

The New Jersey Committee for the Commemoration of
Aristides de Sousa Mendes

A Forgotten Hero Remembered

After nearly 47 years since his dismissal as the Portuguese Consul-General of Bordeaux, France, the memory of the late Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes do Amaral e Abranches is finally and justly being remembered on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean for the humanitarian heroism he displayed during the Nazi invasion of France in World War II.

Dr. Sousa Mendes was the Portuguese Consul General in Bordeaux between 1938 and 1940. When the Nazi armies invaded France on May 10, 1940, ten of thousands of refugees converged upon Bordeaux seeking an escape. After seeing the plight of the refugees Dr. Sousa Mendes decided to help them, and with the aid of two of his sons proceeded to give transit visas permitting refugees to cross the French border, travel through Spain, and enter Portugal and into safety from the Nazi invaders.

However, the Portuguese government of Antonio Salazar instructed Dr. Sousa Mendes to stop issuing visas to the refugees, particularly those who were Jewish. After considerable soul searching Dr. Sousa Mendes decided to disregard the orders of his government and continued issuing transit visas. In all approximately 30,000 visas were issued, 10,000 of them to Jews.

As a result of his insubordination Dr. Sousa Mendes was called back to Portugal and dismissed from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His retirement and severance benefits were suspended, and with 13 children to care for he soon sank into poverty.

He died on April 3, 1954, penniless, disgraced, and forgotten.

Since then his son, John Abranches, now a United States citizen, has been campaigning to have his father's name fully rehabilitated by today's democratically elected government of Portugal. Recently Portugal has agreed to award Dr. Sousa Mendes with a posthumous national medal of honor.

In the United States several states with large Portuguese-American communities have adopted resolutions honoring the heroic and humanitarian deeds of Dr. Sousa Mendes. Such states include California, Massachusetts, and New York.

Here in New Jersey several individuals and groups within the Jewish and Portuguese-American communities have been sponsoring an effort to have a resolution honoring Dr. Sousa Mendes introduced and passed in the New Jersey State Legislature. Led by Ms. Mariana Abrantes, a Portuguese-American from Harrison, N. J., and a Vice-President of the Bankers Trust Company of New York City, organizations involved in the effort include the New Jersey Chapter of the American Jewish Committee, the Portuguese American Congress of New Jersey, and the Republican Heritage Groups Federation of New Jersey.

A resolution honoring Dr. Sousa Mendes will be introduced on April 23, 1987, to both houses of the New Jersey State Legislature. The Assembly resolution will be introduced by the Assembly Speaker Chuck Hardwick. The Senate resolution is being sponsored by Senators James Hurley of Cape May County and Senator Matthew Feldman of Bergen County. People in favor of the resolution are being asked to write to Speaker Hardwick and Senators Hurley and Feldman thanking them for their sponsorship and to write to their

Assemblymen and Senators at the State House in Trenton urging the passage of the resolution.

NEWS FROM THE PORTUGUESE AMERICAN CONGRESS

and the

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE OF NEW JERSEY

80 Washington Street

Harrison, NJ 07029

Press Release

Press Contact: Gail Sorkow

(201) 379-7844

The New Jersey Commemoration of

Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes

A forgotten Portuguese Hero of World War II

Nearly 47 years after his dismissal as the Portuguese Consul-General of Bordeaux, France, the memory of the late Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes do Amaral e Abranches is finally and justly being remembered on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean for the humanitarian heroism he displayed during the Nazi invasion of France in World War II.

Dr. Sousa Mendes was the Portuguese Consul General in Bordeaux between 1938 and 1940. When the Nazi armies invaded France on May 10, 1940, tens of thousands of refugees converged upon Bordeaux seeking an escape. After seeing the plight of the refugees, Dr. Sousa Mendes decided to help them, and with the aid of his staff and family members, proceeded to give transit visas permitting refugees to cross the French border, travel through Spain, and enter Portugal.

However, the Portuguese government of Antonio Salazar instructed Dr. Sousa Mendes to stop issuing visas to the refugees, particularly those who were Jewish. After considerable soul searching, Dr. Sousa Mendes decided to disregard the orders of his government and continued issuing transit visas. In all approximately 30,000 visas were issued 10,000 of them to Jews.

