

MEMOIRS OF A MOULD REMOVING
DIPLOMAT

BRAZILIAN FOREIGN POLICY STORIES
FROM 1948 TO DATE

Translated by Vera Lúcia Mello Joscelyne

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS



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OVIDIO DE ANDRADE MELO

RETIRED AMBASSADOR

Memoirs of a Mould Removing Diplomat

Brazilian Foreign Policy stories from 1948 to date



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*I dedicate this book to Ivory, my
companion for the past sixty years. And
to all Brazilian diplomats who also try
to remove mould in order to thoroughly
air our foreign policy. For foreign policy
depends on the people and therefore
needs to be very well aired.*



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Foreword

Celso Amorim

Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs

To introduce Ambassador Ovídio de Andrade Melo's memoirs has a special significance for me, both professionally and personally. Our friendship began in London in 1969 when I was under his guidance in my first post abroad.

With a critical intelligence and a humanist vision, Ovidio is not only one of our most lucid diplomats - he is also totally committed to our country. He and other members of his generation, such as Paulo Nogueira Batista and Ítalo Zappa, taught me lessons of patriotism and courage.

Ovidio Melo occupied important positions at the Itamaraty. He headed the United Nations Division, and he was Chief of Staff to Ambassador Sergio Corrêa da Costa when he was Secretary General of Foreign Affairs. In this position he was involved in the decision not to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which at the time was regarded by the non-nuclear countries as discriminatory. He also took part in negotiating the Tlatelolco Treaty, which eventually made Latin America and the Caribbean a zone free of nuclear weapons. As Consul General in London he gave great support to expatriate Brazilians, and he was particularly concerned with those exiled - or self-exiled - by the régime de exception prevailing at the time.

At the end of 1974 he was invited by Foreign Minister Antonio Azeredo da Silveira and by the Head of the Department of Africa, Asia and Oceania, his friend and fellow-townsmen Italo Zappa, to represent Brazil to the

transitional government that would lead Angola to independence. When he moved to the African continent, Ovidio de Andrade Melo became a protagonist in one of the most interesting and important moments in the history of our recent foreign policy: our recognition of Angolan independence before any other country in the world. The intention behind the gesture was to close the history of ambiguity towards the maintenance of the Portuguese colonial regime, and thus begin a new chapter in Brazil's relationship with Africa. The decision was a gesture of great autonomy and daring of our diplomacy.

Ovidio stayed in Luanda for most of 1975, a year marked by civil war among the three local forces (MPLA, FNLA and UNITA) that were contending by force of arms for political hegemony. Present at the festivities in which the Angolan people hoisted the flag of an independent country for the first time, the Brazilian Representative conveyed to the new leaders the message that Brazil wished to establish bilateral relations immediately, and create a permanent diplomatic representation in Angola.

In view of the circumstances prevailing in our national politics at that time, Ovidio did not receive the credit he deserved for the daring and courage of his mission - and even for the obedience with which he followed his instructions from Brasilia. It is true that before retiring he was appointed ambassador in Bangkok and Kingston, but he would only reach the rank of First Class Minister - the top of the diplomatic tree - when democratic government was restored in Brazil. As Ovidio himself is proud of saying, he was the first diplomat promoted to the rank of Ambassador by the New Republic.

On a visit I paid to Luanda in 2003 João Bernardo Miranda, the Angolan Foreign Minister, told me of the impact caused by Brazil's pioneering recognition. The news provoked great enthusiasm among the new leaders, contributing directly to the consolidation of the government of the MPLA - Agostinho Neto's movement that had prevailed in Luanda. Our fearless attitude accredited Brazil as a special interlocutor for the Angolans, and inaugurated a friendship that exists to this day. Aware of the importance of recognition by the Special Representative, President Lula paid homage to Ovidio Melo when he gave his name to the Brazil-Angola Cultural Centre.

In "Memoirs of a Mould Removing Diplomat" Ovidio Melo gives us an honest account - rather uncommon in diplomatic biographies - of the episodes that marked his career. He obviously pays most attention to the adventure of the recognition of the Angolan Independence, but does not stop there. He is

still concerned with the evolution of international relations, and above all with Brazil's place in the world.

This book is a valuable contribution by the Institute of Research in International Relations and by the Alexandre de Gusmão Foundation to the preservation and diffusion of Brazilian diplomatic history. With generosity and wit, the author describes intricacies of diplomatic routine as well as important moments of our foreign policy. More than anything else, the publication of Ambassador Ovidio de Andrade Melo's memoirs is an acknowledgment that foreign policy is made by men who are able to overcome prejudices and see beyond the barriers of convention.

Celso Amorim
Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs



Introduction

This book deals mostly with the recognition of Angola's independence by the Brazilian government in 1975, and with the mission I was carrying out at the time in Luanda, the Angolan capital. Since - without any false modesty - I was closely involved in that historic decision, I think it will be helpful if I tell the reader something about myself as a typical middle-class Brazilian who became a combative diplomat, always ready to oppose abuses and impositions that might be damaging to Brazil on the world stage.

I was born in 1925, just within the first quarter of the 20th century, in the valley of the Paraíba River, also called the Valley of Coffee. In this small town, called Barra do Pirai, I befriended many old black people, former slaves who had been freed from the farms of the region. In my own family - considered white but certainly carrying some mixed blood in its veins - and in the company of many friends who had always been proud of their African origin, I soon learned to be grateful to Angola, a country that lost a large proportion of its population while providing Brazil with forced labour and culture. At primary school in my home town, I much admired the historical figure of Tiradentes¹ and abhorred Mad Maria, the Portuguese queen who had ordered him to be

¹ TN Joaquim José da Silva Xavier, (1746-1792) also known as Tiradentes was the leader of the first organized movement against Portuguese rule in Brazil in 1789. His martyrdom made him a national hero.

hanged and quartered. In my studies of history, my favourite subject, I never resigned myself to the fact that Emperor Dom Pedro I paid his father, King John of Portugal, three million pounds sterling for recognising Brazilian independence, even after his theatrical gesture on the banks of the Ipiranga River had been confirmed by armed struggle in the state of Bahia. Most importantly, I was never an admirer of Pedro II: on the throne for 58 years, he increased the value of his property in Petropolis with the proceeds of the sale of noble titles to the Paraíba Valley farmers, thus tolerating slavery and helping Brazil to earn the title of "the last Western country to abolish slavery".

As for the role I played in major diplomatic issues - some very complex, some actually dangerous - it prepared me for the difficulties and risks I faced in Angola in that year of 1975. The disastrous Treaty of Alvor led to the concentration in Luanda of military formations of the three guerrilla movements contending for the national government: the MPLA, the FNLA and UNITA. The constant proximity in which these forces began to coexist led to almost continuous skirmishes and battles, for independence had been promised for the forthcoming 11th of November, and time was short. With that treaty the Portuguese made the armed struggle between the parties more intense rather than less, at a time when - under its provisions - they should have been peacefully drawing up a constitution for the new country.

When countries go to war, whether declared or not, diplomats are often the first to leave - or are soon formally exchanged between the countries involved in the conflict. In Angola the opposite happened. Precisely because the war was foreseeable and imminent, the Itamaraty², having spent such a long time supporting the Portuguese colonialists' greed and ignoring the aspirations of the Angolan people, urgently needed to have a representative in Luanda in order to get to know the three guerrilla movements better and to plan future relations. Brazil had adopted a neutral position: its policy could be illustrated by Machado de Assis³ well-known phrase "to the victor, the potatoes" - meaning that whichever of the three contending parties won the war would be recognized as the future Angolan government. Moreover, we could presume that the presence of a

² TN – A term commonly used to refer to the Brazilian Foreign Office, as the French Foreign Ministry is called the Quai d'Orsay. It is the name of the palace in Rio that originally housed the Ministry and also of its new home in Brasília.

³ TN – Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis (1839-1908) – a novelist, poet and short-story writer – is widely regarded as Brazil's most important writer. The sentence comes from his novel *Quincas Borba* (1891).

Brazilian representative in Luanda would contribute to putting pressure on Portugal to keep its promise to free Angola within a fixed period of time. As this promise had been made by representatives of the Carnation Revolution, and revolutions can change direction unexpectedly and even go back on previous commitments, this pressure was of paramount importance.

I gladly agreed to serve in Angola, even though besides the foreseeable risks of the war I could also sense an extra one. Brazil claimed to be neutral, impartial, and ready to accept the final victory of any of the three guerrilla movements fighting in Luanda. But it was evident from the outset that if Agostinho Neto's MPLA - supported, among other countries, by the USSR - were to come out on top, the United States and several European countries would not recognize Angolan independence. If that happened, then right-wing parties in Brazil, the media in general, pro-Portuguese Brazilians and pro-Salazar Portuguese living in Brazil would do everything they could - ranging from the plausible to the absurd - to prevent Brazil from recognizing the new country. And if after independence Angola were not recognized by Brazil, our foreign policy - towards the whole of Africa, not just the Portuguese-speaking African countries - would be a total fiasco.

The only thing that could not be foreseen was the possible disagreements between the Brazilian President and his Army Minister. They were both military men, one had been appointed by the other, they served the same dictatorship and presumably had the same tastes and criteria.

Throughout the history of diplomacy, from the time when General Charles Martel overthrew Frankish kings simply by calling them "layabouts", whenever the King and the Army disagreed for serious or trivial reasons the sovereign's ambassadors or diplomats - very wise people - took the side of the Army, which is after all the bone marrow of the State. When it came to recognising Angola, fortunately, Brazilian diplomats went the other way. The Itamaraty stood by the King - by President Geisel, that is - and thus risked its neck by opposing the Army Minister. The risk only subsided when the Minister was finally defeated for having tried to overthrow the President in 1978, alleging in an open manifesto to the population that by recognising Angola President Geisel was leading Brazil towards communism.

So in view of all I did in my career before Angola and during that year of war I spent in Luanda, I may claim for myself the alias that appears in the title of this book. An illustrious colleague of mine who became Foreign Minister modestly entitled his autobiography "MEMOIRS OF A FOREIGN OFFICE

EMPLOYEE". I, who never reached such heights in the hierarchy, will be even more modest: I shall call these memories of my career successes and failures "MEMOIRS OF A MOULD REMOVING DIPLOMAT".

For the Brazilian Foreign Office, like all ancient institutions, generates and accumulates mould - and this mould, often a nuisance, must be understood here as excessive bureaucracy, the exaggerated love of tradition, aristocratic prejudices and old-fashioned ideas that still hinder the formulation of the country's foreign policy. It may be the subservient attitudes that Brazil still maintained for sentimental reasons towards its former colonial power when I was still working, and particularly during the dictatorship. Or it may be a sub-product of that inferiority complex that made us knuckle under when facing the impositions of the imperialist powers. These powers are now demoralized or enfeebled, and any type of submission is absurd. Brazil is now beginning to capitalize not only on her independence, quite ancient but so far hardly used, but also on her maturity and the importance now attached to her by the great nations of the world.

Here I must also emphasize the deep respect and gratitude I feel for the Baron of Rio Branco, whose unique talent for collecting maps and historical and geographical facts and much hard work throughout his life enabled him - totally alone - to solve all the border problems that the Empire had neglected or that had defeated it. No matter how some Brazilian diplomats may wish to share in so much glory, the Itamaraty will never be able to claim for itself even a tiny part of the Baron's great accomplishment in negotiating Brazil's borders.

In his other activity as a diplomat, when he created the smart Chancellery that imitated the British Foreign Office or the French Quai d'Orsay, the Baron had a political purpose that could very well be shared by today's Itamaraty. He wanted to make real foreign policy, distancing Brazil from its submission to British imperialism, already quite weakened. He wanted to shake off the lethargy of the foreign policy that the Republic had inherited from the Empire. When he did this, the baron was also removing mould from the republic. Every now and then even strong and intimidating Empires come to an end. And the Baron's policies were good because as external pressures become weaker, various degrees of disobedience and defiance, fitting and tolerable though they may be, simply become necessary.

I now begin the account of the early days of my diplomatic career, when I did not yet know that everything I did of any value would only serve as a sort of imperfect training for the immense difficulties I was later to face in Luanda.

Part 1

Where I Came From When I Joined the Foreign Office

I was born in 1925 in Barra do Pirai, a small town in the State of Rio de Janeiro that had been a village until it became a town by decree under the Republic. Because of this it had no aristocratic pretensions, nor had it become rich and beautiful under the Empire like its neighbours in the Valley of Coffee. The railway reached this village at the mouth of the Pirai River in 1864. From then on, with its station and its large railway depot, the village started to attract freed or even fugitive slaves because it had enough jobs to offer them as brakemen or mechanical stokers, and as layers of sleepers and rails as the construction of railways expanded into other regions.

The railway also attracted a few foreigners from countries that were already industrialized. This labour was essential because throughout the period of slavery, free Brazilians did not do manual work – and after abolition, the freed Negroes could not have been familiar with mechanics. The village gradually became the home of an extremely varied population, and also an important junction and transshipment hub between the lines connecting Rio de Janeiro to São Paulo and Minas Gerais. The village developed quickly, since after

Abolition it attracted large groups of Italian, Portuguese, Arab and Jewish immigrants who chose to make their home inland because they feared epidemics in the city of Rio de Janeiro. While the decline of coffee depressed the economy and almost brought life in other towns in the Paraíba valley to a halt, Barra do Pirai – with its shops and its developing industries along the railway – prospered. While the populations of neighbouring towns merely survived, pining for their prosperous past, the people who lived in Barra do Pirai had an air of satisfaction with the present and confidence in the future. I believe I soaked up all this optimism as a child, becoming an entrepreneurial young man as a result.

Perhaps this is why I succeeded, at the age of twenty-two and on my second attempt, in passing the extremely difficult entry exams for the diplomatic career, and I began the training course at the Institute Rio Branco. I was not quite sure what a diplomat did, but I chose the profession because I wanted to travel the world with my pretty girlfriend Ivony, also from Barra do Pirai, to whom I am still married. Now, after sixty years of marriage and forty years of diplomatic pilgrimage, we feel that though we did indeed gain much experience and culture from all this travelling, we also missed the simple life and the closeness with our good friends back in our home town.

A First Initiative, Still During the Training Course

In the early days of the course, being very proud of coming of age and achieving financial independence (I had supported myself from the age of eighteen), I had to take an initiative that certainly went against the diplomatic grain, but was useful for all my colleagues and future candidates for the diplomatic life throughout the country. The Itamaraty was used to dealing with wealthy and important people, and it was a great follower of tradition – so when it created the Institute Rio Branco, it never considered the possibility of scholarships for its students. It seemed to believe that any candidates who actually passed the exams would be able to support themselves, with the help of their own or their family's fortune, for the two years of the course. I destroyed this unfounded belief by presenting two documents to the Institute, which I made a point of calling "certificates of no means". In these the Mayor and the Bishop of Barra do Pirai stated that the new IRB student, a resident of the town, did not have the necessary means to keep himself and study in Rio de Janeiro; that he was of age and did not

wish to be supported by his family, and he therefore needed a grant to enable him to continue his studies.

From then on, the Institute began to grant scholarships – initially to students from other parts of the country, and later even to those who already lived in Rio de Janeiro. Only then did the diplomatic career become not just theoretically possible but actually feasible for ordinary Brazilians from any corner of the country. This was the first bit of mould I removed from the Itamaraty. It was a good start.

In my professional capacity as a diplomat I have lived in Toronto, Lima, Kobe, Washington, Buenos Aires, Algiers, London, Luanda, Bangkok and Kingston. In the last two posts I was also accredited to neighbouring countries: to Malaysia and Singapore when in Bangkok, to the Bahamas, Belize, Antigua and Barbados when in Kingston. Counting all our moves over four decades, my family and I lived in 21 different houses, some of them in quite bad conditions as they were located in countries such as Algeria and Angola that had just been through or were still going through the wars of independence. As well as living in ultramodern, comfortable capitals and cities, I also served in less peaceful posts, not much sought-after by diplomats but of temporary interest to Brazil.

My first posting abroad was to the freezing temperatures of Toronto, accompanied by my wife and our daughter of six months. The work was easy and routine in the tiny, sleepy Consulate, created only to satisfy the needs of the Canadian Light and Power Company that operated in Brazil. In Toronto I learned that public lighting and transport can be managed magnificently by the province, or even by the municipality. In Brazil, while our tramcars were falling to bits and we often had no electricity even in the capital, the Light and Power Company insisted that only a private company could provide those services efficiently. To generate more power, the Canadian company had asked the Brazilian government for a loan to fund the construction of a new dam on the Paraíba River. This dam, coincidentally built in my home town, changed the previously torrential Paraíba into a set of parallel canals full of dirty water (genuine sewers), which are there to this day.

Immediately after my arrival in Toronto I dealt with an issue that I had come across in the Communications Department of the Itamaraty. Ever since the days of the Baron, the Itamaraty had only two types of correspondence with its missions abroad: the official letters received, and the so-called dispatches that it sent. Both were extremely formal and punctilious, and always

started with “I have the honour of making it known to Your Excellency” and ended with various types of respectful treatment such as “I take this opportunity to renew my wishes of consideration and respect for Your Excellency and remain your obedient servant, Yours very truly”, etc.

Smelling strongly of the 19th century, this type of correspondence could only be avoided if the topic to be dealt with was clearly urgent and demanded a telegram. But because telegrams were expensive and budgets tight, the extent of the urgency was always a matter for discussion – and no diplomat likes to be accused of reckless spending. There was no happy medium between the two types of correspondence until a diplomat known for his bureaucratic geniality, ambassador Mauricio Nabuco, invented a new type of correspondence, the so called letter-telegram. In this new type of message, possibly originating from the US, the sender abandoned the official old-fashioned formulae and dealt with the main subject straight away. The formal wishes at the end were also dispensed with, and all that was needed was the sender’s signature.

The letter-telegram then became the standard medium for correspondence between the Itamaraty and the legations. Because they were not supposed to be longer than two pages, letters took less time to write. But unfortunately they took just as long to deliver. If the matter was not confidential, the letter was sent by normal air mail. If it was, it had to wait for the next diplomatic bag – which was also sent by air mail.

But that was not the worst thing. When it arrived at the Itamaraty, a copy of the letter-telegram had to be made for each of the divisions to which it was addressed. Sometimes it also had to be copied to other divisions that might have an interest in the matter, so more time was wasted on discussing addressees. And of course, these copies had to be made by typewriter with ten or twelve carbon copies, because xerox machines were not available in Brazil at the time.

Having worked at the Communications Division of the Itamaraty, I had been in charge of proof-reading the letter-telegrams for some time – and I could not come to terms with the stupid task I had been given: managing a battalion of typists, proof-reading all the copies they had typed, and occasionally getting them to do the work all over again. As soon as I arrived in Toronto, I sought out a company that made the forerunners of Xerox photocopiers. With the new machine, the sender of the letter-telegram typed one copy on ordinary paper for his own file, and another copy on a special

paper, a kind of negative. This was sent to the addressee, who would then use the same type of machine to make as many copies as were needed. I officially communicated my “discovery” to the Itamaraty, and soon after that, photocopiers were bought – and the letter-telegram procedure was totally mechanized.

I was praised by the Itamaraty for my functional zeal, and I thought I was going to share in Ambassador Mauricio Nabuco’s glory as the inventor of the letter-telegram – but not long after that, the worldwide use of photocopiers, telex machines and computers, all in rapid succession, totally destroyed my hopes of becoming famous.

In my second post, in Lima, Peru, we found a very lively embassy, a very likeable ambassador who soon became a friend, and a beautiful country with a fascinating history – but ruled at the time by a caricature Latin American military dictatorship, something that only became familiar to us in Brazil much later.

Two Initiatives I Took In Japan

When I took over the Consulate General in Kobe, southern Japan, the town still bore the marks of wartime bombing. The only reason it had been saved from total destruction is that the war finished when it did, as it was supposed to be the target for the next atomic bomb after Nagasaki. It was the Itamaraty’s third-largest collector of fees after the Consulates General in New York and Hamburg, because Japanese immigration to Brazil was intense at the time, numbering some ten thousand people a year. Whenever a ship full of immigrants was due to sail to Brazil, which happened twice a month, the work at the Consulate became very strenuous – and we often worked through the night, certifying documents and issuing permanent visas.

Immigrants were recruited by the Japanese government among small farmers in the south of Japan and Okinawa, and those selected then came to the Immigrants’ House in Kobe, run by a Japanese diplomat. There they stayed for a fortnight, having Portuguese lessons and learning a bit about Brazil and our “exotic” costumes. Two or three days before embarkation the Brazilian Consul, accompanied by an interpreter, visited the hostel and exchanged a few very friendly but superficial words with each of the visa applicants. To me this visit seemed to be a mere formality, with no serious content – just a way to pretend that Brazil was also doing the selecting. One

day I decided to break with tradition and asked the candidates a single perfectly pertinent question that never had occurred to any of my predecessors. I asked how much they had paid the Japanese-Brazilian society - a private organisation that acted as a kind of mediator between the Immigrants' House and the Consulate General - for being issued with what was known as the Letter of Call (Carta de Chamada), in other words the work contract necessary to obtain a permanent visa. The answers to my question were astonishing. Depending on the size of the immigrant family, they had paid very substantial sums - sometimes thousands of dollars. This suggested that some members of the Society, who owned large or small farms in Brazil, were making a lucrative business out of the procedure by issuing numerous work contracts, even more than the size of their farms would justify. Trying to prevent, or at least reduce, the society's greedy exploitation of poor would-be emigrants, the Consulate General placed several ads in the local papers. These notified the general public that the specific intermediation of the Nipo-Brazilian society was not always necessary, that Brazil did not limit Japanese immigration to farmers, that technicians and professionals of all kinds were also welcome in Brazil, and that the Consulate General could help candidates for emigration to find employment in Brazil totally free of charge. In the ads, to make sure candidates did not think the Consulate was exploiting immigrants, I made a point of emphasizing that the cost of a permanent visa was just five dollars. This at least safeguarded the position of Brazil in an emigration system with its origins in 1908, which the Japanese government - perhaps out of love of tradition - had no interest in reforming or simplifying.

The ads, however, did not produce the desired results. In fact, from the very beginning, Japan conducted all the selection of immigrants. This ensured that only unemployed or extremely poor labourers would be exported, the empty stomachs that the State was not willing to fill. And Brazil still only imported labour to work on the land, just as the Empire had done with European immigration when Senator Vergueiro, a prominent large farmer, conducted experiments to try to put an end to slavery.

After so many decades I still have an indelible memory from this period of ships full of immigrants sailing for Brazil, around five hundred people every fortnight. As soon as the travellers had embarked, they exchanged paper streamers with their friends, relations and bystanders standing on the quay and waving them goodbye. Various authorities from the Kobe Municipality, from the Immigrants' House and from the Brazilian Consulate General were

present at this ceremony. A band played traditional Japanese songs, interspersed with some Italian songs with lyrics that spoke of lovers' goodbyes, sad songs for the crowd to sing along with. The streamers continued to be exchanged, from top to bottom and vice versa, until they formed a sort of awning sloping between the deck rail and the quay. Suddenly the ship gave a long blast on its horn, and the band began to play the beautiful Japanese national anthem to announce its imminent departure. The tugboats began to pull the ship away and it slowly left the quay. The streamers were gradually torn, and this was like a metaphor for the immigrants' anguish as they left their homeland, perhaps for ever. In the end, the sadness of the travellers and the crowd also affected the dignitaries who were present at the ceremony. That emotive farewell made it difficult to hold back a discreet tear.

Another matter that attracted my attention in Kobe was Brazil's acquisition of several oil-tankers from a single Japanese shipyard. The tankers were paid for with huge monthly instalments that began when the contract was signed. But as construction work would only start a year later, because there was a production queue at the shipyard, the vessels had been paid for in full even before their keels had been laid. Brazil was practically paying in advance.

Buyers of identical vessels from other Japanese shipyards – Greek millionaire ship-owner Aristotle Onassis, for example – also paid in instalments: one when the contract was signed, one while waiting for construction to start, one when it had begun. But in shocking contrast to Brazil's practice, these instalments never totalled more than thirty per cent of the total value of the order. Only when the vessel came into service did they begin to pay the remaining seventy per cent, in small instalments that were funded by profits from the tanker's operations. Now that's what I call payment by instalments.

In view of the payment system – totally unusual in Japan – that Brazil had suggested, or perhaps merely accepted, the shipyard that built the oil-tankers for us had been excluded from any type of credit financing by the Japanese Export Bank. This had been clearly reported in all the main Japanese newspapers a few years earlier, on the grounds that the company did not need any subsidies or credit from the Japanese government because it was totally financed by Brazil.

I advised the Itamaraty of all this, and succeeded in creating a general uproar that went as high as the Presidency – then held by Juscelino Kubitschek. As far as I know, the way the tankers were paid for was not altered in any way. My initiative was apparently not entirely without effect, however: a month

later, for no apparent reason, the government shortened the period for which diplomats could be posted permanently abroad once they had been away from Brazil for more than five years. This strange measure affected only two diplomats, myself and a friend of mine then serving in Paraguay, and we had to return to the State Secretariat. My friend had asked to be transferred because he was tired of Assunción – but as for me, it was with great sadness that I said goodbye to Japan and to the many friends I had made there in less than two years.

In Japan, when I tried to make minor changes to how immigrants were selected or oil-tankers paid for, I was interfering with old, very mouldy systems – at first without suspecting that they may have involved corruption. So though I wanted to be the remover, in the end I was the one to be removed.

Back In Brazil for a While, Reviewing the Roboré Agreements That Had Shaken the Relationship Between the Itamaraty And Sectors Of The Armed Forces.

Back in Brazil I was appointed to work in the Political Division, and a few months later in a so-called Commission of Agreements with Bolivia, created specifically to try to amend a delicate situation in which Itamaraty had had some disagreements with the supposedly “nationalist” sectors of the armed forces. These disagreements had to do with the treaties of Roboré, negotiated with Bolivia the previous year. In order to be consistent in its actions, that section of the Army that strongly defended the Petrobras monopoly of oil exploration on Brazilian territory could not accept that the company should weaken its patriotic position by going to explore for oil on foreign territory, especially in neighbouring countries. In addition, other “nationalist” army officers, some very bitter, did not agree with the minor border adjustments agreed in the Roboré treaties to correct provisions of the treaties about borders that did not correspond to geographical facts. These had been due to deficient knowledge of the inaccessible regions between the two countries at the beginning of the 20th century, at the time of the Baron of Rio Branco, when Brazil and Bolivia signed the Treaty of Petropolis.

Acting in the Commission of Agreements with Bolivia I had to visit the frontier several times, trying to find solutions to the problems of smuggling or violations of treaties that provided for the free transit on Brazilian territory of goods bought by Bolivia. I managed to solve some of these problems, but by no means all of them. The work was sometimes dangerous, even life-threatening – and it often required the Army’s cooperation.

It is worth mentioning two cases that could have had serious effects on relations with Bolivia, but were satisfactorily resolved. In the first, the Chief Inspector of Customs and Excise in Corumbá ended up in prison, and for a long time, convicted of several murders and of smuggling. One item of contraband was a very valuable herd of Indian zebu cattle, which the Ministry of Agriculture believed to be possible carriers of an Asiatic bovine plague that was a serious threat to Brazilian cattle-raising activity. The herd, which Bolivia valued at one third of her entire annual budget, did indeed enter Brazil – and so far, touch wood, there has been no sign of the plague.

The second episode related to the seizure, and subsequent judicial auction in Guajara Mirim, of the equipment of a meat packing plant that had been brought to Brazilian territory on its way to Bolivia, triggering protests by the Bolivian government. Considering this a violation of the Treaty of Petropolis, the Itamaraty sent me to Guajara Mirim to investigate the matter. After a week of arduous and dangerous investigation, I discovered that there had been serious irregularities in the seizure and auction of the plant. Coming back to Rio de Janeiro with the evidence I had obtained, I managed to persuade the Rio de Janeiro Court of Justice - that had jurisdiction over Territories⁴ - to ask the Army to seize the plant for a second time, but this time in order to place it safe and sound and for good on the other bank of the Guapore river, on Bolivian soil, in the hands of its legitimate buyer.

Still at the State Secretariat, I was chosen to be the Itamaraty's representative on a course held by the Higher Institute for Brazilian Studies (ISEB). My thesis at the end of the course examined Japanese immigration to Brazil, concluding that it was beneficial to our country. This was contrary to widespread opinion at the time, under the influence of poisonous US propaganda about the so-called "yellow peril" after Pearl Harbour.

Many years later I saw *High Noon*, in which Gary Cooper plays the sheriff of a village infested with bandits, with an honest population completely intimidated by them and therefore defenceless. And this brought back some of my worst adventures on the Brazilian border, in the Itamaraty's service, guaranteeing the fulfilment of treaties that had been peacefully negotiated by the Baron – and even having to carry a gun.

⁴ TN – Brazil had States and Territories. States had their own Courts of Justice but the Territories were under the jurisdiction of the Rio de Janeiro Court.

My Participation in the Re-Establishment of Relations with the USSR

When I served in Peru, the work was not too strenuous. Over drinks with my friend Coronel Celestino Correia da Costa, then Military Attaché, we made a bet. He said Russian was a language that “adults could not learn”. I found this foolish, and hence the bet. The Colonel would give me a collection of Teach Yourself Russian records, and within a year I would learn sufficient Russian to read a newspaper and to keep up a conversation on a non-specialized topic. At the end of the year I would go before an examining board chosen by us both, and the winner would get five hundred dollars. I won, but as I felt my Russian was far from perfect I decided to be generous and let my friend keep his money.

My reward came many years later. Back in Brazil in late 1959, because I knew Russian, I was included by the Foreign Minister Horácio Lafer in the first trade mission to Moscow since relations had been broken off in 1946, with the objective of re-establishing commercial relations with the USSR. In his final report, the head of the mission, Ambassador Barbosa da Silva, praised my linguistic knowledge: it had been useful to all the Brazilians participating in the mission, at a time when Brazil had no embassy and no interpreters in Moscow. It was clear to me at the time that Brazil should not avoid - or let itself be coerced into avoiding - any form of trade for political reasons, or because of the type of government prevailing in other countries. The Brazilian government’s aversion to communism, however, or its reluctance to displease the United States during the Cold War, was so great that the true objective of the mission was played down by giving the result of extremely detailed and distrustful negotiations a title that was undefined and far too vague. On Brazil’s suggestion, instead of being called a commercial agreement or treaty, the final document was entitled “Terms of Understanding”. In my view the title commercial agreement or treaty would have been much more innocent and indeed accurate. “Terms of Understanding”, on the other hand, covered a vast range of possibilities – it could even have contained full agreement with the USSR about all Cold War issues.

Thus, with a timid first step, we re-established the commercial relations that we had had with Russia since Pedro I – but diplomatic relations with the USSR remained in abeyance during the Kubitschek and Quadros administrations, being restored only under President Jango Goulart.

After diplomatic relations had been re-established I took part in further negotiations with the USSR, this time about more comprehensive commercial exchanges based on a formal and proper Trade Agreement. The head of the Soviet delegation that came to Brazil for these negotiations was Eduard Shevardnadze – subsequently a prominent figure in the perestroika process, and then President of an independent Georgia.

At The Organization of American States (Oas) In Washington - The Cuban Crisis And The Crude Pan-Americanism

In the early months of 1960 I was appointed Secretary to the Brazilian delegation at the OAS in Washington. Fidel Castro was already in power in Cuba, and US relations with the island were beginning to deteriorate rapidly. In meetings of the OAS Council we witnessed the bitter exchange of accusations almost daily, always with the same contenders. I will try and reproduce the scene: on one side the Cuban representative, recently arrived because his predecessor had deserted in exchange for a good job at the CIA, babbled on with serious complaints about acts of sabotage committed the previous day in Havana by putative American agents or exiles from Miami. On the other, representatives of the dictators – Somoza, Trujillo and others – would start to speak almost without waiting for the Cuban to finish. These ambassadors, extremely clever and with some skills in oratory, seemed to have instructions from their superiors to leap into the fray, all guns blazing, in fervent support of the United States. In long, aggressive speeches they accused Fidel Castro of being a communist and of inventing stories to “destroy democracy in the continent”. Only after a long series of insults did the Cuban receive his definitive answer from the American delegate. Cold and laconic, he merely deplored the debate that lasted all morning “about events that, if they did happen, were very probably caused by the opposition Fidel already faced in his own island...” The session was then closed for lunch.

Such debates, repeated ad nauseam, got gradually worse – eventually leading to the abortive invasion of the island at the Bay of Pigs, to Fidel Castro’s angry declaration that yes, he had always been a Marxist-Leninist, to Cuba being bracketed together with the Soviet Union, and ultimately to Cuba’s expulsion from the OAS. This happened after two OAS Meetings of Consultation in Costa Rica and Punta del Este, Uruguay, both of which I attended as a member of the Brazilian delegation.

Throughout this very confused period at the OAS, Brazil's foreign policy seemed to me very balanced and impartial. The Charter of the OAS had not until then provided for the expulsion of a member state because it had adopted a particular form of government. After all, repulsive dictators – Somoza, Trujillo and many others – who always did as the United States told them had always participated in Pan-American conviviality without triggering protests.

In conversation with the Foreign Minister, Santiago Dantas, at the Punta del Este conference after Cuba's expulsion, I expressed a wish to serve at the embassy in Buenos Aires. He asked me why I was in such a hurry to leave the OAS. I answered that after Cuba's expulsion, the OAS would be cataleptic for many years, and – with a certain flippancy that still remained from my youth – I predicted that a military coup d'état in Argentina would soon remove Arturo Frondizi from the Casa Rosada. The Minister seemed slightly alarmed by this, perhaps because he may have worried about President Goulart's stability. Soon after this, however, the coup d'état in Argentina that I had predicted actually took place, and I was recalled from my holiday in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais to be urgently transferred to Buenos Aires. I was told to travel immediately, and my instructions were to serve in the political sector of the Embassy.

Some time later I heard why my transfer had been so hurriedly organized. On the eve of the coup the Brazilian Embassy in Buenos Aires had apparently sent a short message to Itamaraty stating that "Frondizi was more secure in office than ever, and there would be no coup."

In Argentina: Perpetual Peronism

In the first two years in my new post I insistently advised Itamaraty – utilizing coherent arguments instead of prophecy – that the problem with a democratic recovery in Argentina at the time was that in any free and honest election, PERÓN, OR WHOEVER HE NAMED AS HIS CANDIDATE, WOULD WIN by a substantial margin over any competitor. This prediction was very obvious, and many other observers made it too – both at that time and later, throughout the years and successive military dictatorships. For Peronism has proved to be very long-lasting: the Kirchners, an amiable couple of Peronists, still govern Argentina today, while the main opposition is another faction of the same Peronist party.

The Trade and Development Conference: Preparatory Steps in Brazil

In early 1963 I was assigned to assist the Minister of Planning, Celso Furtado, at a meeting of CEPAL (the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) to be held at Mar del Plata in Argentina in preparation for the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). At the meeting, noticing that many of the Latin American countries were not very familiar with the vital trade issues to be dealt with in the UNCTAD conference, I suggested the UN should organize a seminar to brief underdeveloped countries throughout the world on the very important issues involved. The Brazilian government liked the idea very much, and suggested the seminar should be held in Brasilia. This was unanimously approved at Mar del Plata.

Still in 1963 I was called to the Itamaraty by Ambassador Jaime de Azevedo Rodrigues, then Head of the Economic Department, to look after the creation of a new Trade Policies Division in that Department, specifically designed to help in the organization of the forthcoming conference. I then spent two months in Rio de Janeiro, without my family, planning and setting up the new Division. Finally I went back to Buenos Aires, where my family had stayed since my daughters were at school there. To return to Rio for two years to head the new Division would have been impossible, for I had not saved enough money to supplement the lower salaries diplomats receive when serving at home. My best bet was to forget my interest in the Trade and Development Conference and go back to my post in Buenos Aires before somebody else grabbed it.

But even in the later part of 1963 it was difficult to foresee what was about to happen in Brazil. The unforeseen military coup was launched three months after I returned to my post in Argentina. After the initial purge of five diplomats, among them my friends Jaime de Azevedo Rodrigues and Antônio Houaiss, Itamaraty conducted an inquiry by correspondence that was answered by approximately forty Brazilian diplomats around the world. I was also investigated on this occasion, but apparently acquitted – for they let me stay in my job and in my post. In the new circumstances of a dictatorship in Brazil, the Ambassador thought it would be more convenient to transfer me from the political to the economic sector of the Embassy – and I agreed that it would be wise.

