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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

20 February 1961

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 13-61 (Internal O/NE Working Paper - CIA
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SUBJECT: Troubled Waters For Lusitania

1. Portugal's political torpor has been rudely and suddenly shattered by overt expressions of foreign and domestic opposition to the Salazar regime and by serious disorders in Angola. The government's self confidence has been shaken; it is not only embarrassed by the international publicity given these events, but also concerned lest additional incidents be inspired which might seriously impair stability and, over the long run, jeopardize the traditionalist and conservative orientation of Portuguese politics. Meanwhile, within the regime some officials are reportedly speculating on how best to oust the ailing 71-year-old Salazar, whom they now believe incapable of adapting policies to cope with the rising pressures against him and his government.

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2. Opposition to Salazar in Portugal proper is largely confined to the politically conscious elite, to members of the business community and to small radical groups. By and large the general public is apathetic about politics, although when given the opportunity to register its weariness with the status quo it may manifest strong interest in change -- as it did when General Delgado ran as an opposition candidate in the Presidential election of 1958.

3. Because of Salazar's long held monopoly of power, all opposition groups in the metropole have been forced to live in semi-clandestinity, to move warily, and often to accept allies with which they were not ⁱⁿ fundamental agreement. The radicals apart, they have been little more than collections of individuals, critical of the government, but not necessarily agreed on constructive programs of their own. Recently, however, three prominent oppositionists were granted an interview with President Thomas and permitted to publish an attack on the regime calling for changes in government leadership and freedom for the establishment of a responsible opposition. Although the government's display of noblesse oblige was probably primarily designed to let its critics blow off steam, it now

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seems morally committed to permitting non-regime candidates to run in the Fall National Assembly elections.

4. Assuming that no palace coup takes place before the elections, the intervening period is likely to be one of intense political maneuvering and even unrest. Oppositionists who do not temper their criticisms will provoke repressive action by the security police (PIDE), which we believe will remain loyal to Salazar. Many oppositionists will probably find it difficult to disassociate themselves convincingly from the now largely discredited Galvao-Delgado movement. Some may seek to obtain the backing of prominent leaders such as Santos Costa and Defense Minister Moniz, both of whom are now identified with the regime but discontent with its policies. The defection of either of these two men would be a blow to Salazar's prestige and might damage the unity of the still loyal armed forces, but neither is a sufficiently popular figure to rally widespread popular support against the dictator. Moniz, however, probably has sufficient backing within the armed forces to mount a coup against Salazar -- a move he has threatened more than once.

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5. Over the next few months the developing situation in the Portuguese overseas territories will be critically important, with African nationalism breaking the surface and the settlers becoming more politically conscious. While the incumbent regime has tied its prestige to the retention of its African "provinces" and to their development as primary sources of national wealth, it has imposed a tight, arbitrary rule on these areas and has in practice consistently failed to meet settler expectations of much needed economic expansion and foreign investment. Moreover, the violent rioting in Luanda and revelation that native unrest and anti-white feelings are by no means confined to the capital has raised serious misgivings in Portuguese officialdom over the efficacy of colonial policy as a whole.

6. Settler reactions to domination by Lisbon are generally of three kinds: (a) Simple hostility to Salazar and his government on the part of those whose loyalty to Portugal remains steadfast, but who feel the "provinces" and their particular problems are being overlooked by a far-away capital. (b) Separatism, which has, according to some reports, some following in Angola and considerably more in Mozambique among the settlers ---

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some of whom feel Lisbon will never act fast enough in implementing the assimilation policy while the natives are still attracted to it, and some of whom are tempted to experiment with a form of apartheid. (c) Scattered radical opposition, prepared to use any allies, even African nationalists to discredit and eliminate the dictatorship and all its institutions.

7. Finally, it should be noted that the overseas territories themselves are almost certain to be exposed to external pressures over the next few years which could intensify the political malaise within them. Portuguese Guinea is an inviting target for Toure's nationalist propaganda and is likely to become increasingly unsettled; the situation in northern Angola is reportedly already troubled by Abako tribal agitation originating from kinsmen in the Congo; and Mozambique experiences recurrent low level native unrest, in part stimulated by outside agitators. All three provinces have apparently been infiltrated by the well-financed pro-Communist Revolutionary Movement for the Independence of Portuguese Colonies (FRAIN) based at Conakry. The Portuguese military establishment in these areas, although recently enlarged, is probably spread too thin to cope with multiplying disorders; the loyalty

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of its native seroys in Angola is already open to question. Although the scanty evidence available would indicate that the Africans, themselves, are not as yet seriously infected with anti-Portuguese sentiments, they will probably continue to stir up hostile action against their white rulers in response to some form of foreign pressure.

CONCLUSIONS

In brief, the fixed assumptions on which Portuguese stability has rested for decades -- general acquiescence in Salazar's rule and the close and mutually beneficial attachment of the overseas territories to the metropole -- are now in doubt. How the situation in Lisbon will develop over the next few months will depend on the interaction of official discontent at home and the evolution of diverse tendencies in Africa. Continuing native unrest in Angola would probably sharply reduce the government's image at home. Increasing demands for greater autonomy in Mozambique would probably contribute to the fragmentation of opposition groups and provoke attempts at stern repression from Lisbon. However, to the extent that widespread outside agitation in either Angola or Guinea could be identified, the

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the regime might be able to call successfully for patriotic support. Finally a combination of these pressures, plus the rising level of African and UN criticisms could drive Portugal, no matter who is at the helm, into sullen isolation.



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