JOHN P. CANN

# FLIGHT PLAN

# AFRICA

## PORTUGUESE AIRPOWER IN COUNTERINSURGENCY, 1961-1974

Following the 1952 reorganization of the Portuguese Air Force from the army and naval air arms, Portugal now had an entity dedicated solely to aviation that would bring it into line with its new NATO commitment. As it proceeded to develop a competence in modern multi-engine and jet fighter aircraft for its NATO role and train a professional corps of pilots, it was suddenly confronted in 1961 with fighting insurgencies in all three of its African possessions. This development forced it to acquire an entirely new and separate air force, the African air force, to address this emerging danger. This is the story of just how Portuguese leadership anticipated and dealt with this threat, and how it assembled an air force from scratch to meet it. The aircraft available at the time were largely cast-offs from the larger, richer, and more sophisticated air forces of its NATO partners and not designed for counterinsurgency. Yet Portugal adapted them to the task and effectively crafted the appropriate strategies and tactics for their successful employment. The book explores the vicissitudes of procurement, an exercise fraught with anti-colonial political undercurrents, the imaginative modification and adaptation of the aircraft to fight in the African theaters, and the development of tactics, techniques, and procedures for their effective employment against an elusive, clever, and dangerous enemy. Advances in weaponry, such as the helicopter gunship, were the outgrowth of combat needs. The acquired logistic competences assured that the needed fuel types and lubricants, spare parts, and qualified maintenance personnel were available in even the most remote African landing sites. The advanced flying skills, such as visual reconnaissance and air-ground coordinated fire support, were honed and perfected. All of these aspects and more are explored and hold lessons in the application of airpower in any insurgency today.

John P. Cann is a Research Fellow and retired Professor of National Security Studies at Marine Corps University, a former member of the research staff at the Institute for Defense Analyses, and Scholar-in-Residence at the University of Virginia. He earned his doctorate in War Studies at King's College London in 1996, published *Counterinsurgency in Africa* in 1997, *Memories of Portugal's African Wars, 1961–1975* (ed.) in 1998, *The Brown Waters of Africa* in 2008, and numerous articles on small wars over the years. He is a retired naval captain and flight officer specializing in open ocean reconnaissance aviation and served in a variety of aviation assignments, including command. He has been awarded the Portuguese Navy Cross Medal and the Medal of Dom Afonso Henriques for his writings on conflict in Lusophone Africa.

FLIGHT PLAN AFRICA

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# Flight Plan Africa

## *Portuguese Airpower in Counterinsurgency, 1961-1974*

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Front cover – top: a Sud-Aviation Puma helicopter collecting troops following an operation in the Chana da Cameia in the east of Angola (Source: Forca Aerea Portuguesa); bottom – a North American T-6G Harvard on patrol in the north of Angola (Source: Forca Aerea Portuguesa). Rear cover - A Sud-Aviation Alouette III refueling at a tactical base in the Téte District of Mozambique (Source: Forca Aerea Portuguesa).

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For my dear friend
General Jorge Manuel Brochado de Miranda

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## Preface

During the research for my first book, *CounterInsurgency in Africa, The Portuguese Way of War, 1961–1974*, the door opened and revealed to me the unusual importance of airpower in the Portuguese campaigns to retain their African possessions. The air dimension, normally a support for ground forces, played more than this traditional limited role. It was indeed a key part of the equation because of its flexibility, imaginative application, and aviator courage in responding to the varied insurgent threats and ground force requirements throughout the three theaters of Angola, Guiné, and Mozambique.

Normally counterinsurgency is not conducive to the centerpiece employment of airpower, as it is a labor-intensive enterprise that requires vast numbers of light infantry who are busy bringing security to the population and winning the "hearts and minds" competition. Yet in this case, the Portuguese Air Force was unwilling to cede the focus of the debate entirely to ground forces.

In each theater Portugal was faced with a very different enemy in his aggressiveness, imagination, competence, and size. Airpower was able to adjust and adapt to these changing battlefield mosaics and remain for Portugal more than the usual complement to ground forces. Normally insurgents operate within populations, and Portuguese Africa was no exception, so any attempt to destroy them from the air was fraught with potential repercussions. This meant that targeting had to be effective in preventing the insurgents from reaching the vulnerable populations, and here we see throughout the book examples of just how this was done. Between the "piracy" operations in the east of Angola and the heli-borne tactical trackers and envelopment groups in the north, the insurgents were never able to reach the targeted populations and proselytize them successfully in Angola. In Mozambique it was the armed reconnaissance missions and patient intelligence gathering that enabled targeted strikes on insurgent columns and restricted them to the border districts of the theater. In the cramped battleground of Guiné, the insurgents were very aggressive, and the conflict bordered on the conventional in its violence. Yet time and again the aviators reduced insurgent forces insistent on exposing themselves. Airpower was the bane of their existence in all the theaters, and they constantly sought solutions to this persistent and dangerous threat. The industry of the insurgents and their Soviet, Chinese, and Cuban advisors in addressing the airpower scourge led to the deployment of the

Strela, a Soviet-designed, heat-seeking, air-ground, hand-held missile. Despite its initial success and surprise, the Portuguese quickly developed effective countermeasures and reasserted the constant pressure of airpower.

The remarkable results from the air effort came from a force with one of the smallest presences in Portuguese Africa, and yet its leverage and impact belied its modest numbers. Out of perhaps 158,000 men under arms in the *ultramar* at the height of the fighting in 1973, the Air Force numbered about 6,000 men and women, and this figure included about 1,900 paratroops and their para-nurses. The navy was the smallest of the three at about 3,000, while the army was the largest at about 149,000. Out of the 4,100-man dedicated aviation force, there were never more than 300 pilots at any one time, and these bore the burden of all aviation missions. Their enormous impact was disproportionate to their small numbers.

The book explores just how Portugal went about developing an air strategy and executing and adjusting it to achieve a new approach to counterinsurgency that could employ airpower more effectively and at less proportional cost than comparable counterinsurgencies. This air strategy was based on a network of airfields that offered varying levels of support across the vast reaches of Portuguese Africa and a fleet of aircraft with unimproved field capability to extend the airpower reach. The airfields were based on a spoke pattern around a key installation that could sustain the more primitive fields that allowed wide-ranging support of ground forces, independent air operations, and wounded air evacuation. The aircraft were proven, simple, and inexpensive. The infrastructure and fleet were designed both to support the population and destroy the insurgent, and in both instances they worked well.

Unfortunately, long wars are frustrating to airmen because of the highly complex and technical nature of aviation and the expertise needed to manage even routine operations. It took the initial years to develop an effective air force and adapt it to fighting insurgents successfully in the difficult terrain. The Air Force in this case began with a sound foundation grounded in NATO and adapted remarkably well. It developed its own unique approach, and the book describes how it managed this success. The achievement of the Portuguese Air Force in counterinsurgency establishes it as a relevant model for those who are disinclined to cede the debate to ground forces on the importance and criticality of airpower in counterinsurgency.

## The Wolverhampton Military Studies Series
## Series Editor's Preface

As series editor, it is my great pleasure to introduce the *Wolverhampton Military Studies Series* to you. Our intention is that in this series of books you will find military history that is new and innovative, and academically rigorous with a strong basis in fact and in analytical research, but also is the kind of military history that is for all readers, whatever their particular interests, or their level of interest in the subject. To paraphrase an old aphorism: a military history book is not less important just because it is popular, and it is not more scholarly just because it is dull. With every one of our publications we want to bring you the kind of military history that you will want to read simply because it is a good and well-written book, as well as bringing new light, new perspectives, and new factual evidence to its subject.

In devising the *Wolverhampton Military Studies Series*, we gave much thought to the series title: this is a *military* series. We take the view that history is everything except the things that have not happened yet, and even then a good book about the military aspects of the future would find its way into this series. We are not bound to any particular time period or cut-off date. Writing military history often divides quite sharply into eras, from the modern through the early modern to the mediaeval and ancient; and into regions or continents, with a division between western military history and the military history of other countries and cultures being particularly marked. Inevitably, we have had to start somewhere, and the first books of the series deal with British military topics and events of the twentieth century and later nineteenth century. But this series is open to any book that challenges received and accepted ideas about any aspect of military history, and does so in a way that encourages its readers to enjoy the discovery.

In the same way, this series is not limited to being about wars, or about grand strategy, or wider defence matters, or the sociology of armed forces as institutions, or civilian society and culture at war. None of these are specifically excluded, and in some cases they play an important part in the books that comprise our series. But there are already many books in existence, some of them of the highest scholarly standards, which cater to these particular approaches. The main theme of the *Wolverhampton Military Studies Series* is the military aspects of wars, the preparation for wars or their prevention, and their aftermath. This includes some books whose main theme is the

technical details of how armed forces have worked, some books on wars and battles, and some books that re-examine the evidence about the existing stories, to show in a different light what everyone thought they already knew and understood.

As series editor, together with my fellow editorial board members, and our publisher Duncan Rogers of Helion, I have found that we have known immediately and almost by instinct the kind of books that fit within this series. They are very much the kind of well-written and challenging books that my students at the University of Wolverhampton would want to read. They are books which enhance knowledge, and offer new perspectives. Also, they are books for anyone with an interest in military history and events, from expert scholars to occasional readers. One of the great benefits of the study of military history is that it includes a large and often committed section of the wider population, who want to read the best military history that they can find; our aim for this series is to provide it.

