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MARCELLO CAETANO

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EASY TIMES...

SPEECH DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR MARCELLO CAETANO ON RECEIVING COMPLIMENTS OF THE LEADERS OF THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S ACTION MOVEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF HIS INVESTMENT AS PRIME MINISTER. S. BENTO PALACE, ON 27 SEPTEMBER 1971

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SECRETARIA DE ESTADO DA INFORMAÇÃO E TURISMO

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Members of the Central Committee of the National
People's Action Movement,
Mr. Chairman and members of the Executive
Committee,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am most sincerely grateful to you for being here and above all for the work done in the last few days, and the resulting proposals for future action. I am expressing my gratitude not only in my capacity as Chairman of the Central Committee of the National People's Action Movement, not only as head of the Government but, together with these positions, as a Portuguese citizen.

It is absolutely necessary for all Portuguese worthy of the name to stand united about the leaders they have chosen and to help them to further and complete successfully the harsh, thorny tasks which lie before us. Of course my Government has worked hard, and has not shunned any effort or watchfulness. We have sought boldly to face national problems. We have been successful

in maintaining the defence of the overseas provinces against the subversion instigated on a growing scale by that incredible Organization which goes by the name of the United Nations, and armed and subsidized by powerful interests. We neither weaken in the struggle in the overseas provinces nor allow any let-up in our vigilance over those who seek to bring terrorist tactics to the Homeland.

But, while defending the overseas provinces, on the diplomatic and on the counter-subversion fronts, with all the inconveniences, liabilities and difficulties that such a process of defence entails, we have also been concerned not to let our country drift further way from the development standards of traditionally rich Europe, and to prepare the future in such a way that the younger generations might find a place in it and be able to act within it.

During the early years of subversion in Africa it was thought impossible to reconcile the defence effort with the economic and cultural development effort, carried out on the scale called for to make up for our backwardness.

We have been trying to achieve such a conciliation, persuaded that a victory in Africa could only be a precarious one if it were to be attained at the cost of stagnation in Europe. This is why we launched out boldly on the policy of enhancing the Portuguese people through reforms in education, health, aid and social welfare, at the same time that we have endeavoured to strengthen the work of the State in economic promotion and to give private initiative greater incentive.

I believe that this effort has been understood and applauded by the Nation. But, in recalling this fact here, to guarantee our intention of going on with this policy, I must of necessity stress the serious difficulties it entails. Many think that they have an unbounded right to everything, but that they should not be called on to contribute. There is building up a dangerous mentality of claims and facilities that is absolutely incompatible with our country's resources and real features.

I should not be true to my duty to tell the Portuguese the truth if I did not point out once more that we are undergoing very critical times, when the acuteness of national problems is worsened by unsettling conditions in world economic affairs and politics.

It should not be thought that we are surrounded by abundant human and material resources. It is only a very careful management of public moneys that enables us to make our current effort with the armed forces and at the same time allows us to deal with matters of urgent significance for the conservation and progress of our life as a nation. The expression 'very careful management' must be stressed so that citizens may not constantly be calling for further expenditure and so that civil servants may become aware of their duty not to waste such resources as are at our disposal. What about human resources? They are made scarcer by emigration and mobilization, and without them money is useless, for it is only of value when there are people to make use of it, to transform it into useful goods, to enhance it to the good of the

community. Men and women are the major wealth of a homeland; no progress is possible without able, sufficient human resources.

This is why I said, ladies and gentlemen, that the unity of all Portuguese around their Government is quite indispensable, as is the existence of a grouping of citizens like the National People's Action Movement, to maintain a constant dialogue with the authorities, to inform and to be informed, to make the Government aware of what people are thinking and then to inform the latter, enlightening them on the basis of the reality of events and the facts of government.

It is inevitable that there should be an egotistic trait in individuals, in places, in undertakings, in professions and occupations. All think of themselves first; all think their primary duty is to watch over and further their own interests; all consider their conveniences and advantages to be just. This ocean of claims and requests washes up against the Government. But, since the vision of the authorities must take in the whole horizon of the entire country, from Caminha to Timor, they are forced to weigh needs and resources, the better to decide the satisfaction of such needs according to a scale which will recognize priority for the most worthwhile purposes, not only at the present moment but also on a view of future prospects.

Now the Movement must be imbued with the same spirit that should orientate the work of the government, and it must transmit it to all other citizens. I will repeat once again that these are not easy times. What is

being done can only be performed thanks to a close collaboration in the midst of the Government and with patriotic understanding on the part of the Portuguese people.

I should like to be able to address you and the country with optimistic words. I am still an optimist, because I believe that we shall overcome the obstacles that stand in our path, however many they may be, threatening our existence as an independent Nation that will neither give up its rights nor will readily abandon hope of attaining its ambitions. But I cannot hide the existence of such obstacles. I cannot conceal from the Nation that we have to overcome great difficulties, which will continue for a long time and may even increase in number and gravity as time goes on.

They can be overcome, but to do this we shall have to work hard. We must produce more and more wealth; we must keep the feeling of love for our country alive and shining. Above all we must envisage the future in a spirit of unity, firm decision, the persistent desire to conquer, not permitting around us any form of defeatism, still less any kind of betrayal.

I am sure that the Portuguese people will understand this language and that, as hitherto, it will continue to be the pledge of our continued existence as a Nation. I would like the National People's Action Movement to be the yeast destined at all times to leaven this admirable patriotism which has always, at times of crisis, provided the greatest reserves of Portuguese energy.

When, three years ago, I took over as Prime Minister, I said that I did not lack courage to face the gigantic tasks that I foresaw. These tasks are gigantic indeed, but the courage to face them has not abandoned me, nor has the confidence that I have felt since the outset in the worthy, admirable, incomparable Portuguese people. With them I am sure that we are on the right road and I believe that, with them, we shall always prove able to find a path worthy of Portugal!

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