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Showdown On Goncalves Likely Today

Army Chief May Favor Meeting of Assembly

The Portuguese Armed Forces General Assembly will meet today as scheduled, according to a spokesman for President Costa Gomes. It is likely to be the scene for a showdown between supporters and opponents of Vasco Goncalves. Opponents of the pro-Communist Goncalves reportedly plan a military move if the assembly goes against them.

Rumors that the assembly would be postponed in the face of a threatened boycott by army delegates were denied yesterday by the President's office.

Might Have Left Faction

If Fabiao now favors the meeting it could indicate that Goncalves' opponents believe they can control the outcome, or, possibly, that Fabiao has deserted the anti-Goncalves faction as he did once before when he withdrew as the Antunes group's candidate to replace Goncalves.

The assembly meeting reportedly will be held at Tancos, a town about 80 miles north of Lisbon. Paratroopers headquartered at Tancos are believed to support the Antunes group and pro-Goncalves delegates could feel intimidated.

suggests that this would also be a good opportunity for the Antunes group to initiate a military move by seizing some of the principal leaders of the Goncalves faction.

One good barometer of how Goncalves' backers view his chances has been the public position of the Portuguese Communist Party, which has vacillated between full support for Goncalves and calls for a compromise, depending on Goncalves' fortunes at the moment.

Call for Compromise

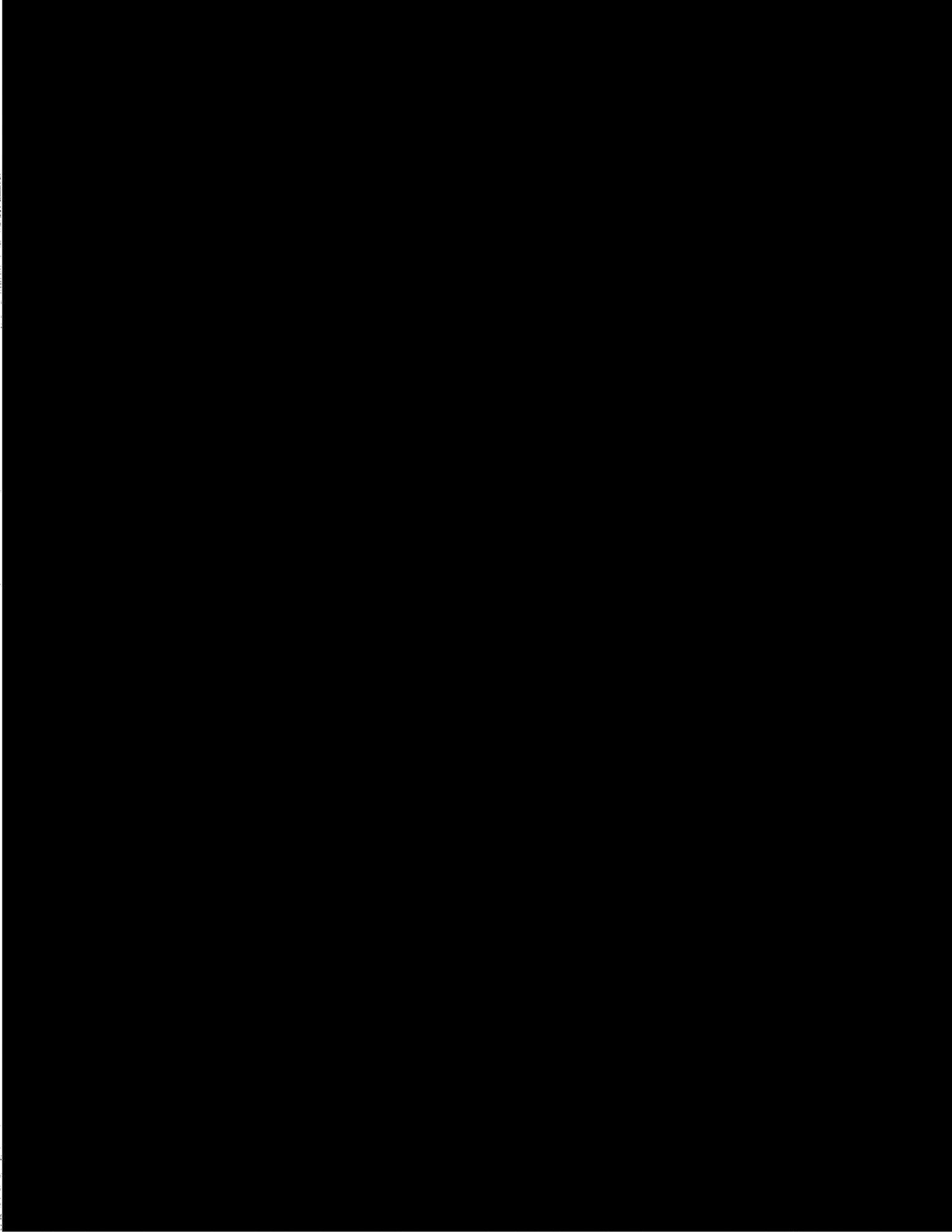
In an interview released yesterday, party secretary Cunhal called for the warring military factions, the Communists, and the Socialists to discuss a compromise solution and form a new government that could be supported by all factions. No mention was made of Goncalves.

