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THESIS

**U.S.–PORTUGUESE RELATIONS AND LAJES FIELD AIR
BASE**

by

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December 2014

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U.S.–PORTUGUESE RELATIONS AND LAJES FIELD AIR BASE

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

The thesis examines the relationship between the United States and Portugal with special attention to the past, present, and potential future utilization of Lajes Field Air Base, the sole military asset in Portugal that has historically been highly valued by the United States. In the last decade, global events have set U.S. geopolitical interests pivoting toward the Asia-Pacific. The post-Cold War re-alignment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and recent U.S. budgetary limitations have placed constraints on the U.S. Air Force's mission capability. Lajes Field Air Base, located in the Azores archipelago, was not spared from these budgetary cuts. The U.S. Air Force made cuts in manning and logistical assets at Lajes Field in order to save millions annually. This thesis evaluates the impact of these reductions on Lajes Field Air Base's mission. The thesis also assesses the implications of these reductions for the social, political, and economic bonds between the United States and Portugal, particularly the autonomous government of the Azores.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Air Combat Command
BENS	Business Executives for National Security
CRT	Committee of Employee Representatives
CSDP	Common Security Defense Policy
DOD	Department of Defense
EU	European Union
EUCOM	United States European Command
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
GDP	gross domestic product
HF	high frequency
IFOR	implementation force
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
JFCL	Joint Force Command Lisbon
JP-8	jet propulsion fuel
KFOR	Kosovo Force
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCISS	NATO Communications and Information Systems School
OAE	Operation Active Endeavour
RAF	Royal Air Force
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement
STRIKFORNATO	Striking and Support Forces NATO
TTU	terminal transportation unit
UN	United Nations

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I. INTRODUCTION

It has been 24 years since Karl J. Van Deusen submitted his thesis entitled “U.S.–Portuguese Relations and Foreign Base Rights in Portugal.”¹ Many new developments have intervened since his original thesis. Some issues presented in his thesis have been resolved or mitigated while others have produced new mission requirements. Mission-related issues, including reductions of forces and responsibilities at Lajes Field Air Base, continue to be a concern today, much as was the case 24 years ago.

The importance of this thesis resides in the potential impact of U.S. military budget cuts on the mission of Lajes Field Air Base and the relationship between the United States and Portugal. These implications might not have been considered initially, when the decision was made by the U.S. Air Force to reduce its forces and facilities at Lajes Field Air Base. The relationship between the United States and Portugal has been a balanced one with geostrategic gains for the United States and with enhanced military power projection in a remote territory for Portugal.

Historically, the political-military relationship between the United States and Portugal has been healthy. This political-military relationship dates back to the United States Continental Congress, which utilized the Azores to coordinate the travel of emissaries who were recruiting support for the U.S. War of Independence (1775–1783). The Azores also have the distinction of hosting the oldest continuously operating U.S. Consulate, which started in 1795. Portugal was a reliable U.S. ally during World War I and changed its initial stance as a neutral country in World War II in order to facilitate U.S. troop and equipment movements through the Azores.

Since it was first constructed, Lajes Field Air Base’s main mission has been to refuel military aircraft flying to and from Europe. Currently, Lajes Field Air Base can

¹ Karl Van Deusen, “U.S.-Portuguese Relations and Foreign Base Rights in Portugal” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 1990).

store over 65 million gallons of jet propulsion fuel in its tank farm.² Lajes Field is the U.S. Air Force's largest fuel repository in Europe and is the second largest in overseas bases, second only to Guam Air Force Base in the Pacific.³ The reduction in forces will shrink the window of refueling opportunity for any U.S., North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), or coalition aircraft passing over the Atlantic Ocean from a 24/7 window, to an eight-hour, seven-days a week window.⁴ The limited time available for aircraft to land and refuel at Lajes Field will make sortie planning more difficult for U.S. and NATO forces and for possible future coalition partners.

This thesis assesses whether the financial savings derived from reducing forces and facilities at Lajes Field Air Base will be beneficial in the long run for the U.S. Air Force and U.S. security interests. The thesis addresses three important problems. First, as noted above, the reduction of forces at Lajes Field will diminish the mission capability of the Air Base Wing. The number of U.S. Air Force personnel at Lajes Field Air Base is commensurate to the number employed at any other small U.S. Air Force base. A common but mistaken impression is to think that Lajes Field Air Base is an American base; in fact, it is not. The U.S. 65th Air Base Wing is hosted by the Portuguese Air Force, which has command over the Portuguese Air Base No. 4. (Lajes Field Air Base is located within Portuguese Air Base No. 4.) The primary military asset of Lajes Field Air Base is its runway, so the maintenance of the operability of the runway is the top priority for the Lajes Field Air Base leadership. The reduction of forces, as indicated previously, will degrade the availability of the runway from a 24-hour schedule to an eight-hour schedule.⁵ The restricted window of opportunity will cause scheduling constraints for U.S. and NATO sorties flying over the Atlantic Ocean. The reduction of forces will also include billets for military police, which augment the Portuguese military police in

² Marcus McDonald, "Team Lajes Offloads Fuel for the Fight," 65th Air Base Wing Public Affairs, April 19, 2007, <http://www.lajes.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123049530>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Chris Bargery, "Lajes Field Transition" (unpublished power point, 65th Air Base Wing, Lajes Field Air Base, Terceira Island, Azores, August 8, 2013), 1–17.

⁵ Ibid.

securing the perimeter of the base. The shortage of U.S. security forces will put an extra burden on the Portuguese Air Force to provide physical security for the base.

The second problem arising from the U.S. force reductions is the damage to U.S.–Portuguese relations. The reduction of forces will affect the local hire employees. The burden of over 300 Portuguese nationals on unemployment or retirement will be placed directly on Portugal’s struggling economy. Approximately 300 U.S. facilities, which have been kept up well by U.S. forces, are also designated to be given back to the Portuguese government.⁶ The Portuguese government has no capability to maintain such facilities, which were constructed to meet U.S. specifications, such as a 110 volt electricity supply and U.S. sewage and water systems. These issues cause strain on U.S.–Portuguese relations. Under the technical agreement signed by both countries in 1995 any facility not needed by U.S. forces would be demolished, and the land on which the facility was built would be given back to the Portuguese government in the same state in which it was received.⁷ Thus, if the Portuguese government were to only accept cleared plots of land from the U.S. Air Force, the logistical and monetary costs would be immediately counterproductive to the initial cost cutting measures proposed.

Finally, the third and last problem is the impact of the reduction on NATO forces. The deactivation of the Joint Force Command Lisbon (JFCL) headquartered in Oeiras, Portugal, in December 2012, nullified Portugal’s operational scope within its primary area of interest, the Iberian Peninsula. The relocation of the Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO (STRIKFORNATO) from Naples to Oeiras, Portugal, in 2012, and the decision in 2012 to relocate the NATO Communications and Information Systems School (NCISS) from Latina, Italy, to Oeiras, Portugal, validated NATO’s realignment as a result of the 2010 NATO Summit in Lisbon. Once the Cold War ended, NATO and U.S. forces realigned their power projection missions to include closures of NATO commands and U.S. military missions. Portugal’s Air Base No.4 and Lajes Field Air Base lost their status as key elements in monitoring and protecting the Iberian Peninsula, due to the

⁶ Bargery, “Transition,” 3.

⁷ Department of State, *Agreement on Cooperation and Defense between the United States of America and Portugal, Technical Agreement* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1995).

closure of the JFCL and the termination of the U.S. Navy's Mid-Atlantic submarine monitoring mission.

An important document supporting this analysis is a Naval Postgraduate School thesis written by Karl J. Van Deusen.⁸ The thesis, entitled "U.S.-Portuguese Relations and Foreign Base Rights in Portugal,"⁹ is a detailed quantitative case study of relations between the United States and Portugal with an emphasis on foreign basing rights. While Van Deusen's thesis was completed in June 1990, it retains considerable relevance 24 years later. In Van Deusen's words,

This thesis suggests that Portugal's apparent move toward closer alignment with Europe does not preclude the possibility of greater U.S.-Portuguese cooperation in the social, cultural, economic, political, and military fields. Despite the perceived decrease in the Soviet threat, enhanced U.S.-Portuguese relations are as important now, if not even more, than in the past.¹⁰

Van Deusen was aware of the importance that Portugal and the Azores had in the geopolitical interests of the United States, and he emphasized the importance of cultivating U.S. and NATO relations with Portugal. The historical chapter in Van Deusen's thesis complements further chapters by linking Portugal's colonial Ultramar war in 1968–1974 with its newly democratized government's hesitance to modernize its military. Portugal still possesses a modest military establishment with dated military assets. Van Deusen's thesis also covers Portugal's rising economy up to 1990, which does not compare to today's struggling economy.

Van Deusen's astute deductions about the continual flux in Western assessments of the Soviet Union's behavior within the timeframe of his thesis remain relevant today with regard to Russia. Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 has given NATO Allies and other countries grounds for concern. Developments such as the Crimea annexation and Russia's continuing interventions in Ukrainian politics highlight the importance of reviewing and reinforcing military and political bonds with U.S. allies in

⁸ Deusen, "U.S.-Portuguese."

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 5.

NATO. Portugal's status as a founding member of NATO, after having been a Western ally through World War I and II, should give it historical credibility to receive continuing U.S. support.

Historical references to Lajes Field Air Base are an important aspect of this thesis. Historical accounts specifically dealing with Lajes Field Air Base delineate the importance of the base in relation to significant historical events. The book by Manuel Martins entitled *Base Aerea das Lajes (contribuicao para a sua historia) Lajes Air Base*¹¹ specifically deals with the historical events associated with the base. Martins describes in great detail historical events in which Lajes Field Air Base was a central player or contributor to the success of U.S. and NATO missions.

The Agreement on Cooperation and Defense between the United States of America and Portugal¹² has been carefully analyzed for its relevance. The agreement clarifies key elements of U.S.–Portuguese cooperation. The provisions concerning “Cooperation with the Autonomous Region of the Azores” and “Facilities on Portuguese Territory” are among the more relevant articles of the document which have direct bearing on the thesis.

Bruno Cardoso Reis's book chapter on Portugal's strategic culture includes a section entitled “Level of Ambition: A Modest but Global Role in Robust Alliances.”¹³ His chapter provides a current viewpoint of Portugal's determination to rebuild its military capabilities into a malleable force that is more compatible with current NATO and EU capabilities.¹⁴ Portugal wants its military capabilities to back up its foreign policy, but cannot fully reach this capability without its allies. The economic constraints that Portugal faced in 2010, when its economic performance dropped severely, still linger today, making Portugal's contributions to NATO and the EU secondary in comparison

¹¹ Manuel Martins, *Base Aerea das Lajes (Contribuição Para a Sua Historia)* [Lajes Air Base (Contribution to its History)] (Azores, Portugal: Tipografia Açor, Lda., 2006).

¹² Department of State, *Agreement on Cooperation and Defense between the United States of America and Portugal* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1995), 1–7.

¹³ Bruno Cardoso Reis, “Portugal,” in *Strategic Cultures in Europe: Security and Defense Policies Across the Continent*, ed. Heiko Biehl, Bastian Giegerich, and Alexandra Jonas (281–291) (Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer Fachmedien, 2013).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 290.

with certain other allies. One of the more important sections of Reis's study is entitled "Foreign Policy Orientation: A Euro-Atlantic State and Lusophone Nation."¹⁵ Reis's chapter describes a common concern that Portugal and Europe have regarding U.S. efforts to promote a "global NATO."¹⁶ The perception of NATO as a global force may provoke a negative interpretation of U.S. foreign policy toward Europe. The United States has already started a pivot in strategic policy toward the Asia-Pacific, but it has also re-affirmed its commitments to its European allies after Russia's annexation of Crimea.

