

Cold War and the resistance to decolonization: Eisenhower Administration and Portuguese Africa

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During the Eisenhower administration fundamental changes occurred in Africa. Between 1957 and 1960, the majority of the former African colonies became independent, a situation that forced the rethinking of the United States' African policy. Due to Cold War constraints, the Truman administration had already put aside the traditional position of anti-colonialism, specially developed during the Roosevelt Presidency. In fact, the Truman years were characterized by a less idealistic approach in regard the idea of self-determination. Considerably more pragmatic than Roosevelt, the Truman approach on African issues meant that transformations in Africa could not be rushed and had to be planned very carefully. Otherwise, in the eyes of this administration, things could evolve on the way to «dangerous solutions», which meant that rushed independencies could facilitate Communist penetration in the new states. Therefore, the US should collaborate with their European allies in the process of creating conditions to grant independence to the African colonies¹.

With the beginning of the Cold War, the United States quickly adopted a policy directed to the consolidation of the Western Alliance against the Soviets. Fearing that the process of reinforcing transatlantic bonds could be menaced by the US traditional anti-colonial position, the Truman administration tried to avoid taking bold attitudes regarding this issue. However, this did not mean that the United States were in favor of European colonialism. During the presidency of Harry Truman, the policy towards the colonial issue was to persuade its European allies to concede some progressive liberalization of its Asian and African colonial territories, although Washington always

¹ Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2001, pp. 67-74.

avoided risking the transatlantic alliance. Truman hoped that the European allies would start a “gradual but steady” process towards the decolonization of the Third World, allowing a “peaceful transfer of power from the colonial administration to the pro-Western and anti-communist native elites”. However, initiatives such as the Marshall Plan and the creation of NATO eventually “stimulated the economic and military capability of the colonial powers” over their possessions, which contributed to the delay of the resolution of the colonial problem². The escalating of Cold War and the Truman administration’s efforts in containing the Soviet expansion caused fear of any sudden change in Third World. With the definition of Cold War positions in Europe, the bipolar conflict easily extended to the global level. The Truman Administration soon began to see the developments on the colonial territories with “cold war lenses”, as it is perfectly visible in the pages of NSC-68³. According to this report, the “lack of order” between the nations was a situation “more and more intolerable”⁴.

When Eisenhower took office, in 1953, he didn’t have many reasons, at least, to reassess this policy. In the years of international instability of post-war period, the European colonial empires were understood as a stability factor, especially in Africa, where the nationalist movements were less active and disseminated. However, the evolution of nationalist movements in Africa during mid-1950s pushed the Eisenhower administration to gradually undertake a different approach on colonialism that was less sympathetic to the maintenance of European formal power in Africa. This paper wishes to evaluate the evolution of this policy, taking in consideration particularly the way US-African policy during the Eisenhower administration had an effect on US-Portuguese relations.

² Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, pp. 67-74.

³ Wilson Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman: Postdam, Hiroshima and the Cold War*, p. 321.

⁴ “United States Objectives and Programs for National Security”, Relatório NSC-68, 14 de Abril de 1950. *FRUS*, Vol I, 1950, p. 234.

The Eisenhower Administration and Africa

Dwight Eisenhower and his secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, were both men of «Europe» who knew little about the Third World and nationalist movements. Therefore, when they arrived in power in 1953, they were first of all concerned with the development of Cold War in Europe and in Asia, where the US was fighting a three years old war. Africa and the development of an African policy was not in the mind of both politicians, even though they considered inexorable the swift to independence of all European colonies⁵.

Eisenhower inherited a policy towards Africa based on what US officials termed as a «middle course» or «middle of the road» position. This policy was characterized by seeking to “support its European allies while encouraging movements towards self-rule to satisfy African nationalists”⁶. However, this «middle course» policy constantly tended to give predominance to the European ruling elites. In the 1950s, there was the widespread belief that people of the African colonies were not sufficiently developed to be granted independence. The North-American elites believed that, “in a world populated by soviet predators, there was no room for romanticizing about immediate liberation” of the African colonies. The Eisenhower Administration feared the premature granting of independence, because it was thought that political instability was ideal for soviet expansion. In this sense, it was necessary that the European Allies, together with the United States, would prepare gradually the eventual independence of its colonies, trying simultaneously to avoid maintaining, for too long, the colonial status quo⁷.