Stephen Badsey
University of Wolverhampton

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## Abbreviations

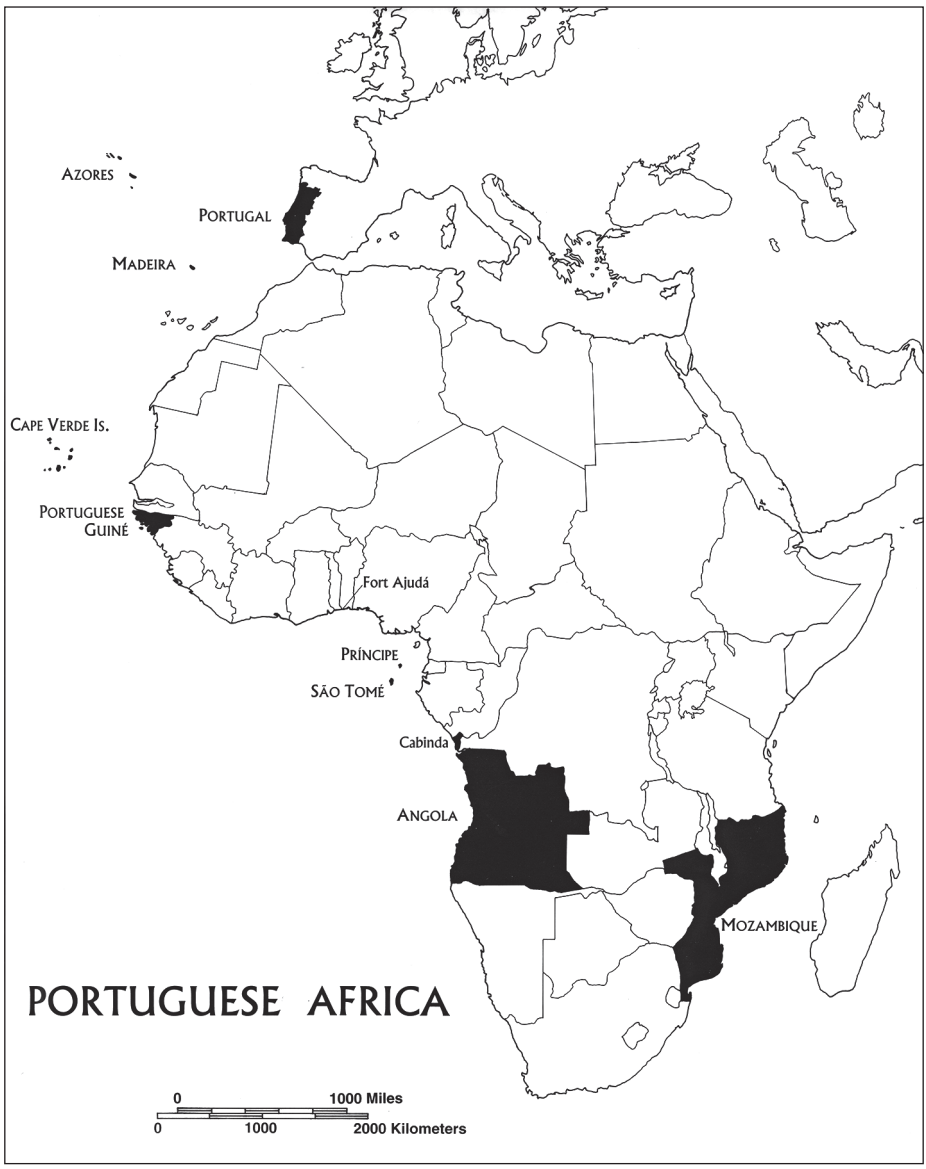
| | |
|---|---|
| AB | *Aeródromo Base* or Aerodrome Base |
| ABAKO | *Alliance des Ba-Kongo* or Alliance of the Bakongo |
| ACB | Air Club of Beira |
| AgrAr | *Agrupamento Aéreo* or Air Group |
| AI | *Aeródromo de Instrução* or Training Aerodrome |
| AIL | *Áreas de Intervenção Livre* or Free Fire Zones |
| AL | *Aeródromo Logístico* or Logistical Aerodrome |
| ALAT | *Aviation Légère de l'Armée de Terre* or Army Light Aviation |
| AM | *Aeródromo de Manobra* or Maneuver Aerodrome |
| ANC | African National Congress |
| AOA | Angle of Attack |
| AR | *Aeródromo de Recurso* or Alternate Aerodrome |
| AT | *Aeródromo de Trânsito* or Transit Aerodrome |
| ATIP | *Ataque Independento Preparado* or Planned Attack |
| ATIR | *Ataque Independente em Reconhecimento* or Armed Reconnaissance |
| AU | African Union |
| BA | *Base Aérea* or Air Base |
| BCP | *Batalhão de Caçadores Pára-quedistas* or Paratroop Battalion |
| BE | *Batalhão Eventual* or Contingent Battalion |
| CAS | Close Air Support |
| CAT | Civil Air Transport |
| CCFAA | Commander-in-Chief Armed Forces of Angola |
| CCIVM | *Orgão de Controlo e Informação de Voo Militar* or Military Flight Information and Control Authority |
| CECI | *Comando Especial de Contra Infiltração* or Special Command for Counter-Infiltration |
| CFB | *Caminho de Ferro de Benguela* or Benguela Railroad |
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency |
| CCAA | *Centro Conjunto de Apoio Aéreo* or Joint Air Support Centre |
| CCE | Company of *Caçadores Especiais* or Special Hunters |
| CCMDS | Company of Commandos |

| | |
|---|---|
| CMIG-Zero | *Centre Militaire d'Instruction Guerrilla–Zero* or Military Center for Instruction in Guerrilla Warfare, Number Zero |
| COFI | *Comando Operacional das Forçes de Intervenção* or Operational Command of the Intervention Forces |
| COMSECAR | *Comando do Sector Aéreo Leste* or Eastern Air Sector Command |
| CONAKAT | *Confédération des Associations Tribales du Katanga* or Confederation of the Tribal Associations of Katanga |
| Cotonang | *Companhia Geral dos Algodões de Angola* or Cotton Company of Angola |
| DC | *Destacamento de Cooperação* or Detachment of Cooperation |
| DGS | *Direcção-Geral Segurança* or General Security Directorate |
| Diamang | *Companhia de Diamantes de Angola* or Diamond Company of Angola |
| DIH | *Détachements d'Intervention Héliportés* or Heliborne Intervention Detachments |
| DISC | Directorate of the Service of Management and Accounting (*Direcção do Serviço de Intendência e Contabilidade*) |
| DLOC | *Destruição Localizada* or Localized Destruction |
| DRIL | *Directório Revolucionário Ibérico de Libertação*, or the Iberian Revolutionary Directorate of Freedom |
| DShK | Degtyarev-Shpagin Large-Calibre (12.7mm) |
| DTA | *Divisão dos Transportes Aéros* or Air Transport Division |
| EALA | *Escadrille d'Aviation Légère d'Appui* or Light Support Aviation Squadron |
| EEC | European Economic Community |
| EPLA | *Exército Popular de Libertação de Angola* or Popular Army for the Liberation of Angola |
| ETAP | École des Troupes Aeroportées |
| EVA | *Esquadrilha dos Voluntários do Ar* or Flight of Air Volunteers |
| FAC | Forward Air Controller |
| FAP | *Força Aérea Portuguesa* or Portuguese Air Force |
| FARP | *Forças Armadas Revolucionárias de Povo* or Revolutionary Armed Forces of the People |
| FAV | *Formações Aéreas de Voluntários* or Volunteer Air Formations |
| FNLA | *Frente Nacional de Libertção de Angola* or National Front for the Liberation of Angola |
| FOD | Foreign Object Damage |
| FRELIMO | *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* or Front for the Liberation of Mozambique |
| GALA | *Groupe d'Aviation Légère d'Appui* or Light Support Aviation Group |
| GATac | *Groupements Aériens Tactiques* or Tactical Air Command |
| GHAN-1 | *Groupe d'Hélicoptères de l'Aéronautique Navale NO 1* or Naval Helicopter Group No 1 |
| GO 1001 | Operational Group 1001 |

