



The
National Intelligence
Daily

Published by the Director of Central Intelligence for Named Principals Only

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Copy No.

134

FRIDAY AUGUST 22, 1975

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 197

TCS 625/75

Portuguese Discussing Timor With Australia and Indonesia

Portuguese Foreign Minister Ruivo held separate talks with the Indonesian and Australian ambassadors Wednesday on the rapidly deteriorating situation in Timor.

- Would like Australian assistance in evacuating some 500 Portuguese and foreign nationals from Timor.
- Admitted there was little possibility of returning to the decolonization timetable agreed upon in Macao in June.
- Planned to try to reach a modus vivendi with the warring Timorese political factions and to leave the governor and a staff of about 70 behind in Timor as a symbolic presence.

• Was considering requesting international political assistance in the form of a good offices committee in which it hoped both Indonesia and Australia would participate.

Ruivo told the ambassador he would make a similar approach to the Indonesians and would also alert the International Red Cross.

President Suharto will probably view Lisbon's approach as offering a way out of his Timor problem. He may decide to authorize Indonesian military intervention in Timor on the grounds that he has tacit Portuguese support to restore order and protect the lives of innocent people.

Military Rivalry Spurs Rumors Of Lisbon Coup Contenders for Power Lining Up Supporters

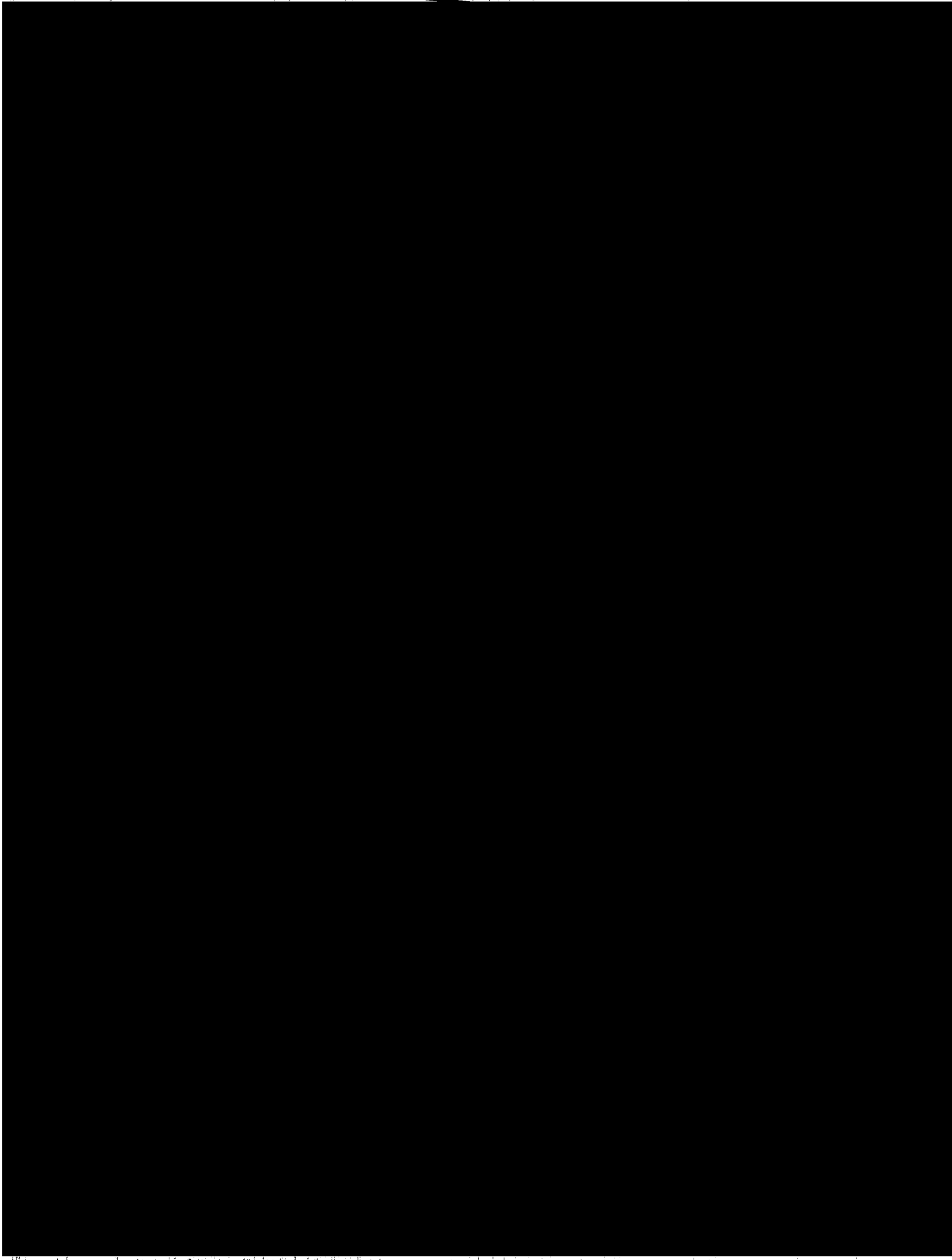
An apparent last-minute effort by contenders in the Portuguese power struggle to line up military support has set off a wave of rumors in Lisbon that a coup is imminent. The power struggle could just as well degenerate into clashes between military units backing rival ideological approaches.

There were reports last night that a military alert has been declared in Coimbra, headquarters of the central military region. Some high-ranking military leaders, including General Otelo de Carvalho and Army Chief of Staff Fabiao, met in Coimbra yesterday in what could have been a strategy session. The Communist Party, which may have gotten wind of these or other developments in the military, charged last night that the chance of a right-wing military coup has increased.

Yesterday, President Costa Gomes reportedly met again with Mdo Antunes, leader of the anti-communist faction in the military, apparently to discuss further the ultimatum Antunes and Carvalho presented the President for the removal of Prime Minister Goncalves. According to press reports, Antunes told Costa Gomes that any military move to keep Goncalves in power could be defeated in a matter of hours. So far, Costa Gomes has given no indication of how he will respond.

The Prime Minister yesterday vowed again that he would fight to the end to retain power. In fact, he seems to have picked up some support within the

(See Portugal... Page 4)



Portugal . . .

From Page 1
armed forces.

The navy representative assembly voted yesterday to continue backing the present government. It coupled this action with a statement of support for the political action plan drawn up by officers associated with Carvalho.



Any gains for Goncalves could be illusory. There is no assurance the navy assembly speaks for a majority of that service, and other reports have indicated that the original Antunes document had the support of 80 percent of the air force.

Goncalves' ardent supporters in the Communist Party are backing away.

On Tuesday, Portuguese Communist Party leader Alvaro Cunhal conceded at a press conference that the Goncalves government does not have the necessary support and said the Communists are prepared to consider alternatives.

Goncalves' ouster would be the most serious of many blows for the Communists in recent weeks. Cunhal said he believes military officers favoring the Communists will now be purged, a process that has already begun, and that the Armed Forces Movement, which the Communists have exploited so effectively, may no longer hold the balance of political power.

Cunhal added the armed forces could "quickly become an instrument of counter-revolution." He implied that they could turn their guns against the Communists.

The principal antagonists of Goncalves—Antunes and Carvalho—reportedly have agreed on a new government program. Initial reports say it largely represents the views of the democratic, pro-European Antunes group, with some small consideration given to placating the radical leftists. Such an arrangement presumably would allow real power to remain in the hands of anti-communist military officers and the democratic political parties.

