

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: April 14, 1966

SUBJECT: Brazilian Interest in Africa

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador Pio Correa, Secretary General, Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
Ambassador Leitao da Cunha, Ambassador of Brazil to the United States.

Joseph Palmer 2nd, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs.

COPIES TO: J. Wayne Fredericks, Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs.

Jack B. Kubisch, Country Director, Brazil Affairs.

Lambert Heyniger, Officer in Charge, Portuguese Territories.

COPIES TO: AF - 2 AFC WE UNP ARA Amembassy, Rio de Janeiro

Ambassador Pio Correa called on Mr. Palmer on April 14 during the course of his visit to Washington for discussions with US officials on a number of subjects. After an exchange of amenities, Ambassador Pio Correa said that Brazil wanted to begin to play a more active role in world affairs, including Africa. He noted that while many independent African nations have economies which are still rather closely tied to their former metropolises, he believed Brazil has an excellent chance of establishing good economic relations with Portuguese Africa, particularly as the Government of Portugal is now "less difficult" than before with regard to economic ties and financial arrangements between itself, its territories and foreign countries. Generally critical of the British (and US) handling of the Southern Rhodesian problem, Pio Correa also said that Brazil is interested in establishing better economic relations with South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, and that he did not at all like the recent UN Security Council Resolution regarding deliveries of oil by tanker at Beira in Portuguese Mozambique. The Secretary General said that the present situation was not one which warranted the use of Chapter VII mandatory sanctions, as there was at present no threat to international peace. He said the Resolution violated the principle of freedom of the seas and that he was "shocked" that it had been approved. Pio Correa reiterated that Brazil is interested in developing markets in Southern Africa and does not wish to have to deal with blockades or embargoes in this area. Further, he said that the West presently has a bulwark in Southern Africa and that it might be a good thing to see this position maintained.

Mr. Palmer responded

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Mr. Palmer responded that US policy with regard to the principle of self-determination is closely tied to American history, and that the US is deeply committed to this principle as well as that of government by the consent of the governed. He observed that evolution toward genuine self-determination in Southern Africa presented the greatest potential bulwark against Communist penetration in this area. Mr. Palmer pointed out that the Southern Rhodesia problem is a very important one for the UK, not least as a challenge to the UK's prestige. The independent nations of Africa too were very much concerned with the current situation in Southern Rhodesia. Mr. Palmer noted that the Security Council Resolution was not generally directed against Portugal, but was rather designed to meet a specific situation at the port of Beira and is rather narrowly focused on this particular problem.

Ambassador Pio Correa interjected that he could not accept this statement. Since the port of Beira and the territory of Mozambique were parts of Portugal, it was the same as if the Security Council had directed a resolution against traffic in the Tagus River. Mr. Palmer, continuing, said that the resolution, nevertheless, attempted to limit itself to the present situation at Beira. He said that, to the extent that anyone could encourage the Portuguese Government to take a more responsive attitude toward the UK oil embargo of Southern Rhodesia, all interested parties would benefit. With regard to trade with South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, economic markets depend on stability and stability in turn will depend on what steps are taken toward government by the consent of the governed. Mr. Palmer suggested that Ambassador Pio Correa discuss this question with the Portuguese, encouraging them toward greater measures of self-government in Portuguese Africa with a view toward eventual self-determination.

Ambassador Pio Correa observed that the Brazilian Government would be having talks with Portuguese officials in Rio de Janeiro beginning April 25 and invited the US to send representatives to participate in these talks. Mr. Palmer said that we would be happy to consider the suggestion. He continued that it is important both to the Africans and to the US that peaceful solutions be sought to current problems in Southern Africa. He pointed out that recent developments in other parts of Africa have been very favorable to Western interests, but that Southern Rhodesia represents a real threat to this favorable trend.

Ambassador Pio Correa stated that while there has been some trouble in Portuguese Guinea, there is no unrest now in Angola or Mozambique and the Portuguese are not "sitting on the heads" of the Africans. He said that when an exercise of self-

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determination might be held, the Africans might decide to maintain their present relationship with Portugal. In any case, independent African nations will probably remain non-aligned between East and West, and this must be kept in mind in dealing with them. Mr. Palmer questioned this, observing that, although technically non-aligned, Libya and Ethiopia, for example, provided the US with important strategic facilities and most of the rest of Africa was more non-aligned on our side than on the other.

Mr. Fredericks said that he wanted to emphasize Mr. Palmer's concern with the serious and difficult situation in Southern Rhodesia. While this problem was essentially an internal one for the UK and the British Commonwealth, there were serious dangers to Western interests in the independent African states should it not prove possible for the UK to reassert its authority in Southern Rhodesia. Fredericks also emphasized Pio Correa's earlier remark concerning the strategic importance of the West African land mass to the security of South America.

Ambassador Pio Correa then raised the possibility that Portugal might be in a good position to act as a mediator between the UK and Southern Rhodesia because of its own long-term interest in this part of Africa. He again suggested that the US participate in the forthcoming talks between the Brazilians and the Portuguese in Rio. Finally, he said he regretted that the conversation had taken such a somber tone, but that he was deeply concerned over the recent Security Council Resolution and, in fact, somewhat surprised that the US had supported this resolution without prior consultation with Brazil.

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