

Estoril Political Forum 2021
29th International Annual Meeting in Political Studies

**“On the 80th Anniversary of the Atlantic Charter:
Structuring a New Alliance of Democracies”**

Estoril Palace Hotel, 18-20 October 2021

Opening Address João Carlos Espada

**Senhora Reitora da Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Professora Isabel Capelo Gil,
Senhor Presidente da Câmara Municipal de Cascais, Dr. Carlos Carreiras,
Senhora Directora do Estoril Political Forum, Dra. Rita Seabra Brito,
Senhores Embaixadores, Distintos Convidados, Senhoras e Senhores, Caros Amigos,**

Gostaria de começar por agradecer a presença de todos nesta 29ª edição do Estoril Political Forum. Um agradecimento muito especial e muito enfático é devido a S.Exa. o Presidente da República pela sua tão amável, tocante e inspiradora mensagem — bem como à Senhora Reitora, pela sua muito amável presença e pelas suas tão amáveis palavras, e ainda ao Senhor Presidente da Câmara de Cascais pelas sua tão amável mensagem.

Pedia a vossa compreensão para usar agora a língua inglesa, de forma a comunicar directamente com os nossos convidados estrangeiros.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the 29th International Annual Meeting in Political Studies, now also called the “Estoril Political Forum.” We are delighted to let you know that you are participating at Portugal’s largest annual meeting in Political Studies – and, yes, indeed, almost twenty-nine years have now passed since we had our first meeting, in the Arrábida Convent, in October 1993. We were then no more than 20 participants... I am told that we now have more than 600 in-person registered participants, not to mention the several-hundred on-line participants.

I am also delighted to let you know that we are now starting the celebration of the 25th anniversary of our Institute for Political Studies, which was launched in the academic year of 1996/1997. A full celebration is being prepared for the next Estoril Political Forum — the 30th — hopefully in June 2022. In the meantime, we expect to be able to circulate a preliminary version of our booklet about the 25th anniversary still during our present meeting.

And the title of our meeting this year — ‘On the 80th Anniversary of the Atlantic Charter: Structuring a New Alliance of Democracies’ — will surely not surprise the

friends of the Estoril Political Forum. As President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa has so kindly underlined in his very touching Opening Message, if there has been a defining permanent feature of our meetings since 1993, this has certainly been our strong commitment to liberal democracy, the rule of law, free-trade and a market economy — the common ground of the Atlantic Charter of 1941, as well as of NATO and of the EU. This common ground, incidentally, is also one of the distinctive features of the hotel where we are. The Estoril Palace Hotel was the hotel of the Anglo-American allies during the second world war. It was also, incidentally, the birthplace of Ian Fleming's James Bond.

This common ground is of course epitomised by the patron of our Estoril Political Forum since the very beginning, 29 years ago: Winston Churchill — as President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa has also very kindly emphasised.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Precisely because we share this common ground of liberal democracy that Winston Churchill epitomised in the 20th century, precisely because of this common ground, we are happy and delighted to have always had with us speakers and participants with different political dispositions: we have Conservatives, Christian-Democrats, Liberals, Libertarians, Social-democrats and Democratic Socialists; and even on the very crucial topic of the European Union, we have Federalists and Anti-Federalists, Europhiles and Eurosceptics, "Remainers" and "Brexiters".

We have never asked for conformity of views in our previous 28 International Meetings in Political Studies and we are certainly not asking for conformity in this 29th meeting either. On the contrary, we have always encouraged critical controversy between rival views — provided they share the common ground of defending the Free World.

But we have always requested a gentle respect for general rules of good conduct. This is what we teach our students every single day. Precisely because we don't like to do as we are told by central powers, precisely because of this allergy of ours against central commands, we are seriously committed to abiding by general and impersonal rules of good conduct, as opposed to arbitrary specific commands from above.

One of these rules, by the way, is punctuality. We start on time, we end on time. And we like to call these general rules, rules of gentlemanship. These are very old-fashioned rules that were not centrally designed, they have gradually evolved. And precisely because they were not centrally designed by a central power, they are far apart from the unfortunate tribal habits that now tend to dominate many universities and many television channels, as well as the so-called social media (of the latter, as I have said in several previous meetings, I am glad I know nothing directly, only having been told about them by very kind and helpful friends).

Some people may well ask the post-modern question of ‘how do you define gentlemanship?’. And, as I have said in several previous meetings in Estoril, I am glad to respond with Karl Popper’s definition, which he repeatedly taught me, more than 30 years ago:

‘Gentlemen do not take themselves too seriously, but are prepared to take their duties very seriously, especially when most around them talk only about their rights’.

In the good old days, people used to call this ‘Civility’. And ‘Civility’ was of course a general disposition that applied to women as well as men — who were then called, if and only if they behaved properly, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Ladies and Gentlemen, [By the way],

I am delighted to let you know that we have made available to all participants of this Estoril Political Forum a copy of the memorable Atlantic Charter, signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill on August 14, 1941, when they meet at sea in Placentia Bay, Newfoundland. We will certainly be discussing the significance of this Atlantic Charter — especially, I am sure, its present-day significance — throughout our Estoril Political Forum. For the time being, I just would like to recall how Churchill described it in the 3rd of his six-volume book on *The Second World War* — this 3rd volume, incidentally, being titled *The Grand Alliance*:

“The profound and far-reaching importance of this Joint Declaration was apparent. The fact alone of the United States, still technically neutral, joining with a belligerent Power [Britain] in making such a declaration was astonishing. The inclusion in it of a reference to ‘the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny’ amounted to a challenge which in ordinary times would have implied war-like action. Finally, not the least striking feature was the realism of the last paragraph, where there was a bold and plain intimation that after the war the United States would join us in policing the world until the establishment of a better order”. [WSC, *The Second World War*, 1950, Vol. III, *The Grand Alliance*, Chapter 24: “The Atlantic Charter”, (p. 356, Folio Society edition, 2000)].

The Atlantic Charter was indeed a watershed moment in the Second World War — it was a tremendous commitment to Liberal Democracy in a time when tyranny seemed to be unbeatable. A New Atlantic Charter, incidentally, was recently signed by President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Boris Johnson, also by the sea, at the G7 Summit in Cornwall, Britain, on 10 June this year. We are also making available the text of this New Atlantic Charter and very much looking forward to your insights on the significance of this new Anglo-American joint declaration — in the context of the new global challenges to Liberal Democracy.

I am also delighted to recall that we are also making available to our guests another famous speech in defence of liberal democracy, when liberal democracy again seemed gloomed (even though, thank God, not as much and in 1941). I am referring to President Ronald Reagan's speech of 1982 at the British House of Commons, when he famously announced his commitment to "the global campaign for democracy".

That speech led to the creation of the American National Endowment for Democracy, in late 1983. We have the privilege and pleasure of having with us the Founding President of NED, our good friend Carl Gershman, who will recall that speech tomorrow, at the George Washington Memorial Dinner, together with Marc Plattner, Founding Editor of the *Journal of Democracy*, who gives us the privilege and pleasure of being the Chairman of the International Advisory Board of our Institute for Political Studies.

Both of them, incidentally, will participate at our very next panel —"On the 80th Anniversary of the Atlantic Charter: Structuring a New Alliance of Democracies" — together with the Director of our Institute's European Studies Centre, José Manuel Barroso, and the director for Spain and Portugal of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Wilhelm Hofmeister.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hope you will enjoy our meeting. It is now my pleasure and privilege to give the floor to the very distinguished Director of our Estoril Political Forum, Rita Seabra Brito.

Thank you.