As a result of his insubordination, Dr. Sousa Mendes was recalled and dismissed from the diplomatic service and not permitted to practice law. His retirement and severance benefits were suspended, and with 13 children to care for he soon exhausted his assets and sank into poverty. He died on April 3, 1954, penniless, disgraced, and forgotten.

Since then his family, including his son, John Abranches, now a United States citizen, has been campaigning to have their father's name fully rehabilitated by today's democratically elected government of Portugal. Recently Portugal has agreed to award Dr. Sousa Mendes with a posthumous national medal of honor.

In the United States, several states with large Portuguese-American communities have adopted resolutions honoring the heroic and humanitarian deeds of Dr. Sousa Mendes. Such states include Massachusetts (on November 6, 1986), New York (on December 16, 1986), and New Jersey (April 8, 1987). Under the sponsorship of Representative Tony Coelho, a Resolution was passed on June 10, 1986.

The organizations involved in the effort include the New Jersey Chapter of the American Jewish Committee, the Portuguese American Congress of New Jersey, and the Republican Heritage Groups Federation of New Jersey. A commemorative luncheon is planned for Thursday,

May 21, 1987 in Newark with two of the late consul's sons, John Paul Abranches and Luis Felipe Mendez as honored guests.

The New Jersey Assembly was introduced by the Assembly Speaker Chuck Hardwick. The Senate resolution is being sponsored by Senators James Hurley of Cape May County and Senator Matthew Feldman of Bergen County.

For tickets and information regarding the luncheon on May 21, 1987, please contact the American Jewish Committee, 303 Millburn Ave., Millburn NJ 07041 attention Gail Sorkow (201) 379-7844. Tickets are \$20 each.

May 15, 1987

Mr. and Mrs. George Swec
892 LaPlaya Court
Manteca, CA 95336

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Swec,

The Portuguese American Congress of New Jersey wishes to invite you to be Guests of Honor at a Memorial Luncheon co-sponsored with the American Jewish Committee of New Jersey, commemorating the heroism of your father, the late Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes do Amaral e Abranches who in his position as the Consul General of Portugal in Bordeaux, France in 1940 saved over 30,000 refugees by issuing them transit visas to Portugal.

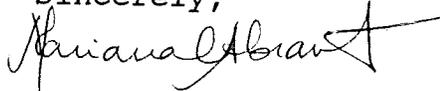
We are grateful to the Sousa Mendes family members whose dedicated campaign over 47 years has enabled us to learn of this courageous man who suffered so much for his humanitarian deeds.

As we gather to pay tribute to Dr. Sousa Mendes, a modern Portuguese hero who was named a Righteous Among the Nations by Israel in 1967, and recently honored by official resolutions in the United States and Portugal, your presence will help to make this an important and historic event.

The Memorial Luncheon is scheduled for
Thursday, May 21, 1987, at 12:00 noon
Portuguese Pavillion Restaurant
99 Monroe Street, Newark, New Jersey

We look forward to seeing you at the Luncheon.

Sincerely,



R.S.V.P.
80 Washington St
Harrison, NJ 07029
(201) 484-9448

May 15, 1987

Mr. Carlos F.F. Mendes
415 So. Union Drive, Apt 207
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Mendes

The Portuguese American Congress of New Jersey wishes to invite you to be Guests of Honor at a Memorial Luncheon co-sponsored with the American Jewish Committee of New Jersey, commemorating the heroism of your father, the late Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes do Amaral e Abranches who in his position as the Consul General of Portugal in Bordeaux, France in 1940 saved over 30,000 refugees by issuing them transit visas to Portugal.

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Sincerely,
Mariana Albrant

R.S.V.P.
80 Washington St
Harrison, NJ 07029
(201) 484-9448

May 15, 1987

Mr. and Mrs. Sebastian Sousa Mendes
27645-A Susan Beth Way
Saugus, CA 91350

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Mendes,

The Portuguese American Congress of New Jersey wishes to invite you to be Guests of Honor at a Memorial Luncheon co-sponsored with the American Jewish Committee of New Jersey, commemorating the heroism of your father, the late Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes do Amaral e Abranches who in his position as the Consul General of Portugal in Bordeaux, France in 1940 saved over 30,000 refugees by issuing them transit visas to Portugal.

