# THE POLICE DIPLOMAT NETWORK AS A RESPONSE TO MODERN CHALLENGES: A PORTUGUESE PERSPECTIVE

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## ABSTRACT

This research explores the transformation of international security dynamics amid the rising challenges posed by globalised crime and modern crises. A pivotal element in this discourse is the phenomenon of Russian irredentism, illuminating the territorial and geopolitical ambitions of a nation challenging established international norms. Within this evolving landscape, the concept of Police Diplomacy has taken on a new expression, marking a paradigmatic shift in which representatives of law enforcement agencies take on diplomatic functions previously reserved for politicians and career diplomats. Portugal's Universalist orientation provides a compelling framework to contextualise this transition, reflecting the Nation's commitment to universalist ideals and its active engagement in global collaborative efforts. Utilising Portugal as a focal point, this study offers an in-depth analysis of the police diplomat role, delineating its complexities, challenges, and implications within contemporary international relations. Throughout, emphasis is maintained on the overarching goal of peace diplomacy, centred on Human Security and the safeguarding of vulnerable populations.

## INTRODUCTION

Some contemporaneous trends seem to be pushing humanity towards the ultimate end. The military invasion of Ukraine – the worst security crisis on the old continent since the Second World War (1939–1945) now entering its third year – and the growing threat of the use of nuclear power amplify the risk of an escalation of tensions, reconfiguring the international order as we understand it (Cohen et al., 2023). The People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, and the US are investing in the expansion and modernisation of their nuclear arsenals, outside of the agreements made, increasing the imminence of a nuclear war, whether intentional or by mistake. "Geopolitical divides are preventing us from coming together around global solutions for global challenges" (Guterres, 2024, p. 4). In 2023, the hottest temperatures on record were recorded, while floods, forest fires, and other climate-related disasters affected millions of people and communities across the globe, compelling the "people on the move" (IOM, 2022)[1]. Meanwhile, stirring developments in the life sciences and other disruptive technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, particularly artificial intelligence, have reached unprecedented heights, transforming human interaction in multiple areas (Schwab, 2018).

In the third decade of the 21st century, humanity is facing an unusual level of danger because of the unbridled arms race (including nuclear), extreme climatic events, advances in life sciences and digital disruptive technologies, and the acceleration of the generalised corruption of the global information ecosystem. Compressed by critical and almost unsustainable tensions, international security needs urgent, concerted intervention on a global scale as if 2024 were the decisive moment for the survival of civilisation and the entire modern geopolitical construct[2]

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[1]  The urgent need to deal with climate change and human mobility is evidenced by an extensive network of international agreements and structures. Climate change, environmental degradation, and disasters are reconfiguring modern patterns of human mobility. Now is the crucial time to concretise these agreements and drive forward the implementation of human mobility in climate change scenarios (IOM, 2022).

[2]  Originally created by Rudolf Kjellén, geopolitics is first and foremost a way of thinking about and perceiving the world (Kjellén, 1924; Dodds, 2007). A contested and ever-evolving concept, geopolitics can be defined as the method of analysis or perspective that refers to politics and power dynamics – that is, the discourses and practices associated with the acquisition and use of power, the exercise of power, power relations, and the structure of power for certain purposes – as a function of a given space, whether locally or on a broader scale, such as a region or the world (Correia, 2012; Tomé, 2014, p. 190).

(World Economic Forum, 2024a; Mecklin, 2024). It is therefore clear that the scientific and applied concertation of such criticalities on the international geopolitical chessboard is of great importance to security studies. In light of the combined prisms of international relations and police science, this exercise in 'plasticity' in social science research selects the components of interest in a timely manner in order to mould them to the object of study (Fernandes, 2022a).

Portugal, as a global actor with a universalist slant, geographically and politically inscribed in the projects of the EU, UN, and NATO, has benefited from the interdependent, cooperative, and collective security disposition that emerged in the last quarter of the 20th century. Committed to the defence of European values and centred on human security and the development of an area of freedom, security, and justice stripped of borders, the Portuguese state promotes foreign policies – domestic and European – that cover multiple dimensions not exclusively military in scope (Mota, 2020).

With this in mind, this essay is dedicated to analysing the main existential dangers highlighted for contemporary times, specifically for 2024, in view of the consequences that reverberate for Portuguese internal security. In doing so, Portugal's position is duly taken into account in the context of the European geopolitical complex, to which it is related and dependent. Europe's security seems less and less secure. "Europe was in danger and today it is increasingly in danger" (Borrell, 2024, p. 2). Russia's transgression and the US's indecision and lack of focus on the Atlantic Alliance show just how ill-prepared Europe is to face these threats (Beddoes, 2024).