⁵ Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, pp. 110-111.

⁶ James Meriwether, “Africa and the Eisenhower Administration” in Cathryn Statler (ed.), *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World and the Globalization of the Cold War*. Oxford: Roman and Littlefield, 2006, pp. 176.

⁷ Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the color line. American race relations in the global arena*, p. 117.

«Middle of the road» policy towards Africa was also important to protect US interests in that continent and in Europe. Africa was the main supplier of uranium, explored in the mines of Congo and South Africa, which was vital for the United States' nuclear program. On the other hand, the interdependence between metropolitan and colonial economies increased the strategic importance of Africa. These ideas are clearly presented in a report of the Department of Defense written in the beginning of 1955. According to this report, US policy towards Africa had three main purposes. The first was to assure the access to raw materials and to strategic resources of the continent, denying, consequently, its access to the Soviets. Secondly, there was the purpose of containing the expansion of the Soviet Union and of Communism as ideology, favoring the association of the African people with the Free World. Finally, the third objective was maintaining the natives' trust in the American policies through the North-American support to self-determination. However, this last objective should be pursued only when "it did not damage the overall relations of the United States with its allies"⁸.

Nevertheless, the development of anti-colonialist movements in Africa contributed to a reassessment of this position. In 1953, the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) elected the "increasing African discontent and demands for self-government" as one of the chief problems in Africa. Although assuring that European colonial powers would be able to hold out longer their rule, the United States could not ignore entirely the movement that was in progress in Africa⁹.

The events that took place in Bandung, in April 1955, represented the first sign calling to the revision of this policy in Africa. The beginning of the neutralist movement and the fear that the Soviet Union might take advantage of this change in Cold War forced the Eisenhower administration to act. Despite John Foster Dulles' suspicion of the so-called neutralists – he believed

⁸ Memo by the Under-secretary of Defense, 9 May 1955. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS – White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary, Subject series, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 11.

⁹ "Conditions and trends in tropical Africa", 22 December 1953. FRUS, 1952-54, vol. XI: 71-89.

that neutralism was an “obsolete, immoral and shortsighted conception” – the Eisenhower Administration developed a new awareness in what regarded its attitude towards the African nationalist movements¹⁰. For US officials, the Bandung Conference represented the confluence of a number of important Cold War developments. It mixed the old specter of communism with a newer one of neutralism. On the other hand, it showed the energetic rise of anti-colonialism and Third World nationalism. Finally, it alerted Western countries for the importance of race relations for the future years in international politics¹¹. In fact, the racial issue was a problem, not only internationally, but also for the US domestic policy. In this period there was an intensification of the confrontation against racial segregation in the US, which was followed by the increasing of white resistance in Africa. This brought a new dilemma to the Eisenhower Administration: the beginning of an international racial conflict would have serious consequences, not only in Africa, but particularly inside the United States¹².

Besides Bandung, also the Suez Crisis of 1956 showed the necessity of a change in the North-American policy towards Africa and the colonial issue. The United States’ pressure on France and the United Kingdom was one of the defining moments that lead the Eisenhower administration to a position less supportive of the European colonialism in Africa. The beginning of African independences (Ghana in 1957 and Guinea in 1958) showed how imperative it was for the United States to develop a new policy in Africa, refraining from the main prerogative of US foreign policy so far – keeping good relations with the European colonial powers, above all. In alternative it should have in consideration that Africa would eventually become one of Cold War’s main stages. In this sense, in 1958, the National Security Council approved its first memo on Africa, where it

¹⁰ Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the color line. American race relations in the global arena*, Boston: Harvard Press University, 2003, p. 113.

¹¹ Jason Parker, “The Eisenhower Administration and the Bandung Conference” in Cathryn Statler (ed.), *The Eisenhower Administration*, pp. 153-174.

