

So that these may be preserved in a more permanent and handier form, it has been decided that Occasional Papers previously circulated to Members shall in due course be reprinted in the Annual Reports. This is the first of them.

«OPERATION ALACRITY»

by
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«ALACRITY» comes from the Latin *Alacritas*, meaning «a cheerful readiness or promptitude.» In 1943 it was the codename for a bloodless operation which may have saved many lives and helped to shorten a world war.

ALACRITY was based on a six-hundred-year-old Treaty of Alliance, that of 1373 between King Edward III of England and King Ferdinand and Queen Eleanor of Portugal. Revived, renewed, and fortified many times thereafter, it was the old treaty itself which was invoked, because it was the clearest and contained the fewest inhibiting clauses.

Article I, translated from Norman-French or Latin is worth quoting: —

«In the first place we settle and covenant that there shall be from this day forward... true, faithful, constant, mutual and perpetual friendships, unions, alliances, and deeds of sincere affection, and that as true and faithful friends we shall henceforth

reciprocally be friends to friends and enemies to enemies, and shall assist, maintain, and uphold each other mutually, by sea and by land, against all men that may live or die.»

In this somewhat antiquated English this has a certain grand simplicity like the Book of Ruth: 'Whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.' It was frequently invoked over the centuries and always kept, particularly by Portugal.

Now, in 1943, it was to be used as the grounds on which Portugal would permit Britain, and later her Ally the U.S.A. to make use of parts of her territory in the islands of the Azores as bases for anti-submarine warfare and as a staging-post for aircraft being flown from America to Europe and the Mediterranean. From Portugal's point of view the Treaty was of the utmost importance. She was neutral but deeply and undoubtedly pro-British. She had an understanding with her neighbour, Spain, whose ruler, General Franco, was indebted to the Axis powers. And when Hitler's armies overran Europe, Portugal felt quite understandably threatened.

Although by 1943 Churchill, a veteran with powerful historical instincts, *felt* sure, it was not known for certain that Hitler had neither the intention nor the means to invade the Peninsula. In fact as early as December 1940 he had had a long meeting at Hendaye with Franco, at which the latter had resolutely refused to join the Axis Powers at war or to permit Hitler to move through Spain to take over Gibraltar. Hitler, remarking that he would sooner have 3 or 4 teeth out one by one than go through such a meeting again, had decided not to mount a Gibraltar operation, though he had planned to do so in January 1941, and although later pressed by his Naval High Command to invade Portugal for the sake of her ports, he always refused. Paradoxically, he wished to take over the Azores, in order to threaten the U.S.A. but while Goering said the Luftwaffe could ferry troops there for an occupation, the *Kriegsmarine* in its

turn refused, claiming that they were not strong enough to provide logistic support.

It is easy to see why Hitler on the one hand and Britain on the other were so interested in the Azores. The position of this archipelago of 9 islands, from 875 to 1,350 miles due west of Lisbon, is the mid-point of the Atlantic, and of commanding strategic value. No less a person than Prince Henry the Navigator recognized this when in 1431 he despatched Fray Gonçalo Velho to seek the semi-mythical Islands of Enchantment, as these uninhabited specks in the ocean were called in the ancient maps. So did the great Explorers, Albuquerque, Magalhães, and the rest. Sir Richard Grenville, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, fighting and dying in his lone ship, the *Revenge*, «at Flores in the Azores» knew it. In 1918, the U.S. Navy, whose Assistant Secretary was Franklin D. Roosevelt, knew it, when they set up a Naval Base at Ponta Delgada in São Miguel.

From 1939 onwards, both the Royal Navy and the *Kriegsmarine* were acutely aware of the archipelago, for it lay athwart vital convoy routes. Important as it was to the Germans, whose U-boats re-fuelled from large submarine «milch-cow» tankers in the waters thereabouts, it was of even greater interest to Britain, whose troops had to be sailed to the Middle and Far East and much of whose food supplies had to be imported.

«For the bread that you eat and the biscuits you nibble,
The sweets that you suck and the joints that you carve
Are brought to you daily by all us Big Steamers —
And if anyone hinders our coming, you'll starve.»

They came, those Big Steamers, and they went on coming, but the cost in terms of ships and men hardly bears thinking of. At first, Britain felt the threat to be from raiders like the *Hipper*, which attacked a convoy off the Azores on Christmas Day 1940, and, meeting a powerful escort of cruisers, was herself mauled and in turn only damaged one merchantman. But the

true menace, as intended all along by the *Kriegsmarine*, was the U-boat, and it was not long before the Admiralty realized it to the full.

