

Portuguese Defence Policy: Internal Politics and Defence Commitments

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INTRODUCTION

Located on the Western periphery of Europe and removed from the Western front, Portugal was a non-democratic member of NATO for twenty-five years. This anomalous situation has now changed. An analysis of Portugal's present role in the Western security system must be based on an historical evaluation of internal Portuguese politics. Three factors stand out. First, between 1949 and 1974 (and especially after 1961) defence and security policies were not centred on the Euro-Atlantic theatre. Second, from 1974 to 1975, the country lived through a unique experience in postwar Western Europe that contributed to the formation of a strong anti-Soviet and pro-Atlantic national consensus. The attempt of the Communist Party to take power during this period forced democratic elements to rally around a new sense of Atlantic solidarity. Third, until 1982 political power was supervised by a politicomilitary body—the Council of the Revolution—created by the constitution. Only after this date was the principle of the subordination of military forces to duly elected political power incorporated into a revised constitutional text.

Today, thirteen years after the coup d'état of 25 April 1974 which brought about democracy in Portugal, the Portuguese people are coming to grips with the various problems associated with this transition. It would seem logical that Portugal's entry into the European Community on 1 January 1986 should have ended a difficult period of integration into the international system. Similarly, its adoption of democratic government and foreign policy guidelines parallel to those of other Community members established it as a more valuable contributor to the

Alliance's ideals. Uncertainty about the fundamental options of Portuguese society was resolved by the time Portugal became an EC member state.

However, despite sharing common geostrategic concerns with its European partners, Portugal's economic difficulties, the evolution of its domestic politics and the particular role of the military within its society still differentiate it from other West European democracies. Its political and economic situation and its policy-making process in defence and security link Portugal more closely with peripheral European countries of the Mediterranean.

Foreign and security policies have been undergoing a process of redefinition since 1976, when NATO and the EC began to figure prominently on the Portuguese government's agenda. As yet, successive governments have not elaborated policies that would reflect this increased concern for European defence. 'Coexistence' with Spain, with which Portugal now shares fundamental options regarding foreign policy, NATO and the EC, is one of the important issues to be addressed in the policy redefinition process. With respect to NATO, Portugal has been able to demonstrate positively its role as an ally. A favourable domestic political climate created by the gradual strengthening of democracy and the victory of pro-Atlantic political parties is to thank for this. Negotiations are taking place on how to extend U.S. rights to the mainland; facilities had formerly been granted only in the Azores. In the years to come Portugal will have to define more carefully its military relationships with the United States, Spain and its European partners in NATO.

This redefinition must of course be based on certain facts of geography as well as on less immutable political considerations. In global strategic terms, Portugal is part of the Atlantic-Mediterranean region that stretches from the Azores to the eastern Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf. From the NATO perspective, this region reaches as far as Ardahan in Turkey, a few miles from the Soviet border. The increasing geostrategic importance of Portugal, especially in the out-of-area context, is becoming evident. It is also apparent, however, that military forces are ill-equipped, both structurally and in terms of matériel, to handle adequately the tasks which the new foreign and defence policies of Portugal may require them to perform. Furthermore, although there is a pro-NATO consensus that binds together democratic parties and the public, there is no

similar agreement over the need to modernize the Portuguese armed forces. Both the public and certain important sections of the political leadership are sceptical about the extent to which a modernization of the armed forces would contribute to deterrence since they perceive a threat against Portugal as highly unlikely and, moreover, they feel that, given the shield already provided by NATO, a Portuguese deterrence apparatus would be redundant. In addition to this, military expenditure is generally perceived as an extravagance given Portugal's severe economic difficulties. Political instability and economic troubles have also led to the emergence on the left and reemergence on the right of nationalist opposition to the foreign and security policies (interpreted as a 'surrender' of the country to the allies) adopted since 1976. Furthermore, however unrealistic it may seem, the threat from Spain is often invoked by conservatives who are still haunted by António de Oliveira Salazar's prophecy that once deprived of its colonies Portugal would in turn fall under Spanish colonial rule.

Two essential objectives have dominated Portuguese politics over the centuries: the maintenance of its colonial empire, and the affirmation of its national identity within the Iberian peninsula—a term disliked and used as little as possible by most Portuguese in anything other than its strictly geographical sense. An alliance with the dominant maritime power (first Britain, and later the United States) has always been regarded as essential for fulfilling these two objectives. During World War II, even if Salazar's political beliefs drew him close to the Axis, geostrategic and political constraints forced him to adapt his neutrality policy to the requirements of the Anglo-Portuguese alliance and later to join NATO.

Portugal has abandoned its isolationist attitude vis-à-vis Europe and now wants to play an active role within NATO. It does not wish merely to assume the role of a large airport at the gates of Europe, and seeks to be more assertive within NATO councils. Portugal, the 'faithful ally' as it was once called by Joseph Luns, has begun to feel that it has not always been treated well by the allies. Some Portuguese recall the period of the African wars when Portugal received little support, others refer to ingratitude shown for Portugal's role in facilitating U.S. military action in the Middle East during the Yom Kippur War, while still others consider that the country has not received sufficient help to modernize its armed forces. Some people,

therefore, wonder if a more 'prodigal son' attitude, similar to that taken by other peripheral countries, would not, all things considered, be more advantageous.

HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTRAINTS ON PORTUGAL'S SECURITY POLICY

Portugal's foreign and security policies reflect, to a certain extent, the geographical position of the country and the shape of its territory (a rectangular strip of land, plus the Atlantic archipelagos—Madeira and the Azores). Situated on the Atlantic flank of the Iberian peninsula, Portugal is clearly on the periphery of the European continent, from which it stretches out towards Africa and the Americas.¹ The Algarve, the southern coast of Portugal, is 220 kilometres from the Moroccan coastal line. The Atlantic archipelagos of the Azores and Madeira and the Spanish Canary Islands reach out even further towards the African and American continents. If their marginal position isolated Portugal and Spain from the great changes wrought by the industrial revolution in Europe and allowed the peninsular states to maintain a comparatively neutral position during World War II, their projection towards Africa and the Americas explains their involvement in the affairs of those regions.

While in terms of climate, flora, level of economic development, culture and especially language, Portugal is a Mediterranean country,² in terms of geographical position and geopolitical options, Portugal belongs to the Atlantic theatre. Its Atlantic dimension, especially vis-à-vis Spain (which, for the Portuguese, belongs more to the Mediterranean theatre), has always been central to Portuguese strategic thinking, although Portugal's special relationship with the Arab countries, particularly with Morocco, has recently added a new dimension to its strategic outlook.

In spite of common traits that differentiate the peninsula as a whole from the rest of Europe, the resemblance between Portugal and Spain is only superficial. Some experts and decision makers consider fallaciously that the Iberian peninsula is a uniform (although not homogeneous) entity, a notion which may have been reinforced by the simultaneous entry of Spain and Portugal into the European Community. Drawn in the

twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, Portugal's national borders remain the oldest and most stable in Europe. The individual shape of Portugal is easily identifiable, detaching itself from the heart of the peninsula, the *meseta*, the massive high plain from which Castille integrated all the peripheral units with the sole exception of Portugal.³

Traditional Alignment with Sea Powers

For evident geostrategic reasons, Portugal has always created alliances with leading maritime powers: first Britain, then the United States and NATO of which Portugal was one of the founding members. Portugal's membership in NATO, therefore, is consistent with its traditional alliance policy. The Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of Alliance was signed in 1373 and renewed through complementary treaties from the fourteenth to the twentieth centuries. It was applied frequently in the interests of both countries, although there have occasionally been harmful side effects. After the Napoleonic Wars, for example, the English general, Beresford, remained in Portugal as pro-consul while the Portuguese king, John VI, was in Brazil. During this period Beresford, in his capacity as commander-in-chief of the Portuguese army, violently suppressed the liberal revolution and was eventually expelled by the victorious insurgent movement. The treaty was not applied, however, during the Goa crisis of 1961.⁴ It was, of course, implemented successfully as recently as the Falklands War, when Santa Maria and Porto Santo were used for refuelling by Britain.

The mutually beneficial character of the Anglo-Portuguese alliance is evident. Formally, it was a guarantee of Britain's hegemonic Atlantic position and of the integrity of Portugal's national boundaries and colonial empire. Britain did, however, interfere with Portugal's colonial policy on one occasion. On 11 January 1890, it issued an ultimatum against Portugal's plan to link Angola and Mozambique by land (which would have included what was eventually to become Rhodesia)—an incident which sparked a profound crisis in the Anglo-Portuguese alliance and led to the development of anti-British and nationalistic sentiment, as well as republican ideas which contributed eventually to the abolition of the Portuguese monarchy in 1910. Portugal complied with Britain's ultimatum

and did not carry out its designs. But, paradoxically, it was only after 1890 that the actual colonization of Mozambique and Angola took place and Portugal established itself as the fourth world colonial power, counting among its possessions Angola, Mozambique, Guinea, Cape Verde, Sao Tomé e Príncipe, Timor, Goa, Damão and Diu. During the First Republic (1910–1926) the protection of colonial possessions became a dominant concern of Portuguese politics and remained so until 1974. It was so dominant that, even in spite of resentment towards Britain because of its ‘breach of contract’ in 1890, Portuguese republicans allied with Britain during World War I primarily in order to protect the overseas empire.

