PORTUGAL

(1) (Speech given by
His Excellency Dr. José Caeiro da Matta
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Portugal,
at the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in
Washington, D.C., on April 4, 1949.)

"The Government of Portugal, which I have the honor to represent here on this occasion, received with pleasure the invitation extended by the Government of the United States in its name and in the name of Belgium, Canada, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United Kingdom, to take part in the North Atlantic Pact.

"The time has now come where we see the concept of this pact become a reality; and, before our signatures are affixed to it, allow me to say a few words in the name of Portugal.

"To President Truman, who, with his strong personality, so well symbolizes in this hour the clear political vision and the decisive entry of the United States into this undertaking, go the cordial greetings of the Government and people of Portugal.

"My country, in accepting this invitation extended to her to take her place among the original participating nations in the Atlantic Pact, was not, I can affirm, concerned exclusively with considerations of her own security. She did so much more because of her recognition of the need of giving her cooperation to this great effort. More than ever it is necessary to defend the principles and the positions which those peoples that are the depositroy of the ideals of Western civilication occupy in the world. It can be said that there is now being repeated around the shores of the Atlantic, and on a much vaster scale, the picture which the ancient peoples knew at the time when the finest conquests of the human mind and the highest exponents of civilization were centered in the small but fertile area of the classical world.

"Portugal is an Atlantic country whose activities throughout the long centuries of history took place to a great extent on the broad sea which forms her boundary. To those countries to which we are bound by the seaways of the Atlantic we are brought near by friendly relations. The memory of our first contacts with some of them is lost in the night of time. With one of them we can point to centuries of the closest collaboration.

"Europe, which has such a great moral heritage to defend--Europe, reduced in political values, struggling against the greatest and most dangerous mental epidemic of all times, which threatens to destory the flower of our culture--Europe is anxiously seeking a formula for peace. Her moral forces are now exerted in the will to correct her ills. And the evidence of what might be a disquieting shadow on her horizon finds her facing with courage and decision the reality of her present position, appreciative and grateful for the moral and material solidarity nobly offered to her from this side of the Atlantic.

"Portugal wishes to assert that she sees in the North Atlantic Pact, not only an instrument of defense and international cooperation, but also, for the reasons and for the aims which govern it, a precious instrument for peace. And she considers herself fortunate to be able to find that, once again, none of the instruments on which her foreign relations are based is in conflict with its letter or its spirit.

(1) "May the thought which has made of these nations living examples of true social progress, in work, in freedom, and in peace, keep intact the ties which are being formed today and ensure that this pact may bear the fruit which we expect of it.

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(2) ..."It is through long and sustained effort, by the laying of stone upon stone, that any great monument is erected. We are still at the beginning of our work of fashioning this great instrument for peace -- an instrument which certainly represents the grandest alliance ever to have been formed in the history of the world."

("The Scotsman", May 19, 1950.
Prof. da Matta, Portuguese Foreign Minister. Addresses at the end of the London session of the twelve Foreign Ministers of the Atlantic Council)