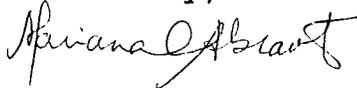
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R.S.V.P.
80 Washington St
Harrison, NJ 07029
(201) 484-9448

May 15, 1987

Mr. and Mrs. Cesar Sousa Mendes
Quinta Alpoem, 2
3530 Mangualde
Beira Alta, Portugal

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Mendes,

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80 Washington St
Harrison, NJ 07029
(201) 484-9448

May 15, 1987

Mr. and Mrs. Philip Mendes
7 Prince Edward Street
Roxboro, Quebec
H8Y 2S9, Canada

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Mendes

The Portuguese American Congress of New Jersey wishes to invite you to be Guests of Honor at a Memorial Luncheon co-sponsored with the American Jewish Committee of New Jersey, commemorating the heroism of your father, the late Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes do Amaral e Abranches who in his position as the Consul General of Portugal in Bordeaux, France in 1940 saved over 30,000 refugees by issuing them transit visas to Portugal.

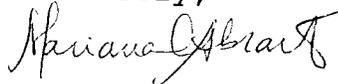
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80 Washington St
Harrison, NJ 07029
(201) 484-9448

May 15, 1987

Mr. and Mrs. John Paul Abranches
7965 Tamarack Drive
Dublin, CA 94568

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Abranches,

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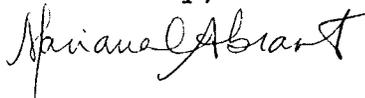
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80 Washington St
Harrison, NJ 07029
(201) 484-9448

May 15, 1987

Mr. and Mrs. Pedro Nuno Sousa Mendes
Casal da Granja de Cima
Varzea de Sintra
2710 Sinta, Portugal

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Sousa Mendes,

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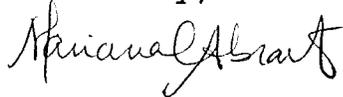
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R.S.V.P.
80 Washington St
Harrison, NJ 07029
(201) 484-9448

May 15, 1987

Hon. Dr. Joao Pereira Bastos
Embassador of Portugal
2125 Kalorama Road
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Sir,

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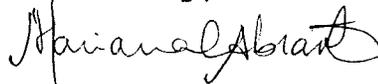
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R.S.V.P.
80 Washington St
Harrison, NJ 07029
(201) 484-9448

May 15, 1987

Hon. Dr. Matos Proenca
Embassador of Portugal
Mission of Portugal to the United Nations
777 Third Avenue, 27Fl
New York, New York 10019

Dear Sir,

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R.S.V.P.
80 Washington St
Harrison, NJ 07029
(201) 484-9448

May 15, 1987

Hon. Dr. Jorge Cardielos
Vice Consul of Portugal
Consulate of Portuga
1180 Raymond Blvd, suite 222
Newark, New Jersey 07102

Dear Sir,

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Dear

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For this courageous action, Dr. Sousa Mendes was dismissed from the diplomatic service and not permitted to practice law. With a family of 13 children to support, he died in poverty in 1954. His nine surviving children have pursued a dedicated campaign to restore their father's good name. In 1967, Sousa Mendes was named a Righteous Among Nations by Israel. In June 10, 1986 the United States House of Representatives passed Resolution sponsored by Congressman Tony Coelho.

Please join in paying tribute to this modern Portuguese hero at a Luncheon co-sponsored by the Portuguese American Congress and the American Jewish Committee of New Jersey, and having as honored guests two of his thirteen children, Philip Mendes of Quebec, and John Paul Abranches of California. Also present will be a number of New Jersey and New York public officials who will present legislative resolutions passed in our two states.

The event is scheduled for
Thursday, May 21, 1987 at 12:00 noon
at the Portuguese Pavillion Restaurant, 99 Monroe St, Newark

For reservations, please contact me or Ms Candie Almeida,
Broad National Bank, 905 Broad Street, Newark, NJ 07102,
(201) 624-2300 or Ms Gail Sorkow (201) 379-7844

Do join us at this important community event.

Sincerely,

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Do join us at this important community event.

Sincerely,



Bankers Trust Company

280 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10015

Mariana C. Abrantes
Vice President
Telephone: 212-850-1768

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 1990, Church Street Station
New York, New York 10008

Newark, New Jersey
10 de Abril de 1987

Prezados Senhores,

A presença de Portugal no mundo tem frequentemente sido superior em relação ao seu pequeno tamanho, graças aos logros individuais e colectivos do povo Português tanto em Portugal como pelo mundo fora. Estas façanhas, conseguidas à custa de muito esforço, coragem e sacrifício, merecem ser devidamente reconhecidas para o maior engrandecimento da herança Lusitana.