In terms of the critical path pursued in the development of the current research, the search for a bibliography and the subsequent literature review played an essential role in building knowledge. In fact, the appropriate positioning of this essay in the relevant context allowed us to identify gaps, grasp doctrines, integrate new events, and evaluate the results of previous research (Quivy & Campenhoudt, [1995] 1998). "The reading of all good books is like a conversation with the most honourable people of past ages, who were their authors, indeed, even like a set conversation in which they reveal to us only the best of their thoughts" (Descartes, 1998, p. 6). Equally pertinent to the logical, organised, and

opportunistic construction of this study, interdisciplinarity enabled the scientific basis of the research, giving it rigour and validity according to the rules of academia. On the other hand, the triangulation of concepts made it possible to analyse the object of study from multiple perspectives and possibilities. By assimilating and combining the theses of several authors, a more holistic and refined understanding of the subject was uncovered (Plattan, *apud* Machado, 2008).

## 1. THE RISE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY PATTERN

Throughout recorded history, the intertwined themes of security, conflict, and power dynamics have pervaded human societies and diverse civilisations, irrespective of their political orientation, territorial expanse – be it local, regional, or global – or geographic domain. The mechanics and discourses relating to the acquisition of power, its exercise and its structured configurations for specific purposes have received significant academic attention in various scientific disciplines (Tomé, 2014).

In the contemporary milieu, international relations navigate a complex tapestry of perceptions, paradigms, and evolving patterns, significantly influencing disciplines such as public international law, international political economy, political and diplomatic sciences, military and police sciences, sociology, anthropology, and psychology, thereby elevating security studies into an established scientific domain.

As the 20th century transitioned into the 21st, successive historical junctures, accentuated by the forces of globalisation, reshaped power dynamics and the hegemonic structures of the international order (Tomé, 2019). The paradigms of statehood, international security, and diplomacy have undergone transformative shifts, ushering in a new epoch of inter-nation correspondence in the networked age (Carpenter & McLuhan, 1960; Kissinger, 2002; L'Heuillet, 2004; Al-Rodhan & Stoudmann, 2006; Elias, 2013),

Consequently, novel geopolitical, defence, and security frameworks have emerged, encompassing facets such as internal, external, human,

multilevel, global, and societal dimensions, thereby influencing perspectives on security concepts (Fernandes, 2005; Elias, 2013).

It becomes discernible that the construct of security is rife with intricacies, controversies, and divergent interpretations, contingent upon the analytical lens employed.

Delving into the contemporary paradigm of international law and security, we observe intricate regulations governing the prevention and limitation of force deployment in inter-state relations. Rooted in Article 2.4 of the UN Charter, the *jus ad bellum* doctrine ('right to war') encapsulates the evolution from an erstwhile unbridled logic to a universally proscribed framework regarding the use of force (Kowalski, 2014).

After the devastations of the First World War, The Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907 championed philanthropic ideals as imperative requisites for peace. Subsequently, the revolutionary concept of *jus in bello* emerged, contesting Hugo de Groot's predominant model and establishing the rules that govern and circumscribe behaviour during a war.

The Treaty of Versailles of 1919 and the nascent League of Nations further entrenched these constraints on belligerent actions. However, the unequivocal endorsement of prohibiting force deployment in international relations materialised only in 1928 with the Briand-Kellogg Pact. This landmark treaty, although pioneering, was fraught with limitations, which were only addressed post-Second World War, and characterised by the Holocaust and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Following the culmination of the global conflict spanning 1939 to 1945, efforts pivoted towards crafting global peace and security and eschewing militarism. In alignment with Chapter VII and Article 51 of the UN Charter, provisions were established for two exceptions to the use of force: the prerogative of the UN Security Council to enact military measures, and the invocation of the right to self-defence.

Pursuant to Article 24 (1) of the Charter, the UN wields exclusive authority over international public belligerent capabilities. Indeed, the Security Council is endowed with considerable discretion to uphold its mandate of preserving international security, with resolutions such as S/RES/678

of 1990, S/RES/687 of 1991, S/RES/1441 of 2002 pertaining to the Gulf War intervention, and S/RES/1973 of 2011 concerning the Libyan civil conflict, exemplifying this mandate (Platiau & Vieira, 2006).

In the realm of international law, Article 51 of the Charter delineates the conditions for individual or collective self-defence against military incursions, predicated upon actual armed hostilities rather than threats or the use of force. Such legitimate defence necessitates a meticulous evaluation of the nature, magnitude, extent, and repercussions of the aggression, adhering to principles of proportionality and necessity. Foundational to collective self-defence are reciprocal protection treaties and conventions (Kowalski, 2014).

