

UNEASY PORTUGAL ON VIGIL FOR COUP

Armed Forces Alerted as a Precaution in Wake of Spinola Resignation

By HENRY GINIGER

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LISBON, Oct. 1 — Portugal's armed forces have been placed on full alert as a precaution against a coup following the resignation yesterday of President António de Spínola.

The country was outwardly quiet today, but concern was reported in official circles that a dissident movement might develop in favor of General Spínola, who accompanied his resignation with a dramatic warning to the country, over radio and television, against chaos and "new forms of slavery" by the left.

Over the last few weeks a wide purge of army and navy officers has been carried out, against the wishes of General Spínola. About 200 army officers between the ranks of lieutenant and colonel and 130 navy men have been retired.

Still the Defense Chief

Gen. Francisco da Costa Gomes replaced General Spínola yesterday as President but, apparently as a precaution, he continues to direct the armed forces as chief of the defense staff. The military alert was ordered last night.

A Government spokesman said today that the general and two navy men, Rear Adm. António Wrosa Coutinho and Commodore José Batista Pinheiro Azevedo, had made him President. The three are the only survivors of the seven-man Junta of National Salvation that ruled Portugal in the weeks after the coup of April 25 in which the old dictatorship was overthrown.

Four conservative members of the junta—General Spínola and three of his followers, Brig. Gen. Jaime Silverio Marques, Gen. Manoel Diogo Neto and Gen. Carlos Galvao de Melo—were purged yesterday.

Impression of Anarchy

General Neto was chief of staff of the air force, which, as the most conservative branch of the armed forces, consequently was considered a possible source of trouble for the Government.

With power now almost exclusively in the hands of leftist forces, including the Communists, both the armed forces and the Government were taking pains to dissipate the impression given by General Spínola that Portugal was heading toward political and economic anarchy. The General appeared to be concerned that Portugal was in danger of a Communist dictatorship, instead of the democracy getting promised when the authoritarian rule of Premier Marcello Cactano was overthrown in April.

There was particular concern here about foreign reaction to the Spínola statements, in the light of the diplomatic effort to rebuild Portugal's prestige as a democratic country. Portugal is engaged in a negotiations with the United States in which she is seeking to trade off a new five-year lease on the Azores air base for various forms of economic aid amounting to some \$240-million over the same five-year period.

No attempt was made yesterday to interfere with General Spínola's resignation address on television and radio, nor was the press forbidden from printing his text in full. The Government appeared to be particularly preoccupied by the impression that was left abroad, since General Spínola took most of the headlines.

Late last night the Premier, Brig. Gen. Vasco dos Santos Gonçalves, made an impassioned defense of the armed forces and his Government, which, he said, does not share General Spínola's "catastrophic and apocalyptic view of Portuguese society at this moment." He reasserted the firm intention of the armed forces to lead the country to elections next March, but added the proviso that something unexpected could always occur to prevent them.

The Premier acknowledged that there were major problems, but insisted that "the country is not heading toward economic chaos." After 50 years of dictatorship, he asked, "What other people has undergone so much change in five months and practically without a shot being fired?"

Rightist Plot Charged

The Government and leftist political groups have charged that an extreme-rightist plot was brought to light over the weekend. Perhaps 100 persons have been put in prison and their assets have reportedly been frozen. Others, fearing arrest, have reportedly gone into hiding or fled to Spain.

According to officials, arms have been found in homes here and in cars coming into Lisbon. But General Spínola was thus far not being accused of any responsibility in the supposed plot.

However, at a rally staged last night by thousands of Communists and Socialists in front of the presidential palace, some demands were made that he and his colleagues on the junta be imprisoned. General Spínola was reported to be in his home in Lisbon.