

PORTUGUESE BEHAVIOR TOWARDS THE POLITICAL TRANSITION AND THE REGIONAL INTEGRATION OF MACAU IN THE PEARL RIVER REGION

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Unlike Hong Kong's painstaking transition to Chinese rule, Macau's transition has been essentially smooth. Three main factors explain this situation: first, the few, if not insignificant, Portuguese interests both in Macau and in the region; second, both governments' considerable pragmatism and realism towards Macau; third, political and diplomatic considerations which have led the Portuguese government to adopt a foreign policy posture that emphasizes cooperation between both parties in order to distinguish Macau's transition process from that of Hong Kong, and to secure symbolically in the annals of international diplomatic history that Macau is in fact a distinct political entity from that of the neighbouring British colony of Hong Kong. Based on these three explanatory premises we foresee that the remaining years will be rather peaceful.

Although we have been in Macau for more than four centuries, our presence there is very limited.

Pedro Catarino¹

Weak Portuguese interests in Macau and the region

Portuguese interests in Macau and in the Pearl River region, as well as in greater China (the mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong) are rather feeble. Such was not the case, however, up to more than two decades ago. Until the April 25th, 1974, Portuguese revolution, Portuguese interests in Macau were highly political and, therefore, also economic and commercial as a result of the overseas policy then in place. As José Calvet de Magalhães, Portuguese consul in Guangzhou [Canton] between 1946 and 1950, noted:

Our interests in China are fundamentally restricted to the maintenance of Portuguese sovereignty and the well-being of the colony of Macau. The British position is different from ours since, apart from the defense of their colony of Hong Kong, the English have important interests in China.²

Due to the intransigent defense of the overseas domains by the highly nationalist government

of Prime Minister António de Oliveira Salazar, economic development plans were put in place, in the 1950s, and a Portuguese Economic Space, in 1961, with two clearly outlined aims: promotion of local economic and industrial development and Macau's integration in the empire. A study carried out a few years ago by several faculty members of the University of Macau confirmed that the imperial policy of economic integration contributed in a decisive way to the economic development of the enclave. Of the four phases identified in this study — incipient, growth promoted by Portugal, the beginning of the textile and clothing industries, and diversification³ — the second, apart from replacing the manufacture of traditional products of the first phase of industrialization, contributed also to a significant increase in trade between Macau and Portuguese Africa. This situation became the subject of some well-founded criticism by Ben Bella, then leader of Algeria, during the visit of the then Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai to that North African country in December 1963.⁴

However, with the 25th April 1974 Portuguese revolution and the hasty decolonization of the overseas colonies, the *ancién* regime's policy that justified the Portuguese presence in Macau and in the region was utterly discarded. The new regime's political intentions towards Macau became quite explicit when it decided to withdraw its military garrison from the enclave, on December 31st, 1975, and allowed the rapid demise of the Portuguese Economic Space. Shortly after, Macau's official currency, the pataca, was linked to the Hong Kong dollar, in 1977, which in turn was linked to the US dollar in 1984. These key events contributed to the rapid collapse of Portuguese political, economic, commercial and financial interests in Macau. The latter three interests were not filled by any Portuguese economic groups because they were abruptly nationalized as a result of a sharp turn to the left of the Portuguese-revolution in March 1975.⁵

The outcome of these self-inflicted wounds was a total disinterest on the part of the Portuguese central government towards such crucial issues as investment, foreign trade, and the teaching of Portuguese language and culture in Macau. For example, Portuguese investment in Macau throughout the last two decades has been practically non-existent. Aware of this distressing fact, successive local Portuguese governors invested quite heavily in major public works, during the last few years of 1980s and in the first five years of the 1990s, with the support of the Chinese central government. Despite the generosity of many investment incentives — namely, land concessions, interest relief schemes for loans and tax exemptions — offered by the Macau government to Portuguese companies, their participation rate in local public works projects remained at a trifling level.⁶ Several factors contributed to this outcome: the extremely weak capacity of Portuguese economic groups to project themselves abroad, the lack of knowledge among Portuguese entrepreneurs about the Asia-Pacific region, the inadequacy of capital and of entrepreneurial initiative, the absence of human resources, and the added competition from local Macau companies closely associated with prominent local Chinese leaders or that have strong connections with mainland China.

