Mr. Chairman
Members of the Assembly:

There can be no doubt that the most serious problem confronting the Portuguese Nation at this moment is the Overseas Provinces. In normal circumstances they would pose no problem for our country. For five centuries Portugal has been a Nation spread over several continents, in Africa, in Asia and in Oceania as in Europe. In the natural genius of its people and in the traditional experience of its contacts, our country will always find the solutions suited to the harmonious development of all its portions, to the brotherly relations among all its citizens, to the enriching fusion of all its forms of culture.

But at this juncture this development of a multi-continental and multi-racial society is being hampered by growing hostile international pressure, determined by ideological prejudice, imperialistic interests and continental forms of solidarity which daily try out new manners of expression, trampling on all the limitations imposed by reason and all the norms accepted in international morality and law. In the constitutional or dependent assemblies of the United Nations this pressure has met with an environment well suited to its formation, its extension and its application. From it there has arisen an absolutely incredible campaign launched against our country, mobilizing extensive resources and powerful forces, and making use of a wide range of weapons, from calumny to aggression.

Faced with this attack, which seems definitely to be sharpening the Portuguese people must adopt an aware, well-defined position. That is why I am calling on them, through their highest representative assembly, to react anew on the matter. To facilitate this process I intend to recapitulate the guidelines adopted by the Government, in accordance with the suffrage of the people and within the lines laid down in the constitutional revision of 1971.

I have on so many occasions already dealt with this major national problem in public that I am sure I may be forgiven if I refer in many contexts to what I have said elsewhere and at other times.

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It can never be redundant to point out that the military operations in Angola, Mozambique and Portuguese Guinea are the result of the need to ensure legitimate self-defence against acts of aggression planned and launched from foreign territories. Confronted with an assault on lives and property on Portuguese territory our duty was necessarily to withstand the aggressors, punish them and take such measures as were indispensable to safeguard people's lives and property. Military forces were called in to aid in this policing activity. But our adversaries' attacks continued in the form of insidious guerrilla warfare and we thus found ourselves involved in a wearisome daily struggle, in which, inevitably, the enemy, although possessing only small forces, is able to maintain the initiative and constantly to carry out attacks on the economy and the morale of the inhabitants.

But, as I had occasion to say in July 1972, 'the military forces at present serving in Portuguese Africa, of which about half consist of African officers and soldiers, are not waging war but ensuring and maintaining the peace. They do not dominate or subjugate, they neither annex nor conquer - but merely remain on the watch and, when necessary, meet force with force, enabling the inhabitants to live normal lives, supporting their development and social enhancement and guaranteeing the economic development and progress of the territories concerned' (1).

When this is the pretext for others to call us warmongers and disturbers of the peace, then we are the victims of a deplorable lie. The peace is disturbed by the attacker, not by the defender. It is only as the results of dubious propaganda techniques that those who act in legitimate self-defence can be condemned, instead of seeking to restrain and punish the aggressors (2).

* * *

As soon, therefore, as order was restored in the overseas territories, we could have summed up the advantages and the drawbacks of staying there and, if we found, by cool analysis, that it would be more lucra-

(1): 'Progress in Peace', p. 177
(2): 'The Major Options', p. 177
tive and comfortable for the European Portuguese to turn their backs on the overseas provinces, then we could have got out and, like other European powers, returned to our small peninsular land, heralded by the momentary chorus of anti-colonialist praise and under a shower of blessings from right-thinking intellectuals. Had we done this we should no doubt by this have occupied the chair at the Assembly of the United Nations, after Nepal's term of office and before the turn of the Fiji Islands.

But in fact nobody thought of doing any of this. We stayed in the Overseas Provinces and we have been fighting there for twelve years, during which time the flower of Portuguese youth has served in Africa, doing their duty by their Homeland, suffering, fighting and shedding their blood. Is this the collective madness of a nation? Or a caprice of its leaders?

On several occasions I have dealt with this topic, the reason why we are fighting to defend the Overseas Provinces (3). And in so doing I have shown that we cannot leave off protecting inhabitants whose express desire is to remain Portuguese, nor could we abandon an achievement of civilization raised and maintained by the toil and genius of Portugal and which can only survive with and through Portugal.