¹² Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the color line. American race relations in the global arena*, p. 118.

emphasized the necessity of avoiding “frustrating the African nationalist and self-determination aspirations”, so that the United States would not be in disadvantage to the Soviet Union. Although NSC recognized that some African nations acted like “teens misbehaving”, it was obvious that the “nationalist fever” was expanding in the continent and it was no longer worth resisting it¹³. The main purpose of the new African policy was to keep an equidistant position, that is, to pressure the European allies to proceed with changes that would lead, in the near future, to the independence of their colonial territories, warning, once more, for the dangers that a premature independence could bring to the Western interests¹⁴.

Therefore, Eisenhower’s African policy was mainly reactive. With this administration deeply concerned with the homogeneity of the Western bloc, Africa was basically seen as the extension of Europe’s economic and political interests, as a “complementary area”. Between 1953 and 1958, “official American policy toward colonialism in Africa changed little” with both Eisenhower and Dulles trying their best to avoid any direct association with the political evolution of that continent. The acceleration of African independences and the creation of the third bloc at Bandung, proved to the administration that it was time for a more active African policy. Both by establishing diplomatic ties with newly independent countries and by pressuring the European allies to start with “gradual but steady” preparation of African people to self-determination, the Eisenhower administration became more sensitive to African nationalist ambitions¹⁵.

The United States and the Portuguese colonial policy

¹³ Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the color line. American race relations in the global arena*, p. 111.

¹⁴ James Meriwether, “Africa and the Eisenhower Administration”, in Cathryn Statler e Andrew Johns (eds.) *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War*, New York: Rowan&Littlefield Publishers, 2006, p. 184.

¹⁵ Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the color line. American race relations in the global arena*, pp. 117-118.

The Eisenhower administration position towards the Portuguese colonial policy clearly reflected its dilemma in regard to colonialism. If, on the one hand, the US feared that the colonial powers would increasingly become more “sensitive and inflexible” in their positions in Africa, it also feared to be put in a position of being pressured by both sides. This worry was even more plausible as it seemed clear that the European colonial countries would not easily quit their positions in Africa¹⁶.

For this administration, it was clear that Portugal would be one of the countries that would more fiercely resist to decolonization. According to the Department of State, the Portuguese government believed that “without their colonies Portugal would count for little more than a strategic location in the world political-economic complex” of Cold War. Therefore, its sovereignty over overseas possessions was “very tenaciously guarded” and the security of the colonies was “a constant preoccupation”, both in Asia and in Africa¹⁷. The developments in Portugal after the end of World War II reinforced this perspective. Portuguese prime-minister Oliveira Salazar’s “natural distrust” regarding the US power, especially because of Washington’s anti-colonial positions, made him foresee that the attack to colonial empires was about to begin. Portugal saw in the strategic importance of the Portuguese Atlantic islands, mainly the Azores, a way to improve the relation with the new world power. Portugal’s invitation to be a founding member of NATO made clear that the United States wanted its inclusion in its sphere of influence, even though it was a dictatorship. This enabled Lisbon to pursue its traditional guidelines in foreign policy: the Atlantic vocation and a special alliance with a maritime power that would contribute to the maintenance of the colonial

¹⁶ Memo of the Bureau of African Affairs, 4 August 1955. FRUS 1955-1957, Vol. XVIII, pp. 13-22.

¹⁷ Policy Paper “Portuguese Government and Foreign Policy”, undated. NARA, RG59, Lot File 59D108, Bx. 2.

empire. The integration of Portugal in the North Atlantic Alliance gave the regime a statute of equality among the other European powers¹⁸.

In 1951, Oliveira Salazar changed the Constitution replacing the classic imperial idea of the period between the two world wars. Portugal adopted a colonial *assimilationist* conception, with the colonies becoming *Overseas Provinces*, which, together with the European territories, formed a “united and indivisible” nation. This reform maintained, however, the *Native Statute*, refusing the right to citizenship for the majority of the colonized people¹⁹. In overall, we can say that the reorganization of Portuguese colonial empire after World War II tried to prove that Portugal could only survive as an intercontinental block. For the Portuguese political elites, in the Cold War world there was no space for small countries because world witness the constitution of great territorial blocks, economically strong and politically united. In other words, in this world “smaller nations felt oppressed”²⁰.

