



CENTRO DE EXCELÊNCIA JEAN MONNET JEAN MONNET CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL STUDIES WITHIN THE
FRAMEWORK OF A RESEARCH PROJECT (2021-2022) FUNDED BY THE
PORTUGUESE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

Summary

Portugal's participation in international missions and its contribution to peace promotion has been object of study since the 1990s. However, it remains necessary to understand where the country stands in terms of peacebuilding, to identify its strategies and objectives in this field, and to reflect upon its performance in contemporary peace processes and missions as an international actor.

This report aims to contribute to this reflection in three dimensions:

- 1) The framework of Portugal's defense strategy, focusing on the apparent dichotomy between the national interest and the external dimension of the National Defense Policy.
- 2) The analysis of Portugal's capabilities to promote peace in international missions. This includes the debate between quality and quantity regarding the deployment of armed forces, but also the discussion about training conditions and the recruitment of military personnel. The report also highlights Portugal's preference to participate simultaneously in various international missions. However, this option may be subject to criticism and reassessment, particularly when Portugal struggles to modernize its defense structures and Armed Forces, in order to respond to digital and global insecurity flows in permanent evolution. Regarding strategic issues, a stronger commitment to state-building in the scope of international missions and a greater integration in global interventionism, would be valuable.
- 3) Finally, the assessment of Portugal's strategies in terms of its participation in international missions. Here, it is noteworthy the balance between a more sporadic participation, in spheres of clear relevance to the national interest, and a more regular participation oriented by a logic of solidarity and harmony with the interests of the international organizations that Portugal is part of. Challenges associated to these missions require greater articulation between decision-making and strategic consideration structures, the Armed Forces, civil society and academia. Given the complexity of security threats and defense policies, specialized knowledge becomes paramount to enable Portugal to generate returns to national citizens by taking full



REPÚBLICA
PORTUGUESA
DEFESA NACIONAL



ces
Centro de Estudos Sociais
Universidade de Coimbra

FCT

Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia
MINISTÉRIO DA CIÊNCIA, TECNOLOGIA E ENSINO SUPERIOR



With the support of the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

advantage of defense industries, defense economy and defense diplomacy. Likewise, it is essential to facilitate the dissemination of knowledge about the role and importance of National Defense, not only to the national interest, but also to promote international peace and security. For this purpose, investing in more efficient political and scientific communication comes across as an unavoidable strategy.

International missions and the promotion of peace and security: the Portuguese case

This report results from a Roundtable, under Chatham House Rules, in which Portugal's role, strategies and objectives in international missions and the promotion of peace and security was discussed. The debate revealed that Portugal's defense strategies cannot be dissociated from broader considerations on peace mission, particularly when it comes to the need for greater transparency, articulation with local communities and commitment to building sustainable peace. The discussion endorsed Portugal's support to processes of democratic transition in post-conflict settings, but is also highlighted that it falls short on expectations. As such, it is expected more thought through interventions, both to assure their contribution to the needs of local communities and to fulfilling Portugal's national interest. Finally, it is pivotal a closer alignment with the security, humanitarianism and development nexus, namely via the inclusion of local-oriented strategies and approached designed at promoting sustainable peace and a closer relation between international missions and local communities.

The debate on Portugal's defense strategy has highlighted the tradition of participation in international missions within the scope of alliances and organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU). As a result, the national interest has been defined and articulated in a logic of solidarity and permanent dialogue with these organizations, and also of multilateral approach to peacebuilding at the international level. In this sense, Portugal's participation in international missions is aligned with the mandates defined by international organizations and with their interests, sometimes blurring its contribution to the national interest.

Regarding defense capabilities, Portugal's efforts to attract and retain qualified military personnel remain limited. The military career is not compelling, denoting insufficient recognition of professionals and the need to guarantee their progression.

The discussion about Portugal's participation in international missions revolves around military personnel, as mentioned, but also with the dilemma between quality or quantity. Here, the issue is whether Portugal should follow the global interventionism promoted by international organizations, or opt for better planned and successful interventions in strategic locations. Due to the deep and quick transformations in international security, it becomes evident the need to reinforce investment in new technologies and in training specifically adapted to address different needs.

In terms of capabilities, Portugal should reflect on the purpose of peace missions and better inform civil society on the contribution of national policies and global interventionism in this area, thus fostering a comprehensive debate on their purpose. Strategies implemented by Portugal should also follow from integrated decisions with different local and international actors involved in sustainable peacebuilding.

Concerning the participation in peace missions, Portugal faces another dilemma: respond to the request of the organizations and alliances it integrates, in a logic of solidarity, or to prioritize the national interest. In either case, it is desirable that humanitarian aid, security and development cooperation (also known as the triple nexus) are well balanced to promote sustainable peace. Furthermore, peace promotion should be defined and recognized as a national strategy, thus supporting Portugal's growing influence in the design of international missions' mandates and, in this way, contributing to increase its political leverage in the field of international security.

In addition to the traditional focus on maritime security, on bilateral defense cooperation with Portuguese-speaking African countries and on a performance aligned with the interests of the organizations in which the country participates, Portugal is increasingly investing in specializing its Armed Forces to engage in interoperability scenarios between different international organizations in the same geographical context. This enables a more integrated and comprehensive contribution to peacebuilding. As such, Portugal maximizes its limited resources and avoids the duplication of efforts that the involvement in missions of different organizations may imply.

Among the challenges Portugal will face in the short and medium-term, technological investment stands out as one of the most relevant to modernize its performance. In this regard, it is desirable a greater contribution from universities, with the creation of ecosystems, in which different actors (such as the Armed Forces and researchers, for instance) can work together creating synergies in areas of strategic interest, such as cybersecurity.

Communication was another issue addressed in the debate, which identified gaps in the dialogue between different actor and their respective audiences. In the case of peace missions, communication between decision-makers, forces on the ground and local communities must be strengthened. The goal is to facilitate the design of these missions and to ensure they are capable of responding to local needs and specificities. Likewise, it is noticeable an insufficient dissemination of knowledge and information about Portugal's participation in international missions to civil society. This weakens the involvement of citizens and the public debate on issues relating to the external dimension of the National Defense Policy, with consequences on the processes of policy formulation and decision-making.

In conclusion, the discussion revealed that Portugal's role in the promotion of international peace and security results from the articulation between exogenous and endogenous factors, in a setting increasingly marred by striking and unavoidable challenges and transformations. As such, Portugal needs to design and implement strategies enabling a positive and effective

contribution to international peace and security, while also reinforcing its image of conciliator and reliable partner within the organizations and alliances it integrates. For this purpose, it needs to modernize its defense structures and equipment, as well as to optimize resources allowing for an adequate response to the main international insecurity flows. Universities and private actors have an important role in assuring the production of relevant goods and knowledge in this domain, thus affirming Portugal's participation in international missions as a structuring element of its foreign policy. To this end, the discussion emphasized clearly the need for a more effective communication and dissemination of knowledge about Portugal's contribution to the promotion of international peace and security. This awareness is paramount to increase the public debate on the external dimension of the National Defense Policy, thus enabling its reassessment, improvement and consolidation as a strategic vector of Portugal's foreign policy.

Bruno Almeida

Renata Cabral

* The support provided by the European Commission, the Ministry of National Defence and the National Foundation for Science and Technology to the production of this publication does not constitute a validation of its content, which reflects solely the authors' point of view. Neither the Commission, the Ministry of National Defence or the National Foundation for Science and Technology may be held accountable for potential use that can be made from the information contained in this publication.