The tradition of basing security policy on alliances is still evident in present day Portuguese politics. The policy owes its success largely to the tactic of forging flexible alliances that are neither exclusive nor irreversible. Portugal has consistently sought compensations for a dependence on outside powers that might become unmanageable, drawing a balance between the Atlantic and European dimensions of its foreign policy.⁵ The management of ‘dependencies’ is the central feature of Portuguese foreign policy.

Because no wars have been fought on Portuguese soil against a foreign power since the beginning of the nineteenth century (following the Napoleonic Wars), a notion has emerged that it is possible to ‘neutralize’ national territory. War is regarded as something only remotely possible, in spite of recent painful experience with colonial wars, and this belief in some way affects public attitudes to defence policy. Despite a general popular consensus in favour of the alliance with Britain and the United States, and a tendency to support military action taken by allies (for example, the clear public support of British intervention in the Falklands in 1982 and the only mild criticism of the American intervention in Libya in 1986), increasing distrust and resentment towards the allies is becoming evident among political leaders and military circles. From the experience, sometimes negative, of the presence of British troops in Portugal,⁶ some have drawn the conclusion that ‘invasions by the allies are often more harmful to a country than enemy invasions.’⁷ By ‘invasions’ these critics (mostly in the army) refer to the possible presence on Portuguese territory of allied troops, American or Spanish, to face threats with which the Portuguese army would not be able to cope. This naturally would diminish

the autonomy of Portugal within NATO. It is often recalled that during World War II ground forces in the Azores were Portuguese.⁸ This 'historical tradition' is used as an argument by the army to justify its position that the presence of foreign troops in the country, even in its protection, should be resisted.⁹ That is not to say that in the case of aggression against Portugal allied troops would not be welcome; rather, it is to argue that at present there is no perception of threat that would justify the stationing of foreign troops.

Portugal's strategic position has become vital—especially because of the geographical situation of the Azores—in terms of war scenarios in the European or the Mediterranean theatres in which the United States may become involved. It is widely accepted that Portuguese positions in the Atlantic are of the utmost importance to U.S. power projection towards Europe. This fact was already evident during World War I, when Portugal granted use of facilities in Ponta Delgada (Azores) to the United States, and it became even clearer with the development of U.S. naval and air power in the period immediately before and during World War II. To Americans, the Azores became, as Admiral Sterling put it in 1938, an 'advanced strategic border' of the North American continent, with a similar position in the north Atlantic to that of the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean.¹⁰

The strength of U.S. interest in the Azores was incompatible with the policy of Iberian neutrality (Portuguese *and* Spanish) which Salazar sought to maintain at all costs through intense diplomatic activity in London, Berlin and Madrid prior to and during the course of World War II. A friendship and non-aggression treaty designed to maintain the status quo in the peninsula, and subsequently known as the Iberian Pact, was signed between Portugal and Spain in Lisbon in March 1939, and as a result, Salazar later played an important liaison role between Spain and the allies.

Portugal's difficulty in reconciling its desired neutrality with the interests of its maritime ally also became apparent when the United States actually decided to occupy the Azores. In a meeting held in Washington on 11 May 1943, in which both Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill took part, 'Operation Lifebelt' was decided upon. The advocates of military occupation argued that the Azores were indispensable for the surveillance of a wide portion of the Atlantic in the

performance of anti-submarine warfare tasks and that the islands were critical to the link between the United States and Britain, the European continent and Africa. 'Operation Lifebelt' was the code name for the military occupation of the Azores which, in fact, never took place. Political considerations, diplomatic pressures and the fact that the British were convinced that the Anglo-Portuguese alliance would work, finally solved the problem without need to resort to military action. After negotiations, facilities were granted to the British and extended to the Americans (as British allies). The American negotiator of this agreement, Chargé d'Affaires, George Kennan was right in stating that: 'Salazar...fears association with us only slightly less than with the Russians.'¹¹ The Americans arrived in the Azores in the beginning of 1944 and never left.

U.S. interest in the Azores did not diminish after the war ended. In the opinion of U.S. military planners, the Azores, together with Greenland and Iceland, were the most important American bases outside the United States.¹² Although Salazar eyed the United States suspiciously after the wartime pressures—especially because of its policy of rejecting the inclusion of colonial possessions (Algeria excepted) in the NATO area—he had to face the fact that Britain was no longer the leading maritime power in the world. Despite the opposition of a strong group of Salazar's followers to any form of involvement in 'European disputes,' the reality of Soviet advances and the emergence of the United States as a global Atlantic power left Salazar with limited options. Domestic pressures prevailed and eventually, Salazar accepted to join NATO, despite tensions with the United States.

The end of the war fed the hopes of the Portuguese democratic opposition that the allies would bring democracy to Portugal. But because he could claim membership in an alliance of democratic nations 'determined to safeguard the freedom...of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law,' Salazar was able to boost his own public image (both at home and abroad) without satisfying the aspirations of the democratic opposition.¹³ The opposition reacted by making vain appeals to the democratic states to reject Portugal's membership in NATO.¹⁴ The communists, conversely, used Portugal's acceptance in the Alliance to expose the latter's 'reactionary and imperialist' character.

During the Cold War, Salazar made ideological use of NATO membership in his crusade against the Soviet communist threat which he projected onto the domestic theatre in order to fight against internal opposition, whether it was communist-inspired or not. The term 'crusade' was actually used in the recommendation of the *Câmara Corporativa* (Portugal's second legislative house composed of representatives appointed from professional bodies) to the National Assembly in support of the ratification of the NATO treaty. Salazar was unable to make the most of Portuguese participation in NATO to improve Portugal's external public image, since this image was damaged by his policy of proceeding 'proudly alone,' as the last symbol of Catholic values surrounded by 'devilish' democracies.

The isolationist doctrines of self-reliance contained in Portuguese foreign policy were not only unrealistic, given the growing interdependence between states in the postwar system, but a certain recipe for disaster. This became evident when, a year after Salazar refused the Marshall Plan for Portugal (and even offered financial aid to help other European countries recover from wartime disruption), he was forced, because of a large national debt, to revise his position and apply for an extension of the Plan to Portugal, subsequently approved for the year 1949–1950.¹⁵

Neither the Anglo-Portuguese alliance nor the Iberian Pact (Portugal's most important international commitments) were inconsistent with the NATO option. However, although Spain itself was shifting towards an alliance with the United States and adapting to postwar changes, it objected to Portugal's membership in NATO arguing that it undermined the Iberian Pact. The Portuguese denied this and made some weak attempts to convince their NATO allies that Spain ought also to become a member. However, the Portuguese nurtured suspicions about Spain which, during the period of Salazar's rule, turned into outright anti-Castilian hysteria much encouraged by official propaganda. The mentality of generations which have learned history from school books of that period is still tainted by such sentiments. Throughout the regimes of Salazar and Franco, mutual suspicion persisted in ironic contrast to the ideological proximity of the two dictators.

On 5 January 1951, the Mutual Aid and Defense Agreement between Portugal and the United States was signed. On the basis of this agreement, a defence agreement was signed on 6

September 1951, whereby Portugal granted the United States use of military facilities in the Azores (Lajes base). The integration of Portugal into the military structure of NATO went smoothly since there was no question of Spain joining the Alliance. Portugal fell under SACLANT, although the Azores were not included in the IBERLANT (activated in December 1966) whose headquarters are in Oeiras, near Lisbon, but in WESTLANT, which is stationed in Norfolk, Virginia.

Until 1974, Portugal's defence policy and consequently its policy of alliances were primarily motivated by the need to defend the overseas empire. When the wars in Africa broke out in 1961, Portugal became further alienated from its American and European allies. In the following period, the country's military effort focused largely on those wars. As a result, responsibility for defence of Portuguese territory was effectively entrusted to other NATO members. The truth is that a military threat to the mainland or the Atlantic archipelagos has never been taken seriously by Portugal and membership in NATO served, in the 1960s and 1970s, primarily as a means to gather political and military support for the war effort in Africa.

In spite of Salazar's warnings against the threat posed by the Soviet Union in Europe, the country's military expenditure was not increased when Portugal joined the Alliance, even if a significant process of modernization was undertaken in the 1950s within the NATO framework. The budget increased substantially only when the war in Angola broke out in 1961. Although, between 1953 and 1961, Portugal contributed a division for the defence of central Europe, its overall participation in NATO military forces was relatively insignificant.

The wars in Africa caused Portugal to become even more estranged from its European allies, whom Salazar accused of conspiring against Portugal's presence in Africa just as they had done in giving no help to Portugal when India occupied Goa in 1961. Relations with the United States were also extremely tense throughout this period, especially during the Kennedy administration, when both the Mozambican Liberation Movement (FRELIMO), led by Eduardo Mondlane, and Holden Roberto's National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA) were receiving U.S. support. In 1961, an arms embargo was passed against Portugal by the U.S. Congress. Salazar responded by refusing to renegotiate the 1951 defence agreement, thus hoping to make the Americans fear for their bases in the Azores.