Above all south of the equator, the two great provinces of Angola and Mozambique which Portugal created from a mosaic of poor, generally decadent tribes scattered over arid, uninviting regions, are inhabited by black, white and Asian citizens who love Africa and whose Homeland it is, by birth or 220n choice. There races mingle, cultures interchange, relationships are strengthened, efforts made in common to continue and improve a type of society where men are judged by their talents, their merits or their services alone.

We have thus concluded that it was our duty to defend those who have placed their trust in Portugal and are true to her flag, and we consider it our obligation to safeguard an achievement that represents a positive contribution to the progress of Mankind and of Civilization. Have we then been wrong? I think not. Not even in the case of the defence of other provinces, like Guinea, where the European presence is much less marked. In Africa we are defending not only the white inhabitants but all those, regardless of colour or race, who are loyal to Portugal and who would, for that very reason, be the victims of their enemies' vengeance if they were abandoned. On the other hand, there is the overall defence of the Overseas Provinces which forces us to be coherent in our attitudes. An act of transgression or compromise at one point would immediately affect the overall strength of our resistance. We could not for example, accept negotiations with the enemy in Guinea on such terms as would deprive us of authority to refuse negotiations in Angola or Mozambique. So that only the central Government can hold the initiative - since it also has the responsibility - for the conduct of overseas policy. This faculty belongs to the Government alone, in conjunction with the other organs of sovereignty, and not any other bodies.

The defence of the Overseas Provinces is thus forced on us by the moral need to preserve the lives and property of those who are Portuguese citizens in lands that have been Portuguese for centuries. And it is forced on us by our awareness that we have a mission to perform: to guarantee the continuation and the improvement of societies where no racial discrimination is practised and where harmony between men, whatever the colour of their skins, is actively furthered.

Of course we have not yet reached perfection. No doubt there have been undesirable shortcomings and deplorable falling-short of the ideal. Unfortunately I know of no nation or political or social experiment which has begun without difficulties, proceeded without showing defects or triumphed in the entire purity of its principles. What has to be done is to maintain faith in such principles. We must fight those human imperfections which are made manifest in their implementation but we must not let their existence demoralize us. Persistence in murder does not invalidate the goodness and the normality of the standard of not killing others.
While we thus guarantee peace and order in the Overseas Territories we have been giving thought to their future. It is a curious fact that in all of them the outbreak of terrorist attacks has coincided with the beginning of an era of noteworthy economic and social development.

In the framework of this economic spurt, the prospects for political development had to be discerned and defined, as I did in the course of my unforgettable visit to Africa in April 1969, in the speeches I made in Guinea, Angola and Mozambique.

I summed up my statements on those occasions in the talk I gave on TV on 17 June 1969, from which I would like to quote here. "In my speeches in Africa I announced the basic points of our policy: consolidation of the multi-racial societies we are fostering, which are totally free of any kind of colour, racial or religious discrimination; progressive autonomy in Government of the provinces in harmony, as the Constitution lays down, with their state of development and own resources; growing participation of their inhabitants in political and administrative structures; development of the territories with ample opportunities for the initiative, technical skill should be to enhance the land and its people, not to exploit them" (4).

It is for the country to decide whether or not I have been a faithful executor of this programme. On it was based the constitutional revisions of 1971 in the part regarding the Overseas Provinces. In furthering the reform, the political and administrative institutions of the Overseas were renovated, giving them unprecedented opportunities for action. Some think that we did not go far enough, but in fact we went as far as it seemed reasonable and feasible for us to advance. It is easy to criticise at a distance, with the benefit of hindsight. But I have not forgotten (as, no doubt, may others still recall) the difficulties that had to be overcome for us to get as far as we have.

In the policy that has been carried out a major role has gone to the concept of the concession of progressive, participatory autonomy to the overseas. When, in Lourenço Marques on 18 April 1969, I spoke before the Legislative and Economic and Social Councils, in joint session, before the revision of the Constitution, I said: "The Portuguese Constitution guarantees the Oversea provinces administrative and financial autonomy with powers to legislate on subjects of exclusive interest to them alone, through their representative bodies. In their composition as in

(4): For the Future of Portugal, p. 206
their powers, they are in no wise inferior to the assemblies of those States which are members of the most developed and advanced federations. The Constitution adds that the autonomy of the provinces shall be compatible with 'their state of development and their own available resources', which implies that they shall expand as they grow, socially and economically. Some fear that the administrative and financial autonomy of the overseas provinces may harm, or even endanger, the ideal of national integration. It has always been my view that a clearly understood integration of all the portions in the Portuguese whole calls for each one to take its part therein with its own geographical, economic and social features. Any unity achieved, not by the common will based on the harmony of interests, but by a forced imposition of abstract patterns could never be really wholesome. National unity does not necessarily mean the destruction of regional variety.