The Wheat Treaty and How Difficult It Was For Brazil to Earn Its Daily Bread

It was, however, in the economic sector of the Embassy that I feel I made better use of the time I spent in Buenos Aires. There I achieved something that may still be important today for commercial relations between Brazil and Argentina. The basis of the exchange between the two countries - as I soon found out - was the Wheat Treaty, a document from the first years of the decade that had been automatically renewed a few times without amendment. And I discovered that it was hopeless: crippled by its gaps, standing on one leg and totally unbalanced. Under its draconian terms, Brazil was forced to buy a minimum of one million tons of Argentinian wheat every year. But it forgot to mention, as any treaty of that kind should do, that the Argentinian grain sold to Brazil needed to be of good quality, and to cost less – or at least no more – than wheat from any other source.

Moreover it did not require Argentina always to have the grain available to sell to Brazil every year. If by any chance the harvest was poor, or if it found other buyers offering a better price, it would simply leave Brazil without bread. Not that it would be easy – or even possible – to find a buyer prepared to pay a higher price, because the Argentinian wheat sold to Brazil cost much more than wheat from any other country.

But even more absurd, this Argentinian wheat bought by Brazil in Buenos Aires cost much more than the same Argentinian wheat quoted and bought at the wheat market in Rotterdam. Holland is much farther from Brazil than Argentina. If we bought the wheat in Holland, we would obviously have to take freight costs into account. Would transportation from Holland be much more expensive? Amazing though it may seem, the answer was no. Bringing the wheat from Europe was actually cheaper! For the Argentinian wheat coming to Brazil from Buenos Aires had its transportation costs subsidised by the buyer's government, i.e. Brazil.

Further questions then became necessary. Did the Treaty say anything about transportation subsidies? Did Brazil grant subsidies only to Brazilian ships? In both cases the answer was no: the Treaty simply did not deal with freight. And Brazil paid subsidies to both the Brazilian and the Argentinian merchant navies. Besides making a high profit on the grain, in other words, Argentina also profited from its transportation. As there was

no rule requiring the freight to be equally distributed, Argentina benefited most because it transported more than half of the wheat coming to Brazil.

The Ambassador, who was about to take his annual leave, was informed of all this. Then, as Chargé d’Affaires, I considered it my duty also to inform the Itamaraty of the situation, because the Wheat Treaty was about to expire and would be renewed automatically. As soon as the Itamaraty became aware of the absurdities of the treaty it called for new negotiations with Argentina, which reluctantly agreed. Unfortunately, in my view, the negotiators who came to Buenos Aires from Rio de Janeiro were rather feeble. They merely amended the Treaty, adding to its first clause the requirement for the tons of Argentinian wheat to be bought by Brazil each year “to be of good quality and to have an internationally competitive price”. It wasn’t much, but it was better than nothing.

Having been deliberately left out of the negotiations, I understood that this small alteration was the most we would get. For behind this issue – the obligatory acquisition of Argentinian wheat – there was a hidden force that was kept quiet because it would cause even greater embarrassment to Brazil. It had all started some time before, with the US decision to sell us their wheat surpluses in exchange for payments in Brazilian currency, according to Public Law 480. Argentina protested vehemently against these North American sales, alleging that this was a form of dumping and that Brazil had been a traditional costumer for Argentinian wheat from time immemorial. Showing how much it valued its relations with Argentina, the US government agreed with Buenos Aires on a scheme under which the US would only sell American wheat to Brazil, to be paid for in Brazilian currency, after Brazil had fulfilled an annual commitment to buy from Buenos Aires as much wheat as Argentina could regularly produce for Brazilian consumption. Argentina then set the amount of wheat that it would sell annually to Brazil, already considered a loyal customer, at a million tons. And this compulsory acquisition, unavoidable if we also wanted to pay for any American wheat in Brazilian currency, became the object of a draconian treaty that obviously allowed no scope for discussions about the quality of the grain or competitive prices. **THAT IS HOW HARD IT WAS FOR BRAZIL TO EARN ITS DAILY BREAD!**

While this was going on with the wheat, Argentina did not buy any coffee from Brazil. It preferred to import Colombian coffee, even though the Brazilian Coffee Institute spent about five million dollars a year on publicity in Buenos Aires.

It is now a matter of public knowledge that under the Goulart administration the Brazilian currency we paid for US wheat went to the US Embassy in Brazil to finance the opposition's state governors and conspiratorial bodies such as the IBAD (Brazilian Institute for Democratic Action) that were to pave the way for the 1964 coup d'état.

When it finally took place, the coup was very successful. After the coup, how could Brazil and Argentina – both under military regimes that counted on American approval – even think of reopening the issue of the wheat, or attempting to modify an agreement that even if not very favourable in economic terms “had produced so many political results for the perfect understanding between the two dictatorships? And for the perfect understanding of the two dictatorships, simultaneously, with the United States?” The agreement therefore became untouchable. It lasted while the two countries remained under military regimes. And Brazil continued to pay through the nose for Argentinian wheat even when the US no longer had grain surpluses to sell for unconvertible currencies. According to Pio Correia, who was Ambassador in Buenos Aires in the late 60s and who defended the Treaty vehemently, “Brazil had to pay a political price to consume Argentinian wheat”.

Algiers: A New Embassy, But Administratively Very Mouldy

In 1965 I was transferred from Buenos Aires to Algiers. I gladly accepted the new post, though I knew it would involve hardship – because not many years before, the country had become independent in a bloody war that was waged mostly in the capital. However, I could not have refused and gone back to the State Secretariat in Brazil, because I still had insufficient resources to supplement the low salary in Brazilian currency I would receive back home.

Soon after my arrival at the new post, President Ben Bela was overthrown by General Boumédiène in a coup d'état that puzzled all the Embassies in Algiers and all the Ministries of Foreign Affairs worldwide because it lacked any clear justification or objectives. I had neither the time nor the inclination to learn more about this enigmatic event, because I was already sure I could not stay in the post. The main reason for this was that the Commissioned Brazilian Ambassador in Algiers regularly deposited in his private bank accounts the considerable sums he received from the Itamaraty for the administration of

the Embassy. This obviously illegal practice had already been denounced in the previous year by a secretary who in fact had agreed to serve in Algiers because of his friendship with the Ambassador. When the Ambassador went on leave, the secretary and friend was made Chargé d’Affaires – but protested loudly on discovering that the Embassy was totally devoid of cash, that it did not even have its own accounts in any local bank.

When it received this accusation, the Administration Department in Brazil was totally bewildered. It did not dare to investigate the Ambassador because, as everyone knew in the Itamaraty, the latter was mui amigo of the dictator General Castelo Branco, with whom he had worked in the ESG (Higher Institute of War). Facing the dilemma of either suing the Ambassador or transferring the whistle-blower, the Administration chose to keep the Ambassador in post and transfer the whistle-blower, replacing him with a regular turnover of secretaries until some time in the future one of them, with a more tolerant character, adapted himself to the new administrative practice that the Head of Mission, the President’s friend, had instituted in Brazilian diplomacy.

As in the meantime, having already served in Washington and Buenos Aires, I had turned up at the Administration Department asking for a third post – the head of the department very shrewdly sent me off to Algiers, emphasizing that “life was very cheap in that city, it was very easy to save money there”.

When I convinced myself that the Embassy was more or less rudderless, I also hesitated. It would have been useless to denounce the Ambassador once more, repeating the accusation of the previous year. It could even be dangerous, as the Administration itself had feared, since the man was a friend of the dictatorship’s Chief Supreme. To confirm and show off this friendship, the Ambassador was anxious to go to Rio de Janeiro and was thinking of taking some leave. And he made no secret of it: on leave he was going to visit his patron, and almost certainly obtain a promotion that would lead to the very top of the career tree.

I then decided to use another tactic, different from a simple accusation but much more effective. When the Ambassador started to pack to go on leave I very calmly told him I would only accept the position of Chargé d’Affaires if the Embassy were transferred to me formally, with all its books in order and up to date, and with the balance of the money received for the previous three months deposited in an official bank account.

The arguments that followed were bitter. I would not give in and abandon my demands. The Ambassador notified the Administration Department of his subordinate's rebellion. The Head of the Department phoned me from Brazil to insist that I should take over the post without any rendering of accounts. As he did not get very far he tried to get me out of the way by offering me other posts, some very tempting indeed. I refused them all, saying that I would only agree to be transferred back to Brazil. And in case the Itamaraty could not pay my fares because I was in Algiers less than a year, I would pay them myself, even if this meant selling my flat in Rio.

Confronted by this deadlock, the Administration finally instructed the Consul General in Barcelona to go to Algiers with two assistants to take over the Embassy, so that the Ambassador could take his leave and I could go back to Brazil. When the Consul General arrived in Algiers, he also felt that he should not take over the Embassy without examining the accounts. Preparing the accounts took a long time, because none of the paperwork was in order. The Embassy did not even own an inventory book, and since it had been created, a couple of years before, approximately ninety thousand dollars of public money – over and above normal funds – had been spent on the fabric of the building. In the end the Ambassador owed the Embassy just over five thousand dollars, a small sum since it covered only what was left over from the previous three months' funds. He had to repay it, and this time the money was deposited in a new bank account opened exclusively for the use of the embassy.

The reason why the investigation had covered only the previous three months is that otherwise it would have taken much longer. When it was over, the Consul General sent the Foreign Minister a telegram informing him that I had been completely right when I refused to take over the Embassy without a formal set of accounts. I was then ready to go back to Brazil, having paid my fare out of my own very limited funds.

As soon as he had paid back just three months' -worth of the money he had embezzled, the Ambassador hastily left for Brazil. Back home he immediately contacted his friend Castelo Branco, who invited him to dine at the President's residence. A few days later, among other confirmed promotions, came the one he had so anxiously awaited: he was made a "full Ambassador", as he pompously proclaimed – though the title of "your foolship" would have been more appropriate for him.

The reason why this whole story - a sort of “downstairs” adventure of Itamaraty that has nothing to do with foreign policy - deserved such a long account here, with all its sordid details, is because it led to a change in the regulations and in the traditions of the House. Since my rebellion in Algiers, no other diplomat anywhere abroad has had to take over the responsibility of being in charge of the post without the right to conduct a prior examination of the accounts of a head of mission he mistrusts, when this head of mission is hurriedly transferred or goes on leave. Nobody is now obliged to be mistaken for an accomplice, or to have his good name mixed up with other people’s misappropriations and embezzlements, because of an informal transmission of responsibility without accounts being rendered. Indeed, since then all heads of all foreign missions have been notified that when they leave their office, even temporarily, they may have to render accounts to a subordinate even if they dislike him or regard him as an enemy. For all these news I would like to think that accounts in every post must now be kept with much greater care and much more neatly. This extremely novel situation that I created brought to an end an age of absolute power of the heads of mission, who had previously acted as if they were absolutist monarchs, anointed by divine right, served by humble courtiers and vassals and with the unquestionable authority to cut their heads off for any lapse of etiquette, or lack of respect towards the sacred sovereign ...

Back in the Itamaraty for a new period in Brazil, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that my firm and fearless attitude with the Ambassador in Algiers, and indirectly with the Administration, had been very much applauded by my colleagues, particularly by those who had been passed over for promotion in favour of the President’s friend. The entire Itamaraty thought he was rather conceited. His surname rhymed with his main defect so behind his back they called him Ambassador Presumption. A commission of three honest and incorruptible ambassadors (Boulitreau, Navarro da Costa and Donatelo Grieco) went to Algiers, examined the Embassy accounts, and even without a long-term investigation concluded in its report that the holder of the post had committed five irregularities, two of which were actually criminal and would justify immediate dismissal. Boulitreau, who had been my boss and friend in Buenos Aires, showed me the report, with its proposals for severe penalties. But apparently conditions in Brazil at the time did not permit the dismissal of a friend of the dictator. Discussions about the matter therefore dragged on for a couple of years, and in the end, still during the long dictatorship, the appointed

criminal was made Ambassador to a very distant country that at the time had no great relevance for Brazil. In that golden exile he remained for more than a decade, fighting with successive secretaries and subordinates who could not stand him, until he eventually reached the age limit and retired.

Heading the United Nations Division. The Struggle Against Portuguese Colonialism At The Un

As for me, after this extremely unpleasant experience during the six-month interregnum in Algiers, I felt rewarded when I was given the post of head of a division regarded as important in Itamaraty because it involved a good deal of travel, and dealt with all the multilateral relations centred at the UN in New York and Geneva: the United Nations Division. The Foreign Minister at the time was Juracy Magalhães, who had become known for enthusiastically proclaiming at various important official events that “what was good for the United States was good for Brazil”. Taking this motto seriously, a necessity if I was to keep my job, I took up my post at the UND trying to coordinate the Brazilian vote with the US vote on the more serious issues that the United Nations dealt with at the time: decolonization, and nuclear disarmament – so far unreachable.

For many years, because it needed bases in the Azores, the United States voted in favour of the Portuguese government even when the rest of the UN membership almost unanimously tried to apply economic sanctions to Portugal for its colonial policies. But it had finally lost patience with Portugal’s obtuse colonialist obstinacy, and at this time had begun to abstain at these annual voting sessions of the General Assembly. The only members that continued to vote in favour of Portugal on that red-hot issue were apartheid South Africa and Brazil. In the end, the only company Brazil had in that annual vote was the worst possible one, particularly in the eyes of African peoples who had plenty of reasons to hate apartheid. Most importantly, the peoples of Africa felt that the arguments we presented at each session to justify our vote against sanctions were a premeditated act, an unforgiveable offense. We claimed that we could not vote against Portugal for sheer sentimental reasons, because Portugal was our grand-dad, our ancestor. In the face of this clumsy excuse the Africans were justifiably infuriated, pointing out that more than half the total population of Brazil were of African origin, and asking whether Brazilian diplomats should not regard Africa as their grandma, a nice ancestral old lady.

For all these reasons I wrote a memorandum formally proposing that in the vote on sanctions against Portugal at the Assembly's forthcoming session, Brazil should follow the United States' good example and simply abstain.

As for the justification for this abstention vote, none was needed. But if we wished to explain the change in our vote, I said we should at least refrain from repeating the irritating excuse that Portugal was our dear ancestor. It would have been much better to state that we were against the application of economic sanctions in the decolonization issues as a question of principle, based purely on politico-economic logic.

I then explained in very precise terms that although sanctions may harm the economy of the colonial power, they are always transferrable: the colonial power can push them down, transfer them (in a stronger version) to the colonies. Worse still, whenever it is submitted to sanctions, the parent State starts to exploit the colonies more fiercely and heartlessly in order to make up for the losses that have been imposed on it. In their turn, if the colonies are more brutally exploited they will intensify their struggle for independence with greater passion, and even in suicidal despair. Like the rest of the world, presumably, Brazil wanted the process of decolonization to take place as peacefully as possible, so that the old colonial powers and their liberated colonies may in future coexist peacefully, without memories of a hellish past of continuous conflict and eternal hatred. If this is true, I continued, Brazil cannot vote in favour of the imposition of sanctions, for this will only intensify the liberation wars in the colonies. And it is for this reason that we reject sanctions in these cases. The sanctions medicine is counter-indicated for the evils of colonialism.

This memorandum got no further than the General Secretariat, headed at the time by an unconditional Lusophile, Ambassador Pío Correia. It must have gone straight to the bin without even being filed. Years later, however, I had the pleasure of hearing the same attractive arguments that I invented against sanctions used by none other than Margaret Thatcher, when the UK refused to punish South Africa for its practice of apartheid.

The only difference between the two cases is the difficulty I had with the convoluted reasoning, recognizing that it was hypocritical! I felt that in order to protect Portugal, which the Brazilian government wanted to do and would always do in any case, we certainly did not have to offend Africa, also our ancestor. As for the use of such arguments by the British Prime Minister, it was just one more example of perfide Albion protecting the Pretoria government

– for to her apartheid did not seem all that absurd as long as the profits made by Anglo American’s diamond mines kept rolling in.

Still in the United Nations Division. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (Npt) in Contrast With the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Atomic Weapons and Peaceful Nuclear Devices for “Geographical Engineering”

Another subject that occupied much of my time at the United Nations Division was the nuclear disarmament issue that was being dealt with by a UN commission in Geneva. In that commission the five nuclear powers (also the countries occupying the five permanent places on the Security Council, curiously enough) dictated the rules, the progress, the pauses, the language and even the gestures of the negotiations, like the ancient fabulists describing imaginary meetings between talking wolves and lambs. The strong countries, already armed with the atomic bomb, simply wanted to disarm the weak countries that only had conventional weapons, preventing them from any scientific and technological advancement that might lead them, even in the remote future, to have nuclear weapons.

“RESPONSIBLE”, claimed the authoritarian great five “are only those nuclear powers that have been hardened by wars. As for the unarmed countries, they are IRRESPONSIBLE, unruly, truly dangerous states that should not even dream of having nuclear weapons. On the contrary, they must learn how to live in fear of the nuclear weapons of those few that have them and threateningly exhibit them throughout the world. Thus, being very frightened, when they hear about general disarmament – something that in fact only applies to them – they are likely to come running, prepared to sign any piece of paper we put in front of them promising an eternal peace that will never come.”

All this had to do with the negotiations under way in Geneva, where Brazil was represented by Ambassador Silveira who made encouraging and humanitarian speeches. But in Brazil, under a military dictatorship, the nuclear disarmament issue started to be seen in a different light. As I said before, Foreign Minister Juracy Magalhães proclaimed that what was good for the United States was good for Brazil. So if the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had been evidently good for the United States, they would be also good for Brazil, if it had them. Brazil was regarded by the dictatorship as “a country no one can hold back” i.e. as an emerging power that since the League of Nations, since the last world war, yearned for a seat on the Security

Council. Indeed, when President Castelo Branco in his last message to Congress said that “Brazil agrees with the United States on everything... except on the issue of nuclear energy”, he may have seemed boastful but he was not being completely honest. In fact, even in the nuclear issue there was agreement. Just like the United States, Brazil also wanted its atomic bomb. And the new President Costa e Silva came to power with a discourse that was even more revealing: “Brazil agrees with the proscription of nuclear weapons, but reserves to itself the right of manufacturing its own nuclear devices for peaceful use”. Since there was no difference between bomb and explosives for peaceful ends, all these resonant phrases could have various interpretations.

When I took on the United Nations division and tried to establish a political line for Brazilian diplomacy with regard to the disarmament treaty that was being plotted between the nuclear powers in Geneva, I had to take into account the attitude towards atomic weapons on the part of the Brazilian military, then totally in control. From their cadet days, military men go around with grenades hanging from their belts. Vocationally, to be minimally respected and to intimidate, in peace and at war, they cannot be afraid, and must not seem to be afraid of big or small explosives. To be the winner of eventual conflicts they dream of having more efficient bombs, atomic if possible. In 1963, before the coup, the newspaper *Última Hora* carried out an opinion poll among all Brazilian generals in command of troops. Eighty per cent of them wanted Brazil to develop nuclear weapons.

Recent Brazilian history also revealed that this wish was also prominent among Navy officers. Did not Admiral Álvaro Alberto, when at the head of the National Commission of Nuclear Energy, order from Germany centrifuges to enrich uranium, even if at the time it was not clear why we needed enriched uranium as we did not have any large reactors? Also important was the US government’s reaction to the Admiral’s order. The American troops that were still in Germany after the war simply embargoed the shipment of the centrifuges to Brazil. And soon after that the Brazilian government hurriedly dismissed the Admiral from the command of the NCNE, without any clear explanation of the reasons for the dismissal.

However, being a civilian, I could not ignore the opinions that civilians might have about ordinary explosives and nuclear devices. Since remotest antiquity, the first axe that was invented was both a work tool and a weapon. Even today dynamite is equally used in the civil war in Bolivia and in the building industry throughout the world. Miners use explosives, just as the

military spray the enemy with bombs. Doesn't it seem incongruous that the Scandinavian scientist who invented dynamite also created the Nobel Peace Prize? Now, this same duality of uses applies also to nuclear explosives. After letting off the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Americans – afraid of becoming an object of hate forever in history for having committed those atrocities – started to make enormous publicity of the entirely peaceful ends of atomic devices such as opening up canals, bays and gulfs, creating lakes, making river beds regular, building roads, removing mountains, drilling tunnels and dozens of other purposes that were given the name of Geographical Engineering.

The treaty that was being drawn up in Geneva did not mention peaceful uses for nuclear devices. It did not contemplate the possibility that some countries may want to manufacture their own nuclear devices for exclusively peaceful ends. Could we accept this restriction to our development, to our sovereignty? In my view the answer is no. A country as huge as Brazil would certainly need nuclear engineering in future. The Brazilian writer Graciliano Ramos once said, jokingly, that in order to become a great power Brazil needed to have a gulf, because all great powers have at least one gulf. The military dreamt of Brazil as a great power, so it seems they needed to open a gulf. Coincidentally they were going to build it in the vast state of Piauí, just as Graciliano had recommended. Could they possibly do it with sticks of dynamite? Wouldn't they need the "peaceful" nuclear bombs?

The Geneva treaty did not seem to have the sole objective of Disarming the World, as it proclaimed. It had another hidden objective that was more important for the nuclear powers: it aimed at preserving - if possible indefinitely - the monopoly of the manufacture of any type of nuclear devices, for military or peaceful purposes, in the hands of the five existing and recognized nuclear powers. If these aspirations came true, all the disarmed countries would have to resign themselves to limiting or even abandoning completely any type of research on atomic energy. And the impression I had about the Geneva negotiations, from telegrams and reports that were placed on my desk every day, was that the nuclear powers, in their attempt to establish this monopoly for their own benefit, were merely dreaming of illusory and historically unsustainable privileges. Could any one imagine that the discovery of gunpowder would have given China the exclusive right to produce fireworks until now? Could any one accept that Sweden should monopolize the manufacture of dynamite simply because Nobel invented it? In the name of

science and the progress of civilization, the nuclear powers were aspiring to absurd monopolies that had always been unacceptable anywhere in the world.

Another important aspect that we had to take into account is that the nuclear powers were constantly increasing their atomic arsenals, threatening each other and intimidating all other nations with the claim that they could destroy the planet several times over. And yet, being already over-armed, they still regarded themselves as very RESPONSIBLE pacifists.

As for the disarmed countries, many of which did not have the ability, the resources or the technology even to make fireworks, they were regarded as irresponsible for merely dreaming of manufacturing nuclear devices in a distant future, even if for exclusively peaceful ends. But these countries had at least the sovereign right to dream of the future. And the great powers could not deprive them of this sovereign right by imposing on them a treaty that in fact would set up a kind of nuclear colonial system.

The mere proposal of disarmament in the discriminating way it was being imposed by the nuclear powers was hypocritical, even offensive. And it certainly and deeply disrespected the juridical equality of nations, something Brazil had always fought for from the days of the Baron and of Rui Barbosa as head of the Brazilian delegation in The Hague. Could we then tolerate and sign a treaty that intended to impose and prolong indefinitely that much inequality between the nations? This was the apparently naïve question I put to my superiors in the Itamaraty when I first came across the subject, in late 1965, when I took on the United Nations Division.

I was convinced – even if I kept quiet about it – that for Brazil the problem was even more evident and more serious because we were under a military dictatorship that had come to power by a coup d'état, encouraged and supported by the United States. Juracy's sentence echoed in the corridors of the Itamaraty. Would it also apply to nuclear weapons? Would the atomic bomb be as convenient and beneficial for Brazil as it was for our Good Brother in the North? When Juracy had proclaimed his phrase, he may have intended to please the United States. But if applied to the nuclear issue it had also another subtle meaning, rather unpleasant for the Yankees. If the atomic bomb was good for them it was also good for Brazil... Castelo Branco, Costa e Silva and the other military who would come later would not accept the draconian, discriminating and humiliating treaty that was being plotted in Geneva by the great powers, the pretentious "owners of the world". And if our dictators refused to accept the treaty, wouldn't they be considered ungrateful,

irresponsible, even the enemy? Wouldn't they instantly lose the solidarity from Washington on which they counted? Wouldn't this disagreement cut short the duration of the dictatorship? As we see, the uniformed advocates of the coup of 64 seemed to be in dire straits, even if they were not quite aware of it.

The respect that the North American military showed towards atomic weaponry seemed no less confused. The brutality of the bombing in Japan had frightened the entire world with a dramatic intensity never seen before in history. Eisenhower, with more political discernment than the unsophisticated Truman, feared that the unprecedented violence committed against Japan might turn the United States into a pariah, certainly feared, but also loathed - like a modern version of the Vandals and Huns - by the whole of mankind. Soon after the Second World War the arms race with the USSR began, and the US conducted outrageous nuclear experiments - removing entire populations to destroy islands like Bikini in the Pacific, and manufacturing and testing increasingly frightful atomic and hydrogen bombs in the atmosphere. This still further aggravated the North Americans' very bad reputation for unrestrained brutality. For all this, for the old warrior Eisenhower, something had to be done - with positive publicity - to make the nuclear devices with which Washington wished to dominate the world seem less unpleasant.

The State Department then began to spread the news about the great technological advancement that the control of the atom - achieved at Los Alamos by the United States - could bring for the economic development of the world and hence for world peace. According to this optimistic new line of propaganda, atoms for peace, the much desired economic development of the poor and backward countries could be accelerated and achieved only after this great scientific advancement of the United States and thanks to the innocent and beneficial "peaceful atom". Like all North American publicity designed to impress the whole world, it was followed by a plethora of rose-tinted articles, reports, pamphlets and books that flooded the world, announcing "the benefits that the nuclear devices would bring to the economic development of all countries, being used for a new type of daring engineering, to be called geographical engineering".

This was not just propagandising the future possibility of modifying geography to hasten economic development. American publicity about the peaceful atom soon began to sound like a commercial advertisement in search of good business opportunities. If a friendly country "needed a bay, a gulf or

a canal”, for example, the Americans would offer nuclear devices capable of building them in a much shorter period and “at a price eight times cheaper” than that of conventional explosives. As an example, in order to overcome the deficiencies of the Panama Canal, the US presented plans – supposedly already well advanced – to build a new and much wider canal in Nicaragua, with nuclear devices “lined up” according to the detailed instructions of the new expert “geographical engineers”... And that wasn’t all: with these extremely useful nuclear devices, bothersome mountains that happened to be in the way of new roads could be removed in the twinkling of an eye; beautiful lakes or useful dams could easily be opened up, rivers could be straightened, waterways would take no time at all to build, and they would provide the cheapest means of transport for heavy and perishable goods; exhausted oil wells would be revitalized, copper, zinc, aluminium and diamond mines would be exploited at lower cost, less effort and greater profit – all this thanks to the new technology developed by the United States and now kindly made available to mankind (naturally at a very reasonable price).

Dr Jekyll may have offered the world nuclear devices for peace and development, but Mr Hyde was determined to monopolise nuclear research for offensive or peaceful purposes. Any scientific experiments with nuclear energy that the disarmed countries could carry out had to be contained, drastically limited or summarily abandoned: they could never even begin to think of manufacturing nuclear devices for themselves. But if these same countries needed some “geographical engineering”, all they had to do was sign a contract with a US company. Or they could use the international organizations that the US had promised to establish and provide with technical instructions. Even in these apparently generous offers there was something suspicious. Atomic explosions always produce harmful radiation, so for the US to try out its “nuclear geographical engineering” in distant and alien territories looks like enlightened self-interest. The truth is that to this day the Americans have never used this advanced engineering in their own vast territories. And when the USSR tried to do it, very secretly, in the faraway lands of Siberia, it simply did not work. As for other activities with nuclear energy not involving explosives, the United States would also sell powerful reactors to generate electricity, and the facilities required for research into the agricultural and medical use of radioisotopes – and all at a very good price, which would obviously make it unnecessary for those countries to start their own research.

They thought the world would then voluntarily submit to a new regime, under which scientific research would be compulsorily restricted, and knuckle under to a new “nuclear colonial system”.

As I had been serving in Washington when this wave of publicity started, during the Eisenhower administration, I soon asked our Embassy in that capital to collect every bit of publicity or scientific material available about nuclear devices for peaceful purposes and “geographical engineering”, and send it to the Itamaraty library. With the same objective – giving the Ministry ammunition for the discussion that was taking place in Geneva – I suggested to Ambassador Sérgio Correa da Costa - a lucid and patriotic man with huge diplomatic experience and political vision, who was Head of the Political Department to which the UN Division was subordinated – that we should make the most of the declarations made by the then President Costa and Silva when he was still War Minister in the Castelo Branco government. In these declarations he had invited all Brazilian scientists who were exiled abroad, having run away from persecution after 1964, to come back home. I also suggested that the Itamaraty should try to contact all Brazilian scientists abroad to encourage them to come back home and contribute to the advancement of Brazilian science. And in order to give the Itamaraty some idea of the benefits that nuclear energy could bring to Brazil’s development, I suggested we should invite Brazilian scientists – both those still at home and those who were ready to return – to give lectures about their specialities to diplomats interested in the subject. These suggestions always met with Ambassador Correa da Costa’s support, encouragement and further suggestions, and they were put into practice with great success. This helped to increase our mutual political understanding and to cement a strong and lasting friendship.

The close association of the Itamaraty with the directors and scientists of the National Commission for Nuclear Energy was thus strengthened, and Brazil’s diplomats were better prepared for the international discussion about nuclear disarmament. The content of the lectures given by the NCNE scientists to the diplomats was reproduced in book format and distributed to Brazilian diplomatic posts all round the world.

I must remind the reader that in the Geneva negotiations, Brazil and the other countries then called “underdeveloped” participated only as mere observers, even if they were given the title of “mediators”. The mediator title appeared to have been given in case the representatives of the great nuclear powers seriously disagreed, and needed to be refrained by the audience. The

disarmed underdeveloped were then allowed to speak, but to deaf ears. So when Ambassador Silveira made humanitarian speeches in Geneva on behalf of Brazil, he was talking to the walls. The only ones that had any true influence on the result of the debates, the only ones that could substantially contribute to the progress and final outcome of the work, were the nuclear powers. And among them, precedence was given to the greatest: the two superpowers, the US and the USSR, with huge nuclear arsenals that could destroy the world five times over – as they frequently boasted. This was the capacity they proudly called “overkill”, a threat that was no less stupid for being so frequently proclaimed. If the whole earth were destroyed, the great powers would go down with it. And what kind of terror could the destructive capacity of the bombs cause if the earth had already been destroyed once? Who would want to remain alive, permeated by radiation, to be present at the second or third end of the world?

The long and boring speeches made by representatives of Brazil and other “mediator” countries in the Disarmament Conference in Geneva certainly made the great nuclear powers impatient. But at least they served to give Brazil more time to reach a decision. We could confidently expect that after a painful gestation period of a couple of years, the Geneva conference would give birth to a monster of a Treaty that would be sent to the UN and signed in a hurry by all member countries.

We shall now take a closer look at the Non-Proliferation Treaty. A few years later, as we had foreseen, it was presented to the world – no longer for comments and appraisal, still less to meet with hesitations and refusals, but for an immediate and almost compulsory signature.

First we could ask: what was the meaning of this proliferation that the treaty intended to hold back, and in which direction was it going? Was it supposed to prevent vertical proliferation, i.e. to stop still more bombs piling up in the arsenals of the nuclear powers, already full to overflowing?

Certainly not. The nuclear powers would never think of ceasing to manufacture and refine their bombs. At most they would get rid of outdated weaponry with less destructive power, only to replace it with new, more powerful devices. According to the latest estimates, the United States currently – in 2009 – has 5,400 nuclear warheads, while the former Soviet Union has 14,000. The numbers in themselves are less important than the destructive power of modern warheads, which is certainly much greater now than it was in the 1960s. We now know that in terms of its effect on vertical proliferation,

the NPT never worked. Even after the collapse of the USSR, which left it as the only superpower, the US continued to refine its nuclear weapons – installing them in satellites, trying to make war with minimal risk to its troops, attacking the enemy from the air with the so-called intelligent weapons, as it has been doing in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is the so-called Star Wars programme, invented by Reagan and gradually developed without much publicity – perhaps to take the world by surprise and to make up for the many failures suffered by the US in terrestrial wars since Vietnam. It is worth remembering that until the first bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, the development of the original atomic bomb was not given much publicity either – even after it had been tested in the Nevada desert.

So it is clear that the treaty under preparation in Geneva was only intended to restrain horizontal proliferation, i.e. to stop the manufacture of atomic bombs from spreading and to prohibit other countries from having them. In this sense, since this was its true aim, the treaty worked from the start. Pressurizing all UN members, the nuclear powers succeeded in persuading some individual and groups of nations to sign up to it even before the negotiations in Geneva came to an end.

The whole of Africa, under pressure, soon gave a demonstration of its naïve pacifism, declaring itself “denuclearized”. The innocence of this declaration was even more remarkable because South Africa, at a time when the insane brutality of the apartheid system was at its peak, was secretly “borrowing” a few tactical nuclear bombs from Israel, with the United States’ permission, to intimidate the large majority of its increasingly rebellious black population, concentrated with this purpose in mind in the poor suburbs conveniently away from the white cities. In the Middle East, similarly, Israel – with its own technology and much money borrowed from the US – could discreetly continue to manufacture nuclear bombs to terrorize and restrain its Arab neighbours. The Arabs and Asians, however, couldn’t even dream of having nuclear weapons, until the day when Pakistan, in permanent confrontation with India, circumvented the Non-Proliferation Treaty and managed to manufacture some nuclear bombs with the help of a Pakistani scientist who had also contributed to the nuclear development of other Asian countries. As for India, at the time close to the USSR, it feared neighbouring China – and perhaps for this reason was brave enough to refuse to sign the NPT, going on to manufacture nuclear bombs with its own technology. We see then that since the NPT came into force, four new nuclear powers have appeared in the world, either with

American approval (Israel and South Africa) or like India and Pakistan by outwitting the IAEA in Vienna and fooling the NPT inspectors. That makes one new nuclear power per decade since the NPT was presented to the world.

Several small and poor countries, with apparently no possibility of development, soon declared themselves “denuclearized”, singly or in groups, to please the powers that had plotted the Treaty. But other countries of medium size and with their own resources, a higher level of culture and scientific progress, conscious of their independence, could not accept a draconian treaty that in the terms it was conceived by the nuclear powers was in fact offensive since it raised doubts about the responsibility of the rest of mankind. In fact, what the treaty did was to discriminate between countries, dividing them into a minority that could have and develop nuclear weapons and a large majority that could not even dream of having them. Colonialism was making a comeback, stronger than ever before. As for us Brazilians, the Treaty reminded us of the policies of Mad Maria, the Portuguese queen who forbade colonial Brazil to have iron foundries... For with regard to the atom, the prohibition to have nuclear devices of any kind was quite obvious from the moment the NPT was presented to the world, by the UN, to collect adhesions. But what did Latin America feel about nuclear disarmament even before the conclusion of the Geneva treaty? There were three different types of reaction, as follows:

- 1) Mexico, in view of its geographical proximity to the United States, would be inevitably hit if at any time the Cold War became nuclear war. It would therefore never make sense for Mexico to develop its own nuclear defence. Its best bet was to pay homage to its powerful neighbour, proclaiming itself the pacifist leader of a naïve Latin America ready to become denuclearized like Africa.

- 2) For Brazil and Argentina, as well as for other Latin American countries geographically distant from the United States, the NPT was unacceptable – and the fact that Mexico intended to become its advocate was something new and would tend to divide Latin America.

- 3) For other Latin American countries at a very low level of development and with internal political upheavals, some simply ruled by Washington’s puppets, the best bet was to follow Mexico and please the United States. And if possible to obtain some compensation or help in exchange for signing the NPT.

So while the treaty negotiations were still dragging on in Geneva, Mexican Foreign Minister Garcia Robles soon conceived a regional denuclearization treaty, to be negotiated in his Ministry in Tlatelolco. The aim was to persuade all Latin American countries to abandon any advanced nuclear technology that might lead to explosives, and to do so rapidly and without hesitation.

Brazil and Argentina then saw themselves under pressure from Mexico to commence discussion, in an exclusively Latin American conference, of a Mexican denuclearization project for Latin America that would be a sort of dry run for the approval of the NPT in Geneva. Remember that both Argentina and Brazil had already made statements in the past with regard to nuclear weapons. In a sensational speech in 1950, Juan Peron happily announced to the world that a German refugee scientist had manufactured the first hydrogen bomb in Buenos Aires. This news was never confirmed, but since then the whole world became aware of Argentina's wish to have atomic weapons. Brazil, more modest and more pacifist, never had such ostensible desire for nuclear weapons. It only intended to enrich its own uranium and for this purpose bought German centrifuges – but the Americans refused to let them be exported from occupied Germany. Much later, trying to avoid an atomic confrontation between the superpowers at the time of the missile crisis in Cuba, Brazil had proposed that the whole of Latin America became denuclearized – since this would lead to the removal from the island of the atomic weapons sent by the Soviet Union, without discrediting the Cuban government and also without a third world war.

