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Speech by Luís Amado, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, on the occasion of the launch of the books "Dalan ba Dame - Paths to Peace" and "Mauberíadas" by Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, on October 17th, 2024, at the headquarters of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP).

Thank you very much.

First, a word of thanks for the invitation, which honours me greatly, precisely because of the relations I have been able to develop over the 25 years, since I met Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão, with Timor-Leste, its people, and its most recent history.

I would like to greet the Prime Minister, the Executive Secretary of the CPLP, the President of Porto Editora, and the ministers accompanying the Prime Minister on this state visit. There are many ambassadors here; in fact, I know many who have played a major role in the Timor process, as well as all those present who have taken an interest in this launch.

Because I had not received the text of the book "Mauberíadas", I naturally concentrated on what is a book of speeches, ten years of speeches, a very long book. And it is a book that, as you can imagine, I skimmed through the speeches, certain that I would not have time to read all the speeches, where there are, in fact, many repetitions, as those of you who have the opportunity to see it will realise.





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But the book is a tribute. From my point of view, it is a homage to the extraordinary work that has been done over the years by the politician and by the poet, precisely because nobody understands the poet without realising the dimension of the politician, and nobody understands the politician without realising the dimension of the poet that resides in the politician.

Poetry, like art in general, is the source of the absolute creation of freedom, and Xanana realised this in the poems he wrote in Cipinang prison. He wrote many of these poems in isolation but always with a strong intuition of his political responsibility. For this reason, the poet he is is inseparable from the guerrilla and later the statesperson he is.

Professor Manuel Ferro's essay on the epic "Mauberíadas" records with particular emphasis this fundamental critical point of the complex personality that is Xanana Gusmão, as an artist and creator, with all the drive of art associated with this exercise of creation, whether in poetry or painting and as a politician with a vision of his country's destiny, transforming it into an extraordinary epic. Professor Manuel Ferro, I noted, after composing this epic "Mauberíadas", found it necessary to take up arms and lead the guerrilla war, the other epic dimension of the hero poet. In fact, he emphasises what I was saying earlier: you cannot understand a politician without understanding the trajectory of his intellectual work and creativity, particularly in poetry.





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But it is above all about the politician, whom I can talk about because I had the opportunity to spend 25 years with Xanana Gusmão, recognising in him the skills of an absolutely unusual politician, even disconcerting for more formal and somewhat daring politicians. And all of us - there are many people here with experience of the Timor process - know what I mean, those moments of disconcerting boldness, provocation, and insinuation, which are always part of the way Xanana approaches political activity and from which this more poetic dimension stands out.

That disruptive drive that the creator, the artist in general, transmits, and which, in political terms, has its own dimension.

So, what I appreciate most about Xanana is this instinctive dimension of the political act. Also, from my long political experience, having never been a politician committed to a political career, things have happened, and I have held various political positions, but I have the clear notion that the political act is in itself an act of rupture; it is an impulsive act, it's an instinctive act. Sometimes, the box of reason gets disturbed in this permanent exercise of looking in the dark for a way out of problems. This is certainly what Xanana experienced in the guerrilla war, in prison, and the resistance. This permanent exercise of trying to grope in the darkness. Breaking out of chains, trying to get out of the box: institutional, formal, even prison, as was the case. But always with intelligence, which is why he is a politician whose career reflects a very constant balance between this creative, disorderly,





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provocative side and a very rational and responsible view of his task as a political actor.

And it is precisely this other quality of intelligence, strategic intelligence—not tactical intelligence nor opportunity intelligence—where so many contemporary politicians lose their way, especially in the voracity of modern political communication and media pressure—always concerned with understanding the distance without losing sight of the contours of what matters and what is truly strategic. Thus, associated with this dimension and a powerful instinctive charge in the exercise of power or the quest to seize power, he possesses this quality of strategic intelligence reflected throughout his work.

In fact, if you read President Ramos-Horta's foreword, it sets out this list of moments in which the strategic vision took precedence over all others, and that is why he states that, in fact, the memory, more than anyone else, is Xanana, the contemporary history of our beloved country. President Ramos-Horta recognises this after listing a series of situations, experiences, and decisions in which this strategic consideration of the long-term vision, the fate of the community, and the imperative of the actions under his responsibility dominated him.

Next, a fundamental characteristic in a political profile, whatever it may be, is will. You do not lead if you want to, but you certainly lead if you want to and can. However, will is an irreplaceable element of political action, and he consistently demonstrated this in challenging, very critical moments





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when he seemed, in fact, momentarily shaken by the will to abandon. Still, resilience prevailed, an essential characteristic of any successful political leadership profile.

Then there are two fundamental qualities, one of which is empathy! No leader can impose himself without empathising with his people. I have seen Xanana at various times during the election campaign in multiple elections. I was able to witness this charge of empathy, which is the other side of charisma. There is a lot of talk about whether a politician is charismatic. A politician is not charismatic if they cannot exert that opposite influence on the voter in a democracy. But this empathy with the people, this experience of the people, and here, this epic dimension always comes to the fore. The epic poet, the epic, the verses, the poems. They are always present in those moments when Xanana falters but must act because political action is imperative for his career, his destiny, as an epic poet of his epic. And that is what gives him authority, and the authority of a politician lies above all in that ability. The ability to accommodate the different categories of political man: instinct, rational common sense, strategic intelligence, will, and resilience. Empathy!