The participation of the inhabitants of the provinces in local government is already considerable and important, and will surely become more so; but it should not be thought that it may lead to any kind of disintegrating autonomy. In today's world, more than ever, strength comes from being united. Developing territories need financial and technical support provided in a spirit of fraternal collaboration, not laid out on a coldly calculating policy or with mere exploitation in view. Cohesiveness of the several parts in the Portuguese whole is the secret on which balanced progress will depend, where human values shall not be thrust aside by mere material achievements (5).

Some eighteen months later, in laying before the National Assembly, on 2 December 1970, the Bill for Constitutional Revision, I returned to the topic and sought to explain its clauses referring to the autonomy of the overseas provinces (6).

If you recall, I stressed the differences which are forced upon the legislator, in considering individual territories: differences of geography, economic capacity and stages of development, differences in the cultures of the people, their usage, their customs, their religions, their practices which we should respect and seek to preserve, to the extent that they do not undermine the moral principles of civilization, differences in social structures and the types of human relations. But I also

(5): For the Future of Portugal, p. 131.
(6): Revolution in Continuity, pp. 66-68
stressed the need to maintain the sovereignty of the State intact, one and indivisible, and the supremacy of the central Government which, in societies where different races live in constant contact, must fulfil the most important mission of 'ensuring by constant vigilance respect for the individual rights of all the elements of the population of the overseas territories, without any discrimination'. The central Government is, and must continue to be, the defender of the rights of the weakest members of our society. 'The legal equality of all Portuguese citizens must always and everywhere be paralleled by social intermingling. If in some place there were revealed a tendency to segregation, it must be inexorably fought by the intervention of the Central Power, wherever such intervention proves necessary. We shall not give up our policy of racial fraternity, we shall not renounce our intention of going on to form multi-racial societies, we shall be unyielding as to the maintenance of a sole statute applicable to all Portuguese citizens, of whatever race or colour they may be'.

The political and administrative autonomy of each province implies its own organs of government, with an elected legislative assembly to pass laws of local application, and freedom to manage its provincial finances and patrimony. This degree of autonomy is far more extensive, as has been noted on several occasions, than that normally granted to the members of political federations, yet it cannot be dis-integrating in effect. Many reasons make it advisable to maintain the authority of governors as the representatives of the central power. One of the important ones is that I have just mentioned: to make sure that the economic power of certain minorities, or the blind force of a majority, do not hinder peaceable co-existence, that balanced, harmonious ability to live together which must exist in multi-racial societies.

How, then, is the autonomy of the overseas provinces to develop? Again I would like to quote my own words, written in the 1970 preface to my book "Indecinable Mandate". "In politics there is only room for historical visions, which are incompatible with undying oaths. We cannot say that things must develop in a given direction until the end of time. Here, too, the important thing is to prepare the future, ready it to be a Portuguese future, built by our own hands to preserve our
collective soul': see our collective soul'.

I may now be asked to define the best path to prepare this 'Portuguese future'. Some opine that the maintenance of the struggle against terrorism may bring about a gulf between Portugal and the inhabitants which might well endanger this Portuguese feeling that we seek to guarantee for the future. This method of reasoning assumes acceptance of the existence of a national uprising in Guinea, in Angola or in Mozambique against the common Homeland. This is not the case. The inhabitants of Guinea, Angola and Mozambique have not risen up against Portugal; quite the contrary, for they are the innocent victims of the terrorist attacks and they may well on occasion suffer the consequence of fighting the subversive elements which have infiltrated amidst them and lurk, ready to attack. To defend them is one of our duties and it is one of our missions.

