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BELONGS TO US ALL
WE ALL GO
TO MAKE UP PORTUGAL

SPEECH MADE BEFORE THE DISTRICT COMMITTEES OF THE NATIONAL POPULAR ACTION MOVEMENT, ON 27 SEPTEMBER 1970

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SECRETARIA DE ESTADO DA INFORMAÇÃO E TURISMO

1970



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TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE
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I have listened with great satisfaction to the observations just made by the Chairman of the National Popular Action Movement. I do not know if it is necessary for me to say that his view of the structure and functions of the Movement merit my full approval. I would like all those who agree with the basic principles of the Movement to collaborate in it, by setting up centres and groups, as the statutes allow, if they think fit, rather than allowing a dispersal of efforts and a large number of splinter groups which would weaken the opportunity for intensive, extensive and far-reaching work, as is our desire.

We must now effect a basic task to maintain the flame of faith alight in its members and make them permanently aware of their reasons for action. Once its staff framework is organized, and renewed by direct suffrage of its members, the National Popular Action Movement is ready to carry out its statutory tasks. Among the latter a major rôle is occupied by the task of informing and enlightening citizens on problems of national life, explaining the data involved in them,

possible solutions and the reasons why one of these should be adopted in preference to the others.

I shall now explain some of the Government's points of view, hoping thus to contribute to facilitating the work of the newly empowered committees in this field. At all levels, from the parish to the administrative district, it would be advisable for frequent meetings to be held, not for the purpose of speech-making, but to provide an opportunity for an examination of matters of the greatest national and local interest: this would enable the central organs of the Movement to be permanently in contact with the thoughts and desires of its members, while the latter would know what is going on in the spheres where decisions have to be taken.

It happens that by choosing today for this meeting the Executive Committee has wanted to mark the second anniversary of my appointment as Prime Minister. Yet I shall not take this opportunity to view in retrospect the work that has been done, for it would easily take the form of an apologia. But if we set out to examine the present situation of our country so as know what is our present starting-point and what obstacles remain to be overcome, we shall of necessity weigh the main factors that have influenced Portuguese policy. It is in the light of such factors that we must appraise the actions of the Government and the results that have been obtained.

In the first place we should not forget that Portugal has been confronted in three of its overseas provinces, separated from each other and from the Homeland by

hundreds or even thousands of miles, with terrorist activities, encouraged by moral and material support from foreign countries, international organizations and pressure groups of all types. Our defence of the Overseas Provinces against terrorist actions has been going on for ten years, and this has involved very high expenditure and the mobilization of thousands of men. Many families have been plunged into mourning by the sudden loss of dear ones. But, apart from this, life has gone on normally, here in the Homeland as in the provinces overseas. There have been no sizeable restrictions, no drastic sacrifices have been imposed. Not even the tax burden is as large as that of many European countries where there are not such heavy military expenses to be met.

Quite often we hear foreigners inquire how a small, poor country like Portugal can bear this financial burden. Our enemies, who do not understand it either, readily interpret it as NATO intervention, because they wish at all costs to discredit this anti-communist alliance in the eyes of the 'Third World' countries. But the fact is that, by definition, NATO is only concerned with the North Atlantic area and forbids use of its weapons outside that area. Several of our allies in the organization do not hide their hostility to our position in the southern hemisphere and act as adversaries. We receive no support from NATO or from any other organization or alliance. Perhaps it is a miracle, but it is taking place: Portugal

has borne practically alone the strains of the effort to defend its Overseas Provinces.

The fact is admirable, but necessarily it is a weighty factor in our national way of life. It must be borne in mind by Portuguese people when they call impatiently on the Government to do this or that, carry out some plan or pay for some improvement or other. The Government is constantly being forced to take difficult options. It wants to meet needs in education, economic development, health, and so forth ... here and in the Overseas Provinces, but it is readily obvious that money is not elastic. It is only by a feat of balanced administration that we are able to fight on two fronts: the war front against terrorism and the struggle on behalf of the economic and social development of our country.

Now the prospects are that there will be no early relief of this situation. The guerrillas that make their appearance here and there in the vast territories of Angola and Mozambique, or who harass us along the frontiers of Portuguese Guinea, would long ago have been annihilated had it not been for the constant foreign aid to which I have just referred. It is foreign countries that supply the terrorists with money, weapons, supplies, all kinds of resources, and also a terrible publicity machine in which the outstanding rôle is played by systematic lies and concealment of the truth.