Tem por fim esta carta pedir o vosso apoio à campanha de reconhecimento e homenagem ao ex-diplomata DR. ARISTIDES DE SOUSA MENDES DO AMARAL E ABRANCHES quem, como Consul Geral de Portugal em Bordéus, França em 1940 salvou cerca de 30,000 refugiados da invasão Nazi emitindo-lhes vistos de entrada a Portugal, em contra das ordens dos seus superiores.

Em consequencia, Dr. Sousa Mendes foi chamado a Lisboa para prestar contas da sua conducta, e foi despedido do corpo diplomático. Impedido de exercer a sua profissão de advogado, e com uma prol de 13 filhos, em curto tempo se viu financeiramente arruinado. Na pobreza e esquecimento, veio a falecer em 1954, e foi sepultado na sua terra natal, Cabanas de Viriato, Beira Alta. Os seus filhos mantiveram sempre viva a memória do seu heroísmo, e com muita dedicação vão finalmente conseguindo reabilitar o nome de seu pai em Israel, no Canada, nos Estado Unidos, e espera-se, também em Portugal.

Pelo seu belo exemplo de humanitarismo digno de enfileirar ao lado de outros grandes vultos da historia mundial moderna, compete-nos a todos aderir à campanha de homenagem ao Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes, um heroi da terra de Viriato.

Na quinta-feira, dia 21 de maio, 1987, pelas 12:00 (meio-dia) terá lugar um almoço de homenagem no Portuguese Pavillion Restaurant, 99 Monroe Street in Newark, co-patrocinado por o Portuguese American Congress e a American Jewish Committee of New Jersey.

Para reservar lugares para este almoço, por \$20 cada um, favor de contactar Mariana Abrantes (2) ou C. Almeida, 905 Broad Street, Newark, NJ 07102 , (201) 624-2300.

Contamos com a vossa participação nesta homenagem importante.

Atentamente,

cc: John Abranches, Dublin, California
Cesar & Joana Mendes, Mangualde, Beira Alta
Phillip Mendes, Canada

Newark, New Jersey
10 de Abril de 1987

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Atentamente,

cc: John Abranches, Dublin, California
Cesar & Joana Mendes, Mangualde, Beira Alta
Phillip Mendes, Canada

Dear Sirs,

As the Portuguese Consul General of Portugal in Bordeaux, France, between 1938 and 1940, the late Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes is credited with saving 30,000 people, including 10,000 Jews, by issuing them transit visas to Portugal, without the support or permission of his government. For this, Dr. Sousa Mendes was dismissed from the diplomatic service, barred from the practice of law, and died in poverty in 1954. As you read about the courageous actions of Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes in the enclosed documents, we trust you will wish to join in helping to make them widely known and honored.

This is to invite you and your organization to lend your support to this continuing recognition effort, spearheaded by the devoted and decades-long campaign of his surviving children to win justice for Dr. Sousa Mendes.

In New Jersey, we propose to bring together the Portuguese and Jewish communities, and all those interested, in support of the following actions.

- 1) Passage of a Resolution by the New Jersey State Legislature, as has been done in the US Congress and other states, to be presented to Dr. Sousa Mendes's family, probably his son John Abranches who lives in California.
- 2) Creation of an "In Memoriam" scholarship fund with the Portuguese American Scholarship Foundation of New Jersey for those who might wish to honor him in this fashion.

To communicate your endorsement of the passage of the Resolution, please write to:

Hon. Charles Harwick
Speaker of the New Jersey State Assembly
State house Annex
CN 098
Trenton, NJ 08625

Sincerely yours,

March 15, 1987

Hon. Charles Harwick
Speaker of the New Jersey State Assembly
State House Annex
CN 098
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Sir,

I am writing in support of passage of a resolution by the New Jersey State Legislature to commemorate the heroic deeds of the late Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes do Amaral e Abranches.

As the Consul General of Portugal in Bordeaux, France, between 1938 and 1940, the late Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes is credited with saving 30,000 people, including 10,000 Jews, by issuing them transit visas to Portugal, without the support or permission of his government. For this, Dr. Sousa Mendes was dismissed from the diplomatic service, barred from the practice of law, and died in poverty in 1954. As you read about the courageous actions of Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes in the enclosed documents, we trust you will wish to join in helping to make them widely known and and honored.