Mexican diplomacy, very shrewdly, remembered that pacifist gesture from Brazil in the Cuban issue, and tried to use it as a precedent for the Tlatelolco conference. From 1961 to 1965, however, too many things had happened in Brazil. Under military rule the country was no longer as pacifist as it had been at the time of the missile crisis in Cuba.

In this confused scenario, we can see that the Itamaraty found itself in a complex situation. Brazil started to confront the issue of nuclear disarmament on two fronts simultaneously: Geneva and Mexico. The negotiations in Geneva were slow, as we have already seen. The negotiations in Tlatelolco, called by Mexico with the applause and the encouragement of the US, were intended to be concluded quickly, so that when the Geneva treaty was ready the whole of Latin America would automatically sign up - willingly, happily and to the sound of mariachi songs, setting the world a pacifist example to be followed by other continents.

For Brazil the negotiations in Mexico were also uncomfortable in view of the leadership role that Garcia Robles and Mexico apparently hoped to take – and worse still, because the Americans would be watching very closely the objections that the Latin American countries might have against the NPT. On top of that, Brazil did not want to be accused of being a warmonger – but could foresee that we would not be able to approve any disarmament treaty, in Geneva or in Mexico, that would hamper our scientific development or compromise our sovereignty.

The Brazilian representative in Mexico was initially Ambassador José Sette Câmara, an intelligent, friendly and persuasive diplomat and hence a worthy adversary for Garcia Robles, the old diplomatic fox who hosted and presided over the Tlatelolco Conference as Mexican Ambassador and Foreign Minister. Work began with the many questions Brazil wanted to raise about the proposal for nuclear disarmament. This successive questioning, apparently innocent, and reminiscent of the old Socratic method, would produce unsatisfactory answers that would lead to new questions. And thus Brazil would demonstrate to the other Latin American countries that they ought to preserve the right to engage in any nuclear research that might be useful for their progress and independence, and also that they should consider both aspects of denuclearization: 1) the disarmament of the disarmed, and 2) the need of the disarmed to make sure that they would no longer be intimidated by threats of nuclear annihilation. The question of invulnerability was truly the most important aspect of any denuclearization project. Latin American was not threatening anyone. But it could be threatened if it had any misunderstanding with nuclear powers that also had colonies – and hence specific interest – on this continent.

The truth is that the mere possession of atomic weapons by any country is intimidating. The nuclear powers have thousands of atomic weapons, and that is simply terrifying.

Questions Brazil Raised In Tlatelolco

The first question Brazil had to raise in Tlatelolco, naturally formulated in diplomatic language, basically tried to ascertain whether the term “denuclearization” simply meant a unilateral, virtuous renunciation of nuclear weapons, a kind of voluntary mutilation of sovereignty for high-minded humanitarian motivations – or if it was also necessary to obtain an assurance

that the nuclear powers would never attack or threaten Latin American countries with these weapons. If the powers were ready to give this non-aggression assurance, how would it be included in the Latin American treaty? After long discussions about these background and form issues, it was agreed by the Conference that all the nuclear powers would be called upon to give this assurance in a Protocol to the Treaty.

Once this was decided, the same question covered another aspect that was still rather vague. What if new nuclear powers appeared, with the approval or tolerance of the NPT, that had not signed the non-aggression protocol? Would the Treaty continue in force while waiting for these new powers to sign it? Would this situation not be even more dangerous, for surely the appearance of new and rebel nuclear powers would put the world at risk of new wars? Would it not be wiser to suspend the validity of the treaty until the non-aggression Protocol had been duly signed by the new nuclear powers? In this case, as we could imagine, the validity of the treaty would be intermittent, always going on and off, suspended each time a new nuclear power appeared on the global scene.

The second Brazilian question had to do with the geographical ambit of the intended treaty. Mexico would certainly denuclearize, i.e. the north border of the area of the treaty would run alongside the Rio Grande, the border with the United States. From the mouth of the same river, in the Atlantic Ocean, would be drawn a parallel line that would perfectly delimit the islands and territories within the southern border, and consequently under the treaty, as it advanced over the ocean. Cuba was below this parallel line, but it was already denuclearized in exchange for the assurance that it would no longer be invaded, in a direct agreement between the two greatest nuclear powers. As for the American base at Guantanamo, could it stock nuclear bombs or shelter vessels or aircraft that transported them? The same problem would come up with regard to Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and the militarized strip that the United States had as a colony along the Panama Canal. Would Washington be prepared to denuclearize all these colonial areas? The express agreement of the United States would be necessary, perhaps in another protocol to the treaty. It would obviously be Mexico's responsibility to obtain American assent to the denuclearization of the American colonies in the area of the future Latin American treaty.

When dealing with the American colonies, it was obviously even more important for us to consider the European colonies in Latin America. Wouldn't

we need two other protocols to the treaty to guarantee the agreement of England and France to the denuclearization of its remaining colonies in the Caribbean and South America? This seemed essential to the Brazilian government, for if military bases and nuclear missiles remained in these dependent territories, the continent would remain at risk. What did the other Latin American countries feel about this? How would Venezuela and Argentina feel if the French or British had bases with nuclear warheads in the Guyanas or the Falklands? Years later, the war between Britain and Argentina showed that this Brazilian concern was very pertinent.

So for the countries that had colonies on the continent, the problem would be solved with another protocol to the treaty.

Another matter, apparently insoluble, that seemed of paramount importance to Brazil was the fact that Latin America had to sign the treaty en bloc, since it could only come into force when every Latin American country, without exception, had signed it. Could Brazil, which borders on ten other countries, feel confident that the treaty would guarantee the intended denuclearization – in the sense of the invulnerability of its entire territory – if any one of its neighbours were against the treaty and in a militarist fit of temper tried to obtain nuclear weapons, either independently or with a secret loan? And what if one of Brazil's neighbours decided to lease parts of its territory to a nuclear power so that it could establish military bases to stockpile atomic bombs?

All these questions occupied the Tlatelolco Conference during its first phase. With respect to the issues raised by Brazil, Mexico had to make new contacts with the nuclear powers and the colonial powers with territories on the continent to obtain the necessary guarantees, since the forthcoming treaty depended on them. This would be the only certain way of denuclearizing Latin America, or at least of making sure it would not be intimidated or threatened by the nuclear weapons of others.

When the Conference resumed its work a few months later, no clear answers to the doubts raised by Brazil had yet been found. In fact Brazil didn't think they would be in a brief period, or possibly ever. It only wanted to make sure that those guarantees would be mentioned in the project originally presented by Mexico. For by then they were essential not only for Brazil, but for other Latin American countries – including Argentina, which discreetly, hoping that no one would remember Peron and his imaginary hydrogen bomb, followed the Brazilian lead in these complex inquiries. It is possible that to

Mexico and Garcia Robles, these exchanges were reminiscent of the convoluted conversations of unforgettable Mexican actor Mario Moreno, the well known Cantinflas. In the second session in Tlatelolco, the doubts raised by Brazil touched the very core of the disarmament issue throughout history. When the first stone axe was invented in pre-history, it had two uses: it was both a useful tool and a dangerous weapon. Gunpowder was useful for making fireworks and for ammunition. Dynamite was useful to build and to destroy, in peace and at war. And nuclear devices could be used not only for war, but also – in the new guise of geographical engineering – to promote economic development.

We were thus turning American propaganda about the peaceful atom against the emasculating idea of non-proliferation that was in effect a nuclear colonial system. We flooded the Tlatelolco Conference with all the United States publicity about the peaceful atom for economic development. We showed that Brazil, a huge country, was very interested in geographical engineering. Later, with peaceful nuclear explosions, we could carry out gigantic projects that would also benefit our neighbours, such as connecting the basins of the River Plate and the Amazon. Our neighbours in the south and southwest, who today sail in the River Plate basin, would also have free access to the Amazon basin. Throughout Brazilian territory, sailing on large rivers or short canals, our neighbours would have new trade opportunities with cheap transportation, not only with Brazil but also with the whole of South America. Was this, for the time being, a future dream? It certainly was. But as soon as the problem of radiation caused by the explosions could be solved, this dream could come true.

In future Brazil could gladly accept the US offers to carry out geographical engineering works, and we could even engage American companies to do so once the issue of residual radiation was solved.

Brazil would even accept that international organizations, technically instructed by the US or other nuclear powers, could in future be in charge of geographical engineering works on our territory.

But neither of these acceptances meant that Brazil could accept the revocation of its sovereign right to manufacture its own nuclear devices in order to carry out peaceful works of geographical engineering on its territory. In fact this had already been decided by President Costa e Silva in his inauguration speech, when he said “Brazil agrees with the proscription of nuclear weapons, but reserves to itself the right of manufacturing its own nuclear devices for peaceful use”.

At this point in the Tlatelolco negotiations the draft treaty originally presented by Garcia Robles was heavily amended, thanks to Brazilian interventions that had been consistently supported by Argentina. Other countries were gradually being won over by the practical, realistic points of view that Brazil defended. And if other arguments were necessary to make them totally convinced of the fairness of our position, we still had some: we could, for instance, bring to light the issue of the transportation of nuclear weapons through our skies and territorial seas, the dangerous presence of aircraft and ships in our airports and ports with nuclear weapons on board... None of these points had been raised at the time. But the draft treaty already contained all the doubts and reservations I have described, establishing a clear distinction between peaceful nuclear devices and nuclear bombs. Peaceful devices, now benefiting from US commercial publicity, were clearly allowed, approved, even applauded by Latin America – but nuclear weapons were forbidden. In the Geneva Treaty denuclearization encompassed all nuclear devices, but the Treaty of Tlatelolco had turned into something quite different: it proscribed only nuclear weapons, but it accepted the national development of research into peaceful explosives for geographical engineering purposes. It could then be called a treaty of “peaceful nuclearization for Latin America” as Ambassador Corrêa da Costa had already pointed out.

Turning The Mexican Treaty Inside Out

The Mexican treaty project, gradually altered by Brazil, had also adopted several of our initial proposals: it now demanded the clear delimitation of the denuclearised area; determined that the treaty could only come into force with strong guarantees against nuclear aggression on the part of the armed powers; it specified that if new nuclear powers appeared, the treaty would be suspended until the new power gave assurances of non-aggression; it made clear that the treaty should be signed simultaneously by all Latin American countries, as the contiguity of the treaty area was essential: no country could consider itself denuclearised if any of its neighbours was preparing itself for atomic war with its own or borrowed bombs; and finally, it insisted that all nuclear powers with colonies in the continent must place these colonies under the regime of the future treaty.

The NPT negotiations in Geneva could now be rapidly concluded, since we already had the made-to-measure Mexican treaty. All that was needed

now for the Geneva treaty to be completed overnight and presented to the UN for signature was the agreement between the superpowers.

As we had managed to include all the proposals mentioned above in the text of the Tlatelolco treaty, the term denuclearization no longer meant only disarmament but also included security from any nuclear threat or aggression against Latin American countries. Not all the countries present at the negotiations in Mexico were concerned with their own safety in the face of hypothetical threats of atomic aggression. But as far as Brazil was concerned, the inclusion of all our proposals would preserve our own safety.

The second discussion period about the Latin American treaty had ended with an inconclusive draft, in a situation of virtual impasse. Mexico, in a hurry to conclude the treaty to please its powerful neighbour, knew very well that a Latin American treaty would mean nothing if didn't include at least Brazil, Argentina and other large countries that might eventually follow us in the voting. Brazil, initially reluctant to become involved in the negotiations at Tlatelolco, had succeeded in incorporating in the Mexican project all its points of view about what a fair, equitable nuclear disarmament treaty must be – and we were now interested in using the Mexican treaty as a kind of strongpoint. The idea was that it would enable us simply to refuse the draconian treaty that sooner or later would come from Geneva, intending to impose itself on all countries of the world. We could then simply negotiate, offering our signature of the Latin American treaty in exchange for a quick completion of that instrument, something Mexico wanted so much.

So between the end of the second and the beginning of the third discussion period at Tlatelolco, as head of the United Nations Division, I submitted a memorandum to Ambassador Sergio Corrêa da Costa suggesting that we should “turn the Mexican negotiations inside out”. My idea was to benefit from the Mexican Foreign Minister's eagerness to complete the treaty. Would this eagerness lead him to accept that all Brazil's amendments became rules instead of exceptions? In other words, would Brazil's proposals (that were already part of the project and recognized as valid and important for Latin American security) become essential conditions for the treaty to come into force for all Latin American countries that signed it?

As for the countries that did not regard all of them as essential (in the parts that affected them), they could expressly forgo them when signing the treaty.

When, by memorandum, I presented this formula to my superiors in the Itamaraty, I pointed out that this would enable Brazil to sign and then ratify the treaty of Tlatelolco without reservations (thus showing its peaceful character) – but the treaty, even if signed and ratified by us, would not commit us to any obligation or have any validity for Brazil until all the clauses that we had added to the original project were totally and perfectly satisfied, according to our own criterion, by the countries holding atomic weapons, by the countries holding colonies in the area of the treaty and finally, by the countries of the continent, in particular our neighbours, that were all to sign the treaty simultaneously. As presumably it would be extremely difficult for all these conditions to be accepted at the same time, we would have signed and ratified an international document that in practice, for Brazil, would not exist. And thus we could refuse to sign the NPT in Geneva when it was ready, alleging that Latin America already had an excellent treaty that proscribed the military use of nuclear energy but that even prescribed and regulated the manufacture and the use of peaceful explosive artefacts for geographical engineering.

It would then be easier for us to proclaim to the world that the Latin American treaty was much more comprehensive, and that the continent did not need the Geneva NPT. And we would be right in saying this until all the safety clauses we had inserted in the regional treaty were perfectly satisfied according to our own and very rigorous criterion... something that most probably would never happen.

My proposal was accepted by Ambassador Corrêa da Costa, who came to an understanding with the Mexican Foreign Minister Ambassador Garcia Robles about this rapid formula to conclude the treaty. Garcia Robles, an extremely experienced diplomat, accepted our suggestion, so the third discussion period in Tlatelolco was brief and successful. Signed by all Latin American countries, including Brazil and Argentina, the Treaty served as proof of our peaceful disposition, a proof strong enough to enable us to refuse in limine the draconian Non-Proliferation Treaty concluded in Geneva a few months later.

Ambassador Garcia Robles, with the conclusion of the treaty and the alleged great contribution it made to “world peace” was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize – and in fact received it a couple of years later. As for Brazil, it was able to refuse to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty when it finally was ready in Geneva.

The work Ambassador Corrêa da Costa and I did together, when he was head of the Political Department and I of the United Nations Division, was the basis for a very strong friendship. Another diplomat I got very close to was Paulo Nogueira Batista, who had served with Corrêa da Costa in Canada. Later, working at the State Secretariat, he took a close interest in our work on the treaties of Geneva and Mexico.

At the end of the Castelo Branco government, when Costa e Silva took over, Correa da Costa was made Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry. The new Minister would be Magalhães Pinto, a politician from Minas Gerais and previous governor of that state, a civilian who, aspiring to the Presidency, had started the 1964 coup d'état.

Corrêa da Costa, who had promoted me to Counsellor and then to Minister⁵, invited me to be his Chief of Staff in the Secretariat General – and I gladly accepted. Paulo Nogueira Batista, also a close friend of Corrêa da Costa, became head of the Planning Department - a new, recently created department and an essential new addition to the Itamaraty that couldn't have been placed in better hands.

Another friend of mine, Minister Celso Diniz, also from Minas Gerais, was a distant relative of Magalhães Pinto and was called to be the Foreign Minister's Chief of Staff.. Yet another friend, Counsellor Cyro Cardoso, from an illustrious military family, was invited to work in the Casa Civil⁶ of the Presidency. These colleagues and I agreed to do something that was totally new in the Itamaraty. We would avoid a situation that had always been a disaster, not only in Brazil but in other Foreign Offices throughout the world: the rivalry and hostility that eventually arise between the Foreign Minister, a politician, and the Secretary General, a career diplomat. This rivalry normally leads to a series of intrigues, in which both individuals seek the support of the President of the Republic – and this leads to the eventual dismissal of one of them. With this group of friends in key second-rank posts, we strengthened both the Foreign Minister and the Secretary General. And we enabled the

⁵ TN – The Brazilian Foreign Office hierarchy in ascending order was: Third Secretary (or Vice-Consul) , Second Secretary (or Assistant Consul) and First Secretary (or Consul), Counsellor (a title conferred to a few First Secretaries) Second Class Minister (or Consul General), First Class Minister or Ambassador.

⁶ TN - The Casa Civil (Civil House) provides consulting, analysis, information and technical services for the President of the Republic. It comprises the Head of the Casa Civil, as well as advisors, adjuncts and secretaries. It also has a corps of specialist consultants and an administrative support group.

Itamaraty to have a single voice in its contacts with the Presidency, something that was very important in the changeable, always unstable conditions of any dictatorship.

As the reader will remember, in his inauguration speech Costa e Silva had spoken about Brazil's right to manufacture its own nuclear explosives for peaceful ends. As a soldier, Costa e Silva was more used to explosives. But how would Magalhães Pinto, a civilian used to political conciliation, understand and accept the policy we defended, the refusal to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty in Geneva? It would be the responsibility of Minister Celso Diniz – his Chief of Staff – to explain clearly what we had already done with the Tlatelolco Treaty, turning it into a kind of antidote against the Geneva Treaty. And that is what Celso Diniz very efficiently did. So much so that – as can be seen in some Security Council minutes that were only recently published – when the military at the meeting wanted peremptorily to refuse the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Magalhães Pinto reminded them that the best strategy was to use the fact of our adhesion to the Tlatelolco Treaty as a justification for our refusal to sign the NPT, thus avoiding accusations that Brazil was an irresponsible warmonger.

As part of the publicity about our nuclear policy, Corrêa da Costa often went on television to explain to viewers, with considerable eloquence and charm, the peaceful uses of atomic energy for medicine, food preservation, and even in the form of explosives for geographical engineering, as promoted by the United States. Foreign Minister Magalhães Pinto also decided to be an advocate of the policy, albeit in a more formal way, inviting scientists for lunch at the Itamaraty and assuring them of the government's support for their research in all branches of science, including nuclear energy.

Everything seemed to be going well for the new policy at the Itamaraty, and this included an invitation from the United States to the Secretary General, Ambassador Correa da Costa, to meet the highest authority in North American nuclear activities - a well-known Nobel laureate - to discuss possible forms of cooperation between the two countries in this area. On his trip to Washington the Secretary General Corrêa da Costa took two collaborators: Paulo Nogueira Batista, then head of the new Planning Department, and me, his Chief of Staff. Besides the visits we paid to scientific institutions, we were offered a very formal lunch attended by the highest authority in nuclear energy and many other American scientists.

At the huge U-shaped table – with reserved places – I had on my right a gentleman who introduced himself as the White House’s Advisor on nuclear energy. We chatted about various topics and he even made a point of saying that he knew and admired Brazil. Then the speeches began. When Ambassador Corrêa da Costa read the speech he had prepared for the occasion, he thanked his hosts for the invitation to visit the United States and then, as charmingly as possible, emphasized the pacifism that had always been characteristic of Brazilian history and the affirmative position Brazil had taken with regard to world efforts for the proscription of nuclear weapons. In the case of weapons, he continued, Brazil strongly felt that they had to be proscribed. But with respect to nuclear explosives for geographical engineering, “Brazil would gladly accept the United States’ offer to provide other countries with American services in this area. It would also accept that in future these services might be carried out by international organizations, with technical guidance from the United States. But Brazil also reserved the sovereign right to develop its own nuclear explosives for peaceful purposes”. The Ambassador then spoke of Brazil’s vastness, and our probable need to alter some of our geographical features in order to accelerate our development.

As Corrêa da Costa proceeded with his speech I discreetly examined the guests’ faces and noticed expressions of surprise and antipathy. Finally, when we were about to get up, the White House Advisor next to me could contain himself no longer, and poured out disguised threats that were certainly meant to be transmitted to Sergio Corrêa da Costa. No longer so friendly, he suddenly asked me: “is the Brazilian ambassador being serious?”

I answered that obviously the Ambassador was being serious and that his statement about Brazil’s reserving the right to manufacture its own nuclear explosives, exclusively for peaceful purposes, was in fact quoted from our President’s inauguration speech.

My interlocutor then told me: “You know, to me this seems like that situation that often happens in families with adolescent sons. The teenager complains about the parents’ advice and restrictions, and every day threatens to leave, saying he can’t stand it anymore. The parents endure the rebel child’s complaints and threats day after day, month after month, until one day, in a fit of temper, the son leaves home. Do you know what happens then?” – the white house’s nuclear advisor asked me – “the parents, who until then had been very patient with their son, suddenly lose their temper... and if before

they supported the kid, now they just sever relations and no longer give him even a drop of water.”

I thanked my fellow guest for his brief story, told him I didn’t see any similarity with the political situation we were dealing with, but that I would pass it on to my superiors to see if they found it funny.

Back in Brazil we continued with our efforts to “nuclearise Brazil for peaceful ends”. We wanted Brazil to develop scientific research, but also to adopt practical measures such as the acquisition of a nuclear reactor to generate electricity. Relations between the Itamaraty and the National Nuclear Energy Commission had never been so fruitful. But the NNEC was not part of the Itamaraty, it was subordinated to the Ministry of Mines and Energy. And it was this Ministry, under Coronel Costa Cavalcanti, a military politician in the Juracy Magalhães mould, i.e. very subservient to the United States, that started to undermine the Itamaraty’s initiatives, particularly with reference to the acquisition of the reactor.

The Americans soon volunteered to sell us a Westinghouse reactor. And Coronel Costa Cavalcanti readily took up the offer. The media soon decided that the acquisition of the new reactor, entirely built by the Americans, was “a gigantic step in Brazil’s development and scientific and technological progress” and applauded Costa Cavalcanti’s willingness to buy. The head of the Nuclear Energy Commission, General Uriel, a military scientist who had established good relations with the Itamaraty, was replaced by a civilian physicist who was totally against the idea that Brazil should even dream of reserving itself the right to produce any nuclear device in the remote future, in particular if it happened to be “horribly explosive”. With this new situation, the issue of the new reactor to be bought, its sale conditions, the place for its future installation, etc., began to be the object of general public attention. And the Itamaraty – which had got involved in the pro-nuclear propaganda (clearly somebody else’s field) with the sole objective of preventing international treaties from subjecting Brazil to a new colonial situation, or of depriving it of its sovereignty - was now totally marginalized.

Simultaneously with the Itamaraty’s marginalization in the nuclear energy issue, Ambassador Corrêa da Costa fell ill with what was originally thought to have been a heart attack. After a couple of weeks of rest and treatment the diagnosis was altered to hernia in the gullet, but as a precaution Corrêa decided to exchange the exhausting activity of the Secretariat General for a post abroad. For me and Paulo Nogueira Batista, our boss’s decision was also opportune.

We had already completed the period we could officially spend in Brazil, and – in my case, at least – a quick transfer abroad was urgently required: I had exhausted my savings, and my salary was insufficient to support my family. I was also concerned with the political activity of my eldest daughter, who – still at high school – wanted to become “a peasant guerrilla fighting for agrarian reform”. Her projects made me speed up the family’s transfer abroad.

In these new conditions, with Corrêa da Costa’s transfer, Paulo Nogueira and I also went abroad. Where to? It was very easy to choose a post. Correa da Costa was given the Embassy in London. Paulo chose to be Counsellor in Bonn. As for me, thanks to the good will of the Foreign Minister’s Chief of Staff and of the Foreign Minister himself, I was offered a selection of splendid posts: the Consulates General in London, Paris or New York. I preferred the Consulate General in London, for if Corrêa da Costa and I occupied the two highest posts in one of the capitals of the so-called Elizabeth Arden circuit at the same time, he at the Embassy and I at the Consulate General, the Brazilian exiles living in or going through that city would not be persecuted by the dictatorship. This was important, because in Paris the exiles had been seriously mistreated and had even invaded and stoned the Consulate General in protest against a diplomat who was also a policeman.

Transfer to the United Kingdom

When I was transferred to London, in the second half of 1968, I could not imagine I would live there for so long. All together I was Consul General for eight years, or seven years if I take away the one year of provisional service I accepted in Luanda, in 1975, as Brazil’s special representative before the guerrilla movements that were members of the Transitional Government in the run-up to Angola’s independence. Having fulfilled my adventurous mission - Brazil recognized Angola and established relations with it from the very moment of its independence, at midnight on 10 November 1975 - I went back to London in early 1976, and stayed another six months before choosing to be transferred to Bangkok. I was curious to explore Thailand and Southeast Asia, and I wanted to witness the results of the defeat heroic Vietnam had inflicted on the United States.

During my long stay in London I received the good news that Brazil, with Ambassador Gibson as Foreign Minister, had refused to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty finally concluded by the great powers in Geneva. I was

glad to see that Brazil's refusal had been justified by our previous adhesion to the Tlatelolco Treaty, which guaranteed Brazilian nuclear disarmament – but also our inalienable right to pursue our own scientific and nuclear research. But most importantly, it also permitted the research that might lead to the production of nuclear explosives for legitimate and peaceful ends, such as the much-publicized geographical engineering. This research will no doubt be useful to our economic development once the problem of residual radiation is solved.

While Corrêa da Costa and I were in London we were visited several times by Paulo Nogueira Batista on his way to and from Brazil, and he gave us some idea of what he was doing in Bonn. A perfectionist as a diplomat, Paulo even learned German so as to perform his duties more efficiently. And because he believed that Germany could contribute to our economic and scientific development for peaceful activities, he tried to approach the German government circles that looked after nuclear energy as well as large companies that manufactured nuclear reactors.

During the Geisel administration regime Germany became more important to Brazil, and the Embassy in Bonn started to receive visits by government ministers seeking German cooperation for their respective ministries. In this new political context Paulo Nogueira Batista's post also became more relevant. Paulo's role particularly grew in importance when he befriended Minister Shigeaki Ueky. Ueky was a Brazilian of Japanese origin who had been a friend and a close civilian collaborator of the military President since the days when Geisel headed Petrobras, the Brazilian oil company. Together, Paulo and Ueky turned Geisel's natural interest in cooperation with Germany towards the field of nuclear energy. And it was because of this that Brazil and Germany, with the necessary discretion, negotiated a gigantic cooperation treaty whereby Brazil would buy eight German nuclear reactors and would have German cooperation in the enrichment of uranium by a new method – invented by the Germans – called Jet Nozzle.

I was already in Angola, half-way through 1975, when this agreement was signed in Bonn, with great world repercussions. The signatory for Brazil was Foreign Minister Silveira. On the day the agreement was to be signed I interrupted my activities – normally surrounded by disturbances and shooting – to send Silveira a telegram of congratulation, for I knew very well how he must have been afraid of the US reaction when he signed the agreement. This was the gist of my telegram: "I congratulate Your Excellency, great Foreign

Minister and my dear chief, on signing the nuclear energy treaty with Germany. I regard this treaty as a necessary confirmation of Pedro I's shout on the bank of the Ipiranga River."⁷ If my telegram ever reached Bonn, I never received any reply. It must have frightened the Foreign Minister even more for having signed a treaty inspired by Paulo Nogueira Batista.

For all this, I started to regard my good friend Paulo Nogueira Batista, unfortunately no longer with us, as the bravest of all Brazilian diplomats in view of his contribution to making the dictatorship cut off the branch it had been sitting on since 1964. Eleven hard years had gone by, for we were in 1975. But after that treaty with Germany the government no longer had the support of the US. From then on, Geisel was blamed by Carter - very unfairly - for all the crimes and atrocities that the dictatorship had committed since its installation.

In addition to the treaty with Germany, Geisel also dared to displease Washington by recognising Angola, revoking military agreements for the acquisition of obsolete weapons from the United States, and casting Brazil's vote at the UN on a resolution that irritated Israel by comparing Zionism with racism. The result of this general insubordination was that at the end of his term Geisel started talking about the need to end the dictatorship and to lead Brazil back to democracy. For this purpose he chose the rude and authoritarian Figueiredo to replace him. Figueiredo took six years to carry out the re-democratization job – and at no time dared to take any initiative that might upset Uncle Sam. It seems to me that when he took over he was already prepared to undo – among the other achievements of Geisel's foreign policy – everything that Paulo Nogueira Batista had built in terms of Brazil's cooperation with Germany. And in the end he dismissed Paulo himself from all the functions he had taken on in order to carry out the agreements with Germany in an efficient way.

After some democratic governments that will not look too good in the history books, Fernando Henrique Cardoso with his Foreign Minister Lampreia decided, perhaps under increased pressure from Washington, to abandon an entire hopeful, dignified foreign policy and submissively sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty. This signature rendered the Tlatelolco Treaty

⁷ TN – On 22nd September 1822, on the banks of the river Ipiranga in São Paulo, the regent Pedro (later Emperor Pedro I), shouted "Independence or Death" in a symbolic gesture to declare Brazil's independence from Portugal.

purposeless, useless and meaningless. Curiously enough, Lampreia was one of Silveira's collaborators – so he should have been aware of the mistake he was about to make when he interrupted a policy that the Itamaraty had put a great deal of effort into since 1965.

In spite of this diplomatically ill-advised step, the Brazilian military still has plans to build a nuclear submarine, now with French technical assistance. Also, with centrifuges produced in Brazil, they enrich uranium for exclusively peaceful ends. And furthermore the government is thinking of buying or building six nuclear reactors to generate electricity in different parts of the country. Is President Lula's government reverting to the past?

In face of US hysteria about the Iranian and North Korean nuclear plans, I wonder whether it will ever accept to have a nuclearised Latin American country, perhaps even for military ends, on this continent that it still mistakenly considers its "back garden"...

After all, I have been retired for more than twenty years, I shall soon be eighty-four years old, my health is beginning to fail – so I leave the present document to others, young or less old, in the hope they will understand what we did at the Itamaraty. I am still sure that what we did during the dictatorship about this issue of great relevance to humankind - the use of nuclear energy not monopolized by the great powers - was to the benefit of Brazil's independence. To understand the past is the first step towards a better future. I believe that in a world where the number of nuclear powers increases every decade, to be denuclearised is a form of self-mutilation that will contribute neither to Brazil's progress nor to peaceful international relations. On the contrary, it will endanger the preservation of the natural resources with which Brazil has been endowed.



Brazilian National Day at the Embassy in Lima, 1955



On our way to Japan, 1956



Escorting the Emperor's brother, His Highness
Prince Mikasa on his visit to Brazil



At the OAS Council, assisting Ambassador Fernando Lobo



Bogota 1960 – at one of the OAS meetings



In Buenos Aires 1963 – Brazilian National Day



Presentation of credentials by Ambassador
Corrêa da Costa in London, 1968



Annual Party of the Anglo-Brazilian Society in London, 1973



With our friend Jorge Amado in Bahia



Agostinho Neto's arrival in Angola on his return from exile, 4 February 1975



At the Chancellery in Angola, 1975



At Luanda harbour sending off the Brazilian nationals who were to be taken home on the ship Cabo de Orange



Farewell to the ship Cabo de Orange taking back to Brazil the Brazilian refugees from the war in Luanda



Removal of Portuguese monuments (statue of Camões) on the eve of
Angola's Independence Day, 11 November 1975



Presentation of Credentials in Thailand, 1976



Presentation of Credentials in Malaysia, 1977



Reviewing the troops at the presentation of credentials in Singapore, 1977



Interviewed by Thai television on 7 September 1978



Giving a talk in Singapore, December 1978



Ivony receiving a decoration for her services to the Red Cross from the Queen of Thailand, 1980



At a military parade in Bangkok



Enjoying a boat trip on the river Chao Praya in Bangkok, 1978



Retired at long last



At home in Rio de Janeiro, 1996



A recent family gathering



Part II

Brazil's Recognition of Angola In 1975

I. Retrospective of Brazil's African Policy Before 1975

The present paper was first presented at a seminar organized by the University of São Paulo and by the Alexandre de Gusmão Foundation. The objective of the seminar was to obtain testimonies for an anthology to be called *Sixty Years of Brazilian Foreign Policy*. As it is now going to be presented in book format to a wider public, I feel the reader will benefit if I should draw a wider picture, showing the limitations the Itamaraty faced under the military dictatorship and the constraints suffered by individual diplomats during that period.

With this objective in mind, it seems essential to go back to 1964, the year of the coup d'état, so that we can appreciate how the recognition of Angola was a remarkable exception in the limitations imposed by the dictatorship on Brazilian foreign policy for so long. The military regime escalated Brazil's debt without consulting the Itamaraty about its possible consequences for the country's sovereignty, and now it wanted to give the world a quite fictitious idea of Brazil. In its propaganda Brazil was already a great power that "nobody could hold back". Under the Geisel government, such contradictory objectives led Brazil to adopt some unusually daring attitudes – one of which was the prompt recognition of Angola. These attitudes were totally at variance with the foreign-policy model in the early days of the

dictatorship (“what is good for the United States is good for Brazil”), and were more similar to the impulsive – albeit appropriate – gestures of President Jânio Quadros’ Independent Foreign Policy. Perhaps we should remember that Geisel was promoted General by Jânio Quadros and worked at the Military Office under that administration.

Let us then return briefly to 1964, to the beginning of the dictatorship, to examine the extent to which Brazilian Foreign Policy was restricted and constrained – also with regard to Brazil’s relations with Africa.

In numerical terms, the rupture of the democratic system in 1964 left the Itamaraty almost untouched. While a vast number of purges were carried out at other ministries, in the Itamaraty only five people were actually thrown out – in three cases for vague politico-ideological reasons. The best-known case was Minister Antonio Houaiss, one of the best diplomats the Itamaraty ever had. Houaiss worked at the UN Decolonization Commission, and he tried very hard to come to an understanding with the representatives of black Africa, seeking to persuade the Itamaraty to change its position of support for Portuguese colonialism. This was obviously what provoked the termination of his diplomatic career on the absurd accusation of being “an enemy of Portugal”.

Although almost unaltered numerically, the Itamaraty was not less intimidated. It succeeded in taking over responsibility for the investigations that the new government wanted carried out in each Ministry, in a witch hunt for “left-wingers”. Some forty diplomats were investigated by a Special Commission consisting of diplomats and the military, its objective being to discover possible ideological motivations of those under investigation for their foreign political activities. Thus all those who had distinguished themselves for their efficiency and enthusiasm in (i) Juscelino Kubitschek’s Pan-American Operation, (ii) the Independent Foreign Policy inaugurated by Jânio Quadros and (iii) the Goulart-Santiago Dantas’ foreign policy were constrained and intimidated. The latter established relations with the socialist world, tried to keep Cuba in board in Pan-Americanism, and tried to negotiate better and fairer terms of foreign trade at UNCTAD to improve the Brazilian population’s living standards.

Nobody else was purged as a result of the intramural inquiry, but Brazilian foreign policy withered. It could no longer consider itself independent. And in this, it seemed that the world also had shrunk. Relations with the Socialist countries, with the Third World, with the Non-aligned countries, with

representatives of the peoples fighting against colonialism – all became highly suspicious. In this context, Brazil once again voted in solidarity with Portugal at the UN – even if Portugal continued to use practically slave labour to expand its coffee plantations in Angola and thus compete with Brazil in the international markets. In these conditions, foreign policy couldn't even be utilitarian. I was one of the diplomats investigated at the time, and I can attest to how dispirited we all were with this regression of our foreign policy.

In 1965, when Vasco Leitão da Cunha was still Foreign Minister, I was just back from a post abroad – and was appointed Head of the UN Division in the Political Department. Not long after this there were some ministerial changes in the Castelo Branco government. The new Foreign Minister, Juracy Magalhães, took office and soon became known for the slogan “what is good for the US is good for Brazil” that was intended to summarise his policy.

As Head of the UN Division I was responsible for preparing instructions for the Brazilian Delegation at the UN General Assembly. As in the case of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, I tried to apply the new Foreign Minister's slogan specifically to the agenda on decolonization in Africa.

As I explained in more detail in Part I of this book, the United States made a point of abstaining in this vote. But Brazil, more than ever, was inclined to vote against sanctions for Portugal. I suggested then that we should also abstain, following the American line. As for the justification for this vote, I suggested that we should no longer justify our position by alleging sentimental reasons i.e. that we could not go against Portugal because it was our ancestor, “our little grand-dad”. This was extremely offensive to Africa, which was also our ancestor and had made major contributions to our history and culture. I then suggested that we should adopt a more logical, albeit more cynical, politico-economic rationale: we would not vote for sanctions against Portugal because these sanctions would be counterproductive. Applied to the colonial power, they would be immediately passed on to the colonies in the form of intensified exploitation. More intense exploitation would certainly also lead to stronger resistance on the part of the colonized populations. Therefore, if we wanted a peaceful solution for the problem, we could not vote in favour of measures that would end by exacerbating the war.