This thesis consists of five main chapters, with this introduction as Chapter I and the conclusion being Chapter V. The second chapter of the thesis provides a historical review of relations between the United Kingdom and Portugal, with a specific reference to the importance of the alliance between the two countries, which eventually gave way to the United States' efforts to achieve basing rights in the Azores. The third chapter of the thesis offers a more detailed look at the strategic importance of Lajes Field Air Base in successfully achieving the United Kingdom and United States military missions, which later expanded to NATO and allied missions.

The fourth chapter of the thesis analyzes the periods of reduction at Lajes Field Air Base, from the end of World War II to the end of the Cold War era, and the 2012 United States announcement of the reduction of forces. The chapter also touches on the "end goal" of the reduction of forces and equipment, the current status of the reduction, and the strategic and logistical obstacles in reaching the reduction goal for Lajes Field Air Base. The chapter considers the role of U.S. Congressmen with Portuguese heritage and the influence they have had in impeding the force and mission reductions at Lajes Field Air Base.

The fifth and final chapter describes the actions that have been taken to mitigate the impact on the local and national economy of the Lajes Field Air Base reductions. This chapter also speculates on alternative solutions to prevent the reduction of forces or the

¹⁵ Reis, "Portugal," 284–287.

¹⁶ Ibid., 285.

modification of mission parameters in order to sustain or enhance current operational capability. The chapter also presents an overall summary of the thesis and ideas for the possible future missions of Lajes Field Air Base.

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II. PORTUGUESE HISTORY AND TIES WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE UNITED STATES

This chapter of the thesis focuses on Portugal's long-standing alliance with England, since 1707 the United Kingdom. This chapter focuses on the effectiveness of this long lasting alliance and how throughout history, both Portugal and the United Kingdom have maintained their commitments all the way to the twenty-first century.

The first dated alliance between Portugal and England was in 1373. However, the official date most historians acknowledge as the ratified alliance between Portugal and England was May 1386, since this date marked the wedding of King John I of Portugal and Philippa of Lancaster, daughter of John of Gaunt, the first Duke of Lancaster, sealing the Treaty of Windsor.¹⁷ This treaty holds true as the oldest alliance in the world, which is still active. Throughout history the alliance at some points was purposely forgotten or conveniently put aside, but never severed.

This chapter provides a review of Portugal's beginnings, the English and Portuguese Empires, and the strategic importance of the alliance and at times its abandonment. The chapter ends with a conclusion assessing the importance that Portugal has had in helping the United Kingdom maintain its global power. Though the alliance between Portugal and England was officially founded in 1386, the two countries had crossed paths before. The treaty solidified the bond between the countries and eventually marked the mutual solidarity with a notable marriage and alliance.

A. PORTUGAL AND ITS BEGINNINGS

The friendship between England and Portugal was seeded on the battleground of Portugal's birth. Martin Page states,

Lisbon had been effectively closed to north Europeans for almost 400 years. The knights' chaplain described it as beyond the boundaries of the

¹⁷ Thomas Earle, "Portugal and England, 1386–2010: A Complex Web of Political Economic and Intellectual Relations," University of Oxford, 2010, <http://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/portugal-and-england-1386-2010>.

known world, at the southern extremity of the Atlantic Ocean. The city was reputed to be 'the richest in trade of all Africa and most of Europe.'¹⁸

In 1147, the King of Portugal, Afonso Henriques, was forwarding his campaign to solidify his kingdom. In that year King Henriques set his goals toward capturing the city of Lisbon, which at that time had over 150,000 men. Compared to Paris, which then had about 50,000,¹⁹ Lisbon was the megacity of a still adolescent Europe. King Henriques was at a military disadvantage. Lisbon was located on a hill and adjacent to a river, making it difficult for any army to besiege it. While King Henriques tried to besiege the city of Lisbon, English and Norman crusaders in route to the Holy Land to start the Second Crusade campaign stopped in Portugal due to inclement weather. As the crusaders restocked their boats, a bishop came to them and requested their help on behalf of the Portuguese king.²⁰ The crusaders saw the wealth that Lisbon had and said that they would only fight for Portugal if after their victory they could plunder Lisbon with none of the riches to be given to the Portuguese. Page quotes King Henrique's speech, as follows:

Who are about to remain with me at the siege of the City of Lisbon may take into their own power and possession, and may keep, all the possessions of the enemy. Myself and all my men shall have absolutely no share in them. If perchance they should take the city, they shall have it and hold it until it has been searched and despoiled. After it has been ransacked to their full satisfaction, they shall hand it over to me.²¹

The city of Lisbon was overtaken, and all its spoils were taken and divided among the English, the Normans, and the Germans. Portugal had conquered its future capital, and the Crusaders had reached their most successful point of their crusade, since the Second Crusade was tragic from that event on.²²

¹⁸ Martin Page, *The First Global Village: How Portugal Changed the World* (Alfragide, Portugal: Casa das Letras, 2011), 74.

¹⁹ Ibid., 75.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Henriques quoted in Page, *First Global Village*, 75.

²² Ibid., 78–9.

B. THE BRITISH AND PORTUGUESE EMPIRES

With the help of the English (and others), Portugal conquered the city of Lisbon, a key territory and eventually the capital of its kingdom. The year 1147 was not to be the last time Portugal and England would combine their armies in combat. In the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), Britain fought alongside Portugal when Spain decided to invade Portugal. The Seven Years' War began with the great powers, including Great Britain, fighting against France. Portugal and Spain were designated neutral countries during the Seven Years' War. Towards the end of the war, however, Spain invaded Portugal, and each country requested the assistance of its natural ally. Portugal depended on Great Britain and Spain on France as an ally.

During the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815), Portugal continued its trade with the United Kingdom, even under French restrictions. This led to French forces invading Portugal.²³ France's and Spain's actions against Portugal gave rise to the Peninsular War (1807–1814). The United Kingdom's military, led by the first Duke of Wellington, Sir Arthur Wellesley, came to Portugal's side once more and helped the country regain its sovereignty and independence.²⁴ When France turned on Spain, Wellesley took advantage of having the Spanish on his side, and pushed forth into Spain to repel the French forces.²⁵

C. STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE ALLIANCE

The twentieth century brought more situations in which the United Kingdom and Portugal had to align their forces. On March 9, 1916, during World War I, Germany declared war on Portugal. Antonio Costa Pinto elaborates on this issue as follows:

The [Portuguese] Republicans had unanimously supported participation in the Great War, in the belief that it would guarantee the safety of the African colonies. But because Britain seemed prepared to "give" Germany some of those colonies, the [Portuguese] Democratic Party concluded that neutrality was dangerous, and became the greatest champion of military

²³ Charles Esdaile, "The Peninsular War: A Review of Recent Literature," *Historian*, no. 64 (Winter 1999): 9, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/274973055?accountid=12702>.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

participation on the European front. The Democrats believed, furthermore, that Portuguese participation in the peace negotiations would consolidate the country's international position.²⁶

Portuguese troops fought alongside British soldiers on the Western Front. Fifty-five thousand Portuguese troops were deployed in Europe, and of those 35,000 were killed or wounded.²⁷

When World War II came about, Portugal was persuaded by the United Kingdom to establish a strategic allied base in the Azores for the benefit of British and American forces. The base became a key asset to allied nations, particularly the United Kingdom and the United States.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill had first to ask the British Parliament for support in asking for Portugal's permission to build and utilize a base in the Azores. Prime Minister Churchill stated,

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, basing themselves upon this ancient Alliance, have now requested the Portuguese Government to accord them certain facilities in the Azores which will enable better protection to be provided for merchant shipping in the Atlantic. The Portuguese Government have agreed to grant this request, and arrangements, which enter into force immediately.²⁸

Churchill concluded his speech to the House of Commons by saying,

I take this opportunity of placing on record the appreciation by His Majesty's Government, which I have no doubt is shared by Parliament and the British nation, of the attitude of the Portuguese Government, whose loyalty to their British Ally never wavered in the darkest hours of the war.²⁹

The base in the Azores became a key sub hunting base, as well as a transportation hub for the United States to send its troops and equipment across the Atlantic.³⁰ British

²⁶ Antonio Pinto, *Modern Portugal* (Palo Alto, CA: The Society for the Promotion of Science and Scholarship, Inc., 1998), 9.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Winston Churchill, "Agreement with Portugal," *Hansard*, 392 (1943): 716–9, House of Commons Transcript, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1943/oct/12/agreement-with-portugal>.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Page, *First Global Village*, 239.

and U.S. operations from the Azores reduced the level of allied casualties. Page notes the distinct relationships the people of the Azores and the people of Portugal had towards the United States in World War II and makes clear how popular sentiment influenced Salazar's decision making.

As well as refusing to stop the tungsten shipments to Germany, Salazar had stalled over the allies' request to set up military bases in the Azores. These Portuguese islands were being used by German U-boats as a safe haven from which to attack convoys bringing food and other vital supplies to Britain. With the help of the U-boats, Hitler had come close to realizing his dream of starving the British into defeat. Still Salazar did not budge. The Azorian people themselves have long had closer personal links with the USA than with mainland Portugal itself. Indeed more Azorians live there, than in the Azores themselves. There was no question as to where their sympathies lay. A wave of demonstrations on the island demanded independence from Portugal. In the summer of 1943, seemingly abruptly, Salazar conceded to both the allies' demands.³¹

In 1961, Portugal was at risk of losing one of its important colonies in India. Goa was one of Portugal's oldest and well established colonies. India had negotiated with Portugal several times to regain its territory, and those requests were denied. India finally decided that it would take Goa back by force.³² As stated by Jagan Pillarisetti, "After years of negotiation, in late 1961, the government decided to deploy the armed forces in an effort to evict the Portuguese out of Goa and other enclaves. Accordingly in November 1961, India made preparations for the same."³³

Portugal invoked its treaty with London but had little help from the United Kingdom. India had already obtained independence from the United Kingdom on August 15, 1947. The United Kingdom was not keen on antagonizing a former disputed colony. Portugal received no assistance from the United Kingdom on this particular occasion. The loss of Goa effectively ended Portugal's 451 year rule in India. Goa was eventually annexed by India.

³¹ Ibid.

³² P.N. Khea's "Official History of the Indian Army Forces," Bharat Rakshak, 2014 adapted in Jagan Pillarisetti, "The Liberation of Goa: An Overview," last modified November 3, 2009, <http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/IAF/History/1961Goa/1012-Goa01.html>.

³³ Ibid.