Cunhal also talked in the interview of possible efforts by fascists associated with Antonio de Spinola to regain power. Indeed, Spinola is the wild card in the Portuguese deck who has the capacity to alter significantly the present balance of forces.

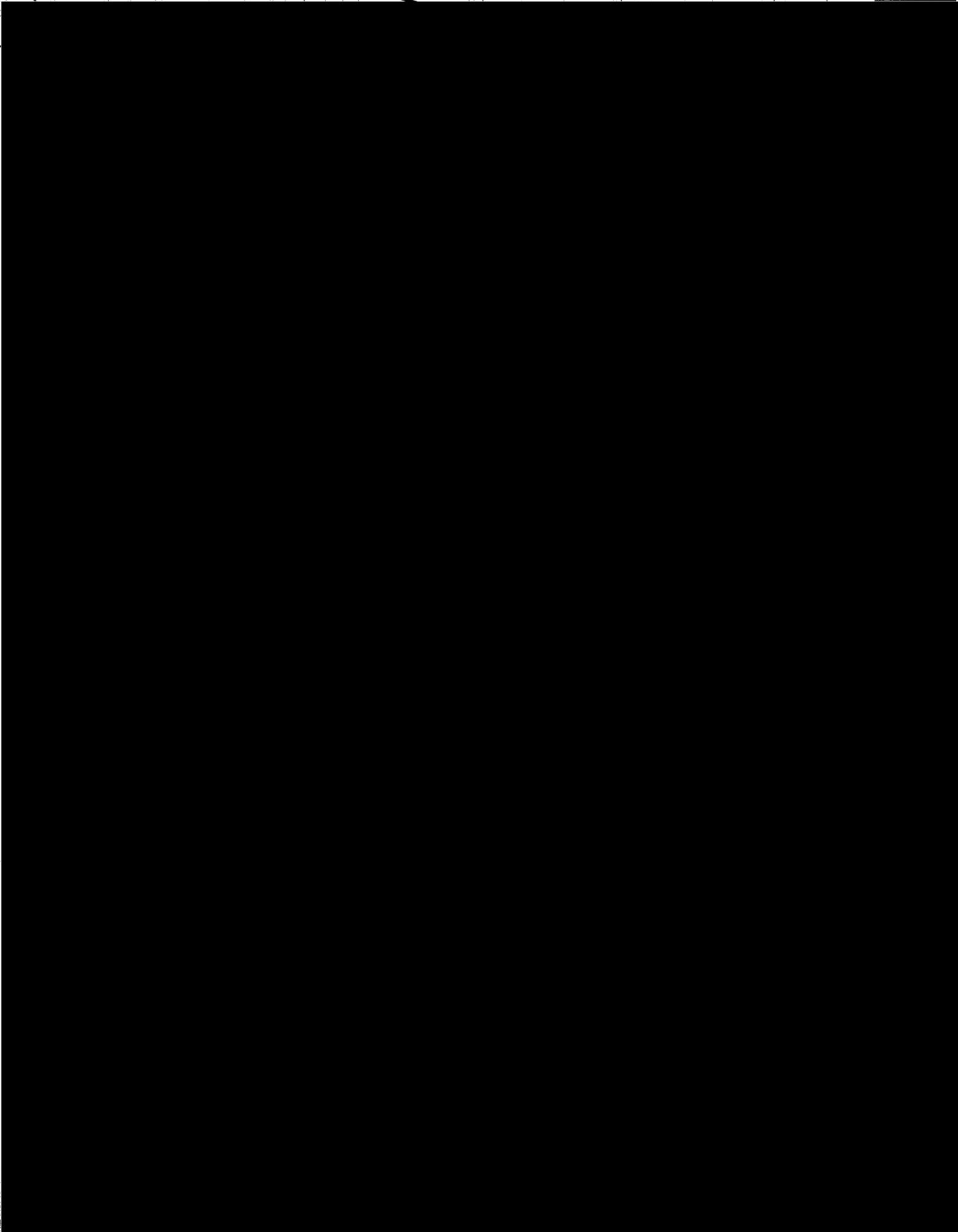
Spinola's backers, both within Portugal and in neighboring countries, see Melo Antunes as nearly as objectionable as

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WESTERN EUROPE

Showdown in Portugal . . .

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Goncalves, and could decide to make their move before Antunes succeeds in using anti-Communist sentiment to put himself in power.

Spinola's approval in Paris Wednesday has already set off rumors in Lisbon that he will attempt to regain power. With Portugal's armed forces divided, Spinola, in league with other rightist forces, might have improved prospects for success. It is more likely, however, that he would

succeed only in torpedoing the attempt to oust Goncalves and roll back Communist influence.

Meanwhile, prime minister-designate Azevedo has continued his efforts to form a government, but with lack of success. Yesterday, the Popular Democrats made



Prime minister-designate Azevedo arrives at Belem Palace in Lisbon on Wednesday

known their conditions for joining a new government. Echoing the Socialists, they called for Goncalves' removal, the appointment of a military minister from the Antunes group, local and national elections, and restructuring of the Armed Forces Assembly.

With Azevedo's efforts stalled and swearing in ceremonies postponed, there has still been no real change in the government. Goncalves still chairs meetings of the Fifth Provisional Government's cabinet, and Azevedo continues to function as navy chief of staff.