As the reader already knows, the above suggestion, presented by memorandum, got no further than the Secretary General, Pio Correa, who probably threw it in the bin. Brazil continued to vote in favour of Portugal for many years to come, for sentimental reasons or for none at all. And years

later, to my surprise, I heard the same arguments used by Margaret Thatcher when she refused to apply sanctions to South Africa.

During the administration of Juracy Magalhães a Coordination Commission was created with the United States. Its annual meetings would examine a priori the most important items on the General Assembly's agenda. In 1967, under the Costa e Silva administration, I accompanied new Secretary General Sérgio Correa da Costa to one of these yearly meetings as Chief of Staff of the Secretariat General. Among the dozens of topics in the agenda I could clearly feel that the United States was specifically concerned with Portugal's insistence on keeping its colonies. It felt Portugal was too weak for such a huge enterprise, and that the enterprise itself was obsolete. And at each step it asked what Brazil could do to try and dissuade Portugal of its vain wish to continue being a colonial power. Perhaps because during the Jânio Quadros administration Foreign Minister Afonso Arinos had had very poor results when he tried to influence Portugal, the Itamaraty was not willing to renew such *démarches*. The United States had no intention of going against Portugal, because they wanted their military bases in the Azores. The war in Africa therefore proceeded, becoming increasingly bloody. And in the UN, every year, we continued either to vote against or at most to abstain when almost the whole world tried to apply sanctions to Portugal.

Other more urgent issues then occupied my attention. Soon after this I was transferred to London as Consul General. Costa e Silva sadly ended his period in the government, with the Institutional Act 5, the ill-fated AI5⁸. Fifteen more diplomats were purged. These purges were not obviously political but they were brutal and gave no right of defence to the purged diplomats. Médici took office, Gibson became Foreign Minister, Brazil's debts soared. The dictatorship's police repression has no limits. In the Itamaraty itself a corps of police-diplomats is created, in the service of repression. The Itamaraty moves to Brasília, the new capital, but a small city - where diplomats coexist in the

⁸ TN – The AI5 was the fifth of seventeen decrees issued by the military dictatorship in the years following the 1964 coup d'état in Brazil. Its immediate consequences were: the closure of the National Congress and all the Lower Houses of Brazil (with the exception of São Paulo); the permission for the federal government, under the pretext of “national security”, to intervene in states and municipalities; the instant legitimacy of decrees issued by members of the Executive power; the preliminary censorship of music, films, theatre and television; the illegality of political meetings; and the suspension of *habeas corpus* for crimes of supposed political motivation.

purpose-built apartment buildings. In the competition for promotion and posts, they become great experts not only in mutual slander - an old characteristic of the old Itamaraty, called the Larga Street Butantan⁹ - but also in denunciations to the organs of repression. At this time, resistance to the dictatorship takes the form of hijacking planes, kidnapping Ambassadors, robbing banks, and the armed struggle in Xambioá¹⁰. On the other hand, the political police tortures and murders the regime's opponents. All this has repercussions abroad, but with no effect on the bankers - who offer Brazil new loans on increasingly harsh conditions.

The Itamaraty does not dare to warn the government that the acceleration of foreign debt will seriously jeopardize Brazil's sovereignty. Instead it turns to the promotion of foreign trade, and this also contributes to increasing foreign debt - because without a positive trade balance, not even the interest on the debt can be paid. And it worries about the effects that the excesses of the dictatorship's police are having on Brazil's reputation abroad. A new police investigation commission travels the world to ask Brazilian diplomats in their posts if they believe that "there is torture in Brazil". The image of Brazil that the Itamaraty wants to project abroad is of a "Great Power", "nobody can hold this country back", "Brazil love it or leave it". Once more, as Consul General in London, I was investigated.

But the oil crisis brings a growing number of difficulties to Brazil. In order to achieve positive balances, we must expand our trade relations with foreign partners - including the Arabs and black Africans, previously neglected by our policies. To establish normal relations with both, we shall have to review some of the political positions we had adopted since 1964, in particular our unconditional support for Israel and Portugal. Gibson then organizes a mission to the countries of black Africa that are already independent: Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal etc. Everywhere it goes, the mission is asked to state the Brazilian position with regard to the Portuguese colonies in Africa. From London, following the results of that mission with interest, I could foresee that nothing

⁹ TN - This was a self attributed nickname. The Butantã is a well-known scientific and research institute specializing in snakes. And the old Itamaraty Palace in Rio de Janeiro was at Rua Larga (Larga Street)..

¹⁰ TN - Xambioá was one of the sites of the Araguaia guerrilla name given to a series of guerrilla actions in the North of Brazil intended to fight the military dictatorship. The movement involved some 70 militants of the Communist Party of Brazil and having started in the late 60s resisted the military offensive (with approximately five thousand men) from 1972 to 1975. It ended with the death or imprisonment of most of the guerrilla fighters.

positive would come of it. Years later, indeed, Marcelino dos Santos – head of FRELIMO in Mozambique – remembered this mission with unrestrained irritation. He told me that “Gibson had at first raised hopes, then caused even greater disappointment for going to Africa to reiterate the traditional Brazilian positions favourable to Portuguese colonialism”.

I was still in London when the Carnation Revolution took place in Portugal in 1974. More than a revolution, it seemed like a collapse: a collapse of the hopes that the Portuguese military could still nourish – no longer of victory, but of keeping the war that they had been conducting in Africa for the last fourteen years going indefinitely. Spínola, until then an illustrious colonial military commander, assumed power. Exiled opposition leaders such as Mário Soares were taken by surprise by events in Lisbon. At first they thought it would be a mere military coup, a follow-up of the Salazar dictatorship. Then, probing the situation at every step, they joined the revolutionary process that was much more than a simple coup d'état. Mário Soares became Spínola's Foreign Minister. And then the new Portuguese government began to define its intentions more clearly: one of them was to concede independence to its African colonies.

This was certainly a laudable objective that could be applauded by the world. But how could it be done? For some countries – friends of Portugal – the important thing was the *modus faciendi* of this concession of independence. Could Portugal simply leave Africa, abandoning its former colonies to the guerrilla movements that had been helped by the Socialist world for fourteen years of war? In the following pages I shall examine the doubts expressed by NATO about Portuguese intentions at a seminar held in late June 1974. The United States and the European powers believed that Portugal could easily leave Guinea Bissau and Mozambique at any time. But according to Nato's calculations, Portugal could not get rid of Angola - a rich colony where three guerrilla movements were fighting for power - for at least another five years, even if it wanted to.

On his way home from Europe, US President Nixon stopped briefly at the island of Salt – where he met Spínola and Mobutu, the long-time dictator of Zaire, with the definite purpose of establishing a *modus faciendi* for this process of getting rid of Angola. With this visit he hoped to avoid what some Western politicians called “a too rapid decompression of the Portuguese colonies in their access to independence”. Zaire's dictator Mobutu was a supporter of Holden Roberto of the FNLA (National Front

for Angolan Liberation), the movement preferred by the United States as the future Angolan government. It seems that this secret meeting established the initial basis of what would later become known as the Alvor Agreement, under which the three guerrilla Movements recognized in Angola were Holden Roberto's FLNA, Savimbi's UNITA - the result of a schism of FLNA that later cooperated with the Portuguese troops in the battles against the MPLA - and Agostinho Neto's MPLA, supported by the Socialist world. With this alignment of forces it was possible to presume, both on the Island of Salt and at Alvor, that in the elections for Angolan independence or in the skirmishes that might occur among the movements, FNLA and UNITA would end up as allies. In that case the West would have a 75% chance of having some control over the new country. This made it possible to set 11 November 1975 as Angolan Independence Day. What was not - and perhaps could not have been - taken into account on the Island of Salt or at Alvor was the popular support that the guerrilla movements would have, or the fighting experience that they would have acquired in the fourteen-year anti-colonial war. And this is what invalidated all the previous calculations of Nixon, NATO, Spínola and Mobutu.

As we have seen, certain factions within the Itamaraty had been trying for years to persuade Portugal to move on from its colonial position, if only because colonialism seemed increasingly *démodé*. Other factions were interested in expanding our trade with Angola, hitherto hindered by Portugal. Angola also had oil, and this interested us. Being of German origin, the new Brazilian President, Geisel, was not at all influenced by Gilberto Freyre's Luso-tropicalism, exploited by Portugal for its political ends. Being of Italian origin, Italo Zappa - then Head of the Africa Department at the Itamaraty - was similarly untouched. Mario Soares, Spínola's Foreign Minister, came to an understanding with Silveira, the Brazilian Foreign Minister, suggesting that Brazil could once more show its friendship for Portugal by taking part in the process of Angolan independence. The process was expected to be brief, for Portugal could not continue a colonial war amidst a social revolution at home.

From some corner of Silveira's office, stimulated by Zappa, an original and rather clever idea emerged: Brazil would establish Special Representations in Mozambique and Angola, with the status of "in advance" embassies. Our mere presence, in advance and neutral, would give the Alvor Agreement more international credibility. That would help Portugal to get

rid of its colonies, and – most importantly – help the colonies to get rid of Portugal, something that would satisfy both God and the Devil in the Land of Sun.¹¹

I was asked to participate in this adventure, with an uncertain, unpredictable outcome. I accepted the invitation, perfectly aware of this uncertainty and unpredictability. In the following pages I summarise my diplomatic experience in Africa in that year of 1975, more valuable to me than anything else I learned in my forty-two-year diplomatic career.

II. Testimony From Various Sources About Angola in 1975

The present testimony about Brazil's recognition of Angola in 1975 - one of the most remarkable and controversial events in Brazilian foreign policy, given the conditions in Brazil at the time – is certainly not an academic paper. It does not get involved in political digressions, it is not based on economic data, it does not quote previous historic and diplomatic facts or seek the support of a vast bibliography. It is just the account of a Brazilian diplomat whose job took him to Luanda for a year. But the circumstances of that experience were dramatic, full of political consequences – and capable of determining the future of Brazil's relations not only with Angola, but with the whole of black Africa.

This account is also the result of a series of notes I began to make in Bangkok in 1976, when the impressions brought from Angola were still very vivid in my memory. I continued to write these notes for the next five years, because the recognition of Angola – done at precisely the right moment but maintained with great difficulty by the Brazilian government – continued to suffer persistent international pressure and be the object of heated discussion in the Brazilian press. This had very serious consequences, even affecting the composition of the government: in 1978 Army Minister Silvio Coelho Frola, abruptly dismissed from his post, made an angry proclamation describing the recognition of Angola as a sign of what he saw as the increasing “communization” of Brazilian politics.

Although this is not a very important issue, in the years after 1975 my career was marred as a consequence of the role I played as loyal executor of

¹¹ TN – “God and the Devil in the Land of Sun” is the title of a well-known film by the late Brazilian film-maker Glauber Rocha.

a policy drawn up by the Presidency and the Itamaraty. Confronted by the continuous and passionate discussions that this policy provoked, and occasionally still does, the Itamaraty did not come to my defence – although it did maintain relations with Angola, which I thought essential. In the benefit of these relations, initially fragile and threatened by all kinds of internal and external pressure, I said nothing. Nor would I have had efficient means to defend myself, given the censorship and intimidation by the political regime under which we were living. Now the conditions of the world, of Brazil and of Angola are different, and relations have been consolidated. And this has stimulated me to try to clarify this obscure and controversial episode in our diplomatic history for the general public.

This testimony should in future be supplemented with other memoirs, those of the high authorities of the Republic who designed our policy towards Angola in 1974 and then chose me to carry it out in Luanda. In 1979 Antonio Azeredo da Silveira, the Foreign Minister at the time who recently passed away, left a tape at the CPDOC of the Getulio Vargas Foundation containing a long report on his entire administration. The recognition of Angola was one of the most important events in this report, and it deserves to be studied. I also hope that the then President Geisel will leave his own testimony about foreign policy, a policy with a broad, long-term vision, that he firmly adopted towards Africa so that History can do him justice.

As for other testimonies about that year of war, I would recommend Robert Stockwell's book *In search of enemies*. Stockwell was a top civil servant working for the CIA. From Kinshasa, in Zaire, he headed the Agency's operations in Angola in 1975/76 but later, in 1978, disillusioned with the job, he retired and wrote this book. *In search of enemies* had some reviews in the Brazilian press, but so far it has not been translated into Portuguese, as it deserves.

Fernando Câmara Cascudo, a Brazilian journalist who in 1975 worked in Luanda for the FNLA as Holden Roberto's political adviser and also as adviser to the most important newspaper of the former Portuguese colony, *Província de Angola*, also wrote a book: *Angola a guerra dos traídos* (Angola, the war of the betrayed). Câmara Cascudo had to leave Luanda in a hurry in August 1975 when the FNLA was expelled from the capital. His book therefore does not reflect conditions in the city, or the strength of its resistance to subsequent foreign invasions. It is more a reflection of what the troops of the FNLA, Kinshasa and the north of Angola thought about Luanda.

On the other side of the political divide there are two books by East-European journalists.

In 1978 Oleg Ignatiev, of the newspaper Pravda, published a book that was translated into Spanish as *El Arma Secreta en Africa* (Progress – Moscow) in which he makes interesting observations about his country's relations with the MPLA, and reveals plans of the MPLA's President Agostinho Neto for a possible anticipation of the Independence proclamation if, when taking over the town of Benguela – as it in fact did later - the invading South African army had shown enough strength, efficiency and above all mobility to arrive in Luanda before 11 November, the date specified as Independence by the Alvor Agreement.

Ryszard Kapuscinski of the Polish News Agency also published a book in 1976. Translated into English in the US as *Another Day of Life*, it had excellent reviews by American critics. In it he tells of the vicissitudes of the war in Angola from September 1975, when he arrived in Luanda, until he went back to Poland some time after independence. The description of a trip he took to the front on the Namibian border, accompanied by the MPLA, deserves special attention. The South African troops were already on the other side of the border, warming up their tank engines for the blitzkrieg that they would carry out in the hope of reaching the Angolan capital before 11 November. It was Kapuscinski who broke the news of that invasion to the MPLA in Luanda, and from there to the world.

In contrast with these two books, written by experienced international commentators from countries that had a very clear foreign policy and had clearly helped the MPLA during the fourteen years of anti-colonial war – my testimony will reveal some aspects of our foreign policy that have not been examined until now. These include our inadequate knowledge of black Africa, especially Angola; the natural mistrust of Brazilian foreign policy by both the MPLA and FRELIMO in view of the support we had given Portugal for years, and not very discreetly; and the oscillations to what the new policy and the neutrality adopted in 1975 were subjected when the war intensified and worse still when it became clear that the MPLA was going to win. Finally I will also reveal some small misunderstandings and disagreements that occurred between the Itamaraty and the Special Representation in Luanda, as well as between the Special Representation and the MPLA. Some of these happened after relations

had been officially established and Angola seemed to be getting on very well with Brazil. In view of our previous policies, early relations were distrustful rather than placid.

My hope is that whatever defects it may have, my testimony will help to improve Brazilian foreign policy. Angola was merely an example of a complex political situation with broad international involvement, in which the positions adopted by Brazil carried a lot of weight and immediate influence.

Similar situations may occur in future. Our foreign policy must therefore be more accountable – the only way to obtain more support from the press and from Brazilian public opinion. We must also be able to take and implement political decisions quickly whenever we encounter emergency situations such as Angola in 1975. In particular, we must be aware that “making diplomacy” doesn’t simply mean trying to sell our manufactured products abroad to generate surpluses so that we can pay off our the foreign debt.

To make foreign policy is to adopt attitudes that are consonant with the national interest in the short, medium and long term, to face danger if need be, and to have a definite international personality, not just vague theoretical sovereignty. This is what Brazil had with regard to Angola in 1975, and this is why I am proud to have served as Special Representative in Luanda at that decisive period.

1. How the Conception of Special Representations Emerged

When the Geisel government took office in 1974, I was still Consul General in London. Soon after that, the Carnation Revolution took place in Portugal. I knew little about General Geisel, except that he had played a moderating role against torture during the Castello Branco administration. As for the new Foreign Minister, Silveira, I only knew him superficially as a colleague at the Itamaraty. I also knew about his activities as Head of Administration at the Itamaraty, and the positions he adopted – in my view a rather vague, generous third-worldism - at the Brazilian Representation in the UN in Geneva. For all that, I couldn’t have expected my name to be remembered for any specific function that the government deemed important. And less still to be asked to help design foreign-policy plans or lines of action. I read the declarations of the new government – as I presume all diplomats must have done at the time – with the scepticism that reading official documents always inspires. I

remembered the Independent Foreign Policy of Jânio Quadros. Can there be a foreign policy that is not independent? Also, can there be a foreign policy that is not pragmatic, ecumenical and above all responsible? The adjectives Silveira used to qualify his policy seemed to be some sort of criticism of the narrow, prejudiced and repetitive policy that the Itamaraty had adopted since 1964. But I couldn't guarantee that in the new administration there would be some substantial changes of course rather than just a few merely cosmetic corrections.

While in Brazil nothing seemed to change, the revolutionary ferment in Portugal – even if it was very confused at first – promised substantial changes in political orientation. In fact it raised the hopes of all sectors of world public opinion that had opposed Salazar's dictatorship and its colonial activities in Africa. Marcelo Caetano had visited London some time before. His visit had coincided with the denunciations made by Adrian Hastings, of *The Times*, about a massacre perpetrated by Portuguese troops in the Mozambican village of Wyriamu. The Portuguese government denied the truth of the report, claiming simply that the village didn't exist. *The Times* then resorted to geographers to prove that the village existed, in the Province of Tete – and Hastings published new reports, with impressive photographs to prove that the massacre had indeed occurred. All this meant that Marcelo Caetano's visit was extremely agitated, with vehement protests in the press and in the streets.

The Carnation Revolution came soon after this. And it began by promising the decolonization of what was known as Portuguese Africa. It was a good promise, no question. But how could it be fulfilled by generals as closely associated with the colonial past as Antonio Spínola? We had to wait and see.

In June of that same year I was asked to be an observer on behalf of the Institute Rio Branco at a seminar that NATO was organizing at Oxford University. It dealt with all the political problems of the world in very honest and informal discussions, with very different opinions expressed by observers from the European foreign ministries, by journalists from the most important newspapers worldwide and by well-known academics. Consensus existed only with regard to one subject: Portuguese decolonization. They thought that in the case of Mozambique decolonization would be easy. Mozambique was a very poor colony, economically dependent on the cheap labour that it exported to the South African mines. The country only had one native movement

hoping to assume power after independence: FRELIMO. But Angola was rich, and very different. There were three movements, respectively headed by Holden Roberto, Jonas Savimbi and Agostinho Neto, vying for power after independence. And as NATO predicted that this dispute would be very bitter, even if the Portuguese military really was interested in getting rid of Angola IT WOULD TAKE NO LESS THAN FIVE YEARS to establish Angola as an independent state.

For this reason Portugal was trying to show that the other supposed “Angolan movements” were unqualified. These were groups of “assimilated” whites or mestizos who had lived in perfect agreement with the colonial system but who now, at the eleventh hour, tried to create a party to dispute the elections with the blacks or to receive independence on a silver platter from the Portuguese. This would turn Angola into something similar to Rhodesia at the time, or to the South Africa of apartheid. To show vitality and make themselves known, these neo-colonialist political groupings – encouraged by old members of the Portuguese secret police and by military hard-liners military in the colonial forces in Angola – tried to intimidate the black population. In September of that year, 1974, the musseques or slums of Luanda were invaded and ravaged by armed bands of white settlers and their mestizo or black henchmen. These were pogroms, and they soon hit the international press. This was their way of telling the world that the independence process would be necessarily violent if Angola did not take the path offered by the “kind and snow-white hands”.

In November of that year I took two months’ leave in Brazil. Tired of the monotonous consular service in London, I was hoping to exchange that post for a commissioned Embassy. I had not yet dealt with this matter with the top people at the Itamaraty when Italo Zappa, the head of the African Department and a friend since our adolescent days in Barra do Pirai, approached me with a very curious proposal Silveira intended to give a first step towards the political relationship between Brazil and the Portuguese colonies on their way to independence, and he was therefore thinking of opening embryo forms of embassy in Lourenço Marques and Luanda to deal with the black Movements that Portugal saw as candidates for power. According to Zappa, Silveira had already reached agreement about this with Mario Soares, Portugal’s Foreign Minister – but it was essential for the African movements to accept the idea.

Silveira wanted me to take this proposal to the native Angolan movements. The first stage would be for Zappa himself, as Head of the African Department, to visit the leaders of the movements in Africa. The idea was that he would

“break the ice of any past grudges” that they might have against the previous Brazilian policy of veiled support for Portuguese colonialism. Later I would go, specifically to make a proposal for the creation of two Special Representations, one in Lourenço Marques, the other in Luanda. If the proposals were accepted I could choose to become the head of one of them. This would fit in precisely with the post of Commissioned Ambassador I was hoping for. Zappa also made a point of emphasising that the invitation came from Silveira. Was I interested?

I asked for a few days to think about it. But from the start I put some questions to Zappa in order to get a better idea of the meaning of the mission that Silveira (or Zappa himself) was trying to give me. Why had the Minister gone first to Mario Soares instead of dealing directly with the leaders of the black movements? Was there any intention of adjusting the promised independence to possible neo-colonialist purposes on Portugal’s part? Was Brazil trying to influence the process of independence in Angola by somehow favouring one or other of the black Movements in a process that would most certainly be very complex? We had had Consulates in both Luanda and in Lourenço Marques since the days of Jânio Quadros’ Independent Foreign Policy, so why didn’t those Consuls simply get in touch with the leaders of the black movements about the idea of Special Representations during the transition period?

Zappa gave categorical answers to my initial doubts. Brazil had no intention of shaping independent Angola according to the designs of its former colonial power. Nor did it have any intention of favouring any one of the three movements. It would be totally fair, impartial, equitable and neutral towards all of them, and after independence it would be ready to recognize whichever one came to power. As for the present Consuls in the Portuguese colonies, they were accredited to the Portuguese government. They had been there for a long time, and they were officials with no particular political vision, having been worn out by the familiarity with colonial authorities and society. They would therefore be transferred from their posts as soon as possible. The Consulates themselves would be closed down, becoming mere departments of the new Special Representations. Brazil’s objective in establishing these diplomatic missions in the Portuguese colonies was to lay the foundations, at as early a stage as possible, for a close relationship with Angola and Mozambique. If this was to happen, it would be essential to find the common denominator between the aspirations of the three Angolan

Movements and FRELIMO in Mozambique with regard to future relations with Brazil.

Similarly, Zappa explained, the Brazilian government had been right to seek the Portuguese government's agreement to the creation of the Special Representations. It was a way to testify to the good intentions Portugal was expressing when it promised its colonies independence. The Carnation Revolution – like all revolutionary processes – could go sour, regress, take unexpected courses, try to retract its promises. Wouldn't Brazil's public endorsement of the promised independence reduce the possibilities of a reversal?

In the days that followed I continued to have conversations with Zappa, searching for more information. What if the independence process in Angola became more hostile and lasted longer – as NATO'S observers predicted? How would Brazil react if at the end of the period of electoral campaigning or armed struggle, the MPLA - the movement that the Western powers considered unacceptable - were the winner? And what would be my situation if this possibility became reality, if I accepted the job of whitewashing our previous African policy, leaving a post in London and taking a leap in the dark towards another post that would perhaps never be created? Wouldn't I be left high and dry while Silveira himself, pressurized by the internal and external reaction, paddled off into the sunset?

Zappa's answers to these questions were no longer as categorical. He himself had his doubts about all this. But he claimed that if we were impartial towards the Angolan movements from the outset and we demonstrated that impartiality by establishing a Special Representation in Luanda from the early days of the transition to Independence, any sudden change in our policy when independence actually happened would become much more difficult. And this would be the case regardless of the wishes of some sectors of international or Brazilian public opinion. Also, according to him, what Silveira was proposing was not a leap in the dark. It was not a transfer from London to either of the two Special Representations still to be created. This was a temporary job: my post would continue to be London. I would go to Africa, first on a special mission to put the proposals about the Representations, then on a temporary posting for six months – a period that could be extended depending on the progress made. If this was a leap, then a safety net was in place. If everything in Angola went sour and I had to leave, there would be an ejector seat: I would return to London and wait for another post.

I thought Zappa was accurately interpreting Silveira's intentions, or his own – so I accepted the assignment. Zappa soon left for Africa on his “breaking the ice” mission. Luis Bastian Pinto, then Ambassador in Cairo, had carried out a previous mission during Silveira's administration, but he did not think it had had a positive result. Zappa would go and return, and I – still on leave in Brazil – would be able to hear his news and learn from the experience he would have acquired in the initial contacts made. At the end of my leave I would return to London and await instructions to leave for Nairobi on the mission to propose the creation of the Special Representations. Nairobi was the closest diplomatic post we had to Dar-es-Salaam, in Tanzania, where FRELIMO and the MPLA – both still in exile during that transitional period – had their headquarters.

Meanwhile, while on leave in Brazil, I researched the African black movements and the war they had waged with Portugal for almost fifteen years. The Itamaraty archives were very poor on the subject. All they had was information – or out-of-date misinformation – that the Portuguese government itself had fed the Brazilian authorities. Brazilian diplomats all over the world had been studiously avoiding contact with leaders or heads of those African movements since 1964, fearing accusations of subversion or of being Portugal's enemies. As for the bookshops in Rio de Janeiro, the only books on the subject that they dared to display on their shelves dealt with greater or lesser enthusiasm with “Portugal's civilizing mission in Africa”.

I decided then to return to London via Lisbon, where such information would be available since all African movements were trying to make themselves known to Portugal and accepted by it. And indeed, the Lisbon bookshops were full of new publications about Africa and about the programmes and purposes of the African movements. In London, while awaiting the instruction to depart, I was able to read British publications about the colonial war that Portugal had been fighting fourteen years in its African possessions. I also contacted some Portuguese and British people who knew the subject well, some of whom had even had personal contacts with the leaders of the Angolan and Mozambican movements.

II – Mission to Africa to Propose the Special Representations

My mission to Africa to propose the creation of Special Representations in Lourenço Marques and Luanda began some time in mid-January. From

Nairobi in Kenya I made contact with the Mozambican FRELIMO movement and the Angolan MPLA in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, with the help of Frank Mesquita, our ambassador in Dar-es-Salaam.

Agostinho Neto was away from Dar-es-Salaam. Samora Machel, who had received Zappa six weeks before, sent Marcelino dos Santos to meet me. He was Vice-President of FRELIMO in charge of foreign relations.

The first interview I had with Marcelino dos Santos, at FRELIMO's military camp in Kurasini outside Dar-es-Salaam, was quite calm. I explained the Brazilian government's good intentions and its new policy towards Africa. I suggested the creation of a Special Representation in Lourenço Marques and emphasized, as convincingly as I could, the advantages that such an anticipated permanent mission would bring for relations with Brazil. I also pointed out that this would reinforce the Alvor Agreement, in which Portugal promised Mozambique independence in July 1975.

As instructed, I also told him that Brazil would be ready to provide Mozambique with humanitarian aid during the transition period to relieve the effects of the war. The Itamaraty wanted FRELIMO to prepare a list of priorities to help the Brazilian government to target its donation.

Marcelino dos Santos answered very politely, saying he was aware of the changes in the political intention of the Brazilian government as had been explained by Zappa to Samora Machel and now by me to him, and that he could only have praise for these changes. He described the creation of a Special Representation in Lourenço Marques as a new issue requiring study and a collective decision, so it would have to be submitted to FRELIMO'S Political Bureau. Any help to be given by Brazil to the Mozambican people to relieve the sufferings caused by war would be gratefully received, but FRELIMO no longer prepared priority lists in the quest for foreign aid: this exercise was usually a frustrating waste of time. He suggested that the Brazilian government should regard aid to Mozambique, ravaged by war, as similar to the aid Brasilia used to give the Brazilian Northeast in times of natural disasters such as drought. He expressed Mozambique most urgent needs in three words: trucks, food, medicines. As for the creation of the Special Representation, he suggested we should have another meeting in approximately twenty days.

While I was in Dar-es-Salaam, even though I knew Agostinho Neto was away, I contacted the MPLA's office. The person I dealt with was Andre Petrov, head of that office, a black man from Cabinda who had studied in Bulgaria and had been given the Slavic surname because his real one was too

complicated for the Bulgarians. Petrov, who already knew of the proposal made to FRELIMO about the Representation in Lourenço Marques, told me that Agostinho Neto would be back in Dar-es-Salaam in a few days and would be glad to meet me, just as he had met Zappa. He promised to give me a ring in Nairobi to make an appointment for the interview with the MPLA head.

I went back to Nairobi to report the interview with Marcelino to the Itamaraty, and stayed there to wait for Petrov's phone call – which seemed to be taking a long time to happen. Finally, after trying to call him several times, I managed to find him at the MPLA's office. He was very busy. Agostinho Neto had returned to Dar-es-Salaam, but was soon to leave again. He would be travelling via Nairobi the next day and would make a brief stopover. If I wanted, said Petrov, I could meet him at the airport – but the interview would have to be very brief, just as long as it took to change planes.

That evening I carefully examined the routes and timetables of the few airlines that flew to and from Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam. I came to the conclusion that the only plane leaving Dar-es-Salaam next morning that Agostinho Neto could possibly take was a return flight of an East African Airways plane coming from Rome, and passing through Nairobi in the early hours of the morning, so I got on that plane on its way to Tanzania that same morning. Arriving in Dar-es-Salaam, I waited at the airport to go back to Nairobi on the same plane. I contacted the chief security officer at the airport and asked him to make sure Petrov would get a note from me to be given to Agostinho Neto as soon as he arrived to change planes.

The result of my short trip was positive. I came back to Nairobi from Dar-es-Salaam on a seat next to Agostinho Neto in the first class section of the plane, which was completely taken over by the MPLA's top people. That flight to Nairobi, which took just over an hour, was the first stage of the MPLA's return to Luanda to participate in the transitional government prior to independence. Agostinho Neto intended to arrive in Luanda, after a few stopovers in Nairobi and other African cities, on 4 February. On that date, fourteen years before, the MPLA had rebelled in the capital of the colony, carrying out the first attacks on Portuguese prisons and military barracks.

The conversation with Agostinho Neto was very friendly, in a mood of contained excitement at a moment with great political and historical significance for him and his fellow MPLA members. I did more listening than talking.

Gratified about Brazil's new foreign policy with regard to Africa, the MPLA leader agreed to the opening of a Special Representation in Luanda, expressing great interest in all types of cooperation that the Brazilian government could offer Angola both before and after independence on 11 November. In a very restrained manner, he talked about the political situation in Angola and possible relations with the other movements – especially with Savimbi's UNITA with regard to the planned elections. What impressed me most was his broad and understanding view of Brazil's and Angola's situation in the world, of the close cooperation that was possible between two countries fraternally connected by their culture and ethnic mix of races, countries that complemented each other in terms of commercial, economic, technical and cultural relations. In fourteen years of war, Agostinho Neto had not become hostile towards Portugal: he was simply an adversary of Portuguese colonialism. But he seemed to think that Angola's possible future relations with Brazil would be much more promising than those with Portugal. For Portugal was not a tropical, ethnically mixed country with a large territory and abundant natural resources. Unlike Brazil it didn't have a large population struggling to overcome colonial backwardness, to develop, to industrialize. Portugal was European and would grow increasingly close to Europe, moving away from Africa and from Brazil – which he saw as very similar to Angola.

After Nairobi I went to Angola. I visited the Portuguese High Commissioner, and the three prime ministers – one from each movement – that constituted the Transitional Government, recently established in accordance with the Alvor Agreement. The Portuguese High Commissioner, Silva Cardoso, was an Air Force general. In my view he was not the best choice for the job, as it was unlikely he could exercise a very strong leadership of the Portuguese army troops, the largest force in Angola. Nor, as a politician, did he sufficiently differentiate the three movements from each other: in our brief, friendly conversation he accused Holden Roberto of bringing Zairan troops lent by Mobutu to Luanda, the MPLA of not making an effort to disarm the population of the Luandan musseques (or slums), which he considered very dangerous – and finally he implied that of the three party leaders aspiring to govern independent Angola, Savimbi “was the least evil for the Portuguese”.

As for my visits to the three Prime Ministers, MPLA's Lopo do Nascimento was very welcoming and affirmed that the opening of a Special Representation in Luanda was an excellent idea. It was also clear that he knew Brazil well, and understood the potential for cooperation between us. UNITA's José

N'Dele was also cordial and pleasant, but he avoided any political declaration about the other parties: at the time UNITA still operated as a sort of pendulum between Holden Roberto and Agostinho Neto. Finally the FNLA's Pinnock Eduardo referred to his party's fear that the musseques (the flat slums or "mud towns" surrounding Luanda) were armed, and neither the Portuguese nor the MPLA were doing anything to disarm them. His party, the FLNA, would have to take the initiative. For this purpose they were bringing more troops from Zaire to Luanda.

I kept remembering the events of September of the previous year, when white settlers, dissatisfied with the Carnation Revolution, had organized punitive expeditions, true pogroms, against the musseques. Had it not been these attacks that led the blacks of the poor districts to arm themselves? I had asked that question in my conversation with Lopo do Nascimento, and he agreed. And in advance told me a secret that was more than a mere excuse for MPLA's inaction with regard to the musseques: the weapons in the musseques were also an inconvenience for the MPLA. Not because it feared an attack. His argument had to do with the difference between the MPLA's troops and the armed musseque population. The MPLA had fourteen years' experience of fighting against Portugal, mainly in the Angolan hinterland and in exile. Its regular forces that only just reached the capital were certainly armed, but they were also politically conscious and disciplined. The people of the musseques, conversely, did not yet have a developed, uniform political consciousness: they reacted to events spontaneously and rather anarchically. And it was beginning to build a power allied to the MPLA – the so called Popular Power – but not totally controlled by the MPLA. It had its own district leaderships, and now that the MPLA had established itself in Luanda for the first time, whenever it tried to disarm the people, whenever it tried to select who could and who could not have weapons in the musseques – all the weapons would be hidden, disappearing as if by magic. If the MPLA couldn't disarm them, if the Portuguese troops couldn't do it without a major conflict, the musseques would keep their arms. In fact, just like the slums and ghettos of all large cities of the world, they always had – and some of their leaders came from criminal origins. Worse still, if the FLNA tried to disarm the musseques later on, as it intended, it would merely increase their firepower – because they would capture the FLNA's weapons. In the poor areas of Luanda even the children carried weapons. They built their own little toy guns, with bits of pipe, nails and

rubber bands – but these were lethal toys, for they could fire real bullets. And bullets and weapons of all calibres were being stolen from the Portuguese troops, and from Holden's and Savimbi's troops in Luanda, even from the MPLA itself. That is: as Luanda was filled with the troops from the three movements, the so-called “popular power”, sheltered in the musseques, also prepared itself for war.

Through Prime Minister José N'Dele I arranged an interview with Savimbi in Silva Porto, a small town on the plateau where the UNITA leader was born. I went by plane to Nova Lisboa (now Huambo) and from there by car, in the company of a Consulate worker who had been a sergeant in the Portuguese command troops and a Portuguese engineer from Nova Lisboa who had been an army captain and fighting the guerrillas in Angola. It was a long journey, and going through the region where they had so recently been fighting the MPLA, the two men could not avoid reminiscing about their war adventures. The MPLA was taken seriously in all the war encounters they both remembered, but when they spoke of the UNITA their conversation took on a frivolous tone, as if Savimbi was an enemy not to be taken into account or treated seriously. Mockingly, they said that Savimbi had never confronted the Portuguese; it had just “run around the area, very rarely fighting and only against the MPLA”.

