

Professor António Rebelo de Sousa - Speech 26/06/2023

First of all, I would like to address myself to Her Excellency the US Ambassador, Mrs. Randi Levine: It is a great honour to have you with us in this important event.

I would also like to present my compliments to all of those who have participated in the organization of this event, namely the Catholic University of Lisbon and the Institute of Political Studies and to my friend João Carlos Espada, as well as Mr. William Kristol and my friend António Neto da Silva.

It is my pleasure and honour to attend the George Washington Memorial Dinner, that takes place within the scope of the Estoril Political Forum, on behalf of the Benjamin Franklin Institute.

The Benjamin Franklin Institute seeks to promote the values that inspired the political intervention of the US Founding Fathers, in particular the ideals proclaimed in the US Declaration of Independence and in its Constitution.

It is this way that we fight for the ideal that "all men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, among these the values of Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness".

We intend to intensify relations of friendship and cooperation with the USA, as well as with the Portuguese Speaking Countries, always seeking to support these values. It is important to rebuild and broaden the democratic consensus, particularly when we live in a general context characterised by a certain return to conventional war, based on a growing relevance of "territoriality" and, therefore, on the affirmation of a power, if not "imperial", at least "territorial".

At a time when the predominance of the "affirmation of the values of democracy and freedom and the primacy of International Law" were already being considered, a return to the medieval concept of the primacy of force represents a regression of many years, which must not be compromised by those who fight for the principles of democratic legitimacy in the exercise of power.

Therefore, it makes no sense to place the aggressor and the victim, the invader and the invaded, the usurper and the usurped on equal terms.

The unconditional nature of the values that drive us establishes limits for negotiation with those who only guide their practical action by assessing the correlation of forces on the ground, with clear disregard for principles and values. What has been happening in Ukraine is an important reminder to the Member States of the Atlantic Alliance to respect the commitments undertaken in terms of allocating financial resources to the Defence effort in the near future.

We can not have doubts about our democratic principles, about the importance of rebuilding a democratic consensus in the different Continents, from North America to the Eastern Europe, from India to South Korea, Japan, Australia and Taiwan, from Latin America Countries to the African Continent, knowing that this is not an easy task but that it is a main goal that we must try to achieve.

Finally, the USA has been a good example to the other democratic countries since the time of the Founding Fathers and we hope that the American political class will continue, at least in clear majority terms, to give an example of respect for its own democratic institutions and for its allied Democratic Europe, so that we may continue to be inspired by this example of Freedom and Democracy that the USA has been for the Free World.