According to Jorge Morbey, former chairman of the Macau Cultural Institute:

The Portuguese investments which were announced are either late or were given up. They amount, however, to one contribution or another to the capital of enterprises of the territory, which the government of Macau has been offering at price conditions worthy of comments from the Chinese public opinion, which considers them to be lower than their fair value. Consequently, such capital offers have been seen as a bad bargain for the territory, which at its own loss would be favouring Portuguese interests from abroad and discriminating against local investors. I do not foresee great success for this policy.⁷

Portuguese investment is not only weak in Macau but also in China, in spite of the introduction of a rather generous support program by the Portuguese government in the last few years. A recent

official report revealed that in 1994 Portuguese investment amounted to an insignificant 10 million escudos or just a little bit over US\$6,000; whereas in 1995, it increased to 121 million escudos or just US\$733,000. These figures represent 0.02 percent and 0.09 percent, respectively, of total Portuguese investment abroad.⁸ This dismal situation lingers on despite the fact that the Portuguese government created a specific credit line of US\$200 million for Portuguese investors in China, in March 1993,⁹ and opened the Beijing office of ICEP (Portuguese Investment, Trade and Tourism Board), on September 16, 1994.¹⁰ According to a sweeping report drafted by government officials, academics and business people:

The renegotiation of the US\$200 million credit line, which has not yet been used and points to the fact that Portuguese entrepreneurs have not yet shown any interest in China, would constitute a relevant aspect for our global strategy. In fact, this credit line is not attractive enough when compared to other ones, because it penalizes and demotivates Portuguese companies that have access to it. The concessional percentage provided by the Portuguese government must expand in such a way as to increase the likelihood of approval by the Chinese authorities.¹¹

A more or less identical situation repeats itself in the area of trade between Portugal and greater China (the mainland, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau). According to an official report in 1994, 1.09 percent of Portuguese imports came from greater China; whereas 0.63 percent of Portuguese exports went in the opposite direction. The following year, that is, in 1995, the imports fell to 1.07 percent; whereas exports remained at 0.63 percent.¹² In statistical terms bilateral trade is insignificant. This precarious situation reflects also, in part, a long-term trend in Portuguese foreign trade: its high concentration in the member-states of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), reaching up to 90 percent of total exports and 84 percent of imports in 1994.¹³

Besides the absence of Portuguese economic, financial and trade interests in Macau and greater China, one of the strongest signs that Portuguese interests in the enclave are quickly vanishing is, undoubtedly, the extremely weak identification by Macau's Chinese residents with the Portuguese language and culture. The available studies reveal that only a very small number of Chinese are able to speak Portuguese and have some basic knowledge of Portuguese culture.¹⁴ This situation was fully recognized in an experts' conference, which concluded:

A reason for the failure of the Portuguese language as one of the languages with influence in the territorial identification [of Macau] was remarked. . . It was verified that in the great majority of the territory's schools — namely, in the private schools — there are obstacles to the implementation of policies decided by the government, and it was concluded that the number of teachers who consider themselves touched by the Portuguese culture is insignificant. . . Portugal, although already lacking the ability to win the struggle for the implementation of the Portuguese language, must assert itself, through the consolidation of the Portuguese culture, with the development of training, namely through the identification of the role to be played by the university in the Macau community.¹⁵

Apparently, Portuguese diplomats are well aware of this situation. For example, on June 6, 1990, ambassador Pedro Catarino, then head of the Portuguese delegation to the Portuguese-Chinese Joint Liaison Group, stated in the debate on *Macau — Past, Present and Future*, sponsored by the Center of Oriental Studies, and held at the Lisbon Geographic Society, that:

It will be useless for the JD [Portuguese-Chinese Joint Declaration] to speak of Portuguese economic interests if in December 1999 there are no Portuguese corporations able to contend with the added competition which will then exist. It will be useless for the JD to speak of the protection of the Portuguese language if the use of our language and the interest in learning it are not stimulated.¹⁶

The absence of these extremely important interests enables us to understand and explain the great serenity that has been marking Macau's transition period, and which will certainly mark the remaining years.