In Silva Porto I met Savimbi in a small provincial hotel. The area immediately opposite the hotel, the steps that led to the second floor and the room where Savimbi received me were full of heavily armed guerrilla soldiers. Why all that firepower in a tranquil small town in the hinterland that happened to be his birthplace? Hadn't Zappa been received by Agostinho Neto alone, at an office in the second floor of a building in the centre of Dar-es-Salaam? Didn't the leaders of Holden Roberto's FLNA live in the Hotel Trópico in Luanda, didn't they walk around the heavily armed city with a few discreet bodyguards, if that? Why did Savimbi need all that firepower around him? It could only be a way to impress visitors. Maybe those men were the only forces they had. As for the conversation I had with him, it was as relaxed as it could be, with armed guards posted all round the room. I described the new Brazilian policy. He neither criticized the previous policy nor praised the current one. I proposed the creation of a Special Representation in Luanda. I had hardly begun to expound the reasons that had led Brazil to take such a step when Savimbi agreed. I also tried to get him interested in the cooperation Brazil could offer Angola, but I had the clear impression that Savimbi knew

very little or nothing about Brazil and had never thought of any cooperation with us. He merely said, in a lukewarm voice, that UNITA could “look into the subject”. In the air of the room there hovered a vague expectation. I could not say what Savimbi wanted to hear. Brazil was proposing to be impartial and equitable. It would just observe the struggle for power among the three Angolan movements without taking sides. And Savimbi was doing the same. Wasn’t he also hesitating and placing UNITA in a kind of auction between the FNLA and the MPLA? Wasn’t he the one that white colonialists preferred because he had never truly fought against Portugal and always fought against the MPLA? If I had publicity support, money and arms to give UNITA, Savimbi would certainly be interested. But impartiality? Savimbi seemed to me to be a politician of the here and now, of the give and take, of the fast buck. He would accept the devil as an ally to get into government – and indeed he did, when he became South Africa’s ally. But as for a Brazil that didn’t have any advantages to offer him, he just wasn’t very interested.

I soon said goodbye and returned to Luanda, for my mission had been fully accomplished: Savimbi had agreed to the Special Representation. I had asked for an interview with Holden Roberto to be held in Kinshasa, in Zaire and while I waited for it to happen I used my time to pay a visit to some of the new Transitional Government ministers: Saidy Mingas (MPLA, Planning), Dr Samuel Abrigada (FNLA, Health) and Prof. Jeronimo Wanga (UNITA, Education). Those were the Ministries that would be of greatest interest as the objects of an apolitical, non-partisan cooperation with Brazil.

The Health Minister, Dr. Abrigada, was the first to receive me. He immediately told me that if I hadn’t come to see him, he would have come to see me. He wanted an invitation to go to Brazil. He also wanted Brazil’s immediate help in sending Brazilian doctors to Angola. Portuguese doctors were leaving the country, and he intended to bring in some three hundred professionals to staff the out-patient clinics and hospitals that his Ministry was going to build along the border between Angola and Zaire, from where all the Angolan refugees would return to vote for the FNLA in the forthcoming elections. He wanted doctors of all specialities, and he even had a list of them with the required numbers. And while he spoke, he showed me a wall-map with coloured pins indicating the remote points on Angola’s northern border where outpatient clinics and hospitals were to be created. I promised Dr Abrigada I would do something about his intended journey to Brazil, and

quickly escaped from his imaginative and unrealizable health plans that revealed his party's electoral anemia.

Next I visited Professor Jeronimo Wanga of UNITA, Minister of Education. I told him about the visit I had paid to Savimbi in Silva Porto. I told him of the efforts Mobral¹² had been making in Brazil to eradicate illiteracy, and I raised the possibility of agreements between Brazilian universities and the University of Luanda, which was already losing its Portuguese lecturers. None of this diverted Wanga from his hieratic ministerial style, so I decided to use shock treatment. I told him that Portugal always had agreements with Brazil to permit the unlimited circulation of books published in Portuguese between the two countries, but that with regard to Angola, in spite of the great thirst for books that independence had generated – the few bookshops were permanently crowded – Portugal still imposed a rigid quota for the importation of all Brazilian books. No more than US\$ 80,000 a year was allowed for Angola to import publications from Brazil, and this still left the former colony culturally tied to the former colonial power – even in the transition to independence. Wanga, an educator, wasn't moved even by this. He just vaguely promised to “look at the matter” as if he was doing me a commercial favour. I said goodbye as cordially as I could, and left feeling very disappointed.

The following day I visited the Planning Minister, Saíd Mingas of the MPLA. Young, educated, an economist and the son of a well-known Luanda family – he was the brother of a famous Angolan composer and singer – Mingas made the same good impression on me as Lopo do Nascimento and Agostinho Neto before him. He knew Brazil quite well, expected a lot from the possibilities of cooperation between Angola and Brazil, and believed that with the Special Representation established in Luanda this cooperation would soon bear fruit. It was evident that the relevant Brazilian authorities could establish a good dialogue on planning with Mingas. It was a good idea to invite him to go to Brazil.

I still had to go to Kinshasa to have the interview with Holden Roberto. But as the date of the interview still gave me enough time, I paid a visit to Agostinho Neto who had arrived in Luanda on 4th February amidst great demonstrations of popular jubilation. He was staying in one of the official houses near the Government Palace that used to function as the colonial officers' residence. I arranged the interview by phone and was received that same

¹² TN – Brazilian Literacy Movement.

afternoon. Two guards let me go through the small front garden, I rang the bell, and Agostinho Neto himself opened the door and asked me in, wearing a sports shirt. He offered me a coffee, and we sat down to have our conversation. I congratulated him for the reception he had had in Luanda – which I had seen – on an ordinary working day that had become an unofficial holiday because of his arrival. Then I decided to test my impressions of the Ministers of Health and Education. Remembering that Agostinho Neto was a physician, I started very softly broaching the question of the public health problems in Angola. Then I mentioned Dr Abrigada's plans for close and immediate cooperation with Brazil now that the Portuguese doctors were leaving. But Agostinho Neto didn't let me continue. He said frankly that Abrigada was not even a physician, he was a doctor of theology – and his plans were simply deranged. He knew them very well because a large number of the doctors still in Angola, who worked in the local hospitals or at the Ministry of Health, were MPLA members. And he emphasized, very pertinently: if Brazil had three hundred doctors to send to Angola, it would rather send them to the Amazon – where the Brazilian government was building the Transamazônica road.

As for the exodus of the Portuguese doctors, he was sorry and thought it unnecessary – but he didn't believe it was such a tragic event or that it would do the Angolan population much harm. The few large cities in Angola where these doctors were concentrated, with their well-to-do and profitable white patients, certainly would feel the exodus. But the black Angolans, even in the cities, were poor and could not pay doctors' fees. In the rural areas, as they didn't even speak Portuguese, they could hardly make themselves understood to those doctors that treated them free of charge as a charitable gesture. They treated their ailment as best they could, with native herbal medicines – or simply died without any treatment. As for Abrigada's plans, he emphasized that "they are not designed for public health in Angola, they are designed for the electoral health of his party". And they would not be carried out: even the Portuguese professionals remaining in Angola would not take part in these projects, because they would not be willing to live in these remote border areas. With regard to the type of medical care that the MPLA would recommend for Angola, Agostinho Neto told me it would be mainly preventive. Public health services would be extended, nurses would be trained, new doctors would complete their undergraduate courses. They would be people from the various regions of the country, able to speak with patients in their native tongue.

Native African medicine, with its herbs and teas that often worked, would be studied and reassessed in those aspects that might have a scientific basis. In this – training doctors and nurses, the manufacturing drugs and vaccines, building and managing hospitals and out-patient clinics – Brazil could help and teach Angola. And – who knows? – perhaps even learn something in the process. . .

I reminded Agostinho Neto of the shortage of Brazilian books in Angola, even of books on medicine. And I mentioned that the Portuguese government was still imposing a quota of a mere eighty thousand US dollars a year for the importation of any books published in Brazil. This brief information was enough to make Agostinho Neto shift in his seat, feeling how absurd this limitation was, and ask me for more information on the matter. He promised me that the MPLA would look into the matter as soon as possible to try and abolish this discriminating and typically colonial restriction.

That evening I took the plane to Kinshasa, where I was to meet Holden Roberto two days later. I went to visit him at the FNLA headquarters in the centre of the Zairian capital, and taking with me the Brazilian Ambassador in Zaire, Braulino Botelho Barbosa, who had already had some brief contacts with Holden in the social and official circles of Kinshasa. Holden received us cordially and informally and seemed much more friendly and lively than Savimbi. However, his loquacity made it very difficult for me to expound in a few words the new Brazilian policy towards Angola, and tell him that Brazil felt the need to open a political representation – a sort of advance embassy – in Luanda. Holden immediately agreed with the idea of the Special Representation, and briefly praised the new Brazilian policy. Not revealing at any time any bad feelings he may have had about our previous policy, he quickly resumed his speech, re-starting his narcissistic account of the FLNA's activities. In it he, Holden, figured as the only liberator of Angola, as the greatest enemy of the Portuguese in general – and in particular of the Portuguese communists, who were hoping to hand Angola over to Agostinho Neto. He regarded himself as the champion of Western civilization, of democracy and of the Christian principles in Africa, and so on and so forth. This speech, which really surprised me, ended up with Holden waving a leaflet in the air, the Treaty of Alvor, and with eyes shining with exaltation saying: "This treaty was my doing! The Portuguese simply wanted to hand Angola over to Agostinho Neto. Savimbi was afraid to get involved in the negotiation of a treaty and lose Angola to Agostinho Neto. Then I showed Savimbi that if we were together, if we presented our points of view in perfect consonance,

neither the Portuguese communists nor Agostinho Neto would predominate. And that is how I, alone, wrote all the articles of this treaty!”...

From Kinshasa I returned to Nairobi straight away. More than twenty days had gone by since I had spoken with Marcelino dos Santos. On my arrival in Nairobi I tried to find out if Brazil had already sent some donation to Mozambique, as it had promised. The answer was no: no donation had been sent. The Itamaraty insisted that FRELIMO should present a list of priorities, a sort of request for help. I rang Zappa and advised him to forget this list once and for all, and to give me the instructions to revisit FRELIMO and find out about their view on the Special Representation. Zappa told me to wait for new instructions. Several days went by before these new instructions arrived: it was no longer necessary to request the list, no donation was on offer – but instead I should suggest to Marcelino dos Santos that representatives of the Higher Institute of War (ESG), on a visit to Africa, also visited Lourenço Marques. The ESG had been invited to go to South Africa and refused. I rang Zappa again to complain about the instructions received. He told me there was nothing he could do to alter them. My duty was to carry them out, even if this led to disaster.

I then got on a plane to Dar-es-Salaam to find out Marcelino dos Santos’ answer about the creation of the Special Representation in Lourenço Marques. I also had to carry out the instruction about the ESG’s visit, and I was aware that my second interview with Marcelino dos Santos could not be as tranquil as the first one. I began by letting him know that the leaders of the three Angolan movements had already agreed with Brazil about the creation of the Special Representation in Angola. It had seemed a good idea to them in view of the possibilities it created for closer cooperation and better political understanding between the two countries in the transitional stage then beginning. I concluded by asking what answer FRELIMO’s competent organs had given to the same proposal made by Brazil in relation to Mozambique.

Marcelino dos Santos answered slowly, emphasizing each word, almost each syllable, as if to better transmit the collective decision of which he was the spokesperson: “FRELIMO could not accept the Brazilian proposal, conceding to Brazil a special status in the anticipated establishment of diplomatic relations with Mozambique, because, the minds and hearts of the Mozambicans, after having suffered fourteen years of war and seeing Brazil support Portugal all that time, were not accustomed to regarding Brazil as a friendly country”. “Therefore” – he concluded – “Brazil should wait until the

independence of Mozambique was finalized, and only then make a formal proposal of diplomatic relations to the competent bodies”.

I answered Marcelino dos Santos saying I respected FRELIMO's decision and would pass it on to my government, but that I could not refrain from deploring that such decision had been made on the grounds of a supposition – in my view unfounded – that Brazil was not “a friend of Mozambique”. I then pointed out that Brazil was far away and very introverted in its policy in view of its development problems, and that we only received scarce and distorted news of the war in Mozambique because the colonial powers tended to hide from the world the struggles occurring in their possessions and Portuguese nationals were very numerous and influential in Brazil. But in spite of all the limitations or distortions of the information we had on Mozambique, or on the war the Mozambican population was waging against the Portuguese, Brazil on principle had never been in favour of colonialism, it had always manifested its wish to see the war in Mozambique end as soon as possible, and it had always hoped Portugal would find a peaceful solution for decolonization in Africa. For this reason Brazil's vote at the UN had always tended to abstention, and even if it could not have satisfied FRELIMO, it irritated Salazarism. Besides – I continued – there are degrees of friendship and enmity. The countries that could not be regarded as friends of Mozambique were those that had always voted in favour of Portuguese colonialism – such as South Africa, for example, or the NATO countries that had often been accused by FRELIMO of providing Portugal with weapons. This Brazil had never done.

But after the war had finished and Mozambique was beginning a transitional stage towards independence, FRELIMO would necessarily have to deal with Portugal every day, both before and after independence – and this certainly deserved our attention. The same would be true of South Africa, given the economic ties that had always existed between the two countries – and, I presumed, to the main NATO countries, as Mozambique could not avoid having political relations with them as soon as possible, still in the transitional phase or as soon as it became independent.

And what is more, if Mozambican hearts and minds formed the erroneous impression that Brazil was not a friend, the best way to dispel it would be by allowing Brazil to be present in Lourenço Marques as soon as possible, cooperating with Mozambique. This is why we had proposed the creation of the Special Representation.

Marcelino dos Santos spoke again to tell me that my observations were pertinent from an exclusively Brazilian point of view, but that the Mozambicans did not see it from the same perspective. FRELIMO had opened an office in Rio de Janeiro in 1963 especially to let the Brazilian population know about the drama of the anti-colonial war. That official diplomatic representation of a country not yet independent corresponded, inversely, to the formal diplomatic representation that we now wanted to open in a country where the independence process was still incomplete. But in 1964, FRELIMO's office in Rio was ransacked by the police, and its workers imprisoned and tortured. Worse still, they had been threatened with expulsion to Portugal – where they would have been thrown into the PIDE'S dungeons. And this disastrous expulsion was avoided only because Senegal's President, Leopold Senghor, interceded with Brazil on FRELIMO's behalf. Also the value I attributed to Brazil's abstention votes at the UN could be acceptable from a purely procedural, juridical or even political perspective. But in politics it was not possible to neglect the sentimental factor, originating from greater affinities and historical expectations. Brazil had also been a colony. In Bahia it had bravely fought for its independence; it had Tiradentes and Tomás Antonio Gonzaga, the latter exiled in Mozambique. Brazil, by origin and culture, is quite African, and it owes a lot to Africa. For all this, Mozambique had always expected Brazil's support, which in moral terms would carry a lot of weight with Portugal and the world. Brazil's abstention vote, therefore, had never been sufficient. A positive vote from Brazil in favour of Mozambique would probably have stopped the Portuguese belligerence; it could even have permitted Mozambique to see a quicker ending of the war and an earlier independence.

I continued the interview, then, because my mission had not been totally accomplished. I reminded him that after we had tried – Bastian Pinto, Zappa and I – to have continual contacts with FRELIMO, if the Special Representation were not accepted these contacts would be interrupted at a very important stage. The old Consulate General in Lourenço Marques would soon be left vacant, as the current incumbent had already been transferred. Wouldn't it be worthwhile to find other formulas, to avoid this interruption of political contacts? Wouldn't it be advisable, for instance, to get prominent Brazilians, or Brazilian institutions that might influence our policies, to visit Mozambique during the transitional period? In relation to this I reminded him of the visit the ESG would be paying to various African

countries in the near future. It had refused an invitation to go to South Africa. Wouldn't it be beneficial for it to visit Mozambique now, so that it might have a positive future influence on the formal relations that would be eventually established?

This time Marcelino answered me with short sentences, even with certain harshness. He told me that the contacts with the Consulate General had never existed. The Consulate General had credentials to Portugal, it dealt with the colonial society, in fact it got on well with PIDE. Closed, it would not be missed by FRELIMO. As for the suggestion of the ESG's visit, the answer was absolutely negative. As for any other official visits of Brazilian individuals or institutions in the transitional period, if they wanted to contact FRELIMO, they would have to request a meeting that would have to be previously approved by FRELIMO itself.

I then took my leave. Marcelino and his assistants saw me out. My mission had come to an end.

I went back to Nairobi and informed the Itamaraty in detail about the results of the conversations with FRELIMO, and then returned to London. In my view Mozambique's very resentful and not very consistent position was eminently political: FRELIMO first wanted to see how Brazil was going to behave in Angola now that a Special Representation would be opened there. Relations with Mozambique would certainly depend on what we did in Angola. And Brazil would only be able to have relations of trust with black Africa, in the longer run, if it got on well with the new Portuguese-speaking countries in that continent. The Special Representation in Luanda would therefore gain a greater dimension and a decisive importance to our future relations with Africa. It would become the experimental laboratory for relations with the whole continent.

III – The Scarabotolo Mission

Back in London, I devoted myself to suggesting a few practical measures to the Itamaraty that would be necessary to make the work of the future Special Representation in Angola easier. Foreseeing the exodus, we should not demand a visa of the Portuguese leaving for Brazil. They would travel as tourists, without any visa, as the legislation already permitted. Permanent visas would be granted when they arrived in Rio and before they retrieved their luggage.

Not only should the Consul in Luanda be transferred, as the Itamaraty had already decided, but all the Portuguese nationals working at the Consulate, some of them with close links to colonial interests, should also leave for other posts and be replaced by Brazilians.

The Consulate's residence in Luanda would need an official car. And the building could do with some small alterations: a wall in the garden, a water tank, a power generator, all to give it the minimum safety conditions in situations of panicky emigration and of the armed struggle that might occur.

Except for the car, none of my other requests were promptly dealt with by the Itamaraty. I was still in London, with instructions to leave and take on the Special Representation that had been created with much publicity in the Brazilian press, when I received some very surprising news: Minister Hélio Scarabotolo, Head of the Department of Protocol¹³, was coming to Africa on a fourth mission "to present credentials to the Transitional Government". Scarabotolo made a brief visit to Luanda, had a meeting with the Portuguese High Commissioner, maybe visited the three Prime Ministers – and bought for the Special Representation one of the cars used by the Brazilian consul leaving Angola. This vehicle was identical, in its model and bright colour, to the car of the Zairean Consul – Mobutu's representative and a partner of Holden Roberto. And as both the Brazilian and the Zairean flags are green and yellow, in the struggle that soon broke out in Luanda, the car would increase rather than reduce the threat to the Brazilian representative.

In terms of protocol, Scarabotolo's trip – with its publicized objective of "presenting the credentials of another representative" – was just as odd as the Special Representation with its "Embassy status" that Brazil was going to create in Luanda. Ambassadors always present their own credentials. In face of the negative results of the conversations with FRELIMO, the Itamaraty could have taken longer to create a Representation in Luanda or even given it up all together. This would not have been noticed in Brazil, in Africa, in the world. However it preferred – and in my view rightly so – to face the challenge and to open the Representation in Luanda to which it sent me. But in Brazil,

¹³ TN – The Department of Protocol is responsible for: the physical arrangement of all public events regarding Brazil's relation with other nations; part of the correspondence exchanged between the President of the Republic and other Heads of State; the planning and execution of the President's and Vice-President's inaugurations; their official visits abroad; matters related to medals and decorations; receptions and other official events at the Itamaraty Palace; the visit to Brazil of Heads of State and other foreign dignitaries.

the publicity related to the opening of the Representation was designed around the “Scarabotolo Mission”. The idea was that those sectors of Brazilian public opinion that were indifferent or opposed to Angolan independence would believe that Brazil was going to Luanda not to be impartial, but – as the Itamaraty proclaimed – to help Portugal. This was possible because Scarabotolo was regarded as a conservative diplomat, had excellent relations with Portugal where he had served and had become known as Chief of Staff of Gama e Silva, the Minister of Justice at the time of Institutional Act number 5. For all this it would be inconceivable to imagine that he would agree to contribute to a Brazilian policy in Africa in which a left-wing movement might have any chance of taking office.

Actually, from the moment of its conception, the Alvor Agreement (and for this reason Holden Roberto could be so proud of assigning himself the exclusive paternity of the document) seemed to me a game with marked cards. If UNITA and the FNLA united, both counting on the American, British and South African support and resources, they could win the election. And if a civil war started in Angola, as the other Movements counted on those same foreign resources and had the military help of South Africa and of Zaire nearby, the MPLA would have very little chance of getting to power.

Impartiality towards the three Angolan Movements, the policy proclaimed by the Itamaraty when it opened the Special Representation, pleased all sides – in Angola, in Brazil, throughout the world. In the beginning it raised no criticism because it seemed quite unreal. But it would soon involve us in a process that became increasingly complex when it became clear that the situation in Angola would tend to favour the MPLA. In this case, the decisions we had to make could be very problematic in the world and in Brazil itself.

So I went to Angola with instructions to be neutral, not to favour any party in elections or struggles that might happen. I was to be the executor of a policy that was very Brazilian, apparently inspired by Machado de Assis’ “to the victor, the potatoes”. And the road to be followed in this policy was at first very broad and well-paved, but it petered out into a narrow track with potholes and no visible signposts, that might be leading to a blind alley.

IV – The Special Representation in Luanda in Convulsion

I arrived in Luanda to be Brazil’s Special Representative to the Transitional Government, on 22 March 1975, a weekend. Counsellor Cyro Espírito Santo

Cardoso, whom I had invited to be my only collaborator, would arrive from Brasília at the beginning of the following week with two assistants, Ivete Vargas and Paulo Andrade Pinto, both on their first foreign posting.

I had hardly finished unpacking when the telephone rang. It was from the reception of the hotel: another recently arrived Brazilian, the journalist Fernando Câmara Cascudo, wanted to pay me a visit. We met almost immediately. Câmara Cascudo worked for *O Globo*. He had come to Luanda to help in Holden Roberto's electoral campaign, to guide and modernize the FNLA's newspaper called *Província de Angola*. The very title of the newspaper in my view seemed inadequate in a country on the way to independence. It still smelled of colonialism, of the fictional "Overseas Provinces"... But this is not what Câmara Cascudo came to modernize. He was interested in probing me. He could not in any way believe that Brazil might have come to Angola to be impartial, equitable and neutral. He insisted that, deep down, Brazil must have its preferences. For, he said, "the MPLA was communist, and UNITA was an insignificant movement created by the Portuguese themselves to fight the MPLA." By elimination, – this journalist deduced, Brazil could only be supporting Holden Roberto and the FNLA – even if I didn't want to reveal this preference.

To dispel any illusion that Câmara Cascudo might have with regard to the mission I was heading, I said that the declarations made by the Itamaraty to the press about Brazil's impartiality and equanimity in face of the three Angolan Movements were absolutely serious. And that I and my collaborators would carry it out literally throughout the course of my mission. As for my own beliefs, I told him that we Brazilians had little information about Africa and about the forces vying for power in Angola. So we had not come to Luanda to win elections or civil wars. We had come to establish normal relations with the Portuguese colonies that were becoming independent in order to have good relations with Africa as a whole in the long run. For this we could not start by "betting on one or other of the parties". Impartiality was essential, not involvement in electoral disputes or struggles that might occur. For this same reason, I continued, the role he, as a Brazilian journalist, might play in the service of the FLNA was rather dangerous. He should restrict himself to giving his employer technical and specialized guidance, but he should never get involved in partisan activities. And it was still less appropriate that his actions, as a Brazilian, could be at any time confounded with the actions of the workers that were there in an official mission. This would place the Special

Representation in a situation of confrontation with the other Angolan parties, jeopardizing the Brazilian policy.

Cyro Cardoso and the two assistants he was bringing with him arrived on the following Monday. Since we were all staying at the same hotel – the Trópico – we could start work immediately. The office of the Special Representation had to be in the hotel, because the Brazilian Consul in Luanda, who had already been transferred to another post, was taking a long time to leave – he was still occupying the residence in the Consulate building. We needed stationery, typewriters, and more funds for the Consulate: its budget wouldn't even cover the cost of telegrams. And later we would have to enliven that sleepy office and make it more dynamic. As soon as the Consul left, we would need to deal as effectively as possible with the Portuguese exodus, as well as satisfactorily fulfilling our political mission of keeping the Itamaraty informed about the Angolan political situation on a daily basis. Before anything else, we needed a telex. Temporarily, we could use the hotel's machine in daily competition with the foreign journalists also staying there. But we needed one at the Consulate, and the shops in Luanda no longer had any. We would have to import one from Europe if we wanted to keep in permanent contact with the Itamaraty. Also, if Brazil was coming to Angola to stay – before and after Independence – we had to start thinking of the future Embassy. With the departure of the Portuguese families, the supply of houses for sale or to let was huge, and at very low prices. Wouldn't it be a good idea to start thinking of the installation of the future Embassy in such a financially favourable situation?

We began to get involved in the practical life of the city, dealing with the local shops, wealthy house owners, engineers, architects and foremen who might plan and later carry out the needed alterations in the building we had provisionally chosen for the future Embassy. This activity seemed futile in a city that was visibly preparing itself for war, but it had some great advantages: we felt the population's pulse, its inclinations and dispositions. And we gave them a hope, even if very slender, that the situation wasn't going to be as bad as so many people expected. If Brazil was there, preparing to open an Embassy, to start building works, to stay, why did the Portuguese would have to leave in such a mad rush?

In fact we were also aware that everything was clearly deteriorating. The hotel I had known in February was no longer the same in March. There were few provisions. There were few workers. The old ones, Portuguese people, had left for Lisbon. The apprentices, black Angolans, were stuck at home for

days on end unable to come to work because of the fights that were breaking out in the musseques. For the same reason, trade was gradually stopping – and so was the building of houses. The harbour was almost inactive. Substantial military reinforcements started to arrive from Zaire to help Holden Roberto's FLNA's troops to finally make some effort to disarm the Popular Power. And in the outlying areas of the city, at every step, the FLNA and the MPLA confronted one another in rapid and bloody skirmishes that contributed to increase hostility. These fights also created the first “displaced persons”, or war refugees who run away in panic to the city centre. Savimbi's UNITA tried to be neutral in these conflicts in view of the pendular tactics it had adopted as a political party. With no military forces comparable to those of the other two movements, Savimbi resorted to feigned pacifism. Indeed, the elections that could only be held if there was peace were his only opportunity to exert genuine influence in coalition with one or the other of his opponents.

But these forces were not the only ones acting in that confused city at the beginning of the war. Portugal had around thirty thousand soldiers in Angola. The Carnation Revolution proceeded on its hesitant course in Portugal, and military schisms in Lisbon had immediate repercussions in Luanda. Would the Portuguese military forces eventually split up in Angola? PIDE, the well-known Portuguese secret police, had been extinct and its members were being arrested in Portugal, and its leaders were in prison. But in Angola it had been abolished only by decree. It had lost its offices and become itinerant. Its survival in Angola had previously been made possible by its role as an “anticommunist force”, supported by white colonialist groups that tried to form new parties after the Carnation Revolution. But not even the Portuguese themselves had recognized these groups as candidates for the government of independent Angola. Now, with the first conflicts in Luanda, with the appearance of the displaced and of desperate people who had been evicted from their houses on the outskirts of the city - PIDE was beginning to count on the rebellious mob that wandered the streets. It was available to take part in provocations against the black Angolan movements, or even against the Lisbon government and its intentions of making Angola independent.

So there were at least five forces at odds with each other in that initial confusion in Luanda, counting the Portuguese army, air force and navy as one, under the High Commissioner's orders. Almost every day, armed conflicts broke out here and there all over the city. They would begin far away in the musseques and nobody knew quite why or how. From the “mud city”, as a

circle of fire, it would gradually come closer to the “tarmac city” and would soon reach the centre of Luanda. It was in this city on the edge of panic, armed to the teeth, that the newspaper *Província de Angola*, under Câmara Cascudo’s guidance, started to imitate the Brazilian newspaper *O Globo*, with inflamed editorials in favour of the FLNA that the journalist wrote and printed on the first page. It also used a reheated version of the same slogans that the Médici Government had used in Brazil a few years before, in an apparently calmer environment: “Angola, love it or leave it!”.

While these conflicts on the periphery – but with centripetal tendencies developing, we also had to fulfil other formal obligations to represent Brazil. We had to visit the authorities, the High Commissioner, the Prime-Ministers of the three movements, other ministers (health, education and planning). With all these people we tried to coordinate the possible beginning of an apolitical cooperation between Brazil and Angola. It was also necessary for us formally to visit the Consular Corps in Luanda and talk with all those foreigners who had been living in the city for a long time, and might therefore have interesting observations to offer. Because of the conflicts in the streets, these visits were becoming increasingly dangerous.

My wife Ivony finally arrived from London. As soon as she arrived, with the experience acquired in other posts in similarly disturbed places, she decided to stock up and to organize, in the Consulate’s residence - now available – a sort of warehouse with bags of provisions, tins of food and whatever might be essential for a long stay in Luanda if the shops became empty and the war more intense. She ran all sorts of risks on these shopping expeditions, but thanks to her foresight we were able to survive for the rest of that year in Luanda, when the war did in fact become more intense.

The little we asked from the Itamaraty, in terms of administrative measures, took a long time to come and was always done imperfectly, or just by half. Our requests and suggestions seemed to fall into the usual bureaucratic cracks, in the routine of exchanges between divisions, departments, the Secretariat General, the Minister’s office... As if we were operating in normal conditions, and the Representation’s priorities were the same as those of the old, sleepy Consulate. The international press and even the Brazilian press daily highlighted the conflict in Luanda. Their reports were exaggerated, for there was some interest in arousing the world’s interest in events in Angola and blaming the MPLA. Then the African Department at the Itamaraty suddenly came to life, Zappa sent telegrams or rang, wanting to know how we were doing after the

latest skirmishes. But if the African Department sometimes worried too much, others delayed initiatives that were essential for our safety. They dragged their feet, sometimes even forgot our requests and suggestions and didn't even bother to reply.

In fact, the Itamaraty as a whole was not prepared to face those new circumstances, or to give us the necessary instruments for the execution of a new policy designed at the heights of the Presidency and the Minister's office. At the same time, for instance, Lebanon was sliding into civil war. But Brazil had no specific policy on Lebanon, and our diplomats had nothing special to do. The Ambassador could go on leave, the Embassy simply cease operations or even close down and be placed under the Lebanese gardener's care: it would make no difference. But Angola was totally different. We had come to be obstinate, to stay at all cost. And all the parties to the conflict, Portuguese and Angolans, expected something from Brazil: moral or political support, economic aid, or even military assistance. When they expected nothing, they at least wanted a permanent visa in a hurry, so they could escape from the war as soon as possible and migrate to Rio – for they felt Lisbon was “going communist”.

The least the Itamaraty could have done to help us – and I leave here my advice for similar situations that may arise in future – would have been to create an interdepartmental task force, designed to hasten the solution for the Special Representation's logistic and administrative problems. As this was not done, during that period we had to carry on our backs the Special Representation with staff shortages, very limited resources, and increased risks. We were responsible for that incredible, neutral diplomatic mission, with simultaneous credentials to three armed and absolutely antagonistic political movements. Plus a Consulate that when in operation issued five thousand permanent visas per month, probably an all-time record for the Itamaraty. And as if all this were not enough, we still had the task of setting up an Embassy that was ready – modestly furnished, without ornaments, but fully operational – on the day Angola finally became independent.

In April and May, as foreseen, the struggle grew more intense and reached the city centre. Public cleaning services ceased. There were frequent power cuts because one or the other of the transmission lines had been hit. The city water was no longer treated for lack of chlorine. The First of May holiday, that the MPLA hoped to celebrate for the first time in Luanda, served as an occasion to intensify and broaden the fighting – which was now waged in one

of the districts of the “tarmac city” itself. During the day Luanda lived in fear, and the curfew was anticipated from nine to six in the evening. The harbour, already inactive, began to be filled with huge piles of boxes. And the airport was always crowded with refugees who slept on the floor with their belongings waiting for any flight that might take them away from Angola.

Contradictory official statements came from the High Commissioner and from all the parties, and were broadcast. They blamed the latest conflicts on one or other of the Angolan movements. They also often reported the action of white provocateurs trying to bring the movements into confrontation. When the day-time fighting ended, when the heavy weapons of the Angolan movements fell silent, lighter weapons opened up in the wealthier districts – guns shot at random, in the dark, through gaps in the windows or from the terraces of smart buildings. Their aim was to provoke the Angolan movements into continuing the fight in the hope they would destroy one another, to induce the UN to send a peace-keeping force or foreign powers to intervene. It was on a relatively calm night like this, without any conflict in the nearby areas, that a lateral façade of the Brazilian Consulate was hit – from top to bottom, along its entire length – by a burst of machine gun fire. Something similar had happened at the nearby Italian Consulate. After this we had to place iron-plated boards on the more exposed windows of the building.

As the fighting in Luanda became broader and more intense, it began to affect the rest of the country. Previously calm rural towns were hit by the seismic waves of that political earthquake of which the epicentre was the capital. In every one of those small towns, whichever movement was stronger expelled its adversaries by gunfire. It was because of this that Holden Roberto's FLNA took over some villages and towns in the North, near the Zairean border, and UNITA expelled the MPLA from some villages near the central plateau on the Zambian border. The MPLA controlled all the coastal towns except Luanda. In the capital, because of the massive presence of Portuguese troops, the struggle was more complex and undefined. There were also many refugees from small rural towns where actual fighting had taken place. The inactive harbour, the airport crowded with refugees, the presence of Portuguese troops, all this prevented the MPLA from receiving any help from its usual allies, the Socialist countries. But the American Congress continued to vote for aid to Holden Roberto's FLNA. These funds were disguised as aid for the Zairean government. And South Africa started to help Savimbi from the border with Namibia, sending to Angola some “mercenaries” who when

captured immediately confessed they were soldiers in the regular South African army.

The permanent fighting in Luanda and the threat of internationalization of the conflict worried the Portuguese government, and also some African ones. For this reason, in an attempt to re-establish peace, the Angolan movements got together at the Conference of Nakuru in Kenya, under Jomo Kenyatta's auspices. In the Conference's final communiqué some concrete issues were provisionally solved: the PIDE's agents that still incited conflict in Angola would definitely be expelled from the country, and to replace the old Portuguese police, already disbanded, a combined police force of the three Movements would be created. Besides these initiatives, the Nakuru Conference could just make a few recommendations: it suggested that the clauses of the Alvor Agreement providing for the drawing up of an electoral law and of a Constitution for independence on 11 November should be actually implemented.

The decisions taken in Kenya by the three parties began to be implemented, with regard to the expulsion of PIDE from Angola and the creation of the combined police force, whose uniforms were bought from Brazil – but they did not go very far. There was already too much conflict. Fighting re-started in Luanda between the FLNA and the MPLA in mid-July, and this time there were no temporary cease-fires because combatants were exhausted or ammunition was lacking. Battles were waged simultaneously in every district: heavy weapons, bazookas, mortars, even cannons were used on both sides, night and day. Many of the FLNA's quarters, euphemistically called People's Houses, were razed or burnt to the ground, and the FLNA was expelled from Luanda after a week and a half of uninterrupted fighting. Then, in a battle that lasted one hour, Savimbi's UNITA was also expelled. In spite of this, some ministers of both expelled parties still stayed in the capital, apparently taking part in the now fictitious tripartite Government with the Portuguese High Commissioner at its head. The FLNA's troops that had taken over some small towns in the North, on the Zairean border, had also advanced towards Luanda and were in Caxito, a strategically important junction where all the roads going North met. They threatened the town of Quifangondo, where the installations supplying water to the capital were located. Often there was no water in the city for days on end.

The MPLA was now in total control of Luanda, but it still had to coexist with the Portuguese troops under the High Commissioner's command. We

were entering a period in which the course of political events in Lisbon would determine events in Angola. The question was: could the High Commissioner, Silva Cardoso - who at an earlier stage was very concerned about the arming of the musseques, and because of that was totally opposed to the MPLA and closer to the FNLA – still remain in his post with the MPLA in power?

The provisions of the Alvor Agreement relating to the preparation of an electoral law and a Constitution by the three Angolan parties now appeared completely impractical. Once again the question was: would the Portuguese government stick to its purpose of removing its troops from Angola on the day set for independence, even if this meant leaving Luanda in the hands of the MPLA?

We were thus entering a period of indefinition and political expectation which some foreign governments would soon try to influence. As soon as the fighting in Luanda ended in victory for the MPLA, the British Government removed its nationals from Angola, quite suddenly closing its Consulate General soon afterwards. All other countries, including (at my suggestion) Brazil, believed this attitude to be too hasty, and decided to keep their representations in Luanda open. The intensity of the fighting during the previous stage, however, suggested the need for caution. So all the foreign representations soon began to remove their (non-official) nationals from Angola, via Luanda. So did we, using the Cabo de Orange, a ship of the Lóide Company that had been anchored outside the harbour for the last three months, unable to moor at the inactive quay that was now full of ships and boxes. The Cabo de Orange took to Brazil all the Brazilians living in Angola who wanted to leave. In total, there were about thirty of our countrymen and two Portuguese women who had worked at the Consulate and had been “displaced” from their flats in the fighting in the capital. With the expulsion of the FNLA and UNITA and the consequent end of the daily fighting, life in the city gradually became calmer. The exodus of the Portuguese, with the help of the Portuguese government, was now frantic: the number of TAP flights was increased, and large ships were chartered and sent to Luanda to take away the settlers, their belongings and their cars. VARIG also increased the number of flights to Luanda and suspended first class in order to increase its payload. During this time we reached the apex of our activities in the Brazilian Consulate, issuing five thousand permanent visas in a single month.

