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MARCELLO CAETANO

**WELCOME**  
**TO THE AZORES**

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SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL  
AT THE BANQUET OFFERED IN HONOUR OF THE  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
RICHARD NIXON, AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH  
REPUBLIC, GEORGES POMPIDOU, AT ANGRA DO  
HEROÍSMO, AZORES ISLANDS, ON 13 DECEMBER 1971

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SECRETARIA DE ESTADO DA INFORMAÇÃO E TURISMO

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It is to me a singular privilege to welcome to Portuguese territory the Heads of State of two friendly nations.

In these days, so full of the worries that reflect the birth pangs of a new world, it is good that, from time to time, the peoples' leaders should look for a small island.

Small islands have about them a mythical charm. They are a haven — not for oblivion, but for meditation. Man needs to know his own limits, if his actions are to be realistic and fertile. And an island is, by definition, a piece of land limited on all sides ...

This island, where we stand, is one of the many discovered by those Portuguese who ventured across unknown seas aboard their frail vessels during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

These islands were desert. The Portuguese navigators revealed their existence, gave them names and added to them a human dimension.

They had to possess a lot of courage, those fellow-country-men of mine of five centuries ago. But they

needed a good deal of imagination too. For the places they christened are numberless, be it over the oceans, or on the continents, in Africa, in America, in Asia, in Oceania. There, where, today, the presence of Portugal is, in many cases, still alive.

Sometimes the beauty of the new land excited such wonder that the native lyrical talent of the Portuguese soul would flow free and, then, the islands received names like Flores, Graciosa, or Formosa ...

At other times, his sense of the real would lead the sailor or the geographer to pick out one of the physical traits of the place in order to name it.

But when no other way remained — Heaven came to the rescue. And thus the whole calendar of saints has been scattered around the earth by the devotion of the Portuguese.

Here, in this archipelago, called Açores because it was so rich in that particular species of bird, the first island to be discovered was piously dedicated to Saint Mary. The second one was placed under the protection of Saint Michael. And then the discoverers reached the third. Three is a magic number. It had to be celebrated in a special way. And the island was given the name of Jesus Christ.

During its first period of settlement the island was indeed called Jesus Christ. And more than any other land it is linked, through its former name, with the culture and the civilization which ennobled Europe and marked the growth of the Americas.

On the other hand, placed between Europe and the Americas, the archipelago of the Azores has always been a connecting link between the two continents. Lord of Ilha Terceira in the earlier period of its colonization, a Corte Real is found to be connected with the discovery of Newfoundland. And in later times, when the size of the population outgrew the scanty space of these islands and was scarce in the vast areas of the Americas, there started in that direction a continuous flow of emigrants which has not yet ceased.

In the United States of America, azoreans build up the major part of the Portuguese community. Many of them come from this island where, since last war, an air-base has been established that has rendered no small service to the cause of the West and to the security of the Atlantic.

The two peoples cannot but understand each other. The Portuguese are sensitive to the prestige of a Nation, which, like the American, bases its greatness on the moral strength of its civic life and on the indomitable energy of its children. And they admire the courage with which it fights to preserve the freedom of the Western World.

Here, in the Azores, is one of the bulwarks for that struggle.

However, if the President of the United States of America has good motives to find in this place many affinities with his country and to be welcome here with warm friendship, the reason why the President of the

French Republic may feel in friendly country are none the less.

In order to colonize the islands in the fifteenth century, the Portuguese resorted to other peoples in Europe. And many of the first settlers came from territories which nowadays are French or which enjoyed at the time a very close relationship with France.

At São Miguel there is a village called Bretanha. And the language spoken there is still typical compared to the other parts of the island. Many of those who accepted to take part in the adventure of covering with human life these bits of solidified lava were Flemish. The landscape, the habits, the language have kept an indelible imprint left by those men who brought with them their own tradition and the elements of a culture that has so strongly contributed to the wealth of French culture, which was then taking its modern form.

You cannot compare France's cultural influence in Portugal to that of any other country. No economic or political influences can be called to justify this fact. The only valid explanation must come from affinities of the mind. The cultured Portuguese admires the French literature, French art, the French way of life and of being. And it is not only admiration that he feels: it is also love. Sadness overcomes him when he sees, so often, how misjudged and badly known his country is, owing to lack of information, but he forgives many a thing out of that tolerance which, in the heart of the Lusitanian, goes hand in hand with friendship.



Luckily, the relations between the two peoples are very cordial and that cordiality is mirrored in the relations between their governments. Many Portuguese are at present working in France, thus contributing towards the economic prosperity of the country and creating one more link between the two Mother-countries. These are indeed good reasons to welcome warmly the presence on Portuguese soil of the President of the French Republic.

The world expects a lot from this meeting between the two of you, Mr. Presidents. And it is justified in doing so. Two gentlemen are talking face to face. Two experienced statesmen are drawing up the balance of a critical situation. The leaders responsible for two great nations are facing courageously, but carefully, the difficulties of the present and the ways of the future.

My wish is that the atmosphere of this place may contribute to an understanding in these talks and to their happy conclusion. Beyond its stormy, wintry aspect, a feature of this island is its human climate of goodness and mutual understanding. It is full of a passionate wish to help others, of an unbounded yearning to better life, a yearning nourished by a stubborn hope and expressed in patient and honest work.

We have, very close to here, the anti-cyclone centre. I know nothing about meteorology, but the word does convey to me that, were it not for the currents which brake the whirlwinds built up in the same direction as the rotation of the earth, we would lay open to much more frequent

catastrophes. Nature has created the normal movement, but is has also foreseen a remedy to its excesses.

Allow me, Mr. Presidents and Gentlemen, to give now a thought to all the men scattered throughout the world whose destinies lay in the hands of those who have been assigned the heavy responsibilities of governing. And to wish, on this island of Jesus Christ, that Mankind be still in time to hear the resonances of the Christian message.

I toast to the health of the President of the United States of America and of the President of the French Republic. I toast to the peoples they represent. And I toast to the success of the talks which have started today.





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