Historical reasons

Portugal's presence in Macau is fundamentally due to the existence of an "informal political condominium", between 1949 and 1987, and from the latter date of a "formal condominium" whose key principles have been pragmatism and realism.¹⁷ This *modus vivendi* enabled local "representatives" of mainland China's interests to persuade and influence, on behalf of the Chinese central and Guangdong provincial governments, local Portuguese administrators on various public policies issues in the enclave and Portuguese overseas policy towards Macau.

Although we cannot state a concrete date as to when this condominium became operational, we believe that it came into being in 1949. It is well known that the then Chinese Ministry of Trade founded the Nanguang [Nam Kwong] Trading Company, on August 28, 1949, in order to exert influence over local Portuguese administrators under the pretext of enhancing trade links between Macau, and the People's Republic of China and vice-versa.

Despite the latter claims, Nanguang played a crucial role in breaching, with the connivance of the Macau Portuguese administration, the Western embargo against mainland China following her military intervention in Korea. According to a Nanguang official publication:

Early at its founding, the company got very few export business to handle; instead through [an] individual way of trading, it mainly dealt [with the] purchase of special goods and materials required specifically by circumstances [in] mainland China at that time.¹⁸

Moreover, during the People's Liberation Army mop up operations in Guangdong Province in October 1949, the new Chinese political and military leaders gave political assurances to the Macau government that the enclave's status quo would prevail. General Ye Jianying [Yeh Chien-ying], head of the Chinese Military Affairs Control Commission, as well as first secretary of the South China Sub-Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party, governor of Guangdong, first secretary of the Guangzhou Municipal Party Committee, and mayor of Guangzhou, appointed, on October 27, 1949, Dr. Ke Lin [O Lon]: "to treat discreetly with our authorities all matters that are of common interest between Macau and Guangzhou,"¹⁹ On the other hand, General Wang Zhu [Wang Chu], commander of the Zhongshan military district, presented, through a third party, to governor Albano Rodrigues de Oliveira the new Chinese leaders' policy towards Macau. This message stated unequivocally:

1st, that the Chinese authorities will respect Macau's neutrality and that no one from the People's Liberation Army will attempt to enter Macau either in uniform or armed; 2nd, all fluvial and other types communication links between Macau and China will continue as before, that the new Chinese authorities expect that the "Overseas Chinese" will be treated well by the Portu-

guese authorities, and that they will not ban peaceful demonstrations in support of the revolution; and, 3rd, that the Portuguese authorities who wish to visit China are welcomed.²⁰

Bilateral contacts were reinforced with the appointment of the enigmatic "red capitalist compatriot" He Xian [Ho Yin], chairman of the already very influential Macau Chinese Chamber of Commerce, as member of the then Macau Legislative Council "as the representative of the Chinese community", on August 25, 1955.²¹ These contacts were so good that Sir Alexander Grantham, governor of Hong Kong, between 1947 and 1957, stated in his political memoirs:

I always thought that the Macau government, or at any rate some of the personnel, had better liaison or side-door contacts with the Chinese authorities than we had, despite the fact Portugal did not recognize Beijing and that a diplomatic representative of the Nationalist government resided in Macau. In Hong Kong we virtually had none. I think the reason for this was that the Anglo-Saxon is more rigid and aloof and less subtle than the Latin.²²

There is, however, concrete evidence that, from mid-1963, meetings began to take place between the governor of Macau and the local "representatives" of mainland China. Following a serious incident between Portuguese and Chinese military vessels on June 28, 1963, that resulted in the detention of seven *Guomindang* "sailors" (agents) from Taiwan in Macau's territorial waters, Governor António Lopes dos Santos, who ruled the enclave from 1962 to 1966, started to be approached with "relative frequency" by the local "representatives" of the Chinese community aligned with Beijing concerning this incident and other matters. According to the former governor:

