Dear David,

1. One immediate and disturbing consequence of the political confusion of last weekend was that the normal courtesies afforded to diplomats vanished. It was clear that— not surprisingly—the instructions to their activists by the Communist Party did not include any special reference to diplomatic privilege, and when members of the Armed Forces eventually put in an appearance they were not much better briefed. Members of my staff on innocent recreational outings or travelling from their homes to the Chancery were obliged to submit with the rest of the public to time-consuming road blocks and searches of their cars and persons. Colleagues in other Embassies shared the same experiences. In one case, that of the Information Secretary at the US Embassy, a house was burst into by armed soldiers in the small hours and the unfortunate individual hailed from his bed protesting, because, as it turned out, his landlord was on the wanted list.

2. Heads of Mission fared no better than anyone else. My own experience was perhaps an extreme example, but others also had trouble. On my way to Sintra by car on 29 September accompanied by my wife and two Belgian friends, I was stopped three times by groups of civilians who were handing out Portuguese Communist Party leaflets. Despite my CD number plates, my Diplomatic Identity Card and my assertions that they had no right to interfere with foreign diplomats, the "volunteers" at the first and third checkpoints insisted on searching my car for arms, ostensibly at the request of the Armed Forces Movement (AFM). Though on the whole polite and apologetic, some of those concerned at the third checkpoint became extremely aggressive in response to my protests and, in addition to making a more thorough search of the car, attempted to carry out body-searches.

3. On the return journey there seemed to have been some attempt by the AFM to assert their authority, and we managed to get through without further searches (though the soldiers who had appeared on the scene were searching other cars). The official wireless station was by then broadcasting statements by the AFM that the latter now had the situation under control and that there was no longer any need for the "democratic forces" to man check-points.

4. Although it is clear that the Portuguese Government itself had nothing to do with these deplorable departures from the norms laid down in the Vienna Convention, I spoke on Monday to the Deputy Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps, the Colombian Ambassador, (in the absence of the Nuncio) and asked him to deliver an energetic protest to the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, both as a matter of principle and in the hope that in any further disturbances the authorities might take more effective steps to protect diplomats from harassment and infringement of their rights. The Colombian, flanked by the Austrian and Netherlands Ambassadors, accordingly formed up on 1 October and protested to the Secretary-General of the Ministry on behalf of the Diplomatic Corps. The result, in the form of an apology by the Foreign Minister, is recorded in my telegram No 333.

5. My Defence Attaché, Tom Huggan, likewise made a vigorous protest in person to the Assistant-Military Governor of Lisbon, Col Amadeo da Silva Carvalho, and extracted a handsome apology.

6. As important as the breach of diplomatic immunity was the evidence which these events afforded of the relative strengths of the Communist Party and the Armed Forces. COPCON, which is intended to be the main instrument for ensuring military control over Metropolitan Portugal, had the greatest difficulty in getting its orders obeyed during the confused hours of 29 September. The Communist Party and other extreme left organisations, on the other hand, were not only able to get their barricades into position with speed and efficiency, but maintained the initiative over the military throughout. Despite broadcasts repeated every 15 minutes from midday onwards that the civilians manning the barricades could go home, as the Armed Forces had everything under control, in most cases they did not abandon their posts until about one the following morning, presumably after receiving orders from Party headquarters. Having thus tested and proved their strength once, there must be a danger that they will be tempted to use it again, in perhaps more formidable ways.

[Signature]

N C C Trench