For the United States, Portugal’s policy toward her African territories could be summarized in three points. First, Lisbon established a “generally tolerant and paternalistic attitude toward indigenous people” that was equivalent to a “very slow «assimilation» system” like the one developed by the Belgians in the Congo. The second point referred to the stimulation of the colonial economy using its natural resources, with the minimum employment of foreign capital and domestic or foreign credit. However, this economic development was moderated by the “policy of not encouraging the growth of appetites which may not reasonably be satisfied”. For example, the education of African natives “should not be too rapid and should be limited in scope”. Finally, the

¹⁸ Nuno Teixeira, “Entre África e a Europa: a Política Externa Portuguesa, 1890-2000”, in António Costa Pinto (ed.), *Portugal Contemporâneo*. Lisboa: Dom Quixote, 2004, pp. 87-116; António Telo, “Portugal e a NATO: o reencontro da tradição atlântica”. Lisboa: Edições Cosmos, 1996.

¹⁹ Valentim Alexandre, “O Império Colonial”, in António Costa Pinto (ed.), *Portugal Contemporâneo*. Lisboa: Dom Quixote, 2004, pp. 67-86.

²⁰ Alberto Franco Nogueira, *A Luta pelo Oriente*. Lisboa: Centro de Estudos Políticos e Sociais, 1957, p. 97.

Portuguese government tried to restrain “all foreign influences which may in any way detrimentally affect Portuguese sovereignty in the territories and the generally amicable relations between the indigenous people and the Portuguese”. In fact, US diplomatic officials remarked the efforts undertaken by Portugal to increase “protective measures in the territories against the possibility of internal uprising and external encroachment whether psychological, economic or political”²¹.

Despite the escalating of the situation in Africa during the second half of the 1950s, the situation in the Portuguese colonies seemed very calm. According to a report of the Department of State, it was expectable that, “in the next years”, Portugal would “be able to control whatever African unrest and agitation may develop in Angola or Mozambique”. Through “repressing the political activity and through some measures of cultural assimilation”, Portugal had been able to “stave off trouble” from its African colonies²². This perception led the US not to take any drastic measures regarding Portugal, although they would make an effort to encourage the Portuguese “to the extent possible, on the long-term benefits of more enlightened policies in Africa, including liberal trade and investment policies”. However, as neither Angola nor Mozambique were of direct strategic, economic or political interest to the US, and as it seemed that the Portuguese had the situation under control, the United States policy would be, “without indicating approbation of overall Portuguese policy, not to publicly dispute the proposition that Angola and Mozambique were integral parts of Portugal”²³.

Nevertheless, any attempt made by the US to reassess a position regarding European colonial empires would have a significant effect on US-Portuguese relations, especially in what

²¹ Memorando 5719/1 do National Security Council, 21 de Março de 1958. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS – White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National security Affairs: records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers subseries, Box 21.

²² National Intelligence Estimate, “The Outlook in East, Central, and South Africa”, 20 October 1959. FRUS 1958-1960, Vol. XIV, pp. 58-68.

²³ NSC 6001, 19 January 1960. FRUS 1958-1960, Vol. XIV, pp. 79-93.

concerned the use of Lajes airfield in the Azores during peace time. Since the end of World War II, the United States military presence in that archipelago allowed Lisbon's government to use the Azores as a true «Trump Card», whenever a deadlock arose between the two countries. This was the case of the Goa crisis in 1954-1955. Goa, one of the three reminiscent Portuguese territories in India, was claimed by Nehru's government as part of India. Since the end of the 1940's India tried to negotiate with Portugal the handover of the territories but Salazar always refused. With the support of India, a social movement emerged contesting Portuguese sovereignty in the territories, which led to the invasion of two Portuguese enclaves, Dadra and Nagar-Aveli, in 1954. In the next months, Lisbon's government tried to regain control of these territories through diplomatic action, counting on US support to achieve this. However, the United States held that the effort developed by the Indian government to bring about through negotiation the remaining foreign enclaves in India should be followed in a neutral way to "avoid any involvement in this question" in order not to damage the already instable relation with New Delhi²⁴.