After the fall of France, with U-boats based along the French and Norwegian coasts, and homed in on convoys by long-range aircraft shadowing from bases in Western France and Norway, the sinkings on the most exposed routes, 1,800 miles from Britain to Gibraltar and 3,000 miles to Sierra Leone, were appalling. In 1940 and again in 1941 4 million tons of shipping were lost. The Big Steamers of those days were not all that big and 500 to 600 ships a year were sunk, with their men and their cargoes. These losses could not be replaced by Britain's own building yards.

British aircraft from home bases or from Gibraltar had not the range to «counter-shadow» and the naval escorts, destroyers and corvettes, had a top range of 2,000 miles, and so could only with safety cover 600 miles or so before having to refuel. The U-boats were able to take advantage of the Milch-cows' «pasturage» off the Azores, and the cows in turn were supplied by tankers fuelling at Tenerife.

In order to provide full escorts, i.e. one to every five merchantmen, the Royal Navy would need about 380 vessels with a range of 3,500 miles. By the end of 1941 there would be only 72 of these and by end-1942 only 120. Even the introduction of converted Escort aircraft carriers and Catapult Merchant Ships could hardly provide the answer. On 2 August 1941 the 1st Sea Lord was advised by his staff:—

«The acquisition of the Azores would provide an immediate improvement and allow us to establish *this year* a situation more favourable than that which we should be able to reach several years from now.»

This also reflected the thinking of the Prime Minister, who as Former Naval Person, had written in April to Mr. Roosevelt, expressing unease about German intentions on the Azores. Roosevelt, on 24 May, had actually ordered the occupation of the Azores by the U.S. Marines — the only military force

a President can move without permission from Congress. On 27 May he had spoken of «an unlimited National emergency», going far beyond «all aid short of war», under which he had introduced Lend Lease and swapped 50 destroyers against bases in British territory. But this, coupled with somewhat ham-handed publicity, for example in an article in the Christian Science Monitor of 23 May saying that «Azoreans are half-Yankees», had caused resentment in Portugal.

Fortunately, perhaps, Roosevelt cancelled the order, and the Marines, already in training for landing in a sub-tropical latitude, were sent instead to Iceland. There is no record of their comments. It seems that this reversal of decision resulted from a secret communication from Churchill to Roosevelt giving intelligence of the forthcoming operation BARBAROSSA, Hitler's attack on the U.S.S.R. which would effectively deflectet him from adventures in mid-Atlantic.

In July 1941, Roosevelt wrote privately to Dr. Salazar, Prime Minister of Portugal, offering support, should his country be over-run. Salazar was known to be re-inforcing the Azores as a possible refuge for his Government. He did not reply to Roosevelt, and Churchill, at the Atlantic Conference in August, appears to have misunderstood, for he records, in «The Second World War», that Salazar had written to Roosevelt. This, in the light of Portugal's aversion to the U.S.A. and her later attitude during the war, seems unlikely.

Of course the Azores, neutral as they were, did a lot of re-fuelling of belligerent ships, almost entirely British. But this was subject to the Hague Convention. It had, early in the war, been decided that Portugal's neutrality suited Britain as well as Portugal, for we could never have undertaken her protection and that of her overseas possessions, particularly when we were on our own. The Convention stipulated: not more than three warships at a time to enter a port; not more than 24 hours in port unless damaged; no individual ship to call more than once in 90 days; and fuel to be limited to sufficient to get

to the nearest national port. The Portuguese interpreted these rules most liberally for the Royal Navy, turning a blind eye to occasional infringements, and accepting Gibraltar plus 60% as fuel requirements.

Indeed, so cooperative were they that the Admiralty described Ponta Delgada as «almost a Fleet Refuelling Base», and in August 1941 the Portuguese Major-General da Armada, equivalent to 1st Sea Lord, Almirante Alfredo Botelho de Sousa, rather diffidently asked his friend the British Naval Attaché to advise the Admiralty to be as discreet as possible as the Germans were pressing Portugal to be «more neutral».

