

Memorandum for: THE RECORD

The attached blind memo on Portugal-Africa relations was prepared by WE/IA.

The request for this information came from the DCI via the NIO/EUR. It was delivered to

Assistant NIO/EUR on 14 April 1986.

Attachment:
EUR M86-20055

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14 April 1986



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DATE 4/15/86
DOC NO EUR M 86-20055
OCR 3 14 April 1986
P&PD 1
file SOURCE

MEMORANDUM

Portugal and Africa

Although Lisbon divested itself of its African colonies in the aftermath of the 1974 revolution, it now wants to strengthen its influence in its former possessions. Portugal's national identity is bound up with the country's long history of involvement in Africa, and restoring influence there has become Lisbon's third foreign policy priority behind maintaining good relations with Washington and membership in the EC. Because Portugal's means are limited, many Portuguese leaders--including President Soares and possibly Prime Minister Cavaco Silva--are open to cooperative arrangements with the US in instances when US and Portuguese interests are congruent. Lisbon, for example, shares the US interest in maximizing Western influence with the Machel government in Mozambique.

What Portugal is Doing

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Portugal has military cooperation agreements with all its former colonies except Angola and has offered them non-lethal equipment and training. Portugal's limited resources mean, however, that deliveries to equipment-starved African countries generally are infrequent and inadequate.

--Military training--so far limited to Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde--has been conducted in Portugal because the idea of sending Portuguese troops back to Africa is controversial both in Lisbon and in the former colonies.

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[REDACTED]

Portugal wants to build economic leverage with its former colonies but its chronically poor economic situation limits Lisbon's options.

--Lisbon thus is seeking trilateral aid arrangements, under which it would provide area expertise and manpower for development projects financed in part or wholly by the US or other third parties.

--The US and Portugal have agricultural and technical training agreements, for example, with Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, and Sao Tome.

--In our view, the Portuguese would be open to further such cooperation on infrastructure projects, particularly if they thought such efforts would boost Lisbon's credentials with existing governments. [REDACTED]

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Constraints on Portuguese Policy

One problem for Lisbon as it seeks to expand its influence is the residual bitterness of the former colonies, particularly - Angola and Mozambique, over the wars of independence. There also are divisions within Portugal over whether to support existing governments or rebel forces. These divisions are apparent, for example, in the differing approaches of President Soares and former President Eanes.

--Soares's relations with Angolan and Mozambican leaders have been strained since his tenure as prime minister from 1983 to 1985 because they are convinced he permitted rebel spokesmen to carry out anti-government propaganda in Portugal. During the same period, Soares's political foe, former President Eanes, actively courted the government in Luanda. [REDACTED]

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These conflicting approaches persist in current Portuguese policy toward Angola. The Portuguese government has quietly supported the two track approach the United States has followed in applying pressure through support to UNITA while continuing to seek a negotiated solution to regional conflicts.

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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--At the same time, the Portuguese are reluctant to identify themselves publicly with support for Savimbi, however, because of the risks to their economic interests in Angola.

[REDACTED]

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Social Democratic Prime Minister Cavaco Silva has been in office less than six months and has no track record on African policy. We believe he shares the general Portuguese willingness to cooperate with the US on Africa but he is trying to improve relations with the regimes in Luanda and Maputo and this may lead him to publicly criticize US policy initiatives on occasion.

--For example, Cavaco Silva recently expressed "great doubt" about supporting Savimbi, arguing that this could lead to intensified Soviet military aid for the Luanda government and weaken Angolan moderates opposed to the Soviets and Cubans.

[REDACTED]

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Relations with South Africa

Portugal is publicly critical of South Africa's apartheid policy, but reluctant to take actions against Pretoria.

--It agreed under EC pressure to withdraw military attache, but concern for large Portuguese community living in South Africa holds Lisbon back from supporting strong measures.

--Lisbon also wants to maintain credibility with South Africa in order to be in a position to serve as a mediator in Pretoria's conflict with black African states.

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