Following this, the United States made some concessions on its African policy. Relations with the United States improved further during Premier Marcelo Caetano's government which came to power in 1968 after Salazar's death. As a consequence of growing U.S. involvement in Vietnam, the political stances of the Nixon administration and the Portuguese government became more similar even though there was sustained Congressional criticism of Portugal. In a memorandum addressed to the President in 1970, Kissinger recommended the relaxation of the embargo through the selling of 'equipment which has dual civilian and military uses.'¹⁶ During the Yom Kippur War, the Caetano government was put in an awkward position by the Nixon administration which demanded overflight rights from Portugal for U.S. aircraft proceeding to the Middle East. While Caetano initially hoped for various *quid pro quo's* for this concession, the Nixon government succeeded in pressuring the Portuguese government by implying that the United States would take a firmer public stance in the United Nations and elsewhere against Portugal's colonial policy. The Caetano government, therefore, eventually acceded to Nixon's request on the understanding that the United States would provide Portugal with support should it be the object of economic or even military reprisals from the Arab countries.

NATO's attitude towards Portugal, prior to 1974, did not have a negative influence, as it did in Greece, on the formation of democratic political parties or on Portuguese public opinion. This was partly because the non-communist opposition was very weak and was constituted mainly of moderate socialists and republicans whose ideal model of society was reflected in the Western democracies of the other NATO member countries. And if Mário Soares, founder and leader of the Socialist Party, was critical of the support—even if minimal, and often reluctant—lent by some NATO members (France, Germany, and the United States) to the Portuguese war effort, this criticism was never very strong.¹⁷ Furthermore, the Socialist Party (PS), the only democratic party that existed before 25 April 1974, was founded in Germany in March 1973, with some support from the German Social Democratic Party which was then in power. The two other democratic parties in existence before 1985, the Social Democratic Party (PSD) of liberal orientation, and the Democratic and Social Centre Party (CDS) of Christian Democrat leanings, were both led by people who had been

linked to Caetano's policies of overture. Both parties adopted pro-European and pro-NATO attitudes and benefitted from the support of German foundations.

The Growing Weight of the Military Forces

Although the military instigated the movement that eventually overthrew parliamentary democracy in 1926 and brought Salazar to power, there were many opponents to the regime within the armed forces, sympathetic especially towards Britain, and who welcomed participation in NATO as a means for cooperation with the allied democracies. Participation in NATO eventually served to 'democratize' the Portuguese military and throughout the Salazar regime members of the armed forces expressed their dissatisfaction. As early as 1946, General Marques Godinho and General Ramires, both governors of the Azores during World War II, led an abortive military revolt against the regime. In 1949, General Norton de Matos, who had been governor of Angola prior to 1926, ran for Presidency against the official candidate of the regime, another army general, Oscar Carmona. Later, in 1958, a military man, Air Force General Humberto Delgado, a former military attaché in the United States, was the opposition candidate in the Presidential election held in that year. He was murdered by the political police in 1965. In 1961, Defence Minister, General Júlio Botelho Moniz, openly expressed his disapproval of the regime. He was promptly removed from office. Overall, however, Salazar was able to keep rebellious members of the military under control. In any case, a sense of duty and discipline prevailed until 1974, reinforced by the common feeling that it was an inappropriate time for disunity since the first and foremost duty of each soldier was to help sustain the empire.

The war in Africa restored much of the lost influence and power of the armed forces and gave them a greater degree of autonomy vis-à-vis civilian political power. The military asserted its views more and more strongly on the crucial problem of the Portuguese nation: how to end the colonial war. Among those in favour of a political solution to the African problem was General António de Spínola, Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces in Guinea, who tried to persuade Premier Caetano to negotiate with the liberation movement, the African Party for the Independence

of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC). Even if he may have been inclined to listen to General Spínola, Marcelo Caetano could not, in turn, convince the ultra-conservative political and military sections, who had the support of the President of the Republic (1958–1974), Rear Admiral Américo Tomás.

NATO member states had different individual approaches towards the situation in southern Africa. These differing policies, however, created a generally negative attitude towards NATO within Portugal where the domestic debate on this issue was divided between two radically opposed groups. On the one hand, the *ultras* could never forgive NATO for what they considered its ambiguous or even treacherous positions: its rejection of the Portuguese thesis of ‘enlargement’ of the Alliance towards the south Atlantic; and the support lent by European and NATO countries to the liberation movements in Portugal’s former colonies. On the other hand, those sections permeated by communist influence and most of the younger officers, who had adopted the ideological beliefs of the liberation movements they were supposed to be fighting, could not forgive NATO for what they considered to be all-out support for Portugal in the colonial wars. The latter were the founders and organizers of the Movement of the Armed Forces (MFA, also termed ‘movement of the captains’). The central issue in the formation of the MFA in 1973 was the opposition of a group of junior officers (captains with four years training in the Military Academy) to the government’s decision to offer full military careers to graduates of a six-month course. Led by a group of young army captains, engaged in the colonial wars, the movement was soon to become more political. Like General Spínola, the captains realized that the colonial wars had no military solution and strove to find a political solution to the colonial question. On 25 April 1974, the MFA overthrew the regime in a swift military coup in Lisbon that had general public support. Premier Caetano and President Tomás were to surrender to General Spínola.

Portugal’s interaction with the European economy, culture and society has been increasing steadily since 1949. At the beginning of 1974, more than one million Portuguese were working in France and some 200,000 in Germany. This brought badly needed foreign exchange into Portugal. Foreign trade was carried out primarily with Europe. Britain was the main importer of Portuguese products (23.7 percent of total

Portuguese exports in 1973), and during the first enlargement of the EC, Portugal negotiated an agreement with the Community, signed in June 1972, that further linked the economies of Portugal and those of other Western European countries.¹⁸

This rapprochement with Europe was opposed by a sector of Portuguese businessmen (accustomed to special privileges in Africa) who defended a more protectionist view. The majority of leading businessmen, however, (who had benefitted from Portuguese membership since 1955 in the European Free Trade Association, EFTA) were sympathetic to a liberalization process that would bring Portugal politically closer to the rest of Europe. In a book that had a large influence on the military leadership and other sections of Portuguese society, General António de Spínola—who was to become the first President of the Republic following the 1974 coup—praised the European Community and said there was no alternative for the Portuguese but integration into a ‘European space’ that ‘might accept us if we behave predominantly as Europeans.’¹⁹

EMERGING DIFFERENCES ON DEFENCE AND SECURITY

When Portuguese military involvement in Africa ended, the Communist Party (PCP) and the left-wing in the military tried unsuccessfully to impose a position of neutrality within NATO and of pro-Third World non-alignment in Portugal’s foreign and security policies. Nevertheless, many of those who questioned, after the 1974 coup, the use of the Alliance to guarantee Portugal’s security, came to realize fully through their own experience in 1974–1975 how important allies could be. In the late 1980s, attitudes towards security issues and decision making on national defence matters are still determined by events that immediately followed the coup. Domestic political events have played a decisive role in shaping perceptions in foreign and defence policy matters.

Anti-Soviet and pro-Atlantic Sentiment

In Portugal there is a broad national consensus in favour of NATO and an anti-Soviet strategy, comprised of the democratic political parties, the armed forces, leading figures in the media

and the public as a whole. The Communist Party has a strong influence, however, over the workers in and around Lisbon and the rural workers of the large southern estates nationalized by the land reform.

The impact of the 1974–1975 crisis on the Portuguese people cannot be overemphasized. While Europe was welcoming détente and the outcome of the Helsinki conference, Portugal was undergoing what Mário Soares described as a communist effort at ‘the final assault on power, even reaching the stage of an attempted siege on the Assembly of the Republic, as if to take the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg in 1917.’²⁰ Fortunately enough, Mário Soares never became the ‘Portuguese Kerensky,’ the gloomy role which Henry Kissinger had predicted for him, nor was Portugal a ‘lost cause’ or the ‘anti-communist vaccine of Europe.’

In 1974–1975, the communists were able to integrate into their political front an important group of the MFA and thus radicalized the democratic process. They were able to force the pro-Western President, General António de Spínola, to resign and to replace him with General Francisco da Costa Gomes. With the subsequent nationalization of banking and major industries, and the land reform, the communists gained control of important sections of the state apparatus. Finally, in the summer of 1975, since they had almost complete control of the cabinet led by the decidedly pro-communist Vasco Gonçalves, the government was practically in communist hands. In order to thwart the communist onslaught, the democratic forces were compelled to unite. They had to reject any possibility of compromise with the Communist Party, and to fight it decisively in every area identified as a ‘key area’ by Soviet ideologist Boris Ponomarev (in his work published in June 1974 to draw lessons from the defeat of communism in Chile). These areas were the media (deeply infiltrated by the communists, where politico-ideological blackmail was the rule), the armed forces and the state bureaucracy.²¹

In the nineteen months between 25 April 1974 and 25 November 1975—when a group of military officers became disgruntled with what they perceived as a putschist and totalitarian left-wing regime—Portugal underwent profound changes, the consequences of which are still strongly present in all aspects of Portuguese society. During that period, moderate representatives of the military, led notably by General António

de Spínola, were outside the government. The Council of the Revolution, a politico-military body entrusted with the supervision of the MFA and the political parties, was established to act, in the words of the constitution, as ‘guarantor of the enforcement of the Constitution and of the faithfulness of the spirit of the Portuguese Revolution of 25 April 1974 and as political and legislative body in military affairs.’²² The 1976 constitution was drafted in 1975 in a tense atmosphere—during which the Assembly was under siege by communist and leftist workers—that led to considerable bargaining and compromise. This is the reason for the explicit mention of the armed forces as the guarantors of democracy.