Throughout the war, even at the darkest moments, the Portuguese Navy, as exemplified by the Almirante and his staff, and by men like Comandante Penteadó, the Maritime Commander at Ponta Delgada, represented in their sympathy for Britain, not only the tradition of the old Alliance, but the feelings of the vast majority of Portuguese. It was most moving in those days for an Englishman to find that thanks to centuries of fair dealing by his compatriots, the phrase 'palavra de Inglês' (word of an Englishman) meant trust. And the compassion and practical kindness shown by this staunch, gentle, ancient ally, for example in putting out in any kind of weather to rescue survivors of a sinking, was a true restatement of the phrase «friends to friends» in the ancient treaty.

The British War Cabinet discussed the question of Azores bases, but took no immediate action. On the one hand there was the risk to Portugal of an attack by Hitler, which could be considerable if she made bases available of her own free will. On the other, to take over a base by force would be just the kind of action for which Britain condemned Hitler, and a breach of the Alliance. Nevertheless in case of German attempts to forestall us, Britain had a secret plan, condemned LIFE BELT, for mounting an operation if need be.

But in December 1941 came Pearl Harbour and the entry of the U.S. into the war, as an Ally, with her unlimited resources.

This would in time restore the balance of the U-boat war, but at first because of American unreadiness it was disastrous. A German operation, called *Paukenschlag* (Drum beat) placed U-boats led by six «Aces» on the American Atlantic coast, where they sank hundreds of thousands of tons of shipping against a back drop of neon-lights illuminating the silhouettes of the ships. Admiral Morison, writing bitterly of the three months it took before black-out regulations were introduced against protests that this would kill the tourist trade, says: 'ships were sunk and seamen drowned in order that the citizenry might enjoy business and pleasure as usual'. Churchill, more temperately, remarks that 'The long-awaited, supreme event of the American Alliance seemed at first to have increased our perils at sea.'

In fact in 1942 8 million tons of Allied shipping were sunk, and even the vast U.S. ship-building programme could not replace such losses overnight.

If the Admiralty was concerned in 1941, so was the R.A.F. Early in that year a Portuguese Mission under Colonel Craveiro Lopes visited London to study the defence of Portugal and signed a secret agreement a few months later for the development by Britain of airfields in the Azores. British Officers could not be allowed to prospect, so Major Humberto Delgado, of the Portuguese General Staff — later, in 1965, to die in unexplained circumstances on the Portuguese Spanish border — was ordered to collect the necessary topographical data. Thrilled to participate in the war against dictators, amongst whom he included Salazar, he did so, and spent January to March 1942 in England, nominally in charge of a training wing of the Portuguese Air Force. (He spoke excellent, if idiosyncratic English.) He briefed the Air Ministry Planning Staff, including Air Commodore Vintras, who was later to be involved in detailed negotiations about the Azores facilities, and work was begun on Lagens airfields.

By the end of 1942, although the U-boat attacks still produced apocalyptic results, there was a perceptible change in

the war as a whole. Russia still fought, Rommel had been driven back across North Africa. The Allies had landed in Morocco and Algiers. Churchill called it 'The Hinge of Fate.' In Lisbon, a cheeky jingle indicated Portuguese faith in an Allied victory: —

«Em mil nove centos e quarenta e tres
Todo o mundo fala Inglês.»

Early in 1943, Comandante Uva, a Portuguese friend of the British Naval Attaché, told him of a private talk with Dr. Salazar, with whom he was on close terms. If, said Salazar, the British wanted facilities in the Azores they should have them, but he would open his mouth wide when it came to the quid pro quo. He was to be true to his word, which, as no doubt he intended, reached the British Ambassador, Sir Ronald Campbell, just then in England for discussions at the Foreign Office. There were, of course, other indications of Portugal's willingness to negotiate.

Planning began. The 1373 Treaty was taken out and dusted. In February the Admiralty paper of 2 August 1941 was chambered up and put by the 1st Sea Lord to the British Chiefs of Staff. The Air Ministry established a new Coastal Command Group, No. 247, under Vice Air Marshal G.R., later Sir Geoffrey Bromet, to undertake A/S patrols based on the Azores. Naval personnel and shipping were swiftly ear-marked. The War Office and the Ministries of Economic Warfare and War Transport were consulted. A team of specialists was built up to negotiate the terms under which ALACRITY «an operation to introduce forces into the Azores at the invitation of the Portuguese», would take place.