On April 2, 1982, Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands, South Georgia Island, and South Sandwich islands. Argentina and the United Kingdom have yet to resolve their dispute over possession of these islands. Argentina escalated the debate by invading and occupying these British territories.³⁴ This act of war by Argentina drew a quick reaction from British forces, which fought to liberate their territory in the South Atlantic Ocean.³⁵ Portugal offered its ports in the Azores to the Royal Navy in support of Britain's aims in the Falklands War. Britain instead used Ascension Island as a staging point. The Falklands War lasted 10 weeks and ended with the United Kingdom regaining its territories from Argentina.³⁶

D. WHEN THE ALLIANCE WAS FORGOTTEN

While the treaty of alliance was a uniting document, there were times when the alliance did not have any bearing on Anglo-Portuguese relations. During the dynastic union between Portugal and Spain (1580–1640), King Sebastian died fighting in Morocco and left Portugal heirless.³⁷ A grand-uncle of the King took his place on the throne, but died two years later. King Philip II of Spain took the Portuguese crown by force, justifying his place on the throne by being the grandson of King Manuel I.³⁸ From that time forth the alliance between Portugal and England was put on hold. Portugal's foreign policy was forcibly aligned with that of Spain, making England an enemy. During the Anglo-Spanish War (1585–1604) Portugal and Britain were by unfortunate circumstances put on opposing sides. The Dutch-Portuguese War (1602–1663) brought one more conflict that put the Portuguese and British empires in opposition. The Dutch Revolt of 1566 initiated the pilfering of King Phillip II's possessions by the Dutch Republic allies,

³⁴ Lawrence Freedman, "Reconsiderations: The War of the Falkland Islands, 1982," *Foreign Affairs*, September 1982, 196, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/36819/lawrence-d-freedman/reconsiderations-the-war-of-the-falkland-islands-1982>.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Prove Portugal, "1580 Crisis, Iberian Union and Decline of the Empire," Prove Portugal, accessed November 2, 2014, <http://proveportugal.wordpress.com/about/1580-crisis-iberian-union-and-decline-of-the-empire/>.

³⁸ Ibid.

England and France. Since Portugal belonged to Phillip II, it too became a target, even for its former ally England.³⁹

In 1890, the alliance between Portugal and England was again put to the test. Portugal was seeking treaties with the Yao chiefs in a territory southeast of Lake Nyasa in the Shire Highlands of Africa. This led to Britain sending Portugal an ultimatum in which Portugal was asked to retract its forces from disputed areas that the British insisted on controlling. Teresa Coelho explains the Ultimatum as follows:

What is meant by the Ultimatum? It refers to a memorandum sent to the Portuguese Government by Lord Salisbury on 11 January 1890. In that document he demanded the withdrawal of the Portuguese troops from Mashona and Matabeleland (later Rhodesia) and the Shire-Nyasa region (Malawi) where Portuguese and British interests in Africa overlapped.⁴⁰

Many in Portugal took the ultimatum as an insult. It forced Portugal to acknowledge British sovereignty over territory that Portugal had claimed centuries before.⁴¹ Portugal signed treaties with France and Germany. The German treaty gave claim to Portugal on a belt of territory on the Zambezi valley, linking Angola and Mozambique. This belt of land was later known as the “Rose Colored Map.”⁴² Britain did not appreciate what Portugal had done and in response protested. The territory Portugal had claimed overlapped with Scottish mission settlements in that territory.⁴³ The territory also interfered with Cecil Rhodes’ expansion policy.⁴⁴ Tensions escalated in Africa. Two expeditions were sent forth to accomplish the task of coming to an agreement with tribal chiefs on the territories designated on the “Rose Colored Map.” In addition, 20 treaties with chiefs in what is now Malawi were accomplished. Serpa Pinto was one of the

³⁹ Portugal, “1580 crisis.”

⁴⁰ Teresa P. Coelho, “VI—Lord Salisbury’s 1890 Ultimatum to Portugal and Anglo-Portuguese Relations,” St. John’s College, Oxford / Universidade Nova de Lisboa, accessed November 2, 2014, 1, http://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/files/windsor/6_pintocoelho.pdf.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 2.

⁴³ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 2–8.

³³ Ibid.

Portuguese leaders charged with leading one of the expeditions. While conducting his duties, Pinto met with Henry Hamilton Johnson, the British consul to Mozambique, at a river crossing.⁴⁵ Johnson advised Pinto not to cross the river.⁴⁶ Little to Pinto's knowledge, Johnson was appointed by the British government to ascertain the strength of Portugal's rule in the Zambezi and Shire valleys.⁴⁷ Unfortunately, Pinto crossed the Ruo to Chiromo, which led to an armed conflict between Pinto's troops and Johnson's troops.⁴⁸ This incident was the start of a conflict between Britain and Portugal. Portuguese citizens were outraged with the Ultimatum and the armed conflict, and many protested in the streets of Lisbon.⁴⁹ Coelho describes the event in her paper as follows:

The terms of the Ultimatum aroused violent anti-British sentiments all over Portugal. Demonstrations were held, the British consulate stoned and economic sanctions against Britain demanded. Advocating Portugal's claims in Africa, the Portuguese press and literature echoed and stimulated the reaction against Britain. Journalists, poets, novelists, students and the public in general protested violently against what they saw as an outrage.⁵⁰

While there were initial treaties formulated, either Portugal or Britain did not fully agree. However, a treaty signed on June, 11, 1891,⁵¹ established the permanent borders that are still respected today. There were repercussions from this event. The friendship between Portugal and Britain was damaged but not abandoned. In Coelho's words,

The Anglo-Portuguese Declaration of 1899 signed on 14 October 1899 reaffirmed former treaties of Alliance. According to the new treaty, Britain committed herself to defend Portuguese colonies from all enemies present and future. Portugal agreed to stop the supply of arms through Lourenço Marques to the Transvaal and officially declare neutrality in the Anglo-Boer conflict.⁵²

⁴⁵ Coelho, "Ultimatum."

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 4.

⁵¹ Ibid., 7.

⁵² Coelho, "Ultimatum," 4.

It must be understood that Portugal and Britain at the time of the Ultimatum, were connected by royal blood because Don Carlos the King of Portugal was a relative of Queen Victoria. Hence, the alliance, while bruised, was not irreparable.

E. CONCLUSION

Portugal and the United Kingdom have shared many moments of solidarity and rivalry, but as brothers, bonded by an alliance of blood. The two countries were bonded by family ties. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the conquest of Lisbon in 1147 was a key to Portugal's survival. English troops (among crusaders from other countries) were there helping King Henriques fight the Moors. The crusaders were there as profiteers on the way to the Holy Land. Portugal had to give all of Lisbon's wealth to secure its country's new borders. While the treaty of Windsor of 1386 was a symbol of good faith between the countries, it became more of an insurance policy for Portugal against its ever waiting neighbor Spain and a way for England to keep Portugal within its sights, as well as economic opportunities.

Both countries have for the most part rendered aid to each other when needed. As seen in this chapter, the United Kingdom (England) has accepted the greater share of risks by taking on opponents of the Portuguese crown, and securing the country's sovereignty for a good part of Portugal's existence. At the same time the Anglo-Portuguese alliance has afforded the United Kingdom benefits in trade and commerce with Portugal and its possessions. It also gave the England of the fourteenth century a navy it could call upon. One can say that the relationship between Portugal and England has been symbiotic at best, since it has benefited both countries. The absence of such a treaty probably would have put Portugal at more peril of becoming a permanent possession of Spain, if it were not for the United Kingdom. In the past, England was an island fortress that could not be conquered. The English Channel made a formidable obstacle that not even Napoleon could overcome. England's military strength benefited Portugal by protecting it from becoming the target of nearby countries, such as Spain or France. These had to think twice on their strategy of conquest, as to avoid fighting with the British.

The Anglo-Portuguese alliance, while never broken, was abandoned at times. With the death of Portugal's King Sebastian in Mozambique and his predecessor dying two years later, Portugal was quickly taken over by Spain. This event unwillingly put Portugal at odds with England, due to Spanish rule. The Dutch-Portuguese War (1602–1663) was the alliance's darkest moment. England took full advantage of Portugal's subjugation to Spain. Along with the Dutch, the British took Portuguese overseas possessions for their own, inciting armed conflicts between countries and outrage among the Portuguese people. As it was in 1386, the Anglo-Portuguese alliance is still in full vigor, ready to be utilized either Portugal or the United Kingdom for assistance or benefit.

III. THE UNITED STATES, PORTUGAL, AND NATO ALLIANCE

According to David S. Yost,

When the Alliance was formed, Portugal was governed by a dictatorship little different from that in Spain; but the Azores were too important to the security of the Allies in the event of war to let Portugal's form of government pose an obstacle to membership.⁵³

Supporting Portugal's membership in NATO was not a normative action, but rather an exception to NATO's democratic values. This chapter of the thesis focuses on Portugal and its contributions to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This chapter clearly delineates the importance Portugal, the archipelago of Madeira, and the archipelago of the Azores has had for NATO. This chapter also explains how these regions contributed to the stability, reinforcement, and security of the North Atlantic routes to the Straits of Gibraltar for allied operations, and to the refueling of rapid deployment forces heading to Central Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East. The topics covered in this chapter include Portugal before NATO, the United States secret second base in the Azores, the role of the Madeira Archipelago and Nazi directive No.18, Portugal's membership in NATO, Portugal's contributions to NATO after the Cold War, and the future of Portugal in NATO and the EU. The chapter concludes with an assessment of Portugal's value as a strategic partner for the NATO Allies.

A. PORTUGAL BEFORE NATO

Since Portugal's creation, it has had a rich and eventful history. Portugal has influenced global trends, as well as having contributed to the activities of other global powers. The strategic value of one of its discoveries—the Azores (nine islands, 900 miles off the coast of Portugal)—was even appreciated by Christopher Columbus, on his way back from discovering the New World. Columbus resupplied his ships at one of the

⁵³ David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed, The Alliance's New Roles in International Security* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2000), 71.

Azorean islands called Santa Maria and continued on to Europe.⁵⁴ The Azores have been a stopover point or safe haven for countless maritime navigators. With the development of aviation and its initial limitations, the Azores became a natural stopover for most early aviators.⁵⁵ In the twentieth century, Portugal's military strategic value was noted long before the establishment of NATO. In 1918, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was the Assistant Secretary of the Navy at that time, visited the Azores and supervised the dismantling of World War I United States naval facilities, which were located on two of the nine islands.⁵⁶ Roosevelt also gave notice of the geographical importance of the islands as a viable control point for securing the Atlantic Ocean.⁵⁷ Once World War II started, future members of NATO, particularly the United States and Britain, knew the distinct strategic advantages of having allied military bases in the Azores, and the definitive impact they would have on the war as a whole. Unfortunately, Portugal had been a fascist country since the early 1930s and was neutral when World War II commenced. Allied forces were preoccupied about the Atlantic Ocean and its military value for whoever secured it. The Atlantic Ocean was a large area which for the most part was unprotected from enemy forces. German U-boats were wreaking havoc on the transatlantic shipping lanes,⁵⁸ and the United States needed a quicker way to ship its troops and equipment across the Atlantic.

The geographic location of the Azores islands was ideal for a refueling and submarine hunting airbase. In May 1943, a conference between Great Britain and the United States, called the Trident Conference, focused on determining how to convince Portugal's Prime Minister Antonio Salazar to allow allied forces a military presence in the Azores.⁵⁹ Britain's proposal to Portugal included a strategic diplomatic appeal, by way of Portugal's and England's centuries-long alliance treaties, including the Windsor

⁵⁴ Rita Reif, "Auctions," *New York Times*, June 7, 1991, C29, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/108739332?accountid=12702>.

