

NATIONAL DECLARATION - CABO VERDE

Relations between the Cabo Verdean and American nations predate the birth of the new Republic of Free Men on July 5, 1975, when the islands of Cabo Verde also proclaimed their political independence.

Coincidence would have it that this new Republic of Free Men already boasted a large community of its citizens living in the territory of the United States of America, a community that had begun to establish itself since the adventurous age of whaling.

Could it also be a coincidence that today there are more members of the great Cabo Verdean Nation scattered among the various states of the United States of America than in the islands of Cabo Verde themselves out in the middle of the Atlantic?

Whatever the reasons for our proximity and convivial relations may be, their existence has been a fact since the dawn of time. And we are convinced that more important than finding explanations for the phenomenon is continuing to invest in the strengthening of the existing ties and doing all in our power to ensure that, in addition to relations between the two countries, they favor a greater approximation between their respective peoples.

We sincerely believe that openness to the world, the longing for freedom, the intransigent defense of liberties and guarantees and the dream of the universalization of political, social and economic democracy are the elements of the affinity, understanding and union felt between the two nations and their political institutions. And we believe as well that as a function of this, Cabo Verde and the United States of America must forge paths of convergence and complementarity and strive for greater political and cultural exchange and a willingness to participate in the fulfillment of the legitimate aspirations of their respective peoples – in short, openly invest in the enhancement and expansion of relations between the two countries and peoples. And taking into account the fact that bilateral relations between the two sovereign states constitute the result of the priorities and directives guiding their respective foreign policies, it becomes imperative to identify the elements able to aid in the fulfillment of the goal of deepening the existing historical relations.

Normally, a country's foreign policy is determined by the architecture of its interests, although none too seldom bilateral relations end up benefiting from sentimental factors, historical ties and affinities that do not necessarily correspond to the basic rule of "national interest." And the intensification of

bilateral relations between Cabo Verde and the United States of America may be the result both of the interaction between the priorities of both sides' foreign policy and of the influence of the sentimental factors, historical ties and affinities that bind them.

Even so, it must be kept in mind that one of these two countries is no less than one of the greatest powers of our time, while the other is a tiny African island nation, one that nevertheless possesses a remarkable history and is eager to cooperate toward more global processes for the construction of world peace, freedom, development and progress.

Cabo Verde's usefulness has been assessed through its privileged geographic position and its positioning in the field of democracy. It already serves as a bridge between Europe and West Africa and is working to equip its ports and airports to serve as a hub for intermediate access to coastal West Africa. It is important, at this point in history, to lend potential to this usefulness in its relations with the United States of America, with the assumption that its position in the Middle Atlantic, at the intersection of the routes that connect Europe, Africa and the Americas, can be of vital importance to some of the United States of America's strategies.

We also believe that history, friendships between individuals and families, the role of the generations-old Cabo Verdean community in the United States and the natural affinities in relation to a country that may be considered one of the examples of democracy and good governance in Africa can have a positive influence on the enhancement of relations between the United States of America and Cabo Verde. Our shared history, the fellowship with our communities residing in US territory, our clear option for the installation and continuous refinement of the democratic rule of law and our willingness to participate in projects that help move humanity forward can serve as important ingredients in the process of the deepening of relations between the two countries.

In addition to all of this, there exists a series of phenomena and situations involving Cabo Verde that put the security of our geographic region in check (of which the list below is but a small sample), and for the resolution of which the United States of America can play a predominant role. These phenomena and situations constitute reasons for us to become ever-stauncher defenders of a more robust partnership between Cabo Verde and the United States of America, and include:

1. - The fact that the use of our sub-region of Africa as a platform for the trafficking of drugs along the South America-Africa-Europe corridor embodies a grave threat to world and collective security, allied with the fact that Cabo Verde is not in a position to deal with this and other organized crime-related phenomena (piracy, terrorism, illegal emigration, the pillaging of marine resources and the dumping of toxic waste in the sea, among many others) alone;
2. - The fact that the United States of America gives priority to relations with countries that pursue economic development, which goes along with Cabo Verde's efforts toward inclusive development able to generate wealth and finance the improvement in quality of life for the people of the islands;
3. - The fact that US diplomacy with a focus on economic merits always features support for the development of local economic forces, including relatively inactive sectors, in order to create space and opportunities for Americans to be able to invest, which converges with Cabo Verde's expressed desire to engage in firm partnerships to this end;
4. - The fact that there is a much room to explore in terms of the connections between the two countries in sectors such as education and culture, opening the way for greater cultural exchange involving cultural agents from the United States of America, from our émigré communities and from Cabo Verde itself;
5. - The fact that there is a veritable force, embodied by professionals from the Cabo Verdean diaspora living and working in the United States of America, with the capacity to act as a catalyst in relations with the governments of the various host states;
6. - The fact that relations already exist with AFRICOM (The United States Africa Command, responsible for military operations and military relations with 53 African countries) that can be taken greater advantage of, keeping in mind the fact that Cabo Verde – and its Exclusive Economic Zone – can be transformed into a buffer zone with regards to drug and human trafficking, given its location at the crossroads linking Africa, Europe and South America.

In witness of all of this, we hereby DECLARE our willingness to strengthen bilateral relations with the United States of America and, in a multilateral framework, with all of the peoples and countries of the world that are lovers of peace, freedom, progress and the well-being of humanity.

City of Praia, July 3, 2014.

JORGE CARLOS DE ALMEIDA FONSECA

President of the Republic of Cabo Verde