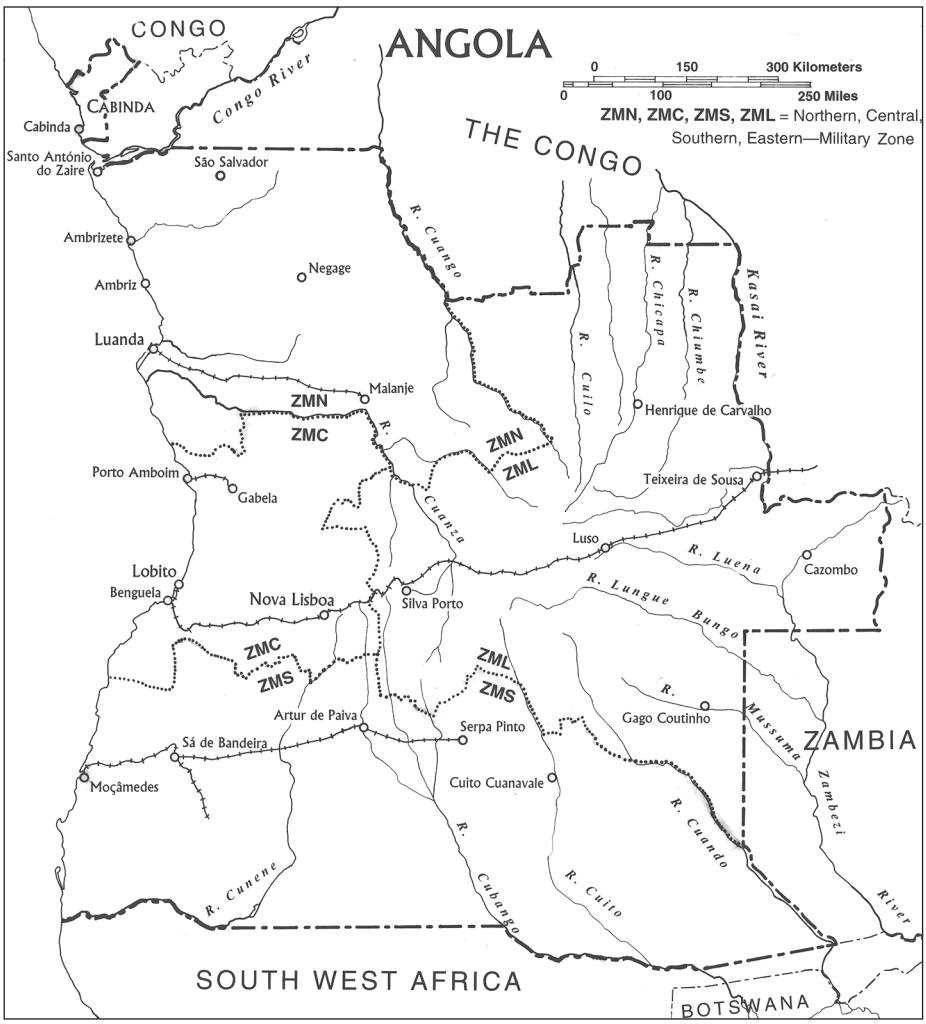
| | |
|---|---|
| GP | General Purpose Bomb |
| GRAE | *Governo da República de Angola no Exílio* or Government of the Republic of Angola in Exile |
| HE | High Explosive |
| HF | High Frequency Radio |
| IAEM | *Instituto de Altos Estudos Militares* or Institute for Higher Military Studies |
| IFR | Instrument Flight Rules |
| IP | Initial Point |
| JASC | Joint Air Support Centre |
| LDM | *Launcha de Desembarque Média* or Medium Landing Craft |
| LZ | Landing Zone |
| MAAG | U.S. Military Advisory Assistance Group |
| MANU | Please see UNAM |
| MAP | U.S. Military Assistance Program |
| MDAP | Mutual Defense Assistance Program |
| MEDEVAC | Medical Evacuation (Aviation) |
| MNC | *Mouvement National Congolais* Congolese National Movement |
| MPLA | *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* or Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| OAS | Organization of African States |
| OAU | Organization of African Unity |
| OPC | Ovambo People's Congress |
| ORMIS | *Ordem de Missão* or Mission Order |
| PAC | Pan African Congress |
| PAIGC | *Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde* or African Party for the Independence of Guiné and Cape Verde |
| PAC | Pan African Congress |
| PCA | *Posto de Comando Avançado* or Forward Command Post |
| PIDE | *Polícia Internacional de Defesa do Estado* or International Police for Defense of the State |
| PLAN | People's Liberation Army of Namibia |
| PoAF | Portuguese Air Force |
| PSA | *Partido de Solidariedade Africana*, *Parti Solidaire Africain* or African Solidarity Party |
| RA | *Região Aérea* or Air Region |
| RAF | Royal Air Force |
| RCAR | *Reconhecimento Armado* or Armed Reconnaissance |
| RDF | Radio Direction Finder (Radio Compass) |
| RECA | *Reconhecimento Armado* or Armed Reconnaissance |
| RFOT | *Reconhecimento Fotográfico* or Photographic Reconnaissance |
| RhAF | Rhodesian Air Force |

| | |
|---|---|
| RLI | Rhodesian Light Infantry |
| RPG | Rocket-Propelled Grenade |
| RVIS | *Reconhecimento Visual* or Aerial Visual Reconnaissance |
| SAA | South African Airways |
| SAAF | South African Air Force |
| SADF | South African Defence Force |
| SAM | Surface-to-Air Missile |
| SAP | South African Police |
| SAR | Search and Rescue |
| SAS | Special Air Service |
| SCCI | *Serviço de Centralização e Coordenação de Informações* or Service of Centralization and Coordination of Intelligence |
| SFERMA | Société Française d'Entretien et de Réparation de Matériel Aéronautique |
| SIGG | *Serviço de Informações do Governo-Geral* or Intelligence Service of the Governor-General |
| SIGINT | Signals Intelligence |
| SIPA | Société Industrielle Pour l'Aéronautique |
| STOL | Short Takeoff and Landing |
| SWAPO | South West Africa People's Organization |
| TAP | *Transportes Aéreos Portugueses* or Portuguese Air Transport |
| TAM | *Transporte Aéreo Militar* or Military Air Transport |
| TLCA | *Transporte Ligeiro de Carga Aérea* or Air Cargo Light Transport |
| UAT | Union Aéromartime du Transport |
| UDI | Rhodesian Unilateral Declaration of Independence |
| UHF | Ultra High Frequency Radio |
| UNAM | *União Nacional Africana Moçambique* or Mozambican African National Union |
| UNAMI | *União Nacional do Moçambique Independente*, or National Union of Independent Mozambique |
| UDENAMO | *União Democrática Nacional de Moçambique* or the National Democratic Union of Mozambique |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNITA | *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* or the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola |
| UPA | *Uniao das Populações de Angola* or Union of Angolan Peoples |
| UTCI | *Unidade Táctica de Contra Infiltração* or Tactical Counter-Infiltration Unit |
| VHF | Very High Frequency Radio |
| ZA | *Zona Aérea* or Air Zone |
| ZACVG | *Zona Aérea de Cabo Verde e Guiné* or Air Zone of Cape Verde and Guiné |
| ZANU | Zimbabwe African National Union |

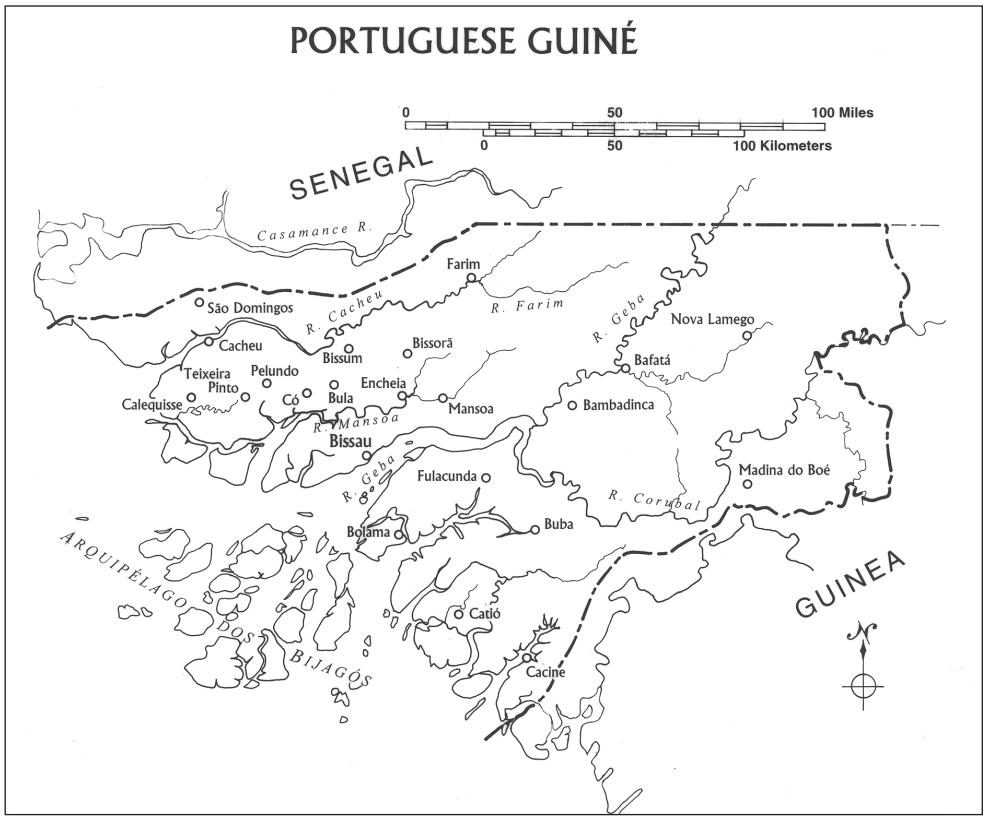
| | |
|---|---|
| ZAPU | Zimbabwe African People's Union |
| ZIL | *Zona de Intervenção Leste* or Eastern Intervention Zone |
| ZIN | *Zona de Intervenção Norte* or Northern Intervention Zone |
| ZL | *Zona de Largada* or Landing Zone |
| ZML | *Zona Militar Leste* or Eastern Military Zone |
| ZPU | *зенитная пулемётная установка* or Antiaircraft Machinegun Mount |



