

Isabel Capelo Gil

## Estoril Political Forum 2021

Senhor Diretor do IEP,  
Dr. Gonçalo Venâncio, em representação do Presidente da Câmara de Cascais  
Caros palestrantes, Srs Professores, distintos convidados  
Caros estudantes do IEP

É com particular alegria que hoje, 17 meses após um dos eventos mais inesperados do nosso tempo, vejo esta sala do Hotel Estoril Palace cheia de participantes neste importante Forum Global, que o Instituto de Estudos Políticos da Universidade Católica Portuguesa vem organizando há 3 décadas. Aqui sente-se de forma real e perceptível a energia que antecede os grandes debates. Porque na verdade, a universidade, é isso mesmo, um santuário do debate livre e da perspetiva plural, que nas condições de hoje, antecipa o amanhã, pensando estrategicamente o desenvolvimento da sociedade e capacitando os profissionais do futuro. É por isso relevante que após a suspensão do tempo, se relance o amanhã e que este projeto se faça de forma comparada, porque nenhuma nação existe isolada, nem mesmo as insulares. E que se faça também de perspetivas distintas.

O Instituto de Estudos Políticos da Universidade Católica Portuguesa afirmou-se de forma sustentada como *honest broker* do pensamento democrático em Portugal, lançando o debate e formando cidadãos capazes de pensar estratégica e responsabilmente o futuro. Estratégia e responsabilidade são duas palavras cruciais nesta equação. São elas, na verdade, que orientam a formação que é dada na UCP. E são elas também a exigir as alianças que perante os perigos para o exercício da democracia no tempo presente serão determinantes para a subsistência daquele que é o pior dos regimes à exceção de todos os outros.

Dear participants of the Estoril Political Forum, distinguished guests,

I am delighted to welcome you once again to the Estoril Political Forum and to this extraordinary venue in Estoril. To welcome you in-presence, that is. Because if we think where we are, then certainly the inspirational place where this high level event of Católica's Institute of Political Studies takes place, The Estoril Palace Hotel, a harbinger of defining events in 20<sup>th</sup> (and 21<sup>st</sup>) century politics, cannot be simply substituted by a remote streaming event. And as this year's Forum topic is 'Structuring a new alliance of democracies' on occasion of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Atlantic Charter, it is important to be inspired by the larger alliance setting and think as well

and practice the smaller alliances of academic exchange, using this event to widen and enrich the eclectic networks that are crucial to the development of knowledge, and to the practice of politics. And alliances allow us as well to consider, project and shape a more perfect future, especially in the face of adversity. NATO, the European Union rose out of the rubble of conflict and dissent and they shall always be incomplete, because that is the very nature of democratic alliances.

American philosopher Martha Nussbaum famously claimed that in order to thrive, democracies need to cater to a strong economy and a flourishing business culture armed by a robust military establishment, but that it is also required for democracy to live on, to cultivate the imagination. It is, she argues, the ability to imagine - that comes forward in art, literature, film, the performance arts - that keeps democracies alive and awake. This imaginative capability prompts the exercise of critical thinking and reflection which is crucial to allow democracies to deal responsibly with the many problems of our world. I shall end my brief reflections by inviting you to consider precisely the work of the imagination in building ever more perfect futures. (Spoiler alert ahead)

Yesterday, I watched - with a sign of dismay I may add - the final James Bond movie *007 No Time to Die*. The 25<sup>th</sup> film of the Bond saga, *No Time to Die* is, as all other Bond movies before, a comment on our times. The plot is as always framed by the sense of imminent threat to the world, saved in a last ditch effort by the efficient though unorthodox actions of the MI6 agent James Bond. The recurring storyline ends with the demise of the villain, and his/her network - Spectre - and the reinstating of order. The viewer is reassured that in the end Bond, and hence the MI6, will prevail, meaning that democracy and the rule of law shall always succeed over authoritarianism and repression. Well, that is, till now. If anything, Bond has become more humane in the last films of the saga and in *No Time to Die*, in order to save his most cherished secret (a daughter), he is hopelessly poisoned by the villain - Safin - in such a way that though the poison will not harm him, it will kill anyone he touches. With no future in sight - that is a future based on human interaction - he self sacrifices to save humanity. Bond dies! Surely there'll be another 007, but not Bond. And why does Hollywood kill Bond? Well, maybe because our times have no need for an unorthodox dapper hero, that dresses up in a tuxedo hobnobbing with glamorous lady agents while he proceeds to kill evildoers in style. A hero that despises animals - remember the villain Blofeld's cat - drinks on duty, etc. Perhaps Bond's death is testament to an era that is undergoing transformation and signals a watershed moment. It imagines, in fact, a point of transition for democratic Western societies. The saga too adapts to the changing needs of society. Viewers no longer look for lone heroes, but require robust and long-lasting solutions for a very fragile world. And this is arguably what democracy is all about, a regime that listens to

different voices, that favors equality before the law and liberty of choice, seeking to sustain a decent life across the many divisions that any society entails and allowing its constituents to imagine a better future for all. My hope is that in our different functions, we shall all do our bit and that this Forum continues to shine as a beacon of hope for ever more perfect coalitions of the willing.