

Defence planning and alliances: Portugal in the early years of the Cold War (1945–59)

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Abstract

This article looks at how Portuguese defence planning was executed in the years 1945–59, and seeks to assess to what extent this same planning was subject to constraints derived from the alliances established by the Portuguese Government. During this period, Portugal was faced with internal and external issues of difficult resolution. Internationally, its interests and its obligations were focused on the Atlantic powers, the ones who had the necessary means and organization to counter the Soviet threat. At home, the Portuguese authorities considered that Portugal was first of all part of the Iberian peninsula and, as such, made common cause for its military defence with its turbulent and, at that time, less respectable Spanish neighbour.¹

Keywords: Defence Planning; Alliances; Cold War; Portugal; Spain; NATO

1. Introduction

In the 1950s, there was in Portugal an intimate connection between foreign and defence policies, a complex process that this article will attempt to explain.

Despite the complacent acceptance given by the British authorities, in the period immediately after the Second World War, the Salazar regime encountered major obstacles

to efforts undertaken to promote the integration of Portugal in the new international scenario (Moreira 2008: 543–51).² During this period, British diplomacy was one of the main connecting links to the west for the dictatorial regimes of the Iberian peninsula, having supported them discreetly but effectively. British authorities sought to maintain their influence in the Iberian peninsula, a strategic location of transition between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, and a vital geographical space to maintain in their sphere of influence. Although not as internationally ostracized as the Franco regime, and despite having important diplomatic relations with both British and US authorities, it took some time for the regime in Portugal to gain more widespread acceptance among the countries of the victorious block. Between 1945 and 1949, Portugal continued to enjoy sufficient international manoeuvrability to ensure the signing of bilateral agreements with the United States and an invitation to be part of the Marshall Plan.

From 1949, with its accession to NATO, Portugal's foreign policy became easier, but not all its difficulties disappeared. In the 1950s, there was a cooling off of diplomatic relations with Spain caused by Portugal's accession to NATO, and the apparent good understanding between the Lisbon authorities and Washington also suffered significant setbacks caused mainly by issues related to Portuguese colonial policy.³

During the 1950s, the definition of Portuguese foreign policy was affected both by internal and external constraints. In an era of decolonization, the 'Estado Novo', led by Salazar, persisted in a stubborn colonial policy that was contested internationally. It can be said that, in general terms, the gradual acquiescence to Portugal's participation in the new international system did not ultimately result from the effectiveness of diplomatic action by

the Portuguese authorities, but rather from cyclical geopolitical circumstances that were favourable to the strategic interests of both Britain and the United States.

Only after 1947, more specifically after the talks to discuss matters related to participation in North American economic aid under the Marshall Plan, did the Portuguese authorities effectively begin to talk of cooperation with the Western Bloc. From this year on, Portugal gradually began to extend its international integration, not only in the field of diplomacy, but also in the economic and military fields. From then until the mid-1950s, Portugal intervened actively in matters related to the Marshall Plan, the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Payments Union (EPU). In addition to these key moments, Portuguese authorities were also involved in discussions related to the European Council, and closely followed others related to the European Coal and Steel Community and the European Defence Community (Pereira 2006: 21–23).

One of the major successes of Portuguese foreign policy with respect to the international acceptance of the Portuguese regime came in 1949 with NATO membership. The accession of Portugal to the Atlantic Pact confirmed the geostrategic importance of the country to the policy of containment of the Soviet threat, which by then was starting to take shape and represented a further element in the international acceptance of the country, so incessantly sought by Salazar. Thus, Portugal was invited to join the North Atlantic Pact primarily because of the geostrategic importance of its Atlantic archipelagos. Being of vital importance to US strategic plans, the Azores would prove to be the most important and decisive asset for the international acceptance of the country. A 'centre of gravity of international politics', the Azores were always linked in the immediate post war period to

issues related to the Great Defensive Strategy of western countries. The Portuguese archipelagos were a vital support centre for air links between the European, American and African continents; ensured control over the major shipping routes of the Atlantic and, being an essential supporting base for the projection of American military power on a global scale, ended up being identified as an essential support base for the implementation of a first phase of the United States' nuclear strategy.⁴