What is at stake in this struggle, as is often stressed, is the winning of souls, not the conquest of land or the subjugation of peoples. We win them over to the extent that we fulfil the mission of all legitimate governments, to effect the common good, meeting social needs and the just ambitions of the individual. In the desolate areas of tropical Africa, in those vast spaces where since the dawn of history man has felt his weakness under the pressure of hostile nature, it has fallen to the European to clear the jungle, to overcome the dangers that threatened life, to make full use of the land's resources. The natives were thus gradually freed from indigence, ignorance and oppression. But the task of redemption of Africa has not yet been completed; there are immense tasks to be performed to locate and exploit natural wealth. And there is unending work to be done in teaching and enhancing the people who live there. The domination of nature and the enhancement of human dignity - these are what must really count in political work in the overseas provinces.

There is thus a process of development afoot which, as I have just said, consists in building up a Portuguese future through the training and promotion of the people, served by the infra-structures necessary for the optimum utilization of the wealth of the land and men's toil to enhance it. This is the serious, sure path that we are following, engag
ing in the task our capital, prodigious technical feats, heroic efforts and enthusiastic devotion. But the path is a long one because time is an indispensable element in the solid building-up of any human achievement.

Dazzling fancies can be swept before the marvelling eyes of an astounded public by the use of words, tricks and illusions. But a few days are enough to make them lose their fleeting brilliance and disappear like smoke. All that then is left is disillusionment and bitterness, or even a feeling of revolt. We need time and we must win time if we seek honestly to go on with our intention to build a lasting spiritual and material edifice. We cannot afford to waste or lose a minute for the time at our disposal is little enough for effective action.

Great as our impatience is, we are forced to recognize that we have made good use of our time this far: the achievements in the several provinces of the Overseas territories over the last twenty years have been many and vast, and not only in the sphere of economic development. Much has been done to raise the standard of living and the standard of culture of the native population, a task of which we can legitimately be proud, a motive of pride above all for those who have modestly and silently carried out their duty to keep watch over the Overseas Provinces, to protect and defend them, thus to enable the mass of the inhabitants to enjoy peace and the fruits of progress.

The soldiers who have garrisoned the overseas provinces of recent years have not been there to see their comrades die as a justification for others to die after them. Their sacrifice has guaranteed peace and security and has prevented any repetition of the spectacle of the Congo in 1961 with the corpses of men mutilated, children quartered, women raped and disembowelled. It has permitted a revival of constructive work and, once the confidence of the inhabitants had been restored, an acceleration of the rhythm of development of the provinces, which are now ever more promising realities in the world of wealth, comfort and peace.

Still, however fast we move, it is not surprising that we seem to be going too slow, not to mention the enemy, one of whose sought-after successes would be to deprive us of time. I refer to those who in all good faith and inspired by patriotic motives watch the years go
by and feel encroaching weariness, undermining impatience and fading hope. Could we not speed up political solutions? This is the topic which I particularly want to ask you to consider.

This is the place for an open, frank debate. We provoked it throughout the country on the occasion of the 1969 elections and the reply of the electorate was categorical. But I do not consider, for reasons that I have explained more than once, that such a debate can be constantly engaged in on such a scale. In the first place because, according to the general consensus, the preparation of a decision can be discussed but when it is taken, and above all if it is a decisive one for national life, calling for the mobilization of people's minds, resources and a lengthy, risky military service, it would not subsequently be licit to subject to perpetual daily discussion a decision that is being carried out and the execution of what has been decided.

Secondly, engaged as we are in a struggle against powerful enemies which have no lack of means of psychological pressure or the funds to flood us with their propaganda, such a debate would be a breach provided for the enemy, the more easily to spread its lies, publicise its doctrines, step up among young people and the population in general the campaign of intimidation which has already, in so many forms and in so many spheres, been launched.

But the National Assembly has both the right and the duty to give its opinion on those new aspects which the passage of time reveals in national problems. That is why it was elected.

Within the concept of an acceleration of the process of political development of the Portuguese overseas provinces, the principle might be adopted of the auto-determination of the peoples, and a plebiscite might be held among them. I also dealt with this solution four years ago.(7) One of the most serious mistakes made with relation to the African populations is the notion of forcing on them the acceptance of the principles of European democracy and its ritual practices. This form of democracy is meaningless to peoples that, for the most part, are still at the tribal organization stage.

