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“Preparing for the Next War”:
the Portuguese Army Staff Corps and the Military Reforms
on the eve of the Colonial Wars*

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The Portuguese Army Staff Corps

In 1937, the Portuguese government had decided to reorganize the Army Staff Corps, a body within the Portuguese Army that existed since 1834.¹ This reorganization was, in fact, part of a broader reform of the Portuguese Military that allowed the new regime – the dictatorship of Oliveira Salazar – to impose a tighter control of the Portuguese Armed Forces. The Portuguese military had played an important role in Portuguese political life, specially since the coup of May 1926, that had created the so-called “Military Dictatorship”. Invited by the military to be minister of Finances, since 1928, and prime-minister, since 1932, Salazar realized that for the consolidation of his personal power and of his regime

* This text is part of an ongoing research project on the Portuguese Army Staff Corps, created in the first half of the 19th Century. The project focuses mainly on the period between its modern reorganization, in 1937, and its extinction in 1974. One of the main topics of the project is to evaluate and to understand the way officers from the Portuguese Army Staff Corps (ASF) played a relevant role in preparing the Portuguese Army for the colonial wars that started in Angola in 1961. Since the late 1950s many members of the ASF realized that the next armed conflicts Portugal would have to face would be the wars for national liberation in Africa, therefore, wars of counterinsurgency, very different from the conventional wars they were prepared to fight.

¹ See João C. de Sá Nogueira, “Breve Notícia Histórica acerca do Corpo do Estado-Maior,” *Separata do Boletim do Estado Maior do Exército*, 8 (1969).

it was essential to subordinate the military to the civil power.²

The reforms began in 1935, when the government promulgated laws number 1905 and 1906. These laws created a new national defense structure, giving Salazar the presidency of the recently created National Defense Council. A few months later he became Minister of War (1936-1944), a crucial step towards an effective “political subordination” of the Armed Forces to the new political power. This change would culminate with the enactment, on September 1, 1937, of Law 1960, on the organization of the army, and Law 1961 on the recruitment and military service. These laws reflected, in “spirit and letter [...] the principles of reduced spending and logic optimization of existing resources”, dear to Salazar. The laws paved the way for a set of regulatory documents that were published in the last days of 1937. These documents focused on sensitive points such as “boards and effectives”, “promotions”, “salary” and “reforms”. According to historian Telmo Faria, the publication of these decrees and the implications they brought, turned out to be a truly “political imposition” over the military, with “irreversible consequences” in the long process of “political weakening of the armed forces” and their subordination to political power.³ Salazar had been able to create his “own” army, a body politically devoted to himself that would support his regime, the “New State”, until the very end in 1974.

As a counterpart to this process of “bringing the military back to the barracks”, Oliveira Salazar always promised to modernize the Army, to create a more efficient, technically prepared and equipped Armed Forces in Portugal. In September 1935, the leader of the Portuguese government declared publicly to a group of Portuguese officers that it was not for the Army to intervene directly in the administration and government. He considered that the “reorganization and prestige” of the military were incompatible with “direct intervention in internal politics”. He wanted the military to be “liberated” as soon as possible from “concerns that are not those of moral and technical preparation for the defense of

² On the relations between Oliveira Salazar (leader of the government from 1932-1968) and the Military in the 1930s see Telmo Faria, *Debaixo de fogo! Salazar e as Forças Armadas (1935-1941)* (Lisbon: Edições Cosmos/Instituto de Defesa Nacional, 2000), José Medeiros Ferreira, *O Comportamento Político dos Militares, Forças Armadas e Regimes Políticos em Portugal no Século XX* (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 2001), Maria Carrilho, *Forças Armadas e mudança política em Portugal no séc. XX. Para uma explicação sociológica do papel dos militares* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda, 1985) and António Paulo Duarte, *A Política de Defesa Nacional, 1919-1958* (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2010).