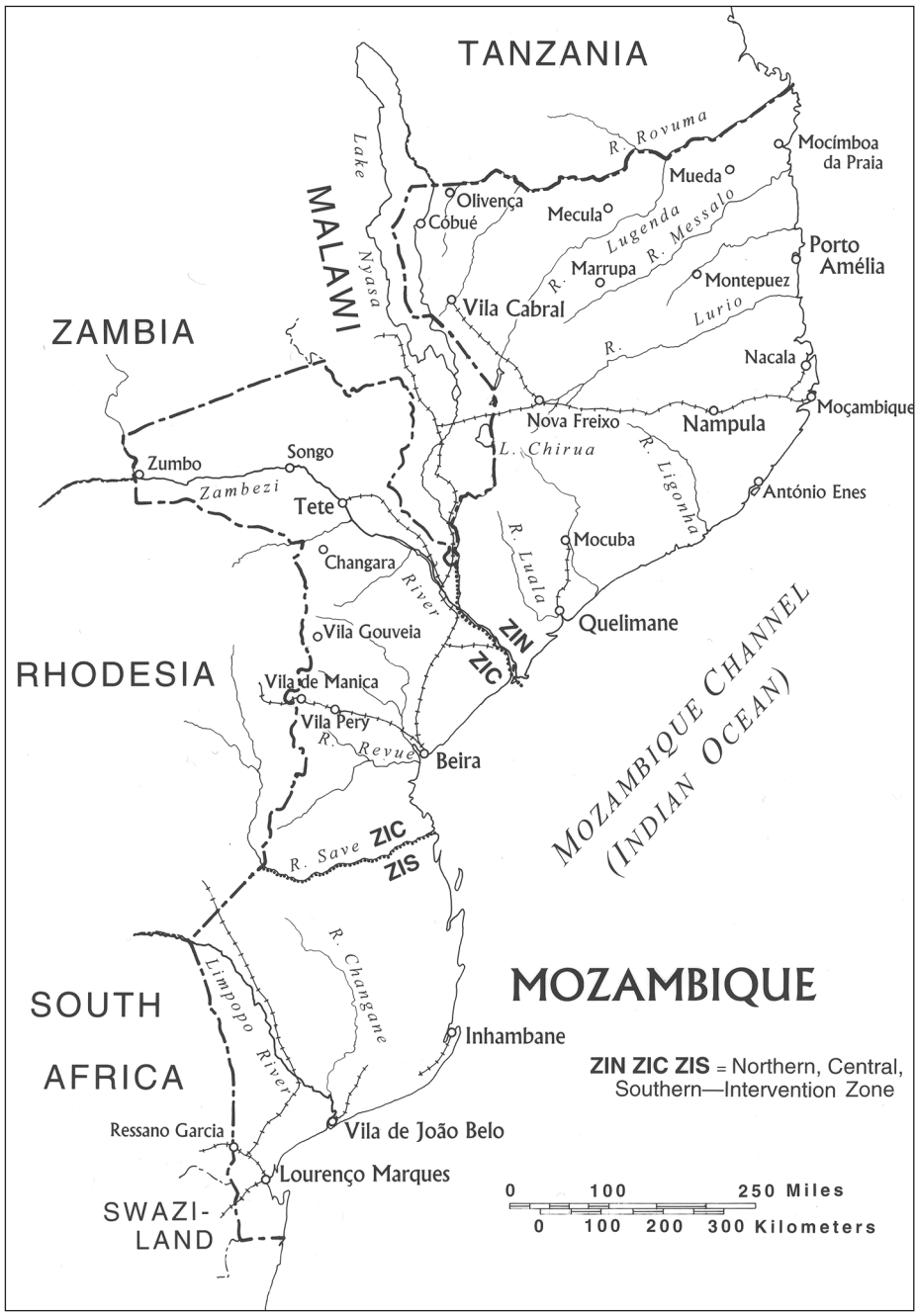

Portuguese Africa


CONGO
ANGOLA
CABINDA
Congo River
Cabinda
Santo António do Zaire
São Salvador
0 150 300 Kilometers
0 100 250 Miles
ZMN, ZMC, ZMS, ZML = Northern, Central, Southern, Eastern—Military Zone
THE CONGO
R. Cuango
R. Chicapa
R. Chiumbe
Kasai River
R. Cuilo
Ambrizete
Negage
Ambriz
Luanda
Malanje
ZMN
ZMC
ZMN
ZML
Henrique de Carvalho
Porto Amboim
Gabela
R. Cuanza
Teixeira de Sousa
Luso
R. Luena
Cazombo
Lobito
Benguela
Nova Lisboa
Silva Porto
R. Lungue Bungo
ZMC
ZMS
ZML
ZMS
R. Mussuma
Gago Coutinho
ZAMBIA
Artur de Paiva
Serpa Pinto
Sá de Bandeira
Moçâmedes
Cuito Cuanavale
R. Cuando
R. Zambezi River
R. Cunene
R. Cubango
R. Cuito
SOUTH WEST AFRICA
BOTSWANA

Angola




Portuguese Guiné


TANZANIA
MALAWI
ZAMBIA
RHODESIA
SOUTH AFRICA
SWAZI-LAND
MOZAMBIQUE
Lake Nyasa
R. Rovuma
Mocímboa da Praia
Mueda
Olivença
Cóbué
Mecula
Lugenda
R. Messalo
Porto Amélia
R. Marrupa
Montepuez
Vila Cabral
Lurio
R.
Nacala
Moçambique
Nova Freixo
Nampula
L. Chirua
R. Ligonha
António Enes
Zumbo
Songo
Zambezi
Tete
Mocuba
R. Lualá
Changara
River
Quelimane
Vila Gouveia
ZIN
ZIC
Vila de Manica
Vila Pery
R. Revue
Beira
MOZAMBIQUE CHANNEL (INDIAN OCEAN)
R. Save
ZIC
ZIS
R. Changane
Limpopo River
Inhambane
ZIN ZIC ZIS = Northern, Central, Southern—Intervention Zone
Ressano Garcia
Vila de João Belo
Lourenço Marques
0 100 250 Miles
0 100 200 300 Kilometers

Mozambique

# 1

# Portugal Besieged

Since the introduction of aviation in Portugal in 1910, its aviators have shown great energy, imagination, and courage and undertook some of the most daring exploratory flights of the pioneering age. Indeed, from these early days they have had an illustrious history in the spirit of the caravels. Such luminaries as Gago Coutinho, Sacadura Cabral, Brito Pais, Saramento de Beires, and Manuel Gouveia became aviation household names for their trans-South Atlantic and trans-Asiatic flights between 1919 and the early 1930s. These and other feats earned international acknowledgment, and the Clifford Harmon Trophy, a prize created to celebrate aeronautical accomplishments worldwide, was awarded four times in five years to Portuguese pilots. These feats were accomplished by army and naval aviators; however, when Portugal joined NATO in 1949 as one of its founding members, the national vision of military aviation changed from one fragmented between these two services to a unified concept. This thinking led to the establishment of the Portuguese Air Force in 1952 as an entity dedicated to aviation that would bring the needed flexibility, economy, and control to mobilize and concentrate aviation resources where they were most needed.

Because of the nature of World War II, air forces in general in the immediate post-war years were oriented toward the classic interstate conventional conflict. There was little attention, if any, paid to intrastate unconventional conflict, the one that would threaten the *ultramar* or overseas territories of the Portuguese Empire. This would be a conflict that required air support to the primary ground force, the police, and government agencies that were busy protecting the population from insurgents and supporting people in their day-to-day lives, and not to a conventional army in a symmetrical conflict. The Portuguese Air Force under able leadership anticipated such a conflict and began in its formative years to lay the groundwork in Africa to defend the *ultramar*. In the following pages we shall explore just how this occurred and how in the subsequent conflict the Portuguese Air Force learned by doing. It identified the operating problems and found appropriate solutions to overcoming the vast distances and forbidding flying conditions in Africa to bring the critically needed support to both its military and civil colleagues.

In performing this vital function, it was constrained by the Portuguese colonial position in a shifting geopolitical climate that viewed empires as out of step with the new political awareness sweeping through the undeveloped world. These "winds of change" spawned new enemies and battles that would be fought not only in the swamps and savannas of Africa but also in the diplomatic forums of the United Nations and the Organization of African States.

**"Winds of change" and the Cold War**

In the decade of the 1950s, the "winds of change" were blowing through Africa. The largest colonial power, Britain, was freeing its colonies at a regular pace in step with its reluctant promise made to the United States during World War II. Following the independence of British India in August 1947, its empire wound steadily down, and by the mid-1960s all of its African possessions were independent countries for all practical purposes. France, despite its reduced circumstances, remained adamant in retaining its colonies and fought two losing conflicts, Indochina between 1946 and 1954 and Algeria between 1954 and 1963. During the Algerian conflict, an exhausted France began to grant independence to the remainder of its colonies at a rapid pace. With the 1959 débâcle in the Belgian Congo and its independence the following year, Portugal then possessed the last intact colonial empire.