⁵⁵ Martins, *Base Aérea das Lajes*, 13.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 25–6.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 35.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Treaty of 1373 and the Methuven Treaty of 1703.⁶⁰ These treaties plus British and United States support to facilitate and expedite efforts to surmount the logistical and financial constraints of such a proposal, were submitted to Portugal.⁶¹ Portugal responded in favor of allowing a military presence in the Azores, but with certain stipulations. Portugal's stipulations consisted of assistance from allied forces against possible German air strikes, protection from German attacks on Portuguese merchant ships, and provisions to guarantee the preservation and restoration of Portuguese colonial territories.⁶² From 1941 to 1943 the Portuguese started the initial stages of amassing air assets within the Azores, including a landing strip at the future Lajes Field Air Base on Terceira Island in the Azores.⁶³ Most of Portugal's aircraft were composed of World War I airframes. Until the British came to the Azores there were minimal air support facilities and a packed dirt runway.⁶⁴

British forces arrived at Terceira Island in October 1943, and quickly started work on a new runway to accommodate future British B-17s. In one month, Lajes Field Air Base runway was completed with the assistance of local workers.⁶⁵ Most local islanders lived simple and poor lives. They worked in the fields and were paid minimally. These workers eagerly left their jobs to become employees of the Royal Air Force (RAF), since the RAF's salaries were substantially higher than those from farming.⁶⁶

On November 9, 1943, a Royal Air Force B-17 sank a German submarine for the first time from the Azores. The aircraft took off from the newly assigned allied base called Lajes Field Air Base.⁶⁷ The establishment of an anti-submarine campaign with its nucleus in the Azores was truly advantageous to the allied forces. In 1942, German

⁶⁰ Martins, *Base Aérea das Lajes*, 25.

⁶¹ Ibid., 25.

⁶² Ibid., 26.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 33.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 37.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 43.

submarine attacks had sunk 5.4 million tons of cargo. By 1943 that number had been reduced to 146 thousand tons.⁶⁸ The proposal to allow American forces to operate from the Azores was initiated by the British on December 1, 1943.⁶⁹ The British signed an agreement with the United States, allowing its forces to operate as “technical assistants.”⁷⁰ Nine days after the agreement was signed, the first United States B-17 landed on Terceira Island. On December 31, 1943, Portugal sent official authorization of the agreement.⁷¹ With approval from Portugal for British and American forces to operate out of Terceira Island, a large scale logistical operation took place to support a great number of airframes and maintenance crews. Fuel for the stationed bombers became a high priority.⁷² On January 9, 1944, the United States Navy received authorization for the procurement of a port to build a fuel docking facility along with two fuel pipelines, connecting the port and Lajes Air Base.⁷³ Large numbers of sailors, with their equipment, arrived at the nearby port of Praia da Vitoria, the closest port to Lajes Field Air Base. The Navy expediently constructed the fueling port, hardened support facilities, and living quarters for the assigned military, as well as two taxiways at Lajes Field Air Base.⁷⁴

B. THE AZOREAN SECRET BASE

The United States Army had established a “technical assistants” military presence in the Azores, but was not satisfied with the limited mission scope it had at Lajes Field Air Base.⁷⁵ The socio-political relationship between the United States and Portugal was healthy, so the American administration persuaded the Portuguese government to grant United States rights to build its own base on a different island.⁷⁶

⁶⁸ Martins, *Base Aérea das Lajes*, 43.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 51.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., 52.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 61.

While negotiations were going on between governments, a secret mission had been put into effect. Six military officers went to Washington, DC and received a covert mission to accomplish.⁷⁷ The officers were to survey the island of Santa Maria, under the guise of being employees of Pan American Airlines. Portugal gave permission to the United States to build a military base on November 28, 1944.⁷⁸ Both governments agreed not to reveal the base's role as a military asset; rather it would be identified as a civilian airport, operating under the Pan American auspices.⁷⁹ Once built, the base on Santa Maria Island was called Station X and the work contract to build it was called Special Project 111.⁸⁰ Even though much work went into approving and building the base and keeping it undercover, Station X was short lived with the end of World War II. The end of the war and the return of the British forces back to the United Kingdom gave the United States an opening to transfer assets from Station X to Lajes Field Air Base, which had better equipped facilities and was designed for refueling aircraft.⁸¹

In January 1946, the British returned the base to Portugal. Even though the war had ended, Lajes Field Air Base became the initial refueling point for all aircraft that made the loop in transporting troops from Europe to the United States.⁸² On July 10, 1946, Portugal decided to allow the United States to stay in the Azores on a provisional basis and carry on its mission.⁸³

C. FÜHRER DIRECTIVE NO. 18

The Führer Directive No. 18 was written in November 1940.⁸⁴ It was a phased plan of attack from the German High Command on how to proceed with the invasions in Western Europe, and eventually the capture of Gibraltar, ultimately giving Germany

⁷⁷ Martins, *Base Aérea das Lajes*, 61.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 64.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid., 72.

⁸² Ibid., 73.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Boys' Historical Clothing, "Adolf Hitler and World War II: Operational Orders," Boys' Historical Clothing, last modified July 2013, <http://histclo.com/bio/h/hitler/dir/bhw2-fd.html>.

control over the Straits of Gibraltar. Portugal was also a part of Adolf Hitler's (the Führer's) plan. Portugal was to be invaded, if any British forces occupied its territory. The archipelagoes of the Azores and Madeira were also to be seized by Nazi forces, to reinforce the closure of the Straits of Gibraltar.⁸⁵ Due to the high risk of Gibraltar being invaded, it was decided that it was to be evacuated. In July 1940, 2,000 Gibraltarians fled their country to stay in the Madeira archipelago.⁸⁶ The Azores had strategic value, as did Madeira, by virtue of each archipelago being located in a unique geographical location; each had its own advantages in helping the Allies in World War II.

D. NATO MEMBERSHIP

World War I and World War II solidified the importance that the Azores and Portugal had for the United States' successful military strategic policy in Europe and Northern Africa. Future conflicts within these geographical areas (and beyond) would make the bases that the United States already had in the Azores indispensable. Unfortunately, the United States was in the late 1940s operating Lajes Field Air Base on a provisional status and had abandoned its other base on Santa Maria Island.⁸⁷ The task at hand for the United States was to keep its relationship with Portugal viable and find a way to continue operations in the Azores. While non-binding negotiations between the United States and Portugal were underway after World War II, world politics brewed on. In 1948, the Soviet Union decided to isolate the western part of Berlin, hoping to squeeze and eventually annex that territory for its own sphere of influence.⁸⁸ This meant that about two million people became trapped in their own city.⁸⁹ The United States proposed a continuous airlift operation to supply West Berliners with the essentials needed until global powers came to a resolution.⁹⁰ This mission was known as the Berlin airlift or Operation Vittles. The mission was a resounding success partially due to the base

⁸⁵ Boys' Historical Clothing, "Adolf Hitler."

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Martins, *Base Aérea das Lajes*, 81.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 82.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 83.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

established in the Azores. Lajes Field Air Base became a support hub for personnel coming to and going from the operation.⁹¹ Maintenance crews fixed Operation Vittles airframes, and over 3,000 aircraft passed through the Azores until the operation ended in September 1949.⁹²

Portugal's membership in NATO in 1949 became in part a means to an end for the United States to keep an operational mission within the Azores. The United States ability to operate from the Azores allowed it to project its military interests toward Europe and beyond.⁹³ In 1973, when the Yom Kippur War commenced, the United States in its efforts to support Israel could not secure a refueling base within NATO countries other than Portugal.⁹⁴ The other members of NATO feared oil embargos from Arab suppliers if they were to support the United States and ultimately Israel.⁹⁵ Portugal was the only NATO country willing to allow the United States to refuel aircraft on its soil. The U.S. forces operated from Lajes Field Air Base in the Azores. The name of the mission was Nickel Grass, and 22.3 thousand tons of cargo were sent to Israel through Lajes Field Air Base,⁹⁶ again showing how important Portugal was to the United States and NATO. The support Portugal had from the United States did not prevent Portugal from being seen as a colonial empire by the rest of the world.⁹⁷ Once primary colonies such as Angola and Mozambique tried to secede from Portugal starting in the mid-1960s, this era marked the beginning of Portugal's colonial wars. These wars caused friction within NATO. Because of Portugal's inability to resolve its problems with its colonies, it was perceived as a catalyst for promoting Soviet subversion within those areas.⁹⁸

⁹¹ 65th Air Base Wing History Office, *A Short History of Lajes Field, Terceira Island, Azores, Portugal* (Terceira Island: 65th Air Base Wing History Office), 8, <http://www.lajes.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-110621-022.pdf>.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., 11–12.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Norrie MacQueen, "Belated Decolonization and UN Politics against the Backdrop of the Cold War," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8, no. 4 (2006): 31.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 42.

Portugal was also pressured by the United Nations to decolonize. Portugal resisted and refused to accommodate the United Nations until a non-violent military coup was executed on Portugal's government on April, 25, 1974. Initiated by a handful of Army captains, the coup was named the "The Revolution of the Carnations" for being a peaceful takeover, and it became one of the most critical events in Portugal's modern history. The coup had important implications for Portugal's continuation in NATO. According to Harold Livermore,

Political and social instability prevailed through most of 1975. More than half a million people fled to Portugal from the former African colonies, adding a refugee problem to the already volatile domestic situation; some 30 persons died in incidents of public violence, new political parties proliferated, and strikes were widespread. In 1975 the government also decided to nationalize banking, transport, heavy industries, and the media.⁹⁹

While the "Revolution of the Carnations" marked the end of fascism, it also opened the door for new elections in Portugal. NATO knew where it stood with Portugal under its dictator's rule, but had little knowledge of who would be Portugal's new leader, and there was always the possibility of communism receiving a majority vote, putting NATO in a difficult situation. Fortunately, Portugal's first election after its decolonization era was secured with a Socialist president and not Communist as feared.¹⁰⁰

E. CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATO

After Portugal's social and political hardships in the 1970s, its contributions to NATO were consistent and unwavering. In 1992 Portugal participated in Operation Sharp Vigilance in the Adriatic. Portugal provided one P3-Orion electronics platform aircraft, one frigate, one corvette, and a C-130 for logistical support.¹⁰¹ From 1993 to 1995

⁹⁹ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "Portugal since 1974, The Revolution of the Carnations," by Harold V. Livermore, accessed November 2, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/471439/Portugal/23782/The-New-State-after-Salazar>.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Gabriel E. Santo, "The Portuguese Armed Forces in Peace Support Operations," *NATO's Nations and Partners for Peace*, special issue (2000): 12, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/274600596?accountid=12702>.