Now that it had control of the city, the MPLA started to have administrative concerns. It still had to fight FLNA troops near Caxito, about thirty kilometres

north of Luanda, and at the same time mobilize the population to get the city cleaned up. A mission sent by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was coming to Luanda to verify which of the Angolan parties had de facto popularity and the conditions to govern the country after independence. The OUA's mission would visit Luanda and Ambriz – the improvised capital Holden Roberto had established in the north – and also Nova Lisboa (now Huambo) on the plateau, where the forces of UNITA and the FNLA were concentrated. Only then would it give its written opinion. For this visit Luanda's population worked hard. And when the OAU's mission finally arrived it found a much less dirty capital. It was also received with two large and simultaneous MPLA rallies: one at the airport on the mission's arrival, the other opposite the Government Palace. At the Palace the Portuguese High Commissioner and the MPLA's Prime Minister, Lopo do Nascimento, received the African delegates at a cocktail party, which I also attended.

In this phase of relative peace in the city, the Head of the Itamaraty's African Department, Italo Zappa, also visited Luanda on his way back from a conference in Kampala, Uganda. He arrived one afternoon and was due to fly back to Brazil via South Africa the following morning. He thought that we – my wife and I, Cyro Cardoso and the other Brazilians at the Special Representation - were all very pale and thin because of the hardships we had gone through, and of excessive work. Concerned for our physical wellbeing, or influenced by the pessimism of a brief chat he had had with UNITA's Prime Minister (who was nominally still part of the already non-existent tripartite government, but was getting ready to leave the next day), Zappa proposed that we should simply close the Special Representation as the British had done with their Consulate General. I was strongly against this suggestion. Even recognizing Zappa's abilities and his capacity to improvise policy, I could not expect that in the two months that separated us from Angola's independence he would have found other formulas capable of strengthening our relationship with the Portuguese colonies becoming independents as the Special Representation had done. Moreover, in March we had arrived in Luanda promising impartiality, equanimity and neutrality vis-à-vis the Angolan movements. So how could we in August close the Special Representation, now that the MPLA was clearly the victor and was ready to take office, with broad, unquestionable popular support? If we left, we would be abandoning an entire policy with no other to replace it, and we would not be quickly forgiven. Zappa accepted my arguments, and next day he flew to South Africa

and then to Brazil. But he suggested we should all go on leave to Brazil for a rest after months of war. Gil Ouro Preto from Paris and Sergio Telles from Brasilia would replace me and Cyro in Angola.

In late August, then, I went to Brazil, summoned for “consultations”. Arriving in Brasilia, I discovered to my surprise that nothing had yet been decided about the permanence of the Special Representation in Luanda. Foreign Minister Silveira avoided me, appearing not to want to hear my arguments in favour of the Special Representation. Finally, the situation solved itself. Portugal - the most interested party in this matter – took its expected decision to replace the High Commissioner in Luanda by a General, then an Admiral who would be on better terms with the MPLA, and it formally renewed the promises of the Alvor Agreement. Angola would become independent on 11 November. Portuguese troops would leave the country by then, and the Angolan party that was in Luanda in November would assume power.

In mid-September my wife and I went back to Angola for the final stage of the run-up to Independence Day. From Capetown to Luanda we were the only passengers aboard the VARIG Boeing. I was well aware that the MPLA, already alone in the government of Angola, would take office as soon as the Portuguese left. I was also aware that all the anti-MPLA forces in Angola and elsewhere would try as hard as they could to displace it from the capital before 11 November. Cyro Cardoso was kept in Brazil by the Itamaraty, and my only collaborator was Third Secretary Raul Taunay, who soon arrived in Luanda, stayed with me for many months and did an excellent job.

V. New Aspects of the War

Then the war changed radically. Until then we had witnessed a bloody civil war in the capital with veiled foreign help, but what was to come now, in this new phase, seemed unpredictable: foreign invasions? But where from? In April of that same year the US had been defeated in Vietnam. Would they get involved in another war in Angola? This seemed unlikely, given the growing irritation of the American Congress each time it had to vote in favour of funds for the FLNA via Zaire. Zaire, on the other hand, had from the beginning been discreetly involved in the fight on Holden Roberto's side. But hadn't the MPLA in three months of conflict shown very clearly that it could contain Holden's progress towards Luanda, even if the FLNA counted on the help of the Zairean troops and CIA mercenaries? As for South Africa, with its internal

problems of maintaining apartheid and its illegal occupation of Namibia, would it dare to irritate world public opinion yet again by invading Angola?

It was precisely this last hypothesis that came true in October. Large South African forces - with modern tanks, armoured assault vehicles and firepower that were beyond the capacity of mere guerrilla fighters armed with bazookas, mortars and Kalashnikovs – crossed Angola's southern border at Pereira d'Eça and started to take town after town from the MPLA until they reached the coast near Moçâmedes, from where they advanced up the coast towards Luanda. The terrain was flat, ideal for the supposed joyride they were taking in their armoured motor vehicles, and they counted on arriving in Luanda before 11 November. On the way, however, they encountered unexpected and increasing resistance. As it drew back towards Luanda, leaving towns such as Lobito and Benguela, the MPLA destroyed fuel dumps and bridges, hampering the progress of the South African tanks as their supply lines from Namibia grew longer.

In Luanda the South African advance excited the Portuguese, but it seemed not to frighten the MPLA and its followers. The Portuguese troops departed slowly on their way home. The boxes and cars and their nervous owners also went on board. With the Portuguese departing, the airport was becoming empty. Traffic in the streets, previously disorderly and confused, was now thin. The Portuguese had emptied the shops to fill the boxes they were taking away. In the whole of Luanda only two houses were being renovated and painted in preparation for independence: the headquarters of the British-American company Diamang – a producer of diamonds that had negotiated authorisation to stay on with the MPLA - and the Brazilian Consulate. While the work was being done, my wife and I moved from the Consulate's residence to the Hotel Trópico. I had less to do at the Consulate now that there was peace in the city, and no one left for Brazil. I still had to supply the Itamaraty with as much detail as possible of the faltering South African advance towards Luanda. In reports of many international journalists, this slow advance was represented as a fulminating offensive by UNITA and the FNLA, "merely aided by South Africa".

I also had to supervise the work and painting being carried out at the Consulate building, as well as scouring - with my wife's help – the very few shops that were still half open, or the warehouses of inactive factories outside the city, in search of a few pieces of furniture that might be good enough for the future Embassy. Because of this, the two of us and my few collaborators

criss-crossed the city every day, observing that the population seemed ready to resist, apparently unafraid of the possible arrival of South African troops. It seemed that if they ever arrived, there would be skirmishes in every street and every house. The South African tanks wouldn't be much good in street fighting.

The Consular Corps in Luanda, since the hasty departure of the British, started to recover. Some incumbents went "on leave", while others, already transferred, were packing their cases to leave for good. The only people who stayed until the eve of independence were the West-German and American Consuls – plus three or four foreign businessmen who were "commercial attachés" or "Honorary Vice-Consuls" of their respective countries, who therefore stayed in Angola to look after the buildings of the empty offices and their own businesses.

The Hotel Trópico was also losing its guests. It would be even emptier – a deadly emptiness – during the week before independence: all of its rooms were requested by the government to house the seventy delegations expected by the MPLA for the celebrations on 11 November. My assistants moved to the Consulate building. As for me, I could not move out just before the delegations' arrival because this could be interpreted as a sign that I myself did not believe that Brazil would recognize the new government. For a whole week Ivony and I were the only guests in that three-hundred-room hotel, waiting for the representatives of the countries that were going to recognize Angola.

At this time the West-German Consul General came to see me to discuss a protocol and/or political problem. He felt that the Federal Republic of Germany would not be one of the first countries to recognize Angola, and he presumed that in the absence of German recognition he would not be invited to the independence celebrations on 11 November. He was planning to leave Luanda before then, and he asked what I was going to do. I told him I was still waiting for instructions from the Itamaraty – which had been delaying its decision, wanting to know in advance how many countries would be recognizing the new government. The MPLA was expecting immediate recognition by seventy countries, and this might not be an exaggeration if a substantial number of African countries opted for recognition. But this would depend on the OAU's position with regard to Angola. And the OAU that year was presided over and misguided by Idi Amin the unpredictable dictator of Uganda. The United States, the United Kingdom and other European countries, on the other hand, were pressurizing the OAU and African countries

to delay recognition, even considering the revulsion that the South African invasion was provoking in the whole of Africa. For the same reason, the American news agencies were still trying to disguise the South African blitzkrieg with Savimbi's and Holden's flags.

So it was possible that there might be fewer immediate recognitions than the MPLA expected. But in the case of Brazil, I felt recognition was essential. We had been present since March, we had anticipated relations with all three Angolan movements when we created the Special Representation, and throughout that year we had affirmed our impartiality and equanimity, and promised to establish relations with whichever party won in the end. So how could we now back down precisely when the MPLA was the clear victor, threatened only by a foreign invasion – and an invasion by South Africa, that disgusted the whole African continent?

I put my views very clearly to the Itamaraty. We could not and should not retreat. We either recognized at zero hour, or the Itamaraty should give me instructions to leave Angola immediately with the Special Representation and all Brazilian officials. There was no possibility of adopting half-hearted terms, using half-hearted strategies in the dilemma we found ourselves in. At all costs we had to avoid repeating our major error in Lourenço Marques, where the Consulate General had been absurdly kept in operation even after Mozambique had become independent in July and FRELIMO had taken office. Since we had no established relations with Mozambique, all FRELIMO could do was to invite the person in charge of the Consulate to leave the country – and that is what it did. In Angola we had to take a clear, firm position: recognize it soon, or immediately take our leave. And if we chose the second solution – I made this very clear – the MPLA would not forgive us for breaking our promise of impartiality. We might as well forget relations with Angola, with Mozambique and probably with the whole of black Africa for a long time to come. It would be a fiasco, with serious, long-term continental repercussions.

At the beginning of the week before independence the American Consul General phoned me to say goodbye. He asked me about the Brazilian decision. I told him that so far it was still undefined, but I offered my personal opinion that Brazil would recognize. Having served in Brazil and speaking our language, he assured me that he understood our situation. Finally, two days before the programmed celebrations, I received the Itamaraty's decision to be communicated to the local government. Brazil would recognize Luanda's government by declaration to be given to the press in Brasilia at eight pm on

10 November. With the time difference, it would then be midnight in Angola—precisely when the last colonial representatives of Portugal would be leaving forever and the MPLA would be assuming power. On the same day, the Itamaraty informed me, the decree creating the Brazilian Embassy in Luanda would be signed.

I conveyed this communication to the MPLA's Prime Minister, Lopo do Nascimento, and that same afternoon I received invitations to the Independence celebrations. The news had a great impact, and the MPLA was very pleased. On the following day, when Ivory and I were having lunch alone in the restaurant of the Trópico, the first foreign delegation to the independence celebrations also turned up to have lunch: it was from Mozambique, headed by Marcelino dos Santos. Marcelino saw me, and in a kind gesture came to our table. He expressed his satisfaction with Brazil's decision and told me that from then on, relations between Brazil and Mozambique would be friendly.

VI. The Independence Celebrations

The Independence celebrations then began, with Luanda still under siege. All the harbours in the South were in South African hands, backed up by UNITA and the FLNA. South African tanks had arrived in Novo Redondo, some two hundred kilometres from the capital. To the north the FNLA and its mercenaries, with the help of the CIA, had occupied Caxito, some thirty kilometres away, enabling it to leave the city without water by damaging the Quifangondo facility. The two forces, in the north and in the south, were certainly making final preparations to converge on Luanda on or before Independence Day. The Portuguese High Commissioner, followed by the few Portuguese troops still remaining, would leave Luanda by sea at midnight on 10 November. For that same night the MPLA had summoned the whole population to attend a public rally at midnight, at which Agostinho Neto would proclaim independence and take office on behalf of the MPLA.

As soon as I heard that Brazil was going to recognize the new government, I asked the Itamaraty to send a special delegation as the other countries would be doing, if possible led by Zappa, Head of the African Department. The Itamaraty refused to comply with my request and nominated me as Special Ambassador for the official event. However it did agree with another suggestion of mine: that Counsellor Cyro Cardoso, who had spent six months in Luanda during the worst period of the struggles, should also attend the celebrations.

Cyro should be arriving at ten p.m. from Lisbon, for VARIG, the Brazilian airline, had suspended flights to Angola as soon as the Portuguese exodus finished – even though we were on the eve of independence. I asked a Portuguese assistant from the Consulate to go and wait for Cyro at the airport and take him directly to the public rally, where I would be with Ivony and Taunay.

Exactly at midnight, while the High Commissioner, Admiral Leonel Cardoso, lowered the last Portuguese flag and boarded the boat in the dark harbour without farewells, the new Angolan flag was hoisted in the festive square in front of a huge crowd. Agostinho Neto briefly proclaimed the independence of Angola, which was then celebrated with shots fired into the air – because the fireworks ordered from Lisbon had not arrived on time.

Cyro had not arrived. His plane had overflowed Luanda, but it had been ordered back to Lisbon – probably because every weapon in Luanda was being fired into the air in celebration, making flying dangerous. Back at the Hotel at two in the morning, worried about Cyro's absence, I came upon the man I had sent to the airport to collect him. He was extremely excited: while at the airport he had heard shooting, certainly from the celebration, and had formed the impression that there were movements of military vehicles on the dark roads. With the nervousness characteristic of the Portuguese in the face of a possible invasion of the city, he had come to the conclusion that the South Africans had invaded Luanda, starting at the airport – and this was why the plane had been sent back to Lisbon. I calmed him down, explaining the festive nature of all that shooting and assuring him that the celebrations in the square had been totally peaceful – because the South Africans were not in Luanda, they were still in Novo Redondo. And it would be very difficult for them to attack Luanda, because – according to the news I had received that night – the MPLA had had time to take measures to delay or prevent their advance on the capital.

Next morning the party continued and I again attended, accompanied only by my wife and Taunay. The morning was taken up by a parade in which several popular MPLA organizations took part, together with FAPLAS (the armed wing of the MPLA), with a few armoured cars, jeeps and ambulances that looked ready for the scrap-heap, and the same old machine guns, Kalashnikov rifles, mortars and bazookas that we had seen in intensive use throughout the year. There was a big party at the Palace that evening to celebrate independence.

Cyro Cardoso, obviously exhausted, only managed to arrive at the end of this second day. The same plane brought delegations from many of the thirty-odd countries that had recognized the new Government at zero hour. In their honour the MPLA decided to continue the party, taking all the delegations for a tour of the musseques and to the spots in the city where the fighting had been most intense. Cyro and I joined the tour, not to remind ourselves of the year's difficulties – they were still fresh in our minds – but to see the whole city in one day and assess the population's state of mind. This seemed important, because the previous day I had heard rumours that the MPLA had achieved two victories on the northern and southern fronts. In the north, the FNLA – gathering all its forces – had tried to advance from Caxito to Luanda, arriving on 11 November to take office. But it had been repelled with huge losses, and practically destroyed. In Novo Redondo the South Africans had attempted a final push towards Luanda, but they too were stopped, again with heavy losses. For the first time the MPLA had been able to confront them with new weapons capable of penetrating the armour of the tanks.

So there had been developments on the battle fronts that threatened the festive but isolated capital. The MPLA was clearly less afraid of its enemies than it had been before. And the relief of these first victories had also increased the population's enthusiasm for independence.

The only source of news about what was happening outside Luanda was short-wave radio. For weeks now VARIG had not flown to Angola, and we no longer received newspapers or the diplomatic bag. The telex machine had been silent since the Itamaraty had taken the daring decision in favour of recognition. Although newly arrived, Cyro had left Brazil before Angola's independence and could only tell me what I could clearly foresee even though I was far away: by recognising Angola – one of thirty-odd socialist and third-world countries to do so – Brazil would totally bewilder its own more conservative circles. From then on, Brazil would face pressure from the Brazilian right – as well as from the American and European representations that were opposed to recognition.

Two days after independence I heard on the radio that Henry Kissinger had condemned the presence of Cuban troops in Angola, fighting on the MPLA's side. And after its long silence, the telex machine finally came back to life with a summons from the Itamaraty that serves as the title for my next chapter.

VII – Where Are the Cubans?

I replied to the Itamaraty that my collaborators and I had done nothing in the past few days apart from attending celebrations in public squares with the authorities, and wandering through the city remembering the fighting. But we hadn't seen any Cubans anywhere, in fact not a single Spanish speaker. And I couldn't avoid reminding the Itamaraty that throughout the past year, every time the MPLA defeated the FLNA or UNITA the victory would always be ascribed to the supposed presence in Angola of Russians, Cubans or West Germans – never to the MPLA itself. So Kissinger's statement could be taken with a pinch of salt. Maybe it was just an escalation of the misinformation that had been disseminated throughout the year and throughout the world, now designed specifically to prevent the new Angolan government from gaining recognition. Anyway, I said we would intensify our surveillance, specifically in search of Cubans, and notify the Itamaraty immediately of anything we found out.

Kissinger's condemnation puzzled me. Hadn't the CIA seen or heard about Cuban troops moving from Havana to Angola? Did it only discover the Cubans – as if they were materialized ghosts – when they were in Angola, now that the South Africans had been defeated in their final attempt to reach the capital? And the Itamaraty had posts in the Caribbean, in the socialist countries, in Portugal, in neighbouring African countries, so had it not noticed – even with its limited resources – that the Cubans were on their way to Angola? Actually, how could they have come? How could they have disembarked in Angola when all the ports and airports were in South African hands or held by the FLNA or UNITA, and if the last Portuguese troops had left at midnight on 10 November with the High Commissioner? Could we believe that the Portuguese themselves had let the Cubans into Angola just before independence, just in time for them to confront the final attack of the South Africans and of Holden Roberto outside Luanda? All this seemed to me to be inconsistent, inconceivable, and unbelievable. But Kissinger's condemnations continued, and gradually the presence of Cuban troops in Angola started to be acknowledged: first by Cuba itself, then by the socialist countries, and finally by my interlocutors in the MPLA. But the circumstances and the exact timing of the Cubans' arrival in Angola remained shrouded in mystery.

A Brazilian diplomat who collaborated with the newspaper *Jornal do Brasil* solemnly informed the Brazilian public in an article published on 26 September 1991 that “the Cubans disembarked in Angola “three days after

Independence Day". It was not until three years after the event that I heard an explanation of the mystery from a reliable source. At the very moment when the Portuguese High Commissioner was boarding his ship in the dark harbour, at the exact moment when Agostinho Neto was proclaiming independence in the public square and assumed power for the MPLA, Cuban aeroplanes had landed six hundred men with their weapons at the Grafanil military base, somewhere near the civilian airport, and the MPLA had immediately taken them to the nearby battle fronts to the north and south of Luanda. The Cubans could therefore not have been seen in the besieged city. And this was also the reason why the plane bringing Cyro and various foreign delegations to the independence celebrations could not land in Luanda that festive night, and why the Consulate's Portuguese worker who was supposed to meet Cyro at the airport had been frightened by movements of military vehicles that he had glimpsed far away on dark roads. As he also heard shooting, he thought they were the South Africans invading Luanda. But they were the vanguard of the Cuban troops arriving to go straight into the bush, get involved in the fighting and repel the South African invasion.

The Cuban presence in Angola gave that war a new dimension. What had started as a civil war, funded and encouraged from abroad, and continued as a pure and simple foreign invasion presented with extreme spin, had now become just another Cold War confrontation. The internal and international pressures on the Itamaraty would certainly increase. And I was curious to know how the African continent would see the Cuban presence in Angola helping the MPLA to repel the South African invasion. With an MPLA government supported by Cuban troops, African attitudes would be decisive to guarantee the consolidation of Angola's independence and its international acceptance.

Now the Special Representation no longer existed and my presence was no longer required in Angola, it was up to the Itamaraty to decide in the new situation whether to maintain or withdraw its recognition of Angolan independence. The Itamaraty would certainly dither in the face of the huge internal and external pressures. From Angola, without news from Brazil apart from anything I heard on the BBC, I could do nothing to help Silveira and Zappa to resist the pressure that they were certain to come under. I had to get back to Brazil. Apart from anything else, protocol would not let me stay in Angola any longer: having been Special Representative with the explicit category of Ambassador, then Special Ambassador for the independence celebrations,

I could not be given a lower position as Chargé d’Affaires in the Embassy that had been opened on 11 November.

Besides, my health wasn’t all that good. In late September I had woken up one night with a terrible pain in my left shoulder and arm. At first I thought I was having a heart attack, but I later discovered it was a back problem in the cervical region. In a few days the unbearable pain had gone. But I had something like pins and needles in my arm, and no sensitivity in the index finger of my left hand. I needed medical treatment, but I could no longer find physicians in Luanda – and I could hardly go to any of the hospitals, crowded with the wounded, to ask for physiotherapy.

So I definitely needed to go to Brazil, though I would have been prepared to come back to Angola later as a properly accredited ambassador if the Itamaraty so wished. I suggested that Cyro Cardoso should stay in Luanda as Chargé d’Affaires in my place, but the Itamaraty refused. Cyro then returned to Brazil, and I stayed in Luanda for another two months – still without any decent world news apart from what I heard on the short-wave radio and in brief phone calls to and from Zappa. But I was certainly not well informed about what was happening in Brazil.

VIII – Echoes of the Recognition of Angola in Brazil and In the World

In Brazil, immediately after the announcement of the recognition of Angola and more so after the Cuban presence in that country was confirmed, the more conservative sectors of public opinion became very agitated. They could not accept the alignment in which our policy towards Angola had placed us: on the side of the socialist countries and of Cuba, and not in tune with the United States. It seemed quite evident that the various criticisms that soon appeared in the main Brazilian newspapers – in editorials and various articles – were backed by well-orchestrated foreign support. Even the style and the language were foreign: the policy was criticized not in Brazilian Portuguese but in Portuguese from Portugal.

In the exercise of his functions and with a clear understanding of the importance of the press in international relations, Zappa tried to explain the policy to the Brazilian public. Through the journalists that approached him daily, he tried to explain the position of impartiality that Brazil had adopted – and the need to maintain that policy if we wanted to have fruitful and good

relations with the African continent in the long term. But in the Itamaraty itself he was criticized precisely for trying to establish a dialogue with the journalists to inform the Brazilian public. They accused him of self-aggrandisement, and of looking after his personal image.

The Itamaraty itself tended to keep its counsel, not contradicting the campaign by national and foreign forces against the recognition of Angola. And the embassies of the socialist countries in Brasilia could not avoid witnessing our timidity, and the hesitation with which our Foreign Ministry faced the criticisms it suffered. This attitude seemed to indicate that the Brazilian position could be reviewed. And they certainly warned the MPLA of this possibility.

The MPLA itself had ways of finding out about the Itamaraty's hesitation. It read the Brazilian papers it received via Lisbon. And in practice, it could also perceive other signs of our government's indecision. Brazil had wanted to be the first to arrive in Luanda, to be the first to recognize it. It had supplied uniforms for the combined police force created by the Nakuru agreements, and sent representatives of its shipyards to Angola to sell fishing boats. But after independence, now that the Brazilian Embassy was in place – all the other embassies would take months to reach that stage – the Itamaraty seemed uninterested in trade with Angola. And Angola needed everything – food, medicines, equipment – and it was prepared to pay cash, in dollars and in advance. But though its approaches to the Embassy were passed on to the Itamaraty, it never responded.

With the help of Cuban reinforcements, the MPLA was gradually expelling the FNLA to Zaire and the South Africans to Namibia. The war was no longer its only concern. The new ministries actively formulated their initial plans, and some of them required immediate external assistance. A few ministers and other second-rank officials approached the new Brazilian Embassy. They knew the incumbent well, for he had spent the whole war in Luanda, attended the independence celebrations and become a well-known figure in the city. The Planning Minister, for instance, wanted Brazil to deliver some hospital equipment that had already been paid for. It had been brought to the harbour in Luanda, but as disembarkation was not feasible during the war it had been taken back to Brazil by the Cabo de Orange, the same ship that had taken the repatriated Brazilians back home. Prime Minister Lopo do Nascimento wanted to know about an order of wheelchairs he had placed ages before, which were to be donated to mutilated MPLA war heroes. Not even transactions

with a clearly humanitarian character received any response from the Itamaraty. Everything seemed to have stopped. The Itamaraty was in cataleptic crisis.

The resulting hiatus was extremely dangerous for relations between us. The Itamaraty thought it could play a waiting game. It wanted to see if the MPLA's final victory against its enemies, the expulsion of the invaders from Angola and the recognition of Angola by members of the European Community would silence the press campaign against Brazilian recognition. But Angola, still at war and with its economy in ruins, could not wait. And the MPLA would lose patience if Brazil didn't quickly find soon a way to reaffirm the position it had taken, be it with political declarations at the highest level or with the discreet activation of trade.

Most of the countries that had recognized Angola were from the socialist world. At that time they adopted a different practical procedure in the recognition of states and in the opening of embassies. Initial recognition did not automatically imply the opening of an Embassy, as this costs money. The opening of embassies was then the object of a special joint declaration to be published in the newspapers of both countries. The socialist countries then suggested that the new Angolan government should issue these Joint Declarations, and day by day, as the new missions arrived to begin their installation, these very simple and abridged international documents were published in the few Luandan newspapers. The more traditional practice of international law adopted by Brazil was less formal. Although recognition didn't automatically imply the opening of an embassy, Brazil regarded the option to open an embassy as implicit in its recognition – so all that was necessary was a government decree opening a mission in the country it had already recognized as a member of the international community. For this reason, as the Itamaraty had informed me on the eve of recognition – the Brazilian decree opening the Embassy in Angola would be signed at the very moment of recognition. And for the same reason, the Brazilian Embassy had been opened after independence, with a letterhead and a sign on the front door. The Itamaraty started to refer to me officially as *Chargé d'Affaires*, which was, I repeat, an absurdity after I had been presented to Angola as an Ambassador. In conversations with a recently nominated Angolan diplomat, I formed the impression – and communicated it to the Itamaraty – that in the near future Brazil would be also invited to sign a joint declaration similar to those condensed diplomatic documents that the local newspapers were publishing every day.

To my absolute surprise, in the Itamaraty there began a storm in a teacup. Silveira sent me a long and abusive private telegram to the effect that (i) Brazil was not accustomed to making joint declarations with that objective (in fact it had always made them with socialist countries); (ii) he, Silveira, was under severe pressure in Brazil because of his recognition of Angola; (iii) the Brazilian decree opening the embassy in Luanda had not even been presented to President Geisel for signature (I had been told the decree would be signed on the day of recognition); (iv) by inventing this "joint declaration" I was hindering relations with Angola; (v) I should not be seen or heard in Angola, should not see anyone, not even if summoned by the Foreign Minister. This was also absurd, for the recently installed Foreign Minister was José Eduardo dos Santos, a highly influential politician who became Angola's President after Agostinho Neto's death. At that time he was inviting all foreign representatives in Luanda for interviews in order to get to know them, and also to suggest the publication of the said joint declarations.

I replied to Silveira on the same evening his telegram arrived, and in the same tone. I started by expressing my disagreement. How could I possibly be "hindering" relations with Angola if I had stood a whole year of war in Angola in order to establish those relations? As for the joint declarations, they were no invention of mine: they were an international procedural practice like any other, employed by the Angolans – and also by Brazil with the socialist countries. Moreover, a Brazilian refusal at this stage would only confirm the Angolans' well-founded, growing suspicion that the Itamaraty had become paralyzed by the criticism it was suffering because of recognition. I had only opened the Embassy in Luanda – and informed the Itamaraty of this – because the Itamaraty had officially notified me that the decree had been signed on the day of recognition. How could the Itamaraty call me *Chargé d'Affaires* if the Embassy did not yet officially exist? Had it been the Itamaraty's intention to deceive me, making me the official representative of an Embassy still not created? As for the pressures he, Silveira, was facing in Brazil, I encouraged him to confront them just as I had confronted a year of war in Angola. For according to what the Angolans were now saying, relations with Mozambique and even with Africa as a whole depended on how resolutely Brazil maintained its recognition of independent Angola. Finally, reminding him that since the previous September I was having a health problem and that soon after independence and recognition I should have been removed from Luanda – as I could not be *Chargé d'Affaires* in the same post where days before I was

Ambassador – I told Silveira if he was not happy with my performance in Luanda, he should just send another diplomat to replace me and instruct me to return either to Rio or to my official post in London.

Silveira answered me forgetting the previous reprimands that I had proved to be inappropriate, but still irritated. He pointed out that “what I had affirmed about the relations with Mozambique and with Africa depending on the attitude we now had towards Angola” was an absurdity. Then he proudly stated that he himself, Silveira, in negotiation with Samora Machel at the UN, had established relations with Mozambique (but he did not say whether these negotiations preceded or followed our recognition of Angola).

Obviously it was not in my interests to continue this very unequal discussion with the Foreign Minister, so I simply asked him to read my previous telegram again: it was not I who had said that relations with Mozambique depended on our attitude towards Angola, it was the Angolans themselves – who did not attempt to conceal the perfect understanding they had with FRELIMO. And I finished with a compliment to Silveira’s vanity, praising the African policy he had initiated, which I was proud to have served to the extent my health had permitted.

A few days later I finally received instructions to leave Luanda. My replacement was to be Affonso Celso de Ouro Preto, First Secretary, who worked with Zappa in the African Department. Ouro Preto knew the issues of the post well, and was certainly an excellent appointment for the post of Chargé d’Affaires (if it was possible to use that title in an non-existent embassy, the decree creating it not having been signed and no joint declaration by the two governments having been published in Luanda). Whatever... It was not up to me to present Ouro Preto’s credentials to the local authorities, as one Chargé d’Affaires doesn’t present the credentials of another. It was up to Silveira himself, as Foreign Minister, to introduce Ouro Preto to Angola’s Foreign Minister by direct telegram.

I waited until Ouro Preto arrived, handed the office over to him and flew to Brazil with Ivony via Lisbon.

On our arrival in Lisbon we were met at the door of the aeroplane by Counsellor Leite Ribeiro with a message from Zappa and Silveira: they wanted me to go straight back to Luanda to assume the mission once more, because the new Chargé d’Affaires hadn’t been accepted. I was very reluctant to go back. I had a long and irritated phone conversation with Zappa in Brazil, and another with Silveira in Paris. Finally I agreed to return for a few days, solely

to clarify once and for all why Ouro Preto – an excellent candidate for the post – had been refused.

Back in Luanda I soon found out: Affonso Celso had a half-brother quite a lot older than him, Carlos Silvestre – who had been Brazilian Ambassador in Portugal during the Salazar period. During the 1960s he had visited Angola officially and made a ridiculously pro-Portugal speech with a clear colonialist content. Because of the identical surnames, MPLA had got the two brothers mixed up. And the speech had been so traumatic that more than ten years later it was still a reason to refuse Silveira's nominee as *Chargé d'Affaires*. But the refusal had come from the MPLA's Political Bureau, which would not meet again until the last day of 1975. It was the responsibility of the Political Bureau to reconsider the question and correct the mistake.

Because of this I had to stay in Luanda until 6 January 1976, when I finally boarded a plane for Brazil. The decree creating the embassy in Luanda was signed by the President of Brazil at the turn of the year. In his end-of-year speech President Geisel mentioned the recognition of the former Portuguese colonies including Angola, and even during the holidays the MPLA's Political Bureau corrected the misunderstanding about Affonso Celso Ouro Preto's name and accepted him as *Chargé d'Affaires* in Luanda. Before leaving I attended the New Year's Eve party at the Government Palace with Ouro Preto and Taunay, where I was able to introduce the new *Chargé d'Affaires* to all my MPLA acquaintances and to take my leave. At the time I had the pleasure of hearing President Agostinho Neto praise the impartiality I had demonstrated throughout that whole year of fighting in Luanda, and thank me for the fact that Brazil was the first country to recognise Angola.

My testimony about the recognition of Angola could have naturally ended on the day I left Luanda, but the repercussions of this recognition were so intense, lasted so long in Brazil and abroad and brought so many new lessons for Brazil, for the Itamaraty and for me – that it is worth recounting them in the pages that follow.

Around Christmas 1975, when I was still in Luanda, an article published by Carlos Chagas in the *Estado de São Paulo*, based only on rumours from Brasília – probably from the Itamaraty itself, as Zappa later told me – described me as having recognized Angola entirely on my own initiative. This article was copied and widely publicized by newspapers in Rio and Brasília. And its accusation was not only absurd – for the Itamaraty had announced recognition to the Brazilian press itself, on 10 November – it was also offensive to our

Foreign Ministry, as it implied that it couldn't control its officials abroad, even in decisions of this magnitude.

These same scandalous rumours suggested that this was why I had been transferred away from Luanda. And they speculated about the fact that Ouro Preto's hierarchically lower position might be a sign that "the Itamaraty was beginning to review its policy of recognizing Angola".

Taken by surprise by these offensive affirmations in the country's largest newspapers, the Itamaraty issued a communiqué the next day, merely stating that I had fulfilled my functions in Luanda "with competence and dedication", that I was "being recalled to Brasilia" for reasons of a purely administrative nature and because "I needed urgent medical care", and for this reason I was being "temporarily replaced by the First Secretary Ouro Preto".

The Itamaraty's official statement, of which I was informed while still in Luanda, seemed to me timid and insufficient. It did not answer the main point of the accusation, in that it did not assume full and exclusive responsibility for the recognition. It ascribed my departure from Angola to my need for medical care, but it did not say what kind of medical care – and even worse, it overshadowed the obvious fact that according to diplomatic rules I could not be Chargé d'Affaires in the same post where the day before I had been an Ambassador. The Itamaraty's denial, in other words, did not deny the most essential point. And it still left me exposed to press speculation. Indeed, when I arrived in Brazil, the newspapers started to follow me everywhere, asking whether I was really ill. I didn't exactly avoid the press, and when I was found I didn't make any statements because I knew how fragile relations with Angola still were.

In the days that followed the campaign changed its tone, but I continued to be its main target: according to articles appearing in the main newspapers in Rio, São Paulo and Brasilia I was "to blame for the Itamaraty's decision to recognize Angola because I had given "inaccurate" – meaning, by implication, partisan – "information about the prospect of the MPLA prevailing over the other parties and coming to power in independent Angola".

The Itamaraty didn't deem it necessary to deny these accusations, and in my view they were so absurd that it didn't really have to. After all, all the news about Angola that was published in the same Brazilian newspapers in January and February 1976 made it quite clear that: (i) with the assistance of Cuban troops, the MPLA was expelling FLNA forces from the country, as well as the South African invaders helped by Savimbi; (ii) it was imprisoning and

executing some British and Greek mercenaries notoriously engaged by the CIA; and (iii) at the same time it was gradually being recognized as the legitimate government of Angola by all the European and African countries that had withheld recognition the previous November. Angola had joined the Organization of African Unity and was getting ready to join the UN, and even Portugal had recognized Angola in February 1976. And the incontestable fact is that although still not recognized by the United States, although it faced various other South African invasions, although it suffered another sixteen years of war after Independence in extremely difficult economic conditions, the MPLA governs Angola to this day.

In 1978 the Brazilian Army Minister was dismissed by President Geisel. As I mentioned before, in the proclamation he made – widely publicized in the press – he supported his accusation of the “communization” of Brazil by citing Geisel’s recognition of Angola.

From 1978 onwards the Itamaraty felt freer to develop trade with Angola, which expanded at a headlong pace. At the same time – in his public declarations and in my view exaggeratedly – Silveira also began to emphasize that Brazil had been the first, the very first country to recognize the government of Luanda, the only country to “get its forecasts right” amidst the chaos in which Angola was immersed in 1975. In my view these declarations were inappropriate, for they would certainly create resentment on the part of other foreign ministries interested in having good relations with Angola.

More or less simultaneously with Silveira’s euphoria about his primacy in recognizing Angola, Robert Stockwell’s book was published in the United States with manifold repercussions in the international press. Unhappy with his job in the CIA, he had resigned, and having been Head of the CIA’s Angolan operations in 1975 (from Kinshasa), he had much to tell. He made some very curious remarks about Brazil’s role at the time. He could not understand how Brazil, having a Special Representation in Luanda with good, cordial and perhaps even friendly relations with the MPLA (that, after all, was the only government existing in Angola) could at the same time allow some Brazilians – some even wearing a military uniform – to act as Holden Roberto’s “advisers” in Kinshasa. And this happened after the FLNA’s invasion of Angola, when it tried to reach Luanda before independence. Stockwell also revealed that the CIA was concerned about Brazil’s official relations with the MPLA in Luanda, and for this reason the agency had pressurized the Brazilian Government to remove its Representative from Angola.