Authority naturally imposes itself; that is how it is, and that's why Xanana's authority can be disputed electorally. However, his place in Timor-Leste's history is absolutely indisputable in my reading and the reading of any attentive observer of the reality of Timor-Leste.





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Now, about the book, I have already said it is a book of homage; it is a collection of very repetitive speeches precisely because the ideas hammer away consistently. And why do they hammer consistently? Because Xanana, ever since he began his 40-year political career, realised that everything had to be done and that all needed to be addressed. We had to build, to build the nation-state, which was the dream and the purpose of his public life.

There was a need to build an identity; without identity, there is no nation, but identity is not enough to build a nation. Much more is needed to build a nation. Once the nation is built, the state must be established, and the nation cannot truly be formed without the state, especially in nations that are so complex, diverse, and pluralistic from an ethnic, tribal, and linguistic point of view, with more than 30 languages. Identity is, therefore, an exercise that involves recognising a nation. However, it also requires the nation's construction and the state's establishment.

This is a book in which you can see the effort, the Herculean effort of a leader who, especially after the great shock of 2006 to 2008, wavered as to whether he was truly capable of carrying out the task he had been given. Anyone who visited Timor-Leste during those years of hardship, from 2006 to 2008, clearly understands what I am talking about because it was, indeed, a time of great collective anguish and, above all, of significant political disquiet for Timor's leaders. There were only a few of them. A good half dozen leaders realised very quickly that the dream would turn into a nightmare if nothing were done to change the order of events, and the





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speeches in this book reflect much of that work. This exercise involves thinking about the state, the role of the state, and the imperative need to quickly create institutions through the necessary reforms. For Timor-Leste to be a viable state, since, at that moment, the perplexity about the viability of the Timor-Leste State was felt not only by the Timorese but also by the international community and even by those who had fought the hardest for the cause of Timor-Leste.

The work on identity runs through almost half of the speeches. The work on the nation is also present in many fundamental acts of Xanana Gusmão's political career.

In fact, Ramos-Horta recognises this generously, in my view, when he acknowledges that all the strategic work that made it possible to bring the situation in Timor to a point of independence is due, above all, to the strategic intelligence and long-term vision of Xanana Gusmão.

The de-radicalisation of the political process, after the troubled years of '75, the de-partisanship of FALINTIL, and how he understood the importance of internationalising the conflict and of international support to create conditions that would make the international community realise that there was an identifiable body of a nation that had its own voice and aspired to the condition of independence.





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Undoubtedly, the recognition of the role of the Catholic Church, after the turbulent time that followed the April 25th in Timor-Leste, concerning questions of faith and the church.

Also, the relationship with Portugal, which Xanana probably understood like no other Timorese leader. In fact, I believe that one day, the story of Xanana Gusmão's importance in deepening the relationship with Portugal will be told. He was not always treated well in Portugal; his image and political standing were not always respected, perhaps because of this disconcerting side that he sometimes exhibits in relations, and he was not always treated in the manner that I think Xanana deserves. The value for Portugal of maintaining a living presence of its memory and history at the other end of the world is due, above all, to Xanana Gusmão. And that is why I believe that justice in treating Xanana's image is a demand we must make of our collective conscience.

One of the reasons why I agreed to present this book was precisely because I feel that bad conscience that we probably have not done everything we should to preserve the memory of Portugal in Asia, and in particular, in the only true land that welcomes us.

I just met Ana, and I told Ana Gomes precisely that. I completely agree with what she said at the time: that the history of Portuguese colonisation was so poor, so distant, and so, incapable of considering Timor for centuries. That somehow justifies the generous view that the Timorese have of their relationship with Portugal and Portuguese colonisation. To a large extent,





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we go to the former Portuguese colonies and do not feel the kindness, warmth, or affection with which the Timorese treat us. I think that is essentially why, as it indicates a flaw in colonisation, which was turned to our advantage, and then came the brutal colonisation of Indonesia in such a short time, which somehow gives us this historical benefit of a gentle colonisation. It was distant, but it remained present: not in the body, not in the institutions, not in the buildings and infrastructure that we did not leave behind, but it remained in the Timorese soul. Xanana contributed a great deal to this in the way he always treated the Portuguese colonial relationship concerning the history of Timor.

The concern to build the state is very much present in a 2013 speech that is perhaps the most consistent in its vision of the future for Timor-Leste and remains relevant today. The speech reflects on the nation-state and develops the essential aspects of what needs to be done, what has to be done, and what still must be done.