Portugal supported Operations Sharp Fence and Sharp Guard in the Adriatic by contributing a frigate, a submarine, and extended auxiliary ships.¹⁰² From 1996 to 1997 Portugal supported the Implementation Force (IFOR) by sending two airborne battalions to Bosnia–Herzegovina.¹⁰³ In 1998–1999, Portugal supported Operation Eagle Eye, and Portugal took the mission of performing reconnaissance sorties over the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).¹⁰⁴ In 1999, Operation Allied Force in the FRY was supported by Portugal securing its air mission over the FRY.¹⁰⁵ In 1999 Portugal supported the Kosovo Force (KFOR) under the auspices of Operation Joint Guardian.¹⁰⁶ According to Santo,

The capacity to participate in military operations in crisis management is being developed, as part of the Portuguese responsibilities for security and defence. The military planning, in what concerns the conception and employment of military force, its organization, armament and equipment is nowadays more oriented towards the missions that they may have to fulfil than to the threat that they may have to face.¹⁰⁷

F. MORE CURRENT MISSIONS AND ISSUES

On 2003 Portugal hosted the “Atlantic Summit,” which united the Prime Ministers of Portugal, Spain and Great Britain with the United States President George W. Bush. The summit was held at Lajes Field Air Base and discussed the preliminary details of joint intervention in Iraq. Due to the islands’ central location in the Atlantic Ocean, and the relative safety that the secluded islands presented, it was a fitting location for this event.¹⁰⁸ Portugal’s membership in the European Union and its utilization of the Euro as its currency aligned it well with Europe’s economic aspirations.¹⁰⁹ Unfortunately, Portugal among a few other European countries did not manage its

¹⁰² Santo, “The Portuguese,” 12.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Martins, *Base Aérea das Lajes*, 102.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

monetary budget very well, and inevitably fell into a deep recessionary phase.¹¹⁰ Portugal was forced to undergo budgetary constraints on just about every aspect of government, including military spending. Bruno Reis defines Portugal's defensive policy as follows:

The Portuguese official policy was reiterated in the 2010 Defence Directive—'cooperative security,' emphasizing that the 'NATO, EU, UN' context is 'of vital importance' for Portugal, because 'national security is not defended only at territorial borders' and this is the best way of making 'a contribution towards building a wider security.'¹¹¹

In 2013, Portugal continued its participation in the NATO-led operations in Afghanistan, as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).¹¹² Portugal's contribution to ISAF included the deployment of 227 military personnel, as well as 14 members of the National Republican Guard.¹¹³ Portugal also deployed six F-16 fighters and maintenance personnel to Iceland in support of that country's air policing efforts.¹¹⁴ Portugal is also a member of the ongoing Operation Active Endeavour (OAE), a maritime operation of integral importance to countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. OAE provides anti-terrorism protection and peace building stability within the Mediterranean region.¹¹⁵ Portugal has taken part in OAE in various ways, once with a naval presence in the form of military ships. Another contribution was in the air by providing a P3-P sub-hunter aircraft, and most recently Portugal has deployed one of its submarines in support of the OAE mission.¹¹⁶

Portugal has already projected future missions beyond 2014; its commitment to NATO's role in Afghanistan is unwavering.¹¹⁷ Even though ISAF assets are scheduled to leave Afghanistan after 2014, Portugal will continue to support the country in its

¹¹⁰ Reis, "Portugal," 282.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid., 288–9.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Portuguese Atlantic Committee, "NATO & Portugal—Bilateral Brief," Comissão Portuguesa do Atlantic, October 2013, 2, http://www.ata-sec.org/publications/doc_download/183-nato-a-portugal.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

partnership framework, helping with education and development programs within Afghanistan.¹¹⁸ While Portugal has become constrained by its economic woes, it has continued to participate in NATO missions and has also started to contribute to EU missions.

G. MULTIPLE FUTURES FOR PORTUGAL

With Portugal's entrance into the EU, new possibilities in military partnership came to light. Before joining the EU, Portugal was solely dependent on NATO for its security alliance.¹¹⁹ The start of the Kosovo war painted a new picture for Portugal. It understood that Europe could not depend on the United States to be an active ally in every conflict, so it embraced the EU and became a contributor to build the Common Security Defense Policy (CSDP).¹²⁰ Reis states that the "Current Portuguese strategic culture shows a strong preference both for robust multilateral normative framework, and strong alliances that are regarded as vital, especially for the security interest of small countries in a world of globalized threats."¹²¹ By having NATO and EU membership, Portugal is hedging its security posture. If Portugal gets entangled in a security issue, it is likely to get assistance either from NATO or the EU, each with its unique circumstances for justification of assistance. Portugal perceives itself as being in a better position now than when it was only working with NATO, but Portugal now has two organizations to keep up with.

H. CONCLUSION

Portugal in comparison to several other NATO members is a small country. In terms of contributions to missions led by NATO, however, Portugal is more active than many Alliance members. Reis states that "Portugal today has more military personnel in NATO missions (371, 210 thereof in Afghanistan) than in the UN and the European

¹¹⁸ Portuguese Atlantic Committee, "NATO & Portugal," 2.

¹¹⁹ Heiko, "Strategic Cultures," 285.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid., 287.

Union (EU) combined (165).”¹²² In these recent times of austerity, Portugal has been forced to reduce its military budget to keep up its commitment with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), commonly referred by the Portuguese as the troika. These restrictions in military spending have reduced Portugal’s international military capabilities, as well as its national military flexibility. Portugal has also received notification that the United States military is in a situation of budgetary austerity and has projected a reduction of forces at Lajes Field Air Base.¹²³ These reductions at Lajes Field Air Base will save the United States Air Force an estimated 35 million dollars annually.¹²⁴ Needless to say, Portugal did not receive the notification with much glee. The United States has only one military asset in Portugal, and that is the 65th Air Base Wing, a tenant of its Portuguese host, Air Base No.4. Lajes Field Air Base employs over 800 local nationals, and has a combined U.S. military and civilian presence of about 1,200 people.¹²⁵ The end force structure would bring the local national employee number to just above 300 people and the U.S. military presence to around 160 people.¹²⁶ The reduction in forces of Lajes Field Air Base is disconcerting to the Portuguese government, since it will have an economic impact on the local region. This is just one more issue that Portugal needs to factor into its decision-making as it presses forward to a future that is unknown.

In conclusion, it is apparent that Portugal’s track record within NATO is respectable and even commendable. The strategic value of Lajes Field Air Base has historically been vital to the United States and NATO’s missions. Portugal’s contributions to NATO have not only been the provision of basing rights for the United States and NATO members, but have also included active participation in missions dating from the foundation of the alliance to the present. Portugal has obvious obstacles in its

¹²² Heiko, “Strategic Cultures,” 284.

¹²³ 65th Air Base Wing Public Affairs, “Lajes Field Drawdown as Part of Force Structuring Announced,” United States European Command, December 13, 2012, <http://www.lajes.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123329841>.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Bargery, “Transition,” 3.

¹²⁶ Ibid. 7.

near future to deal with, not only economically but militarily as well. How Portugal decides to resolve these issues will lead it into a new era, one that might involve more participation with the EU and less with NATO.

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IV. MID-ATLANTIC POWER PROJECTION AND CURRENT REDUCTIONS AT LAJES AIR BASE

Prime Minister Winston Churchill once wrote about World War II, “The only thing that ever really frightened me during the war was the U-boat peril.”¹²⁷ This simple statement bore great weight on the collective minds of allied forces during the initial phases of World War II. The security of the Mid-Atlantic region was a vital step in curtailing German U-boat domination on allied naval forces. On 17 August 1943, the Portuguese and British governments signed an agreement authorizing Great Britain’s utilization of Lajes Field (located about 3,000 miles off the coast of the United States and 900 miles from the Portuguese mainland) in support of the Allied forces at war.¹²⁸ By 29 December 1943, Lajes Field was assigned as station No. 15 of the U.S. North Atlantic Wing, within the Army Air Transportation.¹²⁹ The steps taken by Britain and the United States in the Trident Conference of May 1943 solidified efforts to occupy the Azores with Allied forces and take Italy out of the war.¹³⁰

After World War II ended, Lajes Field Air Base flourished and became more than just a refueling base. By 1967 during the Cold War era, the U.S. Navy established its presence at Lajes Field Air Base by activating its Naval Air Facility in support of the P-3 Orion mission of Soviet submarine detection within the region.¹³¹

The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact signaled the commencement of NATO’s steps in trimming and reshaping its military presence and capacity for power projection within Europe and the Mid-Atlantic region.

This chapter identifies the steps specifically taken at Lajes Field Air Base and in Portugal in slowly reducing U.S. military forces and capabilities, eventually getting to the

¹²⁷ Gary Sheffield, “The Battle of the Atlantic: The U-boat Peril,” *BBC*, last modified March 30, 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwtwo/battle_atlantic_01.shtml.

¹²⁸ Martins, *Base Aérea das Lajes*, 106.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 107.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 88.

current state of affairs. This chapter presents a clear perspective of the limited efficacy of NATO's current power projection capacity within the Mid-Atlantic area. It also discusses current events involving NATO and Russia, and the possibility of resurrecting the Alliance's vigilance in order to safeguard the Mid-Atlantic region with renewed vigor.

A. PORTUGAL'S ULTRAMAR WAR AND ITS IMPACT ON LAJES

The years after World War II hardly slowed down Lajes Field Air Base and its multi-tier mission. Lajes had the responsibilities of refueling transient aircraft, keeping vigilance over a large portion of the Mid-Atlantic, and hosting a communications relay station as part of a global communications system. Lajes Field handles the Atlantic portion of secure communications, in support of the U.S. National Command Authority.¹³² Finally, Lajes Field served as an alternate landing site for NASA's space shuttle, in case of a re-entry abort.¹³³

The American components stationed at Lajes Field Air Base were not the only entities empowered with important missions at that location. The Portuguese Air Force also had an important role at Lajes Field Air Base. The Portuguese government kept two fighter squadrons at Lajes Field Air Base in defense of the Portuguese Air Space for that region. Lisbon also established a search and rescue squadron to expedite addressing any emergencies at sea or on any of the nine islands within the archipelago. Finally, the Portuguese Air Force was and remains the sole custodian of Lajes Field Air Base's physical security. One could say that Lajes Field Air Base was at the tip of the spear when it came to NATO's Mid-Atlantic power projection.

Lajes Field Air Base's mission was not perturbed by civil unrest stemming from Portugal's colonial (Ultramar) war from 1963 (the official date of the first troop

¹³² Charles Thompson, "Global Communications, Team Lajes in 'The Fight,'" 65th Air Base Wing Public Affairs, February 1, 2007, <http://www.lajes.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123039547>.

¹³³ Jason Tudor, "Exercise to Test Space Shuttle Rescue Capabilities," *DOD News*, January 23, 2004, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=27447>.

deployments) to 1974.¹³⁴ Portugal was one of the last European countries to hesitantly relinquish its hold on key colonial countries with Africa and Asia. According to Michael Hasgor,

The Angolan uprising started with hundreds of members of the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) attacking official buildings in Luanda in February 1961. Uprisings followed in Guinea (1963) and in Mozambique (1964). The ruling Salazarists decided to not pull out. Their decision was not only dictated by the wish to defend vested interests, but it was also strongly felt that the shock of losing an empire would be sufficient to kill the regime, too.¹³⁵

While the Salazarist government strategized its options in preserving its colonial dominion and maintaining the economic advantages derived from these colonies, it was unknowingly engaging the wheels of change by placing Portugal's troops and Africa-bound immigrants in life-threatening danger. Ultimately, Portugal's actions in the Ultramar war fostered a military coup, which irreversibly changed Portugal's government, colonial power, and global economic status.¹³⁶

B. THE REVOLUTION OF CARNATIONS (MILITARY COUP)

Portugal's African wars had adverse effects on its population and influenced U.S. foreign policy views toward Portugal's role in Africa. The Ultramar War was taking its toll on the Portuguese military. Guerrilla tactics and atrocities by both African and Portuguese militaries created serious doubts by Portugal's citizens about the government's ability to win the war and bring back Portugal's military.¹³⁷ Portugal's influence on U.S. foreign policy views in Africa allowed the war to continue. The U.S. support for Portugal's efforts to keep its African colonies stemmed from an agreement to honor each other's interests. The United States allowed Portugal to divert NATO-

¹³⁴ Michael Harsgor, *Portugal in Revolution* (London, Great Britain: Sage Publications, 1976), 6.

