

Wellcome address by António Neto da Silva - Host

Dear Chair, co-Host, Speakers and Participants

It is a privilege hosting this 2020 George Washington Memorial Debate in such difficult times for us and for Humanity. This current year we are unable to have a presential session but the fact that we are here linked, working together, translates two main important, decisive and stimulating realities:

1 – First, Resilience. The Estoril Political Forum represents, under the strong leadership of Professor João Carlos Espada, the indestructible will of searching for solutions, particularly in periods where challenges are paramount.

2 – Second, Technology. The accelerated development and use of technologies like this one we are using now is allowing us solving the challenges of our times. Actually, the discovery and implementation of technologies is a *sine qua non* condition to allow humans to deal with the sustainability of our planet so that the generations of those who are alive and the generations to come will be able to satisfy their needs with quality.

Now, on the theme of our debate.

Being the United States of America the strongest pillar of the Western Values, without which Democracy will be in great danger, the evolution of the United States plays a crucial role for the future of our Civilization. And for those that carefully follow the recent, surprising and worrying political evolution in the USA, the theme we are going to debate, “America at a Crossroads – What Path Forward?” is of the highest importance for the future of all of us and of all our beloved ones.

Be welcomed.

I now ask the co-Host, Susan Shell, to address you.