In international gatherings speeches are made in which ignorance and ill-will are closely associated. Any listener to these champions of the liberation of the peoples

will judge from their eloquence that the Portuguese Overseas Provinces are jungle tracts where there existed solid, prosperous native political and social organizations that we, the hateful colonialists, deliberately oppressed. They are unaware that these provinces have been part of Portugal for five centuries, perhaps? They were empty tracts of land, with here and there very primitive tribes bereft of the slightest notion of nationality. The Portuguese settled there, opening them up to trade, building towns and villages, planting crops, setting up industries, building roads, making the land habitable by fighting disease and the natural violence of life in the jungle, breeding families that in many zones have now reached the seventh or eighth generation, very often showing crossing with natives of those areas.

In the demagogic bluster of those who attack Portugal we often hear it said that Africa belongs to the Africans, that government must be exercised by the majorities. We are faced by a form of racism concealed by the fragile appearance of democracy. Why should the existence of white Africans not be admitted? Why should it be concealed that the majority in the African countries do not possess the democratic spirit, are not trained or ready to put principles of government on the western pattern into practice there? Why should all eyes be shut to the fact that those majorities have neither the mentality nor the technical skills nor the capital that would provide them with a real independence able to

further and achieve the promotion of man and the development of natural wealth?

The point is that if only the oldest-established inhabitants of a territory are entitled to live in it and govern it, what is going to happen throughout the world? There have been migrations and invasions all through human history. The majority of North Americans and Canadians are settlers and settlers' descendants: should they, then, hand over the reins of government to the primitive inhabitants and leave their homes? Are all the citizens of the existing countries of South America and their leaders native-born? Why should the presence of settlers in southern Africa be illegitimate now, although it was not considered to be so a century and a half ago in America?

With the whole series of arguments which sacrosanct anti-colonialism proliferates, the anti-Portuguese guerrillas go on enjoying the friendly interest, the cumplicity and the blessing of their inciters, who encourage them to go on destroying lives and property and creating difficulties for us, the gravity of which it would be idle to conceal. The Portuguese people must be fully aware of these difficulties; but, in spite of them, I do not see how we could fail to defend the Overseas Provinces.

Why? To fulfil a historical destiny? I respect national traditions: I believe that they form a precious patrimony of the Homeland, and I consider that a nation loses its own character when it denies its own past. But if only History were at stake then my position would

not be so firm as it is, for History is being made day by day, and whatever national imperatives demand shall be done, is done, whether it links up with the past or not.

Do we then remain in the Overseas Provinces to defend the West? Of course, in defending the West we are defending ourselves and the values that represent the essence of the Portuguese national spirit. But if only the defence of the West were at stake, my position would not be so firm as it is, for it is not our obligation to bear alone the support of a cause that affects so many countries and people, when they are unaware of their vital interests and neither recognize nor are grateful for the service we do them.

Even less would I allow that we are in the Overseas Provinces in order to watch over anyone's economic interests. I have already had occasion to point out that the major interests find ways of defending themselves very effectively, and always find a way to gain the sympathy and support of those in power.

Some people believe that the defence of the Overseas Provinces is unavoidable because their loss would be tantamount to the loss of Portugal's independence. I do not agree. Of course, without those Provinces, Portugal would be very greatly diminished in the world's eyes, would lose much of its weight and influence, would be even more subject than now to the greed of those whose ambition is to look down on it and take it under their protective wing, but the independence of Portugal lies in the hearts, the souls and the wills of the Portuguese.

Portugal will survive, with vast territories or with small. Portugal is not a quantity, or space or area of land, but a way of life, a certain kind of people, a given type of national association, a Homeland that cannot be reduced to nothing if some portion is taken away from it, however painful the deprivation, and even if the wound it leaves lives on in the national body and spirit!

No: our Overseas Provinces have to be defended because millions of Portuguese people, black and white, live there, trusting in Portugal, who want to go on living under our flag, enjoying our peace, who are irrevocably opposed to the idea of being handed over to the savagery of those who, in the last ten years, have given very ample proof of the hatred that inspires them and the ferocity of conduct which is their guide.