³ Faria, *op.cit.*, 163-165. See also Luís Nuno Rodrigues, *A Legião Portuguesa. A Milícia do Estado Novo, 1936-1944* (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1996), 57-63.

the nation ... endangered by the lengthy exercise of civilian functions."⁴

The reorganization of the Army Staff Corps was an important part of this process. According to the new laws, the ASC would become the second most important group within the Army, immediate below the corps of general-officers and above the different branches of the Army. The most important function of the ASC would be a “theoretical” one. The ASC was responsible for “preparing studies related to the organization and preparation of the Army for War.”⁵ It quickly became an elite corps, responsible for studies, reports, and recommendations on the organization and preparation of the Army. It also had frequent missions abroad and contacts with different Armies from other European countries. Throughout the decades, the ASC became the main responsible for the debate over the national defense policy and also for the introduction in Portugal of many concepts and doctrines imported and adapted from other countries. The legislation of the late 1930s also stipulated the creation of a school, named Institute for Higher Military Studies (IAEM), replacing the old Central School of Officers. The future officers of the ASC, therefore, began to attend the Army Staff Courses, taught at this Institute.⁶

Throughout Salazar’s regime, particularly in certain critical contexts, the ASC played a crucial role, introducing in Portugal, particularly in the Armed Forces, new methods and new concepts on military affairs. The ASC sent several missions to Spain, during the Spanish Civil War, followed closely the military events of World War II, and played a very active role regarding Portuguese participation in NATO, since 1949.⁷ In the 1950s the Portuguese ASC was already a consolidated body within the Portuguese Army, with more than 80 officers.⁸ As a British observer described, although lacking in “operational experience”, the officers from the ASC were “the keenest and most efficiently trained body in the Army”, a truly “corps d’elite [...] very proud of its traditions, its training, and the fact that it is from its ranks that most Generals are promoted and the higher

⁴ Oliveira Salazar, *Discursos e Notas Políticas*, Vol. II, 1935-1937, (Coimbra: Coimbra Editora Lda., 1937), 76-77.

⁵ Law 1960, in *Diário do Governo*, I Série, September 1, 1937.

⁶ Law 1960, in *Diário do Governo*, I Série, September 1, 1937.

⁷ See Daniel Marcos, “NATO and the reorganization Portuguese Army Staff Corps instruction in the 1950’s” (paper presented at the annual conference of the Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies, Lisbon, July 2011).

⁸ João Freire, “Para uma Sociografia dos Oficiais do Corpo de Estado-Maior do Exército Português: 1938-1974), (paper presented at the workshop “O Corpo de Estado-Maior do Exército Português no século XX”, ISCTE-University Institute of Lisbon, May 2011).

appointments filled.”⁹

The reforms of the late 1950s

In the late 1950s and early 1960s the officers from the ASC were the main responsible for the introduction in Portugal of the new concepts of counterinsurgency and countersubversion. Many of these officers began to realize that the next wars Portugal was going to face would be the wars for national liberation in Africa, therefore, wars of counterinsurgency.

The ASC officers would play a leading role in preparing the Portuguese Army for the colonial wars that started in 1961. This process can be traced back to 1958, when the leader of the Portuguese government, Oliveira Salazar, reshuffled his government and nominated several officers from the Portuguese Army Staff Corps to crucial cabinet posts in the area of Defense. These officers were part of a “reformist” group within the military and the authoritarian regime of Salazar: Botelho Moniz, new Minister of National Defense, Almeida Fernandes, Minister of the Army, Costa Gomes, Under-Secretary of State for the Army.¹⁰

Soon after they took office, these men realized what Almeida Fernandes defined as the “complete inefficiency” of the Portuguese Army, an organization “whose concepts [...] were completely out dated”. This realization made it “imperative” reforms in the field of organization, from the Ministry itself to the territorial organization of the army at home and in the Portuguese colonies.¹¹ This was a situation that, quite naturally, shocked men who, throughout his career, had taken contact with models of organization and functioning of the armed forces of developed countries, especially since Portugal became a founding member of NATO in 1949. As historian Antonio Telo pointed out, they were, in fact, representatives of “a new generation of officials” who had in their resume several experiences, courses, and training periods in NATO context. All these experiences encouraged them to have a more “technological mentality” and a real “cult of effectiveness” and also allowed them to confirm the real “abyss” between the more developed and democratic countries of the western block and Portugal.¹²

Not surprisingly, since they arrived to the government, these officers from

⁹ “Value For War – Portuguese Army”, document prepared by the British War Office in 1950. See Military Historical Archive (MHA), Lisbon, DIV/1/38/66/04.