In paying homage to Dr. Sousa Mendes, we honor not only a man of good conscience, but also all the heroes and survivors of the Holocaust, and the Portuguese-American community in New Jersey.

Please allow me to request that the Resolution be passed on or about April 25th, the Portuguese national holiday which marks the beginning of the new democratic regime.

Sincerely yours,

March 15, 1987

Hon. Charles Harwick
Speaker of the New Jersey State Assembly
State House Annex
CN 098
Trenton, NJ 08625

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Sincerely yours,

February 5, 1987

Dear Sirs,

The few items here enclosed document the extraordinary and heroic work of the late Dr Aristides de Sousa Mendes who as Consul of Portugal in Bordeaux in 1940 is credited with saving 30,000 people, in direct disobedience of orders from his superiors in Lisbon. These achievements are finally receiving widespread recognition as a result of the dedicated campaign of his nine

surviving children to honor their father's memory and restore his good name.

This is to ask you that you join with other organizations in the New York / New Jersey area to pay homage to Dr Sousa Mendes, to coincide with his son John Abranches's visit to our area around April 29, or around June 10.

Dear Sirs,

As the Portuguese Consul General of Portugal in Bordeaux, France, between 1938 and 1940, the late Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes is credited with saving 30,000 people, including 10,000 Jews, by issuing them transit visas to Portugal, without the support or permission of his government. For this, Dr. Sousa Mendes was dismissed from the diplomatic service, barred from the practice of law, and died in poverty in 1954. As you read about the courageous actions of Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes in the enclosed documents, we trust you will wish to join in helping to make them widely known and honored.

This is to invite you and your organization to lend your support to this continuing recognition effort, spearheaded by the devoted and decades-long campaign of his surviving children to win justice for Dr. Sousa Mendes.

In New Jersey, we propose to bring together the Portuguese and Jewish communities, and all those interested, in support of the following actions.

- 1) Passage of a Resolution by the New Jersey State Legislature, as has been done in the US Congress and other states, to be presented to Dr. Sousa Mendes's family, probably his son John Abranches who lives in California.
- 2) Creation of an "In Memoriam" scholarship fund with the Portuguese American Scholarship Foundation of New Jersey for those who might wish to honor him in this fashion.

To communicate your endorsement of the passage of the Resolution, please write to:

Hon. Charles Harwick
Speaker of the New Jersey State Assembly
State house Annex
CN 098
Trenton, NJ 08625

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Sincerely yours,



Bankers Trust Company

280 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10015

Copy

Mariana C. Abrantes
Vice President
Telephone: 212-850-1768

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 1990, Church Street Station
New York, New York 10008

Newark, New Jersey
10 de Abril de 1985

Excelentíssima Senhora Engenheira
Maria de Lurdes Pintasilgo
Lisboa, Portugal

Prezada Engenheira Pintasilgo,

A presença de Portugal no mundo tem frequentemente sido superior em relação ao seu pequeno tamanho, graças aos logros individuais e colectivos do povo Português tanto em Portugal como pelo mundo fora. Estas façanhas, conseguidas à custa de muito esforço, coragem e sacrifício, merecem ser devidamente reconhecidas para o maior engrandecimento da herança Lusitana.

Tem por fim esta carta pedir o seu apoio à campanha de reconhecimento e homenagem ao ex-diplomata DR. ARISTIDES DE SOUSA MENDES DO AMARAL E ABRANCHES quem, como Consul Geral de Portugal em Bordéus, França em 1940 salvou cerca de 30,000 refugiados da invasão Nazi emitindo-lhes vistos de entrada a Portugal, em contra das ordens dos seus superiores.

Em consequência, Dr. Sousa Mendes foi chamado a Lisboa para prestar contas da sua conducta, e foi despedido do corpo diplomático. Impedido de exercer a sua profissão de advogado, e com um prol de 13 filhos, em curto tempo se viu financeiramente arruianado. Na pobreza e esquecimento, veio a falecer em 1954, e foi sepultado na sua terra natal, Cabanas de Viriato, Beira Alta. Os seus filhos espalhados por Portugal, Belgica, Estados Unidos, Canada, e Brasil, mantiveram sempre viva a memória do seu heroísmo, e com muita dedicação vão finalmente conseguindo re-abilitar o nome do seu pai em Israel, no Canada, nos Estado Unidos, e espera-se, também em Portugal.