From the unity achieved in the defeat of the totalitarian forces, the Socialist Party, the Social Democratic Party and the Christian Democrats reached common stands on such issues as membership of the European Community (which was the first priority in foreign policy from 1976) and the necessity of Portugal’s participation in NATO and in the defence of the West. For the Portuguese political leaders who dominated the political scene up to the 1985 general election, loyalty to the Atlantic Alliance became a fundamental factor in Portuguese politics. This was due to internal reasons and to the need for external support (particularly financial aid) to fund the deficit of the balance of payments. These same leaders have been generally more opposed to appeasement towards the Soviet Union than their counterparts in Europe, favouring a hard line in international negotiations with the USSR: ‘The Portuguese government is in favour of consensus and negotiation, but with one limit: that they be actually feasible and not a mere excuse for softness and giving-in on the part of the West.’²³ Public opinion in Portugal follows quite closely the views of the political leadership, although there is a clear lack of public interest in international issues.

A possibly more important opinion leader, in times of crisis, is the Catholic Church, the ideologically predominant force in Portuguese society. The Portuguese Catholic Church is a traditional church, that generally supported the previous regime until 1974. Although strongly anti-Soviet, it is more than cautious in expressing opinions on international matters. Its stance is not dissimilar from certain forms of isolationism that seek to protect Portuguese Catholics from atheist ideas. In 1974–1975 the Church demonstrated its great influence. Feeling

threatened by the communists, it mobilized a large part of the population against the Communist Party. Some observers identify the turning point during the 1974–1975 crisis as the time when the Catholic Church was under direct and open attack from the communists and was compelled to respond. The most spectacular aspect of this mobilization was perhaps the assault against communist headquarters, some of which were burnt down, after an appeal for Catholic resistance made by the Archbishop of Braga, D.Francisco Maria da Silva.

Isolationism and pro-Atlanticism

Any analysis of opinion polls taken in the last few years shows that the Portuguese people are relatively uninterested in major international issues, even in those directly related to the country. The share of non-respondents ranges from 20 percent in the IEEI 1983 poll on NATO,²⁴ to some 45 percent in *Eurobaromètre* polls of April 1985 on the EC (which dropped to 30 percent in October 1985, after enlargement was already decided). The non-respondent average in other European countries is, according to *Euro-baromètre* polls taken in October and November 1985, 5 percent (see Table 3.1). On the other hand, people in Portugal express what sociologists have called 'localism,' focusing their concern largely on domestic issues. There is a general lack of enthusiasm displayed with respect to Community membership.

The Portuguese people's ignorance and lack of concern with regard to international issues is a consequence not only of historical and geographical factors, but also of the lack of attention paid to these questions in public discussions, whether in electoral campaigns, parliament or in the media. It is also a result of a general lack of information: only about 19.7 percent of the population read the newspapers.²⁵ The radio (except for one broadcasting station owned by the Church) and the television are state owned and generally under permanent financial strain which affects the quality of their services.

Despite general indifference to international issues, however, in a crisis situation the Portuguese would be likely to respond. Opinion polls show that the Portuguese are among the Europeans who are most 'willing to fight for their country': 65 percent, against an EC average of 48 percent, ranging from a

Table 3.1: General attitudes of the Portuguese
(October-November 1985)

	Portugal %	Spain %	EC %	Greece %
Preparedness to fight for one's country				
— yes	65	69	48	76
— no	21	18	37	16
(non-respondents)	(14)	(13)	(15)	(8)
Support the movement for European union				
— very much in favour	28	36	28	24
— in favour	28	35	48	43
— against	4	3	9	12
— very much against	3	2	5	7
(non-respondents)	(37)	(24)	(24)	(14)
Membership in the EC is				
— a good thing	42	57	60	39
— not good or bad	18	20	23	26
— a bad thing	10	7	12	23
(non-respondents)	(30)	(16)	(5)	(12)

Source: *Euro-baromètre*, no. 24, December 1985.

maximum of 69 and 76 percent in Spain and Greece to a minimum of 36 and 33 percent in Belgium and Germany, respectively. Willingness to defend one's country appears as proportional, in the same *Euro-baromètre* poll, to the feeling of national pride, with the notable exception of Portugal (the share of 'very proud' being 33 percent in Portugal, 64 and 72 percent in Spain and Greece, 26 and 20 percent in Belgium and Germany, respectively).

The analysis of the few opinion polls taken on defence and security issues portrays a decidedly pro-Atlantic Portuguese public, especially in comparison with opinions expressed in countries like Spain and Greece. The majority of those who know what NATO is are in favour of the Alliance (64 percent in favour, 16 percent against).²⁶ In July 1983, only 17 percent of the Spaniards were in favour of NATO.²⁷

Domestic Politics and the Perception of Threats

The 1974–1975 domestic political experience strongly influenced the Portuguese public's threat perception. Even if an external threat was not apparent at that time, because of the

massive political and financial support received by the PCP from the Soviet Union, Portuguese public opinion does not distinguish greatly between the PCP and the USSR. The PCP is in fact the most openly pro-Soviet communist party in the West and has explicitly condemned Eurocommunism. The negative image of the Soviet Union held by a large number of the Portuguese is a direct consequence of their clear opposition to the PCP.

Two other factors help to account for the presence of anti-Soviet and pro-NATO sentiment in Portuguese society. The first was the Soviet-Cuban intervention in Angola, which directly affected the lives of hundreds of thousands of Portuguese who had to flee from Angola and return to their homeland. This is why the Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) has the sympathy and complicity of so many people in Portugal. In fact, notwithstanding the importance (including economic relations) of Angola for Portugal, the Portuguese government has always resisted repeated pressures from the Angolan government and has never taken strong measures against UNITA leaders in Portugal, and several leaders of the PSD and the CDS have made no attempt to conceal their good relations with the movement. (The situation in regard to Mozambique is altogether different, since there was no civil war and the FRELIMO seems determined to defend broadly defined national interests.) The second factor is the official rhetoric of the old regime which closely identified African liberation movements with the USSR, perceiving them as agents of Soviet communism. As the Soviet Union was, indeed, one of the main supporters of the liberation movements, it was perceived as the enemy of the Portuguese army in the African colonies.

When the public was confronted with political programmes and styles that reflected a Soviet model, a non-aligned Third World model, and a Western or European model, the Portuguese public was generally favourable towards NATO. Politicians used their external contacts in political discourse so that, when the leaders of the Socialist International came to visit to offer Mário Soares their support, the Portuguese Socialists claimed, 'Europe is with us.' Soviet support to the Communist Party was evident to everyone, as was the assistance lent by NATO countries to the major democratic parties. The PS, the PSD and the CDS were known to have close ties with German foundations. The public appearance made by François Mitterrand at a Socialist Party rally and the overt support given

Mário Soares by American Ambassador Frank Carlucci had a strong and favourable public impact.

These basic, and relatively easy, choices of foreign policy orientation, however, do not satisfy all security concerns given that most Portuguese consider the internal threat to security greater than any coming from abroad. The question of internal and external threats was brought up during the discussion in parliament of the National Defence Law²⁸ (October to December 1982) and again during the parliamentary debate on the Internal Security and the Intelligence Services Laws in 1984. During the course of these debates, differences between both the right- and left-wing sections of the military and the political leaderships of the democratic parties came to light. The democratic parties had two altogether different attitudes towards internal threat. During discussions of the National Defence Law, they were totally against any mention of an internal threat and even refused to discuss its existence. Two years later, when the Internal Security and the Intelligence Services Laws were debated, they stressed the dangers ensuing from indirect strategy (unmistakably meaning Soviet indirect strategy) and the need to be prepared to defend against such threats.

The reason for this apparent paradox is quite simple: the fundamental issue of the National Defence Law was not to create an instrument for prompt and effective action against an external threat, but rather to end the period of transition that had lasted since 1974 and to define the tasks of the military forces strictly as those of defence of national sovereignty. The mission of the armed forces, as defined in the National Defence Law, is to defend the country against an external threat. The authors of this legal text were fully aware that they were going against the opinion of influential military men, who stood for a 'broader concept of national defence, encompassing protection in relation to an internal threat, one that would almost coincide with the notion of internal security.'²⁹ The main issue was therefore the same one that had been central in Portuguese security and defence policy in previous years: 'normalization' of the military forces by their subordination to political authority. The National Defence Law was designed primarily to counter that specific internal threat to democracy resulting from the manipulation of the armed forces by 'anti-democratic minority groups.' Although an inefficient and inconsistent enforcement of

the National Defence Law meant that there was no thorough ‘normalization’ of the armed forces (as the majority would have wished), the military did withdraw from the political arena.

