

OUTWARD TELEGRAM

Portugal

EV88883

C222672

[This telegram is of particular secrecy and should be retained by the authorised recipient and not passed on].

C 5649/612/G

[EN CLAIR]

WAR CABINET DISTRIBUTION

FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO LISBON

No. 167. Saving.

9th May 1944.

Repeated to Washington 176. Saving.

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SECRET

Your telegram No. 614 [of April 7th: plan for the defence of the Portuguese mainland].

His Majesty's Government have carefully considered the Portuguese comments on the Anglo-Portuguese plan for the defence of the Portuguese mainland transmitted in your despatch No. 98 [of March 24th].

2. From the military point of view there are no good reasons why His Majesty's Government should abandon the present position under which they are obliged to do nothing more than to prepare a plan. His Majesty's Government are opposed to the assumption of definite military commitments in regard to the Portuguese mainland, however remote the circumstances which would evoke their application. At the same time they are anxious that nothing should be done or left undone which might lead the Portuguese Government to circumscribe or detract from the facilities which they grant to us in the Azores. It is operationally vital to exploit those facilities to the utmost.

3. In these circumstances His Majesty's Government do not favour the suggestion in paragraph 4 of your despatch No. 98 that it might be desirable to agree to the extension of their commitments in the defence plan to cover the event of an attack developing on Portugal as a result of her breaking off relations or declaring war on our enemies.

4. In any case, as you suggest in your telegram under reference, there can clearly be no question of considering the Portuguese proposals while Dr. Salazar maintains his present attitude over wolfram. You may think it best to return no reply at all to Dr. Salazar's note of March 16th until the wolfram question has been settled. If you consider it desirable to make some acknowledgement, you should merely inform Dr. Salazar that the moment when he has refused to meet the requirements of His Majesty's Government over wolfram is hardly an appropriate time to ask them for a serious extension of their undertakings in regard to the defence of Portugal.

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