Over time, Portugal achieved a stronger position with regard to the west, without significant changes to its internal and colonial policies. With regard to Iberian diplomacy, Portugal's accession to NATO caused some tension in the bilateral relations between the two Iberian allies, as Spanish authorities considered the accession of Portugal to that organization a violation of the 1939 Iberian Pact. On the other hand, mistrust by the Portuguese authorities regarding the United States and a fear of subordination to North American interests did not end with the accession of Portugal to NATO. Only with the signing of the Defence Agreement with the United States on 5 January 1951, did the situation gradually begin to change.

2. Principles and guidelines of Portuguese foreign and national defence policies

Even with the acceptance of Portugal by western powers, Salazar still showed some difficulty in accepting the new bipolar order and the decline of Britain as a maritime power. Salazar was counting on the power of Great Britain to counter the hegemonic pretensions of the superpowers, but this ambition fell apart as early as 1947, when a more severe winter exposed the fragility of the British economy in particular, and that of western Europe in

general (Oliveira 2008: 140). In this new context, Portuguese and British diplomatic relations were going to be affected, since London no longer continued to support its old ally, economically and militarily. At the beginning of the Cold War, Britain's substantially reduced availability of resources, and the need for Portugal to engage with the new world power, were realities that proved difficult to avoid.

In 1947 London refused to supply one of the largest orders for military equipment placed by Portugal since the First World War. With well-defined political goals, the Portuguese authorities sought, through this order, to obtain the equipment needed to complete the third phase of the rearmament plan started in 1935 but, above all, to force Great Britain to ensure the defence of the Portuguese mainland, ideally the Iberian peninsula, and the Azores. Discreetly, British officials told their Portuguese counterparts that only the United States was able to provide either the equipment or the defence guarantees required by Lisbon (see Rocha 2015: 91–95).

Fearing the close proximity of a new conflict in which Portugal would hardly be able to maintain its neutrality, there was no other solution than the reorientation of Portuguese foreign policy strategies and the rapid adaptation to a new international reality where the United States played the leading role (TNA PRO FO 371/96129 - 1951).

The key moments in Portugal's adaptation to US leadership occurred during the Second World War, and they increased in the second half of the 1940s and 1950s, the majority of them related to the geostrategic value of the Azores islands. Very briefly, we may consider the following relevant for bringing together the two countries; the Portuguese American agreement in 1944 to establish naval and air bases on the island of Santa Maria,⁵ talks about Marshall aid, the ceding of military facilities in Lajes to the Americans in February 1948, the

involvement of Portugal in the Atlantic Alliance from 1949 and, in 1951, the signing of a Mutual Aid Agreement for Defence (January) and the Defence Agreement between Portugal and the United States (September). In more specific terms, we can say that the redefinition of the Atlantic aspect of Portuguese foreign policy began during the Second World War and was definitively consolidated with the entry of Portugal to NATO in 1949 and the signing of several bilateral defence agreements throughout the first half of the 1950s.

Although the international situation demanded a redefinition of traditional alliances, in the immediate post-war period, diplomatic relations between Lisbon and London continued to occupy a place of great importance in national foreign policy. The Portuguese authorities needed to integrate the United States in the scheme of alliances designed for Portugal's defence, but they were unable to find the necessary political basis for a bilateral understanding.

In this context, between 1947 and 1949, the British authorities proved to be decisively, though cautiously, interested in promoting contacts between the Portuguese and North American authorities, particularly with regard to the ceding of military bases in the Azores. In order to reach the strategic goals they had outlined, the British authorities had to maintain close relations with the Portuguese and develop a closer military understanding with them.

Since the end of the Second World War, London and Washington had developed distinct divergent long-term objectives regarding the Azores. The direct strategic interest of the British was to guarantee the existence of an efficient military airport in the Azores that they could use and control, as well as to base naval forces on the islands in the event of an emergency or war. As for the Americans, their objective was to obtain long-term rights to

maintain full-scale military bases during peacetime in both the Azores and the Cape Verde islands (TNA PRO FO 371/67855 - 1947).