But now a new problem arose. The oldest Ally would not recognize the newest. Dr. Salazar's position vis-à-vis Spain

* In 1943 the whole world will speak English.

and Germany was difficult. He was taking cover under the 1373 treaty, but this ante-dated the discovery of America by 119 years and the American Revolution by 403. Moreover, the Portuguese just did not approve of the Americans. Had they not been suspected of trying to foster a revolution in Ponta Delgada in 1918 from their base there? Weren't they rebellious subjects of the British Crown, and anti-colonial to boot?

Following his rebuff in 1941, President Roosevelt suggested to President Vargas of Brazil that that country might send Brazilian troops to take over the Azores. The Foreign Office protested that such a matricidal scheme would be disastrous, and that Britain's old ties would be preferable as a basis. Anyway, Brazil hadn't got the troops. The suggestion was dropped.

Yet disagreements and arguments continued between Britain and the U.S.A. and also within the British War Cabinet. The Americans were more interested in the Azores as a staging-post for aircraft crossing the Atlantic, the British in Anti-Submarine warfare. Churchill, with his special relationship with F.D.R., leaned to the American point of view, while at the same time feeling intensely the loss of ships and men.

Admiral Ernest J. King, U.S.N. Chief of Naval Operations, was a man of simple, direct, though intellectually logical thought processes, with a face like the bow of one of his own battleships. He said, simply and directly, and with the support of his fellow U.S. Chiefs of Staff, that «Britain should seize the Azores to safeguard communications for the invasion of France.» This viewpoint clicked with that of Churchill who, on the way to the May 1943 TRIDENT Conference with President Roosevelt in Washington, felt that Portugal would find it easier to bow to *force majeure* than to assent voluntarily to a violation of Portuguese neutrality.

Eden, the Foreign Secretary, profoundly disagreed, as did the majority of the War Cabinet. While the 1st Sea Lord wanted the Azores, the Chief of Imperial General Staff was worried about involvement in a possible Peninsula War, and the Chief

of Combined Operations considered that an occupation by force would use resources needed for the cross-channel operation, OVERLORD. But it was *moral* considerations above all which tipped the balance. Eventually, Churchill unwillingly agreed, and persuaded the President and the U.S. Chiefs of Staff that Britain should negotiate for the Allies, and, while preparing an operation for take-over, use only *diplomatic* means.

This was by no means the end of the matter. English is not always the language spoken, even by Chiefs of Staff, in the U.S.A.

II

The U.S. Minister in Lisbon, Mr. Fish, died in March 1943 and his Counsellor became Chargé d'Affaires. Fortunately for Britain this was George Kennan, later to achieve fame as U.S. Ambassador to Moscow and a noted Kremlinologist. He had studied the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance and had written copiously to the State Department about this and about Portugal's importance to the U.S.A. But he never received an acknowledgement. Ambassador Campbell, now about to open the negotiations for Britain, kept Kennan fully informed, though the U.S. Military Attachés were not told.

Campbell saw Dr. Salazar on 16 June and, using as a *point de départ* a suggestion by the latter that it was time to review the results of Anglo-Portuguese Staff discussions, broached the question of facilities in the Azores. Salazar agreed in principle and appointed Almirante Botelho de Sousa to lead a team of experts to meet a British mission. De Sousa's team consisted of Colonel Craveiro Lopes, Major Humberto Delgado and Captain Luis Pina.

The British Mission was led by Air Vice Marshal (later Sir Charles) Medhurst, and included Rear-Admiral R.C. Servaes, Lieut.-Col. Henry Wood, and Air Commodore Vintras.

Mr. Eden cabled Lord Halifax to advise the State Department that negotiations were beginning and sent a personal message

via Winant, the U.S. Ambassador in London for President Roosevelt. Neither of these messages seems to have penetrated to the U.S. Chiefs of Staff. He also sent Mr. Frank (later Sir Frank) Roberts, who was *au fait* with War Cabinet discussions, to assist Sir Ronald Campbell.

The British Mission arrived discreetly and it was hoped that the Germans would not notice them, although they had to pass the German Chancery each day on their way to the British Embassy and the German Military Attaché's Office was only a few yards downhill in the Rua São Domingos à Lapa. This was not so foolish a hope as it sounds. For months British Officers had been stopping off in Lisbon on their way to and from the U.S. and the Middle East. Dressed usually in blazers and flannels and travelling as paint salesmen and missionaries, they included many famous men. General Alexander, arriving unannounced at the Military Attaché's Office said, as he came in, «Good morning, I'm Alexander.»

«Alexander who?» said the M.A. coldly, not looking up.

