

The Luanda Summit

The first official post-independence assembly of the presidents of Africa's five Portuguese-speaking nations was held on June 9-10 in Luanda, Angola. Their meeting, midway between the sixth Franco-African summit in Rwanda in May (II-35: 2:1) and the gathering of the Commonwealth's anglophone heads of state in Lusaka in August (II-29:1:5), underscores the extent to which linguistic, cultural, and economic ties forged in the colonial era continue to shape African relationships. The session was chaired by Angola's Agostinho Neto. Other presidents in attendance were Samora Machel of Mozambique, Aristides Pereira of Cape Verde, Luiz de Almeida Cabral of Guinea-Bissau, and Manuel Pinto da Costa of São Tomé and Príncipe.

According to the final communique, the five leaders affirmed a common desire to develop "the comradeship forged during the liberation struggle" into a cooperative strategy "conducive to the . . . socioeconomic development of their countries"; agreed to hold a subsequent meeting in Mozambique "with the objective of laying down concrete lines of action," and said that a ministerial commission coordinated by Angola would prepare for this second summit; roundly condemned "the imperialist maneuvers against the liberation struggle of the peoples of Namibia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa" and affirmed the summit's "total and unending support of SWAPO, the Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe, and the ANC [of South Africa] as the true representatives of their respective people"; endorsed the Polisario as the legitimate spokesman of the Saharan people; and adopted "identical stands" on the major agenda items scheduled for the July OAU summit in Monrovia.

Although Portugal's role in laying the groundwork for this first lusophone summit was muted, the fact that it took place is consistent with the new chapter that has opened up in Lisbon's relations with its former African colonies. Portugal's current African policy operates on three interacting levels; (1) development of bilateral socioeconomic relationships with each of the five; (2) encouragement of linkages among the five; and (3) furtherance of the broader Eurafrican connection as viewed from the perspectives of the European Economic Community and NATO.

The agreement reached by Presidents Neto and António Ramalho Eanes in June 1978 for expanded Angolan-Portuguese cooperation in various economic and technical areas (I-9:3:2) was seen as a major development on all three levels. The closest and easiest relationship is with Guinea-Bissau, where Portugal has eased the Russians to the sidelines in the fishing industry and where Portuguese doctors, teachers, and technicians "are proving an effective counterbalance to the Soviet and Cuban presence in the area." See "Looking Towards Africa Again",

Financial Times (London), November 14, 1978.

In a speculative article on the NATO interest in Portugal's African connection, the March 1979 issue of *New African* (London) raises the possibility that "with the greater availability of skilled Portuguese for development projects, Angola . . . might be persuaded to get rid of the Cubans."

Considerable importance is attached by all observers to the scheduling of the next Portuguese-speaking summit in Mozambique, which has been the most cautious in responding to Lisbon's overtures. ■