After negotiations, only limited military facilities were granted during this period to the British and the Americans in the two Azorean airfields. Both Lajes and Santa Maria remained Portuguese and under Portuguese control and, although there were a certain number of foreign personnel stationed at both facilities, they continued to be operated by Portuguese staff (TNA PRO FO 371/67855 - 1947).

Portugal's accession to NATO in 1949, unquestionably important in terms of defence, ended up being fundamental for the attainment of national interests, especially in the political field. NATO played a key role in mediating the diplomatic relationship with Washington, and it was through NATO that Lisbon came to negotiate major economic, financial and military benefits (Telo 2001: 124).

Despite the apparent good understanding between the authorities in Lisbon and Washington, diplomatic relations between the two countries suffered a first but significant setback in the mid-1950s (Rodrigues 2002: 26–27). Faced with the occupation of the Portuguese enclaves of Dadra and Nagar Aveli by Indian Union military forces, the Portuguese authorities tried in vain to get Washington to condemn the invasion of those territories. This issue was very complex and led diplomatic relations between the United States and Portugal to their lowest point. For the first time, the American authorities publicly revealed some reservations regarding Portuguese colonial issues. This caused a natural deterioration of diplomatic relations between the two countries, subsequently verifiable in the difficult negotiations held in 1956–57 with a view to renewing the Lajes Agreement.

In late 1954, the Portuguese President Craveiro Lopes declined an invitation to visit the United States, on the pretext of scheduling difficulties.

Predicting the negative outcome of any attempt to reach an agreement on the Azores, the American authorities concluded that, given the circumstances, it was out of question to carry out any major political negotiations with Portugal. It seemed to be easier to achieve the desired objectives through a direct approach to the Portuguese Defence Minister Santos Costa, a strategy perceived, and later blocked, by Oliveira Salazar, with the appointment of the Foreign Minister to conduct the renegotiation of the 1957 agreement.

In 1956, the Suez crisis and the public statements of some American politicians caused more apprehension among the Portuguese political authorities and in particular to Prime Minister Oliveira Salazar, the only one with the authority to authorize the continuation of negotiations on the Azores. In a meeting with the ambassador of the United States, held in Lisbon in December 1956, Salazar deliberately postponed the completion of the new Azores agreement and openly declared, 'We are disturbed about the direction which American foreign policy is taking and frankly I do not understand where you are heading' (FRUS 1955–57: 468).

After the Second World War, Europe was no longer the centre of the international system, and became the stage for deep antagonisms. In this context, as had happened during the war, the strategic value of the Portuguese islands in the Atlantic became strengthened and national authorities knew how to take advantage of it. As J. Borges de Macedo wrote,

“international relations have multiple requirements that can only be thought of on the basis of absolute realism and skilful calculation of currently available forces.

Among them is the strategic function of a territory, not only for the state that owns

that territory but also the appraisal of the interest it represents for other 'securities'.
(1987)"

Throughout much of the second half of the 1950s, the Americans sought through all means to reach an agreement that would allow them to increase the number of personnel deployed on the Azores, to station three early warning squadrons, and would cede substantial areas of land for additional buildings. In the view of some members of the US Department of Defence, the entire Azores question was a matter of exchanging American 'hardware' for Portuguese facilities but, as they soon realized, the issue was not as simple as it seemed. The anxiety and annoyance American foreign policy caused during this period in relation to colonial questions was interpreted by Salazar 'as being against Europe and on behalf of the African-American countries', which led to a deliberate postponement of the new agreement (FRUS 1955–57: 466).

The colonial question thus significantly conditioned diplomatic relations between Portugal and the United States. The Americans expected the Portuguese authorities to separate this political issue from the negotiations of the Azores, but Salazar saw this same question as a way and an opportunity to ensure that American policies would not jeopardize Portuguese colonial interests.

In the new bipolar world after the war, Portugal pursued the same approach to the United States it had used with the previous maritime power, with the aim of obtaining security assurances against the new continental threat. At the same time, the US authorities, worried about their new global responsibilities, sought to ensure access to forward operating bases considered vital for the projection of its military power in the event of that threat materializing.