The German secret services never seemed to twig. Possibly it was because Ribbentrop's men were too busy spying on Canaris' Abwehr and both were being watched by the S.S. At any rate even though the Mission was accompanied by two absolutely stunning secretaries and as time went by were often seen in the Victoria Bar, across the road, at the end of the day, it was weeks before the German Minister, Baron Huynigen-Huene, a nice man, of the old school, tentatively asked the Foreign Secretary, Dr. Sampayo, what was this about a Mission led by an Air Commodore and selling aircraft?

Dr. Sampayo, describing this to Henry Hopkinson, the British No. 2 in the Embassy, said that he had not even had to tell a lie. The Mission was led by an Air Vice Marshal and was not *selling* aircraft. He had therefore denied all knowledge.

Negotiations were painstaking and slow. Early on they had nearly come to a stop when Medhurst and Vintras were arrested, while taking the air, by a plain clothes officer in the

Polícia da Vigilancia e da Defesa de Estado. They were ultimately released and the Polícia told by Salazar to be less vigilant.

Churchill was angry at the slow pace. On 24 July he wrote a fulminating note about Portuguese procrastination... «The time has come to let them know that this nonsense must cease. Every form of ceremony and civility has been exhausted...» Shown surreptitiously to Delgado by Vintras, this speeded matters a little, but still the Portuguese would not give a date for ALACRITY. Churchill wanted early September. On 2 August there was a shouting match between him and Eden who was prepared to accept early October, even though this meant that the facilities would be barely ready before winter. As they said good-night, Churchill apologized for being obstreperous. Eden apologized in return. «Oh, you were bloody!» said Churchill.

Finally on 17 August an agreement was signed. In return for unrestricted use of Lagens Airfield on Terceira, and considerably increased naval facilities at Horta on Fayal and Ponta Delgada on São Miguel, plus emergency use of Rabo de Peixe airfield on São Miguel, Britain was to supply fighter squadrons, Anti-Submarine trawlers on loan, Boom Defence vessels, ASDIC equipment, tanks, transport of all kinds, balloon barrages, and quantities of wheat and coal.

There was no mention of access to the facilities for American forces, but Churchill and Roosevelt agreed at their QUADRANT meeting in Quebec in August that the U.S. should have it. Unfortunately the Portuguese would at first not agree at all, and subsequently only if American aircraft wore British insignia and were under British control. The U.S. Chiefs of Staff were understandably annoyed. The date of entry was to be 8 October.

A squadron of Hurricanes with something approaching Portuguese markings was flown in to Lisbon from Gibraltar, as a token, by R.A.F. pilots in plain clothes. Other material began to arrive. And while two of H.M. A/S M/S trawlers, *Gruinard* and *Eriskay* sailed up the Tagus to anchor off Lisbon

at 11.00 on 8 October and be handed over on loan, and British specialists toiled at converting and modernising Portuguese ships, the Azores Force sighted land and the disembarcation began on 9 October at Angra.

Senior British Officer Azores, A.V.M. Bromet, made contact with the handful of Portuguese Officers in Terceira who were in the know. They were most cooperative, particularly Brigadier Tamagnini Barbosa, the Military Governor, and the inhabitants of Angra do Heroismo, the port, were soon unloading with a will. Lagens airfield turned out to be in a good state, though not long enough for V.L.R. aircraft, and Boeing Fortresses and Hudsons flew in a few days later. After only one day of rough weather, conditions were excellent and unloading took only three weeks instead of a forecast six. At Ponta Delgada, Comandante Penteado was helpfulness itself, but the Portuguese G.O.C., Azores, General Passos e Sousa, was pernickety and caused trouble by sticking to the letter of the law. The Senior British Naval Officer, Commodore Holt was somewhat similar. He was later replaced.

On 12 October Churchill made an announcement in the Commons, as Eden was in Moscow. He clearly enjoyed the historic aspect of the 1373 treaty, though Mr. Aneurin Bevan spoilt the effect a little by remarking that he was glad the Right Hon. Gentleman had at last got to the bottom of his In tray.

Salazar saw General Jordana, the Spanish Foreign Minister just prior to this, at Ciudad Rodrigo, and was assured that Spain fully accepted the situation, and that Franco, who regarded the Germans as «muy brutos», would not permit an overland attack on Portugal.