Firstly, the question of democracy and political organisation, and if there is one indisputable thing about Xanana Gusmão's political personality, it is that he is genuinely a democrat. Nobody can accuse him of never having complied with democratic rules. He has been a guerrilla fighter, he has been President of the Republic, he has been Prime Minister, he has lost elections, he has returned to the opposition, he has contested elections again, he has been elected again, and he has been Prime Minister again. Throughout his career, he has been concerned with consolidating a political organisation of





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the Timorese state that is compatible with what are today the fundamental presuppositions of a modern democracy, from the point of view of constitutional rules and a state that has a parliamentary political system, as is the case in Timor-Leste.

Then, there was an extreme obsession here; I would even say an extreme obsession with the delimitation of borders. There is no state without a people, a territory, and a border. The issue of borders in Timor has always been very sensitive. As we know, it has historically been very demanding from a political point of view, and it has also given rise to a permanent dispute with the neighbouring states on Timor's borders. Xanana's obsession was leaving the border stabilisation with Indonesia and Australia as his legacy. I believe the maritime border with Australia was finally agreed upon. Still, in the construction of the state, as we are seeing, this idea that globalisation and integration would overcome the political problem of border management was an illusion. That is where we are again; the border, the relationship with the other, is established there on that border, and identity is protected there. Consequently, the border issue is also very present in Xanana's speeches, particularly in the addresses he makes to all the regional organisations, precisely because it is a very topical issue in Southeast Asia and throughout the area where he moves.

Then, there is also the management of natural resources, particularly the fact that Timor-Leste has natural resources that are naturally coveted by other states and powers. This obsession is also present; many speeches in





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different forums and international conferences cover the subject of natural resources, particularly the exploitation of gas and oil. In this context, I believe the issues will be resolved in a few more years, and Xanana can rest concerning state-building in this area.

Central to this set of texts is the theme of development. It is the phase that concerns him the most, of course. There can be no state if the conditions of material life and the expectations of the citizens are not met; therefore, the issue of development is how resources are utilised in such a way as to guarantee conditions of development for future generations. The sustainability of the investments that need to be made is permanently at the centre of his concerns, and you will find Xanana Gusmão's thoughts in several of the speeches made there.

And then there is the context of international relations. When we talk about states, we really must think there are no insulated states. States have their international context, which starts with their neighbours. That is where the problems always begin: the neighbours, the allies. If friendship can exist in international relations, sometimes that happens. There is also the issue of allies and special allies.

This is where I think the differentiation that has been made in Timor-Leste's geopolitical insertion throughout this decade, between what is the alliance within the framework of an economic integration sought for the development process in ASEAN and integration into the cultural, linguistic,





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and identity space of the CPLP, is very present in the spirit and strategic thinking that Xanana enunciates in many of these speeches.

The alliances of the CPLP and ASEAN are different, and this is perfectly clear from the way Xanana frames the issue of integration into ASEAN—an absolute priority for the foundations of development that will sustain the nation-state of Timor-Leste in the future and for relations with this identity universe of historical relations that constitutes the CPLP.

And there is often a great deal of confusion, a lot of confusion in the minds of all of us members of the CPLP, between what an alliance is in the context of economic integration and what an alliance is in the context of strategic integration. Whether cultural, linguistic, historical, or even military, in certain circumstances, they are entirely different matters. I believe that this book, which is, in essence, Xanana Gusmão's book on strategic thinking, leaves us comforted by a very coherent, consistent, and integrative vision of the different elements that need to be taken into account in the work of building the first nation-state of the 21st century, after gaining independence and despite all the setbacks it has encountered.

There is an immense challenge. Anyone who has been to Timor-Leste, as I have done dozens of times, realises the extraordinary work that needs to be done to guarantee the stability of a society that is still so fragile and what needs to be done precisely to ensure the security and stability required in a context that has changed radically.





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I think that Xanana's next speeches will highlight this concern more clearly because we are heading for a new Cold War. Timor and its elite made good use of a historical window that opened after the end of the Cold War, which allowed circumstances to be created so that Timor could become an independent state.

But we are on our way to a new Cold War. We are already in it. And the issue will affect us all, and it will undoubtedly affect Timor in a very demanding regional context, especially from the perspective of the geopolitical interests at stake in that region. We must not forget that the Timor Sea is the Timor Sea; it is the sea where access to the Pacific will always be at stake if there is a conflict that jeopardises the transit points in the Indian Ocean. Therefore, the geopolitical insertion of Timor-Leste in the context we are entering is exceptionally demanding from this perspective. Anyone who has followed the reality of Timor in various configurations is absolutely sure of what they are saying at the moment.

The geopolitical context and its evolution over the next few years must be given considerable attention because the next 20 years will be very demanding from that point of view. Therefore, geostrategic positioning has been managed with intelligence and subtlety in certain circumstances. It will be there again.

If there is one thing the book reveals, it is a remarkable capacity for political and diplomatic interaction with all the states in the region. It is very impressive to look at the book's itinerary and see where Xanana has been





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over the last ten years, the speeches he has made over the last ten years, where he has touched, what wounds he has touched, and what nerve centres he has touched precisely with the sharp sense of responsibility that he has as the leader of Timor.

I slightly ran over time, but thank you very much!