Reflecting upon the evolution of security paradigms, which transitioned from state-centric orientations to a focus on individual human beings, it becomes imperative to underscore the concepts of Human Security and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) – constructs promulgated within the international jurisprudence at the onset of the 21st century.

Human Security, albeit encompassing multifaceted dimensions (economic, nutritional, health-related, environmental, political, individual, etc.), strives to ensure the safeguarding, security, and holistic development of individuals, emancipating them from fear, destitution, and indignity. This concept is underpinned by principles of universality, interdependence, humanism, solidarity, and prevention (Kowalski, 2023).

Endorsed unanimously at the 2005 UN World Summit, the global political commitment of R2P aspires to avert egregious transgressions such as genocide, war crimes, ethnic purges, and generalised crimes against humanity, postulating that sovereignty encompasses the obligation to shield populations from Human Rights infringements and mass atrocities. R2P is predicated on adherence to international legal tenets, particularly emphasising legitimacy, peace, and the safeguarding of Fundamental Rights (Vilmer, 2013; Kowalski, 2023).

However, transformations within this domain remain contentious, particularly concerning determinations of the legitimacy and legality of defensive measures against aggression. The assessment of such

intricacies is frequently exacerbated by temporal disparities and subjectivity in information dissemination (Fernandes, 2022b). A salient contention emerges between pre-emptive self-defence (reactive measures after an armed assault) and preventive self-defence (pre-emptive measures to forestall anticipated or presumed armed hostilities), with the latter potentially contravening Article 51 of the Charter by advocating the resurgence of force within international interactions.

These concepts are fundamental to understanding the essentiality of protecting civilians, even in war scenarios. The gradual introduction of humanist principles has opened space for the subsidiary intervention of non-exclusively military actors, namely police forces, dedicated to maintaining order and with the responsibility to safeguard Human Rights. There are still international rules to follow, even in conflict times.

## 2. THE RUSSIAN IRREDENTISM: A GEOPOLITICAL WORLD MENACE

In this warring scenario, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict warrants scrutiny. Initiated in 2014 with the contentious annexation of Crimea and subsequent military engagements in eastern Ukraine, this conflict escalated in 2022 under the pretext of a purported special military operation by the Russian Federation. However, this operation is nothing but a blatant violation of international law and the foundational principles of the UN Charter. Moscow's actions imperil global security and European stability.

The Kremlin's unanticipated military incursion into Ukrainian territories starkly contrasts with prevailing trends of diminishing interstate and internationalised conflicts. Within a multipolar environment marked by intricate interdependencies, such aggressive manoeuvres rekindle considerations of preventive measures against armed conflicts (Kowalski, 2023).

The geopolitical implications of Moscow's actions are profound, challenging established norms and eroding trust in international cooperation

frameworks[3]. In fact, after the *Mauerfall* of Berlin in 1989, the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon in 2001, Russia's military invasion of Ukrainian territory was the international event that most undermined the Westphalian notion of sovereignty and the international security arrangements established since 1945.

We can define irredentism "as the policies of a government to reconquer territories lost in previous conflicts or those territories that are connected by cultural and linguistic ties" (Rua, 2018, p. 144). This concept was at the heart of Vladimir Putin's annexation of Crimea in 2014, masking the real geostrategic interests of access to the Black Sea. In fact, Russian irredentism is a political aspiration of nationalists to take back some or all the territories of the other republics of the former Soviet Union and the territory of the former Russian Empire, aggregating them into a single state (Stent, 2019).

Recent studies underline Moscow's desire to manage the escalation of the war while maintaining dominance. However, this effort has been hindered by the collapse of Russian diplomatic access in target countries due to the expulsion of numerous secret service agents (spies) and other Russian-speaking agents involved in unconventional operations. Currently, the Kremlin is attempting to rebuild its capacity to engage in acts of sabotage, disinformation, and other means to disrupt Western supplies to Ukraine. Information operations and subversion have long been developed to create political destabilisation and capture the elite of target countries. The 29155 and 54654 units of the Russian Federation are specialised in intelligence and unconventional warfare capabilities. Strategic provocation of disinformation, escalation of violence, disruption of markets and economies, political confusion, social anarchy, and governmental vacuums in target countries are frequently used as strategies for gaining power, defending strategic interests, and supporting pro-Russian allies (Watling, Danylyuk, & Reynolds, 2024).

