



FOREIGN INFLUENCE

Two UK Royal Air Force Typhoons conduct fighter integration training with their counterparts in Portugal

Jorge Marinho examines the security repercussions on the education of international military students

Throughout its history, from its founding in 1143 to the present, Portugal has established, developed and maintained relations with different people from various parts of the world. Located on the Iberian Peninsula it is a member of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, of NATO and of the European Union. As part of its foreign policy, the armed forces play a relevant role. This means that, at Government level, with a global vision, combining the Foreign and Defence Ministries is vital.

The defence of territorial integrity, national sovereignty and, indeed, the political regime in existence in a given State are intrinsically tied to the armed forces. Somehow, said forces are also linked to issues involving ontological security and national identity. For these reasons, influences on the armed forces can in turn have repercussions on all the previously mentioned aspects; it is especially relevant to pay attention to the military's top brass and to those who could end up holding such positions. Therefore, the subject matter of this feature is of considerable interest to States'

institutions that both send and welcome military students from abroad.

Generally speaking, Armed Forces personnel from several countries forge contacts among themselves, within the context of training/education, while remaining abroad for a certain period of time. This can be a good opportunity for a State to wield some influence over the foreign troops it welcomes. Thus, currently, countries such as the US and China hold some sway in the sectors of security and defence of various African and Asian nations, among other parts of the world.

On the one hand, when servicemen – and women – training or studying abroad come in contact with realities that differ from those of their countries of origin, regarding politics, the economy and culture, they may then be influenced to a greater or lesser extent. On the other hand, educational institutions/training facilities that welcome said troops can even have programs and, within this framework, also people especially prepared to seek to influence those who arrive from overseas. The idea is to influence foreign troops not just in the strictly military sphere, but also, in broader terms, in the political domain, by conveying to them democratic principles, for instance. Subsequently, some of the military personnel in question could end up taking part in or, in a few cases, even spearhead processes for change in the political regime in their homelands. Somehow, the seeds of political change can be sowed in the minds of those troops when they are studying or training abroad.

FOREIGN FORCES

States with prestigious armed forces and military academies have the ability to attract foreign soldiers and students from other countries wishing to invest in their training. Creating and maintaining emotional ties between host institutions and their foreign servicemen – and women – is vitally important for the host nation's influence to be felt, in the short, medium and long term. In this context, the defence and foreign ministries of host nations, for instance, through their embassies, need to monitor the career path of foreign troops studying or training there, especially when the latter take up high-ranking positions in their homelands, since this could facilitate relations among States. The influencing State's interest lies in getting those under its influence to perform significant duties in society, in order to take advantage of this situation. With regard to the subject matter under analysis, domestically, the influenced State should keep a close eye on who is trying to wield influence on whom, what type of influence is being dealt with, as well as the goals of such influence.

In reality, diplomacy needs to be viewed as multifaceted, involving multidisciplinary, interdisciplinarity and teamwork. This way, in the international sphere, defence diplomacy serves to, *inter alia*, foster military cooperation, both bilaterally and multilaterally. To such end, it is necessary to rely on military academies and training centres as soft power instruments. This kind of power is based on attraction and on a somehow subtle influence whose effects should be considered chiefly in the medium and long term, thereby enabling the State to attain strategic goals.

Armed forces can be regarded as a foreign policy instrument of States. In the field of defence diplomacy, the role of defence attaché takes on particular importance: as concerns pursuing national interests abroad, this position needs to combine defence and foreign ministries. Given that the scope of defence is increasingly emphasised as being broad, the duties of defence attaché are more and more complex, to the extent they cover various areas, such as the economy, science, technology and public relations.