This position caused a great discontent in the Portuguese government. For Portugal, the US position "stemmed from a mistaken policy regarding anti-colonialism" based on the idea that the end of foreign European presence in Asia and Africa was the antidote against communist penetration in those continents. Calling the attention for the fact that Portugal had collaborated with US since World War II, without asking any economic aid or other *quid pro quo*, it should be clear that some "political collaboration in return" was obviously expected. Therefore, it was not possible to predict "how this matter could not fail in gravely affecting such things as NATO and Azores"²⁵.

Besides this, during the Suez crisis Portugal had once again the opportunity to face US resistance to commit itself with the defense of European colonial empires. During the renegotiation

²⁴ "Department of State Policy Statement", December 1, 1950. FRUS, 1950, Vol. V, p. 1480.

²⁵ Telegram from the Ambassador in Portugal to the Department of State, August 9, 1954. FRUS, 1952-1954, Vol. VI, pp. 1744-1745.

of the Azores agreement, in 1956, in a meeting with the American ambassador in Lisbon, James Bonbright, Oliveira Salazar informed that the evolution of the international system made the Portuguese government “to reflect on the desirability of postponing the conclusion of the new agreement”. This statement was a clear reference to what Portugal considered to be the Eisenhower Administration complete lack of solidarity towards France and the United Kingdom in their dispute with the Egyptian government of Nasser. The Portuguese Prime-Minister carried on asserting that Portugal was “disturbed about the directions” which American foreign policy were taking and he “frankly” did not understand them. Portugal, a country with scattered interests in Africa and Asia, had to be assured that the “American policies were not prejudicial to those interests” and Washington should be aware that it “could not expect Portugal to make concessions to the United States in the Azores” if the American policies “should result in harm” to Portuguese interests elsewhere. In conclusion, since Portugal was “greatly disturbed” at US Afro-Asian policies in “prejudice of Europe”, it was necessary to “see where the US [was] heading”²⁶.

Bearing this in mind, an eventual shift in US policy towards Africa, and in particular towards Portuguese Africa, would have grave implication to the overall position of the United States in the Azores. As the American consul in Luanda, Albert Rabida, acknowledged, in order to understand Portuguese policy in Africa, the US should have in mind that Metropolitan Portugal was, still, an “underdeveloped country where in some places the almost feudalistic peasantry has not yet evolved – literally – from the stickle to the scythe”. Obviously, this was maintained through a “benevolent” dictatorship, “where the concept of human rights still has far to advance, both in the popular and official mind, before reaching the status already attained elsewhere in Western Europe”. In other words, “Portugal is still trying to achieve in Europe what certain African territories such as Nigeria

²⁶ Despacho da Embaixada dos Estados Unidos em Lisboa de 4 de Janeiro de 1957. FRUS 1955-1957, Vol. XXVII, pp. 466-471.

and the Golden Coast are trying already to achieve for themselves”²⁷. In addition, Angola and Mozambique were still considered to be “relatively calm enclaves amid the surging waves of nationalism in Africa”. Even though there were some recurring rumors of African uprisings, when compared with the other colonial powers, Portuguese territories were, until 1960, “untouched by the developments” in Africa²⁸.

The American position became clear during the talks between Dwight Eisenhower and the Portuguese Prime minister in Lisbon, in May 1960. Facing Salazar’s “extreme concern” regarding the evolution of the African continent, namely the independence of a large number of countries “which were not yet ready for self-determination”, Eisenhower tried to urge Salazar to take measures for a swift development of the Portuguese colonies. According to the American president, it was not worth to resist the African nationalism, because it was “the only ideal that could face the appeal of Communism”. In this sense, it was important to “gain the nationalist sentiment to the Western side”, by helping those people. On the other hand, it was an obligation of the “civilized and developed nations of the West” to contribute for better living conditions of the colonized people, in financial terms but also improving the health and education conditions. It was a matter of “convincing these people that being on the Western side was the best solution for improving their living conditions”²⁹.

However, the beginning of the Congo Crisis in 1960 reinforced the need to reassess US position towards the colonial issue. In what concerned Portugal, some Department of State Officials clearly supported a change of US policy. Facing the growing of Cold War constraints in Southern

²⁷ Foreign Service Despatch from the US Consulate in Luanda, 28 November 1955. NARA, 753N (1955-1959).