Immediately after the occurrence of the incident . . . , while talking to Ho Yin (He Xian) I realized the great advantage of starting contacts with Mr. Ho Cheng-ping [Ke Zhengping], virtual representative of the People's Republic of China in Macau and manager of Nam Kwong [Nanguang] Trading Company, the commercial outpost of the PRC in Macau. The contacts took place from then on but with a reserved character and in the official residence of Santa Sancha. I always considered them of the highest importance. For about three years, the best personal relationship was maintained amongst ourselves, although obviously on an unofficial basis, and with the full knowledge of the Overseas Minister and of Dr. Salazar. Other than that, Mr. Ho Cheng-ping only contacted the governor in cases considered to be serious, mainly related to the activities of the Taiwan consular office [Special Commissioner's Office for Macau], or when he received instructions from the Guangdong government, usually through letters written in Cantonese and already translated into Portuguese, of which he was the holder, always addressed to 'Mr. António Lopes dos Santos' by the Foreign Affairs Office of the Guangdong Government. During my tenure, three problems [the delivery of seven *Guomindang* agents to the Chinese communists, the rental of broadcasting time in the government-owned Macau Radio Broadcasting Station to a company with links to Taiwan, and the activities of the latter entity's consular office in Macau] were raised with relative frequency by Mr. Ho Cheng-ping or Mr. Ho Yin, who always came with Mr. Roque Choi, who explained them in Portuguese.²³

Besides these liaisons, the Portuguese authorities accommodated many of mainland China's interests throughout these decades. In the beginning of the 1950s, the Portuguese central government interceded with the American government and CHINCOM, the secret NATO committee in charge of following-up the Western embargo against China, in order to reduce the economic and trade embargo against China. In the 1960s, it complied with requests from mainland China to ban anti-commu-

nist activities in Macau, which took place in 1963,²⁴ and to close down Taiwan's consular office in Macau, in 1965.²⁵ A similar position was assumed by the Portuguese authorities during the Chinese "Cultural Revolution" in Macau, which led to the ban of several Guomindang organizations in Macau — namely, the Macau Chinese General Federation of Labour Unions, the Chinese Refugees Aid Association and Dr. Sun Zhongshan [Sun Yat-sen] Memorial House, among many others. Moreover, when Taiwan was expelled from the United Nations, in October 1971, Portugal broke with the United States of America and several of its traditional allies and voted in favour of the resolution presented by Albania and supported by communist and Third World countries regarding the admission of the People's Republic of China to that international organization.

After the April 25th, 1974 *coup d'état*, the Portuguese government made public, on January 6, 1975, its decision to establish diplomatic relations with the government of the People's Republic of China. In addition, it recognized unilaterally the government of the PRC as "the sole and legitimate representative of the Chinese people," declared that Taiwan was an integral part of China, which implied the de-recognition of the Chinese nationalists, and stated that "the Territory of Macau may be a subject of negotiations when it is considered appropriate by the two governments, the Portuguese Government being meanwhile responsible for the strict respect of the rights of the citizens there resident."²⁶ Then on April 25, 1976, a new Portuguese Constitution came into force that changed unilaterally the status of Macau from an "overseas province" to a "territory under Portuguese administration."²⁷ This new constitutional posture in conjunction with the decolonization of the African colonies led the Chinese government to propose informal talks and later formal negotiations to the Portuguese government with the purpose to establish diplomatic relations. Nearly three years later, ambassadors António Coimbra Martins and Han Kehua signed, on behalf of Portugal and China, respectively, a joint communiqué on the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations and a "secret memorandum of understanding" on Macau, on February 8, 1979, in the Portuguese Embassy in Paris. The latter document was partially revealed on January 8, 1987, and it states that:

Concerning the position of the government of the People's Republic of China on the issue of Macau, the Chinese ambassador stated the following: 1. Macau is part of the Chinese territory and will be handed over to China. As to the question relating to the date and formula of the handover, it can be solved in the future at a time judged appropriate by the governments of the two countries through negotiations. 2. Before the handover, the Portuguese authorities in Macau must respect and protect the legitimate rights and interests of the Chinese inhabitants. The ambassador of Portugal in Paris stated that the Portuguese government agrees in principle with the position of the Chinese government. This clearly follows from the instructions on the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Portugal approved by the Portuguese Council of Ministers [Cabinet] on June 14, 1978, in which it stated: [the] Portuguese Constitution does not include Macau in the Portuguese territory; it considers it only under Portuguese administration. The Portuguese government considers that the end of the Portuguese administration over the territory of Macau can be the subject of negotiations between the People's Republic of China and Portugal at a moment judged appropriate by both governments. The Portuguese government assumes, meanwhile, the responsibility for the strict respect of the rights of the Chinese citizens living in Macau. The Portuguese government also assures the Chinese government that it will not permit the use of this territory under its administration for the practice of hostile acts against the People's Republic of China.²⁸

The acceptance by Portuguese decision makers of China's position on Macau also had an impact on the political system which would eventually arise in the enclave after the April 25th Portu-

guese revolution. Although the original plans proposed by Portuguese decision makers called for a fully elected Legislative Assembly, they had to abandon their position due to political pressure by local Chinese leaders. The system that eventually emerged was a hybrid one in which 35 percent of the members are elected by the population-at-large; an identical percentage by philanthropic, business and cultural organizations; and the remaining ones are appointed by the governor. This situation has remained unchanged up to the present, and according to a former member of Faculty of Law of the University of Macau:

Summarizing now the fundamental features of the type of government in the Territory of Macau, we will state that the principle of popular sovereignty is not in force in Macau. The prevailing legitimacy is an historical agreement; there is no true political representation.²⁹

Thus, when the Sino-Portuguese negotiations on the future of Macau began, in June 1986, there was very little to deal with except the date of the handover and the problem of nationality. In contrast with the Sino-British negotiations on Hong Kong, which lasted two long years, Macau's issues were solved within a reasonably short period of time, more precisely, in ten months. The Portuguese government agreed with a quick settlement because the Chinese government accepted to postpone Macau's handover from 1997 to 1999 and agreed in principle to respect the Portuguese "travel documents" of Macau's residents after the latter date — precisely those two key areas in which the British were not able to obtain any concessions from the Chinese. However, as ambassador António Coimbra Martins, the diplomat in charge of negotiating the establishment of diplomatic relations with China and the "secret memorandum of understanding" on Macau in 1979, remarked at the time:

It is an historical problem, and the key is the hands of China. There is nothing new in this. Or better: the novelty that the agreement brings is nothing more than the explicit recognition on the part of Portugal that the fate of Macau is in the hands of China as it always has been. At many times China was unconcerned or wanted to seem unconcerned. A complex interplay of interests explains the relative autonomy that the territory has enjoyed during four and one-half centuries. We say autonomy: the nature of the ties between Lisbon and Macau were not exactly colonial.³⁰

Since 1949 we have been able to detect only a few "frictions" in this condominium: the border conflicts of 1952, the cancellation of the 400th anniversary of Macau in 1955 and the Chinese "cultural revolution" in 1966 and 1967. The first conflict was caused by the tightening up of the Western embargo against China. The weighty military pressure applied by the Chinese at the *Portas do Cerco* (Barrier Gate), the border between Macau and China, resulted in a Portuguese request to the US State Department and to *CHINCOM*, the secret inter-governmental committee charged with the coordination of the Western embargo against China, to allow Macau to trade more "strategic materials and goods" with the Chinese communist government. It must be noted, however, that this international blockade was imposed on mainland China following her unthoughtful and rushed military intervention in the Korean War in 1950.³¹ The cancellation of the celebrations of Macau's fourth centenary resulted, on the other hand, in the clarification of the China's official political posture towards the enclave — according to Beijing, "Macau was Chinese territory occupied by Portugal" — and in the ban of Portuguese Cabinet members' visits to Macau. The latter position was maintained up to the 1974 Portuguese revolution. Finally, the Chinese "cultural revolution" in Macau — the deep systemic crisis within the Macau Chinese-speaking community aligned with Beijing — led to the ban of *Guomindang*

organizations in the enclave and in a realignment of forces within the condominium in favour of the factions loyal to Beijing.

