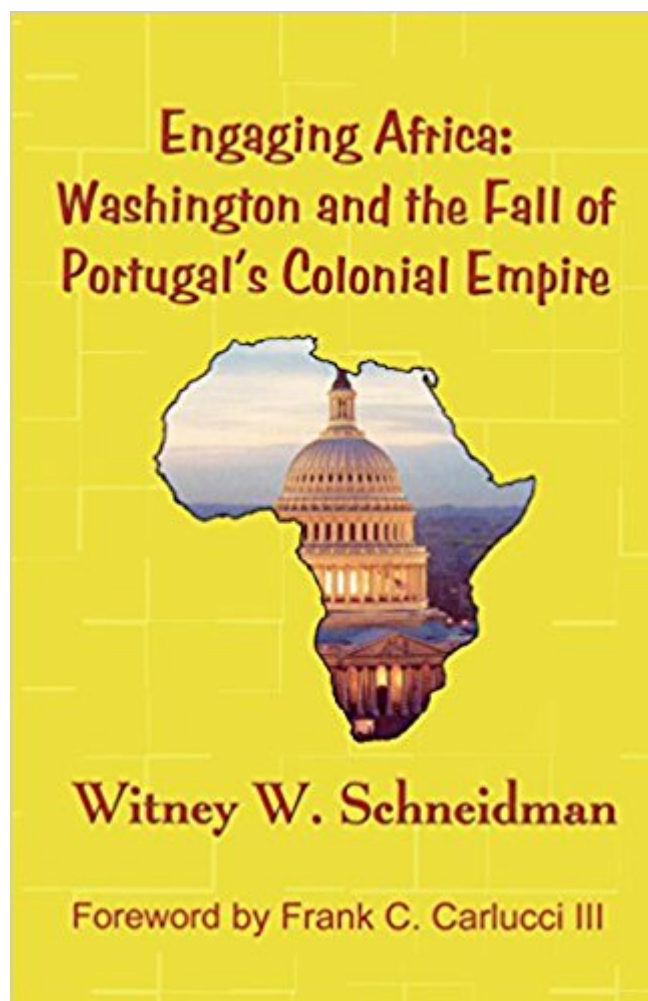


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# Engaging Africa: Washington And The Fall Of Portugal's Colonial Empire



## Synopsis

Engaging Africa: Washington and the Fall of Portugal's Colonial Empire tells the story of how successive administrations •Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and Ford• tried to maintain the confidence of their NATO ally, Portugal, while facilitating the process of decolonization in Angola and Mozambique. Ultimately becoming an epic battle of democracy versus dictatorship, African nationalism versus geo-strategic pre-eminence, and East versus West, this book, largely based on primary sources, tells the story of one of the Cold War's most intense confrontations.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I lived through many of the events that are described in this book and though certainly not an expert on this topic, I'm probably more familiar with it than the average reader. Books written in English about the Portuguese experience in Africa during the 60s and 70s are scarce. So any decently researched and written book on this topic is a welcome addition, and this one is no exception. Yet it is far from perfect. Despite the impressive list of sources and exclusive interviews the author managed to array, the result is still fairly superficial. Most of the interviews with Portuguese and American personalities, including several of the key players, are not particularly revealing -- often they yield little more than platitudes. And there is almost no material from sources in the former insurgent movements. Besides, misspellings of common Portuguese terms abound, and the author employs a disconcerting asynchronous narrative. At its best, the book raises awareness of the failure of the United States to affect Portuguese policy towards Africa in the years leading up to the coup of 25 April 1974, the failure of US intelligence to predict the coup itself, and the failure of US policy,

despite Frank Carlucci's best efforts, to make any significant difference in Portugal's post-coup struggle for democracy (known in Portugal as the "PREC," or "Processo Revolucionário em Curso"). Far from being a victory of US policy and diplomacy in engaging Africa, the independence of Portugal's colonies appears to have taken place almost by chance. And Portugal's transition into democracy is due almost entirely, it seems, to the tenacity of Mario Soares and his Socialist party alliances and the inherent conservatism of the Portuguese people.

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