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3    "Russia views the post-Cold War liberal rules-based international world order to be the creation of the United States and its European allies and a means for the United States to maintain its global political, economic, and even cultural dominance" (Radin & Reach, 2017, p. 22). The Kremlin thus wants to form a post-West order, i.e. an alternative world and international order, with an illiberal scope and a Russian-speaking focus (Boyle, 2016; Kanet, 2018; Stent, 2019).

Cyberattacks have also been used by Putin's forces to cause instability and disorder under a strategy of proxy warfare[4]. In 2007, Estonia, a Baltic nation that shares a border with Russia, was one of the first to be targeted by this modern form of hybrid warfare. Since then, Estonia has built its cyber-defence infrastructure and is ranked third best in the world, behind only the US and Saudi Arabia (International Telecommunication Union, 2021, p. 30). In 2016, Montenegro experienced the infiltration of its political elite and communication networks by Russian Federation agents. Moldova was also targeted by these unconventional warfare actions twice, first in May 2022 and again in February 2023. In June 2022, Lithuania was hit by DDoS attacks perpetrated by pro-Russian hackers *Killnet*. The exacerbation of internal divisions, dissension, and polarisation in the target countries was a common factor in these incidents.

The evolution of Russian unconventional warfare theory includes, among other models, the recruitment of agents within a faction of a state's political elite, interference in electoral processes (as happened with the 2016 and 2020 US elections), and the creation of a network of friendly states. Moscow's strategy poses a serious threat to international security. It is essential that countries and international organisations remain vigilant and adopt preventive and defensive strategies against this insidious penetration of Kremlin influence and its special (intelligence) services (Watling, Danylyuk, & Reynolds, 2024).

This resurgence of geopolitical tensions underscores the fragility of contemporary international relations, with potential ramifications extending to areas such as disarmament, climate change, and information integrity. The ramifications of such geopolitical manoeuvres, accentuated by the re-emergence of nuclear weapons and biological and chemical threats and exacerbated by information warfare, underscore the

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[4]  A cyber-attack involves the use of unconventional or illicit methods to gain unauthorised access to a digital device, computer system, or network. In the Baltic region, Estonia serves as a notable example of how a country can defend itself against cyber-attacks. The narrative dates to 2007 when Estonia experienced a cyber-attack that targeted its digital infrastructure, resulting in the defacement of a statue and the dissemination of false news. The statue in question was the Bronze Soldier, originally erected by Soviet authorities in 1947. While Russian-speaking Estonians view the statue as a symbol of the USSR's victory over Nazism, many ethnic Estonians consider Soviet soldiers as occupiers rather than liberators, and the statue serves as a painful reminder of this history. On 20 January 2024, the defence ministers of the three Baltic states signed an agreement whereby Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania agreed to build defensive anti-mobility installations in the coming years with the aim of deterring and, if necessary, defending against military threats, especially along the borders with Russia and Belarus (Meireles, 2024).

imperative for multilateral collaboration, transparency, and adherence to established international norms and protocols. By tearing up the globally agreed model on climate change, Putin's position jeopardises the stability of the world order. Let us not forget Dmitri Medvedev's words: "Russia has the right to use atomic weapons if necessary" (Diário de Notícias/AFP, 2022). More recently, on 24 February 2024, in his annual State of the Nation address, the Russian president himself again threatened to use nuclear weapons against NATO countries if the West sent troops to reinforce Volodymyr Zelensky's ranks. In Putin's words: "No matter who tries to stand in our way or all the more so create threats for our country and our people, they must know that Russia will respond immediately, and the consequences will be such as you have never seen in your entire history" (D'Agostino & Diaz-Maurin, 2024, p. 1).

In this complex context of state security and survival, challenges are escalating, propelled by surging inflation rates and elevated prices of essential commodities such as energy, oil, gas, and food. The augmented prevalence of zoonotic diseases, coupled with escalating global carbon dioxide emissions and climatic anomalies, manifests prominently across Central Europe, Western Africa, North America, China, Pakistan, and numerous regions within the Northern Hemisphere (Mecklin, 2024). The evolution of disruptive technologies, coupled with the proliferation of digital globalisation and the absence of stringent regulations governing the internet and social media platforms, catalyses widespread cyber polarisation. Concurrently, this environment engenders the proliferation of infodemic phenomena, exacerbating the degradation of the information ecosystem. Such dynamics underscore the perilous ramifications of pervasive surveillance technologies on fundamental Human Rights and civil liberties (Snowden, 2019).