3. Defence planning

For a long time, the concept of National Defence had a strictly military significance, i.e. the military component had a dominant influence not only in defining the doctrine, but also in the organization and accomplishment of defence itself. In the years that followed the end of the Second World War, the concept underwent progressive enlargement as a result of lessons learned from the conflict. Across Europe the strictly military concept succumbed, acknowledging the fact that any future war was unlikely to be a mere clash of military forces, and that defence was no longer a matter to be exclusively decided by the military. The scope of the concept was now wider and more comprehensive, and decision-making with regard to matters of defence, extended to the highest political levels.

In Portugal since the 1930s, due to constraints caused by the political circumstances of the Estado Novo, national defence policy revealed an exclusive subordination to foreign and military policies. During the Second World War, Portuguese defence policy was based on alliance relations and aimed at protecting the interests of Portugal, as defined by the regime, while maintaining a certain relative autonomy of action in the context of the European conflict. Later, once the Cold War period began, the pursuit of security assurances came to dominate national defence policy.

For a long time, the concept of defence that prevailed in Portugal was devised and implemented in accordance with the guidelines of a single policy-maker, Salazar, who himself undertook the coordination of all the other policies necessary to fulfil the national defence policy. However, this coordination turned out to be merely instrumental, as it was just the sum of available and necessary instruments to respond to specific and immediate problems (TNA PRO FO 371/96129 - 1951). Except for a few trusted individuals, the military,

which was regarded as a threat to the survival of the regime, was kept away from any active role in shaping the nation's defence policy. Issues related to defence policy were therefore enveloped in countless ambiguities and indecisions. If sometimes defence issues were understood and addressed in such a generic way that they become entangled in political issues of a different nature, there were moments in which they were approached from too narrow a point of view, directly related to the management and employment of military assets (Rocha 2015: 99).

4. Defence planning objectives (1945–59)

In Portugal, the approaching end of the Second World War and the more than certain victory of the Allies, revived the agitation previously experienced in the barracks. A desire to overthrow the regime increased in both military and civil society. The years between 1945 and 1949 were marked by a series of conspiracies of different origins and motives, aimed at modifying the regime. All shared the intention of entrusting Carmona to replace Salazar, and all were too fragile (Rocha 2008: 179). The existence of an opposition became undeniable and manifested itself in various ways, usually ineffective in practical terms, and this became a constant nightmare for the regime. Attempts to overthrow the regime followed one after another, but they all succumbed to the will and astuteness of Oliveira Salazar, with the invaluable help of the War Minister, Santos Costa.

The concept of defence adopted in 1935, based on a megalomaniac mass army, prevailed beyond the end of the Second World War and only started to change in 1949. During this time Portugal continued to be committed to a defence policy whose ultimate goal was the

development of the military capabilities needed to ensure the defence of mainland Portugal with the least possible external dependency. The rearmament plan started in the second half of the 1930s remained in effect, with only its third phase to complete, the phase that would raise the strength of the Portuguese Army to fifteen Divisions. In 1945, the second phase of the rearmament plan was completed, and Portugal had the equipment needed to equip five divisions, albeit without genuine operational capability. The armaments policy that had been pursued in the previous decade had to continue beyond 1945, but this time to counter the Soviet threat (see Rocha 2015: 96–161).

From 1947, Portuguese defence policy changed and came to a standstill when the national authorities, engaged in carrying out the third phase of the 1935 rearmament plan, found themselves unable to obtain from England the assistance required for its implementation. It was this setback that first placed Portugal in a position of dependence on the United States, since it would now only be possible to complete this rearmament with North American aid. Since the summer of 1944, national authorities had been involved in diversifying the goals of Portuguese foreign policy and in safeguarding post-war national interests, therefore promoting a diplomatic approach to the United States, fostered and made substantially easier by Britain. This approach to the United States had some negative developments during 1948, when the political desire of Portuguese leaders regarding the maintenance of the Portuguese Empire began to clash with the American political philosophy of self-determination and decolonization. The absence of a political basis of understanding that would have allowed the deepening of diplomatic relations with the United States and the completion of the army's rearmament, dragged bilateral relations into a deadlock that would only be overcome after the foundation of NATO in 1949 (Telo 1996: 196–224).