There was little reaction from Germany. Huynigen-Huene in Lisbon presented a stiff protest, and that was all. His opposite number in Madrid was firmly told by Count Jordana that there was nothing to criticize about Portugal's action. Italy was now out of the war, and virtually an Allied Co-belligerent. When the Japanese Minister in Lisbon called on Salazar with a written

protest, he was coldly told to withdraw it. (The Japanese were occupying Portuguese Timor)

Reading the contemporary official reaction in Berlin, it is surprising to see how Little is said about ALACRITY. Hitler was more concerned with the position of German armies cut off by the Russians in the Crimea. Goebbel's diaries for some reason are a blank for October. But Baron Huynigen-Huene is believed to have been recalled and disgraced, and Admiral Canaries, head of *Abwehr*, who was known to be by now opposed to Hitler, was horribly murdered in prison.

Mr. Kennan now began to have a difficult time. He was instructed to tell Salazar, if asked, that the U.S. would guarantee the integrity of Portugal's overseas possessions. Then he was told to tell Salazar anyway, but minutes before going to do so he received an urgent cable reversing this instruction. He had some difficulty in explaining to a polite but puzzled Premier why he had come. On 15 October he was ordered by cable to go and ask Salazar for facilities much greater than those accorded to Britain. He cabled back saying that he disagreed and asking to be allowed to return to Washington and explain his reasons. His instructions were somewhat modified and he gave the «Colonial Guarantee» but before he could see Salazar he received a peremptory and ominous instruction to return forthwith. He arrived in Washington after an exhausting 5 day flight. Still no instructions or comments. Then he was taken to a meeting at the Pentagon at which were present the Secretaries for War and the Navy, and numerous Admirals and Generals—the Chiefs of Staff. He was sat in a corner against a wall and they talked over his head. It was clear that they were going to insist on his asking for all they wanted from Portugal. Or was it to be he? Someone asked who he was. His political master, Mr. Stettinius, wasn't quite sure but eventually supposed it was the Lisbon Chargé d'Affaires. It was time, snapped the Secretary for War, that there was a proper Ambassador in Lisbon, and Kennan was dismissed from the meeting.

Lunching alone, he suddenly became angry. Not only had he not been briefed. He had been totally ignored. And all these high Authorities were wrong, he felt. He determined to appeal to President Roosevelt. Somehow he reached Admiral Leahy, the President's Aide, who introduced him to Harry Hopkins. Hopkins quizzed him mercilessly, but an hour or two later he was introduced, alone, to the President and Commander-in-Chief, who had a complete grasp of the position, and said he would give Kennan a letter from himself to Salazar and leave him to do his best. When Kennan said diffidently that the Pentagon had other ideas, Roosevelt waved a long elegant cigarette holder: «You don't want to bother about all those *people* over there,» he said.

And so the Chargé d'Affaires, a courageous and determined young man, returned to Lisbon to negotiate, without either the State Department or the Chiefs of Staff knowing what instructions he had been given. Even so when he, and eventually a new Ambassador, Mr Norweb tackled the Portuguese, it was some time before America was able to gain all she wanted, and then only by invoking the principle of «friends to friends». For months Comnavzor, the American Naval forces Commander, and the other American officers were nominally under British command. Bromet was tactful and they were sensible. They all messed together and it worked. Men and materials were landed for the construction of a huge new airfield at Sta. Maria. They were not permitted to start work. Eventually, however, Santa Maria was completed on 1 May 1944, and still is a most valuable airfield, belonging to Portugal and now used by International Airlines.

The total bag of U-boats credited to 247 Group from October 1943 to the end of the war was only five, plus one shared with an escort. But already U.S. Escort Groups, commanded by Admiral Royal E. Ingersoll U.S.N., had wrought havoc in the «Milch cow Pasturage», between June and August, and obliged Doenitz to withdraw and disperse his submarine packs such

as Gruppe Trutz. Mid-1943 had already marked the turning point in the Atlantic War. Hitler, in his 1944 New Year message to the German Forces blamed H2S the British invented micro-wave radar mounted in aircraft, for this defeat. And, indeed although new equipment, new techniques, were being developed by Doenitz for «a first-class submarine war», as he threatened, this never took place. If it had, the Azores bases, cheap in terms of blood if costly in terms of money and equipment would have been a key factor. Salazar, during the negotiations, once exclaimed: «Why, oh why, if the British are in such a hurry did they not ask months ago?» It is true to say that had the facilities been available even 6 months earlier they would have been even more valuable. But war does not permit might-have-beens.

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