When the Internal Security and the Intelligence Services Laws were first discussed (and generally approved by the same PS-PSD-CDS majority as for the National Defence Law) the objectives were totally different and the question of internal threat was considered of central importance. The words of the then Vice Premier and Defence Minister Carlos Mota Pinto (who was also the leader of the PSD at the time) could not be more explicit in exposing and condemning the activities of ‘fifth columns’: ‘external aggression against national independence, against the integrity and security of the Portuguese can be perpetrated by forces within...we all know such things as the so-called ‘indirect strategies’ exist.’³⁰

In official strategic concepts, indirect strategy is evaluated as a basic threat that can take primarily two forms: it can be psychological, and seek to curb national will; or military, through the use of internal agents to commit acts of sabotage with or without the support of commando groups that have infiltrated national territory. The importance attached to the internal threat in military planning is justified, in part, by the size of NATO infrastructure on Portuguese territory, which could be the object of attacks. For the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces:

‘at the military level...it is in our interests...to take effective measures of protection not only against possible acts of sabotage and destruction of installations and infrastructures of significant military relevance, but also we must stay on the alert against any attempts aiming at the erosion of national determination in the field of defence and security.’³¹

However, concern is not centred solely on possible acts of sabotage supported by the Soviet Union implementing a ‘strategy of denial’ in Portugal. There are also fears stemming from the appearance of terrorist activities (extreme-left terrorism and Arab terrorism), inefficiency of police forces against organized crime, and the non-existence of intelligence services that could combat the threats. The focus on internal threat indicates how important domestic issues still are in

Portugal's defence policy, and are generally indicative of the low priority attached to external threats.

A major concern in military circles is the so-called 'separatism,' the independence movements in the archipelagos of Madeira and, especially, of the Azores. During the 1974-1975 crisis 'separatism' developed as a way to put pressure on the central government and had some American support. In the Azores, 'separatism' has a long tradition owing to the support received from the Azorean community living in the United States. This community is larger than the population, totalling 250,000, of the nine islands forming the archipelago, a fact which has a decisive economic impact on the life of every family. The existing system of autonomy recognized by the constitution has isolated 'separatism' and reduced the Liberation Front of the Azores (FLA) to virtual non-existence. But regional autonomy is regarded with suspicion by sectors of the Portuguese armed forces who are inclined to think that it contains the seeds of 'separatism.' Regional autonomy grants the regional government the right to take part in international negotiations concerning the islands. This gives cause for suspicion that these rights may be used by external forces to put pressure on the Portuguese government. In 1986, a fierce debate between the armed forces and the regional government of the Azores took place. The law on regional autonomy that had been passed containing an article to the effect that the regional flag would have the same honours as the national flag in public or military ceremonies held in the Azores was vetoed by the President. This illustrates that the armed forces are very much concerned with the unity of the state and are inclined to intervene publicly every time they feel the options of the democratic state do not uphold the 'vital interests of the nation.'

Given the situation of continued political instability in Portugal, many consider that the existing political parties will never be able to stabilize democracy. The military naturally sees political instability as a national defence problem. Some even go so far as to consider that the first priority in a strategic concept of national defence should be 'to strengthen political power at the centre.'³² Others regard economic development as the top priority. But the continued open expression by sectors of the military about appropriate policies for national stability shows that there has not been a thorough 'normalization' of the military in Portuguese society, a concern both of civilian

politicians and large sections of the military who are in favour of a thorough normalization process.

Paradoxically, the lack of a clear perception of an external threat is also one of the reasons for the comparative immunity of the younger generation to pacifist ideas. Furthermore, because nuclear weapons are not an issue in Portugal (a country where geography demands *de facto* de-nuclearization for theatre nuclear weapons), anti-nuclear movements are virtually non-existent, except for one group—the World Peace Council—that is a feeble echo of its counterparts in central Europe and so openly communist controlled that it has no credibility.

The importance still attached to the internal threat and a general disbelief in the existence of any external threat have a number of implications for defence policy making. The first seriously negative consequence is the unwillingness to bring defence expenditure anywhere near the levels required for an adequate deterrent capacity. Another consequence, especially among the younger generation, is a gradually increasing rejection of compulsory military service. Despite the young people's anti-Sovietism, they do not understand the purpose of compulsory military service and consider that it is a waste of time. The youth organizations affiliated to democratic political parties have advocated a shorter term for military service. The Communist League was the only group not to do so. The Communist Party in Portugal will support the armed forces in each and every circumstance or issue. They know from the experience of 1974–1975 that they can only hold power with the support of the armed forces. In 1986, the point of view held by the Young Socialists, Social Democrats and Christian Democrats was finally accepted (against the opinion of the armed forces) and the present term of service is twelve months. One other symptom of the rejection of compulsory military service is the large number of conscientious objectors: in 1984, for example, 4,580 young men filed applications as conscientious objectors, representing 4.32 percent of those figuring on the enrollment lists. According to the law, approved conscientious objectors must perform civil defence duties in lieu of military service.

Most Portuguese, including members of parliament, conceive the role of national defence as bearing a likeness to that of the coast guards, equipped with appropriate vessels and aircraft to patrol the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and to make sure

foreign fishing fleets are kept away from Portuguese seas. Given the vastness of the Portuguese EEZ, that kind of problem is easily understood, but it is unlikely that the public will easily accept a broader or more sophisticated definition of an external role for the Portuguese armed forces.

Broad National Consensus: For How Long?

The existing broad consensus in favour of NATO has remained unquestioned because of the dominant role played by the three major democratic parties from 1976 to 1985. This consensus exists despite the inability of the major parties to work together and the main problem faced in Portugal remains the achievement of greater internal political stability. The PS, PSD and CDS have tried every possible combination of two-party coalitions, none of which managed to stay in power until the end of their respective mandates. Since the October 1985 general election, the PSD has formed a one-party minority government. The electoral system is one of the reasons why it is so difficult to reach more lasting solutions. The present system is based on proportional representation. Given the comparatively large number of important political parties (four in 1983, five in 1985), the party that wins the election is almost sure not to have a large enough majority to avoid a minority or a coalition government. Recent reports show that if a non-proportional scheme had been adopted in the 1983 general election, the Socialist Party would have obtained a full majority in parliament, and the coalition with the PSD would have been unnecessary. During the 1985 Presidential campaign the electoral system was a central issue. The elected candidate, Mário Soares, was opposed to changing the proportional system. The parties in favour of changing the system—the PSD and CDS—represent less than 40 percent of the votes in parliament. Since a two-thirds majority is required, there are slim chances of changing the established system in the near future.

Apart from political instability, profound economic difficulties have engendered the spread of pessimism among intellectuals and the general public. It must be borne in mind that Portugal embarked upon modernization programmes economically weakened by fourteen years of war and under the impact of the 1973 oil crisis. Portugal is still a poor country by

European economic standards: the GDP per capita was 1,905 U.S. dollars in 1985. This compares unfavourably with figures from Spain (4,192) or Greece (3,380) but is higher than Turkey (1,018). Most of the obstacles to development are structural: a huge bureaucracy (employing 530,000 people, over 5 percent of the population), an enormous nationalized sector accumulating growing deficits every year (equalling 11.3 percent of the GDP in 1982), and a lack of competitiveness in the public and private sectors. Moreover, constant political instability has made long-term economic planning difficult.

As dependence on foreign supply for such essentials as energy and food is considerable (85 percent of energy and 65 percent of foodstuffs are imported), foreign debt grows steadily and becomes increasingly difficult to service. Up to 1984, it totalled approximately 18.5 billion U.S. dollars, against reserves of some 7 to 8 billion dollars. Unemployment rose from 2 percent in 1974 to 11 percent in 1985 and this, in the public mind, tended to reflect badly on the democratic parties. Inflation, measured by the consumer price index, reached a peak in 1983 of 33.9 percent and declined to 21.2 percent by the end of 1984. The annual foreign debt in 1983 was 1.75 billion, but dropped in 1984 to 500 million dollars. Owing largely to favourable external factors, most macroeconomic indicators now show an apparent improvement. Although still provisional, official figures for 1986 indicate a 12 percent inflation rate and a 4 percent GDP growth rate.

Political leaders are hoping that EC membership will be a catalyst to boost the economy. Meanwhile, the incapacity they have demonstrated in finding solutions for political and economic problems has opened up new possibilities for other kinds of solutions. In the Presidential elections of 1986, two of the major candidates to the left and to the right of Mário Soares, (Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo and Diogo Freitas do Amaral) frequently cited General de Gaulle in their advocacy for greater Presidential intervention in domestic politics. They have also argued that referendums should become a more important feature of Portuguese politics, and that this vehicle would help to solve political instability. Mário Soares, who held different views on the role of the President, won the election.

During this period a new political party also emerged—the Democratic Renewal Party (PRD)—that presented new ideas to the public. Drawing on the prestige of President António

Ramalho Eanes (1975–1986), the PRD tried to portray itself as the champion of the discontented multitude. It combines the populist propositions of the non-communist left of the MFA with large doses of regionalist nationalism, and has been criticized by other parties for lacking a clearly defined ideology. It is perhaps curious to note that the PRD belongs to the same group as the French *Rassemblement pour la République* (RPR) in the European Parliament.

The PRD made its formal public appearance at the general election of October 1985 when it drew a 19 percent share of the vote mainly from the socialist areas of the electorate (see Table 3.2). In this election the Socialist Party dropped to 21 percent of the vote from 36.3 percent in 1983, the PSD increased to 30 percent from 27 percent, and the CDS dropped to 10 percent from 12.4 percent. The Presidential election in January 1986 seems to have proven that anti-communism is still widespread and outspoken. The two principal candidates—Amaral and Soares—supported by the PSD, CDS and PS received 71 percent of the national vote in the first round of the election.

Political parties have recently undergone substantial leadership transformations. These are bound to re-shape party politics profoundly, especially since the new leaders are either junior members or did not play a major role during the 1974–1975 events. In general, they are less influenced by external events, more technocratically minded, more concerned with economic development and European economic integration than with sustaining a great anti-Soviet campaign. The leaders who fought the 1974–1975 political struggle—Mário Soares, Sá Carneiro and Freitas do Amaral—are no longer, for different reasons, the leaders of their own parties.

