

# The New York Times

Founded in 1851

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demonstration of responsiveness at the summit is sure to enhance the American people's respect for, and trust in, their Government.

## Portugal's Decision

The ideological and personality divergences inside Portugal's military leadership have finally broken the new Government apart, removing the thin facade of pragmatic unity which gave the Portuguese people their best hope for achieving a stable democratic system.

In his dignified but emotional speech of resignation, President António de Spínola warned that the country was headed toward chaos, toward "new forms of slavery." Ominously enough, his most extreme critics concurred; over recent days of tension, opposite sides of the political spectrum have warned that their respective opponents were about to unleash power plays that would almost inevitably engender civil violence. Squeezed from both sides, the President could only withdraw.

This is a moment in the fluidity of Portuguese politics when it may be dangerous to use the labels "rightist" and "leftist" too rigidly; it is certainly premature to try drawing broad conclusions of continental trends from the factional maneuvering which is now bound to grip the Portuguese, just when they can least afford it.

General Spínola was apparently among the more cautious of the military leaders that overthrew the dictatorship last April, but his withdrawal does not necessarily open the way to domination by the well-organized and disciplined Communist party—or any other group, for that matter. Nor is it yet clear whether in fact General Spínola was as strong a force in the military's inner councils as his towering public stature implied. There has long been a belief among observers that, in the classic coup-making model, the 64-year-old general was merely a front man for other officers yet to emerge.

What is clear—and tragically so—is that Portugal, in common with other countries of the West, is undergoing a period of economic strain and unrest in which it can ill afford the luxury of political jockeying, especially when the foundations of its democratic regime are still so shaky after a half-century of authoritarian rule.

Unemployment is rising, inflation has taken hold at an annual rate of 30 per cent, highest in Europe. It is these objective facts, much more than any international or national conspiracies, that give rise to genuine worries for the future prospects of Portuguese democracy. Economic hardship across national frontiers is now a far graver threat to the stability of the industrial world than ideological shifts among governments.

For the United States the only course is to respond with sympathy and generosity to the real needs for Portugal's economic development and participation in the world trading economy. In the era of cold war there might have been a temptation to intervene, overtly or covertly, to counter "leftist" trends. Surely this country has learned enough from the recent and more distant past to understand that any such interventions would be so hardy and futile.