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SALAZAR SAYS

PORTUGAL AND THE ATLANTIC PACT

*PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL'S
ADDRESS TO THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY, LISBON, ON 25TH
JULY 1949*

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*PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL'S ADDRESS
TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, LISBON,
ON 25TH JULY 1949*

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one thousand nine hundred forty ninth year

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PORTUGAL
AND THE
ATLANTIC PACT

PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL'S ADDRESS
TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LISBON
ON 27th JULY 1949

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MR. PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY,
GENTLEMEN.

The wide discussion which preceded and followed the signing of the Atlantic Pact or accompanied its ratification in several of the signatory countries seems to me to have exhausted the subject and to render unnecessary any further explanations as to its «raison d'être» and scope. Besides, the Chamber has at its disposal the proficient Report of the Corporative Chamber, whilst the Foreign Affairs Committee is particularly qualified to examine the question also. The presence of the Government at the moment when the Assembly is asked to approve the Pact in order that it may be ratified is accordingly intended solely to underline its importance both within the framework of European politics and in the more special field of Portuguese interests. I shall be brief and, if I can, clear as well.

I

The late war ended amidst the casting of laurels for the deeds of the Western Powers and the ensuing period has been one of lamentations at their disillusionment:

The conflict was joined for the purpose of preventing the setting up of a strong political and economic hegemony in central Europe, and, on that account and through the implementation of a policy which we denounced as dangerous, it was decided to crush Germany. Beyond that purpose yet another was proclaimed — that of laying the foundations of an international organization, and, to that end, old ideals of the League of Nations were revived. Today it is impossible to entertain any doubts but that both intentions have been frustrated: the mere design of German hegemony has been replaced by a strong and well-established Russian hegemony over the greater part of Europe and Asia; and this selfsame hegemony, essentially opposed as it is to the equality of States and the universality of a community of free Nations, does not allow the organization to live save within

such limits as serve its purposes of influence or domination. But there is even worse.

What, after all, is victory? Victory is the clear unbalancing of forces which enables one of the sides in the struggle, so far as the relativity and the limitations inherent in the very nature of things will allow, to impose its will on the adversary. In this war, however, not only were many of the victorious countries paradoxically clasped with the vanquished, but also neither the United States, nor Great Britain, nor France—to mention only the major Powers—were able to dictate to the nations against which they fought; they find themselves reduced to preventing interference by an alien will in the Western Zones of Germany. For her part, Russia imposes her will in sovereignty and exclusiveness in the North, the East, and the South-East of Europe and is opening up in Asia those great routes which may well lead to almost universal dominion. This being so, it may clearly be said that, if the glory belongs to some, the victory has in effect fallen to others.

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The war policy of the Western Powers brought the Russian armies to the heart of Europe and to the regions wherefrom the whole continent can be subjugated. Except for the strategic region defined by the Aar basin which so well characterises the naturally strong central Swiss redoubt, all the keys to the West have been left in the hands of the potentially aggressive Slav troops. Nor can the significance of this fact be confused with the temporary needs of the occupation: it is a fact which is behind the continuous yieldings of the Western Powers, which explains their weakness, and which conditions their policy. One should not speak euphemistically or foster illusions regarding the situation which has been created: in the present state of economic decay, moral exhaustion, and internal desintegration of the nations in the West, Russia could, if she were so disposed, or can, if she so wills, hurl her armies in a single thrust to the Channel and the Pyrenees.

To the superiority resulting from positional strength is added the

prestige of the ideological system which the Muscovite armies take with them, as those of France bore on their bayonets the ideas of the Revolution. Whether it is a case of Messianic ideal, consciously incarnate in a people; whether it is a matter of creating conditions of survival for Communism through the search for a sufficiently wide base to enable the clash with adverse doctrines and social organizations to be met; whether Russia has merely seen in her communism for export a valuable aid for the efficiency of her arms, irrespective of the truth of the system or of the possibility of its universal acceptance—it is not now necessary to consider. Events are everywhere occurring with undeniable similarity, as if identical programmes were being carried out. In the various Nations in which Russia is able to inspire and support changes, perhaps with the single and only partial exception of Finland, we find the political alignment, the economic integration or rather subordination, the social upheaval taking place along parallel lines. This has been achieved through the dislocation of forces and of political supports, and through trampling on the will, the morality and the interests of the peoples. It has only been possible by means of the violent break-up of the social framework, the adoption of new scales of values, the education of the populations which adopt them when support from outside is absent or weakened, and the denial of all liberty—political, religious or even civil. And the worst of it is that it would seem that Communism's resort to violence is not solely that it may impose itself but rather that it may live, thereby placing itself at the opposite pole to that of the European social order.

