

SUPPLEMENT TO THE REPORT BY AMILCAR CABRAL

"...we are, after all, the anonymous soldiers of the United Nations, because we are fighting and dying for the principles which the United Nations upholds. We are fighting in the defense of human rights, of our people's right and for humanity."

GIL FERNANDES
Representative of the P.A.I.G.C.
Testimony to the General Assembly
of the United Nations, Nov. 30, 1971

The events of the past six months underscore the increasing internationalization of the conflict in Guinea-Bissau. The war which once involved only a tiny group of local Africans fighting with little more than their immense courage against no less than a thousand ill-trained but better armed Portuguese troops has now reached a stage which involves most of the major powers in the world.

On December 9, 1971, the United States entered into an agreement with Portugal which legally formalized the presence of the United States in the Azores. (The United States had been occupying the Azores base since 1943 - the last nine years without formal agreement.)

The new agreement was of little surprise, but the enormity of the American offer removes any doubts about U.S. "neutrality" in the conflict and puts the United States clearly into Portugal's corner. Portugal entered the negotiations with perhaps the weakest bargaining position of any country which houses NATO and/or American bases:

- Portugal had been unsuccessful in raising international loans and Prime Minister Caetano told the Portuguese nation that they were in for some more belt-tightening. (1)

- For some time studies by the U.S. Government had been showing the decreasing importance of the Azores to both American and NATO needs. (2)

1. See speech of Marcello Caetano at the opening of the National Assembly - 2nd December, 1970.

2. The amount of U.S. military air traffic using the Azores facilities dropped from 80% in 1962 to 20% in 1968. Congressional Record, 88th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 13994.

- Portugal could hardly afford the departure of the 3,500 servicemen and dependents who annually pumped \$12 million into the Azorian economy. (3)

By refusing NATO use of the base Portugal would be abandoning her only major contribution to the NATO Alliance.

Following the new agreement of 9 December, 1971, the United States has advanced to Portugal \$436,000,000 in loans, gifts and credits which include:

- \$400 million of Export-Import Bank financing for Portuguese development projects;
- \$30 million in PL 480 agricultural commodities;
- Free use of a hydrographic ship;
- \$5 million or more gratis for "non-military excess equipment";
- \$1 million for educational development.

In exchange, Portugal will allow the United States use of the Azores until February 3, 1974.

The relative size of the American offer can be seen by comparing the \$436 million with the annual Portuguese Defense Budget of \$400 million, most of which goes to support the colonial wars. The total amount of Export-Import Bank loans which the U.S. extended to all of Africa between 1946-1970 amounted to only \$358 million or \$42 million less than Portugal is to receive in the agreement.

Finally, the Portuguese annual trade deficit of some \$500 million, a large portion of which is directly attributable to the cost of the colonial wars. This means that the new U.S. assistance would enable Portugal to pursue her costly wars in Africa without having to face up to the realities of her increasingly more desperate economic situation.

If there remained any doubts that U.S. assistance carried political commitments as well, they were removed by Portuguese Prime Minister Caetano in a broadcast to the Nation on December 16, 1971, when he stated that "the treaty is a political act in which the solidarity of interests between the two countries is recognized and it is in the name of that solidarity that we put an instrument of action at the disposal of our American friends..." He further added that there should "...be on the part of the United States a cooperative attitude in the resolution of the problems of our economic and social life". There can be no question among American or Portuguese officials as to what constitutes Portugal's major economic and social problem!

3. *New York Times*, 9 December, 1971.

During his recent visit to the United States, Gil Fernandes of the P.A.I.G.C. told *UFAHAMU* (January 4, 1972) that the Azores agreement's principal effect will be the prolongation of the war. He regretted that the U.S., rather than attempting to use its leverage to encourage Portugal to negotiate an end to the war, has chosen instead to indirectly encourage Portugal to resolve the conflict on the battle-field. Amilcar Cabral once again stated that the P.A.I.G.C. did not seek American aid but would be most grateful if the U.S. "simply stopped aiding the other side... then, we can finish up our struggle".

Prior to the signing of the Azores treaty, Amilcar Cabral visited Finland, the United Kingdom and the USSR in October, 1971 to solicit support for the P.A.I.G.C. He reaffirmed in his speeches that the P.A.I.G.C. controls two-thirds of the country and has set up the basic institutions of a state. He also noted that although they have the means to attack and destroy the capital of Bissau and Bafata (the second largest city), he would rather have such destruction stopped.

While in London Cabral made a significant gesture aimed at achieving a negotiated settlement. He asserted that the P.A.I.G.C. is willing to negotiate with the Portuguese on the question of Independence for Guinea-Bissau separately from that of the Cape Verde Islands (The Times of London, 26 October 1971). While in Los Angeles Fernandez reiterated this same theme when, in discussing the timing of the independence of Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands, he noted that even identical twins are not born at the same moment.

There have always been those in the councils of government in Lisbon who have lamented the package demand for independence for both Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde and would have preferred the question of Independence for Guinea-Bissau to be negotiated separately. It now remains to be seen if the new P.A.I.G.C. gesture will encourage these men to speak out and try to change Portuguese policy. If they lack the courage or do not succeed it can only mean that both sides will continue to suffer the scars of war, and the world will continue to witness the spectacle of the calculated repression by the imperialist powers of a tiny country numbering less than one million people determined to win their freedom and independence.