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LETTER DATED 2 DECEMBER 1968 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES
OF PORTUGAL ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit herewith, on instructions from my Government, the text of a letter addressed to you by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal.

"Sir,

"In reply to Notes dated 5 and 20 November 1968, numbered PO 230 SORH (1-2), I have the honour to draw your attention to the following.

"2. The Portuguese Government had certain doubts, of both a legal and a procedural nature, regarding the resolution on the question of Rhodesia adopted by the Security Council on 9 April 1966, and in order to be able to take a position with respect to that resolution it addressed a letter to you on 27 April 1966 in which it submitted the queries to which the resolution had given rise.

"3. No reply to the questions submitted at that time was received.

"4. In Notes dated 14 May, 29 July and 20 September 1966 addressed to the Security Council itself the Portuguese Government pressed its request for the necessary clarifications.

"5. Those communications from the Portuguese Government elicited no response.

"6. Nevertheless, the Portuguese Government, still seeking elucidation with regard to the important problems in question, reiterated its doubts and its request for clarification in its communication of 3 February 1967, and again this year, on 20 March, it addressed a further note to the Security Council in which it once more requested that august body to take a position with regard to the serious questions raised by Portugal.

"7. The Security Council likewise did not deign to reply to those two most recent Portuguese notes.

* Re-issued for technical reasons.

"8. The Council's silence with regard to this matter compels the Portuguese Government to conclude that that organ of the United Nations is either unable to reply to the questions submitted or actually afraid to consider them because to do so would reveal profound and irreconcilable differences between the members of the Council, in particular its permanent members. These aspects of the matter, however, in no way concern the Portuguese Government.

"9. In the circumstances, and since the Security Council is unable or unwilling to make clear its position with regard to the points which have given rise to concern on the part of the Portuguese Government, it is difficult to see how Portugal can be asked to take a position on problems and questions which the Council refuses to consider. Nevertheless, the Portuguese Government is ready to state its position when the Security Council or the Secretariat sees fit to reply to the numerous communications referred to above, which for all necessary purposes are deemed to be reproduced here.

"10. I should be grateful if you would transmit this letter to the Security Council and have it circulated as an official document in the usual way.

"Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) A. FRANCO NCGUEIRA
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal"

(Signed) Duarte VAZ PINTO
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.
of Portugal to the United Nations
