

*Portugal*



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

9 March 1981

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*Dear Michael,*

I understand that the Duty Clerk asked our Resident Clerk over the weekend about the title and status of Dr Balsemao, the Prime Minister of Portugal.

/ I enclose an updated biographical note on Dr Balsemao.

*Yours ever,*

*Francis Richards*

(F N Richards)  
Private Secretary

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LONDON





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BALSEMAO, DR FRANCISCO DE CASTRO PEREIRA PINTO

Prime Minister of Portugal.

Born 1937. A law graduate from Lisbon Univeristy, where he also studied Political Economy. Editor of the Lisbon evening newspaper, Diário Popular 1966-71. He then founded the liberal weekly Expresso modelled on The Sunday Times. Thanks of Balsemao Expresso soon became, and remains, the foremost quality newspaper in Portugal.

Member of the 'liberal wing' of the ANP (the official party) in the National Assembly 1969-73, in which he was an active campaigner for human rights and abolition of press censorship.

A founder member of the Popular Democratic Party (PPD, later named PSD) after the overthrow of the Caetano regime in April 1974. Elected to the Constituent Assembly, of which he was Vice-President, in April 1975. Member of the PSD National Political Committee 1976. He understood and sympathised with the attitude of the dissidents who opposed Sá Carneiro and eventually left the Party but he himself stuck firmly to Sá Carneiro. In January 1979 he was made spokesman for Foreign Affairs in the PSD. In November 1979, together with Sá Carneiro, Freitas do Amaral and other members of the Democratic Alliance, he visited London for talks with the Prime Minister and Lord Carrington. Elected a deputy for Oporto in the December 1979 elections. Appointed Minister Assistant to the Prime Minister in the Sá Carneiro Government.

Elected President of the PSD and Prime Minister following the death of Sá Carneiro in December 1980. The decision was not regarded favourably by all the constituent parts of the Democratic Alliance - principally the CDS. But he was generally accepted as the man to carry on Sá Carneiro's policies, but in a more moderate and conciliatory way. He had difficulty in selecting his ministerial team; some members of the Sá Carneiro government declined to serve.

Balsemao speaks fluent English, and is well-disposed towards Britian. He has visited Britain often; attended a Wilton Park Conference in 1969.

Wealthy and widely-travelled. As a young man, very much a playboy and womaniser but has 'settled down'. His second wife, Tita, by whom he has two children, is charming and speaks good English.

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