The new leader of the PSD, Aníbal Cavaco Silva, is an economist concerned with the liberalization of the economic system, who sees foreign policy in terms of the financial impact it may have on the country's economy. He chose as Foreign Minister a former member of the board of directors of a nationalized company. Foreign and defence policies are not the top priorities of the present government. Cavaco's foreign policy displays a more nationalistic, less cosmopolitan approach to international relations than was the case with his predecessors. Other changes have occurred in the Socialist Party after former Secretary General Mário Soares was elected President and chose for himself a 'monarchical, above party

Table 3.2: General elections in Portugal since 1974

Parties or coalitions	1985		1983		1980		1979		1976		1975	
	%	S	%	S	%	S	%	S	%	S	%	S
APU	15.55	38	18.20	44	16.92	41	18.96	47	—	—	—	—
CDS	9.74	22	12.38	29	0.23	(a)	0.40	(a)	15.91	41	7.65	16
PRD	19.04	38	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
PS	20.81	57	36.35	100	FRS	—	27.43	73	34.97	106	37.86	115
PSD	29.79	88	27.04	73	2.49	(a) 8	2.38	(a) 7	24.03	71	26.38	80
AD	—	—	—	—	44.40	123	42.24	118	—	—	—	—
FRS	—	—	—	—	27.13	71	—	—	—	—	—	—
MDP	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4.12	5
PCP	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	14.56	40	12.52	30

Key:

S=Seats; AD=Aliança Democrática (CDS+PSD+minute monarchist party with no electoral significance); APU=Aliança Povo Unido (PCP+ MDP); CDS=Partido do Centro Democrático Social; FRS=Frente Socialista Revolucionária (PS+minute extreme-left parties with no electoral significance); MDP=Movimento Democrático Popular; PCP=Partido Comunista Português; PRD=Partido Renovador Democrático; PS=Partido Socialista; PSD=Partido Social Democrata. Parties in upper part of Table fought the last general election and their percentages are quoted throughout the text. Coalitions and parties in lower part fought previous elections, indicated by the years in which results are shown, and have either disappeared as such (FRS, AD) or exist in different arrangements. These parties are represented in parliament.

Note: (a)=Results in the autonomous regions of Madeira and Azores. The AD (CDS+PSD) was formed for all constituencies *except* those in the autonomous regions. This explains the (a) figures for the PSD and the CDS in 1979 and 1980.

politics role.' The dominant group in the PS today is in favour of a more European option. Vítor Constâncio (who gave up his position as chairman of the Bank of Portugal to become the new party leader), reaffirmed the pro-NATO policy of Mário Soares, although most of his followers are critical of what they consider excessive pro-Americanism. General Eanes was reelected President with this group's support although they were the losing 'minority' against Soares in the 1983 PS congress.

The emergence of the PRD, growing nationalistic trends, and General Eanes' and the military's criticism of the 'internationalism' upheld by certain political leaders have weakened the broad consensus that emerged out of the 1974–1975 crisis. Even the PCP has shaken off its negative image as the years go by, and shows slow but steady gains in the successive general elections: 12.5 percent of the vote in 1975, 14.6 percent in 1976, 18.2 percent in 1983, and 15.5 percent in 1985. This last result gives a 2.7 percent swing to the PRD, which represents a numeric loss and a political gain for the PCP. The PCP's shift towards Eurocommunism, considered to be out of the question while the present Secretary General, Alvaro Cunhal, is in charge, would also have a disruptive influence on the present reference points of pro-Atlanticism in Portugal.

Internal transformations will profoundly influence foreign and security policies in the future, as they have done in recent years. Appeals to nationalism grow louder as economic and political difficulties have to be confronted. In 1985, the year when the treaty for Community membership was signed, several nationalistic demonstrations were organized, culminating in the commemorations of the battle of Aljubarrota (1385), where the Spaniards were defeated and Portugal reaffirmed its independence.

PORTUGAL BETWEEN THE ATLANTIC AND MEDITERRANEAN

It is misleading to view Portugal as a country living in peace and tranquillity, 'safely' removed from the European front, shielded by U.S. nuclear deterrence (in return for a few facilities), a mere symbolic military participant in the defence of Europe, and a simple geostrategic contributor to the Atlantic Alliance. The situation in peripheral regions, even in the European periphery,

is dominated by differing tensions, and Portugal naturally has to incorporate this regional context into its own defence policy and strategy. Simultaneously, Portugal's democratic governments have set before themselves the objective of reinforcing the role of Portugal in Western security and adapting its strategic contribution to new foreign policy concerns.

When speaking of Portugal in geostrategic terms one must bear in mind that it is formed by a continental strip of land on the Atlantic coast of the Iberian peninsula, with a medium width of one hundred miles, and two archipelagos—the Azores, on the Atlantic coast of the Iberian peninsula, with a median width continent. These groups of islands and the mainland are in an intermediate position, geographically, between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, and between Europe and Africa. From a strategic point of view, this geographical space is, for the most part, comprised within an Atlantic area defined by a group of archipelagos. This area can be referred to as the 'Atlantic-Mediterranean',³³ region whose southern boundary is the Tropic of Cancer.

In the post-colonial period, the strategic importance of Portuguese territory increased, both in the East-West and North-South context. Portugal is a *plaque tournante* between North and South, between East and West, and this has been demonstrated on several occasions. Portuguese strategists define the functions of Portuguese territory by using the concept of a 'strategic triangle'—one that expresses both the importance of each component and of the international space encompassed—crossed by some of the most important sea and air lines of communication, such as those linking North America to Europe, the east coasts of South America to Europe, the Mediterranean to the north of Europe, and southern Africa to Europe.

The importance of the Portuguese strategic triangle in the context of the East-West confrontation is strongly stressed in Portugal. Its functions are usually defined as follows:³⁴

- a) to reinforce Europe rapidly in case of war, particularly the Southern Flank.
- b) in the case of the Azores, to provide an ideal base for surveillance in the Atlantic and for anti-submarine warfare.
- c) to provide a pivotal position in relation to another very important strategic region formed by Greenland, Iceland, the Faroë Islands and Great Britain.

- d) in the case of Madeira, to control the Straits of Gibraltar and, in particular, to provide an advanced position in relation to North Africa, where a growing hostile presence is expected by Portuguese military planners.

Generally, the strategic importance of Portugal may be said to have increased because of the rise in the deployment of Soviet naval power in the north Atlantic. Recently, there have been a number of occasions where Portugal's position was useful to allies having to project power southwards, as was the case during the Shaba conflict in Zaire, in April 1977, when the airfield of Porto Santo (Madeira) was used by the French, and during the Falkland crisis, when the Azores were used by the British air force. In a totally different context, the airfield of Santa Maria (Azores) was used in the winter of 1975 for the transport of Cuban troops to Angola in commercial Cubana Airlines flights.³⁵ The Portuguese positions are, naturally, also fundamental to the projection of power in the East-West direction, as became evident during the Berlin crisis.

The growing strategic importance of Portugal is largely due to its *en route* position for U.S. power projection outside the NATO area, in particular for the most probable scenarios: the western and eastern Mediterranean, and the Persian Gulf. The present U.S. maritime strategy, requiring the deployment from U.S. territory of important military forces by air and sea in the case of war, cannot take place without logistic facilities *en route*. It is worth recalling that in 1973, during the Yom Kippur War, the United States was denied the use of facilities in the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey, and Portugal was the only country to agree to the U.S. request (the U.S. aircraft flew from Germany to the Lajes base, in the Azores and from there to Israel).³⁶

The U.S. rapid deployment force (organized under CENTCOM) can draw great advantages from facilities in Portugal, Spain and Morocco. The United States has obtained facilities in Zaragoza, Moron, Torrejon and Rota (all in Spain), and in the aeronaval base of Kenitra in Morocco. Since Morocco is an Arab country, and owing to the uncertainty of the outcome of the current negotiations with Spain, there is increased U.S. interest in obtaining facilities on Portuguese territory. The Lajes base is only 2,500 miles from the U.S. east coast and 1,000 miles from Britain, while the Persian Gulf is 7,000 miles away from

the United States. Given the flight range of carrier craft—2,140 miles for the C-141, 3,250 for the C-5A—the access to bases in the Atlantic-Mediterranean region is clearly indispensable to U.S. force protection capacities. The general importance of the Southern Flank to American policy is often underlined by U.S. officials.