¹³⁵ Harsgor, *Portugal in Revolution*, 7.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ David Birmingham, *Concise History of Portugal* (Cambridge, Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 175.

assigned military equipment to the Ultramar war zone.¹³⁸ In exchange, Portugal supported a renewal of the Lajes Field Air Base's lease.¹³⁹ According to David Birmingham,

The [Portuguese] Army was re-equipped and given the budgetary resources to fight a major war while its officers were promoted and given opportunities to make private fortunes on the side while serving in the colonies. The officer corps was particularly sweetened by its control of the black market in currency which enabled a brigadier to build a high-rise apartment block after each tour of duty in Africa. The colonial rebels, by contrast, were so ferociously dragooned by the invading colonial army that thousands of people were killed in Angola and many more joined the columns of refugees who fled to Zaire.¹⁴⁰

In 1974, General Antonio de Spínola (a high ranking Portuguese general) published a book questioning the governance of Portugal, and junior officers took notice. Junior officers had secret meetings in the countryside, far away from the surveillance of the Portuguese secret police. Before dawn, on 25 April 1974, a military coup was initiated by taking over a radio station in Lisbon and playing a designated song, signaling the beginning of the coup. Portugal's revolution was for the most part bloodless. Columns of tanks convoyed to Lisbon from neighboring forts. Once the tanks were in position and citizens heard of the coup from the radio, crowds massed by the tanks, and people garnished them with carnations. The Portuguese revolution brought much change with it, a bit more change than the United States and the other NATO Allies expected.¹⁴¹

Portugal had its revolution with the assistance of the communist party. The United States and the rest of the NATO Allies had no interest in supporting a communist revolution, since their interests were already satisfied with the current regime and a communist government might be aligned with the Soviet Union. Inaction by the United States and the other NATO Allies proved to be the wrong answer. By the time Portugal started to establish a new government, the communist party was already in favor with

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Birmingham, *Concise History*, 175.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 176.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

many of the soon-to-be governing officials of Portugal, putting the United States and NATO as a whole in a very uncomfortable situation.¹⁴² Scott MacDonald summed up the situation as follows:

If Portugal fell to the forces of international communism, Western Europe would be outflanked from the rear and an important NATO member lost. The strategic bases in the Azores would also be lost unless a local conservative pro-Western separatist movement was successful in gaining independence.¹⁴³

At the time of the Portuguese revolution, the United States was caught unaware of its rapid development. The United States had no consensus on how to react to the Portuguese revolution. U.S. forces were already withdrawing from a failed democratization operation in Vietnam as well as dealing with a crippled presidency, the aftermath of Watergate.¹⁴⁴ These events pushed Congress to a state of hesitance in dealing with international concerns, which at the time originated mostly from the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁵ Nixon's administration was followed by the Ford presidency, but the Secretary of State was not replaced. Henry Kissinger remained in office and managed U.S. foreign policy. Portugal became a hot topic for Kissinger, since Portugal's revolution was surprisingly unmonitored by the U.S. administration or the U.S. Embassy in Lisbon, Portugal.¹⁴⁶ Kissinger's analysis of the situation was bleak. He saw no chance for Portugal to democratize.¹⁴⁷ Kissinger went as far as replacing the U.S. Embassy's staff in Portugal for recommending a passive stance on Portugal's revolution.¹⁴⁸ MacDonald elaborates on this issue as follows:

Kissinger, according to U.S. Portuguese scholar Kenneth Maxwell, "abandoned hope for a democratic outcome and toyed with various counter-revolutionary options—some paramilitary, some involving

¹⁴² Birmingham, *Concise History*, 176.

¹⁴³ Scott MacDonald, *European Destiny, Atlantic Transformations: Portuguese Foreign Policy under the Second Republic, 1974–1992* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1993), 51.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

separatism in the Azores.” Kissinger had earlier likened Soares, then foreign minister and a leader of democratic forces, to Aleksandr Kérensky who failed to keep the Bolsheviks from power in Russia in 1917.¹⁴⁹

Fortunately, the United States and the other NATO Allies did not have to implement any plans of supporting Azorean separatism from mainland Portugal. Portugal’s voters preferred a socialist government, not a communist one, relieving U.S. and NATO doubts, and clearing the way to a more manageable set of relationships regarding shared interests.¹⁵⁰

The strategic value of the Azores and Portugal were clearly high for U.S. and NATO foreign strategy planning, to the point of having a backup plan of subverting the Azores’ allegiance to Portugal, in order to keep the Alliance’s strategic advantage in the Mid-Atlantic. The strategic priorities of the United States and NATO concerning Mid-Atlantic power projection changed when the Cold War ended with the fall of Communism in Europe.

C. INITIAL REDUCTION OF POWER PROJECTION IN THE MID-ATLANTIC

The period between the end of World War II and the fall of Communism in Europe saw many changes within the force structure at Lajes Field Air Base.¹⁵¹ An important unit established at Lajes Field Air Base was a U.S. Army Port Battalion which assumed its duties in 1952.¹⁵² The Port Battalion evolved to what is today called the Terminal Transportation Unit (TTU). The function of the TTU was to establish control over the loading and unloading of supplies from the local port of Praia Bay to Lajes Field Air Base a few miles away.¹⁵³ The TTU is still functioning to this day, but in a much smaller capacity. In 1957, Lajes Field Air Base activated the Naval Air Facility, established by the U.S. Department of the Navy. This unit played an important role

¹⁴⁹ Kenneth Maxwell, “Portuguese Defense and Foreign Policy: An Overview,” 6, quoted in MacDonald, *European Destiny*, 5.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Martins, *Base Aérea das Lajes*, 88.

¹⁵² 65th Air Base, *Short History*, 10.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

within the base. It supported any naval aviation operations dealing directly or indirectly with the Azorean region, and it also set the foundation for establishing a rotational P-3 sub-hunting mission.¹⁵⁴ By 1967, the Lajes Naval Air Facility had the distinct mission of flying sorties around the Azores, utilizing the P-3 airframe over large areas of the Atlantic to monitor and track Soviet submarine activity. The Lajes Field Air Base Historian has elaborated on this issue as follows:

The sortie rates generated by the Navy were exceeding those of the Air Force during the late 1960s and early 1970s as Cold War tensions flared. The Department of Defense made plans to transfer U.S. military command at Lajes from the USAF to the Navy in 1974.¹⁵⁵

The transition from the U.S. Air Force to the U.S. Navy never materialized due to the Arab-Israeli conflict, which started in October 1973.¹⁵⁶ The Yom Kippur War was instrumental in keeping Lajes Field Air Base under Air Force Command. The Soviet Union elevated the United States interest in the Yom Kippur War when it started supplying the aggressors in the conflict. President Richard Nixon sided with Israel, putting pressure on European governments to support logistical movements of supplies through their bases.¹⁵⁷ The Europeans feared retaliation from the Arab oil-producing nations in the form of a denial of oil supplies. Portugal was the only European country to fully support the United States decision, giving landing rights to Lajes Field Air Base.¹⁵⁸ Operation Nickel Grass was launched from Lajes Field Air Base with 136 landings and 88 departures in the first 48 hours of the operation. At the end of Operation Nickel Grass, 22,395 tons of cargo had passed through Lajes Field Air Base.¹⁵⁹

While the Navy did not take command of Lajes Field Air Base, it did continue its sub-hunting mission until beyond the end of the Cold War. The teardown of the Berlin Wall in 1989 signified the end of communism in Europe, and this brought change. Soon

¹⁵⁴ Martins, *Base Aérea das Lajes*, 88.

¹⁵⁵ 65th Air Base, *Short History*, 11–12.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

after the end of the Cold War, the Warsaw Pact was dissolved, prompting NATO to re-evaluate its posture within Europe.¹⁶⁰ The United States also took a step back in its force projection objectives and decided that the best course of action was to reduce the size of its Europe-based forces, in view of the diminished threat to Europe.

The United States Navy decided to deactivate its two naval units at Lajes Field Air Base by 1994.¹⁶¹ This reduction single handedly eliminated the monitoring and tracking of subs within the Azores Mid-Atlantic perimeter and essentially reduced the power projection capabilities of the United States and NATO. The main housing facilities for the P-3 Orion aircraft were demolished, leaving Lajes without any capability to house any aircraft.¹⁶²

Lajes Field Air Base mission with the twenty-first century fell into two major tasks. The first mission was to function as a fuel repository. Lajes Field still is the largest Air Force jet fuel repository in Europe, with a capability of storing over 65 million gallons of JP-8 (jet propulsion fuel) for dispersal to transient aircraft.¹⁶³ Lajes Field still continues its secondary mission as a high frequency (HF) relay site for secure communications within the Atlantic region.

D. CURRENT AND FUTURE REDUCTIONS OF POWER PROJECTION

After the Navy's departure in 1994, the U.S. force presence at Lajes Field averaged between 1,100 and 1,200 military personnel, Department of Defense civilians, and dependents. Lajes Field Air Base also remained an accompanied assignment. In other words, family members could accompany military personnel for the duration of their assignments at Lajes Field. The local national population at Lajes averaged around 800, not including non-appropriated funds employees. The number of such employees fluctuated on a monthly basis, depending on Lajes Field temporary hire contract expiration dates and decisions on whether to renew or pass over the contract.

¹⁶⁰ 65th Air Base, *Short History*, 19.

¹⁶¹ Martins, *Base Aérea das Lajes*, 123.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ McDonald, "Team Lajes."

By 2012, based on the amount of housing and military buildings vacant but maintained in the Lajes annual budget, the base was still postured structurally for Cold War era operations. Military budget constraints started to loom throughout the Department of Defense (DOD) and its military branches, and these cuts were eventually to trickle down to Lajes Field Air Base.¹⁶⁴ On December, 13, 2012, James Townsend, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for European and NATO Policy, disseminated a press release revealing that Lajes Field Air Base was one of the designated bases to be reduced in force structure.¹⁶⁵ According to Jim Garamone,

The United States is reducing staff and operations at Lajes Field, Portugal, officials said today ... The decision reflects U.S. operational requirements and is part of a DOD effort to find efficiencies and cost-cutting measures worldwide. There are now roughly 1,100 U.S. and Portuguese personnel at the base and U.S. officials say the workforce will likely shrink by at least half. Aircraft operations support will also drop, and the United States will return roughly 300 of the 400 buildings on base to the Portuguese government, officials said.¹⁶⁶

Townsend's press release set a marker for Lajes Field Air Base's most dramatic reduction.¹⁶⁷ The press release raised many questions relevant to the impact on the mission of Lajes Field Air Base, the willingness of the Portuguese government to absorb 300 structures in its already saturated housing market, and the flood of Portuguese civilians either retired or unemployed in Portugal's struggling economy. These questions were not answered until United States Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta visited Portugal on 15 January 2013.¹⁶⁸ Panetta's visit was a sobering display of reality to Portugal and more importantly to the autonomous government of the Azores. In his last visit to Europe as Secretary of Defense to discuss NATO affairs, Panetta made it a point to stop in Lisbon first and discuss the military and civilian force reductions at the base,

