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NIO/EUROPE  
10 December 1985

DCI/NIO Regional Meeting -- 11 December 1985

Portugese Politics

Personal rivalries, new political philosophies and popular impatience with weak leadership seem to augur an era of increased protest votes, shifting political alliances, and greater polarization:

- The main personal antagonism is that of outgoing President Eanes toward former Prime Minister Soares which is reflected in his determination to block Soares' presidential aspirations.
- The new political philosophy is that of Social Democratic leader Cavaco Silva who believes his minority government, party and the Right in general will benefit from ending their cooperation with the Socialists and presenting themselves as a viable alternative to the Left.
- Popular impatience with these political shenanigans against a background of economic difficulties may result in a large protest vote for independent Maria Pintasilgo, with incalculable consequences for the prospects of other Presidential candidates.

Ironically the upshot of all these developments may be what few of the instigators want: weaker governments and greater Communist influence. Another likely result will be governments more eager to demonstrate their nationalist credentials and thus more difficult as partners in NATO and in bilateral relations with the US.

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