The Overseas Provinces have to be defended because we know that we are defending an achievement of the enhancement of the land and the increased dignity of the inhabitants: a task that is being effected in a way of which we can be justly proud.

The Overseas Provinces must be defended because it would not be right for us to give up meriting the trust placed in the Portuguese Homeland by all those who, in the provinces, are working, investing and building with admirable enthusiasm, to such an extent that an impartial foreign observer recently said that the economic exploitation of Angola, for example, is the most brilliant and promising feature of the whole continent of Africa!

During the last elections some anti-Governmental figures suggested a solution for the overseas question through negotiations with the guerrilla chiefs. This solution has also been constantly supported by the terrorists' friends, those who at meetings of the African unity organization or the non-aligned countries seek to undermine Portuguese resistance and get it to give in. I have already publicly, and impartially, examined this solution. The fact is that the guerrillas have gained no permanent, real success. In spite of the lies contained in their propaganda, according to which they control large percentages of the area of our territories, the truth is that they have only been able to occupy isolated strongholds, like the Cabo Delgado one in Mozambique, from which our troops bravely expelled them a short while ago. So, with whom should we be negotiating? Should we negotiate with people who fight among themselves, according to their various tendencies, Soviet or Chinese, about which they are quite open, give them a power they do not possess by themselves, hand over a territory that does not belong to them, leave to their tender mercies men, women and children that they would not respect?

It is generally recognized that we do not practise racial discrimination, that there are no colour bars in overseas territories. What we very much want is for an increasing number of native people to share in the autonomous institutions of the overseas provinces — municipalities, legislative councils, governors' offices — and that their number should increase in the representation

in the National Assembly and the Corporative Chamber. This participation depends entirely on the existence of persons possessed of the requisite moral and technical qualities to carry out political duties. We shall proceed unflinching along this road.

As for the rest ... for example, the incredible campaign waged against us, the main centre of which is the United Nations Assembly, there seems to be no alternative but to follow the advice of the old saw: pay no heed to reckless words.

What are we to think of an organization like the sad, wretched UNO which, on celebrating its twenty-fifth birthday, can boast of not having solved one sole serious problem of international affairs of all those that have arisen during that quarter of a century: Berlin, Korea, the invasion of Hungary, that of Czechoslovakia, Vietnam, the Middle East, not one of all those that have perturbed our world? That insists on stating that when the Portuguese defended themselves against the bandits who in 1961 in the Congo prided themselves on sawing helpless men in half with mechanical saws, and massacred all who stood in their path without distinction of age or sex, yet still insist that the Policing work effected by the Portuguese against those who disturb public order in their territories endangers the peace of the world? This is the organization that brands the Cabora-Bassa Dam as a crime against mankind, just because it is being carried out by the Portuguese, even though it will enable us to enhance to an extraordinary extent an enormous

portion of the Zambezi Valley and to place at the disposition of millions of people a vast energy potential of tremendous significance.

I do not say that the whole world has gone mad, but I do not think that anyone can deny that in it madmen have acquired a significance, an importance and an influence that they have never enjoyed before, while their attitudes, their opinions and their remarks are heard with a new-found credibility and readiness. The difficulty lies in governing in such a world, in which the sane sometimes are brought to doubt themselves and to wonder who is right after all; whether it is those who behave normally, according to the traditional concept, or those who, nowadays, thanks to the consent given by general silence, seem to be in a majority, thanks also to the fear felt by the last defenders of commonsense that they are endangering themselves by daring to differ from the monstrous aberrations that are unhappily so frequent.

I return to our internal problems to insist that the defence of the Overseas Provinces is a sacred duty, which results in liabilities that cannot be either ignored or forgotten by the Portuguese people. The Government does its best to meet, simultaneously with military expenditure, the basic needs of economic and social development, but it has to appeal to citizens to restrain their desires and their impatience, and to collaborate through their understanding in the collective task.

We need to produce a lot and to work productively. We need to maintain the spirit of understanding between employers and workers, for it is the basis of social peace. Therefore, we must proceed securely in the sphere of the economy and the situation of the workers, for excessive, generalized demands, regardless of their effects on the economic life of the country, may bring about a crisis whose beginnings are readily distinguishable, but not its consequences and results.