¹⁶⁴ Jim Garamone, "U.S. Reduces Staffing, Operations at Lajes Field," American Forces Press Service, December 13, 2012, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=118789>.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ "Press Conference by Secretary Panetta and Minister Aguiar-Branco in Lisbon Portugal," Department of Defense, accessed November 2, 2014, <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=5176>.

personally addressing this important topic with Portugal and its people.¹⁶⁹ Panetta commenced his press conference by praising Portugal for its support and contributions in the Afghanistan and Iraq missions, as well as Portugal's participation in NATO's Kosovo mission.¹⁷⁰ Panetta went on to explain the United States financial challenges and how they pertained to the reduction of U.S. forces worldwide, not just at Lajes Field Air Base.¹⁷¹

Panetta assured the Portuguese people that Lajes Field Air Base was still a valid strategic facility for the United States and NATO, and that all efforts would be made to mitigate the economic impact in the local region and even to strengthen military to military relations between the United States and Portugal.¹⁷² To quote Panetta:

Recognizing the concerns that the [Portuguese] minister made, we have delayed the transition of that reduction to October of 2014. We will maintain, in addition, a 24/7 fire and emergency services there and we are committed to a 3-to-1 ratio of employees from the local community. For every one that the United States employs, we will employ three of the local community with regards to jobs.¹⁷³

While the information on the delay in transition and the 24/7 fire and emergency services was accurate, Secretary Panetta was mistaken on the hiring ratio of 3-to-1.¹⁷⁴ The original and still current ratio is 2-to-1—that is, for every United States employee two local nationals are employed.¹⁷⁵ This particular subject came to the surface in several meetings between the Portuguese government and the Lajes Field Air Base leadership, but was somewhat mitigated by a clearer U.S. explanation.¹⁷⁶ Panetta's press conference

¹⁶⁹ "Press Conference," Department of Defense.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Bargery, "Transition," 7.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

concluded with a question and answer session, which dealt with diverse aspects of Portugal's role in NATO as well as United States support in transitioning Lajes Field Air Base to a reduced status.¹⁷⁷

Lajes Field Air Base was designated for drawdown, solely for cost-cutting savings, which for the Air Force amounted to \$35 million annually, at a cost of a major reduction of personnel, facilities, and mission capacity.¹⁷⁸ More detailed personnel reductions were explained at a Lajes Field Air Base town hall meeting, conducted by the Wing Commander, Colonel Chris Bargery, U.S. Air Force, on December 19, 2012.¹⁷⁹ The reduction of military personnel would leave an end strength of 170 personnel from a current total of 675.¹⁸⁰ DOD civilians would be reduced to three positions from a current status of 98 positions.¹⁸¹ The local national employees would also be reduced from a current total of 677 to a future status of 354.¹⁸² Assignments to Lajes Field Air Base changed from accompanied to un-accompanied, because the base would not support the dependents of military personnel in future assignments.¹⁸³ This would bring about a reduction from 600 to 800 people (depending on the size of the family) to an end state of zero dependents.¹⁸⁴

As stated by Secretary Panetta, Lajes would maintain its full capacity in two areas, the fire department and the joint (U.S.-Portuguese) control tower.¹⁸⁵ A more significant reduction was the cutback in operational hours of Lajes's active runway. Lajes Field Air Base had a 24-hour / seven-days a week operational runway.¹⁸⁶ This would be

¹⁷⁷ Defense.gov Transcript, "Press Conference."

¹⁷⁸ 65th Air Base Wing Public Affairs, "Lajes Field Drawdown."

¹⁷⁹ 65th Air Base Wing Public Affairs, "Team Lajes Gets Briefed about Future of the Installation," United States European Command, December 19, 2012, <http://www.lajes.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123330492>.

¹⁸⁰ Bargery, "Transitions," 7.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ "Press Conference," Department of Defense.

¹⁸⁶ Bargery, "Transitions," 4.

reduced to an eight-hour / five-days a week schedule, severely impacting scheduling options for any trans-Atlantic military sortie passing through Lajes Field Air Base for either crew rest or refueling purposes. Emergency or priority missions would still be serviced by Lajes Field Air Base, but these would be few and far between.

The reduction of forces at Lajes also led to a smaller footprint in the Portuguese Air Base.¹⁸⁷ This footprint directly relates to the reduction of 300 facilities out of the 400 designated as U.S. Forces exclusive facilities.¹⁸⁸ As noted previously, 300 buildings would be given back to the Portuguese government. This issue caused a problem within the designated parameters of the technical agreement between the United States and Portugal, which directly relates to Lajes Field Air Base and all its operations. Under the provisions of the technical agreement any U.S. facility not needed would be offered to the Portuguese Air Force for its utilization.¹⁸⁹ If the Portuguese Air Force declines to take over the facility, under the technical agreement, the facility in question will be demolished at the expense of the U.S. Air Force and the land will be restored to its original condition before it is given back to the Portuguese Air Force.¹⁹⁰ If the Portuguese government insisted on adhering to this clause, the sheer monetary sum for the demolition of the buildings and the restoration of the soil would be extremely costly, directly eliminating and surpassing the projected annual \$35 million dollar savings.

External effects on the local government and community were not taken into consideration when the reduction of forces was decided.¹⁹¹ The local economic impact of families leaving—including teachers—will create a void in the local marketplace. Houses rented to military personnel outside the base will be reduced to zero, since the military workforce on Lajes Field will be living in dormitories for the 12 months assigned at Lajes Field. The elimination of accompanied status for Lajes Field affects the local economy. There will be no need for nannies, housekeepers, and gardeners, which historically

¹⁸⁷ Bargery, “Transitions,” 15.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ State, *Technical Agreement*.

¹⁹¹ Garamone, “U.S. Reductions.”

depended on the U.S. families for extra income. Above all, the power projection capacity that Lajes Field Air Base furnished from World War II to the present would practically disappear, sending would-be global hegemon an unintended message of weakness within the Mid-Atlantic region.

Currently, Lajes Field Air Base is in holding status for its designated force reduction. Extensive lobbying from Luso-American congressmen and congressmen representing large communities of constituents of Portuguese descent introduced a provision in the Fiscal Year 2014 National Defense Authorization Act, to halt any reduction of forces at Lajes Field Air Base, until after the DOD officially briefs the U.S. Congress on U.S. military infrastructure consolidation plans in Europe.¹⁹² While, this event has not yet occurred, and Lajes Air Base remains in a waiting status of indefinite duration, it only stops the reduction of military members not their dependents. Lajes Field Air Base has been designated as an un-accompanied assignment.¹⁹³ The amount of dependents is gradually reducing through the natural rotation of accompanied assignments converting to un-accompanied.

E. TECHNICAL / LABOR AGREEMENTS, AND WORK AGREEMENT

Shortly after the reduction of forces announcement was released in December 2012, Lajes Field's bilateral documents became essential sources of reference in determining what actions needed to be done in Lajes Field's future. The technical agreement¹⁹⁴ is one of the essential documents governing Lajes Field Air Base's existence. The technical agreement was developed between the United States and Portugal, in absence of a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). This document provides detailed information on aspects of access to the base, exclusivity of U.S. facilities, and the mission scope of certain resources within Lajes Field Air Base. All issues, whether

¹⁹² 65th Air Base Wing Public Affairs, "Lajes Field Transition Information," United States European Command, April, 2014, <http://www.lajes.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=21000>.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ State, *Technical Agreement*.

large or quotidian, are first referenced in this document. The scheduled reduction of forces at Lajes Field Air Base will considerably cut the Portuguese workforce with a projected cut of over 300 civilians.¹⁹⁵

The *Labor Agreement*¹⁹⁶ and *Work Regulation*¹⁹⁷ documents, produced in conjunction with the Technical Agreement, became important reference documents to the Portuguese employees. The *Work Regulation* is most important because it explains the important function of the Lajes Field Air Base Committee of Employee Representatives (CRT).¹⁹⁸

The CRT is initially identified as a valid organization within the Labor Agreement document, which officially represents the best interests of the Portuguese laborers at Lajes Field Air Base.¹⁹⁹ This group is not considered a union. It functions as an elected group of current Lajes Field Air Base Portuguese workers, which is endorsed by both the U.S. 65th Air Base Wing Commander and the Portuguese Air Base No.4 Commander. The CRT voices the concerns of the Portuguese Lajes Field labor force as a whole.²⁰⁰ Labor related complaints or concerns are presented to the CRT and then forwarded to both the U.S. and Portuguese commanders for resolution. The CRT had been disbanded for over seven years, before the notification of reductions at Lajes was announced, soon after, the CRT was revived.

The CRT is considered an independent entity from any Lajes Field Air Base organization. Being independent, the committee is not limited to interactions with only the base's military leadership. The CRT has been proactive in trying to mitigate the

¹⁹⁵ Dnoticias.pt, "Açores "Não Aguentam" Redução de Efectivos na Base das Lajes [Azores, "can't sustain" reduction of workforce at Lajes Air Base]," Dnoticias.pt, November 24, 2012, <http://www.dnoticias.pt/actualidade/pais/356609-acores-nao-aguentam-reducao-de-effectivos-na-base-das-lajes>.

¹⁹⁶ Department of State, *Agreement on Cooperation and Defense between the United States of America and Portugal, Labor Agreement* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1995).

¹⁹⁷ Department of State, *Agreement on Cooperation and Defense between the United States of America and Portugal, Work Regulation* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1995).

¹⁹⁸ State, *Labor Agreement*, 7.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ State, *Work Regulation*, 17–9.

projected losses Portuguese workers, by initiating talks with Azorean government officials, Portuguese government officials, and civilian interest groups.

While the *Labor Agreement* document gives validity to the CRT, the *Work Regulation* delves deeper into the duties, rights, and responsibilities of the CRT.²⁰¹ This document is invaluable in clarifying the scope of the CRT's influence on local and national entities in its attempts to reverse the reduction of forces decree. The CRT has a prominent status within the local public eye. The efforts of this group are amplified by coverage of local and national media. This has at times caused public opinion to become skewed, since journalists have unrestricted access to the CRT but not to the U.S. personnel at Lajes Field Air Base. Requests from the media have to be vetted through the Portuguese Air Command, and are mostly denied.²⁰²

A better understanding of Portuguese public opinion concerning U.S.–Portuguese relations is provided by a report entitled *The U.S.—Global Leadership Project, A Partnership Between the Meridian International Center and Gallup*.²⁰³ The Gallup report provides detailed data from a global international relations perspective, with the United States as a focal point. The report offers a global analysis of approval or disapproval of the U.S. government's foreign policy performance.²⁰⁴ The Gallup report on Portugal showed a negative trend in approval of U.S. leadership decisions from 2007 to 2012. The highest level of approval that the Portuguese had of U.S. leadership was in 2009, recorded at 51 percent.²⁰⁵ Portugal's approval rate for the United States dropped to 36 percent in 2012.²⁰⁶ The decline in support by Portuguese citizens may influence the opinion of that country's government. A low level of support for foreign military forces on Portuguese soil may at some point become a burden to Portugal's sovereignty and weaken the alliance between the United States and Portugal.

²⁰¹ State, *Work Regulation*, 17–9.

²⁰² State, *Technical Agreement*.