The first of Stockwell's revelations was soon taken up by the international press. I became aware of it in Bangkok, together with the malicious interpretation that soon travelled the world: Brazil had indeed been the first country to recognize independent Angola, but it had played a double game – supporting Holden Roberto at the same time.

In my view this accusation of duplicity in our foreign policy was important: it needed to be answered, because of the damage it could cause to our relations with Angola. I then bought Stockwell's book and sent it to Silveira with a few comments. I waited for an official denial from the Itamaraty, but it never came – evidently because Silveira did not consider it wise to try and identify those other Brazilian military figures who – like the journalist Câmara Cascudo – had been pursuing an African foreign policy in opposition to Brazil's official policy, either on their own initiative or officially.

Nor did the Brazilian press assign much importance to Stockwell's statements about the supposed duplicity of Brazilian foreign policy in the Angolan case. This was something that would require investigative journalism, perhaps too dangerous at the time. But it did emphasize the former CIA agent's claim that the Agency had pressurized the Brazilian government to remove its representative in Luanda. The Itamaraty then finally got angry, as can be seen from the *Jornal de Brasília* of 22 August 1978.

"We never came under pressure of this sort", said a spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry, "and we would never yield to such pressure from any country or any foreign agency". As for Stockwell's suggestion that "the Brazilian diplomat openly supported Agostinho Neto's faction, which was against the United States' interests since it supported Holden Roberto" and his other observation that "the facts showed that the Brazilian diplomat was right" – the Itamaraty, through its spokesperson, said that "a Brazilian diplomat has no personal opinion. He follows the instructions of the Brazilian Government. And the Brazilian Government was neutral with regard to Angola's internal problems."

Even a minimum amount of common sense would lead us to believe that the CIA's pressures would not have been made in an official document with a certified signature, formally delivered to the Foreign Office. These pressures are never open, they are surreptitious. Then it is not a question of receiving them or not, or accepting them or not, but of yielding to them or not. And indeed, the Itamaraty did not yield to them: it kept me in Angola until January 1976, paid me to represent Brazil in Angola vis-à-vis the only government

Angola actually had, at least since August 1975 – the MPLA. This also explains Stockwell's comment that "the Brazilian diplomat openly supported Agostinho Neto's faction". My very presence in Luanda and the diplomatic relations I maintained with the only local government – that the Itamaraty later recognized at independence – were obviously completely open and official, because this was the Brazilian policy drawn up by the Itamaraty. For Brazil, the MPLA was no longer a "faction" – it was the Government of Angola. As for the Itamaraty spokesperson's statement that "a Brazilian diplomat has no personal opinion", to this day I find it completely obscure and inexplicable. If Brazilian diplomats had no personal opinion, how could they interpret complex political events, make forecasts and thus enable the Itamaraty to draw up our foreign policy?

As for the treatment the Itamaraty gave me from 1976, it deserves to be mentioned here only because it was characterized by the same ambiguity, by the same evasive secretiveness, by the same reluctance that it always showed to discuss its policies, and by the same timidity it always exhibited when confronted by internal and external forces opposed to the recognition of Angola. In 1976 Silveira added my name to the list of potential promotions, which seemed to imply full approval of my performance in Angola. In 1977, quite spontaneously and without any request on my part, he promised me a promotion. But until the end of his administration he did not fulfil his promise, probably because of resistance from those forces that had been against the recognition of Angola and wanted me as the scapegoat. Ramiro Saraiva Guerreiro, the Itamaraty's Secretary General in 1975, who closely followed my performance in Africa that year, replaced Silveira as Foreign Minister. Guerreiro also failed to confront the forces opposed to my promotion. For this reason I spent ten years at the top of the promotion list, in the uncomfortable situation of someone sentenced to the stocks. This in a decade when a series of reforms was carried out in the Itamaraty: the number of ambassadors soared – there were more ambassadors than third secretaries, the diplomatic entry grade. During those ten years I was passed over an absurd ninety times.

I was eventually promoted in 1986, the first promotion made by the New Republic: in a way, a better entry for my curriculum vitae.

The Itamaraty's duplicity was also manifested in the posts it gave me after 1976. After Angola I served as a Commissioned Ambassador in Thailand and in Jamaica: comfortable posts with plenty of tourist attractions, but certainly less politically important to Brazil. In both cases the Itamaraty, under both

Silveira and Guerreiro, tried to exempt me from attending the Senate's Foreign Relations Commission to be subjected to the *sabatina* – the open hearing that precedes senatorial approval of ambassadors. I quote here the Parliamentary Assistant of Silveira's office, who in an article for *Jornal do Brasil* (08/10/1991) very candidly revealed the reasons why Silveira bothered to do this.

“At the request of Foreign Minister Silveira I came to an agreement with Senator Daniel Krieger that Ovidio Melo should not undergo a hearing. Whenever there was a hot issue in the secret sessions of the Senate's Foreign Relations Commission, some information ended up in the newspapers. Now, Ovidio Melo's hearing would probably start in Thailand but end in Angola. With probable damage for the Geisel Government, for the Itamaraty and for the diplomat himself. We had to wait for a few weeks until the messages of new Ambassadors going to important posts were submitted to the Senate. When this occurred, I was authorized by Krieger to collect the signatures of the other members of the Commission, using the argument that there did not seem to be any interest in hearing a Consul who was going to be Commissioned Ambassador in Bangkok. The senators agreed immediately and our stratagem worked well. I make it clear, though, that this procedure in the Senate occurred very often in the case of Ambassadors posted to countries of less importance for Brazil. Relieved, Silveira embraced me effusively.”

I must emphasize here that I certainly never accepted Silveira's and Guerreiro's evasive manoeuvres, let alone collaborated with them. They kept me sidelined, cast out and far away, in order to prevent the issue of Angola's recognition from coming up again, from being discussed and made clear to Brazilian public opinion. On the contrary: I believe that foreign policy must be widely discussed and approved by the nation through its legitimate representatives. Only thus can it be strong, long-lasting and capable of fully meeting national interests. Foreign policy cannot be made inside offices, hidden from the population.

Finally, in my view, in the conditions Brazil faced during the authoritarian regime, the recognition of Angola - carried out under extremely difficult circumstances - stands out as the most fearless gesture of Brazilian foreign policy at any time. I am therefore not complaining that my career was marred: it was worth it for something so important. After all, I did not join the Itamaraty to make a career. The Itamaraty's function is to make foreign policy, and that is what I did as a diplomat – so now, in retirement and old age, I can feel reasonably serene and quite fulfilled.

As for relations between Brazil and Angola, now firmly consolidated, they are relations of mutual respect and increasing mutual trust, as should be expected between countries brought into fraternal association by their history, ethnic mix and culture. Cuba withdrew its troops from Angola, Namibia and Rhodesia became independent, and South Africa is necessarily preoccupied with its huge internal problems. Let us hope, then, that after thirty-one years of uninterrupted war, Angola may finally live in peace and develop its full potentialities. For the more it develops, the greater its affinities with Brazil will be. It is therefore probable that relations between Brazil and Angola will in future become a model example for the relations that Latin America will have with the neighbouring African Continent.

Vassouras, RJ, 21/06/1992

In 2006 I returned to this paper, originally written in 1992, to add two telegrams. Originally secret, these were made public by Foreign Minister Silveira himself when he attached them to the testimony he left at the CPDOC in the Getulio Vargas Foundation.

I heard about these telegrams from an American professor, Jerry Davila, visiting professor at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, who was writing a book about Brazilian foreign policy and researching it at the CPDOC.

So here are the two telegrams that refer to the few hours Zappa spent in Luanda in 1975 (see page ____ of this book).

From the Special Representation in Luanda
5/8/1975

Secret, Exclusive, Very Urgent

Private to the Foreign Minister

I transmit: Complying with the mission received I arrived today in Luanda in order to make a personal assessment of the local situation. The city is apparently calm. In comparison with last December it is unrecognizable: rubbish

in the streets, few cars, absence of evident policing, i.e. signs that is going through a lull in the fighting. From what I observed, this struggle was intense and indiscriminate. I am convinced that at any moment the fight will be resumed and this time with a much more serious nature, for it will have been preceded by a period of logistic preparation on both sides, the MPLA and the FNLA. In Minister Ovidio Melo's company I have just interviewed Prime Minister José N'Dele. Three days having gone by since our last interview in Kampala, this time I found him in a state that I do not hesitate to classify as desperate and despairing. I have no doubt whatsoever that José N'Dele wanted to warn us that the decision of UNITA to join FNLA is imminent or perhaps has already been taken, as the FNLA has been pushed out of the city and virtually expelled from the government. He repeatedly advised the evacuation of the Consular corps and claimed to have changed his opinion about the withdrawal of the Portuguese population, because "one can't ask people to make this type of sacrifice".

From the Special Representation in Luanda
5/08/1975

Secret Exclusive Very Urgent
Second and last Part – Private to the Foreign Minister

Notwithstanding Minister Ovidio Melo's opinion, everything I have seen and heard inclines me to ask Your Excellency to consider a decision to order the immediate removal of the three Itamaraty officials remaining at this post. Their permanence here will not fulfil any objective, as the constitutional situation that justified it is clearly in the dust. On the contrary, their permanence may be counterproductive: it could be interpreted as support for one of the movements rather than impartiality with regard to all three. I repeat that it was the top representative of one of three movements that insistently advised the evacuation of diplomatic personnel. This morning approximately three thousand people stood in despair opposite the Consulate, begging to be granted visas. Minister Ovidio Melo calmed them down with vague words about Brazil's cooperation with Angola. The tendency is for this pressure on the Consulate to increase, and this might lead to incidents with unforeseeable consequences. If the Consulate is temporarily placed under the care of its local staff, it will be

easier for them to oppose pressures of all types – for it will be more clearly understood that the decision is not the Consul's or the Special Representative's, but rather that of the relevant authorities in the Brazilian Government. Zappa

Draft of Telegram
To the Special Representation in Luanda
Character secret-exclusive (Very Urgent)

Private to Minister Italo Zappa

In answer to your private telegram of today I must tell you in the first place that I never had any doubt that eventually we would have to pay a price for having created a Special Representation to the Transitional Government in Angola. This conscious political act leads me now – and I say this with total honesty – to agree with Ovidio's position. Our position of strict non-intervention in the internal affairs of Angola – a position we will maintain – will not lead us to any open support for any of the three movements, but it does not prevent me from believing that – be it for Brazil, be it for the Western universe to which we belong – an eventual defeat of the MPLA in a confrontation with the FNLA/UNITA alliance might be a better solution than the pure and simple predominance of the MPLA, with its well-known Marxist orientation. None of this means that Ovidio will, at any moment or in any circumstances, cease to have my full support. Emergency plans are being studied with the Navy and the Air Force. On the other hand, besides being guided by the terms of telegraphic despatch n° 220, especially its final part that contains the general instructions, and in order to characterize the position I outlined beforehand, I am willing to send a diplomatic official, in a temporary posting, to replace Cyro and reinforce the physical protection of the Head of the Special Representation with two security agents, on the understanding that only these officials will remain there, since all the relations of Brazilians working in the Special Representation must already have been evacuated. I believe that both you and Ovidio give me credit for being a boss who is above all humane. What I have just said, therefore, summarises my honest convictions and my assessment of the situation, either from the viewpoint of the Brazilian national interest or for essentially humane reasons. Read and destroy this telegram,

including the relevant tape. My very affectionate regards to Cyro, Ovidio and you from Silveira

Comments on the Previous Telegraphic Texts

Returning from a trip to Kampala, Uganda, where he had been for an OAU Conference, Zappa spent a few hours in Luanda, from 4 pm on 4 August to 10 am of the following day.

Cyro and I went to collect him at the airport. The Counsellor Affonso Celso Ouro Preto, who worked under Zappa in the African Department, came with him. As there was no direct flight from Kampala to Luanda, they were coming from Capetown, in South Africa.

Zappa asked us to show him some of the damage caused by the fighting among the movements. This was easy, because the most important confrontations had taken place about two kilometres from the Consulate. In a brief tour we showed him three partially-destroyed buildings that had previously sheltered the FNLA's forces, and that had been attacked with bazookas and cannons by the MPLA. Zappa and Affonso Celso were very impressed by the damage.

Then we went to the Consulate to talk on the terrace over snacks. Before us, in the entrance to the beautiful bay of Luanda, a Shell aviation-fuel tank was on fire. Fortunately it was empty, but it contained gases that made it burn for weeks on end without exploding. Far away, on land, probably in Quifangondo, cannons roared. From the Consulate we could hear this roaring perfectly well. To Cyro, Ivony and me, the fire and the artillery noises were daily routine. But to Zappa and Affonso they were an uncomfortable novelty.

At about 6 in the evening Zappa asked me if it would still be possible to be received by any member of the government. The government was already in the hands of a single Movement, the MPLA. I rang Lopo do Nascimento, Prime Minister of the only movement in power, but he had already left. I then rang Jose N'Dele, previously Prime Minister of the UNITA, who had stayed in the palace because the MPLA still hoped he might join the winner. N'Dele was in and agreed to receive us.

We left immediately to meet him. When we went into his office he exclaimed in a dramatic tone, pretending to be very shocked: "Why are the Brazilians still in Luanda, in the Special Representation? Why haven't they

left, like the British?" Then he informed us that he, N'Dele, would be leaving Luanda the following day. And that he now understood why the Portuguese had run away from Angola. "They suffered a lot", he said.

N'Dele had got through that entire year without making a clear decision, using his party as a pendulum between the MPLA and the FNLA – but now he was making a sudden, explosive decision because both the FLNA and the UNITA had been expelled from the capital. There was no longer a tripartite government. The government now was the MPLA.

I found N'Dele's explosion irrelevant. I took into account that UNITA had shown itself to be insignificant as a military force in the fighting, and had no right to take part in the Government. It had taken the MPLA a week of intense fighting to expel the Zairean troops from Luanda, and the guerrillas following Holden. UNITA had been expelled in one hour some days later, and according to the rumours prevailing in the city they had left in bare feet, carrying their own shoes.

Zappa, however, was very impressed by N'Dele's alarm and panic. When we returned to the Consulate, after a long silence, he stood in the middle of the room, asked us to listen carefully to what he was going to say, and declared he thought that the sacrifice we were still making in Luanda was now completely unnecessary. For this reason he wanted to send Silveira a telegram suggesting the closure of the Representation and our urgent withdrawal to Brazil.

I immediately refuted this determination by the Head of the African Department. I told him that his position entitled him to use our telex machine to suggest whatever he wished to the Foreign Minister, even the closure of the Representation – but that immediately after his telegram there would be another one from me, explaining why I insisted that the Representation should stay in Luanda.

In March we had arrived in Luanda proclaiming our impartiality and neutrality vis-à-vis the three Movements, declaring that we would accept whoever was the winner on Independence Day. That meant we could not leave now, in August. If we left at this time of the year, nothing could guarantee that Brazil would recognize independent Angola in November, at the right moment. And if we did not recognize independent Angola promptly, we would have wasted all our sacrifice in Luanda during eight months of constant fighting. Mozambique would be even more disillusioned with us. And the whole of Africa would say that Brazil was not to be trusted, not even when dealing with the Portuguese-speaking Africans.

Cyro gave me his full support, and to my surprise even Affonso Celso Ouro Preto disagreed with his boss and gave his opinion immediately.

The debate, in these terms and with four participants, three on one side and Zappa alone on the other, lasted until three in the morning when we finally went to bed.

When I woke at 7 the following morning I rang Petrov, the MPLA's Chief of Police, at home and asked him to come to the Consulate to have breakfast with Zappa. They had already met during the visit that my friend had made to Agostinho Neto in Dar-es-Salaam. I explained beforehand that Zappa had heard N'Dele's views on the previous day, and I wanted Petrov to give him a description of the Angolan situation as seen by the MPLA before he went back to Brazil.

Petrov accepted the invitation, and expounded in great detail the MPLA's view of the defeat it had inflicted on the other movements. A thorough defeat that put Agostinho Neto in power. And that could only change later if the defeated movements sought foreign allies to invade Angola. But if that happened, and new foreign invasions came, the conflict in Angola would become an episode of the Cold War and the MPLA could also have allies.

Zappa left for Capetown at 10 am. I took him to the airport. He made a point of saying that he had changed his mind about the closure of the Representation, the subject of the previous night's discussion. Next day, already in South Africa he rang me to say that he had really given up the idea of closing the Representation. But he asked me to go to Brazil for "consultations". I agreed, for we all really needed a rest after the hardships of war-time Luanda.

Many years after these events, when Zappa was made Ambassador in Cuba, I happened to meet Affonso Celso Ouro Preto in the Itamaraty. All the newspapers printed the news of my friend's appointment to Havana, and praised him effusively – he had good relations with the press. Ouro Preto and I talked about Brazil's relations with Cuba, and we both agreed that Zappa was the right man for the post. Then we recollected that evening of discussions in Luanda when we had both opposed Zappa's sudden wish to simply close the Special Representation in Angola.

Ouro Preto then asked me: "Did you really believe that Zappa had changed his mind about sending Silveira a telegram suggesting the closure of the Representation?"

My answer was yes, I had indeed believed what Zappa had told me that night and also because he had rung me especially from South Africa to say he had changed his mind about the closure.

Laughing, Ouro Preto then told me: "Well, you should know that when he arrived in South Africa, he immediately sent a personal telegram to Silveira proposing the closure of the Representation. And Silveira answered immediately saying that this was out of the question and that he, Zappa, should destroy the personal telegrams exchanged about the issue.

A few days later I demanded an explanation from Zappa about what Ouro Preto had told me.

He looked very surprised and asked: "What does Ouro Preto have against me?"

The two telegrams that came into my hands recently through Professor Jerry Davila strongly confirmed what Ouro Preto had told me in that conversation.

Very strangely, Zappa gave the place of origin of this telegram as the Representation in Angola, when in fact he sent it from Capetown in South Africa. He could not have sent it from the Representation in Luanda, because the telex machine was not in operation and I had the key.

Silveira's reply to Zappa, also "secret" "very urgent" and "private", was mistakenly sent to the Special Representation in Luanda. The truth is that Zappa must have come to an agreement with the Communication Division to redirect Silveira's answer to South Africa, where he already was. If it had been sent to Luanda, it would not have reached Zappa – and I would have been informed of Silveira's reply immediately.

The funny thing is that Silveira, who seemed very concerned that Zappa should destroy the texts and tapes of those private, secret and very urgent telegrams, was the same person who kept them for many years, finally making them public by depositing them with the CPDOC of the Getulio Vargas Foundation when he gave them his testimony about his administration in the Itamaraty.

The reasons Zappa gives Silveira for the closure of the Representation are exaggerated with regard to the danger we would be facing from then on in Luanda. After all, the fighting among the movements had ended in July with the decisive victory of the MPLA – a victory that led to its permanence in power to this day - in spite of the outrageous support UNITA had a bit later from apartheid South Africa.

The Closure of the Representation with the removal of all Brazilian diplomats in Luanda and the surrender of the Consulate to two Portuguese who worked at the old Consulate as Zappa had suggested to Silveira – would have been a total disaster. One of the Portuguese men who was Vice-Consul for a long time, a self-confessed supporter of Salazar and a convinced colonialist, was in favour of the FNLA and a PIDE informant, according to what I heard from many sources. And the other worker, who with the reluctant support of the former had become an “aggregate” of the Consulate after the Carnation Revolution, was a sergeant in the special troops, maybe an informant for the Portuguese army in the Consulate.

As for the “three thousand people wanting a visa” who supposedly stood outside the Consulate in despair on that very morning of 5 August, demanding visas, this was Zappa’s dramatic fantasy. What I had told him when he arrived in Luanda was that some two hundred Portuguese people who had lost their homes soon after the climax of the fighting between the MPLA and the FLNA in July – a month before, not on the same day of Zappa’s arrival in Luanda – had, on a quiet Sunday, made a public demonstration and stopped opposite my residence in the Consulate building to ask for Brazil’s help.

At the time I made a brief speech from the balcony, telling the crowd that - even if not encouraging the exodus – Brazil was helping the Portuguese by granting visas and increasing the number of VARIG flights to Luanda. But the right procedure would be to approach the Portuguese authorities, i.e. the High Commissioner. The demonstration had not been at all threatening. It was totally peaceful, and it was already dispersing when the Police arrived.

Nor did I believe that these peaceful demonstrations would be repeated. Because Portugal was sending planes and boats with increasing frequency to remove all its nationals - with their respective belongings, and even private cars – who wanted to go back to Lisbon. In fact there were few nationals that had not yet been removed by the Portuguese Government. From August onwards, my expectation was that the demonstrations would take place in Portugal, not in Luanda.

Finally, years after that exchange of telegrams between Zappa and Silveira, I must say that Zappa’s attitude did not surprise or disillusion me. We both knew, from the early days of the adventure, that the Brazilian military right and the Lusophile press would be alert to events on the other side of the Atlantic and would try and hinder the Brazilian recognition of the new government – if it was an MPLA government.

In his telegram to Zappa, Silveira also manifested these fears when he said “I never had any doubt that eventually we would have to pay a price for having created a Special Representation”.

Later Silveira also lost his nerve when he discovered after independence that – perhaps for the first time in Brazilian history – the Itamaraty and the Ministry of War were in disagreement. That is why Zappa and Silveira forgot to create the new Embassy on the day of the recognition, as they had told me they would before independence. And that is why they tricked me, by giving me the title of “Chargé d’ Affaires” of a non-existent embassy. And that is also why later, after Independence, Silveira insisted that I should remain in Angola but without any contact with the Government. At the time I had replied that that was totally absurd, and if he wanted he could transfer me back to Rio or to my post in London.

For all that, I believe that it was President Geisel who with his well known determination demanded of Silveira and Zappa a more daring position with regard to the recognition of Angola even after the Cubans’ arrival on the same evening that Agostinho Neto proclaimed independence.

After all, courage is the essential quality of a soldier. The characteristic of diplomats is prudence. And the difficulties that occurred in the recognition of Angola were not caused by the Luanda Government after independence. They were caused by Brazil, by the same right-wing military forces that tried to overthrow Geisel in 1978, accusing him among other things of having recognized Angola.

Ovidio de A. Melo
Rio de Janeiro, 30 May 2006



Part III

Serving In Bangkok and Jamaica

After Angola, and the political uproar that the immediate recognition of its government provoked among that part of the Brazilian extreme right that viewed Geisel's foreign policy with increasing suspicion, I chose Thailand and later gladly accepted Jamaica as my subsequent posts. With twenty eight years of services to the Itamaraty and to Brazil, I could not risk my job – I won't say my career, for it had already been put at risk. To survive, I had to adapt to faraway posts where Brazil had no great immediate political or commercial interests. They were third-world posts, full of tourist attractions – but they had an important and interesting history that should be known to the Itamaraty. If properly analyzed, this history might teach us something useful to be eventually used by Brazil.

For a long time Thailand had been in this category of a beautiful and interesting country, and it had attracted me since the early days of my career. Heirs of a very ancient culture, Thailand's population emigrated from South China and spread out over a flat and very fertile territory approximately the size of France, then called Kingdom of Siam. They defeated the Khmer civilization from Cambodia, confronted and repelled many invasions from Burma (now Myanmar), transferred the capital somewhere else whenever it was destroyed by the enemy, and finally established it in Bangkok. So, Bangkok – called Krungthep by the locals – is a younger city than Rio de Janeiro. The magnificent temples that decorate the city and attract tourists from all over the

world only look ancient because they are exact reproductions of buildings that existed one day but were destroyed by the Burmese in Ayuthia, the previous capital.

Between two huge and very rich Asian civilizations, China and India, Thailand became culturally rich while preserving its own national character. Also when European imperialism dominated the whole of Asia, the old Kingdom of Siam, with great diplomatic ability, succeeded in preserving its independence, even though it was surrounded by British colonies in India and Burma and French colonies in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. And when Britain and France got together to threaten it, Thailand turned to the Russian Tsar for help.

Another attraction Bangkok offered at that time was important to me, though of little concern to the Itamaraty. The Vietnam War had ended in April 1975. I had followed with great interest the developments of that war since serving in Washington during the Kennedy administration through the news that was often concealed by the American press but published by brave journalists such as I.F. Stone. In Thailand, I would be able to follow closely the consequences of the overwhelming American defeat in Southeast Asia. How would China, so close by, behave? Would victorious Vietnam expand towards Cambodia and Laos? How would it unify its territory? For Thailand, the effects of the ending of the war would be huge. Hordes of American troops on R&R breaks from the war had kept Bangkok's bars, brothels and drug dealers in business for years, but that trade stopped overnight. Thailand's intense cross-border trade with Laos and Cambodia – even Vietnam, for certain products, the only trade South Vietnam conducted in the final years of the war – suddenly disappeared because the ports of those neighbouring countries were now open to the world. When I asked for a post in Bangkok, these were the impressions I wanted to have confirmed.

Five years later I was happy to accept a post in Jamaica. At the time I needed to be near Brazil and not too far from the United States: Ivony and I were trying to find the best possible medical care for our youngest daughter who was suffering from breast cancer. She had recovered well from surgery in Brazil, but was still in danger of a possible recurrence of the disease, something that fortunately never happened. But I also believed from the very beginning that the only professional objective I could have in that post was to complement my studies of the history of slavery in that island, comparing it with slavery in the Paraíba Valley during the coffee cycle. I was also interested in the muted but ferocious competition that had always existed between Great

Britain and the United States for predominance in that island. Throughout history this competition made use of (i) smuggling and piracy, Jamaica being the largest centre and most prosperous entrepôt in the Caribbean; (ii) religion, confronting the pomp and formality of the rich and official Anglican religion, installed in cathedrals and palaces, with the initial simplicity and informality of the American Protestant sects that founded churches in buildings that previously held poor dwellings or modest commercial enterprises. The confusion caused by this religious clash in Jamaica gave rise to a curious event: the creation of a new religion, Rastafarianism. It is possible to say that Jamaica was the only country in modern times that created a totally original religion, a religion that has been expanding to other countries and continents ever since. And (iii) competition in the exploitation of cheap Jamaican labour, not only in all the heavy engineering works carried out by Great Britain and the United States on their own territories and throughout the world (undergrounds, tunnels, bridges, channels, etc) but also in a new type of agriculture that was developed in the island itself for the intensive cultivation of bananas. This is the type of cultivation carried out by the United Fruit Company, a company with a sad history of exploitation throughout the Caribbean and in Central America. Because of this use of black workers, half of Jamaica's population now lives far from the island, in England, the United States or Canada.

I must briefly mention here all the matters that were part of my studies and the information I sent to the Itamaraty while serving in Thailand and Jamaica. But I feel that this information was only useful as fodder for the archives, for the only thing the Itamaraty legitimately expected of me were comments on the small events of internal or regional politics from the country or area in which I was serving. And among these, only those that merited international coverage. Of course I did that too, and as regularly as possible. I never knew, however, if my comments had even the smallest influence on the Itamaraty's political plans for those regions.

For all that, I prefer to tell the reader that I did nothing very relevant in those two posts in which I spent approximately nine years before returning to Brazil to retire. I feel I did nothing new or creative, all was mere routine. As the years went by even the great feat of Angola's recognition started to vanish into thin air, gradually losing its importance. Strictly speaking the event only had greater significance and grandeur because Brazil had been under a dictatorship, from which a gesture such as that – no matter how simple – could not have been expected. Genuine and persistent courage had been

shown year after year by Cuba, a small and poor country, making huge sacrifice to help Angola to repel repeated South African incursions.

Finally the dictatorship in Brazil was coming to an inglorious end, in decay but still not quite buried by the Figueiredo administration. In the first democratic government after the military regime, thanks to the kind initiative of friends who had been aware of everything I experienced in Angola in 1975, the injustice I had suffered was corrected: having been at the top of the Access List since 1976, I was finally promoted. My promotion, made on Ulysses Guimarães' request, was the first promotion made in the Itamaraty after the restoration of democracy, a rather good addition to my curriculum vitae. Also, in a generous gesture, the Foreign Relations Commission of the Chamber of Deputies, in formal session, paid homage to me and to Italo Zappa with commemorative plates emphasising the services we had rendered the nation.

In the course of the nine years I spent in Asia and in the Caribbean - very far from Angola - southern Africa went through interesting political changes. Partly the result of the independence achieved by the former Portuguese colonies in 1975, these changes were also the result of the increasing corrosion of the apartheid regime and its unpopularity with all other African nations, its neighbours in particular because they felt most threatened. After 1975 the European colonies in the region that had previously formed a sort of protective carapace for South Africa gradually achieved independence, and the Pretoria Government that they previously protected started to see them as a threat. Rhodesia, with a white dictatorship governing the ninety-nine per cent of the population that was black, became Zimbabwe under President Mugabe. Namibia, illegally occupied by South Africa, also became independent. Helped by the Cubans, Angola not only repelled all the incursions into its territory: it also began to help the newly independent countries in the region.

The apartheid regime was now utterly discredited throughout the world. UN sanctions started to bite, and more than a thousand large, long-established companies with British and American capital left in a hurry, afraid of being contaminated by association with the racist regime.

Only then, when the regime's discredit was about to lead to its total collapse, did the British and American governments succeed in convincing the new Prime Minister - the Boer De Klerk - to free Mandela to negotiate an agreement to end apartheid and establish a new government of the

huge black majority, but still keeping the economy in the hands of the national or foreign whites.

Thus, overnight and as if by magic, with enthusiastic praise from world media, South Africa started to live with a poor black government and a very rich white economy. Certainly a very unstable balance: the poverty of the huge black majority has not been relieved to this day, the dissatisfaction of the population is on a constant upward trend, and the government still survives on Nelson Mandela's endorsement. When Mandela goes, all the population's dissatisfactions will be free to be expressed, and at the same time. It is true that all apartheid laws were revoked, and this is a tribute to Mandela's heroism. But the national security laws that supported the hateful racist regime still remain intact. They are the only sluice-gates that will try to contain a tsunami of dissatisfaction, and the question is not whether it will happen, just when.

Some critics might say that I am being too pessimistic when I foresee turbulence in southern Africa, and particularly in South Africa itself. They may say that this gulf between the government and the population's needs exists in many countries, particularly in those dictatorships in countries where the population is not homogeneous – and this type of situation may last for a long time. I am sure of that. But I am looking carefully at the ratios in these heterogeneous populations. If Barak Obama does nothing to improve the situation of African Americans, he will disillusion ten to twelve per cent of the US population. It is possible to contain this percentage of dissatisfied people. But in South Africa, ninety-five per cent of the population will be disillusioned. It is in this ratio that the problem lies... And castles built on sand eventually tumble.

In the year 2000, although already retired, I was invited by a good friend to take part in a seminar organized by the Research Institute for International Relations (IPRI) about prospects for relations between Brazil and South Africa. My contribution to this seminar is in the pages that follow, and I don't think it is out of date. It might be even more accurate in view of some recent developments. Thabo Mbeki, with all the good British credentials he had to govern the country, was worn out and with very low popularity at the end of his rule. The new Prime Minister took office not so much because he played an important role in Mandela's party as because he was chief of the Zulus. During all these past years the

issue of AIDS control has not been solved, and living conditions in the ghettos of South Africa have not significantly improved.

Paper I Presented At a Seminar Organized By the Research Institute for International Relations In 2000

An attempt at a realistic political view of relations between Brazil and South Africa

In 1975 I was Special Representative of Brazil in Luanda, Angola, when South African tanks invaded, followed by troops of the FLNA and UNITA, in an effort to reach the capital before the date set for the independence. They wanted to force the MPLA out of government, and to install Jonas Savimbi and/or Holden Roberto as rulers of the new country once Portugal left.

The MPLA has governed independent Angola ever since 1975. The country suffered various other South African interventions, all of which were repelled, initially with Cuban military assistance – but in the course of all these years it never had a single day of peace. And the reason for this is that South Africa continued to support Savimbi's guerrillas against the MPLA government. This support came in the form of troops and weapons, and above all by buying diamonds from the areas that Savimbi attacked in Angola. On 8 October 1999 newspapers reported that Savimbi, having for years created all sorts of difficulties and obstacles to the cooperation between Brazil and Angola, "had declared war on Brazil and chosen Brazilian installations in Angola as the target for its attacks". Next day, 9 October, the newspapers said that De Beers, a multinational operating mostly in South Africa, but also in Brazil, and with a monopoly of diamond purchasing throughout the world, had finally "decided not to buy diamonds from Savimbi". It pleaded guilty, in other words – though this had been well known for years. But since diamonds have no certificate of origin, the declaration is inconclusive. Savimbi could always sell diamonds through middlemen.

I begin this paper by pointing to the latent twenty-four-year-old contradiction between South Africa and Brazil in their respective interests in southern Africa. It is remarkable that South Africa, having gone through so many internal changes since it abolished apartheid, might have continued to carry out a foreign policy of destabilizing its neighbours, directly or indirectly, through De Beers. The situation is still more remarkable if we think that the

MPLA was always against apartheid, and it helped the African National Congress in its struggle. Savimbi, on the other hand, became nationally and internationally unacceptable as a possible government for Angola precisely because of his alliance with the white racists who imposed apartheid on South Africa, and who probably intended to expand their regime of racial discrimination to Angola. They had already done the same thing in Namibia, which they then illegally occupied.

This incongruity between South Africa's internal and foreign policies can only be explained if we consider that very little time has passed since Mandela assumed power, and if we combine this fact with the following hypotheses:

1. What should logically and consistently be the foreign policy of Mandela's party, i.e. not to help Savimbi, has still not been adopted by South Africa's foreign ministry – where traces, influences and even a few faces from the apartheid era still remain.
2. South Africa's foreign policy, be it under the apartheid regime or in the democratization resulting from the agreements between Mandela and De Klerk, is an interventionist policy drawn up by multinationals and influenced by Europe and the United States – which openly supported Savimbi during the Reagan administration. This policy is a destabilizing influence in southern Africa, where South Africa seeks the hegemony that will secure the greatest profits for European and American capital in the region.

Given the admiration I feel for Mandela and the African National Congress's persistent struggle against racism and the exploitation of black people in South Africa, I prefer to believe in the first hypothesis: that Mandela's government has not been in power long enough to control the country and erase the last traces of apartheid, particularly its effects on foreign policy.

I cannot totally dismiss the second hypothesis, however: that democratized South Africa was created to be the guardian in southern Africa of European and American capitalist interests. This may have been the basis of the white racists' calculations when they made the concessions that led to the end of apartheid. The growing internal conflict in South Africa in the last years of apartheid had made South Africa an international pariah, unable to influence other countries peacefully, in Africa particularly. On the other hand, the attenuation of internal conflict and the concession of formal democracy with the bombastic publicity it received in the international media, theoretically

inverted this situation – making South Africa a centre of influence and attraction for the entire African continent.

Indeed, in my view, it is around these two hypotheses that South Africa's internal and foreign policies collide in a very difficult and unstable transitional phase. Merely giving the black population the vote without a more equal distribution of health care, habitation, education and income opportunities permitted the establishment of a black majority government. Black majority governments exist in many other countries, former European colonies in Africa, but not one of them can claim to be a model for similar countries in the African continent. What distinguishes South Africa is the authenticity demonstrated in the long struggle of the black majority that became government in its confrontation with the numerous white racists who, until recently, imposed the apartheid regime by force to the benefit of the multinationals. It is from this struggle - that still continues between the black government and the white colonialists and racists who support the multinationals and will be supported by them - that a truly democratic South Africa will emerge. And for this we need time. We may say that South Africa is a newborn country, but one that is by no means free of colonialism. And this is so because colonialism in South Africa was internal. It exploited the black population from its solid position in the very heart of the government apparatus. This was the essential characteristic of apartheid, and what distinguished it from classic colonialism.

Since South Africa freed itself from apartheid, students of international relations tend to find great similarities between that country and Brazil, predicting very promising relations between them. In my opinion, what links these similarities is the fact that they deal with the negative aspects of the current situation of both countries, such as: (i) the abandonment and extreme poverty experienced by the black populations in both countries; (ii) the volume of their respective economies, which are out of balance with those of their neighbours; (iii) unfair income distribution; (iv) large-scale illiteracy – and so on. Rather than promising international relations, these similarities would seem to indicate a growing threat of huge internal turbulences in both countries. And more immediately in South Africa.

In my view, the differences between South Africa and Brazil are much more important and significant.