Portugal is not in the Southern Flank of NATO, but strategy binds it more and more closely to the south. As George Shultz has said: 'Our NATO allies, Turkey, Greece, Spain and Portugal, provide a shield both for the Mediterranean and the Southern Flank of Europe, as well as a bridge to the Middle East and Southwest Asia; and the Azores base is pivotal if the United States is to react effectively to military challenges in Europe or to threats to Western security outside NATO.'³⁷

Security Relations with the United States, Germany and France

The agreement between Portugal and the United States, signed on 13 December 1983 and taking effect in February 1984 for a seven-year period, is seen in Portugal as a step towards the reinforcement of a mutual understanding between the two states in their commitment to Atlantic security. The agreement deals exclusively with the use of facilities in the Azores: Air Force Base no. 1—Lajes, the airport of Santa Maria, and the seaports of Ponta Delgada and S.Miguel (fuel storage). This special agreement is a result of pressures from the regional government of the Azores which demanded that the Portuguese government allow for separate negotiations for the use of facilities in the Azores and the use of facilities in other parts of the country. Negotiations between Portugal and the United States are underway, and an agreement was signed in March 1984 whereby a U.S. 'geodss' system (space surveillance relevant to strategic defence) would be located in Portugal. This is now being reevaluated by the Portuguese government. Negotiations are also being undertaken to allow the United States access to home port facilities in Porto Santo on Madeira, and in the airfields of Ovar, Montijo and Beja on the mainland. The German air force has for some time had training facilities in the Beja air base and in Alcochete. The agreement with Germany, dating back to 1960, was renewed on 15 May 1980. France has

a surveillance and guiding station for missiles on the isle of Flores in the Azores, as per the agreement between Portugal and France signed in 1964, renewed on 24 February 1977 and renegotiated in 1984.

Security Relations with Spain

With the transformation of Portugal and Spain into democratic countries, the old Iberian Pact was replaced by a Friendship and Cooperation Treaty signed in November 1977. This treaty provided for regular meetings of both general staffs of the armed forces, established the framework for common military manoeuvres to take place regularly, and also contemplated industrial cooperation which has not yet begun. Everything points to greater cooperation between the two Iberian states. This, however, would require a reduction of the imbalance in military power between the two countries and a precisely defined division of responsibilities within the Alliance.

Spain's adherence to NATO received Portuguese approval, although it sparked off a debate about how Spanish membership would affect Portugal's role within the Alliance and gave rise to fears that the United States or NATO might be tempted to entrust Spain with security tasks within IBERLANT for which Portuguese armed forces are not yet adequately equipped.

It is of immediate importance to establish the framework for aeronaval cooperation between Portugal and Spain. In the event of Spain joining the military structure of NATO, the prevailing opinion in Portugal is that the two countries should belong to two different major commands, Portugal to SACLANT and Spain to SACEUR. It is not possible, however, to disregard Spain's contribution to Atlantic defence and to IBERLANT through the Canary Islands/Gibraltar space. If the solution to this problem led to the removal from IBERLANT of the Gibraltar/Canaries area, Portugal would certainly impose the condition of integration of the Azores (presently under WESTLANT) into the new IBERLANT. Irrespective of the solutions to the command question, Spanish cooperation with IBERLANT (at present the CINCIBERLANT is a Portuguese admiral) is both necessary and possible. In the case of war, it is evident that both countries would have to cooperate in the reinforcement of European forces.

Out-of-Area Contingencies

Because of its great dependence on energy resources from the Persian Gulf area and its proximity to areas of tension in the south, Portugal cannot neglect its out-of-area responsibilities. Portugal and the United States have mutual out-of-area interests but they may have different views on how to defend these interests. In 1980, the Portuguese government made it clear that the use of facilities for out-of-area contingencies was subject to prior clearance on a case-by-case basis, and this was once again stressed during the negotiation of the present agreement. 'Under no circumstance can clearance for the use of the Lajes base be considered as automatic outside the NATO area.'³⁸ In the case of a Middle East conflict involving Israel and an Arab state such as Syria, it would be highly unlikely that Portugal would openly assist a U.S. intervention. Portugal has made it clear that its territory will never be used against Arab countries.³⁹

The attitude of the Portuguese government in out-of-area contingencies is beginning to shift from one of outright support for American positions—as during the Afghanistan and Iran crises in 1979 when economic boycotts were imposed on both countries by the United States, and Portugal withdrew from the Olympic Games—to a much less ideological, more pragmatic and cautious position, motivated by economic interests (such as commercial relations with the Arab world) and by a desire to be part of a common European stand. This became evident in 1986 during the U.S.-Libyan confrontation. The Portuguese Foreign Minister deplored 'the use of force' by the United States.⁴⁰ Like the European countries generally, Portugal was reluctant to impose severe economic and other sanctions against Libya. The cases in which Portugal would be willing, in principle, to authorize the use of its military bases for out-of-area contingencies are understood to be those in which military support would be needed to ensure the security of the Arab states, particularly in the Gulf area. If Spain's position of not granting facilities under any circumstances for Middle East contingencies remains unchanged, it will be very difficult for Portugal, especially as a member of the EC, to accept the fact that it would be the only European country to do so.

Policy makers think that only by implementing a EuroAtlantic foreign policy based on relations with the EC, the United States, and Portuguese-speaking Africa and Brazil, can

Portugal safeguard autonomous political action. The European option is regarded as a fundamental precondition for the development of Portugal and for preserving a certain degree of independence vis-à-vis the United States. In seeking to develop fully a European dimension in its foreign policy, Portugal applied for membership in the Western European Union in October 1984. It is also striving to increase its participation in all NATO European fora, and particularly in the Independent European Programme Group,⁴¹ considered as an ideal platform for industrial defence cooperation and for research and development. Portugal is already participating in the AW ACS programme.

A Strategy of Denial

Given the existence of NATO facilities on Portuguese territory, the most probable form of Soviet strategy in the region will be a strategy of denial. In the case of open conflict, Soviet strategy could take the form of sabotage or commando actions against coastal targets and existing facilities, mining of harbours, surgical bombing from aircraft or submarine-launched cruise missiles with conventional charges. The target goal of Soviet indirect strategy is to render impossible U.S. access to facilities in the region, or at least to make it as difficult as possible, and to create insecurity in sea and air lines of communication. For the Soviet Union, this is the reason for the immediate strategic importance of the conflict in the western Sahara. The defeat of the Moroccan king and the accession to power of populist groups (which would be the foreseeable consequence of a victory of the Polisario Front) would create an atmosphere of instability in the region with direct consequences in the Atlantic archipelagos of Portugal and Spain.

The situation thus created would be especially delicate for Spain, owing to the immediate threat that would be posed to the Spanish North African dominions, Ceuta and Melilla, and also because of the vulnerability of the Canary Islands, sixty-two miles away from the western Sahara. Portuguese territory could also be implicated as the western Sahara is only 360 miles from Madeira, 210 from the Selvagens, and 120 miles separate the coasts of North Africa and the Algarve. In February 1978, Gadaffi declared that 'there ought to be liberation movements in

the islands occupied by Portugal' because 'the African islands belong to Africa, and their freedom is interdependent.'⁴² An attempt was made to raise this issue at the Organization for African Unity (OAU) summit meeting at Khartoum, in July 1978, but the matter was never discussed, in part because Gadaffi's statements were given no credence (the Portuguese archipelagos were uninhabited at the time of their discovery), and partly because the leaders of the former Portuguese colonies refused to discuss the question. Nevertheless, the subject was raised again, in December 1981, by the Foreign Minister of Zimbabwe, Mangwende. In 1976–1978, contacts between Libya and the feeble separatist movements in the Azores and Madeira were reported, in the form of meetings of these groups with the President of the Islamic Bank for International Development in Paris.⁴³ Although the movements in the Azores and Madeira have been unsuccessful thus far, the Canary Islands have been subject to greater pressures, owing to their proximity to the Saharan conflict, to the greater significance of the separatist movement there (the Movement for the Independence of the Canary Islands—MPAIAC), and also to the discussion of the Canary question in the OAU, which has formally recognized the MPAIAC as a liberation movement. The MPAIAC has almost disappeared, but the people of the Canaries reject the so-called 'OTANization' of the territory. The neutralization of the Canary Islands would be seen as a form of indirect strategy aimed at limiting U.S. power projection capacities. The conduct of this type of strategy does not come exclusively from outside, it also issues from within, and it is today one of the objectives of the communist-controlled pacifist movement within Portugal. Its aim is the neutralization of Portugal within the Alliance, in particular for out-of-area contingencies. Membership of the Alliance has never been openly questioned, not even by Vasco Gonçalves in 1974–1975. This objective has been clearly defined by General Costa Gomes, who was President of the Republic from 1974 to 1976 prior to the first Presidential election and subsequently a member of the presidency of the World Peace Council: 'It is not NATO policies that are keeping us from having healthy relations with the Arab world, but an inexplicable subserviency towards the Reagan Administration.'⁴⁴

Neutralistic tendencies exist in leftist military circles and in pro-communist circles, but also exist, though in a less extreme form, in far more influential conservative sectors, which tend to

reformulate the old anti-Europeanism that characterized Salazar's geopolitical options. Anti-Europeanism can, however, also reinforce a type of pro-Americanism. One observer has remarked that 'it is not surprising that Portugal, having completed the cycle of the empire, should now cling to the geostrategic capacity of her territory, to cooperation with Portuguese-speaking countries and to the historical alignment with the dominant maritime power, in order to survive and to keep her freedom of action and political weight, especially as she will have to accept something like a reversal of her history in joining the European Community.'⁴⁵

Portugal and Challenges from the South

Portuguese defence decision makers are not concerned solely with the indirect implications of the geographical proximity of the south. They consider that in an increasingly multipolar world, regional strategy must take into account the greater probability of peripheral wars. They are aware of the fact that some of the North African states in the western Mediterranean have developed military capabilities matching those of neighbouring NATO countries. The technological developments and the military capabilities of countries such as Libya, Morocco or Algeria make it possible that a conflict in which these countries were involved would have military repercussions for both Spain and Portugal.

