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WESTERN EUROPE

Portugal. . .

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have backed even further away from the Center Democrats, largely because the party's rank and file have more in common with the Socialists than with the Center Democrats and do not want to be involved in what might be seen as an anti-government alliance. Social Democratic leader Sa Carneiro now portrays his party's relationship with the Center Democrats as no more than one of mutual consultation in parliament.

The Communists are not interested in bringing down the Socialist government at this time because they are not strong enough to take advantage of a Socialist downfall and would fare poorly under a more conservative replacement. They are, however, waging a verbal campaign against the Socialist legislative program, much of which is specifically designed to curtail Communist influence in labor and agriculture.

The Socialists will probably solicit Social Democratic or Center Democratic backing for these measures. If they run into trouble, the Communists would welcome the opportunity to support certain bills if they were modified.

Barring a compromise, particularly on agrarian reform legislation, the Communist may try to get their way by fomenting protests against worsening economic conditions. Communist-sponsored labor demonstrations three weeks ago drew an estimated 100,000 people, proving the Communists can still bring the crowds into the streets.

All three opposition parties last week combined forces to defeat two minor bills in the legislature, a forceful reminder to Soares of his government's vulnerability. None of the parties, however, wants a general election soon. A recent poll conducted in five major cities suggested that the Socialists would still obtain a plurality despite a slight drop in their popularity. Soares was still the most popular contender for prime minister, although most respondents were unhappy with the performance of his present government.

With the summer legislative break approaching, the Socialists' survival until fall is virtually assured. At that time, the opposition parties are likely to resume their pressure on Eanes for some changes. If the President should decide that a broadened government is needed, he probably could get the Socialists to acquiesce. He seems unlikely to find sufficient cause to intervene, however, unless he is confronted with a serious deterioration in the economy. [REDACTED]




