

Military defence and support to foreign policy



And to the vast and possible ocean
The Portuguese arms teach:
The endless sea is Portuguese
Fernando Pessoa

Introduction

The role of **MILITARY DEFENCE AND SUPPORT TO FOREIGN POLICY** is performed through a wide range of tasks, including:

- ✘ Autonomous military defence;
- ✘ Collective and expeditionary defence;
- ✘ Protection of national interests and naval diplomacy.



"Vasco da Gama" class frigates.

Collective and expeditionary defence

Portugal is an internationally active actor, adopting a posture of useful service to the community of nations, especially within the framework of the EU, NATO, OSCE and UN. In naval terms, it is important to highlight also the national participation in EUROMARFOR, which reflects Portugal's will to contribute to a European naval force.

Autonomous military defence

Military defence is the fundamental mission of the Armed Forces. However, the geostrategic environment has lowered the probability of direct threats to state sovereignty, to national independence and to territorial integrity. At the same time, the probability of facing new and direct threats that use or take advantage of the sea has substantially increased.

Nevertheless, it is imperative to remember the History and the International Relations of Portugal, which show that the neglect of an autonomous military defence capability always represented a substantial risk, which had to be addressed by allies several times, with the inherent erosion of national sovereignty.

It is also important to accentuate that the current international environment is highly unpredictable, thus stressing the importance of correctly assessing all risks and threats.

In order to autonomously face purely military missions, the Navy has a high-readiness task-force, able to depart from Lisbon and project force in areas where the national interest is at risk.



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Submarine "Tridente".

"Bartolomeu Dias" frigate.

The Navy contributes to Portugal's participation in these organizations, by committing ships, Marines forces, Diving Teams and Maritime Police agents, as well as personnel in international military staffs, in a vast array of operations. In this scope, it should be stressed that Portugal has commanded NATO's Standing Naval Force in the Atlantic (first designated as STANAVFORLANT and later as SNMG 1 / Standing NATO Maritime Group 1), for three times: 1995/96, 2001/02 and 2009/10.

Furthermore, the Navy has participated in the following operations dedicated to peace keeping, humanitarian relief and prevention / fight against terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction:

- ✘ Operations "*Desert Shield*", "*Desert Storm*" and "*Granby*", to free Kuwait, in 1990 and 1991;
- ✘ Peace support operations in the former Republic of Yugoslavia ("*Sharp Vigilance*", "*Maritime Monitor*", "*Sharp Fence*" and "*Sharp Guard*"), conducted between 1991 and 1996;
- ✘ Operation "*Allied Force*", in 1999, of surveillance and monitoring of the Adriatic Sea, in support of the intervention in Kosovo, aimed at ending violence and repression in that territory;
- ✘ Peace enforcement and peace keeping operations in East Timor, in the scope of UN sponsored mandates ("*INTERFET*", "*UNTAET*" and "*UNMISET*"), between 1999 and 2004;
- ✘ Operation "*Constant Forge*", of peace enforcement in Bosnia, in 2000;
- ✘ Humanitarian support mission carried out by Marines, in Mozambique, after the floods of river Save, in 2000;
- ✘ Operation "*Active Endeavour*", initiated by NATO in November 2001, in the eastern Mediterranean, which was under Portuguese command from December 2001 to January 2002;
- ✘ Operation "*EUFOR - Congo*", in the Democratic Republic of Congo, during the 2006 presidential elections;
- ✘ Operation "*Allied Protector*", to fight piracy off the Horn of Africa, in 2009, within NATO's SNMG 1, under Portuguese command from January 2009 to January 2010.



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Participation in these operations is one of the ways that Portugal actively contributes to the international community's efforts of fostering peace, security and development, and is also an opportunity to help shape international policies and monitor their execution.

Protection of national interests and naval diplomacy

This task includes the protection and evacuation of national citizens, naval diplomacy and international relations.



Portuguese marines at the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Protection and evacuation of national citizens

There are nearly 5 million Portuguese and people of Portuguese descent living abroad. Therefore, the country needs the capability to protect and evacuate its citizens at long distances from the national territory. This forces the Navy to be able to conduct or support expeditionary actions, with low local support, thus implying a high degree of sustainability.

In the past, the Navy was called on to undertake some actions of this kind. The following are of particular relevance: operation “*Cruzeiro do Sul*” (Angola, 1992), operation “*Leopardo*” (Zaire, 1997), operation “*ELIPAC*” (Congo, 1998), operation “*Crocodilo*” (Guinea-Bissau, 1998) and operation “*Tarrafo*” (Guinea-Bissau, 1999).

In order to undertake these missions, the Navy has operational forces and units, at 48-hour readiness, able to integrate the initial core group of a national joint Immediate Reaction Force.



Citizen evacuation.

Naval diplomacy

In the scope of naval diplomacy, the Navy's ships conduct intense and widely diversified activities by visiting friendly ports and by showing the national flag in the four corners of the world. In synchronization with the state's priorities, there has been a focus on countries where the Portuguese Diaspora is present and also on Portuguese-speaking countries.

Still within naval diplomacy, it is important to refer the negotiations held onboard *NRP “Corte Real”*, during the peace process of Guinea-Bissau that followed the conflict in the country, in 1998.



NRP “Sagres” has a fundamental role in naval diplomacy, fostering links with the Portuguese Diaspora.

International relations

The Navy develops also an intense international relations schedule of activities, on bilateral and multilateral basis, in coordination with the Joints Chiefs of Staff and the other services, under the supervision of the *General-Directorate for National Defence Policy (Direcção-Geral de Política de Defesa Nacional)*.

On a bilateral basis, the relationship with Portuguese-speaking African countries and East Timor assumes particular relevance. The Navy participates in Technical-Military Cooperation programs, aimed at supporting those countries' Armed Forces as promoters of security.

Furthermore, the Navy maintains staff talks with Military and Naval Staffs of other countries and is, also, an active participant in mixed commission meetings and other bilateral and multilateral initiatives.



1st Symposium of the Navies from Portuguese-speaking countries.