Rather than adopting a reactive stance towards the utilisation of technology by non-state violent entities, policymakers necessitate proactive engagement with emergent technological paradigms. Historically confined within a restricted military domain, contemporary technological advancements are witnessing an open production cycle marked by unparalleled innovations. The escalation in space activities, underpinned by their potential for facilitating open-source, high-precision intelligence, and technological prowess, is harnessed for not only military endeavours but also humanitarian initiatives. Satellites, drones, spy balloons, and

other remote sensing modalities, in conjunction with precision-guided munitions, continually redefine the geopolitical landscape (Liang, 2022; Mecklin, 2023; Ribeiro, 2023).

Amid an international background characterised by discord between both established and emergent geopolitical entities, there arises an imperative for constructive engagement and compromise among nations, including the EU, NATO, and the US. Initiatives centred on collaborative endeavours to bolster surveillance systems (encompassing early detection mechanisms), data interoperability, analytical capabilities, and intelligence-sharing concerning biological anomalies could be instrumental in attenuating potential global threats (Mecklin, 2023). Unquestionably, dialogue and diplomatic negotiations remain paramount in preserving global security.

## 3. THE EMERGENCE OF POLICE DIPLOMACY: AND SO, IT BEGAN

International relations inherently represent a scholarly domain scrutinising the dynamics between sovereign entities, encompassing states, international organisations, non-governmental bodies, and other global stakeholders. This intricate interplay, defined by quests for power and mutual acknowledgement, underscores the centrality of diplomacy. Diplomacy, in essence, encapsulates the orchestration of international engagements through negotiations, collaborative endeavours, peaceful dialogues, and strategic communications (Kissinger, 2002; Fröhlich, 2007; Quinn & Gibson, 2017).

Amid a globalised landscape characterised by the fluid exchange of ideas, individuals, and commodities, comprehending the international paradigm of interdependent security – emblematic of contemporary nation-states – becomes imperative for a nuanced understanding of national security constructs. The contemporary evaluation of a nation's security posture is intrinsically tethered to its relational dynamics with neighbouring states. Consequently, this interdependence manifests in multifaceted, intricate, and frequently tumultuous forms (Brodeur, 2010). Canonical security doctrine posits that the political-military security of

numerous states is encapsulated within a broader security constellation, irrespective of its classification as a subsystem or regional entity (Haas, 1970; Haftendorn, 1990). A region, in this context, denotes a specialised security subsystem characterised by interlinked state entities bound by geographical proximity (Thompson, 1973; Höll, 1983; Buzan, 1991).

The strategic amalgamation of supranational concerns within regional frameworks has engendered novel avenues for inter-state collaboration, notably in domains encompassing security (police jurisdiction) and defence (military). The global resonance of the US doctrine after the 2001 assaults on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon promulgated a vigilance paradigm in transnational conduits, revitalising international police collaboration against atypical and trans-border threats (Cronin, 2002; Fernandes, 2022b).

The globalisation of multifarious quandaries has seemingly accorded primacy to security concerns, somewhat eclipsing traditional military hegemony. Contrasted with the 1980s' predominant focus on domestic policing, contemporary security paradigms exhibit a pronounced transnational orientation. Present-day security imperatives pivot on the mitigation and suppression of international organised crime, cyber malfeasance, terrorism and its associated offences, environmental threats, health crises, event management, and disaster response, underscoring the pervasive transnationalisation of quotidian experiences. Addressing this globalised criminal landscape mandates unprecedented inter-state and inter-agency cooperation. To counter the internationalisation of criminal enterprises, a corresponding globalisation of policing is imperative (Bowling, Reiner, & Sheptycki, 2019).

Nadelmann's seminal exposition (1993), subsequently echoed by Bigo (1996 and 2000), underscored the pivotal role of liaison officers within the international police cooperation nexus. Contemporary jurisprudential and policing entities widely regard this model as an efficacious instrument within a global policing framework (Nadelmann, 1993; Martin, 1994; Brodeur, 2010; den Boer & Block, 2013).

Perceived as conduits, arbitrators, or facilitators, police liaison officers, irrespective of their nomenclatural designation, interface with a plethora of legal-political roles and functions. Typically endorsed as diplomatic

envoys by their respective administrations, these police officers foster both formal and, significantly, informal liaisons with pertinent justice and domestic affairs entities, transnational police networks, and myriad organisations across nations wherein strategic interests converge (den Boer & Block, 2013; Bowling, Reiner, & Sheptycki, 2019; Fernandes, 2022b).

## 4. PORTUGAL'S UNIVERSALIST ORIENTATION

Within the European regional milieu, Portugal's trajectory aligns with the broader context. The governance of its security framework is predicated upon a multicentred and Universalist approach, frequently actualised through the global deployment of national assets in consonance with EU directives (Durão Barroso, 2000). Enshrined within the principles of popular sovereignty, pluralistic expression, democratic governance, and the sanctity of fundamental rights and freedoms, the Portuguese Republic, as delineated by its Constitution, epitomises a democratic entity governed by the rule of law, championing international relations underscored by tenets of national autonomy, Human Rights advocacy, state equality, peaceful dispute resolution, non-interventionist policies, and collaborative endeavours for global emancipation and advancement (Silva, 2020).