Since 1822 Brazil has been an independent member of the international community, even if it might have been subjected for long periods to the neo-colonial influences of Great Britain and the United States. By contrast, South

Africa was a Dutch and later a British colony, in both cases with the objective of emigration from the colonial powers as well as simple exploitation. The Dutch and the British never got on in South Africa, their struggle for power even taking the form of all-out war. It was in South Africa, fighting against the Boers, that the British general Kitchener invented the concentration camp and the scorched-earth policy that other warmongering nations adopted later. Indeed, the dispute between the Dutch and the British continues to this day in independent South Africa. In their colonizing objectives they both confronted the strong resistance of the black tribes – such as the Zulus, a tribe with huge numbers that is still characterized by its bellicosity. Although, after independence, South Africa became a member of the Commonwealth with an independent foreign policy, when the descendants of the Dutch who had originally established the apartheid regime won the election, the country soon left the Commonwealth. With apartheid South Africa had increasingly limited foreign relations: it became the object of international sanctions and came to be a pariah state. But finally it came to terms with the majority of its people who are neither Dutch nor British, but African. It is just beginning to be a country, in other words. Formerly it was a colonial entrepôt in Africa, protected by the fact that its neighbours were also colonies and formed a sort of carapace around it.

That said, South Africa is radically different from Brazil – and also from other Commonwealth nations such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand. It was an unruly colony. It was a rebel Commonwealth member. It was a pariah country in the international community because of apartheid. With such a history, no one can guarantee that its recent democratization will avoid new tumult and great conflict. Having reached formal democratization, South Africa is just beginning to crawl towards a true democracy. And it is not certain to achieve true democracy without bitter struggles.

Brazil was the last country in the Western world to abolish slavery – a regime that corresponded to the apartheid regime that appeared nearly a century later, revived and modernized, in South Africa. When it abolished slavery, Brazil did nothing to improve the former slaves' living standards. It left the new freemen to their fate, and started importing European immigrants as agricultural labour. For nearly a century it was influenced by the racist theories elaborated by the colonizers of Africa and Asia as self-justification. But in a Brazil of mixed races, reality gradually imposed itself. Then came the theory that the Portuguese were the “ideal colonizers” in the tropics because

they intermarry. And also the theory that miscegenation was beneficial because “it whitened the race”. Although not based on statistical data and still containing a large dose of racism, these false theories had an unintentional but very useful side effect: they lowered racial barriers and even stimulated miscegenation. A mestizo nationality was born, speaking a single language, with the beautiful mulatto woman as its symbol.

In South Africa the trend was diametrically opposite. From European colonial racism, the white South Africans leaped directly to the theories of a superior race preached by Nazism – thus seeking to justify the creation of apartheid. The result is that South Africa is now a country divided by conflicting ethnic groups, speaking ten different official languages. Even after the formal abolition of apartheid, even after Mandela came to power, in the hinterland, in areas where the Boers always predominated, visiting Brazilians told me that they found traces of racial separation such as separate toilets for whites and blacks: for the whites, well built and impeccably clean WCs; for the blacks, sordid zinc cubicles, mere cesspits, real pigpens. It is also well known that in the South African hinterland the murder of black people is taken less seriously by the white police and by the judicial system in general.

With a population of almost 40 million, South Africa has a huge contingent of recent – legal or illegal – immigrants¹⁴. These include a large number of Portuguese whom the advocates of the Brazil-South Africa exchange cite as the ideal middlemen for business between the two countries. From my experience of the war and of the exodus of whites from Angola, I must make it clear that these Portuguese immigrants to South Africa are the cream of the most stubborn colonialism in the world, that of Portugal in Africa. Whites and people of mixed descent who could not live – or could not stand living – in Angola after independence under a black government ran away to South Africa. And the same thing happened in the former Rhodesia, in Mozambique and in all South Africa’s neighbours that became independent. Under the apartheid regime, South Africa seemed a safe haven to these recalcitrant colonialists and racists. As South Africa now changes and is also under a

¹⁴ According to the 1996 census, one million of the total population of 39,806,000 people was born outside South Africa. Of those, approximately 530 thousand came from the Southern African Development Community and a few more than 20 thousand from the other African countries. As they are official, these data will certainly not include the contingents of illegal immigrants from neighbouring countries (1996 Population census online – www.statssa.gov.zalcensus96).

black government, these refugee immigrants will tend to break camp once again and leave for destinations they consider safer. Indeed, if we give them the opportunity they may even come to Brazil. However, in view of their colonialist and racist views, it is obvious that these Portuguese cannot be good intermediaries in any trade between Brazil and South Africa, for they won't even be able to understand Brazilian reality.

In the conditions of a unipolar world, with rules dictated by the United States, the civilization model that was applied in South Africa was the American way of life model¹⁵. Under apartheid, South African towns used to expel the blacks from the urban centre to the remote peripheries as soon as the sun went down, but now the blacks can be in the city centres both at daytime and at night. However, the first blacks who dared to stay in the deserted city at night were the unemployed, down-and-outs or prostitutes. Now the whites are the ones who leave the towns at night, driving as fast as they can to their still-exclusive suburbs. The same thing happened in Nairobi in Kenya when it got rid of the British and in Kinshasa in the Congo when it got rid of the Belgians. Both cities have become very violent as soon as the sun goes down. This is now also happening in Johannesburg and Pretoria, and this tends to drive away the multinationals. This violence is racially directed, against the whites, and could not be otherwise. And as happened in the United States, this violence will tend to increase when an emerging black middle class begins to want to live in the same exclusive suburbs where the whites now lock themselves up. In South Africa, the racial conflict of the American Way of Life reproduces itself.

The origins of Brazilian violence and criminality are different: they stem from colonial Brazil. The city slaves, called *negros de ganho*, came together around the town fountains for informal gatherings characteristic of vagrants. Sometimes they fought in the streets, blacks against blacks. The police intervened. The Brazilian martial art *capoeira* was their way of resisting the police. But the *capoeira* was not exclusive to the blacks. They taught it to the whites when they played together as children in the farm houses. As a curiosity, José Maria da Silva Paranhos, the Baron of Rio Branco, was an expert *capoeira*

¹⁵ For the American Way of Life, see an interview with the well-known historian John Hope Franklin in the *Jornal do Brasil* of 23 October 1999, entitled "Try to be a black man and get a taxi in New York". As the title suggests, the interview reveals to what extent racial discrimination still persists in North American life.

fighter in his youth in the late 19th century. And now capoeira is taught in martial-arts academies throughout the country.

Then came Abolition, and with it the abandonment of the blacks to their fate. The largest contingent of slaves in Brazil lived on the coffee plantations in the Paraíba Valley. Left to an aimless life after Abolition, many took the train to Rio de Janeiro. The first hill where they build their huts was the Morro da Providência, near the railhead in the centre of the capital. Soldiers returning from the Canudos War¹⁶ who also went to live there called the hill a favela because it reminded them of the military camp opposite the razed hinterland town. From there, with the arrival in Rio of new contingents of the – mostly black – poor, thrown out of the plantations, the favelas spread to all the hills of Rio de Janeiro. There are now eight hundred of them, interspersed with wealthy and middle-class districts.

There is an obvious huge difference between the habitat of blacks in the Brazilian towns and in those of South Africa. Here the blacks always lived in the town centres, they mixed and coexisted with poor whites (soldiers, immigrants, etc.) and with of all sorts of people of mixed descent. For sure, this mob – recently installed in the town in favelas and doss-houses – lived in poverty, and this led to violence. But the violence was not racially directed. People from the favelas walked freely in the town at any time of the day or night, and in this coexistence with the whites the favela was even idealized in popular songs: “Favela of my loves, favela very near the sky, my zinc hut with a hole in the ceiling from which the stars spread on the ground”. This sort of idealization would hardly be possible in Sharpeville or Soweto.

In South Africa the process was different. The blacks were concentrated in blacks-only districts, some of them forty or fifty kilometres from the white city and others, such as Soweto, adjacent to the Johannesburg city centre. They could only go to the white city to work. In the early evening, when work finished, they had to go back to their huts in Sharpeville or Soweto where the white police at any sign of agitation or rebellion carried out massacres with

¹⁶ TN – The Canudos War (1893-1897)– A conflict in the backlands of Bahia that started around a millenarian movement founded by a Catholic mystic known to his followers as Antonio Conselheiro. Various factors, including the end of the monarchy, poor economic conditions and persistent local droughts helped to attract new members, and the town’s population grew to 35 thousand. Three unsuccessful military attempts were made to liquidate the settlement. The fourth expedition, combining state and federal troops, razed Canudos to the ground. This was followed by a massacre of most male prisoners.

wide international repercussions. Even worse, the Government did all it could to deprive the blacks of South African nationality and confine them to the bantustans according to the tribe to which they belonged. With the end of apartheid, the blacks flowed to the cities suddenly and en masse. It is true that some of the underlying reasons for the violence are similar in South Africa and Brazil, in particular the extreme poverty in which part of the population lives. But violence in South Africa has a new ingredient that is more similar to the violence in the large American cities: it is racially directed. It is more similar to the violence in Watts, Los Angeles, or in Harlem, New York. In this respect South Africa will copy the American Way of Life. Brazil only needs better income distribution to eliminate the poverty of part of its black, mixed or white population. It is a huge task, but less difficult.

Another cultural ingredient that clearly distinguishes the South African blacks from the Brazilian blacks is religion. The Catholic religion that we inherited from Portugal is a peasant religion, illiterate and orally transmitted, interpreted by the priests. It does not encourage – in fact it discourages – the reading of the Bible. In South Africa, the Protestant religions imposed on the blacks strongly recommend the reading of the Bible. This distinction is extremely important, for the blacks' interpretation of the Bible is different from that of the whites. After all, with all their power and ostentation the pharaohs were black while their slaves were white Jews. Solomon was fascinated by the beauty and the wealth of the Queen of Sabah, an Ethiopian black woman. Later, at a particular historical moment, there was a reversal of the situation, with the plundering of the blacks by the whites. And according to the Protestant blacks this plundering must now be reversed.

This different reading of the Bible that culminates in the mythicization of Ethiopia, perfectly characterized in the Rastafarians' Jamaica¹⁷ is the common trait existing between all the English-speaking Protestant blacks, be it in the blacks' rebellions in the English-speaking Caribbean, in the efforts to dignify the American and British blacks, or in former British colonies in Africa. Marcus Garvey's biography reflects this: expelled from Jamaica, where he preached

¹⁷ When the Ras (Duke) Tafari ascended the Ethiopian throne with the name of Haile Selassie, and the titles of King of Kings and Lion of Judah, the Jamaican blacks saw in it a confirmation of the Biblical prophecy about the coming of a Messiah "who would save the black race". They greeted the new Ethiopian Emperor as a God. The British made great efforts to repress the new faith, but a new religion was born – and it is now expanding at an incredible pace in the English-speaking Caribbean. It also has great influence on Caribbean music and culture.

resistance to the whites, he went to New York where he continued preaching. Also expelled from New York, he ended up in England – where he became the mentor and inspiration of Nkrumah, Nyerere, Kaunda and other African leaders who wanted to liberate their countries. In South Africa, that same Anglican Church that never had much political relevance in the United States or in the Caribbean – partially because of the old rivalry between the British and Dutch settlers – made a great contribution to the end of apartheid through the leadership of Archbishop Tutu and Reverend Alan Boesak.

South Africa is therefore a country that arrived late at the international scenario and more than any other country, was traumatized at birth. Apartheid was unsustainable and De Klerk had the good political sense to end it in peaceful negotiations with the black leaders. He was wise enough to realize that when the rope is stretched too far, it breaks. But the scars left by the apartheid regime are still very open. And the blacks' demands for better living conditions will be stronger and faster-moving than those the world has seen in the United States, in the Caribbean, and in all those countries where colonialism not only established slavery, but - in order to reduce the risks for the whites - carefully set limits to the number of slaves of the same tribal origin. And these demands will be stronger and faster-moving because there is a common language in the United States, the Caribbean and the former British colonies in Africa – and at the same time international communication is much improved, with television, the internet and globalization.

The negotiations between De Klerk's good sense and Mandela's heroism, the subsequent election of Mandela as President, the creation of a government of national unity, the institution of a tribunal chaired by Archbishop Tutu to review crimes committed under apartheid and forgive perpetrators who confessed – all this created a euphoric climate. A situation that was exaggeratedly greeted by the international media as heralding the rise of a country where peace had been achieved and the multinationals could operate safely. Mandela's huge charisma also contributed to this. However, this careful patching up is already beginning to unravel. De Klerk and his followers have already left the Government of National Unity. The trade unions and the communists, on the other hand, are beginning to move away from the African National Congress, accusing it of being inactive in face of the serious problems of economic inequality between the wealthy whites and the extremely poor blacks. With this, Mandela's charisma is beginning to wear thin. Besides he is

old, is leaving the stage and Thabo Mbeki, his replacement, has been nominated, elected and inaugurated.

So now the country is governed by Thabo Mbeki, the undisputed leader of the ANC, nominated by Mandela as the new President – but without the reputation and charisma of his predecessor. The confrontation that led to the peaceful end of the apartheid regime made a hundred thousand whites and a thousand multinational companies leave South Africa. Now the uncertainties of this new transition may lead to an even greater exodus, an exodus that will certainly happen if Mbeki decides to effectively combat the poverty that affects the large majority of the population and to abandon the neo-liberal policies, prescribed by the IMF, that South Africa is still applying.

South Africa is therefore an unknown quantity in terms of the evolution of its economic and social policy: we have to wait and see. But while we wait, we have to coexist with it and trade with it. We must take into account that our policy towards Africa does not need intermediaries; that because of its own internal problems, South Africa does not have the conditions to play this intermediary role; and, above all, that our main point of exchange with Africa is Angola, not South Africa. We must remember that for the last 24 years South Africa has helped Savimbi. And Savimbi, in despair, under the UN's sanctions and apparently abandoned by De Beers, "has declared war on Brazil" – which hardly contributes to peaceful relations between Brazil and South Africa.

We must also be aware of the fact that although the Anglo-American multinationals applauded the transformations South Africa is going through and provided the conditions for it, they intend to control them and administer them in small doses according to a specific model. Except in the case of social formalities, this model is no longer that of the British Commonwealth: it is the American model. The mere electoral democracy of "one man, one vote" is a gigantic step forward compared with the archaic racism of apartheid.

We must remember, however, that in theory black Americans have had the vote since Lincoln. In practice this did nothing to improve their living conditions: that only happened a century later, under the Kennedy administration, when the black movements with a religious background imposed themselves as a political force. In South Africa the African National Congress was created in 1912 and created a military arm. Moreover the ratio between whites and blacks is completely different from that same ration in the United States. The remaining forces of apartheid will not have the

conditions to become a new Klu-Klux-Klan. All this makes us believe that the transformations South Africa is now going through cannot be stopped. And they will be much more violent and much more rapid than those the United States has gone through since the Civil War.

As in the United States, however, the transformations in the sense of a genuine and increasing internal democratization may not be reflected in South Africa's foreign policy. They may not prevent the multinationals' large interests from leading South Africa to adopt an imperialist policy with regard to its African neighbours. I am not referring here to the "false" countries, the Bantustans that South Africa itself created and that depend on it for everything. I am talking about the countries that emerged from the decolonization of Southern Africa, i.e. Namibia, Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. In Namibia South Africa tried to rig the election results, and until the last moment it tried to keep Walvis Bay, Namibia's only deep-water port through which it could conduct international trade, under its control. Zambia's contacts with the outside world now have to go through South Africa because the Benguela railway in Angola was destroyed by Savimbi's guerrillas. The same happened in Zimbabwe, since the Beira railway was also wrecked by the Renamo guerrillas supported by South Africa. As for Mozambique, it is largely supported by the labour it sends to the South African gold mines. And now South Africa intends to make of the port of Maputo (formerly Lourenço Marques) the exit door for the industrial production of the areas around Johannesburg. All this means greater dependence of the neighbouring countries on South Africa. Is this a policy to be continued after apartheid? Will the multinationals be able to impress on the South African blacks the same notions of a nation predestined to dominate the others, the same sort of illness the United States has been suffering from since it started to intervene in the Caribbean, in Mexico and in Central America?

Another issue that deserves to be mentioned and reflected upon is the creation of a safety zone in the South Atlantic, a proposal made by apartheid South Africa and accepted by Argentina but rejected by Brazil. The evident objective of this project in its original South African formulation would be to guarantee safe navigation on the route to the Cape, in particular for the supplies of oil from the Middle East. Will the end of apartheid invalidate this South African initiative, which under apartheid would mostly be used to attenuate South Africa's isolation by UN sanctions? Or is this South African initiative part of a broader strategy that may also be interesting for post-apartheid

South Africa? In my opinion, in this period of expectations about South Africa's internal and foreign policy, this project must be frozen. The Cold War is over, at present safety on the route to the Cape is not under threat. The Gulf War against Iraq demonstrated that threats of interruption of oil supplies can be solved in the Middle East itself. What interests us most at present are the Angolan oil supplies. For it is incongruous that we should worry about the passage of oil from the Middle East via the Cape when South Africa, even if democratic internally, continues to help Savimbi in his attempts to destabilize Angola while Savimbi "declares war on Brazil".

In sum, while we wait for South Africa to develop and to define its internal and foreign policy, we have to cultivate our relations with Angola. Angola has the oil that South Africa lacks. And oil can be both a commodity and a currency, to pay for the small volumes of our trade with southern Africa. Therefore let the multinationals be responsible for the trade with South Africa, as they have always been. But in terms of commercial policy we must concentrate on increasing our trade with South Africa's neighbours. This will also serve to make them stronger in the face of a country that is showing itself to be aggressive in Africa, even in this post-apartheid phase.

As a sign of this aggressiveness, which at particular moments may help to attenuate the internal contradictions, we have the fact that South Africa is arming itself. The government programme adopted by Mandela and continued by Mbeki foresees growth, employment and wealth redistribution as the acronym GEAR indicates. But South Africa strictly follows the IMF's advice: it looks after its currency, the fiscal deficit, the better management of the economy, privatizations. In these conditions it does not have the resources to attend with the necessary urgency to the pressing needs - for better health services, habitation, education and jobs - of the large majority of its black people, until recently humiliated, insulted and excluded by apartheid.

In these circumstances, the magazine *New African* (November 1999) – quoting the *Washington Post* – announced that South Africa has ordered three submarines and four warships (corvettes) from Germany, forty state-of-the-art helicopters from Italy and twenty-eight fighter aircraft from Great Britain, all adding up to a gigantic expenditure of 5 billion US dollars.

What will these weapons be for? Against whom will they eventually be used? After all, South Africa's Defence Minister, Mosilloa Lekota, when asked about this in the Congress, could not identify any threat to the country's security, or name any country as a possible aggressor to South Africa.

In short, we must bear in mind one unquestionable fact: South Africa is a new country, taking its first steps in democracy and international coexistence. Nobody can foresee where these first steps will lead. But while we wait to see if South Africa changes, we must urgently improve the living conditions of our poor, mixed-race people. But this is another problem that has nothing to do with relations with South Africa, so it should not be part of this specific study.

If it were necessary to add something to the above paper, written in 2000, I think it would be convenient to remember what has happened more recently in Zimbabwe with Mugabe's re-election. The former Rhodesia's white minority let Mugabe assume power and allowed new Zimbabwe to have a black government simply because it adopted the same formula of conciliation and the end of apartheid used in South Africa: that is, the new country's economy would be untouched, remaining in the hands of the white owners of the prosperous farms of old Rhodesia. Getting old while still in power and respecting this unwritten contract, in all these years of continued government, Mugabe wore himself out and lost popularity with his black electorate. Recently, in order to recover it, Mugabe touched the country's economy precisely where he did not dare to touch it before: he carried out an agrarian reform and took land from the white owners. This was sufficient to raise against him the accusations of fraudulent elections, and for the Anglo-Saxon world to try and overthrow his government. In the past this overthrow would have been violent. Now it is tentatively being left - not very successfully - in the hands of the UN Security Council. And one of the obstacles that most irritate Mugabe's enemies is South Africa's lack of resolution. South Africa's black government starts to see Zimbabwe's predicament as what may become South Africa's dilemma when it begins to satisfy the needs of its people, irrespective of the fact that this may harm the white capital of African neo-colonialism.

Part IV

Continuing My Destiny of a Mould Removing Diplomat

Already retired, I was sought out by some friends from the Ministry of Science and Technology who showed me an agreement negotiated by Brazil with the United States. This agreement provided that the Base of Alcântara in the state of Maranhão, designed for Brazil's aerospace activities and those of countries with which Brazil had planned technical cooperation, would be practically handed over to the United States for its exclusive use.

By this incredible agreement, which was then due to be submitted to Congress for its approval, the American government would have an active say in the choice of countries with which Brazil might engage in technical cooperation in aerospace activities. Next, successive clauses meticulously suppressed any claim of jurisdiction the Brazilian government might have with regard to American activities on the territory rented to them in the Alcântara Base.

Moreover, The containers bringing to Brazil the American material to be used in the American base within the Brazilian base of Alcântara, could not be examined by the Brazilian customs and excise authorities. Only Americans could transport the containers to the American base. The American base would be clearly delimited. Brazilian authorities could not enter. If a crime occurred in the delimited area, only the US police could intervene. If a missile fell on the town of Alcântara, the Brazilian police or firemen could not provide the necessary assistance. The press would not be allowed to photograph the

smoking ruins. And the limit of submission: the Americans would have a right of veto on any aerospace activities that Brazil might wish to engage in with other countries in the Alcântara base.

To me all this seemed simply an aberration. I wrote an official opinion pointing out all these absurdities, and handed it to my friends at the Ministry of Science and Technology. Fortunately they were able to get the Congress to reject this miserable agreement. This, I hope, was my last action as mould remover. But the amount of corruption-mould, subordination-mould and even treason-to-the-nation-mould was astonishing in that agreement, which was fortunately consigned to the rubbish bin of history.

After all this, news from the Alcântara base was all bad. First, a terrible accident at a rocket launch killed twenty aerospace scientists. Then there was a land dispute between the base - as it had been planned and established - and the claims of quilombola^(*) organizations. As it seems that the quilombolas are winning, the base is thinking of moving somewhere else.

Now, in 2009. Colombian President Uribe is keen to allow the installation of American bases inside seven Colombian military bases – even if all other South American countries are manifesting their disagreement with this concession – the agreement that was tentatively negotiated with Brazil and then rejected returns to the stage as a very bad precedent. Uribe alleges that the American bases are “within the Colombian bases”, and therefore Colombia can always control what the Americans are doing. But if this concession of bases contains the same clauses as those the Americans tried to impose on Brazil in Alcântara, what will be granted is sovereignty over national territory. With it, the Americans will have gained a foothold to use Colombia in any adventure they might have in mind in South America. We must also remember that the 4th American fleet, recently brought to life after the Second World War, is searching for a good naval base to act freely in this part of the world.

The Union of South American Nations (UNASUL), an organization that defends the rights of South American countries, recently met President Uribe in Bariloche to obtain more information about the agreement on the American bases in Colombia. Amidst the heated discussions that took place in the meeting, the details of the agreement were not revealed. In the same

(*) TN - Organizations of descendants of slaves who escaped from the plantations and hid in communities called quilombos. If they can prove that quilombos existed in the area where they still live, they can be granted ownership.

gathering, Brazil's President Lula proposed a meeting between UNASUL and President Obama to clarify the matter. So far we have not had a reply from the American government. In my view, the proposal is wise.

UNASUL has doubts about several serious issues. Uribe keeps repeating that the foreign bases will be embedded within the Colombian bases. But the battles that these American troops will allegedly wage in Colombian territory against the FARC (Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces) and the drug traffickers are the type of war that demands constant movement and the speedy pursuit of the enemy. It is evident that participants in this war can easily cross borders and enter the territory of neighbouring countries, as recently happened on the border with Ecuador. Moreover it is likely that the agreement for the installation of these bases in Colombia will have similar clauses to those the US included in the agreement rejected by Brazil. As we have seen, these clauses deny the host country any information about the tenant's intended activities in the area concerned. In this case, Colombia – a denuclearized country – will have no control whatsoever over what the United States – the largest nuclear power in the world – does on Colombian territory or in border areas.

In these conditions, UNASUL will have to remember that when Latin America signed the Tlatelolco Treaty and the NPT, it insisted that security from nuclear attack is the only advantage that Latin America has in being denuclearized. For this reason, as Tlatelolco clearly provided, nuclear powers with colonies in the treaty area cannot station nuclear weapons in those colonies. In addition, all Latin American countries had to sign the treaty at the same time. For if a single one of them builds or borrows atomic bombs, all its neighbours will be at least intimidated – and possibly in real danger.

There are several factors here that will recreate all the issues and difficulties that the principal Latin American countries had with the nuclear disarmament treaties. The US will be involved in a war of constant movement throughout Colombian territory, and the reactivated 4th American fleet will be plying our seas and visiting our ports, carrying nuclear weapons and the ammunition containing uranium or plutonium that has been used in other wars in other continents. After all, either these solemn documents serve to guarantee our security or they are simply pointless. And if they are simply useless, they are – what can I say? – a pile of radioactive mould that must be urgently removed. not by me, because I am old and retired – but by the new and more efficient mould removers of the Itamaraty.



Speech by the Brazilian President, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva at the National Assembly in Angola

Angola, 3rd November 2003

First let me thank this House for the invitation that moved me so much and the people it represents for the warm welcome accorded to me.

This is my first visit to Angola. But I feel at home here, because of the similarity between our cultures.

Mr President, Ladies and gentlemen of this Parliament:

The Atlantic connects us. Its powerful currents make it easier to sail between Africa and Brazil.

For three and a half centuries there were more ships plying between Luanda or Benguela and Rio de Janeiro, Salvador or Recife than on any other ocean route.

These ships, however, carried sadness, violence and fear. The first bond between my country and this Continent was not freedom, but slavery. This fact left deep scars in both our societies.

In order to have her independence recognized by Portugal, Brazil agreed to break all the political ties that linked her to Portuguese Africa. Decades later, with the end of the slave trade, economic ties were also broken.

In the following century Brazil can be said to have turned her back on Africa. Not only on the African continent, but also to all things African in our own country.

Only in the last few decades, when Africa let out her cry for independence, did Brazil awake once more to the existence of this continent.

My country was able to recognize the longing for freedom and self-determination of the African peoples, their huge wealth in human resources and their political and economic potential.

We supported decolonization and the end of apartheid. We became significant partners of Africa in multilateral bodies, in the struggle for development and in international trade.

However, we stained this chapter for many years by maintaining our support for the indefensible Salazar regime and its policies in its overseas colonies.

But of all the episodes that mark that period, one in particular gives all Brazilians cause for deep happiness and pride: our recognition of Angola's independence.

Maybe this is the happiest of the ironies of our common history: initially linked by oppression, far from each other for a whole century, we met again on the heroic date of 11 November 1975.

To have been the first country to recognize Angolan independence is, no doubt, Brazilian diplomacy's finest hour in our relations with the African continent.

I would like publicly to recognise our representative in Luanda at the time, Ovídio de Andrade Melo. In those times of difficulties and uncertainties, of war in Angola and dictatorship in Brazil, he was able to bring together the values and interests of both countries with great wisdom. The Centre of Studies, the temporary headquarters of which I will be inaugurating tomorrow here in Luanda, will bear his name.

The name of Italo Zappa, then Head of the African Department at the Itamaraty, also deserves to be remembered in this context.

Ladies and gentlemen:

We still feel today the benefits of coming closer to Africa in the first years of independence. But we have to go further.

When I took office as President of Brazil earlier this year, I determined that priority should be given to strengthening our relations with the African continent – and in particular with its Portuguese-speaking countries. This strength of conviction stems from a moral and strategic imperative.

Diplomacy is normally regarded as the exercise of a rational and cold calculation. But as I see it, foreign policy is also made with the heart. And the heart links us deeply to Africa.

Brazil is a country with the second-largest black population in the world. My government is fully aware of our national obligation to redeem our historical and moral debt to the social groups that suffered most – and still suffer – from violence, injustice and humiliation. These include those of African descent.

For this reason, for the first time in our history, we have a Special Secretariat for Policies to Promote Racial Equality, active in the most varied areas. Also we are including the teaching of African history and Afro-Brazilian history and culture in school curricula for the first time.

This incorporates Africa and the Afro-Brazilian culture in the reality and experience of millions of Brazilian children, so that they will be able to get to know and be proud of these essential elements in the formation of our country from their school desks.

Many have said that Brazil needs to find Africa before it can find itself. I'm sure they are right. And through Angola, we are finding Africa.

This encounter must not be restricted to governments. It must bring both societies closer as well.

I am sure that nothing can give more solidity to Brazil's relations with Africa, and with Angola in particular, than the acknowledgment of the African and Angolan legacy in our culture and our way of life.

But I also think Brazil has a strategic interest in establishing a privileged partnership with Angola. The huge challenge to promote social inclusion brings us together. We can share our experiences and develop solutions for common problems.

The struggle against hunger and poverty is an urgent task that requires the building of a new world alliance against social exclusion.

Our countries and our continents should be playing a leading role in this struggle.

I have been taking to the leaders of developing countries the message that we need to coordinate international action – within global bodies as well – more efficiently. We must struggle to reinvigorate multilateralism, since it is the ultimate guarantor of peaceful coexistence between nations and of mutual respect and tolerance between peoples.

I have no doubt that international trade has a large potential to produce the wealth that our nations need in order to develop economically and socially.

But it is unacceptable that the sectors in which the developing countries are more competitive suffer the protectionism of the industrialized countries, or are exposed to unfair competition from their gigantic subsidies.

It is more than evident that agricultural protectionism, in all its forms, brings huge losses to our countries, jeopardizing our efforts to reduce rural poverty, the promotion of food security and the search for sustainable development.

The true incorporation of developing countries into the global economy necessarily requires non-discriminatory access to the markets of the wealthy countries.

But I have insisted, ladies and gentlemen, that it is not enough for us to insist on particular attitudes from the developed countries.

Developing countries must play a new, more affirmative and proactive role. Those that have greater capacity may and should have policies in favour of the more deprived nations, exploiting all opportunities for cooperation.

In spite of our difficulties, Brazil is prepared to offer our African partners – and especially to Angola – our experience of the formulating and implementing public policies in the most diverse fields, as well as technologies that are compatible with their specific needs.

We are also prepared to offer African countries improved access to our market.

We are going to examine ways of giving products from the poorest countries free access to the Brazilian market that are compatible with the rules of the WTO.

I believe we already have the necessary juridical framework for this in the General System of Preferences between Developing Countries. We must make use of this system, with full acknowledgment of the differences in development levels.

Ladies and gentlemen,

My dear friends,

In Angola, as in Brazil, hope overcame fear. On behalf of the Brazilian people, I congratulate the Angolan people on the extraordinary peace they have achieved.

This House is the best metaphor for peace. A multiparty and pluralist parliament is the symbol of a society in search of conciliation of interests through dialogue.

In Brazil we learned this lesson during the twenty-year struggle against authoritarianism and dictatorship. In my career as a trade union leader and later, when my companions and I founded the Workers' Party, I put my trust in democracy as the only method that would really allow us to change Brazil.

It was with this same spirit that I participated, as a deputy and member of the Constituent Assembly, in the great democratic operation that led to the 1988 Federal Constitution. With that experience I understood the role of Parliament and the challenges that it faces. A House of democracy, the Parliament is par excellence the locus of the dialogue between parties, between parties and society, and between society and the government.

It is with great satisfaction that I see all political forces actively participating in Angolan institutional life. This is a reason for faith in Angolan democracy, and for confidence in the future of this nation on the part of the international community.

I congratulate all the Angolan parties for leading this great country on the road of peace and democracy.

Better than anyone else, the Angolans know that there is no development without peace. Angola has before her the huge challenge of national reconstruction that demands the unity of the whole country.

Again I congratulate the Angolan people on their extraordinary optimism and vitality, even at moments of the greatest difficulty. We know that the qualities of the Angolan people, shown at those moments, added to the wealth with which this country is blessed, will provide the necessary energy for its journey towards prosperity and development.

Brazil and Angola will maintain and deepen their strategic partnership. I will spare no effort to support our Angolan brothers and sisters in this challenging period of reconstruction. We will intensify the flow of cooperation, of trade and of Brazilian investment.

Education is an essential tool for human, social and economic progress. We are placing the Brazilian experience at the disposal of the Angolan government for the implementation of its Education For All programme.

And we want to do this in the framework of a deep respect for the cultural identity and traditions of the Angolan people.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to refer especially to our common language, the Portuguese of Agostinho Neto and Amílcar Cabral, of Luandino Vieira and Machado de Assis, of Pepetela and Chico Buarque, among so many others whom we admire.

We Brazilians feel very attracted to people who speak our language, perhaps because we are the only Portuguese-speaking country in the Americas. Today, thanks to the new spirit of cooperation that brings us fraternally together,

we have the joyful experience of discovering the singularity of each Portuguese-speaking country, while at the same time celebrating our collective identity.

This feeling of familiarity and this unity is at the base of the Community of Portuguese-speaking countries, of which I have the honour to be President at the moment.

Just as in Angola there is an important Brazilian community, in Brazil there is a large Angolan community that the Brazilian people welcomes with great joy.

A draft bill to amend our Constitution is currently going through the proper channels in the Brazilian Congress. This amendment will extend to the citizens of the other members of the Community of Portuguese-speaking countries the facilities now guaranteed to Portuguese citizens for the acquisition of Brazilian nationality. I fervently hope the bill will be passed.

As you well know, the Parliament also has responsibility for foreign policy, in particular for approving treaties and assigning resources to certain programmes.

In this connection I would like to register here the ample support I have been receiving from the Brazilian Parliament with regard to the policy of strengthening relations with Africa, and in particular with Angola and the other Portuguese-speaking countries. For me, the recent re-launch of the Brazil-Angola Parliamentary Group was a source of great satisfaction.

In the near future Brazil will host the Forum of Parliaments of the Portuguese-speaking countries, which among other topics will discuss an innovative proposal for the creation of a Parliament of Portuguese-speaking countries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We want to be allies of the Africans in the construction of a more just, safer and supportive world. For this, we are strongly involved not only in a dialogue within universal multilateral bodies, but also in establishing closer links with the African Union.

The cooperation of the Community of Portuguese-speaking countries with African regional and sub-regional organisations shows how useful the strengthening of these relations can be in crisis situations.

We are interested in increasing trade with Africa in both directions, in investing in the African Continent, in supporting the efforts at continental recovery represented by NEPAD. I want to leave here the seed of an idea that may grow. We would like to expand our exchange at regional level too,

through a dialogue – and closer relations - between South America and Southern Africa. The starting point for this initiative could be a summit meeting with Mercosul, with its valuable experience of integration.

In this Africa, often so distant and so little known in Brazil – and in South America as a whole, come to that – Angola is our safe haven, our friend's house, the place dear to our hearts.

But Angola is also - and increasingly so - a country of huge potentiality and dynamism, of business opportunities and investment, of new social and cultural partnerships.

We have been together during the war and we will remain together under the sign of peace.

This is my expectation, this is my conviction, and this is the purpose of my government.

My friends,

In this, my first visit to Angola, I repeat what I have said at various times in my political life – before, during and after the elections – that our dear country owes the African continent, and Angola above all, a historic debt. One of the messages I want to deliver on this visit is that we are accelerating our repayment of this debt. I therefore say in my speech that I shall spare no effort, at any time during my term, to make relations between Brazil and Angola the most perfect relations between two countries and two societies.

And I am even more moved to be in this Congress. For me it has a great symbolic meaning. I lost three elections for President, and in 1982 I had already lost an election for governor of the State of São Paulo. However, at no time during my political career did I ever believe that I could come to power in my country by means other than democratic ones.

From each defeat we learned a lesson so that we could continue to grow and to organize. This enabled us to create the most important left-wing political party in South America. And when I am in a House like this one, knowing that in this country there are 126 political parties, knowing that in this country, this House is represented by deputies from 126 political parties, I think this is extraordinary, because the construction of a just and supportive society that we all dream of constructing is humanly impossible unless we can learn how to coexist democratically in diversity, unless we learn that the perfect human relationship is not one in which the human being is submissive, or in which one human being is forced to be exactly the same as all the others in order to be understood.

True democracy means that instead of trying to make everybody exactly the same, we should understand the differences between two human beings, leaving aside what separates them in order to work on what unites them – thus build the consensus that society expects from us.

I think that no country in the world has more moral authority to speak of war than Angola. The war lasted for many years, first against Portugal and later for many years as a civil war. Any historian who wants to write about war will, I think, have to write about Angola.

Now a plea from a President who long before being a President was a friend of Angola's with a deep respect for the people of this country: if for decades you taught the world the ways of war, I now want to ask you to teach it the ways of peace.

Thank you very much.