¹⁰ Luís Nuno Rodrigues, *Marechal Costa Gomes. No Centro da Tempestade* (Lisbon: Esfera dos Livros, 2008), 41-44.

¹¹ Almeida Fernandes, “Razão de uma atitude”, in José Freire Antunes, *A Guerra de África (1961-1974)*, Vol. 1 (Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 1995), 162.

¹² António José Telo, *Portugal e a NATO: o reencontro da tradição atlântica* (Lisbon: Edições Cosmos, 1996), 329.

the Portuguese Army Staff Corps tried to promote a comprehensive plan of reforms aimed at solving the problems they encountered and providing the Portuguese Armed Forces with the means, organization and efficiency that was intended. The major part of these reforms were related to the organization of the Portuguese Armed Forces in the African colonies, as well as to their preparation for a possible armed conflict. Almeida Fernandes acknowledged that the main reason why the new government officials considered the military organization in Portugal absolutely inadequate was the situation in the so-called "overseas provinces". The situation in the "Ultramar", he wrote, received "the best of our attention" and "polarized all studies, plans and measures underway in the Army."¹³

The dominant strategic concept in the period prior to the arrival of the new government team projected that the next war would certainly be a third world war centered in Europe, growing out of the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. This view was shared, for example, by former Defense Minister Santos Costa, who, years before, after a short visit to Angola and Mozambique, had promoted a reorganization of the Portuguese colonial army according to which the territories of Angola and Mozambique "should each send a division to fight in Europe" in the predicted World War III. The new authorities, however, did not agree with the main principles that shaped the reorganization of Santos Costa. The evolution of the international system, marked by the Suez conflict and, above all, by the outbreak of the war in Algeria, had contributed to "change the prevailing mentality" and to emphasize the idea that African nationalism should certainly be the next threat to Portugal's national security.¹⁴

The task of replacing Santos Costa's plan for the military in the colonies would be performed by Costa Gomes, the new undersecretary of state of the Army and officer of the Portuguese Army Staff Corps. Gomes believed that Costa's plan had created an organization of Portuguese Armed Forces that was truly "inadequate" to cope with the kind of war Portugal would eventually face in Africa. The basic idea that should preside over the reorganization of the Portuguese military forces, according to Gomes, was that the struggle for independence or self-determination of the territories was something that could not be avoided. Therefore, it would be necessary to strengthen substantially the number of Portuguese troops stationed in the colonies and also to completely modify their instructional methods in order to prepare them for a possible "counterinsurgency war." It was with this deep conviction that Costa Gomes

¹³ Fernandes, *op.cit.*, 166.

¹⁴ Francisco da Costa Gomes in José Freire Antunes, *A Guerra de África (1961-1974)*, Vol. 1(Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 1995) 114-115.

devised a new plan for the reorganization of the Portuguese forces.¹⁵

To prepare himself for this task and to benefit from observations on the field, Costa Gomes undertook, in the summer of 1959, a tour of the various Portuguese colonies in Africa. Its mission, as disclosed in a press release, had the “overarching objective” of studying “*in situ*” the “main problems with installation, composition, location and status of Armed forces.”¹⁶ The observations made in the colonies left Costa Gomes and other Portuguese officers that went with him deeply concerned with what they considered to be the “military unpreparedness” of the Portuguese Armed Forces.¹⁷

After the return of Costa Gomes and following two particularly important meetings, the Supreme Council of National Defense approved on August 15, 1959, the plan for the reorganization of military forces in the colonies devised by Gomes. The fundamental recommendation of this new document was that Portugal should “intensify the military effort overseas, undertaking the renewal of the military organization in Guinea, Angola and Mozambique in order to make it suitable for the counterinsurgency war, and assigning the most appropriate and better equipped means, particularly, some new military or security units [...] considered indispensable in the border regions” of the colonies. According to Costa Gomes, this process should be started in Guinea, continued and extended to Angola, and finally to Mozambique. In these African colonies Portugal should be prepared for an attack by subversive forces, facing “the threat of sedition or subversion with indigenous character, nourished from the outside.” As for India, Macau and Timor, the Portuguese colonies in Asia, the country should just keep “the forces that are sufficient for the limited objectives that we have there”, saving resources and making the “appropriate adjustments”. The islands of Cape Verde and Sao Tome and Principe posed “no special problems” except those arising from its own “internal security.”¹⁸