Pelo seu belo exemplo de humanitarismo digno de enfileirar ao lado de outros grandes vultos da história mundial moderna, compete-nos a todos aderir à campanha de homenagem ao Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes, um herói da terra de Viriato.

Atentamente,

cc: John Abranches, Dublin, California
Cesar & Joana Mendes, Mangualde, Beira Alta
Phillip Mendes, Canada

Dear

The Portuguese American Congress of New Jersey is honored to invite you to join in commemorating the heroism of the late DR. ARISTIDES DE SOUSA MENDES DO AMARAL E ABRANCHES who in his position as the Consul General of Portugal in Bordeaux, France in 1940 saved over 30,000 people by issuing them visas to Portugal, against the instructions of his superiors.

For this courageous action, Dr. Sousa Mendes was dismissed from the diplomatic service and not permitted to practice law. With a family of 13 children to support, he died in poverty in 1954. His nine surviving children have pursued a dedicated campaign to restore their father's good name. In 1967, Sousa Mendes was named a Righteous Among Nations by Israel. In June 10, 1986 the United States House of Representatives passed Resolution sponsored by Congressman Tony Coelho.

Please join in paying tribute to this modern Portuguese hero at a Luncheon co-sponsored by the Portuguese American Congress and the American Jewish Committee of New Jersey, and having as honored guests two of his thirteen children, Philip Mendes of Quebec, and John Paul Abranches of California. Also present will be a number of New Jersey and New York public officials who will present legislative resolutions passed in our two states.

The event is scheduled for
Thursday, May 21, 1987 at 12:00 noon
at the Portuguese Pavillion Restaurant, 99 Monroe St, Newark

For reservations, please contact me or Ms Candie Almeida,
Broad National Bank, 905 Broad Street, Newark, NJ 07102,
(201) 624-2300 or Ms Gail Sorkow, (201) 379-7844

Do join us at this important community event.

Sincerely,

Newark, New Jersey
10 de Abril de 1987

Prezados Senhores,

A presença de Portugal no mundo tem frequentemente sido superior em relação ao seu pequeno tamanho, graças aos logros individuais e colectivos do povo Português tanto em Portugal como pelo mundo fora. Estas façanhas, conseguidas à custa de muito esforço, coragem e sacrifício, merecem ser devidamente reconhecidas para o maior engrandecimento da herança Lusitana.

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Pelo seu belo exemplo de humanitarismo digno de enfileirar ao lado de outros grandes vultos da historia mundial moderna, compete-nos a todos aderir à campanha de homenagem ao Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes, um heroi da terra de Viriato.

Na quinta-feira, dia 21 de maio, 1987, pelas 12:00 (meio-dia) terá lugar um almoço de homenagem no Portuguese Pavillion Restaurant, 99 Monroe Street in Newark, co-patrocinado por o Portuguese American Congress e a American Jewish Committee of New Jersey.

Para reservar lugares para este almoço, por \$20 cada um, favor de contactar Mariana Abrantes (212) 850-1768 ou C. Almeida, 905 Broad Street, Newark, NJ 07102 , (201) 624-2300.

Contamos com a vossa participação nesta homenagem importante.

Atentamente,

cc: John Abranches, Dublin, California
Cesar & Joana Mendes, Mangualde, Beira Alta
Phillip Mendes, Canada

RESOLUTION

Paying special tribute to the late Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes do Amaral e Abranches for his extraordinary acts of mercy and justice as Consul General of Portugal in Bordeaux, France during World War II

As thousands of refugees converged on Bordeaux in 1940, seeking escape from France, Sousa Mendes took the courageous decision to continue issuing visas to Portugal, against the instructions of his superiors. In all, about 30,000 visas were issued and the refugees were able to escape to Portugal.

As a consequence, Sousa Mendes was dismissed from the diplomatic service, and died in poverty in 1954. His family has since persisted in a dedicated campaign for recognition of his heroic deeds, and to petition the Government of Portugal for a review of his case.

The Portuguese American Congress pays special tribute to Dr Sousa Mendes as a hero to Portuguese Americans, and will transmit copies of this resolution to his family and to the Embassy of Portugal in Washington, DC.