The West has evinced surprise that the liberation of nations should coincide so closely with the enslavement of peoples; to me it is strange that the fact should not be looked upon as the simple resultant of two factors—the exploitation of the Russian victory, on which is based the expansionist force of a social revolution. Be that as it may, it does not appear that this state of affairs, which places Western civilization in jeopardy, can be altered, at least in the near future, save by the organization of the opposing forces, both in the military and economic and in the moral fields.

These postulates have imposed the sequence of events.

II

The agreements between Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxemburg, with their economic developments for the future, could not be regarded as constituting other than the beginning of the organization of the West and the wider grouping of those three countries with France and Great Britain to form the Western Union, even had it been possible to include the Scandinavian group and to secure the support of Italy, was clearly inadequate and lacking in means of action for the ends in view.

The initiative of the United States and Canada in promoting the North Atlantic Pact brought the indispensable support of force to some such European defence efficiency, at the same time that it was sought to revive the respective economy through the rendering of direct aid with American capital and technical resources.

In this the United States are guided by an understandable sense of human solidarity; by the responsibilities in the political leadership of the World which the scope of their war effort has conferred on them and which the alteration in the relative position of the Great Powers has undeniably imposed on them; and, besides, by a well-founded calculation of their own material and moral interests. Once Europe, and with her, Africa, had been subverted, and America faced and delimited across both oceans by the power of Russia and her allies, she would see a new Monroe doctrine applied in reverse and would, at best, have to accept a life within her own Continent, devoid of influence or external projection. The World would appear to her excessively shrunken and Man painfully deprived of those attributes which she conceives to be indispensable to the beauty and dignity of life.

It is in this light that it seems to me the Atlantic Pact should be regarded, and that we should see in it the probable source of other future developments. Its hesitant doctrine, the fluid character of its precepts, the imprecision of certain of its formulas, found on the detailed examination of its text, should not be looked upon as arising from any lack of clarity in the view taken of the problems but rather from natural indecision at the outset, from the desire to avoid major

internal and external reactions, or even from the fact that the constitutional machinery is unsuited to action on such a scale. But the realities are sovereign and will inevitably impose themselves at the decisive moments of Euro-American History which, to my mind, will be a common one in the coming decenniums.

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Side by side with a principle of mutual aid, is it possible to discover in the Pact any ideological content as well? Undoubtedly, but in the precise terms imposed by the above considerations. The definition of that ideology in the Preamble to the Pact is manifestly an unhappy one and suffers from the emptiness or imprecision of certain formulas which, by reason of their having come to be used everywhere in the most varied acceptations, have become spent and unsettling. Their profound meaning is understandable, however, when applied to the realities which gave rise to them, and it is not their greatest defect that they reveal a purely negative anti-communist content instead of statements compatible with the principles of a civilization which has been deemed to be deserving of defence. The truth is that it would hardly have been possible to go very far along that road, when it is considered that here some grave consequences of individualist liberalism are having to be faced, that, there, attempts are being made to conciliate liberty with socialism, and that, elsewhere, so much mental energy is being wasted in the endeavour to arrive at the *identity of opposites* by conciliating Communism with Christianity.

Be that as it may, we feel ourselves to be bound by the obligations of the Pact and by its general purpose, not by doctrinaire pronouncements favouring the uniformity of political regimes concerning whose virtues in our own country we are sufficiently elucidated. All claims, in a contrary sense, which have arisen in Great Britain and the United States — and which, be it said, have been put forward by persons free from the responsibilities of government — are, in my view, attributable to ignorance of the origins of the Pact and, above all, to proper weight not being given to the circumstances or to the real problems of Western Europe.

III

The question now arises: Can the adhesion of Portugal to the Atlantic Pact be regarded as in a certain measure a departure from our traditional foreign policy?

The Anglo-Portuguese alliance has provided the constant basis for a policy inspired on the need for that security along the sea routes which was fundamental for Britain and an essential element in the life of Portugal, both on the Continent and on the other morsels of the Nation spread throughout the World. That same alliance is characterized, throughout its long duration, by the fidelity of both parties to the spirit of the Treaties and by a flexibility which has enabled it to adapt itself to the vagaries of Time. It was conceived and has been applied on the basis of each side deciding as to the attitude of neutrality or belligerency to be maintained in the conflicts in which the other intervenes, and also as to the nature and scope of the assistance to be rendered. Fundamentally, and setting aside now the colonial defence to which Britain is committed, the Alliance has always functioned as a promise of mutual support in the maintenance of the freedom and security of the Atlantic.

The course thus wisely set has on several occasions been interrupted or altered by Portuguese intervention in the internal conflicts of Europe. Whenever we have so intervened, whether of our own free will or impelled by others and by circumstances, we have harmfully deviated from our tasks overseas and have, without profit, but rather to our grave detriment and with the loss of life and riches, returned home sometimes with glory but always disillusioned by our interventions. Throughout our history, these deviations from our main course, defined as it is by the vital needs of the Portuguese people—facing to the sea, backs to the land—are not precedents to be followed but rather to avoid as far as possible.