Following the approval of this document by the Supreme Council of National Defense, the Portuguese Army issued a directive, dated 12 October 1959, with a set of specific decisions concerning the organization of military forces overseas. Among them stood out the substantial strengthening of the existing forces in Guinea, Angola and Mozambique. The directive stipulated, for

¹⁵ Maria Manuela Cruzeiro, *Costa Gomes. O Último Marechal* (Lisbon: Editorial Notícias, 1998), 61, 64 and 118

¹⁶ “Notícia para os jornais”, MHA, 39/23/626/736.

¹⁷ Viana de Lemos, *Duas Crises, 1961 e 1974* (Lisbon: Edições Nova Gente, 1977), 26-27.

¹⁸ Letter from Botelho Moniz to the Ministers of Army, Navy, Foreign Affairs and Overseas, August 15, 1959. Documentation Center April 25, University of Coimbra, Francisco Costa Gomes Archive.

Angola, the creation of "three companies of assault hunters," a "scouting group", "a training center for counterinsurgency war and overseas operations overseas", to be a part of the future Angolan Military School in Luanda. It also determined the creation of "two deposits of material", to be used by forces of "immediate intervention" that could be quickly sent to Angola by air."¹⁹

All these developments were largely the result of the actions of the three Army Staff Corps officers who occupied positions of Minister of Defense, Minister of Army and Undersecretary of State for the Army. As a whole the reforms approved in 1959 represented, as historian António Telo has noted, the "official change of defense policy, the third major reversion since the Second World War." After this conflict, Portugal had placed emphasis on "ground forces primarily devoted to the to static defense of the Pyrenees and the maintenance of the Iberian regimes." In the 1950s, with Portuguese participation in NATO, the defense strategic plans seemed to favor, "almost imperceptibly and somewhat reluctantly", the defense of Europe beyond the Pyrenees." Now the members of the Portuguese Army Staff Corps were able to clearly put the emphasis on defense of the empire, especially Guinea, Angola and Mozambique.²⁰

These were fundamental changes, hard to accept by a significant part of the military, gathered around the figure of the former Defense Minister Santos Costa, replaced by Botelho Moniz in the government in August 1958. In fact, the Santos Costa military line had reacted negatively to his removal and to the appointment of Botelho Moniz. Now they opposed the reforms Moniz intended to carry out. Fernando Valença, from the Ministry of Defense, identified in his Memoirs several "resistances and difficulties" in implementing the reforms, such as lack of will of a particular section of the Army Staff Corps to collaborate in the "laborious studies and implementation of measures corresponding to the solutions" adopted. More generally, he also pointed out to the "orthodoxies entrenched and instilled in the circles responsible for our military higher education, with particular responsibility for the IAEM", the Institute for Higher Military Studies. The changes the "reformers" wanted to introduce "threatened the monopoly of military knowledge, rooted in the teaching, and in the doctrines they taught and spread in the courses attended by officers throughout their careers". To Valença, this elitist group of officers from the Army Staff Corps who dominated the IAEM had contributed to "the alienation of generations of his students about our most pressing, concrete and specific military problems, in favor of

¹⁹ Fernandes, *op.cit.*, p. 170.

²⁰ António José Telo, "A Mudança. 1959", in Aniceto Afonso e Carlos de Matos Gomes, *Guerra Colonial* (Lisbon: Editorial Notícias, 2000), 33.