Following World War II, the colonial troops of both Britain and France who had helped their masters defeat the two imperial regimes of the Axis Powers returned to their role as lesser citizens in the colonial empires of their mother countries. There was a conflict in their minds between the ideals for which they had fought and their continuing underprivileged "native" status. They had difficulty in reconciling this discrepancy, and this led to the notion that perhaps their colonial home should be an independent country with the political freedoms that they were currently being denied. The answer to this search for equal status in the face of intransigent regimes was to form resistance movements. As the British, French, and Belgian colonies gained independence, the indigenous movements became political parties in the bequeathed nominal democracies. While these were generally short-lived and rapidly became oligarchies or dictatorships with fewer economic or political freedoms than before, they were, nevertheless, now independent states and comprised a large part of Africa. Their national and foreign policies reflected their heritage of resistance to colonialism. Portugal thus found itself surrounded in Africa by ideologically hostile countries that would readily serve as insurgent sanctuaries and provide other practical support for resistance movements within its colonies. Angola initially faced such regimes in the Congo to the north and later Zambia to the east. Guiné was sandwiched between and indeed besieged by the former French Guinée to its south and a compliant Senegal to its north. Mozambique had Tanzania to its north and an ambivalent Malawi to the northwest. All of these neighbors were either sources or avenues of armed incursions.

In the context of the Cold War, the Soviet Union, the Peoples Republic of China, and their various satellites were ready to provide important support to insurgent

movements hostile to Portugal and other colonial powers in the direct form of military training, advice, and weapons and indirectly in the moral dimension. Their encouragement to Portugal's colonial opponents developed across a broad spectrum from armed conflict in the field to support in the diplomatic arenas of the United Nations (UN), the Organization of African States (OAS), and numerous other international fora. This hostile environment was clearly developing in line with the solidarity that the newly independent former colonies, now largely despotic regimes, felt with each other and the uncritical tyrannical communist bloc. Portugal, one of the early members of NATO, was staunchly anticommunist, and so there was now an additional dimension to the philosophical divergence with its African neighbors.

This development reflected the competing forces of the Cold War, which lasted some forty-four years from the end of World War II in 1945 to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and pitted the largely former Western Allies against the Soviet Union, communist China and their satellite states. The initial of several phases ran until 1960 and was characterized by the creation of the Western and Eastern Blocs in a simple and starkly contrasting international bipolar system, with various states aligning themselves largely through alliances with either the principal "free world" or "communist" powers. The Western Bloc led by the United States followed a long-term policy of containment towards its Eastern counterpart and managed to extend and consolidate its Western system in this context. This consolidation was made through such vehicles as the Marshall Plan, the Atlantic Alliance, the Rio Pact, the Japanese-American Alliance, and the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany. In a very short time the United States had marshaled the forces of the developed world against its communist bloc foes in support of this containment policy.[1] The Soviet Union in response to this increased encirclement initiated two crises during the period in an attempt to increase its hegemony, the Berlin Blockade of 1948–1949 and the Korean War of 1950–1952. In the first instance the United States organized the Berlin Airlift as a response to a Soviet rail and road blockade of the city. This response avoided an obvious Allied ground confrontation, one that had the potential to be a messy troop encounter without solving the problem of sustaining an Allied presence. The Soviets lifted their blockade once the success of the airlift became obvious and demonstrated Allied determination to remain.

In the second instance the Soviet Union tried the less direct method of using a proxy force to gain communist hegemony on the Korean peninsula. The Allies had demobilized their forces substantially following the war and were clearly vulnerable in peripheral areas, such as Korea. The Soviet Union and China encouraged and supported North Korea in its desire to unify the Korean peninsula under a communist regime and in a surprise attack on the South to achieve this aim. The Allies again

1 António José Telo, *História da Marinha Portuguesa: Doutrinas e Organização, 1924–1974* [History of the Portuguese Navy: Doctrine and Organization, 1924–1974] (Lisbon: Academia de Marinha, 1999), 515.

scrambled to counter this aggression and under a UN resolution fielded a force that eventually restored South Korea under its legitimate government. The naïve post-war notion in many quarters that communists were "simple peace-loving people" was forever dispelled here.[2] The effect of this realization was a serious rearmament in the West, an unfortunate and debilitatingly expensive development for the Soviets.

The second "rearmament" phase ran from 1960 to 1973 and corresponded to the period of the Portuguese wars in Africa, which were directly affected by U.S. and Soviet superpower confrontation. Following an established pattern, the Soviet Union initiated two crises during this period, the Berlin Crisis of 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. These crises followed on the heels and in the latter instance were a direct result of the Pay of Pigs fiasco. This disaster had its origins in a failed plan that was developed during the last months of the Eisenhower and the first weeks of the Kennedy administration by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to invade Cuba with about 1,000 Cuban expatriates and overthrow its dictator Fidel Castro, a continuing thorn to the United States. It was based on the hopeful premise that the unhappy Cuban population would rally around the U.S.-trained and -armed invaders and help defeat Castro and his 200,000-man militia. When the CIA put the force ashore in April 1961, it was smothered by the militia.[3] Later that summer Berlin was thrown into crisis with the building of the Berlin Wall by its communist East to isolate it as part of Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev's continuing efforts to intimidate the Allies into abandoning the city. Things were not proceeding well for the new Kennedy administration.

Khrushchev had twice in 1960 pledged to defend Cuba from U.S. aggression, and after the Bay of Pigs threat, took this commitment to heart. Instead of simply installing defensive hardware there, he decided to use Cuba as an opportunity to bring much of the United States within reliable nuclear range of Soviet attack by deploying both 1,000-mile medium-range and 2,200-mile intermediate-range missiles and 700-mile range Ilyushin-28 (IL-28) Beagle jet bombers. While strategically it would hardly matter whether the United States was struck by an attack from Cuba or an intercontinental ballistic missile from the Soviet Union proper, the now off-balance Kennedy administration could accept neither the domestic nor the international political consequences of Soviet-Cuban fortification. Kennedy consequently instituted a naval blockade of Cuba to prevent any further Soviet build-up after publicly revealing the existence of the missiles and generating diplomatic support for their removal. He directly threatened the island with a U.S. invasion, an option that the Soviets could not counter successfully so far from home. Khrushchev had thus gambled and lost.

2 George F. Kennan, "Long Telegram" from Moscow, February 22, 1946, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), vol.VI, 666–709.

3 Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War* (New York: Macmillan, 1973; Indiana University Press, 1977), 450.

The Soviet troops and matériel were removed, and two years later Khrushchev paid the price with his fall from power. This military humiliation and the compensation that the Soviet armed forces extracted for it marked the beginning of the accelerated advance in Soviet naval power over the next decade. It was to develop into a force formidable enough to challenge the free hand that the U.S. and Allied navies had previously enjoyed. By the 1970s Soviet fleets were a significant presence in every ocean of the world. For Portugal this increased presence meant that communist influence could be extended to remote peripheral areas and that outside support could now be delivered more readily to subversive, anti-Western resistance movements and their insurgent elements.

A second development stemming from the rise of Soviet power was a diffusion of the Atlantic Alliance. In this post-war era the United States had been presiding over world affairs in a way not previously available to any nation. It possessed only a relatively small portion of the global population and natural resources but had proceeded to dominate military and commercial power with a vast margin of superiority over both its friends and foes. With the relative economic recovery of Europe after the war and the birth of the European Economic Community (EEC), many European nations had begun to chafe at the U.S. direction and now sought greater autonomy. U.S. leaders took for granted the uniformity of interests among members of the Alliance and appeared to forget in their position of dominance the long history of European dynamism, political philosophy, and style of diplomacy. This heritage was bound to reassert itself, and no one felt this need more than Charles de Gaulle, the President of France. In an attempt to give new stature to his country, one that was suffering from a deep sense of failure and vulnerability after its devastation in both world wars and defeat in Indochina and Algeria, he took France on its own course. As he was unable to bridge the psychological gulf between his country and the United States, he first ordered the removal of all nuclear weapons from French soil, then withdrew the French fleet from the integrated NATO command, and finally in 1966 separated France from the NATO military structure altogether. In a turnabout France began to seek stronger collaboration with the Federal Republic of Germany. De Gaulle wanted France to be perceived by Germany as a more reliable ally than the United States and over time to displace U.S. with French leadership. The deviation from U.S. influence by these two countries was to give Portugal two critical allies in the prosecution of its wars in Africa.

This crack in the bipolar solidarity was not restricted to the West. China developed a far deeper breach with its Soviet neighbor, so much so in fact that forty Soviet divisions faced the Chinese army across the 4,000-mile Sino-Soviet border from 1969 until the Soviet Union in its economic distress unilaterally abandoned the arms race in 1988. The potentially violent and confrontational nature of this breach played into Allied hands and was fully exploited in the U.S. pursuit of its containment policy. Immediately the United States sought to open contacts with China and in February 1972 signed the Shanghai Communiqué formalizing relations with this formerly hostile state.

There were other divergences and crosscurrents in the bipolar concept, and none were more apparent than the behavior of the nonaligned nations. In 1955 a group of Asian, African and European nonaligned and communist countries met in Indonesia at the Bandung Conference and passed a resolution condemning colonialism "in all its manifestations" and declaring that "the subjection of peoples to alien domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and cooperation."[4] This declaration signaled a new offensive against the Western powers and was greatly encouraged by the retreat of Britain and France from Suez in 1956. This retreat not only destroyed the Great Power status of these two and prestaged the wholesale abandonment of their colonies but also left the United States alone outside of Europe to man the ramparts of the Cold War.

