



**41st UNITED STATES - PORTUGAL
STANDING BILATERAL COMMISSION
September 11, 2019, Washington D.C.**

1. The United States - Portugal Standing Bilateral Commission (SBC) held its 41st session on September 11, 2019, in Washington, D.C., to discuss developments in the bilateral relationship and to explore opportunities to renew and further strengthen the capacity of this longstanding Transatlantic partnership to address critical matters of mutual concern in the international community. The group observed a moment of silence to remember the victims of terrorism.

2. The SBC highlighted the partnership between the United States and Portugal, underscoring the shared norms and values that underpin the special ties between our countries and citizens. Highlighting the importance of this relationship, the SBC noted the visits of many high-level officials from the United States to Portugal since the previous SBC meeting; including those of Under Secretary of State for Management Brian Bulatao, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Tibor Nagy, Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs Carl Risch, Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai, Special Representative for Venezuela Elliott Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research Ellen McCarthy, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense Kathryn Wheelbarger, and several senior military commanders. The SBC noted the June 2019 meeting of Portuguese Minister of National Defense João Gomes Cravinho with the then Acting Secretary of Defense of the United States in Washington. The SBC lauded the positive contribution to bilateral trade provided by events such as the U.S. investment forum in Porto organized in conjunction with local trade associations that connected representatives from U.S. states and local businesses. The SBC recognized the importance of increased cultural exchanges between the two countries and welcomed the efforts of the United States as the Country of Honor in the 2019 edition of the Terras Sem Sombra festival.

3. The SBC lauded the close security and defense cooperation between the two countries on areas of national and global concern. An array of government experts on both sides led fruitful discussions about our shared national, regional, and global security concerns; U.S and Portuguese contributions to multinational, UN, and NATO operations; emerging cyber and hybrid security threats; energy security; and other current global challenges.
4. On energy security, the United States highlighted the strategic nature of the Port of Sines as a recipient of U.S. liquefied natural gas (LNG), as well as the interest of the United States in seeing U.S. investment in the planned Vasco da Gama container terminal. Portugal emphasized energy diversification as a priority for Europe and welcomed the U.S. interest in strengthening cooperation in the field of LNG and in the future Vasco da Gama container terminal.
5. The United States and Portugal highly value the Transatlantic partnership and reiterated the vital role of NATO and the importance of all NATO Allies fulfilling their commitments under the Wales Defense Investment Pledge to invest at least two percent of GDP in defense and twenty percent of defense spending on capability procurement. Portugal updated the SBC on its national plan to increase defense spending and meet the Wales Pledge by 2024.
6. The United States emphasized its strong commitment to cooperation with the Azores. This September marks six years of operation and collaboration at the Atmospheric Radiation Measurement (ARM) climate research facility on Graciosa Island. A National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) research mission visited the Capelinhos volcano site in July, and an economic and agricultural mission visited Ponta Delgada in April, among other outreach. Portugal expressed its desire for enhanced involvement by the United States in the development of initiatives in the area of tourism, external investment in the Region, agricultural exports, space, and the Terceira Tech Island project, among others.
7. The Technical and Labor Committees reported on their most recent discussions and their respective activities to resolve issues of mutual concern at Lajes Air Field.
8. The SBC received a briefing on the environmental issues related to the U.S. presence at Lajes Air Field, with a specific focus on Site 3001. Both sides committed to explore possibilities for prompt and effective action

towards the resolution of the environmental situation at sites 3001 and 5001. Portugal also recalled the situation at the other sites and welcomed, in this regard, the constructive discussion held at the 57th meeting of the Technical Committee. The SBC supported the continued exchange of information and encouraged full transparency and information to the public about these issues.

9. Portugal and the United States stressed the strategic importance of Lajes Air Base to global security. The SBC recalled the substantial progress achieved over the last years in all areas related to Lajes and reiterated its commitment to continue consultations in a forward-looking and results-oriented manner. With this spirit in mind, both sides should consider ways of making further progress on the remaining issues as soon as possible.
10. The SBC discussed several issues of mutual concern in the global political arena, including increasing coordination between the United States and Portugal on issues in Africa and leveraging Portugal's ties with Lusophone Africa. The SBC welcomed the August 6 signing of the Peace and National Reconciliation Agreement in Mozambique and the economic and political reforms being undertaken by President João Lourenço in Angola.
11. The SBC underscored the importance of a free, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent, predictable, and stable trade and investment environment, and of pushing back against unfair practices, including forced intellectual property (IP) transfer and theft, as well as addressing major global economic challenges in order to allow companies to operate on a level playing field. The SBC underscored the importance of vigilance concerning investments in critical infrastructure by state-owned companies. The United States and Portugal stressed the importance of protecting sensitive technology and intellectual property, noted that fifth-generation wireless communications networks (5G) are vital to long-term prosperity and national security, and discussed the importance of ensuring a secure and vibrant 5G environment.
12. Finally, the SBC discussed the suffering of the Venezuelan people and welcomed the commitment by the United States and Portugal to continue working together to help Venezuela achieve democracy, economic stability, and an end to the current crisis. The United States and Portugal reiterated their aligned positions on the legitimacy of the National Assembly and Interim President Juan Guaidó, against the Maduro regime's human rights abuses and interference by foreign powers seeking

to maintain that regime, and the imperative for international humanitarian aid to be unencumbered by political interference so that it can reach Venezuelans in need.

13. David Kless, Executive Director for Logistics Operation at the Defense Logistics Agency, and Alberto Coelho, the Director-General of National Defense Resources, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning reciprocal cataloging services. This MOU improves U.S.-Portuguese codification services and strengthens bilateral logistics interoperability.

14. The SBC decided to hold a next meeting in Portugal in December.