abstractions and academic and technocratic procedures.²¹

Above all, to implement the reforms envisaged in the approved legislation there were no financial means and no political will to spend the necessary money. The main obstacles came from the Minister of Finances and from the government's leader, Oliveira Salazar. Costa Gomes pointed out that, in 1959, he had asked Salazar for five million *contos*, Portuguese currency, for the reorganization of the Portuguese Armed Forces. Salazar asked Costa Gomes if he "knew what all that money meant" and authorized the expenditure of less than a million²². Still, it should be noted that the Decree-Law 42 192 of March 1959, reorganized the Fund for Military Defense of the Overseas (which had been created in 1937) whose administration depended from the Minister of Defense. This Fund could now be applied in expenses for "ground, naval and air forces" in the colonies and was intended to "satisfy, in whole or in part, the extraordinary charges of rearming and equipping the overseas armed forces including those relating to the construction of their own infrastructure, or whatever other means become necessary for the forces deployed overseas."²³

This change, however, was insufficient. Almeida Fernandes recalls how he was "shocked" by the opinion expressed by Salazar that "we have long since reached an excessive proportion of costs with the armed forces" and this percentage "could not be any way increased". To the astonishment of Almeida Fernandes, Salazar was quoted as saying that "the inevitable enlargement of the Air Force and the Navy itself should take place mainly at the expense of reduced funding hitherto assigned to the Army, which had to be therefore reduced accordingly."²⁴

The preparation of the Armed Forces

Nevertheless, several reforms were promoted and adopted, most of them with the final goal of preparing the Portuguese armed forces for the eventuality of a war of counterinsurgency. In terms of military training, the reformist effort intended to give the Army "a full understanding of the concepts and techniques of counterinsurgency war." Once again, the situation in the "overseas provinces" was

²¹ Fernando Valença, *As Forças Armadas e as Crises Nacionais. A Abrilada de 1961* (Lisbon: Europa-América, 1976), 83-87.

²² Cruzeiro, *op.cit.*, 66-67. One *conto* were a thousand *escudos* and one *escudo* about 29 U.S. dollars, in 1959. Cf. Nuno Valério (Ed.), *Portuguese Historical Statistics* (Lisbon: Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2001), 756.

²³ Decree-Law 42192, March 25, 1959, in *Ordem do Exército*, 1ª Série, 1959 (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1960), 288 and ff.

²⁴ Fernandes, *op.cit.*, p. 163.

the scenario that worried the Portuguese military authorities.²⁵ The responsibility for the introduction in Portugal of the ideas, theories and doctrines of counterinsurgency war fell naturally on the officers who were part of the Army Staff Corps.

If officials of the ASC, like Botelho Moniz, Almeida Fernandes, and Costa Gomes, had primarily political concerns and responsibilities, younger officers of the same body had the task of studying and introducing in Portugal the concepts and techniques related to military activity in the African colonies in the event of and armed conflict. The process began in the late 1950s with a series of field trips, observations and visits to France and England. One of the most important missions was the one led by Army Staff Corps officer, Hermes de Araújo Oliveira who went to Algeria in June 1958, even before the arrival of Moniz, Fernandes and Gomes to the government. Hermes de Oliveira collected precious information, ideas and concepts about counterinsurgency that in the following years he would divulge in his lessons, conferences and articles, mostly within the military circle.

In addition to the mission of Hermes de Oliveira, the Portuguese Army also sent, in 1958-1959, five officers to the *Intelligence Centre of the British Army* to attend courses at the *School of Military Intelligence*. These courses included “a strong component on subversive war”, reflecting the British experience in Malaya, Kenya and Cyprus. After returning, captains Pedro Cardoso and Renato Marques Pinto - both from the Army Staff Corps – were named instructors on the Military Higher Studies Institute (IAEM). Pedro Cardoso even brought from England a guide entitled *Keeping the Peace (Duties in Support of the Civil Power)* that turned out to be “quickly translated” by himself. Once completed, the translation of the book served as a handbook and topics like “subversive war problems and support from civil authorities were integrated into the courses for senior officers in 1958-1959.” As historian John Cann pointed out, this initiative marked “the beginning of the practical education of the officers on the problems of subversive war, and altered the course work that was almost exclusively oriented toward conventional wars.”²⁶

Between 1958 and 1960, Lieutenant Colonel Artur Henriques da Silva, from the Army Staff Corps, attended the *Cours Supérieur de Guerre*, at the War College in Paris, which included, among others, a course on "Subversive War". Returning to Portugal in 1960, he also assumed duties as an instructor of the

²⁵ Fernandes, *op.cit.*, p. 167.