This anticolonial momentum was reflected in a further targeting of Portugal, as it increasingly assumed the role of sole colonial power. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) was formed in 1963 with its genesis in the Bandung Conference and held its first meeting in Addis Ababa. It approved a resolution there authorizing armed violence to overthrow existing colonial regimes. In the following year it specifically advocated the expulsion of Portugal from Africa by force, and in 1968 at its Algerian meeting endorsed concrete military support for all liberation movements.[5] This Third World rhetoric gained added legitimacy through its treatment in the United Nations.

Portugal had joined the United Nations in 1955 following a number of vetoes by the Soviet Union, and as if these Soviet rejections were not enough, was immediately made to feel isolated by the international community over its colonies. There had been noisy pressure from a contingent of UN members for Portugal to grant its colonies self-rule. This agitation had been fed by the newly independent states joining the United Nations and by the writings of a number of authors exposing the human abuses in Lisbon policy toward its colonies, most notably the Galvão report. Henrique Galvão, an army captain, was chief inspector of the Colonial Administration and had authored a report in 1947 describing labor conditions in Angola and cautioning against their continuance.[6] In a rather obtuse decision, considering the developing international climate, António de Oliveira Salazar, the Portuguese prime minister, had the report banned and in 1952 arrested Galvão on charges of treason. With this reaction the incident gained international notoriety and fueled the opponents' case. Additionally Portugal refused to submit the periodic technical reports on its colonies

4 David M. Abshire and Michael A. Samuels, *Portuguese Africa, A Handbook* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), 375.

5 Sérgio Augusto Margarido Lima Bacelar, *A Guerra em África 1961–1974: Estratégias Adoptadas pelas Forças Armadas* [The War in Africa 1961–1974: Strategies Adopted by the Armed Forces] (Porto: Liga dos Amigos do Museu Militar do Porto and Universidade Portucalense Infante D. Henrique, 2000), 41.

6 Captain Henrique Galvão, *Report on Native Problems in the Portuguese Colonies* (Lisbon: Ministry of the Colonies, 1947).

that were requested by the United Nations for non-selfgoverning territories. While other colonial powers were unhappy about this requirement, they complied. Portugal managed to attract additional unwanted attention in its refusal. So Portugal, in fighting the highly vocal anticolonial lobby, seemed to play into its hands with these ill-conceived decisions.

Likewise in 1955, a group of UN members advocating colonial independence managed to pass a resolution with the help of the Soviet Union condemning colonialism as a violation of human rights and the UN Charter. In response, Portugal claimed that it had no colonies and that all of its overseas provinces were part of a single state with one constitution. It likewise claimed that the United Nations had neither jurisdiction nor competence in this matter, as it was an internal affair. The issue festered in debate for four years, and finally in December 1960 the UN General Assembly, pushed by this group and the Soviet Union, voted against Portugal. While Portugal was to an extent a victim of its own intransigence, it saw itself as targeted and refused to accept the resolution. Its NATO allies rallied to prevent a catastrophe; however, this support began to fray by 1961.[7] To maintain its position successfully as a colonial power, Portugal would have to become more flexible and imaginative in both its international and domestic approaches to the problem.

By 1961, the Portuguese *ultramar* had become an important and integral part of the country's overall economic health. Its economy by that time had shifted from a partial autarky under orthodox economic practices to a fledgling but rapidly growing industrialized one. The shift away from an agriculturally based economy in both the *metrópole,* or continental Portugal, and the *ultramar* meant that there was a decreasing dependence on peasant labor and its attendant policies. As the *metrópole* developed in this direction, so the first moves were made to foster complementary development in the colonies. Mining, oil exploration and refining, textiles, and cashew processing were in place by 1961, and other basic industries were in the planning stages. These activities reflected a break with the past and a new Salazar policy fueled by colonial promise. Education received renewed and expanded attention, as literate workers with skills were in increasing demand. The paranoia regarding foreign investment had evaporated, and French, German, U.S., Rhodesian, and South African participation in the economy was welcomed. The gathering momentum of the colonial economies continued to accelerate well past 1961 and became a welcome support for the political element in the counterinsurgency campaigns. The colonies were thus developing into substantial economic engines in their own right, and not only were their citizens beginning to benefit individually, but Portugal itself was also reaping substantial rewards from this growing prosperity. The historic potential of the colonies was being realized, a fact that reinforced their long-time importance to Portugal and Salazar's commitment of the nation to their defense.

7 Joaquim Moreira da Silva Cunha, *O Ultramar, a Nação e o "25 de Abril"* [The Overseas Provinces, the Nation and the "25th of April"] (Coimbra: Atlântida Editora, 1977), 13–14.

## Colonial Resistance

At the time when Portugal's colonial commitment was being strengthened, local resistance within its African population was increasing. During this period the democratized European powers in Africa were freeing their colonial possessions in step with the post-World War II trend. This development put increasing pressure on Salazar to move in line with the Western European forms of government and to allow the Portuguese colonies to do so as well. Revolts and the war enabled Salazar to exploit a tide of Portuguese nationalist fervor in preserving the *status quo* and his personal regime, the *Estado Novo* or New State. Consequently, the nationalist resistance and its challenge to his colonial vision had the effect of reinforcing the Portuguese commitment rather than the opposite. While the economy was deemed important, Salazar's personal position of authority was overriding.[8] Further, his hatred and mistrust of communism played an important role. He was mindful of the impotence of the Western powers to contain the economically bankrupt but politically ascendant communism.[9] In a speech to army and naval officers on 6 July 1936, Salazar described communism as "systems of ideals which are literally systems of crime" and was so convinced of the threat of this ideology that he believed "Western civilization is at stake."[10] His worst fears were realized when Daniel Semenovich Solod, the "brilliant organizer and expert in the tactics of infiltration and subversion," was assigned to Guinée in 1960.[11] Ambassador Solod had established an impressive reputation for increasing Soviet influence in the Middle East and North Africa, and now began to work on the Portuguese colonies and to nurture their long-standing dissident undercurrent of nationalism.

The nationalist movements and their military wings of insurgents that challenged Portuguese ownership of its colonies had their origins in the 1930s. The emergence of modern-day black opposition to Portuguese rule began with the repressive practices of Salazar's *Estado Novo* toward any form of dissent, particularly political. This attitude extended from the *metrópole* to the colonies. Resistance began slowly, as there was a practical barrier to any such opposition in the ethnic and social fragmentation of the overseas non-white community. Without strong leadership there would be

8 W. Gervase Clarence-Smith, *The Third Portuguese Empire 1825–1975: A Study in Economic Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 193. Internal and external pressures to democratize Portugal and put it in step with Western Europe had increased since World War II, and Salazar's rule had become tenuous in the late 1950s.

9 Hugh Kay, *Salazar and Modern Portugal* (London: Eyre and Spottswoode, 1970), 69, 133. The author argues that even in England communism had become "the rallying cry of the revolutionary instincts of our age" and had done so "by power of words, by sheer bluff, perhaps by the voluptuousness of contrast." It was largely the success of communist "evangelism" that made Salazar so suspicious of it.

10 Salazar quoted in Ibid., 133.

11 Ibid., 238.

no nationalist movement able to gain the necessary momentum in reconciling these divergent viewpoints and crystallizing resistance to the Salazar regime. Local African grievances were long-standing and had come to the fore during the early twentieth century with the influx of white settlers and abusive labor practices. This indigenous resentment was publicly evident in 1932 when an independent Mozambican newspaper, *O Brado Africano* (The African Cry) slipped through Salazar's censorship and published a scathing editorial titled "Enough." Thereafter this feeling was never far below the surface, and the apparent calm was illusory.

Following World War II, nationalist sentiments grew among the *mestiços* (mixed-race peoples) and *assimilados* (mostly *mestiços* who were legally assimilated into Portuguese culture). However, these groups were largely urban and thus did not represent the greater population. As they were located in cities, they were in a hostile environment for two reasons: the majority of their opponents, the white population, lived in cities, and the national police or PIDE (*Polícia Internacional de Defesa do Estado*, or International Police for Defense of the State) operated most effectively there. Consequently, they were either short-lived or dormant.[12] By 1956 the young Marxists of the Angolan Communist Party contributed to the formation of the MPLA (*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*, or Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola). The MPLA developed roots among the urban and largely radical intellectuals of Luanda, among its slum dwellers, and to a lesser extent, eastward from the capital among the Mbundu, the second largest ethnolinguistic group in Angola, and the Chokwe people. These urban roots were composed largely of *mestiços*, who controlled the party. The movement had little in common with the rural peasants of the east and south of Angola and made little effort to gain their true devotion. In December 1956 the initial MPLA manifesto was openly published in a direct frontal assault on the government. Predictably the PIDE reacted adversely, and a number of the MPLA leaders were forced to flee into exile. From 1957 onward PIDE action was so successful "that the nationalists were not able to maintain more than the most rudimentary organization inside the colonies and could not communicate with those cells that did exist."[13] The parties were forced to conduct their affairs from neighboring states and were deeply influenced by their foreign connections.

The presidential election in May 1958 gave all of Portugal some opportunity to express its dissatisfaction with the *status quo*. Elections under the Salazar regime as a rule were perfunctory, colorless, cosmetic affairs with foreseeable results. In 1958, however, General Humberto Delgado's high-profile and emotionally charged challenge to Salazar's candidate, Admiral Américo Tomás, excited all of Portugal. This

12 John A. Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution, Vol. I, The Anatomy of an Explosion (1950–1962)* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1969), 347–351. Marcum lists some fifty-nine groups affecting Angola alone beginning in the 1940s and either merging with one another or vanishing by 1962.