In considering the invitation to adhere to the Atlantic Pact, the line to be taken by the Government had accordingly to be determined in obedience to the following two-fold aspect: first, as to whether the Pact, in view of the initiative of the United States and of the latter's promise of assistance, was capable, so far as we were con-

cerned, of functioning as a reinforcement of the British alliance in so far as this was already operative as guardian of the security of the North Atlantic ; second, as to what risks might be run in relation to conflicts between Nations of Western Europe, or more precisely, whether the foreseeing of such risks might apply solely to an attack from the East, which, if it were to materialise, would have to be regarded as being launched against all and against the principles of the culture and the civilization they represent.

The shifting to the West, after the first Great War, of the World political centre of gravity not only brought the United States to the forefront but also enhanced the value and the risks of the Atlantic on the security of which Europe, Africa and America came to depend almost exclusively. This being so, the support of the United States has become necessary to the security of the countries bordering the North Atlantic to the same extent that the various Atlantic positions have become necessary to American defence. Thus there would only remain one matter for quite natural concern, having regard to the troubled times in which we live — that relating to the utilization of points of support in time of peace, so resolved were we not to agree to the creation of undesirable servitudes on Portuguese territory. The text of the Treaty and the explanations given satisfactorily disposed of that preoccupation.

With the second aspect of the question the period of validity of the Pact is intimately connected. We could not undertake to intervene in European family quarrels which might arise from the very conditions of peace, in the establishment of which we have not to take part, or from the general political development in the conduct of which we do not even have a voice. But it seems that no conflict is to be foreseen within the next twenty years between the signatory Powers themselves, not even one provoked by a revived Germany. Thus the sole hypothesis against which precaution had to be taken was that of an eruption from the East which would bring in its train the collapse of Europe and of Western civilization. We felt that in the imminence of so great a cataclysm we, too, should assist in averting it by our contribution.

Its geographic scope thus delimited, the Pact does not directly

concern the defence of colonial territories, namely our own overseas territories. But the complications emerging from the difficulties encountered in those territories may acquire grave aspects and consequences. So that the procedure for consultation laid down in Article 4 of the Pact could not be restricted to the defined area but had to be extended to any region where the difficulties are such as to give rise to anxiety. It will be prudent not to rely too much on the advantages of this but also not to ignore them entirely.

IV

A reference to Spain will now be appropriate, both in regard to her non-inclusion in the Pact and to the latter's possible repercussions on our Treaties with that country.

Contrary to what is thought sometimes and often said, our view of the Spanish case is not affected by any commitments as to regimes or political solidarity, which in fact are non-existent; our position lies beyond, in the field of conciliation of the interests of the Peninsula and of their integration within the framework of European interests. It is simply that we enjoy the advantage of not feeling unsettled by emotional states by which public opinions may be led astray when not in possession of the concrete data of a problem.

The common frontier, the affinity of blood, the parallel cultures, the geographical and strategical unity of the Peninsula which has perforce to be looked upon as a whole in the context of the defence of the West on a European continental land basis—these it is that explain not only the existing agreements but also the position systematically upheld by us in relation to Spain in Europe. Others may perhaps not have our freedom of appreciation, but I dare say that there are not today any European or American statesmen whom mature reflection has not led to the same conclusions.

The Portuguese-Spanish Treaty of Friendship and Non-Agression of 1939, as also the Protocol which completed it in 1940, must be regarded as the basis of the relations between the two States in the Peninsula, and as such they condition to a certain extent the policy of each towards the other States. That is to say, no commitments or

activities could be understood which ignored those instruments as expressing a solidarity imposed by geography and by the community of moral interests.

In the lengthy conversations with the Madrid Government which preceded our joining the Atlantic Pact it was made quite clear that the Treaty of Friendship and the Additional Protocol, between Portugal and Spain, were in principle compatible with the Atlantic Pact. So we considered and so, in due course, we declared in Washington. But to our mind it appeared equally clear that the commitments arising from the Pact, or entered into as the result of it, would at each moment have to be collated with the principles of the peninsular agreements. In point of fact, the Portuguese possibilities are variable according to the positions and attitudes of Spain.

In these circumstances, and as I have already said on another occasion, Spain ought to be included in the Atlantic Pact, first, in view of the geographic and strategic gap which her absence represents, secondly, by virtue of the real importance of the contribution of which she is capable, and lastly, because the practical value of Portugal's adhesion is itself different according as to whether Spain is or is not connected with the Pact, and, in the case of her not being so connected, according to the policy adopted should a conflict bring the Pact into operation. The full working of a Western front against the possibility of aggression is strongly conditioned by the existence in the Iberian Peninsula of policies directed in an identical sense. Through good fortune or enlightened intention, the Pact is sufficiently elastic to adapt itself to more than one situation.

