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SPEECH BROADCAST ON 27 JULY 1970,
ON RADIO AND TELEVISION.

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SECRETARIA DE ESTADO DA INFORMAÇÃO E TURISMO

1970



INCORPORAÇÃO

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Certain persons and certain occasions exclude any recourse to rhetoric. Fine phrases would not serve to exalt the great personality of the man who has just died but would rather diminish it. For such personalities are enough of themselves, in their truth, to attract and hold the admiration of all observers.

Salazar, a university professor respected for the lucid intelligence with which he examined problems and uncovered the truth, a clear thinker, a writer of unusual correction and formal elegance, was called into Government office as a technician, at a specially critical moment in Portuguese life. Undramatically, serenely, capably he merely applied as Minister the same principles he used as a Teacher. But the realism with which he faced problems, his resistance to external pressure, his indifference to applause and to censure alike, the tenacity with which he maintained his decisions, the sureness with which he followed up the guidelines that had been laid down — all these characteristics showed that he was not only a knowledgeable teacher or a fluent intellectual but a man of strong

character and inflexible will in whom the highest virtues of the statesman were patent.

The nation's finances were cleared up and the ordered activity of the State was the foundation on which he based the solidity of our currency, the discipline of administration and the rebirth of the economy. Many years of backwardness had deprived the country of the infra-structures necessary to economic progress. Many things had to be created from the roots upwards, in education as in public works; constantly, during his term of office, schools were opened, new roads built, ports established, bridges made and buildings set up ... so that the Portuguese could gain a greater advantage from their work and expect a better way of life.

The multiplicity of parties and their indiscipline had made of the first sixteen years of the republican system one long tumult. An unstable government, social disorder and a crisis of authority were the evils that lay at the root of the revolution of 28 May 1926 and the Military Dictatorship that thus came into being. A constitutional formula had to be found that could put an end to dictatorship without running the risk of plunging the country once more into the previously ruling confusion. Salazar found his inspiration in Portuguese political experience and the character of the people and drafted the Constitution on which a plebiscite was held in 1933 and which still governs us. That basic piece of legislation consolidated the corporative system which introduced into Portugal a wholesome, constant and progressive social policy. Practically nothing

had previously been done to benefit the workers, so that all the legislation and organization which now protect the world of labour were born of it.

But other spheres were already calling for his indefatigable attention. The overseas territories awaited a new civilizing impulse. Salazar laid down plans to meet this call, too, conceived a rational plan of action to be carried out methodically; what had previously been mere nostalgia became a collective ideal, while what had been but a dream soon turned into a reality. The old towns of Africa began to expand, new ones were founded, the bush began to yield to the impulse of strong wills served by powerful means of action, inhabitants that had been centuries behind the rest of the world received the civilizing message, new sources of wealth were wrested from the land, so that anyone who remembers the overseas provinces in the twenties finds it difficult to recognize them nowadays in the force of their present features.

This work of civilizing was assured the aid of the Catholic Church by the Missionary Agreement and it is this achievement of civilization that was endangered in 1961 by the upsurge of terrorism in the Congo. Lives, property and the domestic peace of Angola were threatened. The country was able enough to set right any cases of injustice that might be found, but the inhabitants had to be defended, the work of civilization effected, the very future of co-existence in a multi-racial society secured, and so Salazar took the historic decision to send troops 'rapidly

and in force' and to resist what was then considered generally to be the irresistible force of the winds of change.

In contrast with the defeatist thinkers of the 19th century, this man of thought, but above all clear-sighted statesman with his enlightened energy and iron will, was able to unite the Portuguese and inspire them with ideals which revived in them the spirit of mission.

For this end he enhanced History so that in it he might find the guideline for the future. He himself was a link: he rejected nothing of the past of the Nation which might be useful in building the future. Portugal had suffered deeply from the neglect of a century of negative politics; he bravely stated the virtues, the certainties, the resources of Portugal.

To uphold Portugal's rights in the world he created an army that has been ready and active on all the occasions when it proved necessary, to defend ourselves against threats from outside or to dominate internal acts of subversion. He restored and reorganized the navy, set up the air force and gave our diplomacy one of the golden periods of its history.

But while he did not want the country to be left defenceless, his major concern was always to maintain or bring about peace. He had to face the painful period of the Spanish civil war, the historical significance of which he devined from the outset. During the tragic years of the Second World War his constant concern was to take advantage of the conditions created in the Peninsula to keep it an oasis of peace and outside the conflict. To defend

the Portuguese from the curse of the war he spent hours of anguish, kept watch for endless nights, in silence, without the people even being aware of the dangers they were running. His imaginative diplomatic genius and the exceptional prudence of his tact in government guaranteed the Portuguese the benefits of peace. He served the cause of Peace. He did so even when he was implacably punishing disorder and subversion. For Peace cannot be well served by weakness and neglect, but only by the firmness that prevents crises by intimidating aggressors and reducing the agents of unrest to powerlessness.

As part of his concern for peace he also sought to guarantee the Portuguese religious peace. Freedom of worship did not let him forget that the Catholic religion is that professed by the overwhelming majority of the country and that it is linked with the most genuine national traditions. All his life he was a Catholic and fervent believer and he gave the Church in Portugal opportunities and prospects that were consolidated by the Concordat with the Holy See, according to the notions of the time.

To evaluate Salazar's achievement we must compare the Portugal that he found when he first took office with the one he has left us. He received a country that was financially ruined, divided, perturbed, suffering from lack of guidance, sceptical about its future, obsessed by sterile politics. He left us a country that is ordered, united, aware, sure of its aims and able to attain them.

Forty years' government cannot go by without some shortcomings. To govern necessarily involves displeasing

some. In drawing up the balance-sheet of a policy one has a debit as well as assets. But at this moment of truth the favourable balance is an enormous one. Salazar was a great Minister and a great Portuguese. In the dramatic hours in which he had, alone, to take transcendental decisions for the future of our country, just as in those when, very simply, he sought to get back into the way of life of the village where he was born, in gay times as in bad, in his virtues as in his defects, in the noble gestures of a leader as in the scruples of a prudent administrator, in the hardness of the ruler as in the charming delicacy of his feelings, he was a Man in all the scope of the term and with all the dignity proper to mankind.



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