The political behaviour shown by Portuguese decision-makers for the last forty-six years towards Macau and mainland China leads us to believe that they will not change it because the condominium has been working rather well and has avoided many potential conflicts.

Political and diplomatic considerations

Last but not least, political and diplomatic considerations are the third great factor that explain contemporary Portuguese behaviour towards Macau and China. Aware that unlike the Sino-British negotiations on Hong Kong's future, the negotiations over Macau were rather amicable, and due to the previously mentioned weak Portuguese interests in Macau and historical reasons, Portuguese decision-makers decided to implement a policy of "good understanding and cooperation" with mainland China's leaders. With this policy Portuguese leaders basically intend to demarcate Macau's transition period from that of the neighbouring colony of Hong Kong and thus ensure that Macau be seen as a different process and entity from Hong Kong in the annals of international diplomatic history. This policy has been clearly stated in many public speeches given by Portuguese leaders, who keep emphasizing "the convergence of interests" and the policy of "good understanding and cooperation" between both sides. The general principles of this policy were clearly outlined by Governor Rocha Vieira when he took office on April 23, 1991. According to him:

Exactly because the time available for the Portuguese administration of Macau is short, it will be the permanent goal of my political orientation to limit the tensions and the instability of the transition period in order to reinforce the chances and conditions of continuity that we conceived in the Joint Declaration and that will undoubtedly be continued and reinforced in the Basic Law. . . . And exactly because it is our duty to ensure a stable and feasible future for Macau with no breaks in continuity, I will do everything to maintain the harmony that has existed between Macau and the People's Republic of China by clarifying our objectives, making explicit the goals of the decisions taken, and affirming both in principle and in practice the legitimacy of our historical presence.³²

Even Mário Soares, Portuguese president from 1986 to 1996, recognized that "the Portuguese strategy of good understanding and cooperation with the Chinese authorities seems to be producing beneficial effects."³³

This policy has led to a considerable support for the Chinese central government at several levels: in breaking China's international isolation, in her rehabilitation in the community of nations, in the absence of direct or indirect criticisms of the human rights situation in China, and in a joint effort to support Macau's accession to specialized international organizations.

Even in delicate political and diplomatic situations such as the international isolation of China in the wake of the Tiananmen massacre, Portugal's leaders maintained in place its policy of "good understanding and cooperation" with Beijing. For example, four months after the military slaughter at Tiananmen, governor Carlos Melancia made an official visit to Beijing, despite the fact that at the same time the Chinese authorities were cracking-down hard on the Chinese democratic movement. Melancia was one of the first political leaders from the Western world to visit Beijing when the regime was highly isolated. Moreover, this visit did not reflect the true will and political spirit of Macau's Chinese-speaking residents, who expressed their deep support for the Chinese democracy move-

ment and their profound lack of trust in the Chinese authorities by participating in the largest public demonstrations ever held in the history of Macau, in May and June 1989.

Portuguese connivance with the Chinese regime is so well entrenched that it has even supported the latter's initiatives to break out of its international isolation, namely at the European Community level. According to an official report:

In the framework of the measures adopted as a vehement condemnation of the repression carried out by the Chinese authorities after the Tiananmen Square events, all bilateral ministerial and high level contacts of the Twelve with Beijing were suspended. Portugal safeguarded, however, for itself, with the acquiescence of its partners, the possibility of high level contacts with China as required by the permanent structures created to deal with the issues related to the territory of Macau.³⁴

A year after Tiananmen, the then head of the Portuguese delegation to the Sino-Portuguese Joint Liaison Group, ambassador Pedro Catarino, recognized that "the Portuguese government has been aware of this interdependence and has maintained a positive attitude towards China by playing a moderating role within the EEC (European Economic Community), and it will continue to play this role."³⁵