In 1949, the so-called 'serene revolution' began. Portugal's accession to NATO brought with it profound changes in the priorities given to the traditional pillars of the Portuguese defence policy (Telo 1996: 324). At the time of the accession to NATO, Portuguese political authorities had in hand two important issues related to defence that had to be addressed: to pursue the subordination of the military to the political power by implementing the reorganization of National Defence conceived in 1935 and, to definitively materialize the fifteen Army Divisions foreseen for the third phase of the rearmament plan implemented that same year.

Until 1949, Portuguese defence policy was focused primarily on the possibility of providing assistance to the Spanish authorities in the defence of the Pyrenees line, in the event of a ground assault by Soviet forces (Rocha 2015: 251–59). In this context, the Army continued to be the main and primary element of the national armed forces, the embryonic Air Force served only as an auxiliary force and the Navy had progressed little since the end of the naval plan started in first half of the 1930s.

From 1949 until 1954 it is possible to establish the existence of two evolutionary stages in Portuguese defence policy. Briefly, until 1951, all actions revolved around bilateral relations with the United States and the pursuit of mechanisms to overcome the deadlock into which these diplomatic relations had fallen. During this period, the negotiations for the peacetime deployment of US military forces to the Azores continued and culminated in 1951 with the signing of a bilateral defence agreement, which was only possible within the new multilateral political framework of NATO. The second stage started in 1951 and continued until 1954. These were the years of the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), the arrival of the first American military equipment, new techniques and weapons systems, and

a reorganization of methods and mentalities. The Portuguese military authorities slowly began to realize that the previously drawn up plans were unrealistic, and the fifteen divisions soon became only five (Telo 1996: 322). Gradually, there was a transition away from a concept of defending Portugal's mainland based on a poorly equipped and obsolete mass army. By the end of 1956, the goals of the national defence policy already foresaw the building of a modern air and sea military force, of smaller proportions and more suitable for joint action with American and British forces in the defence of Portuguese Atlantic territories and Europe.

In 1957, this scenario changed and a new and radical shift in Portuguese defence policy emerged. International talks on colonial issues led to the perception that sooner rather than later, Portuguese authorities would have to deal with the development of African nationalisms and that it was therefore essential to develop policies and actions to strengthen and reorganize the existing military apparatus in the Portuguese African territories.

The military structure of the Portuguese Empire changed in early 1958 and was officially confirmed with the adoption of a new National Defence Policy in August 1959. The signing of new commitments to NATO was suspended while the priority given to defence agreements with Spain was also substantially reduced. The focus was now all on the Empire.

5. Conclusions

As we tried to demonstrate, the defence planning developed in Portugal in the years 1945 to 1959 revealed a high level of complexity, having been significantly conditioned by

commitments arising from political and military alliances signed by the Portuguese national authorities before and during the time period covered in our study.

The first fifteen years after the Second World War were difficult for western European countries. These were times for reconstruction and economic recovery, but also of struggle for a securitarian environment that would ensure the necessary conditions to recover lost prosperity and defend against a new threat emerging from the Soviet Union. In a scenario of growing international tension, the Portuguese authorities could not knowingly fail to take action to create these conditions. Inaction would certainly have implied conceding advantages to other actors and led to an inevitable reduction in the defence capabilities of Portugal. Nonetheless, the time period between 1945 and 1959 was characterized by increasing external influences on Portuguese defence policy. With alliances signed first with Spain, and later with the United States and NATO, in the course of these fifteen years, the Portuguese authorities tried to put into practice a complex defence plan that, being based on unrealistic political goals, had little chance to succeed.

Thus, the analysis of the defence and military planning conducted in Portugal from 1945 to 1959, allow us to establish the existence of two time periods in which the influence of external commitments were substantially different.