²⁰³ Gallup, *The U.S.-Global Leadership Project: A Partnership between the Meridian International Center and Gallup* (Washington DC: Gallup, Inc., 2013), 1–24.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

F. CONCLUSION

The strategic value of Portugal's Mid-Atlantic region has been recognized since the initial phases of World War II. The establishment of the Lajes Field Air Base by British and United States forces within the Azores during World War II became an investment that paid for itself many times over. Lajes Field Air Base has had important missions since its establishment. From the end of World War II to the end of the Cold War, Lajes Field Air Base served in a critical capacity in decisive missions around the world. Lajes Field Air Base also refined its missions to keep pace with modernization. It has been designated as a re-fueling base, a fuel repository site, an air tanker base, a submarine hunting base, a transitory base, a high frequency communications relay site, and an alternative landing site for the now defunct space shuttle, in case of launch abort.

The strategic value of Lajes Field Air Base is undeniable to any European strategist. Lajes Field Air Base has reduced its forces in the past and has acquired new missions with new forces, but this latest proposal of reduction puts Lajes Field Air Base just above a mothball base (a base with minimal capacity, waiting for future activation).

While the financial savings were eagerly compiled, it appears there was no political or military-operational feasibility study produced.²⁰⁷ Will saving \$35 million each year guarantee the ability of Lajes Field Air Base to maintain or expand for the future in response to threats to the United States and NATO as a whole? If Russian submarines were to be active again within the Mid-Atlantic, would the Portuguese government allow for a new mission at Lajes Field, possibly bringing back the U.S. Navy's sub-hunting mission? These questions will be especially relevant once 300 structures have been transferred to the Portuguese government.

The CRT brings one more layer in the preservation of the Portuguese workforce at Lajes, and has the workers best interests as its core mission. The CRT has been proactive in voicing its objection on the topic of the reduction of Portuguese jobs at Lajes, and has had the backing of the local and national governments.

²⁰⁷ Garamone, "U.S. Reductions."

The Azorean population has had a long history of immigration to the United States and Canada, among other countries. These immigrants have established large Portuguese-American communities on both coasts of the United States and Hawaii, generations have passed since the first immigrants from the Azores set foot on U.S. soil, but the Portuguese heritage has lasted the test of time. Currently, there are key U.S. congressmen of Portuguese descent who successfully lobbied for halting any reductions at Lajes Field.²⁰⁸ The proposal was approved in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (H.R.3547). Lajes Field Air Base is currently in a holding pattern waiting for further notification of how it should proceed.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ 65th Air Base Wing Public Affairs, “Transition.”

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

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V. CONCLUSION

The future of Lajes Field Air Base is currently in a state of fluid uncertainty. What is certain is its past and present strategic importance, its consistent significance in historical mission successes, and its unwavering bond with its Portuguese community as witnessed by the generations of Portuguese nationals that have worked at Lajes Field Air Base.

An alliance between England and Portugal started centuries before anyone in Europe knew that the Western hemisphere existed. This shared history became a key element in enabling the British to initiate their mission at Lajes Field and eventually open the door for the United States to become the major foreign stakeholder in strategically protecting this valuable territory.²¹⁰

From the end of World War II in 1945 to the end of the Cold War in 1989–1991, the gradual reductions in forces, as well as the changes in essential missions involving Lajes Field Air Base negligibly affected the functionality and importance of the Air Base. The first significant reduction of forces and missions at Lajes Field Air Base was experienced shortly after the end of the Cold War.²¹¹ The termination of the U.S. Navy’s submarine monitoring mission in 1994 brought with it the elimination of any permanent U.S. Navy presence within the Mid-Atlantic region, which reduced U.S. and NATO power projection capabilities within the region.²¹²

The U.S. Department of Defense press release concerning a substantial reduction of forces at Lajes Field in December 2012 raised concerns in the Portuguese and Azorean governments. U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta addressed Portugal’s concerns when he visited Lisbon a few weeks later and talked in more detail about the reduction of forces at Lajes Field Air Base.²¹³ Portugal’s main concerns were the impact of the

²¹⁰ Page, *First Global Village*, 75.

²¹¹ 65th Air Base, *Short History*.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ “Press Conference,” Department of Defense.

reduction of Portuguese workers at Lajes Field, and the possibility of what Portugal could regard as the abandonment of 300 U.S. buildings without a reutilization plan.²¹⁴

An effort to mitigate economic effects had already been under way by the time Secretary Panetta visited Portugal. The United States European Command (EUCOM) in conjunction with the U.S. Embassy in Lisbon, and the U.S. Ambassador to Portugal, Allan Katz, coordinated a visit by the Business Executives for National Security (BENS) as subject matter experts in suggesting possible alternate measures to address the predicted negative impact of force reductions at Lajes Field on the Azorean economy.²¹⁵ The BENS findings document released on March 15, 2013 states

BENS assembled a group of senior business leaders for this advisory visit, including individual experts in real estate development and management; residential and commercial finance; private equity, venture capital and investment banking; energy production; military support services; electric power generation and logistics.²¹⁶

The BENS visit became an important and rare opportunity for the Azorean and Portuguese governments to receive free business recommendations from senior executives with proven success. At full operational capacity, Lajes Field Air Base's economic contribution to Portugal and the Azores was estimated to be between \$105–150 million per year.²¹⁷ Economic revenue on Terceira Island, where Lajes Field Air Base is located, was estimated at 14 percent of the island's gross domestic product (GDP).²¹⁸ The BENS visit took the group of experts initially to Terceira Island for a visit of the primary area of concern, which was Lajes Field Air Base.²¹⁹ The group then talked with local and regional government officials.²²⁰ After assessing the island's potential, the BENS team

²¹⁴ Bargery, "Transitions," 15–18.

²¹⁵ Business Executives for National Security, "Findings of the BENS Advisory Delegation on Commercial Opportunities in the Azores," Business Executives for National Security, March 15, 2013, 1, <http://www.bens.org/document.doc?id=218>

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 2.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid.

visited Lisbon and met with the U.S. Ambassador and Portuguese political and military leaders.²²¹ The BENS team released its findings to the public on March 15, 2013.

The observations made by the BENS team were based on the collective experience of the team's experts. The BENS team emphasized one main area of expansion and profit for Terceira Island, and the team classified the opportunities into short and long term economic stability categories.²²² Expansion of the Azorean tourism industry was one of the suggestions that the BENS team put in first place. The Azorean tourism circuit is underutilized compared to that of mainland Portugal and the Madeira Archipelago. The lack of support from the local and national governments makes it increasingly hard for tourism to flourish within the Azores Islands. A monopoly on the allowable air service has limited the flexibility of tourists trying to reach the Azorean Archipelago.²²³ Currently, only one airline flies between the United States and the Azores; and it is partially owned by the regional government, putting in question the willingness of the local government to share this promising business opportunity eager budget air carriers.²²⁴ BENS also noted the lack of expenditure on advertisements designed to attract tourism from the United States and Europe toward the Azores.²²⁵ While there has been some mention of budget air carriers interested in providing transport to and from the Azores, no solid progress has been achieved on this issue.

One of the important BENS recommendations to stimulate economic activity in the Azores was that of utilizing Terceira Island as an aircraft register.²²⁶ The BENS team spelled out the favorable conditions for an aircraft registry as follows:

The business case for an aircraft registry in the Azores could emphasize the islands' potentially favorable tax and fee structure, a strong customer orientation, a specialization in certain types of corporate or private aircraft, a conventional physical location, and a marketing focus on aircraft owned

²²¹ BENS, "Findings," 2–6.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid., 2–3.

²²⁶ Ibid., 5.

by businesses operating in African or Asian countries having a close historical relationship with the Azores.²²⁷

The BENS findings document had a few more suggestions for the Portuguese and Azorean governments. The BENS suggested the privatization of military housing and converting it to a resort or campus housing for students. It also suggested converting the combined middle school and high school into a university or vocational school.²²⁸

These suggestions put forth by the BENS team have been submitted to the Portuguese and Azorean governments for their consideration. It would take considerable effort and coordination between the Portuguese and Azorean governments to take action on many of the suggestions put forth by the BENS team. The Portuguese government has concentrated its efforts on stopping or delaying the reduction of forces at Lajes Field Air Base, rather than engaging on the BENS suggestions. The benefits gained by implementing some of the BENS suggestions would be valuable for the struggling economy of the Azores, regardless of whether the national and local governments are successful in stopping the reduction of forces at Lajes Field Air Base.

The BENS team focused solely on civilian alternatives to mitigate the economic impact of the reduction of forces at Lajes Field Air Base. The U.S. Air Force did not have any alternate measures to take into consideration other than the reduction of forces and the reduction on the operational window of the Lajes Field Air Base airstrip to save 35 million dollars annually.²²⁹

Recent events involving Russia have put into perspective the importance of being prepared, if necessary, to revive old Cold War countermeasures to secure the United States and its NATO Allies. Russia's recent probing of Canadian, European, and U.S. airspace with its military aircraft has been part of an escalating show of force since Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014.²³⁰

²²⁷ BENS, "Findings," 5.

²²⁸ Ibid., 7.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Sam Jones, "Jets Scrambled to Counter Russian Warplanes," *Financial Times*, October 30, 2014. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/2dd3bdb6-5f95-11e4-8c27-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3Hgl9woXz>.

Since the termination of the U.S. Navy's submarine monitoring mission at Lajes Field Air Base in 1994, the Mid-Atlantic region has essentially been without surveillance for over two decades. The re-activation of a U.S. naval facility at Lajes Field Air Base would enable the United States and its NATO Allies to detect any future clandestine maritime movements in the Mid-Atlantic region by a foreign military establishment. The reintroduction of the U.S. Navy to Lajes Field Air Base would also bring a cost sharing factor, essentially reducing the cost burden on the Air Force. The establishment of a Navy mission would also bring military members back to the base, which would re-validate the utilization of buildings that the Air Force designated as non-essential. Military housing, schools, and offices could be jointly operated by the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Navy, maximizing the efficiency of the base. Lastly, the influx of a new mission at Lajes Field Air Base would mitigate the negative economic impact of U.S. force reductions on the local and national governments of Portugal.

A re-alignment of Lajes Field Air Base to a more mission-centric major command could also revitalize the base's mission to better suit its primary user. The reduction of forces at Lajes Field Air Base will reduce the window of operability for its runway.²³¹ Lajes Field Air Base currently falls under the United States Air Force Europe (USAFE) command. Lajes Field Air Base's primary mission is refueling aircraft, but USAFE aircraft are not Lajes Field's primary customer. The re-assignment of Lajes Field Air Base to the Air Combat Command (ACC) would align the base's primary mission with that of its main customer, giving Lajes Field Air Base a higher priority in assessments of mission necessity.

In conclusion, while one cannot predict the future, it is always prudent to err on the side of caution. The Azores Archipelago, Terceira Island, and Lajes Field Air Base have offered a strategic advantage through epic moments in history. Once the reduction of forces is completed, the Air Force will have to consider the reduction of its physical footprint on an island that has a finite quantity of land. Terceira Island measures roughly 19 by 12 miles. Once the land the U.S. Air Force is currently utilizing is given back to the

²³¹ Bargery, "Transitions."

Portuguese government, it will assuredly be privatized and utilized for civilian development. It will be either impossible or cost-prohibitive to regain any land back that Lajes Field Air Base requires for future missions.

The strategic and communal bond between allies cultivated over more than 60 years of the utilization of Lajes Field Air Base becomes a hard factor to conveniently omit as irrelevant in evaluating the consequences of the reduction of the base's size and force. Sometimes the enduring value of a strategic asset outweighs the temporary budgetary constraints of a global power.

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