13 Malyn Newitt, *Portugal in Africa: The Last Hundred Years* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1981), 190.

taste of partial suffrage awakened dissatisfaction within the *mestiços* and *assimilados*, and a number of small parties were formed in Angola, only to be shattered through arrests in March, May, and July of 1959. As the PIDE systematically wrecked the MPLA organization, it became progressively weaker and isolated from its leadership that was now abroad. In this deteriorating position it supported an uprising in February 1961 that stood no chance of a lasting success. It was doomed to be transient, for it occurred in Luanda, center of Portuguese police and military strength, and the MPLA had no constituency or bases elsewhere among the rural population.

The MPLA in exile established itself initially in Léopoldville and aligned itself not only with other independent African nations and their socialist philosophy but also with the communist bloc, including the Italian and French communist parties. The leadership was consequently familiar with the communist theory in wars of national liberation and organized itself accordingly. The MPLA found that it was in competition with the other prominent Angolan nationalist group at the time, the UPA (*Uniao das Populações de Angola*, or Union of Angolan Peoples), for acceptance as the leading representative of the Angolan people. In 1962 the MPLA formed its military wing, EPLA (*Exército Popular de Libertação de Angola*, or Popular Army for the Liberation of Angola), to project its influence into Angola. This nascent force numbered between 250 and 300 young men who had undergone military training in Ghana and Morocco. The EPLA sought to expand the conflict across the northern border of Angola with this force and penetrate the entire country, publicizing the MPLA manifesto. Recruiting proved to be difficult because of ethnic rivalries, and military action was thwarted by the competing UPA. The UPA through its influence with the Congo leadership forced the MPLA to leave Léopoldville in 1963 and reestablish itself in Brazzaville, from which it was difficult to conduct a campaign across an unenthusiastic third country and into a now distant Angola. As a result northern Angola proved to be barren for the MPLA, and it was not until 1966, with the opening of its second front from Zambia, that some success would come. The most consequential development from the Portuguese perspective was the capture in July 1963 of various 35mm films that described the MPLA military doctrine of revolutionary warfare. It paralleled the Maoist creed by reiterating that the movement was a people's war and that the struggle would be protracted.[14] The first priority would be indoctrination and organization of the masses, and next the establishment of rural

14 Willem S. van der Waals, *Portugal's War in Angola 1961–1974* (Rivonia: Ashanti Publishing, 1993), 103. Neto is quoted: "If the enemy presently possesses more forces than we do, and this is so, then it is correct that we should prepare for a protracted war. The misconception that we should be able to execute a war of rapid decisions should be removed once and for all." See also Alpoim Calvão, "Guerra Revolucionária e Guerra Subversiva" [Revolutionary War and Subversive War], *Anais do Clube Militar Naval* (October-December 1967): 713-720.

bases and resistance areas.[15] This pseudo-nationalistic doctrine was flawed in that the MPLA had little in common with the larger population of Angola. Nevertheless, it would serve the MPLA until 1974, and as we shall see in future chapters, the Portuguese correctly anticipated the weakness of this approach.

The UPA was formed by Barros Nekaka in the mid-1950s from a number of small groups with conflicting goals. In 1958, he passed leadership to his nephew Holden Roberto. UPA strength rested in the rural populations of the Bakongo ethnolinguistic region of Angola. These people straddled the border area that reached into the Belgian Congo, Angola, Cabinda and the French Congo, the footprint of the ancient Kongo kingdom. Roberto unequivocally held the view that not just a "Bakongo kingdom" or some other entity but all of Angola must be freed. An ardent anticolonialist, Roberto had been born in Angola but had lived his adult life in the Belgian Congo. He had been educated in the Baptist Church missionaries and employed in the Belgian colonial economy as an accountant between 1941 and 1949. Northern Angola was an area that had become more politically aware in the 1950s through white settlement, Baptist missionary influence, and an easy access to the developing political activities of the Belgian Congo. Roberto thus felt a close kinship with the peoples immediately across the border. The UPA was able to develop a following there because of the relatively open frontier, and this loyal cadre became the basis for the uprising in March 1961. Portuguese presence in this area took the form of *chefes do posto* (heads of posts) and administrators, as opposed to PIDE, and these officials were so sparse that it was physically impossible for them to maintain anything but the most casual control over their districts.[16]

While Roberto was relatively well educated, he was a member of the Bakongo ethnolinguistic group, was not a *mestiço*, and consequently did not share the more European cultural perspective of the MPLA. He was also tribally oriented in contrast to the non-tribal declarations of the MPLA. As a result, the personality and leadership philosophy of the UPA contrasted clearly with the MPLA and its sophisticated *mestiço* leadership, which was left-wing, intellectual, and acculturalatively Portuguese. Funding and support also glaringly contrasted, the MPLA actually being linked with the Eastern bloc. The UPA received financial support from the American Committee on Africa and from various African governments, preponderantly that of

15 Região Militar de Angola, *Supintrep No. 19: Guerra Revolucionária* [Supplemental Intelligence Report No 19: Revolutionary War], July 1963, Luanda, quoted in van der Waals, 103.

16 Douglas L. Wheeler and René Pélissier, *Angola* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1971), 167. The authors cite as an example the Congo district in 1960. For its 37,000 square miles it had fourteen *concelhos* (basic urban or semi-urban administrative unit) or *circunscrições* (basic rural administrative division) and thirty-seven posts, for an average of 725 square miles per administrative division. This presence would hardly be effective in controlling a frontier, as the posts would be dozens of miles apart. Large numbers of people could and did cross undetected.

Léopoldville.[17] Accordingly they were never able to resolve their differences and join forces effectively.

When the Belgian Congo became independent on 30 June 1960, its new government began to give Roberto practical assistance, including permission to establish a radio station and a training camp within its borders. This sanctuary was an important facet of UPA operations in its early years. Roberto had witnessed the long series of Congolese crises that had begun with the violent political rioting on 4 January 1959 and had led to the accelerated Belgian push toward Congo self-government and independence in eighteen months. By December 1960, he believed that just as the Belgians had quickly grown weary of armed conflict, so would the Portuguese when it was initiated. He consequently used his Congo sanctuary and the porous common border to set the stage for an end to relative colonial tranquility for Portugal.

The UPA formed its military wing, the ELNA (*Exército de Libertação Nacional de Angola*, or Army of National Liberation of Angola), in June 1961 after the March attacks did not achieve a Portuguese withdrawal. Roberto was its commander-in-chief and its other two leaders were Portuguese Army deserters, Marcos Xavier Kassanga, its chief of staff in Léopoldville, and João Batista, its operational commander in Angola with headquarters near Bembe. This leadership was ineffective. The "fiery-tongued" Roberto was so autocratic that he would accept little more than arms and money.[18] Indeed, he appeared hard, introverted, and even sinister from behind his apparently ever-present sunglasses, which he seemed to wear even in dark rooms and on cloudy days.[19] Without training, the ELNA "set a demoralizing example of politico-military incompetence and indiscipline."[20] The South African Defence Force vice-consul in Luanda, Brigadier Willem S. van der Waals, noted that the ELNA "involved itself in military activities in the narrowest sense…but avoided contact with the Portuguese security forces as far as possible."[21] Van der Waals further argues that in the traditional exercise of the informational lever of national power, Portuguese propaganda and social work among the refugees returning to Angola after the March 1961 attacks persuaded most of these displaced people to move into controlled settlements or

17 Hélio Felgas, "Angola e a Evolução Política dos Territórios Vizinhos" [Angola and the Political Evolution of the Neighboring Territories], *Revista Militar* (December 1965): 706.

18 Shola Adenekan, "Holden Roberto," *The New Black Magazine*, 22 October 2007, http://www.thenewblackmagazine.com/view.aspx?index=1042 (accessed 23 March 2009).

19 Ibid.

20 van der Waals, 96.

21 Ibid., 97. The author argues that Portuguese propaganda and social work among the refugees in Angola persuaded most of these displaced people to move into controlled settlements. This development deprived ELNA of popular support. ELNA had concentrated on military action in a human desert and on preventing MPLA infiltration. It had neglected to indoctrinate, organize, and win recruits among refugees returning to Angola and thus missed an opportunity to undermine Portuguese authority. Consequently no ELNA internal political infrastructure was established in Angola. Portugal gained the upper hand and maintained superior momentum until 1974.

*aldeamentos*. This development deprived the ELNA of popular support, and its military action consequently occurred in a human desert. It was thus unable to proselytize the population, as in a classic insurgency, and as an alternative focused on preventing competitive MPLA infiltration. It had also neglected to indoctrinate, organize, and win recruits among refugees in the Congo returning to Angola and had thus missed an important opportunity to undermine Portuguese authority. There was accordingly no ELNA internal political infrastructure in Angola. Portugal gained the upper hand and dominated the human terrain until 1974 in a classic example of successful informational warfare with civil support and population proselytizing.

ELNA training was so poor that despite its expansion to about 6,200 troops, their deportment at such camps as Kinkuzu in the Congo was cause for alarm.[22] Andreas Shipango, South West Africa Peoples Organization representative in Léopoldville, made an appraisal during a 1963 visit: "With representatives from a number of other liberation movements, I visited Holden Roberto's training camps near the Angolan border with a view to sending our young men there. But the atmosphere in Roberto's training camps was very bad, and I could not recommend such a course."[23] Roberto had only a weak military program unsupported by political indoctrination, and indeed there was no talk of winning the population to the UPA point of view, which was simply that Angola should be an independent country with Roberto as head of state. The approach was arrogant and naïve and, as it proved, totally ineffective.