In the pursuit of an international framework fostering peace and equity among nations, Portugal champions the eradication of imperialism, colonialism, and all manifestations of aggression, hegemony, and exploitation in inter-state interactions. Furthermore, it advocates for comprehensive, synchronised, and regulated disarmament, the dissolution of political-military alliances, and the institution of a collective security paradigm.

Concurrently nurturing amicable and cooperative relationships with Lusophone nations, Portugal remains steadfast in fortifying European integration and bolstering democratic tenets, tranquillity, economic advancement, and justice in international relations. In alignment with this vision, Portugal actively contributes to sculpting a domain of liberty, security, and justice, underpinned by a unified foreign, security,

and defence policy framework. This policy is predicated on collaboration and synergy, ensuring the upholding of human and peoples' rights (Silva, 2020).

Steered by the guiding principles of Europeanism, Atlanticism, Lusophony, Internationalisation, and Multilateralism, Portuguese foreign policy is orchestrated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This involves a complex inter-ministerial collaboration, strategically marshalling resources from diverse administrative domains to champion national interests. The Ministry, while being a specialist in political diplomacy, adopts a multifaceted approach encompassing peripheral and technical facets, notably in the realms of security and law enforcement (Durão Barroso, 2000; Magalhães, 2001).

The Ministry of Internal Affairs, spearheaded by its General Secretariat and the active participation of its affiliated law enforcement agencies, fervently endeavours to position Portugal as a significant global actor (Silva, 2020).

Pursuant to Law No. 53/2008 dated 29 August, as amended, internal security is delineated as a sovereign state activity encompassing the preservation of public order, crime prevention and suppression, upholding democratic institutions and legal frameworks, and safeguarding individuals, their assets, and inherent rights and freedoms. While predominantly functioning within Portuguese territorial confines, the domestic security apparatus and services are authorised to operate extraterritorially, contingent upon international obligations and prevailing international legal norms. Collaborative endeavours with overseas police entities or pertinent international organisations aim to augment the Union's ambit of freedom, security, and justice.

Consequently, through proactive engagements in international security and foreign policy arenas, the Internal Administration transcends traditional Westphalian boundaries. This is achieved through the deployment of police liaison officers, trainers, advisors, and other cooperative emissaries to international entities and foreign territories, notably within Portuguese embassies, diplomatic missions, and consular establishments (Tomé, 2019; Carrilho, 2022).

From the late 1990s onwards, Portugal has accentuated the external facet of its internal security apparatus, chiefly via the deployment of police liaison officers under the aegis of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Such officers, sourced from the National Republican Guard (*Gendarmerie*) and the Public Security Police (a civilian law enforcement agency), in addition to immigration liaison officers from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, were instrumental until the absorption of the latter security service in October 2023. Endowed with state accreditation and holding a status akin to diplomatic envoys, these liaison officers possess the hallmarks of official dignitaries with legitimate law enforcement authority, thereby availing themselves of the privileges and immunities enshrined in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 18 April 1961 and its ancillary treaties (Magalhães, 2001; Fernandes, 2022b).

Thus, Portugal has orchestrated an expansive and esteemed police liaison network, seamlessly integrated with its diplomatic infrastructure. Tasked with cross-border collaborations to counteract transnational criminal activities and contemporary hybrid security challenges, this network epitomises diplomacy centred on peace and harmonious international relations (Tomé, 2019).

## 5. THE POLICE DIPLOMAT: A CASE STUDY FROM PORTUGAL

During the latter part of the 1990s, the apparatus of international police cooperation saw its inception with the assignment of police liaison officers (OLMAI) and immigration officers (OLIMAI[5]) to the African diaspora. Principal destinations encompassed nations such as Angola, Cape

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[5]    Within the realm of international police cooperation, the emancipation of the OLIMAI is prominently highlighted by Decree-Law No. 290-A/2001, dated 17 November. This legislation delineates their mission to encompass the analysis of migratory flows originating in or transiting through the host country, destined for Portugal and Europe. Furthermore, their mandate extends to collaborative efforts with local authorities to mitigate illegal immigration and human trafficking. However, pursuant to Law No. 73/2021, enacted on 12 November, the overhaul of the national border control system and the dissolution of the SEF on 29 October 2023 resulted in the redistribution of its competencies to other forces and entities. Notably, the Gendarmerie and the Public Security Police have been endowed with augmented powers concerning foreign affairs and border control. Concurrently, the role of the immigration liaison officer transitioned from the Ministry of Internal Administration to the ambit of the Agency for Integration, Migration, and Asylum, I.P., under the purview of the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, thus relinquishing its police-oriented dimension.

Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and São Tomé and Príncipe, among others. Subsequently, this network expanded its reach to encompass territories such as Brazil, India, Morocco, the United Kingdom, the People's Republic of China, and East Timor. Concurrently, liaison officers were seconded to international multi-stakeholder entities, as exemplified by the Permanent Representation of Portugal to the EU (REPER) and, post-2021, the EU Agency for Police Cooperation (EUROPOL).

Synthesising a diverse array of intricate realities, Portugal's international cooperation network has heavily invested in technical-police training, police academic pursuits, and advanced educational programmes tailored for police personnel across Portuguese-speaking territories. This collaboration spans both Portuguese soil and varied international locales, with technical and instructional contributions geared towards enhancing internal security infrastructures. Additionally, there exists a robust exchange of information concerning justice, security, and domestic affairs, among other collaborative endeavours (MAI Press Release, 2022).

In the contemporary scene, equipped with expertise in foreign and border control, the OLMAI functions as diplomatic police operatives, straddling the nexus between foreign policy and international collaboration.
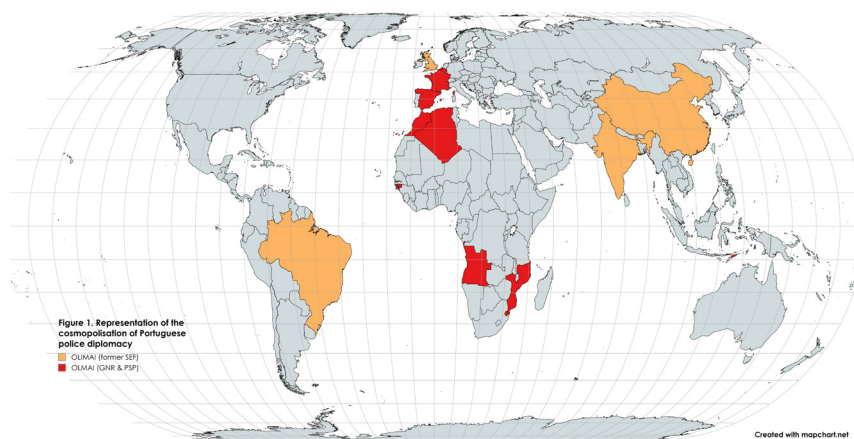


**Figure 1.** Representation of the cosmopolisation of Portuguese police diplomacy.
*Source: author's elaboration (using mapchart.net)*

They offer strategic and operational support to Portuguese agencies, primarily by facilitating information exchange, particularly intelligence pertaining to security landscapes and imminent threats, and providing specialised technical-police counsel.

The convergence of both linear and non-linear and formal and informal interrelationships among myriad security entities and structures, each varying in magnitude and scope – from intra-state to global security paradigms – augments the capacity to curate precise and pioneering informational outputs. Such outputs are pivotal for informed decision-making at the apex of governance, aligning with the state's paramount interests and imperatives and fostering synergies across both domestic and international security arenas.

Intrinsic to the OLMAI's operational framework are intelligence reports, crafted with variable frequency contingent upon deployment contexts. These reports, characterised as strategic and contemporaneous documents, are disseminated to the Heads of Diplomatic Missions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the integral security and intelligence components of the Portuguese Republic. This dissemination embodies a comprehensive, cross-cutting, and inter-ministerial alignment.

Navigating strategic and discreet domains, hitherto the exclusive purview of seasoned diplomats, the OLMAI bolster a plethora of cooperative endeavours – be they bilateral or multilateral – representing Portugal across missions within the EU, the UN, and other supranational, international, and regional frameworks. Such representation is predicated on facilitating internal security aid and executing technical-police cooperation initiatives and ventures (Tomé, 2019; Carrilho, 2022). Serving as pivotal interfaces between distinct security and civil protection entities and their international counterparts, the OLMAI furnish direct technical-police support to ambassadors on all security-related facets upon requisition.

The extent of the exchange of experiences, techniques, knowledge, and information between police representatives from various sovereign nations; the incorporation of (national) policing in other contexts of action, through articulation with various multinational police forces and services; and the interconnection with local, national, sub-regional/

regional, international, and supranational policing systems provide this network of police liaison officers, highlighted in the international environment, with unique training and experience as police diplomats (Stevanović, Jacimovski, & Kekić, 2012; Bowling, Reiner, & Sheptycki, 2019; Fernandes, 2022b).