For military planners, an evolution in North Africa in favour of the Warsaw Pact would be the most nightmarish scenario of all—one that would greatly alter existing perceptions of external threat. Any form of strategic military planning in Portugal should take that eventuality into account. NATO is also becoming aware of the implications of such possible developments. SACLANT logistic positions and sea lines of communication are threatened by Soviet bombers and submarines based in the north, but could be attacked also by Soviet naval and air capabilities based in the south, were the Soviets to succeed in obtaining facilities in Portuguese former colonies in Africa. In order to ensure that NATO retains control of this region, plans for the development of air facilities in Porto Santo (Madeira) are becoming a priority of IBERLANT.

The possibility of a conflict between a peripheral NATO state (such as Portugal) and a non-Warsaw Pact state should be considered. Though other European NATO countries may regard such a conflict as an out-of-area contingency, it would clearly be a conflict to which Article 5 of the NATO treaty would necessarily apply. Of course, Portuguese diplomacy tries to foster good relations, in an attempt to reduce the risk of disputes, with North African countries that in the past naturally opposed Portugal's colonial policies. Relations with Morocco form an especially important part in this regional diplomatic strategy. During his visit to Rabat in March 1984, the Foreign Minister reaffirmed that Portugal does not recognize the Democratic Arab Republic of the Sahara and in his meetings with King Hassan, he discussed the need for Atlantic strategic cooperation, as well as the importance of consultation and cooperation to solve the problems raised by the third enlargement of the EC.⁴⁶

Aside from assisting the out-of-area activities of others, Portugal may, in the future, embark on military cooperation with the Portuguese-speaking African states. Economic cooperation is bound eventually to generate military ties. Not only would the former colonies welcome the presence of Portuguese military advisors, but now that these countries are negotiating military cooperation with France and Britain, Portuguese leaders may decide that closer links with the ex-colonies must be maintained.

DEFENCE POLICY MAKING AND THE MODERNIZATION OF THE ARMED FORCES

The two major priorities for the Portuguese armed forces are thorough normalization of their status and modernization of their equipment. Only by making major improvements will Portugal be able to perform its tasks in the NATO and regional contexts, and to develop any form of military cooperation with the African states. From a legislative point of view, the 1982 National Defence Law represented a turning-point in the integration of the military forces into the democratic state, made possible by the revision of the constitutional text. Once the National Defence Law had been approved, it was necessary to pass complementary legislation and regulations pertaining to the

implementation of the law. This legislation included: The Strategic Concept of National Defence, intended to lay out the guidelines for an adaptation of security and defence policies to the changes that had taken place after the end of the African wars; the multiannual military programme laws that would allow for some degree of parliamentary control of medium-term planning in military expenditure; and, finally, the organic law of the Defence Ministry, that would enable the government to actually carry out the tasks contemplated in the National Defence Law.

The most important aspect of the National Defence Law is that it put an end to the situation existing prior to 1982 in which the military had the power to make the laws ruling the armed forces, to define their budgetary and procurement policies and to approve international agreements in military matters. In other words, the National Defence Law deprived the armed forces of any political functions. All responsibilities in defence policy making and administrative matters were transferred to the government. The President is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, a somewhat honorific role which would only acquire meaning in time of war. He has the power to declare war and appoint the Chiefs of Staff whose names are proposed by the government. He also chairs the National Defence Council, formed by a majority of cabinet ministers, two members of parliament, the four Chiefs of Staff and the two Presidents of the regional governments of Madeira and the Azores. Legislative and supervisory powers in defence matters are the responsibility of parliament.

However, the National Defence Law has not been implemented by the successive governments since 1982 as they have wanted to deal carefully with the armed forces and gain their confidence. The organic law of the Defence Ministry, the legal instrument necessary to provide the ministry with an operative structure, has not yet been approved; some people even say that the Defence Ministry does not exist but *de jure*. It should also be noted that the new provisions of the 1982 National Defence Law relating to the Chiefs of Staff have not been implemented so far, and consequently they still have practically the same powers as before. In reality, the coordination of foreign military aid, representation abroad and in international organizations, definition of strategic options and procurement are all powers which still lie with the Chiefs of

Staff, even if, for matériel purchases, the signature of the Prime Minister, who then delegates this sort of power to the Minister of Defence, is legally required.

Ideal circumstances for the establishment of a framework for thorough normalization have been lacking. Several commanding officers (including the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces) were potential candidates to the Presidency (paradoxically encouraged by party leaders) so that there is still considerable involvement of the military in politics. Furthermore, for several years Defence Ministers were also Deputy Prime Ministers and therefore could not devote enough time and attention to defence policy issues, a fact which naturally allowed the military greater freedom of action in defence issues.

The vast majority of the military wish to see the normalization process fully completed as a prerequisite for the definition of an integrated and consistent Portuguese military strategy. This would in turn facilitate the replacement of obsolete matériel and equipment which is necessary if Portugal wishes not to become a vulnerable NATO ally.

Until now, the role of parliament in the process of defence decision making has merely been to vote the defence portion of the state budget. The parliament and the public have, thus far, had no say in negotiations with foreign countries conducted by the government. The operating principle has always been: 'the less said, the better.' Neither public opinion nor the media (except in the Azores) has acted as a lobbying force in these issues. The democratization of the decision-making process through increased participation by parliament would contribute to a greater understanding of the need for modernizing the armed forces.

Normalization of the armed forces began on 25 November 1975, with the defeat of the military leftists and the Communist Party. The election of General Eanes—a prominent figure of the 25 November counter-insurgency—to the Presidency in April 1976 was viewed by those who favoured normalization as a form of institutional subordination of the military forces to an elected president. Against this stood the so-called 'operatives' who argued that General Eanes should have military power only. General Eanes insisted, however, that he would only agree to become President if he were also made Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces. At the time this condition was accepted. Eanes was the man whom people saw

as having put an end to a situation of total instability, both political and military.

During the following years, however, General Eanes' influence in the armed forces declined. First, because he refused to take sides on the conflict between military factions in favour of normalization and the politico-military sections of the MFA. The latter group had a comfortable majority in the Council of the Revolution and it was from among them that General Eanes selected the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Garcia do Santos. Second, after the 1982 revision of the constitution (made by the PS, the PSD and the CDS) the President of the Republic was deprived of most of his military powers and, notably, of the exclusive power of appointing the Chiefs of Staff who were subsequently to be appointed by the President *after* the government had made a formal proposition.

Even if the National Defence Law did not entirely ban the military from political affairs, and moreover has largely not been implemented, this has not prevented left-wing sections of the MFA or the Council of the Revolution (grouped in the so-called 25 April Association) from persisting in their struggle to 'fight for the preservation of the ideas of April.' General Eanes is the honorary president of this association, the most radical sections of which publish the review *Liber 25* which advocates a policy of neutrality between the blocs.

The governments of the Democratic Alliance (AD) the PSD-CDS coalition 1979–1983, and the *Bloco Central*, the PS-PSD coalition 1983–1985, perhaps worried about a military backlash, were unable, or did not wish to set forth clearly the necessary changes implied in the 1982 National Defence Law. After much hesitation, General Garcia do Santos was replaced as Chief of Staff of the Army in 1983 and this is considered to be 'the sole political measure taken by the government' in military matters.

In 1986, because the PSD government was a minority government, the opposition introduced an article in the State Budget Law whereby expenses surpassing 1,000 million escudos in defence expenditure would have to be previously approved in parliament. This was a way of giving parliament an opportunity to discuss the programme of military contracts even if some of these had already been signed and the corresponding decisions taken before the military programme laws for the 1986–1991 period were submitted. It is evident from the inordinate sums which the procurement programme gobbles up from the overall

financial resources projected until 1991, that ‘normalization’ of the relationships between the armed forces, government and parliament has so far been unsuccessful. Already authorized or contracted purchases of matériel consume almost all the financial resources for the next few years and it seems, therefore, that neither the government nor parliament has had any role in the definition of fundamental defence options. Definition of a modernization or reequipment programme seems fruitless if money has already been irreversibly committed.

The Modernization Programmes and their Conceptual Basis

Many military leaders claim that the fear of a ‘vacuum of power’ is the most serious security problem facing Portugal. It is therefore imperative, they argue, to fill this ‘vacuum’ in Portugal’s interterritorial space, otherwise its Spanish or American allies will surely move to fill it. Equipped to fight wars in Africa—wars of mines, guns and light armoured cars—the Portuguese military forces, especially the army and navy, are almost totally unprepared to guarantee the security of their own strategic space or to contribute to the NATO missions to which they are assigned.

A clear lack of military capabilities is evident in Portugal, in spite of the important infrastructures (especially air force) based there. From 1974 to 1985, modernization of the military forces made little if any progress due to economic difficulties, insufficient clarification of defence policy guidelines, and the absence of an adequate body designed to integrate the efforts of the three services and to arbitrate interservice rivalry, by deciding what priorities should be set for each one. The defence agreement recently signed with the United States has had principally two beneficial effects on the modernization of the armed forces. First, the resulting military aid made the first steps towards modernization possible. Second, each military service was compelled to define its own priorities in equipment and matériel. Thus, during the course of the negotiations with the United States a modernization programme was presented. It was still, however, an unsystematic amalgam of the requirements of each service, and by no means an integrated programme. The purchasing programme submitted to parliament in July 1986 was elaborated on the basis of these various lists of priorities.