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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

March 19, 2007

The Honorable Ana Gomes
Member of the European Parliament
ASP 15G150
Rue Wiertz, 60
Brussels, B-1047, Belgium

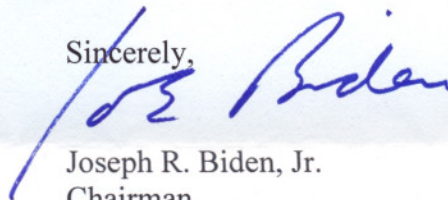
Dear Ms. Gomes:

Thank you very much for your letter. I appreciate your concern regarding the rights of Portuguese workers at the United States Air Force Base on Lajes, and the importance of fully enforcing provisions of the U.S.-Portugal Agreement on Cooperation and Defense Labor Annex.

In response to your letter, I instructed my staff to look into the matter. The State Department has assured me that, while the Lajes agreement does not have the force of U.S. law, the United States Government is nonetheless bound to uphold its provisions as a matter of regulation and believes its stipulations are binding. The Labor Committee of the Bilateral Commission established by the Agreement met recently, and I hope that their discussions were able to address any specific concerns on the part of the base's local employees.

I will continue to monitor the situation and will keep you apprised of any relevant information that comes to the attention of my office.

Sincerely,



Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
Chairman