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## THE ALLIANCE IN THE XX<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

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In the wake of the crisis precipitated by the British ultimatum to Portugal (1890), the Alliance between the two countries was reaffirmed by the Treaty of 1899, which not only reiterated the validity of the Treaties of 1642 and 1661 but also extended their scope to the territories overseas by referring to "conquests and colonies of the Crown against their current and future enemies."

It is hard to exaggerate the diplomatic dependence of Portugal upon the United Kingdom during the period of the Portuguese 1<sup>st</sup> Republic. Should one peruse the respective White Paper, countless examples can be found. British opinion was sought (and followed) on many subjects.

Before the Republican Revolution of October 1910 a delegation of Portuguese Masonry visited London and the supposition is that the English United Grand Lodge from which, then, Portuguese masonry depended, stated it had no opposition to the overthrow of the monarchy. However, when King Carlos and the Crown Prince Luis Filipe had been murdered in 1908 great indignation swept Britain. King Edward VII formally attended a Requiem Mass at St. James Catholic Church, Spanish Place, in London. It was the first time since the Stuarts that a reigning monarch had taken part in a Roman Catholic service. The King is reputed to have indignantly observed to the Portuguese Minister in London, the Marquis of Soveral "...And two knights of the Garter murdered on the same day".

The new Republic was not however officially recognised by London until September 11<sup>th</sup> 1911, almost one year later. The new Portuguese Foreign Minister, Bernardino Machado, insisted but apparently there was strong opposition in the Cabinet including from Churchill, then Home Secretary. There were fears that Republican

anarchy would spread to Spain. During the first years of the Republic the Duchess of Bedford participated in various campaigns to free Portuguese political prisoners.

As is known, Portugal joined the First World War in 1916 after the United Kingdom invoked the Alliance. We know that Portugal had requested her own intervention not only to safeguard the country's overseas territories after the war (particularly Mozambique) but also as a means to buttress and consolidate the population's support for the republic.

The end of the First World War brought certain disenchantment to Portugal's diplomats. It is obvious that the constant confusion and political strife in the country caused a very negative image abroad.

The changing of the Portuguese delegation in the middle of it due to internal political reasons did not help some of our disappointment with the Conference of Versailles. Thus, the conference began with a Portuguese delegation led by Egas Moniz (the later Nobel prize-winner in Medicine), who was the man in charge of foreign affairs under President Sidónio Pais. Following the assassination of this head of state and the ensuing revolution, Afonso Costa headed the delegation. The two delegations had even different aims at the conference. While Afonso Costa sought the continuation of the *status quo* insofar as the colonial territories were concerned, Egas Moniz wanted Portugal to benefit from the spoils of the German colonies, something which did not come about. England actually informed Portugal that Belgium sought to obtain the Cabinda enclave and that South Africa favoured a sort of actual dominance over southern Mozambique. Such wishes did not materialise, but they were one of the reasons that gave rise to the regime of high commissioners in the African colonies. Afonso Costa sought also at Versailles to obtain a seat for Portugal at the Council of the League of Nations. The country felt slighted when Spain, which had been neutral during the War, was chosen instead.

As an example of Portugal's poor international image it is worth describing the story of the upgrading of the level of diplomatic representation between Portugal and the United Kingdom. In 1918, the United Kingdom wanted to raise its legation in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to the status of an embassy (at the time, there was a great difference of protocol between a plenipotentiary minister and an ambassador), and taking into account the deference due to her oldest ally, the United Kingdom pursued contacts in Lisbon in order that our mutual representations would also be raised to the level of embassies. In the meantime the assassination of President Sidónio Pais takes place and King George V deemed the Portuguese situation not worthy of a British embassy. The political killings of October 19<sup>th</sup> 1921 only served to reinforce this decision. The upgrading of the diplomatic representation only took place in 1924. At the time, there was a Labour government in power and the President of Portugal was Teixeira Gomes. Our minister in London was Augusto de Castro. The Portuguese foreign minister, Domingos Pereira, requested accreditation as ambassador for General Norton de Matos. The Tories Balfour and Curzon fought against it. It is worth recalling the important role played by our minister in London, Teixeira Gomes, who later would be President of Portugal and who enjoyed good contacts at the Foreign Office. When he returned to Portugal, the United Kingdom showed the esteem in which he was held by transporting him aboard a Royal Navy ship.