Even less sense attaches to an examination of popular opinions on the individual basis of one man (or one woman) = one vote. This explains

(7) My talk on 9 April 1969, In Indecinable-Mandate, p. 141.
the failures in the new African states in trying out democratic systems on the Anglo-Saxon pattern, very quickly replaced by military dictatorships in which the dictator takes to himself the image of the old Chief, or by what is euphemistically termed 'African socialism', which is basically the same personal regime, but with some theoretical totalitarian touches. What meaning could possibly be read into a plebiscite in the form of voting throughout the bush and the jungle on the destinies of territories bereft of national traditions?

I should not be afraid of it but I should be shocked by what I am absolutely sure would be in any case a parody of direct democracy. While I do not fear it now, I do know that by abandoning the field to our enemies, they would be enabled to make full use of the inexperience and ingenuousness of the inhabitants, and would at once put into practice all the means of moral and physical pressure at which they are past masters and which they would be allowed to do with impunity, surrounded by the blessings of moist-eyed progressive spirits.

Each year the United Nations pass a motion on the Portuguese territories in which we are invited to recognize the right of the overseas peoples to self-determination and independence. But, as I have already once informed the Nation (8), they go further than this demand and also tell us how to carry it out. We should at once withdraw our armed forces from the overseas provinces, grant an un-

(8): TV talk on 17 June 1969, in For the Future of Portugal, p. 205
conditional political amnesty, to let all the members of the terrorist movements come back and do their will, and then transfer all powers to institutions representative of the native peoples, freely elected. To achieve this aim, Portugal was also this year, as a novelty, requested to hand over the territories immediately to the so-called movements of liberation. This means that if we effect plebiscites of our own free will and under our authority, they would have no value at all for Portugal’s enemies and for the United Nations, their principal present instrument; this was what happened in French Somalia and the Seychelles Islands, where the results were favourable to France and to Great Britain respectively. The United Nations will only concede the legitimacy of the results which run parallel to its wishes in the matter, as they might in our territories too, if, as I have just said, we gave prior freedom of action to the enemy in preparing and holding the plebiscite.

We should not fail to see that the enemy does not consist of inhabitants of Guinea, Angola and Mozambique desirous of winning, like the Romantic heroes of earlier sages of independence, freedom for their oppressed homelands. It is made up of powerful imperialist nations, which manœuvre the so-called freedom movements the better to achieve their own ambitions.

In the meetings held to prepare plebiscites, as at the negotiation table, the Portuguese would not, in their ingenuousness, find themselves facing men speaking the same language, with whom an elevating dialogue could be held on the progress and the future of the lands that all loved with equal fervour; they would be confronted by the agents of international forces representing ideological movements or racial currents seeking to impose solutions that could hardly be withstood, so powerful would be the international pressure-groups supporting them and urging them on.

What more expressive, authentic, unarguable plebiscite could be desired than the one that has been taking place over the last twelve years during which Portugal’s enemies have her sovereignty? On foreign territory well-paid, well-armed guerrilla groups have been organized, well trained by instructors from China, Cuba and Russia.
The attempt has been made to give them tactical support through networks of supporters or sympathisers all over the territories concerned. Sudden attacks have been multiplied, attempts at assassination against non-collaborating chiefs and headmen, deeds of intimidation directed at the civil population. All this amidst the increasing din of the well-orchestrated propaganda machine, actively supporting terrorists and their movements through the moral and financial aid of governments with which we maintain diplomatic relations and through churches which are allowed — and indeed helped — to maintain their services and forms of worship on our territory. In spite of all this the people remain true to Portugal. Even so, a tourist can still travel round the territories of Portuguese Africa with greater safety than in many a street in some of the biggest cities of the so-called civilized countries. Even so the political and administrative life and work of the territories goes on in normal conditions under the aegis of the Portuguese law.

Was this attitude on the part of the inhabitants no significance at all? Does it not express a desire which, in accordance with the mentality, the traditions, the outlook and the nature of the Africans, is far more meaningful than the solemn dropping into a ballot-box of squares of paper bearing a printed leopard or a lion?