This posture was reinforced during the visit of the then Portuguese Prime Minister Cavaco Silva to China in April 1994. The Portuguese head of government defended the lift of economic sanctions imposed by the European Union against China in the wake of the Tiananmen crack-down. It goes without saying that the Prime Minister was criticized by Portuguese Catholic groups and social intervention movements.³⁶

This support has also been felt in other areas such as the international rehabilitation of the Chinese regime. Chinese leaders managed to make visits to Lisbon that, together with visits to other capitals, contributed to Beijing's international political rehabilitation. Thus, in February 1992, during the Portuguese presidency of the European Union, Prime Minister Li Peng made a visit to Lisbon that was heavily criticized by the Portuguese and European press. This visit was an important diplomatic coup for the Chinese leadership who saw it as a clear precedent to break their international isolation. The Lisbon visits of vice-president Rong Yiren, in September 1993, and president Jiang Zemin, two months later, served identical political purposes.

The Portuguese authorities are so engaged in avoiding eventual political frictions with Beijing that successive Portuguese governments have kept an absolute silence about human rights violations and the ill-treatment of ethnic minorities in China. This posture, however, has its supporters and its detractors. The leaders of Macau's Chinese-speaking community aligned with Beijing praise it and contrast it favourably with the attitude of other European countries which have been showing a less flexible line with the Chinese regime. On the other hand, some media and Catholic social movements, both Portuguese and European, as well as the Chinese who advocate the respect for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the Beijing regime have been criticizing and noting in a piercing way that the Portuguese authorities have two different ways of dealing with the problem: they criticize and denounce the brutal occupation of East Timor by Indonesia, but they close their eyes to the equally brutal occupation of Tibet as well as to the disrespect for the most elementary human rights in China.

Another consequence of this policy is the joint Sino-Portuguese effort to encourage Macau's accession to specialized international organizations. This is basically being done in order to symbolically underline the enclave's difference from Hong Kong, to appease several sectors of Macau's Chinese-speaking community who are concerned with the intentions of the Chinese government towards the territory, and to gain more votes and influence for China in international specialized agen-

cies. Although from the beginning of the transition period until 1995 Macau joined twenty-four international organizations, after obtaining its respective authorizations from the Sino-Portuguese Joint Liaison Group, one cannot expect major political dividends from these accessions due essentially to the technical and apolitical nature of these organizations. They constitute merely a symbolic act on the part of the Chinese government of the relative autonomy that the territory will enjoy until 1999. The Chinese central government has two powerful instruments in its hands to prevent any autonomy attempts: one is the Chinese Constitution and the Basic Law of the future Special Administrative Region of Macau, which clearly states that foreign affairs fall under the sole authority of the central government, and the other is the veto that China enjoys in the United Nations Security Council.

Because Macau's reunification process has been taking place with great serenity, whereas those of Hong Kong and Taiwan have been experiencing serious problems, several Chinese leaders have been pointing to Macau as a model to be followed both by Taiwan and Hong Kong. However, it seems to us that the latter two territories cannot follow the path traced by Macau due to the fact that the interests of Portugal in Macau and in the region are very weak, whereas the United Kingdom has several trade, economic, and financial interests in Hong Kong and in the region, and the political interests and aspirations of the inhabitants of Taiwan are aimed basically at obtaining a *de jure* autonomy from Beijing.

Conclusions

The above considerations and explanatory reasons enable us to understand the equanimity that has marked the political transition and integration of Macau in the Pearl River region, and, in part, the resigned assessment of many former Portuguese leaders regarding Macau's future after 1999. According to Murteira Nabo, former Under-Secretary and ex-Acting Governor from 1987 to 1991:

In a cultural, social and economic framework such as the one mentioned it is easy to forecast, whether one likes it or not, that three or four generations after 1999 very few memories of Portugal will remain in Macau if strong links of a cultural and especially commercial and economic nature are not established on a regular and systematic basis between Portugal and China.³⁷

If we take into consideration the three previously mentioned major factors, we foresee that the very last years of the transition period will be extremely peaceful. Portuguese decision makers are essentially interested in having a "graceful" exit from Macau that is, with minimal "frictions" with the Chinese authorities. It seems that they are going to achieve it unless mainland China falls into a deep political crisis that disrupts completely the conclusion of Macau's reunification process.