This lack of direction caused great rifts in the UPA leadership. Despite the UPA reorganization in March 1962 at the behest of Mobutu Sese Seko, president of the Republic of the Congo, to include additional groups, to rename itself FNLA (*Frente Nacional de Libertção de Angola*, or National Front for the Liberation of Angola), and to establish a government in exile named GRAE (*Governo da República de Angola no Exílio*, or Government of the Republic of Angola in Exile), little of substance was accomplished. A frustrated Jonas Savimbi, Roberto's "foreign minister" and an Ovimbundu, formally broke with the UPA/FNLA in July 1964, labeling Roberto a "corrupt racist," and eventually formed the third nationalist movement in Angola, UNITA (*União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola*, or the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola). Savimbi had publically announced his break at the 1964 Organization of African States (OAU, now the African Union or AU) meeting in Cairo, Egypt, and alleged that Roberto had set up a "commercial empire in the Congo" and that FNLA administrators were "wage earners and profiteers who enriched themselves on the money of New York financial circles and other international organizations."[24] Within two years, Savimbi had built his meagre 12-man force into a sizeable army, gaining popularity and support as the only leader to work within the country alongside his men in battle against the Portuguese. "Leaders must fight

22 Neil Bruce, "Portugal's African Wars," *Conflict Studies*, №34 (March 1973): 22.
23 Sue Armstrong, *In Search of Freedom* (Gibraltar: Ashanti Publishing, 1989), 71.
24 Adenekan.

alongside the people and not stay abroad, sending 'second-class' fighters to face the Portuguese," Savimbi proclaimed as he denounced Roberto.[25] While Roberto was renowned for his aloofness, the bearded Savimbi mixed often and easily with ordinary people as well as his military. The next year Alexandre Taty, "minister of armaments," after challenging Roberto in an unsuccessful coup, defected to the Portuguese in Cabinda with a substantial number of his followers.

Indeed, Roberto seemed more interested in his personal power than in a war of national liberation, and according to U.S. intelligence sources, was "subservient" to Mobutu, who protected him from internal challenges to his leadership.[26] As the Portuguese weekly *Expresso* observed in 1974, "The FNLA is Holden Roberto and Holden Roberto belongs to Mobutu, to whom he is connected by an umbilical cord."[27] Mobutu was playing both ends against the middle in loudly proclaiming his support for the FNLA while discretely cultivating good relations with Portugal, for like Zambia, the Congo depended on the Benguela Railway (*Caminho de Ferro de Benguela* or CFB), which carried more than half of its foreign trade. There were also dissident elements in Angola that, if unleashed in cross-border operations, could make considerable trouble for him. Consequently he kept a tight control over the FNLA activities both within the Congo and without. He provided just enough political and material support to give it international credibility and to provide the Congo with a stake in Angola should the Portuguese eventually leave.[28] As for Roberto, after 1966 he started a property business in Léopoldville and was often seen driving a shiny black Mercedes-Benz about the city, just as Savimbi had predicted. He clearly became less interested in running a nationalist movement and, according to U.S. intelligence, had not set foot inside Angola since 1956.[29] As Henry Kissinger observed at the time, "The strength of the FNLA continues to suffer from Holden's refusal to move from Zaïre (the Congo) to Angola to take direct control of FNLA activities."[30] Indeed, Roberto spoke French and English far better than Portuguese.[31] CIA Luanda station chief at the time, Robert Hultslander, wrote later that, "This organization was led by corrupt, unprincipled men who represented the very worst of radical black African racism…. It was a squalid spectacle: a corrupt leader dancing to the tune of a foreign master."[32] As for his troops, they have been described as "underfed, ragged, and villainous,"

25 Ibid.
26 Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 239.
27 *Expresso* (Lisbon), 17 September 1974, 18.
28 Gleijeses, 238.
29 Alex Vines, "Holden Roberto," *The Independent* (London), 8 August 2007, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/holden-roberto-460658.hmtl (accessed 23 March 2009).
30 Ibid. Mobutu renamed the Congo in 1971 as Zaïre.
31 Adenekan.
32 Gleijeses, 238.

and were hardly a credible army.[33] The Portuguese, it seems, had little to fear from Roberto and his organization after the March 1961 attacks.

John Marcum described the situation as it existed in 1963: "Whether by the inaction or heavy hand of shortsighted leadership, one opportunity after another was lost, one potential source of support after another was alienated."[34] The political crosscurrents within the UPA/FNLA, the lack of training for ELNA cadres, and major competition from MPLA and UNITA activities reduced the UPA/FNLA to a spent force within two years of initiating the conflict. Roberto followed no sophisticated guerrilla creed other than the initiation of violence in the hope that the Portuguese would become weary with it and capitulate. The approach was amateurish and ineffective alongside that of PAIGC (*Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde*, or African Party for the Independence of Guiné and Cape Verde) and the work of its founder, Amílcar Cabral.

Aside from Angola, there were nationalist movements associated with Guiné and Mozambique that prior to the events of 1961 were hoping to negotiate concessions with the Portuguese on self-determination. In Guiné efforts by local nationalists to organize began in the early 1950s. The PAIGC was founded in September 1956 by local *assimilados* and educated Cape Verdeans. Its initial political organization prompted an aggrieved dockworkers' strike on 3 August 1959, which ended in a violent disaster when it was broken with excessive military force. Fifty workers were killed, and the incident became known as the "Pidjiguiti dock massacre." PAIGC leadership quickly realized that peaceful protest would not achieve its objective of self-rule and independence. Accordingly, it shifted its strategy to one of clandestinely organizing the rural population for an insurgency.[35] The PAIGC had learned hard lessons in 1959 well ahead of the MPLA and UPA/FNLA experiences of 1961, and had shifted its approach. It was not prepared to begin guerrilla war in Guiné until January 1963, when all of the elements for success were in place, including firm sanctuaries in adjacent countries.

The driving force behind the PAIGC was Amílcar Cabral, who was born in Guiné of Cape Verdean parents. Cabral was an agronomist by profession, having been educated in Lisbon, served the Portuguese administration in Guiné (1952–1955), and worked for various agricultural institutions in the *metrópole* (1955–1959) with research trips to Angola. His political awareness came at an early age and matured during his academic time in Lisbon. While influenced by Marxist-Leninist ideas of the time, Cabral was primarily a nationalist and developed his own variant of both the PAIGC political message and its associated military dimension. In his own words: "It is good [for all nationalist movements] to remember…that regardless of how similar are their

33 Ibid, 295.
34 John A. Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution, Vol. II, Exile Politics and Guerrilla Warfare (1962–1976)* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978), 113.
35 Patrick Chabal, *Amílcar Cabral* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 56–57.

struggles and their enemies to one another, national liberation and social revolution cannot be exported. They are…the products of local and national forces. While somewhat influenced by external factors, they are largely determined and tempered by the particular culture of a country's people and its unique local characteristics."[36] It was in this context that Cabral began to prepare the political landscape for guerrilla warfare.

Following his experience in the Pidjiguiti dock demonstration, Cabral realized that the Portuguese would not negotiate and that an armed struggle was the only way to achieve PAIGC ends. Cabral had received no known military training and had little interest in such affairs prior to 1959. It is possible that he had some such exposure during his visit to China in 1960, and certainly Chinese influence was seen in the training of his guerrilla army. It was known that elements of PAIGC also underwent courses in guerrilla warfare and subversion in Algeria, Russia, and Czechoslovakia.[37] Notwithstanding this lack of military experience, the mantle of undisputed commander and tactician fitted him well, and his imagination and flexibility were evident in the conduct of his campaign.

Cabral became quite attuned to the requirement for population indoctrination and keenly aware of the need to bridge the gap between the urban intellectual and the traditional Guinean. His two-year preparation of the political battlefield was classic in its effort to draw the population together in a common ideology that would transcend tribal and ethnic divisions. His investigation into local grievances was the most thorough of any of the nationalist movements. Cabral faced a difficult task in convincing the population that they were being oppressed. The land, for instance, already belonged to the peasants and was generally village property. Guiné had no concentration of foreign settlers who were seemingly exploiting the population. In Cabral's own words: "We were not able to mobilize the people by telling them: 'The land to him that works it.' Because here land is not lacking. … We were never able to mobilize the people on a basis of the struggle against colonialism. This yielded nothing. To speak of the struggle against imperialism yielded nothing between us. … This proved the necessity of having each peasant find his own formula to mobilize for the fight."[38] He thus sought to couch his revolutionary message in terms that would address the daily concerns of the rural population: "Remember always that the people do not fight for ideas, for things that only exist in the heads of individuals. The people fight and they accept the necessary sacrifices. But they do it in order to gain material advantages, to live in peace and to improve their lives, to experience progress, and to

36 Amílcar Cabral, *Guiné-Bissau–Nação Africana Forjada na Luta* [Guiné-Bissau–African Nation Forged in Struggle] (Lisbon: Publicações Nova Auora, 1974), 39.

37 Hélio Felgas, *Os Movimentos Terroristas* [The Terrorist Movements] (Lisbon: Privately printed, 1966), 57.

38 Amílcar Cabral, *Textos Políticos* [Political Texts] (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1974), 19–20.