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VIII. Churchill Statement on the Azores

(The New York Times, October 13, 1943)

The text of Prime Minister Churchill's statement in the House of Commons follows:

I have an announcement to make to the House arising out of the treaty signed between this country and Portugal in the year 1373 between His Majesty King Edward III and King Ferdinand and Queen Eleanor of Portugal. This treaty was reinforced in various forms by treaties of 1386, 1642, 1654, 1660, 1661, 1703, 1815 and in a secret declaration of 1899.

In more modern times the validity of old treaties was recognized in treaties of arbitration concluded with Portugal in 1904 and in 1914. Article 1 of the Treaty of 1373 runs as follows:

“In the first place we settle and covenant that they shall be from this day forward * * * true and faithful friends; they shall henceforth reciprocally be friends to friends and enemies to enemies and shall assist, maintain, and uphold each other mutually by sea and by land against all men that may live or die.”

This engagement has lasted now for over 600 years and that is without parallel in world history. I have now to announce the latest application of these instruments. At the outset of the war the Portuguese Government in full agreement with His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom adopted a policy of neutrality

with the view to preventing the war from spreading into the Iberian Peninsula.

The Portuguese Government have, however, frequently stated and most recently in Dr. Salazar's speech of April 27, that the above policy is in no way inconsistent with the Anglo-Portuguese alliance which was reaffirmed by the Portuguese Government in the early days of the war. His Majesty's Governments in the United Kingdom, basing themselves upon this ancient alliance, have now requested the Portuguese Government to accord them certain facilities in the Azores which will enable better protection to be provided for merchant shipping in the Atlantic.

The Portuguese Government have agreed to grant this request and arrangements which enter into force immediately have been concluded between the two governments regarding first, the conditions governing the use of the above facilities by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and, secondly, British assistance in furnishing essential material and supplies for the Portuguese armed forces and for the maintenance of Portugal's national economy.

The agreement concerning the use of facilities in the Azores is of a temporary nature only and in no way prejudices the maintenance of Portuguese sovereignty over Portuguese territory. All British forces will be withdrawn from the Azores at the end of hostilities. Nothing in this agreement affects the continued desire of the Portuguese Government, with which His Majesty's Government have declared themselves in sympathy, to continue their policy of neutrality on the Euro-

pean mainland and thus to maintain a zone of peace in the Iberian Peninsula.

In the view of His Majesty's Government this agreement should give new life and vigor to the alliance which has so long existed between the United Kingdom and Portugal to their mutual advantage. It not only confirms and strengthens political guarantees resulting from treaties of alliance, but also affords new proof of Anglo-Portuguese friendship and provides additional guarantees for the development of this friendship in the future.

On the conclusion of these negotiations the Foreign Secretary, who has, I think, conducted them with the very greatest skill and patience, has exchanged most cordial messages with the Portuguese President of the Council.

In his message the Foreign Secretary affirmed his conviction that the facilities now granted by the Portuguese Government will greatly contribute to the effective defense of our shipping and thus will prove an important factor in shortening the war. He added that the agreement would give fresh vitality to the ancient alliance and enhance the close and friendly relations which have so long subsisted between Portugal and Great Britain.

In replying to this message Dr. Salazar stated that he shared the hope that the facilities granted by Portugal to her ally would help to bring about greater safety for shipping in the Atlantic; that he trusted that this new proof of Portugal's loyalty to her traditions would fortify the secular alliance and serve to draw still closer the bonds of friendship uniting the two peoples.

I take this opportunity of placing on record the appreciation of His Majesty's Government, which I have no doubt is shared by Parliament and the British nation, of the attitude of the Portuguese Government, whose loyalty to their British ally never wavered in the darkest hours of the war.

Texts of the messages exchanged by Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and Dr. Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, Premier of Portugal, on the occasion of the granting of facilities to Britain in the Azores:

MR. EDEN'S MESSAGE

I ask Your Excellency to accept my best wishes on the entry into force of agreements between His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Portuguese Government covering the use by British forces of facilities in the Azores.

I am convinced that these facilities will greatly contribute to the effective defense of our shipping and thus prove an important factor in shortening the war.

The agreement will give fresh vitality to our ancient alliance and enhance the close and friendly relations which have so long subsisted between Portugal and Great Britain.

DR. SALAZAR'S REPLY

I thank Your Excellency for your kind message on the occasion of the entry into force of facilities granted in the Azores to British forces in virtue of an agreement concluded between the Portuguese and British Governments, based on the alliance between the two countries.

I share Your Excellency's hope that 'the facilities granted by Portugal to her ally will help to bring about greater safety for shipping in the Atlantic and 'I trust that this new proof of Portugal's loyalty to her traditions will fortify the secular alliance and serve to draw still closer the bonds of friendship uniting our two peoples.'