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THE OUTLOOK FOR RETENTION  
OF US AZORES BASE RIGHTS  
IN THE EVENT OF CERTAIN  
COURSES OF US ACTION

Submitted by the  
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

*The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.*

Concurred in by the  
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

*on 27 June 1961. Concurring were The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Intelligence), Department of the Navy; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF; the Director for Intelligence, Joint Staff; the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, Special Operations; and the Director of the National Security Agency. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the USIB, and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.*

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# THE OUTLOOK FOR RETENTION OF US AZORES BASE RIGHTS IN THE EVENT OF CERTAIN COURSES OF US ACTION

## THE PROBLEM

To estimate the short-term outlook for US base rights in the Azores if the US continues to exert pressure on Portugal to institute reforms leading towards self-determination for its African territories and to cooperate with the UN.

## THE ESTIMATE

1. As the time approaches for renegotiation of US military base rights in the Azores, which expire 31 December 1962, Portugal is beset by many difficulties and is becoming increasingly isolated internationally. The rebellion in Angola continues unchecked, marked by unusual cruelty on both sides. Portuguese policies in Africa are under attack in the UN, and the US is applying pressure on a reluctant Salazar to implement reforms rapidly. Because Salazar appears unwilling to respond constructively to these pressures the differences between the US and Portugal could come to a head at any time—perhaps even before the renegotiation question arises. Much will depend on the developing situation in Angola and on the stability of the other Portuguese territories.

2. Salazar's reaction to two US votes in the UN critical of Portugal and to several US demarches on the subject of his African policies has been one of pained disapproval. He apparently feels not only that the US is gravely misguided in endorsing African aspirations for self-determination, but that it has misbehaved as an ally by failing to support actively the Portuguese position. His regime permitted noisy anti-US demonstrations to occur in Lisbon, Luanda, and other cities in March on the occasion of our first

vote of disapproval in the UN. Since then, however, and especially as the Angolense situation has worsened, official and popular criticism of the US has been somewhat muted.

3. Salazar apparently now recognizes more fully than in the past the gravity of the Portuguese situation. He has publicly admitted that social progress has not been advanced as fast as it might have been in the overseas territories and has stated that some reforms might be forthcoming soon. He has taken personal command of the Defense Ministry and is sending to Angola Portugal's most effective civilian and military officials. However, Salazar sincerely believes that self-determination for the Africans at this time or within the foreseeable future would be catastrophic for the West as well as for Portugal. Moreover, his personal indisposition toward taking vigorous action in any direction and the anachronistic character of his government probably preclude the institution of any significant reforms in the near future.

4. During the dry season (June-October) there is a chance that the Portuguese could re-establish a reasonable degree of public order in the disturbed area of northern Angola. Should this happen, and if no further outbreaks of rebellion occurred in Portuguese

territories during this period, it might permit Salazar to announce revisions in his overseas policies sufficient to relax tensions between Portugal and the US and to open the way for negotiations. However, Salazar would probably attempt to secure from the US at least an implicit commitment to abstain from publicly criticizing his policies in the African territories.

5. It is almost certain, however, that the situation in Portuguese Africa will worsen within the next year. We believe that Portugal will be faced with continuing and growing disorders in Angola, the northern sector of which is now almost completely under rebel control, and that revolt could erupt in Portuguese Guinea at any time. The Portuguese military establishment would be severely strained by any such combination of revolts, and might soon lose control of all but the principal towns and communication lines in Angola, and all but the port areas in Guinea.

6. In this circumstance of continuing deterioration the chances that the US could secure a satisfactory renewal of the five-year agreement on the bases by negotiation, while maintaining its position with respect to colonial reforms, would be poor. Salazar would probably attach political conditions requiring a revision of US policy toward the African territories. In the meantime, should US actions be interpreted by Salazar as giving active encouragement to the rebels, the chances would be about even that he would denounce the existing treaty and demand US evacuation before the present rights had expired. However, until the designated withdrawal deadline was reached, the Portuguese would probably not significantly hamper US operations.

7. A much more delicate situation would arise if the US should be faced with a serious international crisis, e.g., exacerbation of the Berlin problem this fall. Salazar would probably be constrained from attempting to force the US to evacuate during the height of such a crisis by his basic pro-Western orientation,

by pressure from the UK, France, West Germany, and other NATO allies, and by apprehension lest the US stay on after being ordered out. However, Salazar would regard our increased need for the Azores facilities as strengthening his bargaining position vis-a-vis the US.

8. Thus, he would probably seek to drive a bargain with the US whereby renewal of the Azores base agreement was made dependent on provision of some measure of US support for the Portuguese position in Africa. Should the US prove unresponsive, Salazar's position would harden. He might, depending on the seriousness of the breach that had developed between the two countries, require the US to leave the Azores when the international crisis had passed. However, he might temper such an expulsion order by attempting to negotiate a new arrangement for the bases with another ally, presumably the UK.

9. Although the Salazar regime appears in no serious danger at the moment and the dictator appears to be in good health, it is possible that he will be replaced in office before renegotiation of the Azores agreement. Considerable opposition to the rigidly conservative policies of his regime has developed in recent months and is bound to increase if the situation in Africa deteriorates. As yet, the opposition is leaderless and Salazar's secret police is likely to keep it that way. However, there is some slight chance that Portuguese military officers, who are already apprehensive of fighting a colonial war on more than one front, may organize to remove Salazar and that they could succeed in so doing.

10. A successor military regime would be no less anxious than Salazar's to retain the African territories, but would probably act on colonial reforms with greater vigor and effect. For this reason, and because of its probable desire for US and other Western acceptance, it might prove more tractable in negotiating with the US over the retention of the Azores bases.