Up until the revolution of 1926, relations between the two countries evolved without major incidents. There was the issue of the Portuguese debts arising from the war and a delegation (headed by Júlio Dantas) went over to England; there were also certain difficulties concerning the Union of South Africa.

The regime that issued from the revolution of 28<sup>th</sup> of May 1926 was recognised by the British Government without any major problems and the former King Manuel II, then living in exile near London, allegedly had some influence in that regard. General Garcia Rosado, who had fought in France during the First World War and had contacts with the former King Manuel II, replaced the Portuguese ambassador, General Norton de Matos.

When Oliveira Salazar joined the Dictatorial Government, and his overriding influence began to be felt, he did not show a strong interest in international affairs. As he remarked in 1929, ["our diplomats] 'must not have much to do,'" since at the time the Ministry of Foreign Affairs only functioned in the afternoon! In 1932, when he became head of the Government [a position he would hold until 1968], he appointed the diplomat César de Sousa Mendes do Amaral e Abranches (a brother of the Consul Aristides de Sousa Mendes) foreign minister, but he was not a success. Nine months later Caeiro da Mata replaced him.

Up until the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 there were no major incidents between Portugal and the United Kingdom. There was always, however, a great awareness of the old Alliance between the two countries. The Prince of Wales (the future Duke of Windsor) visited Portugal in 1931.

The start of the civil war in Spain draws Portugal to a certain prominence in international affairs. We promptly joined in 1936 the Non-Intervention Pact that Britain was a major sponsor of. At first, Oliveira Salazar did not wish to be part of the Committee of this organisation, but Anthony Eden (then British Foreign Secretary) managed to convince his Portuguese counterpart, Armindo Monteiro, whom he got to know well in Geneva at the League of Nations. Thus, Portugal joined the Committee, mainly with the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, the Soviet Union and France. During this difficult period, the attitude of unambiguous support of the Nationalists by the Portuguese government did not create major problems between the governments of Lisbon and London. There were however constant issues with British public opinion, members of Parliament and the country's press. At the end of the civil war, in 1939, we played an influential role in the rapprochement between Franco and the United Kingdom.

The influence of Italy and Germany grew in Lisbon and the coming war was drawing near. It was then that the decision was taken, pursuant to a British initiative, to hold mutual consultations on

defence. The idea being that, should the Alliance have to be invoked, what would be the practical consequences? Another reason was the desire to offset the influence of the Axis forces. Thus, the United Kingdom sent a military mission to Lisbon in 1938 (there were several visits) and the Portuguese also made several military visits to Britain, especially to see *matériel*. But soon it became clear that Britain herself had a great lack of military equipment and that there was little that she could supply to Portugal. Nevertheless, as a diplomatic initiative to counterbalance the Germans and the Italians these contacts had considerable success.

It is probably useful at this point to refer to what was at the time the understanding concerning the meaning of the Alliance. It was understood that either of the countries should come to the aid of the other in the event of attack. Such a commitment also encompassed their overseas territories. But both countries reserved the right to decide if the events justified an intervention. This was the so-called *casus foederis*.

One should also not overlook the strong economic British presence in Portugal, which lasted until about the 1950's. The electric trams of Lisbon (Lisbon Tramway Company) and the country's major telephone company (*Telefones de Lisboa e Porto*) were concessions held by British interests.

At the start of the Second World War, in September of 1939, the Portuguese government conveyed to the British government that it wished to stay neutral by arguing that such a position was the most useful for Britain, primarily due to the impact that it could have on the neutrality of Spain. It also reiterated its obligations under the Alliance. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of September, the United Kingdom agreed with our position. Following the invasion of France in 1940, the Portuguese government proposed to Britain that the scenario of an invasion of Portugal be studied. The conclusions of that study were that Britain was not able to help us effectively. They recommended a symbolic defence on the continent and the transfer of the government to the Azores.

