

NATIONAL FOREIGN ASSESSMENT CENTER

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

NOTE FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR

This memorandum was drafted by [redacted] the Western Europe Division, Office of Political Analysis, to alert you to a State Department policy initiative on Portugal that could have serious negative implications for US-Portuguese relations. Our concern is shared by INR and the Portuguese policy desk at State. This memorandum has been coordinated with the NIO for Western Europe and with the Iberian Branch in DDO.

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Bruce C. Clarke, Jr.
Director

Attachment: Potential Adverse Impact of
New US Policy Toward Portugal

PA M #80-10327

163 (2)

21 July 1980

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Potential Adverse Impact of New US Policy Toward Portugal

1. The State Department has launched a policy initiative [redacted] on US use of the Lajes base for access to Southwest Asia. The position spelled out in the cable has stirred considerable controversy within the Department and caused the Charge in Lisbon to ask for reconsideration. (We understand that PM Bureau Chief Bartholomew, possibly in conjunction with DOD/ISA, simply outgunned the European Bureau.) In our view, this approach ignores Portuguese sensitivities that have been carefully spelled out by Embassy Lisbon and seems likely to have a negative effect on US-Portuguese relations, particularly during this tense pre-election period. [redacted]

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2. The Portuguese have been most forthcoming to US military requests-- despite the ferocious competition between Eanes and Sa Carneiro and among political leaders in general, which tends to complicate dealings with Washington. As you know, internal Portuguese politics make it impossible for any one person or institution to "deliver" Portugal on a particular issue; this was amply demonstrated last month when the government's favorable response to a US request for a feasibility study on homeporting was overruled by Eanes in his capacity as Armed Forces Chief. (Last week, the government accepted the study team's visit--without waiting for Eanes's response.) Though Eanes sometimes emphasizes Third World interests to the disadvantage of the US and NATO, his action in this case does not seem to be directed so much against the US as against Sa Carneiro, who is trying to circumvent the President's authority with the military. [redacted]

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3. In return, the Portuguese want to be taken seriously. Lisbon seeks a relationship in which its needs for military and economic assistance will be considered not as a dole but rather as a profitable US investment in strengthening a valuable ally. What the Portuguese fear most of all, of course, is being taken for granted. An unprecedented series of US

This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] the Western Europe Division of the Office of Political Analysis. The paper was coordinated with the National Intelligence Officer for Western Europe and the Iberian Branch in the Directorate of Operations. Research was completed on 21 July 1980. Questions and comments may directed to the Chief of the Iberia Aegean Branch of the Western Europe Division [redacted]

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requests on politically sensitive issues in recent months has caused Portuguese officials to complain that we are pushing them too fast with too much and overloading their circuits with military requests. Clearly evident is Portuguese concern that the US is eroding Portugal's sovereignty--trying to "gobble their territory one slice at a time." Evidence of the government's distress was registered on 18 June in a formal note delivered to the US Embassy in response to our declared intention to have F16 aircraft destined for Israel transit Lajes in late June. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that henceforth the US must request prior authorization for use of Lajes for non-NATO purposes, rather than simply informing the government as had been the practice. In Lisbon's view, this was not a "change" in Portuguese policy, but a "clarification." [redacted]

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4. While we do not know what assurances President Carter obtained from the Portuguese Prime Minister and Foreign Minister during his recent visit to Lisbon, it seems clear that the policy approach [redacted] (essentially, to ignore the Portuguese note of 18 June) will have a negative impact on relations with Portugal and could jeopardize negotiations over US access to Beja and homeporting rights. Since last March, the signals from Lisbon on what the Portuguese government expects from the US have been clear and consistent. We believe that Lisbon will interpret this new move as a sign of Washington's insensitivity to Portuguese needs and concerns. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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6. Sa Carneiro's government has already been accused (and not only by the left) of "mindlessly following" the US lead. The potential ammunition that a tough US stance would offer to the dissidents within the Democratic Alliance, to Eanes in his feud with the government, and to the Socialists and Communists in an election year, could force Sa Carneiro to back away from his responsive approach to US requests. [redacted]

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7. Relations with Portugal are on firm ground, but in the contest for votes in this crucial election, normally pro-US forces--such as the Socialists--could focus on US "arrogance" and make it a campaign issue. This in turn could stir up concerns that Portuguese sovereignty is indeed threatened and that Portugal is being exposed to possible retaliation by

interests. Insensitivity by the US could also heighten frustrations within the Portuguese military where there is a general fear that the US views Portugal only as "real estate" and not as a partner in NATO. [redacted]

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8. Though we obviously cannot become involved in an intramural policy dispute at State Department, it does seem to be appropriate for us to register our assessment of the potential negative impact of this policy directive. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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