

Good morning.

It's great to be here and to see so many familiar faces.

Thank you, Mr. Chaib, once again for your generous hospitality. And thank you, Ms. Carol Blake, for all you do for the American Corner in Algiers. Mr. Ambassador, members of the American Embassy staff, thank you for coming. And a special thanks to Suellen for all of her work to contribute to the success of this day.

Most of all, I want to thank the members of the American Corner in Algiers and the Information Resource Center at the American Embassy first and foremost for your indefatigable – there's a good new word for you – for your indefatigable participation and enthusiasm in the two American Spaces.

Thank you for inviting me to speak today as we commemorate Algerian American Day.

I want to start with you, the members. There has been a real shift this past year that I'm particularly proud of. You, the members, are the driving force of the activities at both the American Corner and the IRC. You are coming up with ideas, and then you're stepping up and rather than asking us to make them happen, you – YOU! Are leading them. I love this spirit of volunteerism and leadership and engagement and I love your enthusiasm for learning English and learning about the United States.

In just the past few months, you have started and are leading a drama club – you're writing the screenplay, and casting roles from among the members. I can't wait to see the finished production. There's a new History Club and an "English through Music" club where you learn English by singing the same song over, and over, and over again! There are book clubs and poetry clubs and music clubs at both the IRC and the American Corner. You started an evening Skype group to speak English with each other because the IRC and the Corner aren't open late in the evening. You asked to have separate beginner's English classes and

conversation groups. When we told you that we didn't have the staff members to lead such a class, several of you – who already speak English at an advanced level – stepped forward to teach these weekly classes on a voluntary basis. You are giving of yourselves, and I find this incredibly inspiring.

I'm also very proud of the new volunteer club that you all started, under the very able and inspiring guidance of our English Language Fellow, Delia Dunlap. Delia is a great example, to me, of what encapsulates the American Spirit – she is incredibly energetic and very enterprising. She has great ideas, and she makes them happen, inspiring others to get on board. And she cares deeply about the welfare of others. I know that you all visited a hospital a few weeks ago and have plans to go visit a retirement home as well.

I bring all of this up, first, because I'm really proud of the work you're doing – I'm proud of the work and the activities at all of our American Corners – here, in Algiers, and also in Constantine, Ouargla, and Oran.

The purpose of American Spaces around the world is to help build bridges of understanding. You come to the IRC and the Corner to learn about the United States, to learn to speak English, to celebrate American culture. But we learn from you too. We learn through your involvement about your lives, your history, your hopes, and your dreams.

At the Corner and at the IRC, every day is Algerian-American Day.

In a larger sense, the possibility of these American spaces and our friendship and the very fact that we can have an Algerian-American Day is due to our history.

Many naturally point to the Treaty of Amity and Peace signed in 1795 that originally brought our countries together. And I know Algerians everywhere honor President John F. Kennedy for his early support of the Algerian people. On July 2, 1957, as Senator, before he was President, he called on France to recognize Algeria's independence. Almost exactly

seven years later to the day, on July 3, 1962, as President of the United States, John F. Kennedy recognized Algeria as an independent nation.

He gave a televised speech on July 5. I'm going to read nearly the whole thing – it's just over 1 minute long, but his words ring as true today as they did 52 years ago. They honor our common historical struggle for independence, and they point to our future partnership.

This moment of national independence for the people of Algeria, the creation of a new state, represents the devoted and courageous work of the Algerian people and their leaders stretching over many years. I congratulate them. I congratulate them as President of the United States, and I congratulate them on behalf of the American people.

We too fought for our own independence also and it cost us many years of bloodshed and tears and work and perseverance. But we finally obtained our independence as you have yours. And we have maintained it, as you will yours.

It is a particular source of satisfaction to me to express these words of greeting to my friends in Algeria because I recall speaking some years ago in the Senate of the United States on behalf of independence for Algeria.

And now that great goal has been achieved.

We wish you every success in the future, and I want to assure you of our wholehearted desire to work in cooperation with you and your leaders on behalf of peace and prosperity and the progress of your people and mine and the security of all mankind.

Fifty-two years later, that commitment still stands. The United States continues to wish the people of Algeria every success, and we want to work in cooperation with you and your leaders on behalf of peace and prosperity and progress and security.

We at the United States Embassy work to fulfill this commitment every day, in the work we do here. We seek to build bridges between our two governments and between our two peoples.

This commitment was underscored just a few short weeks ago when Secretary Kerry was here in Algiers. He and Foreign Minister Lamamra agreed to a whole host of agreements. You can read them all in the Joint Communique that you can find on our website. There are too many to list here. Many of them are related to our security and economic cooperation, which are absolutely critical. For you, gathered here, I want to highlight a couple of commitments that I think you will be particularly interested in:

- We agreed to share experience and expertise in education, including higher education, science and technology.
- The United States expressed its gratitude for the Government of Algeria's important contribution to the J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative. You'll be hearing more about this exciting opportunity in the near future.
- We agreed to develop a joint English language strategy.
- And we agreed to open an International American School in Algiers in 2015.

So at the very highest levels, our governments are committed to partnership and cooperation. And at our level, the people to people level, we are committed to you. We value your interest in our programs, we are inspired by your enthusiastic engagement, and we treasure our friendship.

Thank you again, and Happy Algerian-American Day!