²⁶ John P. Cann, *Contra-Insurreição em África. O modo português de fazer a guerra, 1961-1974*, (Lisbon: Edições Atena, 1998), 67-68.

IAEM. During his teaching activity he would write a text named *Notes for the Use of Military Forces in Subversive War*. This work would be the starting point for the development of the Portuguese handbook on counterinsurgency, called *The Army in the Subversive War*, finally completed in 1963.²⁷

In 1959, six officers of the Portuguese Army, commanded by Major Franco Pinheiro, from the Army Staff Corps, were also sent to Algeria. These officers spent two weeks at the *Centre d'Instruction of Pacification et Contre-Guerilla* where they took a course with 200 French officers. Shortly after, two other officers were sent to observations on the field staying one month with French units stationed in Algeria. On their return to Portugal, they wrote a "voluminous report on their experiences and observations on insurgency and subversive war." The "dominant message" was that the Portuguese army should "urgently" prepare to fight a war of counterinsurgency.²⁸

In addition to the frequent missions abroad, it should also be noted the concern of political and military leaders in Portugal to integrate in the education of the Portuguese military the concepts and doctrines of counterinsurgency that were being "imported" and "adapted" by the officers of the Army Staff Corps. This concern was present at various levels of military education. Decree-Laws 42151 and 42152, of February 1959, reorganized the Military Academy. In this institution, the situation in the Portuguese colonies became a central theme in the instruction of young cadets. Under the new legislation, it was deemed necessary to promote the introduction of "new and important basic concepts in the organization of our military educational institution". The legislation evoked the "growing difficulties of international life" and "the vastness and complexity of the problems inherent" in the "integration of all parts of Portugal", as well as the "extraordinary technical nature of modern weapons and methods of war." The document stressed how "the historical-geographical conditions of our country should guide the preparation of the new officers towards the performance of official duties overseas". And these were tasks "that often go beyond the specific military functions". According to these principles, it was determined that "all teaching at the Military Academy must reflect the greater concern in preparation for the performance of various tasks that can usually be assigned to officers of the permanent staff overseas."²⁹

²⁷ Cann, *op.cit.*, 70-71.

²⁸ Cann, *op.cit.*, 67-68.

²⁹ Decree-Law 42151, February 12, 1959, in *Ordem do Exército*, 1ª Série, 1959 (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1960), pp. 197 e ss. On the Military Academy and the Portuguese wars in Africa see José Lourenço (ed.), *A Academia Militar e a Guerra de África* (Lisbon: Academia Militar/Prefácio, 2009).

Even before this official reorganization, early in the academic year of 1958-1959, the Commander of the Military Academy, General Buceta Martins, invited Hermes de Araújo Oliveira to give in this school a series of conferences, in order to "stimulate the interest of students and officers under my orders, in the study of complex problems not only military but also philosophical, political and social, that are involved in subversive warfare and necessarily have implications in the counter-revolutionary action". For General Martins, Oliveira's conferences would be crucial to teach the future officers how the Portuguese Armed Forces should "prepare and direct his troops to face the new and insidious processes of a war that is total and ruthless" and completely different from what they were previously prepared to face.³⁰ The lectures given by Hermes de Oliveira in 1958-1959 were later gathered into a book entitled *Revolutionary War*, with the first edition in 1960. Before the publication of the book, and as a direct reflection of his experience in Algeria, Oliveira published two important articles in the prestigious *Revista Militar* titled "The French forces in Algeria" and "The economic value of Algeria." Also in 1959, Hermes de Oliveira already reflecting on the Portuguese problem and on the applicability of the concepts of counterinsurgency war to the defense of Mozambique, published the article "The defense of Mozambique in the light of the revolutionary war." In 1960, in addition to the aforementioned book *Revolutionary War*, he published in *Revista Militar* "Speaking of Algeria", "The psychological action in defense of Mozambique" and "Subversion in Africa."

