

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

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TO :AD/NE

DATE: 16 February 1959

FROM :WE

SUBJECT: Briefing Memorandum for DCI re "The Portuguese Succession Problem"

1. The growing number of rumors regarding Salazar's replacement and his current illness indicate that he probably has no better than an even chance of lasting another year. To date, Salazar has refused to prepare anyone to succeed to his office and powers. But even if he dies without having prepared the way for a successor we believe that initially the regime will probably carry on much as it has in the past. Over the longer term, however, we are less sanguine regarding the prospect of any of the leading candidates to maintain the relative tranquility which has characterized Portugal under the Salazar regime. In Salazar's absence the demand for reforms is almost certain to grow and the regime will find it increasingly difficult to adjust to popular demands for greater liberalization without alienating powerful conservative interests long associated with the Salazar regime.

2. The constitution provides that the President has the responsibility to appoint the Premier. The present incumbent would not hesitate to confirm Salazar's choice which, at this time, would

At USIB briefing of DCI on 16 Feb, DCI changed his original intention of bringing this subject up a sensitive situation at USIB meeting, 17 Feb.

probably be Dr. Caetano, former Minister of the Presidency and the regime's leading theoretician. If Salazar dies without signaling his preference various factions within the government would probably seek to promote the interests of one or the other of several prominent personalities associated with the Salazar regime. High on any such list would be Dr. Caetano, the increasingly popular Gen. Graveiro Lopes, former President of the Republic, and Gen. Santos Costa former Minister of Defense who enjoys considerable backing in the armed forces. In the event, it proved difficult to reach agreement on any single candidate a Junta might be installed. Reportedly the most likely members in a Junta would be, Caetano, Graveiro Lopes, and Gen. Moniz, present Minister of Defense.

3. There appears to be no organized opposition to the present regime. Gen. Delgado, the defeated presidential candidate in last Spring's elections continues to be the center of widespread popular opposition to the regime. However, without the possibility of effectively organizing his support, Delgado can presently do little more than harass the government.



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