These are irremovable realities in obedience to which Portugal has pressed, even at the risk of having to face the incomprehension of others, for Spain to be called to co-operate in the various international organizations concerned with the problems of Europe, and declared herself in Paris for Spain's admission to share in the benefits of the Marshall Plan as well as in the work of European economic co-operation. By reason of the same realities, we defend on all occasions the thesis favourable to the admission of that country to the Atlantic Pact, or, should there continue to be political difficulties opposing her formal adhesion, that the latter be replaced by some

other arrangement. I should add that the presence of Portugal may facilitate a reasonable solution.

V

Portugal cannot be accused of racial prejudice. Indeed, one of the unanimously recognised characteristics of her colonising work is the absence of the spirit of superiority which in practice appears in the form of contempt for men or the violent imposition of institutions and customs. In our contact with peoples in very different stages of economic and social development we have not found it difficult to acknowledge and respect, when there was reason for it, the specific character of other civilizations and cultures. A breath of human and Christian brotherhood habitually inspired a task which down the centuries has been and is, even today, based rather on human fellowship, on community of sentiment and on mutual trust than on the coercive force of Power.

There is no racial prejudice, however, in the recognition of an historical fact — and that is the marked superiority of the European in the civilizing task, among all the peoples of the World. It may still be asserted of this Europe, engendered in the pain of invasions, sacrificed in intestine wars, inured to strenuous labour, stirred at each turn by avalanches of ideas and revolutions reminiscent of furious tempests, discoverer, explorer, missionary, mother of Nations — of this Europe, at once tragic and glorious, it may still be asserted that she retains the primacy in Science and in the Arts, that she applies in the highest degree the secrets of technology, preserves the instinct to perfect institutions, to sublimate culture, and is the possessor of incomparable political experience. We do not overlook what we owe to others in artistic, creation, literary splendour, subtlety of philosophies created and developed here and there; but it is only of Europe that it may be said that, in her urge to transplant civilization, she created, under Christian inspiration, universal values generously, freely placed at the World's disposal. We ought, each one of us, to feel proud of being European.

It would, however, be unreasonable to shut our eyes to the crisis

of Europe at the present moment : devastated, impoverished, divided, morally ruined, corroded by despondency, faced by a dangerous mental bewilderment and the clear decline in the virtues in which she took shape, there are many who ask whether these are not symptoms of decadence and whether that decadence is not final: *finis Europae*.

It is true that the World is more and more emancipating itself from her political tutelage and that, in the delirium of over-hasty liberations, it sometimes sets fire to the best of its heritage. It is true that regions more fertile and better endowed by nature are being opened up in other continents for the production of wealth. It is true that many have learnt the art of war and the secret of conquest, so that she does not possess the monopoly nor even the superiority of force. But it is the spirit that will continue to rule the World, and what is of moment is to know whether, resting on an adequate material basis, Europe can still claim pre-eminence therein.

This thought it is which must underlie the examination of so material and positive a thing as American aid, because politics in the future must be dominated by it. Europe would, in the absence of American aid, be impotent to save in this hour what remains of her moral heritage and of her liberty; reluctantly America has abandoned her isolation — offspring of her selfsufficiency — in order, whilst protecting herself, to succour and sustain Western Europe, the advanced guard of her own security. No one can will the death of the old European Continent nor its abdication. The problem is whether it possesses, with Africa, material and moral reserves to enable it to recover its strength so as to pursue its historical role.

I shall not today deal with this point; but I have answered the question in the affirmative elsewhere, with conviction born of study and as an act of that faith with which those are to be answered who, desisting from all effort, ask if Europe does not stand condemned to choose between America and Russia.

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I dislike wasting time saying useless things and today I have the feeling of repeating what we all have in our minds in one way or

another. But so much the better. Because, if such is the case, the Government have well interpreted the general feeling of the Nation and no difficulty will arise in the approval of the Pact.

The Government's share in the elaboration of the Pact was a relatively modest one. They confined themselves to presenting their comments, to drawing attention to certain aspects, to securing adequate clarification as to the scope of stipulations whose precise meaning they were above all interested to fathom. They might, had it been otherwise, have given better collaboration and have opposed certain weaknesses such as, for example, the somewhat regrettable distinction to be found in Article 11 in regard to the effect of the ratifications. This will serve to explain the decision taken by us to hold back so long: everyone should understand that a responsible Government cannot act in an irrelevant manner, specially in matters of foreign policy.

These, however, are all minor questions beside this fundamental fact: a large number of European countries, threatened in their life and freedom, henceforth count on the assistance of the United States and each on the assistance of the others for the defence of their heritage of civilization. In such circumstances it appeared difficult that we should be absent.



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