

Testimony of Allan Katz
Ambassador-Designate to the Portuguese Republic
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Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I am greatly honored to be here today as President Obama's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to Portugal. I am humbled by the confidence and trust that the President and Secretary Clinton have placed in me, and I pledge that if confirmed, I will work closely with the President, the Secretary, and Congress to advance our nation's interests in Portugal and to promote cooperation on issues of mutual concern. I am further honored by the kind words of introduction from Senators Nelson and LeMieux, my home state Senators.

I am sorry my wife of 33 years and the love of my life, Nancy Cohn, who served the United States as a Peace Corps volunteer in Brazil, cannot be here, but she is in St. Louis celebrating her mother's 88th birthday. I am proud to introduce my two sons: Ethan Katz, who is a professor of History at the University of Cincinnati; and Matthew Katz, who is a graduate student in Public Policy at the University of Chicago. My father was forced to leave school at age 14 in Nazi Germany, so my family takes enormous pride in our educational successes and in our commitment to public service. They are truly what make America great.

I have had the privilege of serving people, both in the private and public sectors. I have been a practicing attorney for 25 years and had a seven-year tenure as an elected City Commissioner for the City of Tallahassee. In that capacity, as well as in my legal practice, I have dealt with a broad range of issues, including growing energy needs in our community and around the world, as well as complex business negotiations. I hope to be able to put these skills to good use if confirmed.

For the Republic of Portugal, NATO and the transatlantic relationship with the United States represent the cornerstones of its foreign policy. Significantly, Portugal will host NATO's next Summit meeting in late 2010. Befitting of a founding member of NATO, Portuguese troops stand side by side with our U.S. men and women in uniform in Afghanistan with the goal of bringing stability and security to Afghanistan. Portugal will have nearly tripled its commitment to the International Security Assistance Force since the summer of 2009 with the scheduled deployment of a caveat-free, company-size infantry unit this month,

heeding the President's December call for our NATO allies to meet the increased U.S. contributions to ISAF with their own.

Portugal is also a contributor to UN, NATO, and EU missions around the globe, and recently concluded its one-year mission as the flagship in NATO's counter-piracy Operation Ocean Shield off the coast of Somalia; in Kosovo, where Portugal has over 250 troops serving with NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR); and in Lebanon where a company of army engineers serves alongside other UN peacekeepers to prevent renewed hostilities between Israel and Lebanon. Historical, linguistic, and family connections have also made Portugal one of Timor-Leste's (East Timor's) strongest supporters and biggest aid donors since independence in 2002. The Portuguese are also directly contributing to the police component of the UN mission in Timor-Leste with 164 Republican National Guard troops.

Portugal remains one of our most steadfast NATO allies, and this excellent military-to-military cooperation is most evident in the long-standing presence of the U.S. Air Force's 65th Air Base Wing at Lajes Air Base in the Azores. In addition to being an emergency landing strip for the Space Shuttle, Lajes is home to one of the USAF's longest air strips and largest fuel depots outside the United States. While Lajes's mid-Atlantic location is of strategic value to the U.S. military, the increasing range of our military aircraft is reducing the need to maintain a garrison of over 700 airmen on the island. We seek new long-term missions that will help the USAF and Portugal keep Lajes both ready and relevant long into the future.

Another area where both Portugal and the United States are working together is in Lusophone Africa, where many opportunities exist for trilateral cooperation, particularly in Guinea-Bissau, which is struggling to develop its democracy and fighting hard to combat the scourge of the drug trade.

While U.S.-Portuguese trade is relatively small, the United States still exported \$2.6 billion worth of goods in 2008 and imported an estimated \$2.4 billion. While total Portuguese trade has increased dramatically over the last 10 years, the U.S. percentage of Portugal's exports and imports has been growing at a slower rate. U.S. firms play significant roles in the pharmaceutical, computer, and retail sectors in Portugal. Lately, Portuguese firms have been particularly active in the U.S. renewable energy sector, with Portuguese wind energy developer EDP alone planning to invest \$4 billion in the sector over the next two years.

If confirmed, one of my key aims will be to employ public diplomacy efforts to strengthen the Portuguese public's positive attitudes towards the United States and provide the Portuguese public a deeper understanding of our policies, culture, and history. A key component of our public diplomacy program, the Fulbright program, celebrates fifty years in Portugal in March. Over two thousand American and Portuguese students and scholars have participated in this program. Without a doubt, the Fulbright program has played a critical role in establishing and nourishing the strong ties in all sectors between the United States and Portugal.

Over one million Americans, including three of our U.S. Congressmen, are of Portuguese descent. Our country, from Hawaii to California to Rhode Island, is bound to Portugal by common values, by history, and by blood. We are family. If confirmed, I will work hard to maintain the bonds that the Luso-American community, our men and women in uniform, and my diplomatic predecessors have built.

Chairman, Members of the Committee, thank you for granting me the honor of appearing before you today. I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.