INFILTRATING INSTITUTIONS

There are diverse situations that should warrant the attention of counter-espionage services. International military cooperation entails risks for States both sending and hosting troops, insofar as influences can be mutual and foreign soldiers – under the guise of students or trainees – can infiltrate themselves as spies at the host institutions. Said spies could be interested in gathering information on military facilities, arms, new technologies, research projects within the military sphere, as well as identifying key individuals, among other aspects. It can also happen that troops are recruited outside their country to serve as spies when they return to their homelands. The Armed Forces of the various countries are aware of said risks and, as such, not only warn their troops of the hazards in question, but also to choose their international cooperation partners wisely. In reality, espionage does not occur solely among adversary States, but also among States regarded as friends. In international politics, appearances can be deceiving.

THOSE TRAINING ABROAD CAN BE INFLUENCED BY THINGS THAT DIFFER FROM THEIR OWN COUNTRY

In this domain, it is ill-advised to underestimate adversaries' capabilities and, with due consideration, with no generalisations, it is wise to acknowledge that not all adversaries appear to be that, and that they could have achieved objectives to be carefully and cunningly achieved in the long run. Intelligence and counter-intelligence services are vital for uncovering that which does not always take place on the surface.

EXCHANGING INFORMATION

With regard to the Portuguese Armed Forces (PAF), in an exclusive interview, General (Ret.) Valença Pinto, Chairman of Eurodefence Portugal and the Portuguese Armed Forces' former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, considers that, broadly speaking, international military training and education are highly relevant, especially as part of alliances. According to the General, these training and education activities enable exchanging information, experiences and mutual knowledge, as well as developing interoperability. This interviewee maintains that, to prevent negative impacts, in terms of foreign influence stemming from the education and training given to Portuguese military personnel

abroad, destinations need to be diversified as well as thoroughly and carefully selected. General Valença Pinto reveals that the aforementioned military personnel are adequately prepared to remain alert and be resilient with regard to activities involving harmful influence wielded at the teaching/training establishments hosting them.

General Valença Pinto believes that the international appeal of Portuguese military teaching/training institutions, in relation to foreign students,

HOST NATIONS NEED TO MONITOR FOREIGN TROOPS STUDYING OR TRAINING THERE

is mainly rooted in the generalised acknowledgment of the PAF's standards of excellence, as concerns contents, discipline, professionalism and demanding nature. In terms of reputation, this interviewee also points out the PAF's exemplary performance in missions abroad. General Valença Pinto points out the following principles and values that the PAF convey to foreign military personnel when these train/study in Portugal: discipline in military training, a strong sense of unity, cohesion and proximity among the various ranks.

According to the Chairman of Eurodefence Portugal, military cooperation and training programs are part of Portugal's Foreign Policy and, as such, there needs to be coordination in relation to their objectives and to controlling how they are

enforced. To this end, General Valença Pinto states that Portuguese-speaking countries have to be regarded as a priority, but not exclusive, while highlighting the need for a proper understanding of those countries' specificities, diversity in the geopolitical and cultural spheres, as well as the differences in equipment and organization standards.

UNDERCOVER THREAT

Commodore João Silva Pereira, Director of the Portuguese Armed Forces' Military Intelligence and Security Centre, adds that the Centre remains attentive to the possible entry, in Portugal, of foreign students posing as civilians who are actually undercover military personnel collaborating with the military intelligence services of their countries, while they serve as spies at Portuguese civilian universities. The PAF, under the corresponding legal framework, adopt the necessary measures to safeguard military security and, hence, national security.

As concerns counterintelligence measures relative to foreign military personnel attending Portuguese military teaching/educational establishments, the Director of the Military Intelligence and Security Center mentions that, in keeping with the law, certain activities are undertaken.

Do the Portuguese Armed Forces prepare military personnel who are sent to teaching/training programs abroad, so that they are impervious to possible negative foreign influences? According to Commodore João Silva Pereira, all Portuguese military personnel deployed abroad fulfil a Readiness Plan that includes, among various aspects, raising awareness to identifying and reacting to possible threatening individuals ●

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A US navy landing craft deploys a tactical vehicle in Pinheiro Da Cruz, Portugal, during an amphibious exercise