Towards the end of 1941, the issue of Timor arose. Dutch and Australian forces occupied this Portuguese territory, ostensibly to help Portugal fend off the Japanese. When the Japanese did come, those forces were of little or no use.

The Portuguese ambassador in London during this first phase of the war was Armindo Monteiro. Possessing a strong personality and an anglophile, the tension between him and Oliveira Salazar (who during the war took over the Foreign Affairs portfolio) grew. The Premier accused him of being too pro-British, i.e., of not defending the interests of his country, as he should. There was a final break between them in 1943 and Armindo Monteiro was replaced by the Duke of Palmela (Spain had recently appointed the Duke of Alba as their Ambassador in London). The British government reacted very negatively to the ambassador's departure. It granted Armindo Monteiro the highest possible decoration, the Order of the Bath, and at a farewell banquet Anthony Eden publicly said, "great destinies await him... but he will always be able to count on his friends." Clearly, the British regarded Armindo Monteiro as a possible substitute for Oliveira Salazar in the post-war era.

Ever since the invasion of France, the Allies worried about the safety of the Azores Islands and the imperious need that they not fall into German hands. Roosevelt argued that should Gibraltar be taken over, and then the Azores would have to be occupied with or without the consent of the Portuguese government. Later during the war (1943), Roosevelt convinced Churchill of this. The latter proposed that we should be notified of the occupation on its eve, so that we would be able to yield "under protest."

But Eden and Attlee (head of the Labour Party and a member of the governing coalition for the war) strongly argued against this position of force. Coincidentally, Salazar sounded out the British government, requesting a reopening of the military talks of 1940-41 concerning the defence of continental Portugal. Anthony Eden talks Churchill into using this opportunity to undertake formal conversations with the Portuguese government invoking the old Alliance and requesting military facilities in the Azores. Salazar

accepted after five days, subject to military and logistical talks between the two countries. These come to a close in August and involved agreements concerning the supply of coal, wheat and means of transportation. It is obvious that Portugal feared a strong German reaction, particularly at sea and in the air.

On October 12<sup>th</sup> 1943 the granting of bases in the Azores to Britain is announced. It caught the Germans completely by surprise. Churchill delivered a rousing speech in the House of Commons with many historical allusions. Eden would later comment that none of his listeners would ever have thought that he might have considered resolving the problem with Portugal other than on the basis of friendship! The concession excluded the Americans. But little by little they came. They, for example, did all the work at the airport.

Another problem always present in the relations between the two countries during the war involved the supply of tungsten. This ore that is important to the armaments industry was exported by Portugal to both belligerents, but for Germany the Iberian supplies, and particularly those from Portugal, were very important, and therefore the Allied pressure on Portugal to embargo those exports was great. Following 1943, the pressure increases in tone and quality. Statements are made in the British Parliament. Churchill personally writes to Salazar. General Smuts, prime minister of the Union of South Africa does likewise. The government of Brazil (which had joined the war) also intervenes. But Salazar refused to yield.

Finally, the secretary-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Teixeira de Sampaio, wrote to Salazar stating that the situation was becoming dangerous. And he is the one who suggested that the British again invoke the Alliance. Salazar reluctantly accepted on the eve of D-day! Eden made a speech in the Commons thanking Portugal and referring to Salazar as "that remarkable man." Armindo Monteiro had been forgotten. Actually, the British government, during this final phase of the war and especially after the granting of the facilities in the Azores, does not seek any replacement of Salazar. They don't think much of the Portuguese

opposition: "A poor lot," said a high-ranking Foreign Office official, "and the best of them [are] rather fifth-rate café politicians."

At the end of the war in the Pacific, the British intervened to prevent the Australians from occupying East Timor following the defeat of the Japanese.