We are all interested in progress, and the Government not least. But, while each class, each group, each locality sees only its own interests, the Government's duty is to take the broader, higher view so as to fit all these individual desires into the widest sense of the national interest. This latter does not always permit entirely satisfactory solutions for the claims of the individual, however just the latter may appear at the time. We form a Nation in which we are all linked together by a close, indissoluble solidarity, for good times as for bad: thus we have to remember that, beyond our own convenience and desires there are others which direct the life of the community.

The Government has planned and launched several major development projects that within a few years may well have a very considerable impact on the national economy. But it is impossible to promise that in a twinkling we shall be able to catch up with the standard of living enjoyed by the richer, more prosperous countries of Central Europe to which our emigrants have gone

in search of high wages. The fact is that our agriculture is constantly in a state of crisis: there was a crisis when there was an excess of manpower, there is one now that there is a shortage and recourse has to be had to mechanization. This crisis has been a current topic all through my lifetime; it is necessarily the result of the unsuitability of our land and climate for the types of crop cultivated, and perhaps defects in the structure of agriculture and entrepreneurial capacity. There is a lot to be done in this sphere, beyond facile protests using all the noble vigour of the language.

With rare exceptions our industry lacks size and daring, having always been accustomed to a protectionism that should have been only a temporary expedient, intended only to enable it to achieve a competitive coming-of-age robustly, and is hopelessly accustomed to using credit to make up for a shortage of own capital. Nor does our trade penetrate into foreign markets with the desirable imaginativeness, persistence and firmness.

Thus there arises another factor that conditions both the national policy and the Government's actions: an economy characterized by a shortage of initiative, the timidity of capital, an insufficiency of staffs and excessive dependence on the State. Constantly economic activities appeal to the Government, seeking its aid, complain at its decisions, are concerned about its intentions, want to know what the Government is thinking, and restrict their activities to the Government's likely attitude... We really need a more self-assured economy, one that

would be more independent, more dynamic, while obeying the laws of the country and collaborating in its progress with a clear sense of what the national interest is.

We have several favourable factors that would lead us to consider the future of our economy with confidence. One of them is the solidity and stability of our currency. Rumours, springing we do not know where from, recently began to call for the devaluation of the escudo. This would mean that, by our decision, foreigners would earn by exchange more escudos for their currencies and would enjoy a greater purchasing power in Portuguese markets. But why should we devalue? Just, as some have suggested, to make a change in that policy of prestige of the Portuguese currency that Dr. Salazar maintained unchanged for his forty years of office? This would be a strange manner indeed of showing the primacy of a liking for change over the prudence of continuity.

A country only devalues when it cannot help doing so or when it is to its advantage. We have no need whatever to change the exchange rates of our currency in relation to foreign currencies, for the Issue Bank holds reserves, proportionate to annual foreign trade, that are among the highest in the world, and these reserves are still growing. Nor is it to our advantage to take this step. It would suit countries that export large quantities of goods to foreign countries and which seek to increase the quantity of exports by the advantage thus

given to the foreign buyer. But Portugal exports far less than it imports and our export goods suffer from a very limited elasticity of price and quantity.

On the other hand we do import a lot: in the case of devaluation we should have to pay much more for our purchases from foreign countries. In general, foreign debts are expressed, not in escudos, but in the currency of the creditor country, which would mean that after devaluation of our currency, tantamount to revaluation of theirs, we should have to pay more than we had received. So that at this time devaluation of the escudo would be a stupid act, because it is quite unnecessary, and bad business, because it is not to our advantage. I quite see that there are cases when countries have to devalue and that this is no disgrace, but none of these cases applies to us, I repeat. Perhaps those who have talked of devaluation did so as part of their concern that we should 'catch up' with Europe and should imitate, therefore, 'civilized' practices. This is a naïve concept, which reminds me of those half-civilized people in under-developed territories who wear spectacles although there is nothing wrong with their eyesight, merely because it gives them a 'civilized' air!