In the first period, which we place between the end of the Second World War and the accession of Portugal to NATO, the official concept of defence relied on the assumptions established in 1935, and had as its main premise, the existence of a megalomaniac and disproportionate mass army. As in the previous decade, Portuguese authorities sought to create the necessary conditions for the ground defence of Portugal's mainland territory,

while avoiding at all costs, excessive dependence on foreign military assistance, or foreign interference in matters of national defence.

The Army continued to be the main branch of the Portuguese Armed Forces. It was still organized according to the provisions of the 1937 reorganization and was divided into two types of land forces (metropolitan and colonial) directed by different ministries. The rearmament plan, started in the second half of the 1930s, was still in effect, but had not yet completed its third phase, in which the Army's strength was to be increased to fifteen divisions. Thus, despite all the money invested in the previous decade, the Army had no real capability to ensure the defence and integrity of the Portuguese mainland. Human resources abounded, but the country still had insufficient resources to arm and equip its military apparatus.

During this period, Portuguese and British diplomatic relations faded in importance due to the inability of the British authorities to continue to support their old ally. In this new context, Britain proved incapable of continuing to supply the weaponry needed to complete the rearmament of the Army, and Portugal's need to initiate an approach to the new superpower proved to be a difficult reality to circumvent. Fearing the proximity of a new conflict, there was no other solution than to redirect the strategies of Portuguese foreign policy and to make a rapid approach to the United States. In the new bipolar world, Portugal began to approach the new maritime power in order to obtain security guarantees against the new continental threat, while the US authorities sought to ensure access to forward bases needed to project its military power.

As for Spain, diplomatic relations during this period between the two Iberian countries were conditioned by the evolution of the international context and revealed, during the first two

years after the Second World War, periods of conspicuous friendship and understanding, but also others of perfect indifference. Officially, the Iberian neighbours continued to be bound by a friendship dictated by the 1939 political and military pact (Iberian Pact).

However, the historical Portuguese mistrust of its powerful neighbour, clearly verifiable in the various defence plans drawn up in Portugal until the late 1940s, was slow to disappear.

After 1947, the Cold War set in, definitively favouring the progressive international rehabilitation of Spain and the gradual resumption of Portuguese and Spanish relations, albeit without what could be termed as a full and disinterested understanding, as proved by the objections raised by Spain during the process of Portugal's accession to NATO.

In terms of defence planning, this was a period during which there were no substantial constraints arising from external political or military commitments. However, it is possible to establish the existence of certain circumstances that indicated the beginning of the constraints on actions of the Portuguese authorities that would mark the decade of the 1950s. We refer first of all to the unwillingness shown by Britain to continue to support the rearmament of the Portuguese Army. While acknowledging that this decision did not prevent the defence plan itself, as it had been set in 1935, it significantly affected the realization of the most important objective set out in that plan, and for the first time, placed Portugal in a position of dependency on the United States of America. The second circumstance that we want to highlight, was the obstructive action carried out by Spanish diplomacy throughout the process of Portugal's accession to NATO.

External constraints on the Portuguese authorities, in terms of defence and military planning, became much more pronounced after 1949, the year Portugal became a full

member of NATO, and it is here we place the beginning of the second evolutionary period we wish to emphasize.

Portugal, a country with insignificant military power and reduced international influence, had no other solution than to undertake an inevitable and progressive adjustment to changing external circumstances. Throughout the 1950s, Portugal's foreign relations and in particular its alliances, ultimately determined to a large extent that, by the end of this period, the conditions and possibilities of national defence policy meant that the exercise of Portugal's sovereignty could hardly be guaranteed by its own means.

The conditioning of defence planning arising from Portuguese alliances was not immediate. It gradually emerged as a result of the accession of Portugal to NATO and it became more visible from 1952 onwards.

Portugal's accession to NATO triggered profound changes in priorities previously assigned to the traditional pillars of Portugal's defence policy. Under the new circumstances, the frontier of Portugal's defence moved to the Pyrenees, leading Portuguese military authorities, for the first time in centuries of history, to abandon their almost exclusive dedication to planning for the defence of Portugal's mainland against their traditional Spanish enemy. Accession to NATO definitively closed the evolutionary cycle of national defence policy that had been followed since the end of the Second World War. During this cycle it became clear that Portuguese political authorities wanted to promote the integration of Portugal in an anti-communist alliance that, besides promoting international acceptance of the regime, would guarantee protection against a military threat that, because of the reduced Portuguese military apparatus, could only be countered by joining forces with other nations.