Negotiations with the terrorist movements? For what purpose? A serene dialogue, a climate of friendliness, to reach conclusions about their thoughts and ambitions? They have never hidden them, as we are well aware: they think their opportunity has come with the winds of change in their favour and they simply want us to hand over the Portuguese Overseas territories forthwith. For us to discuss with them the procedure of transfer and the phases of our withdrawal, the guarantees they would give Portugal and the Portuguese, the political and other ties to be maintained? At this point in history, even if Portugal decided to take this step, I fail to see how we could place any trust in agreements with the so-called freedom movements. The era of the illusions of decolonization through federal solutions has long passed, since the French Union fell apart and since even the British Commonwealth, so solid in roots and strong in traditions,
and also with the happy formula of fidelity to a distant, tolerant unifying monarchy, has begun evidently to decay and is now little more than a reminiscence of what it once was. I dealt with agreements for decolonization, the guarantees available and the effectiveness shown in their application in a talk on 15 January 1973 (9). At that time I referred to the failure of the French and Belgian agreements, but at that juncture we still had not witnessed the sensational rupture of the agreements on Madagascar, which so eloquently reinforced the thesis of the fragility of the undertaking entered into by new leaders in relations to the former colonial powers.

Any negotiations now can only lead, immediately or over a certain period, to the handing-over of the overseas provinces. On other occasions I have pointed out that "we are ready for all conversations aiming at the return of terrorists to their lands and their re-absorption into the Portuguese homeland, and even the study of the acceleration of the participation of natives of the provinces in local administration and government" (10). Just as we continue to talk to those concerned with the future of their lands, that is, all those who live, stay and work in the overseas provinces, contributing to their progress and truly sharing their problems and who are in a position to participate in the study of the decisions to be taken for the common good.

* * *

The policy adopted and implemented has, therefore, been one of energetically defending in all fields the wholeness of Portugal, at home and abroad. Yet doubt is sometimes expressed whether this defence effort can be borne by the Nation, both in financial cost and as regards the effort and strain it implies for economic progress. The facts give the lie to such fears. Moreover I should say that never seen a country engaged in its own defence question the need, the advisability, the timeliness and the extent of the defence effort because of economic or financial reasons. When the lives and property or thousands or millions of Portuguese are at stake, and the wholeness of our national territory, this is what matters above all, even though their defence implies sacrifices, which have had to be made by the peoples martyred by the

(9): The Major Options, p.50.
(10): Talk given on 14 November 1972, in The Major Options, p.40
vast all-consuming wars of this century, who had to undergo harsh attacks, the destruction of their homes, the death of loved ones, the deprivation of their freedom, the loss of their belongings, hunger, exile and ruin, without all this shaking their will to go on fighting and to overcome.

In our case, excepting the grief that has saddened so many families, our population has not yet had to suffer anything like all this, as a result of the defence of the overseas provinces. Nor have public finances been undermined by the enormous expenditure we have been called on to make. The budget continues to be balanced, the tax burden is still a relatively modest one and the national debt is still far below that level that our credibility would justify and bear. If we suffer the effects of inflation it is Europe and America that cause it, not Africa. As for economic and social progress, I do not think that anyone could in good faith say that it has been paralysed because of overseas defence. In few other periods of Portuguese history, may I be permitted to say, has a comparable effort been made on the whole broad front of the economy, education and social security, as in the last few years. Nothing has been left undone because of overseas defence. Moreover it is my principle that to support the overseas provinces our country needs increasingly to foster its wealth, and in the first place the first of the forms of wealth of a Nation, that is, its people and their education. We might even say that overseas defence, far from acting as a brake, has proved an encouragement for national development. We shall not give in for lack of money, always provided that there is no lack of the desire to resist.

Mr. Chairman

Members of the Assembly:

I have not said all that could be said on the topic of the overseas provinces. In my five years and five months as Prime Minister not one day has passed without conscious meditation on overseas problems, without any obsession, always open to the consideration and study of all kinds of solution, and ever awake to the opportunities for seeking out other paths.

If today I have taken this opportunity of recalling what I have said in public over that relatively long period on the various facets of the problems posed by the situation and the future of the overseas
territories, it was merely to show that I have been giving them thought and that I have examined them critically by the light of the national interest.

