

AF/15 - Mr. Fole

October 22, 1973

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To: ~~15UR~~ - Mr. Springsteen  
From: ~~15AF~~ - David D. Newson

Subject: Reply to Portuguese Memorandum

The Memorandum given to us by the Portuguese reflects the Portuguese unhappiness with our current policies towards their African territories and obviously seeks to use their present dependence on the Azores to bring about some change in these policies.

While appreciating the overriding national interest involved, I would hope that our reply will reflect no change in the basic elements of our current policy. The Portuguese have long been of the opinion that differences exist within the U.S. government on what our policy should be towards Portuguese Africa. They obviously hope to exploit these differences to some degree in the present situation. I believe it is, therefore, very important that our reply be consistent with our standard policies. We should keep in mind always that the reply might be published.

The link which Portugal tries to make between Arab reaction to the resupply of Israel and Portugal's position in Africa is unrealistic. The Arab state Portugal apparently fears most is Libya, which already has taken a militant stand with black Africans on questions of colonialism and racism. Moreover, Libya could hardly be expected to turn on Portugal halfway across the African continent when it has not joined its Arab brothers in the war on its own doorstep.

The Africans have already vowed support for the liberation movements, but we have yet to see whether

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individual African states, such as Nigeria, have both the material and political capability to commit their own forces against the Portuguese. Portugal's arrangements with the US on supply to Israel, in any event, can hardly worsen Portugal's position vis-a-vis the Africans.

The movement toward independence in Portugal's African territories is unrelenting and is gathering support from Africans and Europeans as well. But Portugal is determined to hang on, and we are increasingly isolated as its defender.

The Portuguese memorandum seeks to make four points in connection with our African policy:

1. It seeks our acceptance of the Portuguese view that their problem in Africa is essentially one of Communist and Arab inspired terrorism which can be met only by armed opposition.
2. It characterizes as "unfriendly" our arms embargo and our policy statements on African problems.
3. It asks for a more positive attitude on our part toward Portuguese Guinea and political support generally for their position in Africa. The reference to "self-determination" has little meaning since the Portuguese have always described their policy in Africa as representing a form of self-determination.
4. We are specifically asked to end the arms embargo on defense equipment. The request is justified on the basis of possible Arab and African attacks on Portuguese Guinea. We have little evidence to suggest that this is at the moment a realistic threat.

We believe that our reply to these points, while going as far as we can to be responsive, should be consistent with our traditional policy. Specifically we recommend that:

1. We state that it continues to be the view of the U.S. government that the long range progress and stability of the Portuguese territories in Africa rest not in min

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armed conflict but in the establishment of conditions of acceptance and peace between the territories involved and the independent governments of Africa.

2. We state that, while it is our desire to be as responsive as possible to the Portuguese, the relationship of the United States to Africa does not permit us to depart from our policy of discouraging the use of weapons and military equipment of American manufacture in the Portuguese African territories. To do so would be inconsistent with pledges made both to African governments and to the Congress of the United States. United States is prepared to examine other uses in which it can help with the defense of Portugal.

3. We state that the United States will not support the current claim of independence on the part of PAIGC either through recognition or favorable votes in the United Nations. The United States has explained its position that this present claim does not meet the traditional criteria on which the United States has based its recognition of states. (We believe it is important to state our position in the memorandum exactly as we have stated it publicly.)

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PA/HO Department of State  
E.O. 12958, as amended  
May 4, 2006