Hitler's death caused an incident because the Portuguese government ordered that flags be flown at half-mast on account of the fact that he was the head of state of a country with which Portugal had diplomatic relations. Various governments took it badly and there were strong protests.

Once the war came to a close, the victorious Allies did not challenge the Portuguese regime and, unlike with Franco and his government, there was no boycott or isolation. Portugal was invited to be a founding member of the OECD and of NATO.

Following the war, the United Kingdom sought during an initial phase to help us withstand the diplomatic pressures of India (which had become independent in 1947) aimed at the annexation of Portuguese India. But at the time of the flare-up of the crisis in 1954 and the attempted peaceful invasions of the enclaves, the British foreign secretary, Selwin Lloyd, told Portugal that any military intervention against a member country of the Commonwealth "was out of the question." It was a classic example of the invoking of the *casus foederis* clause as a limitation to the obligations under the Alliance. The Queen paid a very successful visit to Portugal in 1957.

The military invasion of Goa took place in 1961. Portugal formally invoked the Alliance and sought right for passage at the British military airports in Aden in order to move troops to reinforce the besieged Portuguese garrison, as well as assistance of a more general nature. Britain refused, citing that which had been stated in 1954. It was to be the only time during the 20<sup>th</sup> century that Portugal invoked the Alliance.

The widening war in the Portuguese African colonies did not immediately raise any problems with the British government, though Portugal had to contend from the outset with major opposition from British public opinion and the British press. However, in 1964, Harold Wilson and his Labour Party won the general elections in the United Kingdom and that is when strong pressures were brought to bear and the difficulties began. Rhodesia's unilateral declaration of independence in 1965 caused a real crisis in the relations between the two countries. Rhodesia sought to open a diplomatic mission in Lisbon. Shortly thereafter, under a United Nations resolution, the "Beira Patrol" is undertaken by the Royal Navy, with a blockade of that Mozambican port in order to attempt to stanch the supply of fuel to the rebel colony. The tension escalated to the point that a British armed take-over of the port of Beira by the British was feared.

The Conservatives were returned to power in Britain in 1970 and Sir Alec Douglas Hume takes over at the Foreign Office. The situation improves gradually and the Portuguese government eventually adopts the view that, all things considered, it is better to have Britain running the blockade rather than any other country. Sir Alec visited Lisbon in 1972. Shortly thereafter the Duke of Edinburgh pays an official visit to Portugal.

The Portuguese Prime Minister, who succeeded Salazar in 1968, Marcello Caetano, made an official visit to London in 1973, as part of the commemoration of the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Alliance. Though the visit went well in official circles, it was surrounded by controversy amongst the British public. The day the Prime Minister arrived, an English missionary, Father Adrian Hastings, revealed in *The Times* the massacre of Wymiaru perpetrated by Portuguese troops in Mozambique. The visit was hounded by constant hostile demonstrations in which Dr. Mário Soares played a significant role.

The revolution of the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, 1974 took by surprise the British authorities, though they suspected that something was afoot.

It was only in 1982 that the Alliance was again invoked, at the time of the war in the Falklands. The United Kingdom wanted

landing rights in the Azores Islands, for the logistical operations aimed at supplying Ascension Island, in the South Atlantic, which was the main base supporting the British naval and military operations. They sought permission first. Portugal replied positively (foreign minister: Prof. André Gonçalves Pereira), on condition that the United Kingdom invoked the Alliance, something that was done.

Following Portugal's accession to the European Community, in 1986, it is hard to claim that the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance has any value, other than to be invoked in speeches of circumstance.

Perhaps the true reason for its centuries-long existence lies, on the part of Portugal, in the country's wish to be protected from Spain, and nowadays that is assured by the fact that Portugal is a member of the European Union.

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**Documentation from the Foreign Office gathered by Dr. Carlos Teixeira da Mota; White Papers from the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Salazar, by F. Nogueira; Footprintings in Time, by J. Colville, 1976; By Safe Hand, by D. Eccles, 1983; conversations with Ambassador A. de Faria.**