A brief anthology of these public statements was published in a pocket-book under the title 'Why Portugal remains in the Overseas Provinces', a few months ago, by the Office of the Secretary of State for Information, on its own initiative. How I wish that many Portuguese would read it!

But the problem is not mine alone, but belongs to the whole Nation. In politics I have ever sought to be the faithful interpreter of national feeling and conscience. I have been guided by election results, by the resolutions of the National Assembly, by the consultation of public opinion from north to south of our country, at home and overseas. But once more I must define the direction that we must take.

There are thousands of soldiers far from their homes and families who in Africa face difficulties and danger, risking their lives to defend Portugal's cause. There are thousands of African natives who are fighting shoulder to shoulder with their European brothers in the armed and security forces to keep Portugal's peace. There are millions of Portuguese, without distinction of race or colour, who live their lives in the overseas provinces, and who have linked their own survival and their future to the destiny of the territories. All of them - warriors and residents - cannot live in doubt, cannot be sustained by ambiguities; they must have certainties.

My Government has undertaken to maintain a certain orientation and it cannot go back on its word. Neither I nor any other of the men in that Government occupies his seat at the Council table from pure personal ambition. We are inspired solely by the desire to serve the national interest, the spirit of service of our common Homeland in the best possible way open to us. It is now for the National Assembly to say whether the path we have been taking is the right one. It has the authority to give such a verdict, one that I shall accept and carry out in a spirit of disciplined service in the common cause.
POLÍTICA ULTRAMARINA

COMUNICAÇÃO DO PRESIDENTE DO CONSELHO À ASSEMBLEIA NACIONAL

No uso de uma prerrogativa constitucional que lhe confere o direito de expor à Assembleia Nacional assuntos de «reconhecido interesse nacional», o Presidente do Conselho fez, no dia 5, àquela câmara uma comunicação sobre política ultramarina, que publicamos em suplemento a este número de «Notícias de Portugal».

Transmitida em directo pela rádio e pela televisão, a comunicação
foi feita antes da ordem do dia. Posteriormente, os deputados dos Estados e Províncias do Ultramar apresentaram, para ser discutida uma moção também sobre política ultramarina, que publicamos nas páginas centrais.

Na sua comunicação, o Prof. Marcello Caetano acentuou:

Tenho procurado na política seguida ser fiel intérprete do pensamento, do sentimento, da consciência nacionais.

A consulta do eleitorado, as resoluções da Assembleia Nacional, a auscultação da opinião pública do Norte ao Sul do País e aquiém e além mar, têm sido os meus guias.

É indispensável porém que mais uma vez se afrime o rumo a seguir. Há milhares de soldados longe das suas terras e das suas famílias que em África arrostam dificuldades e perigos e arriscam a vida na defesa da causa de Portugal.

Há milhares de nativos africanos que ombro a ombro com os seus irmãos europeus enfileiram nas forças armadas e de segurança para sustentar a paz de Portugal.

Há milhões de portugueses, sem distinção de raça ou de cor, que nas províncias ultramarinas têm a sua vida, e ao destino delas ligaram a sua sobrevivência e o seu próprio destino.

E todos esses — os combatentes e os residentes — não podem viver na dúvida, não podem sustentar-se de equívocos, carecem de certezas.

O Governo a que presido comprometeu-se numa orientação. E não pode renegar os seus compromissos.

Mas nem eu, nem nenhum dos homens que me acompanha no Governo, nenhum de nós ocupa os seus lugares por ambição pessoal.

Anima-nos unicamente o espírito de servir o interesse nacional, o espírito de servir, pela melhor maneira, a Pátria comum.

É à Assembleia Nacional que compete agora dizer se o rumo que seguimos está certo.

E disciplinadamente me submeterei depois ao veredicto de quem tem autoridade para o proferir.
MOÇÃO DOS DEPUTADOS DO ULTRAMAR

Depois do discurso do Presidente do Conselho na Assembleia Nacional, foram retomados os trabalhos.

O deputado por Angola, Dr. Neto de Miranda, pediu a palavra para ler uma proposta de moção, apresentada pelos deputados do Ultramar.

Começou por dizer:

Sr. Presidente:

Todas as ações que o Senhor Presidente do Conselho veio trazer a esta Assembleia.

