

## **Siempre Adelante, Always Forward**

*by James Costos, U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain and Principality of Andorra*

This past Sunday we celebrated the 300th anniversary of the birth of Father Junipero Serra, a man whose life's work and passion launched one of the great inflection points in the history of Spain, the United States, and in a broader sense, the world. Speaking at the opening of the U.S.-Spain Council Forum held November 15 in Santa Barbara, California, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Felipe recalled Father Serra's motto, "Siempre Adelante, Always Forward," and reminded us that Father Serra's legacy, "his striving for universality, his pioneering spirit, should drive us towards new goals and a more ambitious future."

In many ways, today marks a new inflection point in U.S. – Spain bilateral relations, one in which we have the opportunity and responsibility to do more than focus on the past, more than seek recovery after five years of recession. It is an opportune moment for that something more ambitious that the Prince so eloquently described.

When President Obama nominated me to be the U.S. Ambassador to Spain many months ago, the headlines about Spain read very differently. By the time I arrived in Madrid in September, media were beginning to tell another story, as more positive signs appeared. After a difficult period of reform, labor costs in Spain have come down, productivity has increased, and Spain is now among the most competitive countries in Europe. Exports have increased, as has direct investment. These developments indicate that, even as Spaniards continue to sacrifice, even as they may not yet feel a positive change in their daily lives, the reforms are working.

The new Spain that is emerging is well-positioned to capitalize on improving global economic conditions. And the United States wants to do its part to support this resurgence, by facilitating bilateral trade and investment, cementing the economic ties that are so beneficial to both our nations. The U.S. is already the second largest foreign investor in Spain, and Spanish companies are increasingly establishing operations in the U.S. market. Total Spanish investment in the United States has increased dramatically over the last few years, rising from \$14 billion in 2006 to over \$52 billion in 2012. But we can and should do more to strengthen these ties, and that is why the Forum focused on our economic relationship, with U.S. and Spanish companies meeting to discuss new possibilities for cooperation in technology, innovation and clean energy.

Beyond bilateral trade and investment, Spain is poised to play a major role in working together with the United States toward a historic goal: the construction of an ambitious Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. The U.S.-European Union (EU) economic relationship is already the world's largest, accounting for one-third of the total goods and services traded and nearly half of global economic output. Freeing our markets to allow more openness and growth by eliminating tariffs and non-tariff barriers to trade, and by harmonizing regulations, will support hundreds of thousands of new and better-paying jobs. Even more importantly, it will set a global standard for trade with other parts of the world, based on the values and standards that we as the transatlantic community set together. It will ensure that the rules-based, open systems that have helped our economies grow are those that succeed in the global marketplace of the future. It is a way to create prosperity in Spain, in the United States, and the transatlantic community as a whole. U.S. Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland has described the moment we are witnessing as one of "Transatlantic Renaissance," as the relationships among the members of our transatlantic community, rooted in shared democratic values and ideals, are infused with a new boost of energy, confidence, innovation, and generosity. I am fortunate to begin my mission here in Spain as ambassador at this very moment, and I intend to seize it to work to help knit our economies, culture and people more closely together.

In the months to come, we look forward to continued engagement with Spain as we deal jointly with important global issues in North Africa, the Middle East, and Afghanistan. In February, we will welcome the arrival of the first of four U.S. ships to be ported at Spain's Rota Naval Base, a tangible sign of our shared commitment to NATO and our Allied security. We are seeing an enormous appetite from Spaniards of all ages for information about U.S.-style entrepreneurship, and we've responded by working with an array of Spanish partners to share our experiences with potential Spanish innovators. To prepare the students of both our countries for careers in the international economy, we are promoting the study of English and international educational exchange. These are investments that we are making in the future of both our peoples.

As I observed my American friends interacting with the Prince and Princess of Asturias during their trip, I sensed their openness and readiness for closer engagement with Spain and its people. We will continue to celebrate the past, and the centuries of Spanish art, literature, and music that have enriched American culture beyond measure, we look to the opportunities of the future, and the potential of the many facets of the U.S. – Spain relationship. We remember the words of Father Serra, "Always Forward," and add our own refrain, "together."