

# Lincoln University

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY  
PENNSYLVANIA

May 2, 1966

Senator William J. Fulbright  
Chairman, Foreign Relations Committee  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Fulbright:

Given its keen and long established concern with such vital public issues as civil rights and foreign relations, many members of the Lincoln University community have been most heartened by your initiative in opening up crucial aspects of American foreign policy for sober scrutiny within the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In this regard, we should like to draw your attention to a matter that has aroused considerable apprehension and dismay here among both faculty and students, a matter that shortly will come before your committee.

During recent years, according to former presidential aide Theodore Sorensen, Portugal "has tried every form of diplomatic blackmail" in order to force American approval of Portuguese colonial policy, using American military bases in the Azore Islands "as a wedge." By naming an admiral as its ambassador to Lisbon in 1963, the American government rendered itself particularly vulnerable to such Portuguese pressure. Consequently, inspite of votes by overwhelming majorities within the United Nations General Assembly demanding that Portugal admit the principle of self-determination for its colonies, and despite the persistent refusal of Portugal to act, the United States has consistently voted against United Nations sanctions to induce Portuguese compliance. The United States has thereby identified itself with the perpetuation of Portuguese colonial rule.

The nomination of William Tapley Bennett to succeed Admiral George Anderson as ambassador to Lisbon threatens even further to subordinate American interests to the domestic and colonial ambitions of the dictatorial regime of Dr. Antonio Salazar. As was the case in the Dominican Republic, Portugal has been ruled for decades by a political and military oligarchy that has suppressed legal opposition, rigged elections, silenced the press, and jailed critics, be they priests, students, poets or peasants as "Communist" agitators. The opposition has inevitably been radicalized. In its African colonies, the Salazar government has defined all African nationalist movements as "Communist." In the absence of channels for legal opposition, such labelling could prove to be a self-fulfilling prophecy of course. The danger that the Portuguese government may ensnarl us in this political trap may be seen in a recent declaration by the Portuguese Foreign Minister, Franco Nogueira. He went to the extent of describing what he labels the American "doctrine of legitimate retaliation in Vietnam" as justification for a possible Portuguese retaliation against Tanzania, which he describes as a "dangerous Communist base" for "terrorist incursions" into Mozambique. These "terrorists" are, in fact, African forces led by an American educated nationalist, Dr. Edwardo Mondlane (Ph.D. Northwestern). By selecting a NATO ministerial meeting as the occasion for his implied threat to bomb Dar-es-Salaam (in American planes ?), and by drawing parallels with the

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Vietnam war in which many Africans consider us an aggressor, the Portuguese leader has deliberately spun an "anti-Communist" web within which he hopes to ensnare the United States.

Clearly the American ambassador to Lisbon should be a person able to distinguish between what are American interests and what are the interests of Portuguese colonialism. Mr. Bennett's record in the Dominican Republic suggests that he is open to criticism on precisely the grounds that he panicked and sought American armed intervention there to suppress a popular revolt on the basis of fragmentary and disputable evidence of Communist participation in that revolt. To appoint someone who has demonstrated such poor judgment to a country that uses the issue of Communism in order to implicate us in colonial wars where he might also find a few Communists--for there is armed insurrection in Portugal's three African colonies--is to risk involving us again in costly misadventures.

As you yourself said last September, it was the unsound counsel of Ambassador Bennett and his associates that caused the United States to ally itself with a corrupt and reactionary military oligarchy. We consider it imperative to renounce the Dominican approach which you so rightly warn, could make us "the enemy of all revolutions", and which would thereby give credence to Communist charges that we are the enemy of popular government, self-determination and economic reform throughout the non-western world. We therefore urge that your committee act now to save us from those who would use the cloak of anti-Communism to drag us into an African Vietnam. We need a man of unquestioned judgment and integrity to represent our national interests in Lisbon. Mr. William Tapley Bennett does not qualify.

Sincerely,

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