²⁸ Memo NSC-5719/1, 21 March 1958. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS – White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National security Affairs: records, 1952-61, NSC Series, Policy Papers subseries, Box 21.

²⁹ Memo of Conversation between Presidente Eisenhower and Prime Minister Oliveira Salazar, 19 May 1960. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS – White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary, Records, 1952-61, International Trips and Meetings Series, Box 12.

Africa, the US should devise a strategy to “effectively destroy the myth that the Soviets were the champion of democracy and freedom”. This campaign could not be based on denying “the oppressive and medieval practices of the Portuguese in Angola”. Therefore, since there were still many Africans “naïve enough to believe that the United States, once aware of conditions in Angola”, would do something about them, a change was necessary. Thus, it was time to end the traditional belief that the “relationship with the Portuguese in Europe preclude our doing anything” on Africa³⁰. At the same time, the international pressure on colonialism was growing, in particular regarding the Portuguese empire. In the end of 1960, the General Assembly of the UN debated the issue and approved three resolutions on it – two condemning colonialism in general, and one condemning Portuguese colonial policy in particular³¹.

In the fall of 1960 the US Ambassador to Lisbon, Charles Elbrick, was in Washington to discuss with President Eisenhower “the grave concern of the Portuguese Government over future developments in Africa”³². Eisenhower noticed that dictatorships like Portugal were “something necessary in countries whose political institutions [were] not so far advanced” as the Americans. Although agreeing, Elbrick added that sometimes, “beneficent dictatorships” had difficulties in dealing with “big problems” like the maintenance of African colonies. While there were no “immediate difficulties”, Portugal showed, as always, to be very “reluctant to give it up for fear of setting off a chain reaction in other colonies”. In reaction to this, Eisenhower revealed its unrealistic position in regard to Portugal. To the President, the US should follow the same policy devised years earlier with the British”. A couple of years before, Eisenhower had the opportunity to advise the British to “notify all remaining colonies that in the space of twenty years they will be required to

³⁰ Despatch from Leopoldville, 28 December 1955. FRUS 1955-1957, Vol. XVIII, pp. 24-30.

³¹ Resolutions 1514, 1515 and 1542 of December 1960.

³² Memo to Presidente Eisenhower from Christian Herter, 1 November 1960. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS – White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary, Records, 1952-61, International Series, Box 13.

determine their own fate”. In the meantime, the British would develop policies to “train these colonies to administer themselves”. Therefore, Eisenhower “recommended that the Ambassador brought this idea to Salazar”. As Elbrick remarked, Salazar was completely aware of US views on Africa, but the Prime-Minister was even “afraid of mentioning the word «independence»” to any territories because he believed that “once the idea of independence is planted in the minds of the people, they forget all about the conditions under which this independence was offered”. To this Eisenhower just said: “sometimes it is necessary to make a virtue of necessity”³³. As history showed us, this is what happened, since the colonial question was only solved fourteen years later, after a coup in Portugal.

Therefore, we can say that US policy towards Portuguese Africa was determined by Eisenhower administration’s ambiguity regarding Africa, on the one hand, and by the need for maintaining the airbase in the Azores, on the other hand. When he arrived in power, in 1953, Eisenhower inherited Truman’s policy towards Africa, which was characterized by the willingness to maintain a «middle of the road» position towards that continent. US main objective was to call the attention of its European allies to develop and prepare the African colonies to become independent in the near future. The pursuit of this policy would allow the Western world to maintain its influence on that continent, denying the Soviet penetration in Africa. But, the quick evolution of the international environment, especially the beginning of African independences, forced the Eisenhower administration to reconsider sympathetic policies towards European colonialism in Africa. Having this in mind, US policy towards Portuguese Africa tried to follow the same pattern. However, the fact that Portugal was one of the European powers less sensitive to the American objectives in Africa and the constant renegotiation of the Azores agreement forced the United States

³³ Memo of Conversation between Presidente Eisenhower and James Elbrick, 9 November 1960. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS – White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary, Records, 1952-61, International Series, Box 13.

to avoid making a swift change in its policy towards Portuguese colonialism. Throughout the 1950s, on the eyes of US officials Portuguese Africa remained a relatively calm, backward and unimportant area until it burned in political instability and war in 1961.