In 1959 it was also decided that, in the future, all new officers of the permanent staff of all weapons and services should be sent "overseas early in their careers, as soon as, in their respective schools, they complete the practical apprenticeships required by law". Speaking at the Military Academy on October 2, 1959, to one of the first group of officers leaving overseas, the Minister of the Army, Almeida Fernandes, stressed that "this decision was not a fluke, but it reflected, on the contrary, the result of a very firm determination, as expressed quite clear in the recent reorganization of the Military Academy", to complete the military training provided in the Academy "with a mandatory tour of duty overseas in the early years of the officer's career."³¹

At IAEM, the school of officers, all these changes were felt even more profoundly, given the role of the officers of the Army Staff Corps in the "importation" and "adaptation" of the counterinsurgency doctrines and tactics. Henriques da Silva, Marques Pinto, Pedro Cardoso, they were all professors at the

³⁰ Humberto Buceta Martins, "Prefácio", in Hermes de Araújo Oliveira, *Guerra Revolucionária* (Lisbon: Ministério do Exército, 2nd edition, 1961), 15.

³¹ Fernandes, *op.cit*, p. 169.

IAEM. Their contributions were promptly introduced in the curricula of IAEM courses.

Finally, it should also be noted, within this context, the creation of the “Training Center for Special Operations” (CIOE), by Decree-Law 42926 of April 16, 1960. Its main purpose would be to “prepare military staff for the kind of counterinsurgency operations that the Army could face in the very short term.” The first instructors of the CIOE were “carefully selected” among the officers who had already attended several courses in counterinsurgency and counter-subversion in “foreign centers of education,” including France, Algeria, USA, Britain and Spain. The CIOE was essential, as noted by military historian David Martelo, for the preparation of the “first officers and sergeants in the techniques and tactics of a kind of warfare hitherto virtually unknown in the Portuguese army”. It allowed the Portuguese Armed Forces to create “conditions for the establishment, supervision and preparation of first units to fight and to address specific situations” that were becoming more and more probable in the Portuguese African colonies. These units received a special designation of “special hunters”, to distinguish them from the “hunters” of the traditional, regular light infantry troops.³²

Concluding remarks

In early 1961, Portugal would face the first rebellions in Angola, setting the stage for 13 years of counterinsurgency wars, not only in this colony but also in Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. Soon after the war began in Angola, the Portuguese government publicly announced its decision to stay in the territory and to fight for the maintenance of the empire as an integral part of the Portuguese nation. Oliveira Salazar's decision to stay in Angola, to fight the war, and to transfer to the colony the adequate military potential was the logical corollary to the ideological premises of his regime.

These developments only confirmed the analyses made by the officers from the ASC who had occupied positions in the Portuguese government in previous years. In fact, the Portuguese Armed Forces were quickly deployed to Angola where they became involved in a war of counterinsurgency. Despite the efforts of the previous years, the Portuguese military were not fully prepared to face a conflict of the magnitude of what came to be the war in Angola. Nevertheless, some important steps towards the preparation for the war had been taken, with a decisive influence from the group of officers of the ASC.

³² David Martelo, “Unidades Especiais. Caçadores”, in Aniceto Afonso & Carlos de Matos Gomes, *Guerra Colonial* (Lisbon: Editorial Notícias, 2000), 94.

Firstly, through the broad reforms undertaken by the Government team headed by general Botelho Moniz, in the Ministry of National Defense, acknowledging that African nationalism would be the next threat to Portugal's national security. In this context, Costa Gomes, the undersecretary of state of the Army, played a key role in the approval by the Council of National Defense of a plan for the reorganization of military forces in the colonies and also of a general strategic reorientation of Portuguese defense policy.

Secondly, through a set of concrete measures taken by the government and by the Army itself, allowing the introduction in Portugal not only of the concepts and doctrines of countersubversive war, but also of some steps towards the preparation of the military for that type of war. In this context, a considerable group of officers from the ASC made frequent field trips and observation missions since the end of the 1950s. Moreover, the teaching of counterinsurgency doctrines and techniques was progressively introduced in Portugal, namely in the IAEM and the Military Academy. The Portuguese Army, to a large extent by the action of the members of the ASC, created its own version of counter-subversive doctrine that would eventually be consolidated in several volumes published in 1963 and entitled *The Army in the Subversive War*. Ultimately, it was also this reformist effort that allowed the creation in Portugal of the first companies of “special Hunters” that would play an important role in the Angola, in early 1961.