# 6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, we ascertain that the spheres of international relations, foreign policy, diplomacy, and international security are intricately intertwined, each exerting a notable influence on global engagements, the preservation of order, and the resolution of shared security challenges. Theoretical frameworks in international relations, encompassing realism and liberalism, shape the diplomatic tactics employed to address security concerns. Conventions, accords, and international organisations bolster inter-state collaboration in confronting transnational security threats. Diplomacy serves as the conduit for enhancing cohesion in international relations, predominantly through mechanisms of trust and mutual reciprocity. Within this context, police forces engaged in cross-border partnerships contribute to resource projection, strategic intelligence sharing, and concerted effort coordination. Hence, collaborative endeavours and effective communication emerge as pivotal elements in navigating the multifaceted intricacies of a globally interconnected milieu characterised by competitive dynamics and enduring incongruities.

The preceding analysis suggests that OLMAI, designated as police diplomatic agents, operate and engage within a nuanced and ambivalent milieu characterised by competitive-collaborative paradigms, multilayered interactions, and the involvement of diverse strategic entities. Their engagements are informed by criteria such as opportunism, entrepreneurial acumen, professionalism, discernment, allegiance, mission-centric ethos, knowledge, and technical prowess (Block, 2010; Fernandes, 2022b).

An OLMAI operative, by necessity, embodies a suite of advanced communication competencies, cultural acumen, and a unique capability to integrate seamlessly with international law enforcement apparatuses.

Their pivotal function is centred upon catalysing collaborative ventures and orchestrating the strategic dissemination of information. To be an effective policing diplomat, a profound understanding of legal paradigms, diplomatic protocols, and nuanced socio-cultural milieus must be demonstrated. This involves cultivating trust among international counterparts and ensuring the fluidity of information exchange to adeptly navigate and respond to global security exigencies. Essential attributes encompass adaptability, discretion, and a steadfast commitment to both domestic and international legal frameworks.

The substantial autonomy vested in such roles predicates upon foundations of trust and intimate collaboration, emanating not only from the sovereign State but also from a spectrum of stakeholders with whom engagement transpires. Mastery in negotiation and adept diplomatic capabilities are indispensable for crafting bespoke strategies tailored to specific constellations of police forces, nation-states, and overarching networks, considering intricate interplays of cultural, religious, political, and legal variables (Bigo, 1996; 2000; Lemieux, 2015).

From a comprehensive analysis, it is discernible that the quintessence of diplomatic endeavours – spanning representation, intelligence diffusion, negotiation, advocacy, protective mandates, and the enhancement of public service – are inherent to the routine operations of the OLMAI. These operatives function as bona fide police diplomats, vested with the authority to actualise security imperatives, all while championing and upholding Portuguese interests on the international stage, within predetermined temporal frameworks (Magalhães, 2001; Tomé, 2019; Fernandes, 2022b).

Police liaison officers emerge as vanguards in architecting a unique paradigm of diplomatic-security synergies at a supranational tier, symbolising an authentic internationalisation of internal security. Functioning as intermediary governmental emissaries, they command respect within diplomatic echelons and are entrusted with the nuanced execution of foreign and cooperative policy agendas. Their purview often encompasses intricate geopolitical challenges with a technical-political essence (Stevanović, Jacimovski, & Kekić, 2012; den Boer & Block, 2013; Lemieux, 2015; Fernandes, 2022b).

The expansive network of police diplomats and their pivotal contributions to Portugal's external representation within global law enforcement collaborative frameworks are unequivocal elements within the contemporary paradigm of transnational security and policing. They epitomise a resilient, dynamic, and efficacious global security infrastructure (Brodeur, 2010).

Despite the inherent vulnerabilities to an array of risks, tensions, and ambiguities of multifaceted origins, police diplomacy, as exemplified by the OLMAI ensemble and its cadre of diplomats, has pioneered innovative strategies and fortified resilience against unconventional hazards and disruptive challenges, consistently championing the cause of Human Security and the unwavering advocacy for Human Rights.

Police diplomacy serves as a crucial instrument for confronting modern expansionism by facilitating collaboration, sharing intelligence, resolving conflicts, and promoting stability and security. As geopolitical tensions continue to evolve, effective diplomatic engagement within law enforcement remains essential for safeguarding global peace and security in the face of contemporary challenges. In a deeply interconnected, fast-paced, and polarised world full of uncertainties, this ability to build diplomacy for peace and liberty is of vital importance. As Sofi Oksanen taught us, freedom is not a choice, it's a necessity.

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