Notes

¹ Pedro Catarino, "A declaração conjunta e a sua relevância nas relações diplomáticas entre a China e Portugal," *Boletim da Academia Internacional da Cultura Portuguesa* ["The Joint Declaration and its Relevance in Diplomatic Relations Between China and Portugal," *Bulletin of the International Academy of Portuguese Culture*], No. 17, (1990), p. 32.

² José Calvet de Magalhães, "Macau e os interesses políticos no Sul da China," relatório anual confidencial do cônsul de Portugal em Guangzhou [Cantão] referente a 1947 (Guangzhou e Lisboa: Arquivo Histórico-Diplomático

do Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros, 1948) ["Macau and the Political Interests in South China," 1947 annual confidential report from the Portuguese consul in Guangzhou (Guangzhou and Lisbon: Historic-Diplomatic Archives of the Portuguese Foreign Affairs Ministry, 1948) pp. 91-92.

³ Sit V. F. S., S. L. Wong, and R. D. Cremer, *Entrepreneurs and Enterprises in Macau: A Study of Industrial Development* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1991).

⁴ Moisés Silva Fernandes, *Sinopse de Macau nas relações luso-chinesas: cronologia, documentos, apêndices e bibliografia escolhida, desde o fim da Guerra do Pacífico até 1995 (trabalho inédito que aguarda publicação)* [Synopsis of Macau in Portuguese-Chinese Relations: Chronology, Documents, Appendices and Chosen Bibliography, from the End of the Pacific War until 1995 (forthcoming)], p. 74.

⁵ Paul Christopher Manuel, *Uncertain Outcome: The Politics of the Portuguese Transition to Democracy* (Lanham, MD, USA: University Press of America, 1995), p. 82.

⁶ Luís Cunha, "Empresas portuguesas em Macau: a atracção oriental" [Portuguese Enterprises in Macau: The Oriental Attraction], *Macau, 1st series*, No. 21, (March 1990), p. 32.

⁷ Jorge Morbey, *MACAU 1999: o desafio da transição* (Lisboa: edição do autor, 1990) [Macau 1999: The Challenge of Transition (Lisbon: By the author)], p. 27. An identical opinion is shared by Peter Wise, "Colonial Battleground: Portuguese Politics Blamed for Governor's Fall," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, (October 11, 1990), p. 12; and by two other former faculty members of the University of Macau: Herbert S. Yee and Sonny S. H. Lo, "Macau in Transition: The Politics of Decolonization," *Asian Survey*, vol. 31, No. 10 (October 1991), pp. 911-912.

⁸ Investimentos, Comércio e Turismo de Portugal, *Um país, um mercado: China*, (Lisboa: ICEP, 1997) [Portuguese Investment, Trade and Tourism Board, *One Country, One Market: China* (Lisbon: ICEP, 1997)], p. 45.

⁹ Luís Tibério, "Faria de Oliveira em Pequim: à espera dos 'negócios da China'," (Faria de Oliveira in Beijing: Waiting for 'Chinese Bargains') *Expresso Economia*, (March 20, 1993), p. C20.

¹⁰ Information kindly provided by the Portuguese Embassy in Beijing.

¹¹ [A] *evolução da República Popular da China no contexto do mercado asiático* (Lisboa: Câmara do Comércio e Indústria Luso-Chinesa, Centro de Estudos Aplicados da Universidade Católica Portuguesa e Gabinete de Estudos e Planeamento do Ministério da Economia, 1996) [The Evolution of the People's Republic of China in the Context of the Asian Market (Lisbon: Portuguese-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Center for Applied Studies of the Portuguese Catholic University and the Research and Planning Office of the Ministry of Economics, 1996)], p. 131.

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