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From the Ambassador's Desk | [A Bi-Monthly Update from the U.S. Embassy in Lisbon](#)



**MESSAGE FROM AMBASSADOR KATZ**

**IN THIS ISSUE**

On July 4th, Americans all over the world celebrate Independence Day. I would like to wish my fellow Americans a Happy Fourth of July and thank our Portuguese friends for their support and hospitality, well wishes, and kindness throughout the year! I hope that you'll have a chance to read some thoughts that I offered during our official Independence Day ceremony. ([4th of July speech](#)).



In this second version of our bi-monthly newsletter I would like to call your attention to three topics that we have been thinking a lot about lately – the Arab Spring, the way forward in Afghanistan and the U.S. commitment to protecting personal data. You'll also have a chance to read about what we have been doing at the Embassy and an exciting initiative for English teachers. As always, we welcome your [comments](#).

- [The Arab Spring](#)
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**THE ARAB SPRING**

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, recognizing the irreversible changes that have taken place in the Middle East and North Africa in recent months, President Obama announced a new approach to promoting democratic reform, economic development, and peace and security across the region. The President reaffirmed his commitment to a set of core principles that have guided the U.S. response to events in the Middle East and North Africa for the past six months. First, the United States opposes the use of violence and repression against the people of the region. Second, we support a set of universal rights including free speech; the freedom of peaceful assembly and association; equality for men and women under the rule of law; the right to practice your religion without fear of violence or discrimination; and the right to choose your own leaders through democratic elections. Third, we support political and economic change in the Middle East and North Africa that can meet the legitimate aspirations of the people throughout the region.

[Link to Text](#) | [Link to Video](#)



President Obama lays out his vision as calls for reform and democracy spread across the Middle East and North Africa.

**THE WAY FORWARD IN AFGHANISTAN**

In December 2009 at West Point, President Obama put forth a new U.S. strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan focused on disrupting, dismantling and defeating al Qaeda and preventing its capacity to threaten America and our allies in the future. On June 22, President Obama discussed how that strategy is being implemented and the way forward in Afghanistan. He announced that the United States will withdraw 10,000 U.S. troops from Afghanistan by the end of the year, and that the remaining 23,000 "surge" troops he announced in December 2009 will leave Afghanistan by the summer of 2012. The process of transition will continue as Afghan Security forces move into the lead, and our mission will shift from combat to support. By 2014, this process of transition will be complete, and the Afghan people will be responsible for their own security.

[Link to Text](#) | [Link to Video](#)



Young girls during a U.S. Congressional delegation visit to a school in Marjah, Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

The United States is committed to ensuring that personal information shared for law enforcement and security purposes is given strong protections. The U.S. commitment to protect privacy and civil liberties within the context of law enforcement and security activities is ingrained in American culture and legal tradition. As Secretary Clinton said during a speech at George Washington University in February 2011, achieving both liberty and security is challenging. Without security, liberty is fragile. Without liberty, security is oppressive. The challenge is finding the proper measure: enough security to enable our freedoms, but not so much or so little as to endanger them. We will continue to work closely with our European partners to advance and deepen our cooperation to combat threats and ensure both the security and civil liberties of individuals on both sides of the Atlantic.

[Link to Text and Video](#)



Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during her speech at George Washington University

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE EMBASSY AMERICAN CORNER INAUGURATION AT IST

Continuing Embassy's outreach to the academic and scientific community, Ambassador Allan J. Katz inaugurated the American Corner at Instituto Superior Técnico of the Universidade Técnica de Lisboa. The American Corners Program is a partnership that supports education and research through printed materials, scientific databases, lectures and workshops by American experts.

[Learn more about these partnerships](#)



Ambassador Katz and Prof. Cruz Serra sign the Memorandum of Understanding.

## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The U.S. Embassy is committed to social responsibility and encourages Embassy staff and family members willing to donate their time and energy to participate in volunteer activities. Over the past year, Embassy employees have supported projects such as Habitat for Humanity and Banco Alimentar, environmental beach cleanups, pet food drives and environmental debates.

[Learn more about these activities](#)



Group of children spend an afternoon of fun and games at the Embassy in the company of U.S. Marines.

## E- TEACHER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy is proud to announce the opening of a scholarship program for its acclaimed E-Teacher courses that train teachers of English as a foreign language in the latest U.S. teaching methods. Participants use innovative distance learning technology to interact with U.S. experts. The E-Teacher Scholarship Program is designed to improve the quality of English language teaching throughout the world.

[Learn more about this program](#)



Seven courses, each lasting 10 weeks, will be offered starting the fall of 2011, and the winter, spring and summer of 2012.