Portugal was now a full member of the most important defence alliance ever created and, as such, could aspire to benefit from the protective umbrella of the largest military machine ever organized at a global level. However, this new alliance established by the Portuguese authorities also entailed obligations that, along with those arising from commitments undertaken with Spain and the United States, were going to constrain, from the outset, the definition of national defence policy and, consequently, the completion of the defence plan the Portuguese authorities had wanted to fulfil throughout the 1950s.

With regard to defence planning, constraints arising from relationships established through Portugal's alliances were manifested at two levels: (1) by how some of the goals for the strength of its forces were defined and gradually changed to meet its needs for both self-defence and external commitments; and (2) by whether these forces ended up being effectively organized and equipped.

Defence planning deals, among other issues, with the establishment and maintenance over time of armed forces that can be immediately available the moment their action is found to be necessary. It is therefore important that such planning is established by setting realistic goals that national authorities consider attainable in the future. However, during the first two years that followed the foundation of the Atlantic Alliance, the goals for defence outlined by the Portuguese authorities, and in particular by Santos Costa, continued to be not only ambitious, but also utopian and unrealistic in relation to the actual economic capacity of the country. Furthermore, they revealed a certain lack of knowledge of the evolution that had occurred in the concept of force deployment since the end of the Second World War and, at least initially, a failure to properly evaluate the relative value to be

assigned to the different alliances established by the Portuguese Government, and the actual implications of the military commitments undertaken under these alliances.

In the early years of the Atlantic Alliance, the Portuguese authorities were still focused on channelling all available efforts and resources to the organization of ground forces, thus seeking to take advantage of what in Portugal was considered to be an asset in relation to most European countries – an abundance of militarily trained manpower. Strongly committed to achieving the main goal that had led to the acceptance of the invitation to join NATO – the completion of the third phase of the rearmament of the army – the national authorities insisted on the need to organize and equip the fifteen divisions referred to in the 1935 plan.

A founding member of the Atlantic Alliance, with defence agreements signed with Spain and the United States, Portugal's political and military authorities in the early 1950s faced the daunting task of seeking to achieve a balance of forces that would allow them to adequately meet not only Portugal's needs for home defence, but also the proper integration of its military forces in the joint defence of the Iberian peninsula and western Europe. Ignoring the constraints imposed by a reality never before experienced in Portugal, and disregarding the lack of any significant changes in the resources available to equip its existing military forces, Portugal's authorities insisted on adopting a programme of multiple expansion of its available forces that, in just two years, proved to be totally unattainable due to its inflated goals. Effectively, despite the scarcity of resources, it was thought possible to organize and simultaneously sustain forces (land, sea and air) to ensure the Portuguese contribution towards the defence of Western Europe; the defence of the Iberian peninsula from the

frontier of the Pyrenees, and the defence of the Portuguese mainland and the islands of the Azores and Madeira.

This multiple scaling down of the Portuguese military forces that national authorities were compelled to consider, constituted what we consider to be the main conditioning factor for overall defence planning established for the 1950s, and it is merely the most obvious factor from a broader set of external constraints that affected the action of the Portuguese authorities.

In the 1950s, the change of direction in Portuguese defence planning derived, essentially, from the accession of Portugal to NATO, and started seven months after the signing of the Treaty, when the authorities in Lisbon were called on, for the first time, to set out for the organization's representatives all their national defence goals and to officially declare the volume of military forces that Portugal was willing to assign to the common defence of western Europe. The new circumstances required a swift adaptation to a pace of decision-making and planning totally different from the Portuguese reality. Accustomed to the typical halting and idiosyncratic rhythm of the Estado Novo, the Portuguese authorities were suddenly forced to abandon their typical reaction of improvisation, so often seen at key moments of national history. Inevitably, this was not a conflict-free process. Not only was there a discrepancy between domestic political goals and the objectives of the projected force structure, but there was also a significant mismatch between the strategic needs of NATO and the specific strategic objectives of the Portuguese authorities.