Moreover, this matter of Europe has sown confusion in the minds of many honest people among us. A false dilemma has been manufactured, which would involve a choice between Europe or Africa, on dramatic terms that have led to arguments and polemics, characterized by unjust suspicions on both sides. Let us clarify the

point. When we talk of bringing Portugal closer to Europe, leaving culture aside, we may be thinking of the movement of economic understanding characterized by a customs union or of a political integration movement in the form of a European federation. We should have much to gain from the former; we should have everything to lose by the latter. In any case political federation is far from being a feasible concept. In a European federation we should always remain a poor, forgotten relative, deprived of influence on common decisions, our future alienated to the convenience of the dominating powers. Let us never be tempted to forget one geographical detail: starting from the Atlantic, we are the first; but, seen from Paris, Berlin or Moscow, we shall always be the last of the continent. Politically it is desirable that the European nations should understand each other and get together, but Europe neither can nor should cease to be the Europe of the individual homelands!

As far as economic agreements are concerned, the fact is that the Portuguese Homeland, although it has very extensive interests in other continents, stands in Europe and cannot avoid the necessary consequences of this fact of geography. We are not now, in any case, setting out for the first time to sail on the sea of European economic agreements. For many years now we have belonged to one of the existing organizations of the West — EFTA, the European Free Trade Association — where we have undertaken liabilities and from which we have gained advantages that have already led us to a certain

stage of liberalization and co-operation that we should not give up. Any agreements between us and the Common Market will have to start out from this already acquired situation so that it may continue to develop along the lines already agreed on. We are thus not novices in European economic co-operation, nor is there any call for alarm if we continue inside it. EFTA has not prevented us from maintaining our economic ties with the Overseas Provinces. What disturbs the normality and the tightening of the links between the various portions of Portugal is not undertakings with regard to European countries, but other causes, among them the very serious, complex problem of transfers.

Personally, and with all due respect, I have never been in agreement with the ruling system of inter-territorial payments. I have long-defined views on this subject, but I am not so proud as to consider them the sole valid ones on the matter, nor do I exert such despotic power as to seek to impose them on others. So I hope that the experts will put forward practical, effective, urgent solutions for this serious problem.

I now realize, gentlemen, how the time has flown by, and I also see that although I have not gone in detail into any topic, there are still many left about which I would like to say something. But there are limits to your patience, so I shall choose, to close, just one other topic, which is another of the concerns and the conditioning factors of present political activity.

These two years in power have seen a world climate of contestation that everywhere, and above all among young people, has questioned the foundations of the social order and the legitimacy of our civilization. While such movements always reach Portugal after a certain delay, it is true that our young people have also been affected by the wave of contestation; among them socialism has gained unexpected favour and considerable expansion, whether in the Marxist, the Trotskyist or anarchist varieties, with the Chinese hues of Maoism or the vague wordiness of Castrism. As always, those who talk, act and dominate are daring minorities, but the masses look on complacently or submissively follow, without reacting against the fashion from Paris, as launched by the Revolt of May 1968.

Not only all authority but society itself are attacked at their foundations, so that it is not only authority that has to defend itself, but society, through all its organs and all its members, to justify the reason for its existence in its present form and its ability to correct itself. In our country the resistance of all established sectors is secure, being determined by the living instinct for self-preservation, common sense and experience, which has taught that the promise of heaven on earth, when believed in or when one tries to make it come true, infallibly makes life hellish; even so, our environment is not prepared to form the anti-bodies that should fight and eliminate the infection. The complaint is all the more dangerous because it undoubtedly also arises from certain religious

circles, from which it might least reasonably be expected, which contaminate the minds of the faithful, accustomed to following their pastors in perfect trust. Certain sectors of the Catholic Church reveal trends that necessarily alarm the civil power. It is not for me to express any opinion on the internal problems of the Church, nor shall I do so. But leaders cannot be indifferent to the fact that certain clergymen seek to make use of their priestly character and the traditional respect it gives rise to, and also the facilities arising from the freedom of worship and belief, to engage in anti-social and anti-patriotic political activities. Only a very tiny minority of the clergy is involved, but however few they are the fact that they exist is of undeniable gravity. The clergy have been trained to carry out a spiritual ministry. They lack suitable training for involvement in the problems of the temporal government of society, and they are only too ready to accept all complaints, all protests and all dissatisfactions at face value.

No one will deny that the Church should be for the oppressed. So am I, but the question is to decide what oppression is and who is really being oppressed. Because, if we were to accept a certain definition of oppression made fashionable by socialist doctrines, we shall soon be fostering a generalized war, the struggle of those who feel a minimum of obedience against those who wield a minimum of authority, the war of children against their parents, women against men, pupils against their teachers, employees against employers, ruled against ruler, citizens

against the authorities. The ancients said that the corruption of the best always led to the worst.