Delas há que destacar que correspondem integralmente à linha de rumo que propõe seguir no campo político e administrativo logo que assumiu a chefia do Governo, palavras que nos habituou pelo seu estilo inconfundível de clareza de exposição apontando-nos o caminho que devemos seguir para atingirmos os superiores interesses da comunidade nacional.

O que há momentos ouvimos do Senhor Presidente do Conselho foram palavras que sublinham as que ainda recentemente pronunciou no seu notável discurso de 16 de Fevereiro último, no encerramento da conferência anual da A. N. P.

Aí se referiu à política nacional realizada nos últimos anos, os positivos resultados com elas obtidos, a intencionalidade de outras medidas de natureza político-administrativas e a compreensão e colaboração que de todos os portugueses espera.

Muito em particular e dentro de um esquema de política geral definida, o Senhor Presidente do Conselho dedicou uma especial atenção ao Ultramar, tal como ultimamente esta Assembleia vem sendo tema de muitas intervenções, e onde se processa um método e incontroverso progresso econômico e social.

Deve referir-se como significado especial as referências às medidas legislativas mais salientes, como a Reforma Constitucional, no título respeitante ao Ultramar que lançou as bases de uma transformação que está em marcha, a Nova Lei Orgânica, a característica de regiões autônomas dada às Províncias Ultramarinas, o progresso sócio-económico que nelas se processa, o progresso de todo o País através de planos de fomento, a despeito das despesas que a defesa do Ultramar nos impõe para salvaguarda do trabalho em paz das populações.

Havemos e temos de dar ao Senhor Presidente do Conselho, Prof. Doutor Marcelo Caetano todo o nosso aplauso e todo o nosso apoio, reafirmando-se se o rumo seguido está certo para que se não vá na dúvida de se sustentar equívocos, como há momento foi dito.
A esta Assembleia cabe distinguir os efeitos e os feitos políticos da acção do Governo e as atitudes do seu chefe ao longo da sua acção governativa.

Toda a acção desenvolvida pelo Senhor Presidente do Conselho e a clara orientação nacional que vem imprimindo ao seu governo, o que acaba mais uma vez de ser reconhecido e justamente apreciado em terras do Ultramar pelos colegas agora regressados, merecem reflexão da Assembleia Nacional e o seu apoio para a prossecução da tão esclarecida acção governativa.

Assim, e nos termos regimentais, a Comissão do Ultramar tem a honra de propor à Assembleia a seguinte mocção: «Tendo em consideração o regime constitucional em vigor quanto ao Ultramar, que afirma a unidade nacional e no qual se define a autonomia das províncias de harmonia com o seu desenvolvimento económico e social, o que pressupõe uma autonomia progressiva na qual participem cada vez em maior número e mais decididamente as respectivas populações.

Considerando a existência nas Províncias Ultramarinas de sociedades multirraciais, em que não existem de direito discriminações e se procura abolir de facto toda e qualquer desigualdade não baseada na cultura e nos méritos individuais;

Considerando constituir direito inalienável da soberania portuguesa encaminhar a evolução dos territórios do Estado Português sem intromissões humilhantes de outros países ou de organizações internacionais onde se definam políticas sob a inspiração de interesses estrangeiros;

Considerando que nos territórios portugueses do Ultramar a vida social decorre pacificamente, em condições de normalidade e segurança superiores à da maior parte dos países do Mundo actual, apenas perturbada pela existência nalguns pontos de guerrilhas vindas do exterior;

Considerando que as autoridades portuguesas se têm limitado a cumprir o seu dever de defender a paz, a ordem pública e a segurança das populações, não fazendo guerra mas apenas tomando as medidas indispensáveis a essa defesa;

Considerando que, como é patente, essa defesa, não tem impedido o espectacular progresso económico e social das províncias ultramarinas, mesmo, e direita sobretudo, daquelas em que tem sido tentada a subversão;

Considerando ainda que na própria Metrópole, mau grado as vultosas despesas a que a defesa do Ultramar tem obrigado o País, se tem, especialmente nos últimos cinco anos, processado notável política de fomento económico e de promoção social.

Resolve manifestar o seu apoio à política do Governo que vem sendo claramente definida e sustentada pelo Senhor Presidente do Conselho, em particular no que respeita à defesa e valorização do Ultramar.