The constraining effect of NATO's concepts was thus present from the beginning of the relationship between the Portuguese authorities and their new alliance partners, and first became noticeable in such simple matters as methods and working dynamics. However,

these were not the most important aspects of such effects. NATO was primarily responsible for the downward revision of military goals outlined by the authorities in Lisbon as well as for the assumption of more realistic and less ambitious commitments throughout the first half of the 1950s. Furthermore, the action of the different NATO agencies also turned out to be crucial for the adoption of a more modern typology of Portugal's forces, more consistent with modern requirements for waging war.

However, the conditioning of the action of the national authorities with regard to defence planning was not limited to issues arising directly from Portugal's accession to NATO.

As we have seen, in the 1950s, Portuguese authorities were deeply committed to fulfilling military commitments arising from the Iberian Pact, and that commitment had inevitable repercussions on defence planning. Despite the cooling-off of diplomatic relations that had taken place in the previous decade of the 1940s, at no time did the Portuguese Government cease considering Spain as an indispensable element of its system of alliances envisioned for the post the Second World War period. Therefore, when it was invited to become part of the restricted founding group of NATO, Portugal never ceased to insist, though with few practical results, on the suitability of Spain becoming a member of the western defence system.

The deliberate non-involvement of Spain in NATO's defence planning entailed serious security problems for Portugal and it was therefore important to promote the deepening of military cooperation between the two Iberian countries aimed at the joint defence of the Iberian peninsula from the line of the Pyrenees. This was a matter to which the Portuguese political and military authorities paid special attention and prioritized without, however, receiving an equal degree of commitment from the authorities of the neighbouring country.

Throughout much of the 1950s, Portuguese defence planning foresaw the allocation of a portion of national military resources for the defence of the Pyrenees that greatly exceeded that made available for the joint defence of western Europe or even that envisaged for homeland defence. However, this fact did not seem to induce greater openness by the Spanish authorities in the bilateral talks related to collective defence of the peninsula or any kind of statement of recognition of the effort that Portugal was willing to make. The conditioning of the action of the Portuguese authorities was a constant, since most of the initiatives promoted with a view to clarifying vital questions for the structuring of Portuguese forces for the defence of the Pyrenees, almost always foundered against a certain torpor and indifference of the Spanish authorities, more obviously after the agreement signed between Spain and the United States in 1953.

In general terms, the Defence Planning idealized by the Portuguese authorities for the 1950s was subject to constraints substantially different from those faced in previous planning periods. However, we cannot fail to note that there are certain parallels between the situation that existed before the accession of Portugal to NATO, and that of the second half of the 1950s. We refer in particular to the fact that achieving the objectives set out in the Portuguese defence plan was dependent on strong external assistance. If, prior to 1947, Portugal sought by all means to convince the British authorities to provide the means required to implement the last phase of the rearmament plan foreseen since the beginning of the second half of the 1930s, in the late 1950s, the implementation of that defence plan was entirely dependent on the provision of large quantities of military equipment by the American authorities.

Thus, much of Portuguese defence planning in the 1950s was merely a theoretical exercise, which could hardly evolve to the 'field of practical realities', as Santos Costa had aspired, because it depended on obtaining resources that required creating an ambition to fulfil often irreconcilable goals. Nonetheless, thanks to foreign assistance, by the early 1960s, much had already been achieved in terms of forces to assign to NATO.

During this decade, which was the first in a Cold War environment, military affairs directly interfered with diplomatic activity, so that Portuguese defence planning reflected, above all, the need to manage alliance partnerships and the international affirmation of the regime, rather than the actual need for defence against an external military threat.

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Notes

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² On the concept of international integration see also Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff (2001).

³On this subject, see Redondo (1996) and also Rodrigues (2002).

⁴ On the strategic value of the Azores see the telegram sent to the State Department in Washington by the US ambassador to Portugal, Herman B. Baruch, see *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)* (1946) and also Telo (1996: 113–16).

⁵ On the 1944 Portuguese American agreement see Rodrigues (2004, 2005).