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PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

Unofficial translation of the message addressed to the British Prime Minister

SERIAL No. 212A/82

I have the honour to refer to the message you recently addressed to me requesting the support of my Government regarding the voting on the Resolution concerning the Falklands, which just took place at the General Assembly of the United Nations.

As it was transmitted in due time to the British Embassy in Lisbon, the position of abstention taken by my Government, in spite of the significant number of Portuguese citizens living in Argentina, our traditional good relations with that country and the various approaches we have had from Buenos Aires, reflected the understanding and the active support given by Portugal since the beginning of the crisis.

The historic and close links between our two countries lead me also to address myself to you in order to put to you now a matter which is deeply worrying both the Portuguese political circles and public opinion: the case of East Timor which will soon be debated at the Fourth Commission of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

For the last seven years the question of East Timor has appeared, as a separate item, in the Agenda of the General Assembly, without having been possible to find an acceptable solution by the International Community which would take into account the legitimate rights and interests of the people of Timor to freely choose their future, an aim that Portugal, as the administrative power, continues to pursue, as always, with firm conviction and willingness.

In this spirit, my Government has tried to create conditions to overcome the present impasse having decided for that purpose, for the first time, to sponsor together with other States, including all Portuguese speaking countries, a new draft resolution about East Timor. Such a draft resolution has, as its main distinctive feature, a great preoccupation for moderation and open-mindedness, in order to establish the necessary dialogue between the parties directly involved in order to obtain a global solution for the problem, namely the grave and still unresolved humanitarian questions which are tragically affecting the living conditions of the people of East Timor.

This new draft resolution would therefore not only discard any hostile purpose or idea of confrontation with Indonesia, but would open, with all

flexibility, positive ways to unblock the question, by using the mechanisms available to the International Community, through the United Nations Charter, to impose the rights and duties consecrated in that same Charter.

It is, therefore, also in this same context that, for the first time, an appeal to the Secretary General of the United Nations is being made to initiate consultations with the view to explore all paths that may lead to a comprehensive settlement of the East Timor question.

I would also like to reiterate that the Portuguese stance is totally devoid of any territorial claim to East Timor. The only objective of my country is to see that a genuine de-colonization process will take place there, in accordance with the rules of international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter.

I have much pleasure, therefore, in informing you that this position is obtaining a greater understanding by many countries, namely within the EEC, and I would like to stress the positive role the Belgium Government intends to play in order to plead within the EEC in favour of this draft resolution which they consider deserves a positive vote and not an abstention.

In these circumstances my Government hopes that Her Majesty's Government may be able to take a more helpful attitude towards Portugal on the question of East Timor by supporting the draft resolution and thus contributing towards a similar consensus to be formed among the other EEC countries.

I avail myself of this opportunity to present to you the assurance of my highest consideration.

s) Francisco Pinto Balsemão
Prime Minister of Portugal.