The ideal of absolute justice based on the consent and agreement of each and every one, without exception, to all deliberations and decisions, would not lead to that idyllic peace symbolized by the dove, but to universal war, born of permanent dispute and constant misunderstanding between individuals.

Young people seem to be in friendly agreement when they spend their leisure together to sing and love, free from all obstacles and all cares. But life is more than this. Whether they like it or not, modern life can no longer return to its primitive simplicity, nor would the destruction of all that mechanical civilization has produced — if it were possible — make the men who have reached the summits of human knowledge and technical achievement happy beings freed from all ambition. At the bottom of all our hearts there is an irrepressible concern; as true happiness of mind is not within everyone's reach, we seek a satisfactory substitute in material well-being.

It is now the fashion for people of a certain age to apologise to the young, recognizing that the latter are very right to protest and that the culprits are the older members of our society, because they have proved unable to provide the young with a better world and do not understand them as they ought to be understood. I myself do not think this. For thousands of years each generation in receiving the inheritance of the past has thought itself disappointed by much that it has found in life and which

it thinks could be bettered, while not yet able to discern what could, and what could not, have been changed. There are three possible attitudes in this situation: become resigned and let things go on just the same, rebel and destroy without improving anything, or seek to correct what is wrong and work constructively to leave a better world to those that will come after us.

My generation in Portugal adopted this last attitude. It is true that we have not achieved all we dreamt of, materially or morally, but our instincts were noble ones, our actions generous and our work on behalf of the community intense. I feel that we are handing over to the younger generations in Portugal a country better than the one we found when we were young. Now it is their job to carry on with the task, and my deep desire is that they shall do better. But this will not be achieved through the methods of contestation, nor with the ideologies which lead to the sad picture of a people bereft of individual motivation, where the richness of the personality is lost and swallowed up in the monstrous deification of the collective.

Meanwhile, the duty of the leader is to defend the legality and the order passed on to him, which can only — and should only — develop through regular, peaceful means. The conscience of the Christian statesman is often faced with the problem of the coherence of his faith with his actions. When faced with the criminal who assaults the social order by taking lives or offending his fellows, the private individual can turn the other cheek, but not

the leader. When the legitimate interests of social existence and peaceful life of the community are at stake, the leader must of necessity prevent or impede such acts and their doers as compromise these essential values. What if there are individual motives for the action to be considered? This belongs to a second stage which appertains to the appraisal of human activities: at the moment of infringement it is the pernicious act that has to be avoided or suppressed.

The National Popular Action Movement will undoubtedly have to face many problems raised by the ferment of contemporary anarchy. An effort must be made to combat anti-social tendencies, to enlighten, to teach. I will repeat what I have already said: very often it will be enough to appeal to the common sense that the majority of the Portuguese have not yet lost, which is an excellent antidote for so many silly words spoken, attitudes struck and actions performed all around us.

We shall not be silent, we shall not give in, we shall not let ourselves be led astray by the false prophets who abound with their ambiguous messages in this apocalyptic age.

The reform of Portuguese society will be effected with slow but sure steps, and in peace. A long period of revolutions and civil wars in our history has proved that subversive agitation is incapable of solving any of our real problems; on the other hand it was responsible for our backwardness of one century, during which the Portuguese fought among themselves, destroyed much of

their common patrimony and left national riches abandoned only to find, at the end, that they had become poorer than before and had let slip the opportunities that the passage of time had brought within their reach.

Let us not repeat that disastrous experiment. We shall not turn back to that wrong road! The Portuguese people truly love peace, real peace, born of love and understanding, not of a reckless sowing of hatred, lies and rebelliousness, which can only provide a crop of devastating tempests.

We must proceed with a policy of fruitful reform, without impatience, for only actions that are carefully planned in advance can bear fruit. Action, if it is to be performed firmly and be free from hesitation and setbacks, must be well prepared in advance also.

So let all the Portuguese be confident. Of the Government? Yes, but above all of themselves. For the Government will continue to work for Portugal's benefit, but in that work it must be accompanied by all Portuguese people. Portugal belongs to us all: we all go to make up Portugal!



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