

CABO VERDE AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: A BICENTENNIAL RELATIONSHIP

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Abstract

Changes in the distribution of world power suggest that insular countries such as Cabo Verde should diversify international cooperation and thus ensure long-term benefits. This premise, combined with principles of solidarity, mutual respect, transparency and responsibility has enabled the signing of various agreements between Cabo Verde and the United States of America in the areas of security and defence, development aid policy, democracy and human rights. This article critically discusses the main gains achieved in the relationship between the United States of America and Cabo Verde, an former Portuguese colony until July 1975 and, after that date, an independent state, with the purpose of providing an analytical framework to respond to the current challenges. To do this, an exploratory qualitative study was carried out based on bibliographical and documentary analysis. The article concludes that Cabo Verde and the United States of America have been following the evolution of the international community, taking into account the importance in the region where the archipelago is inserted, sharing synergies and exchanging experiences in matters of development, defence and security.

Keywords

Cabo Verde, United States of America, Bilateral relations, Defence and security, Development.

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Introduction

The international system is currently characterised by the distribution of powers. As a result, it is necessary to establish alliances based on strategic alignments based on common principles, values and interests. States establish forms of relationship with other states to promote and consolidate their interests.

Relations between Cabo Verde and the United States of America (USA) originated in the 18th century. Three key moments in this history stand out: the first is the passage through Cabo Verde of a considerable number of Africans who were victims of the slave trade bound for the American continent; the second is related to the activity of American whaling ships from New Bedford and Nantucket in the Cabo Verde seas; the third follows the intensification of trade routes between the USA and West Africa (Lobban, 2018). The archipelago came to prominence by trading and exporting products to the USA and in particular to the city of Boston (Brooks, 1970; 2010; Duncan, 1972). This relationship and permanent forms of dialogue followed where the islands saw emigration as an opportunity to improve the living conditions.

Currently, the most representative Cabo Verdean communities are concentrated in the state of Massachusetts (capital Boston and nearby cities and towns such as Quincy, Randolph, Somerville and Cambridge) and south of Boston (Brockton, Taunton, Fall River, New Bedford, Cape Cod and Wareham) and the states of Rhode Island (Providence, Pawtucket, East Providence and Central Falls), Connecticut (Bridgeport and Waterbury), Florida, California, New Jersey, Virginia, Maryland, New York and Georgia (MOTT, 2020; Lima-Neves, 2015). The diaspora is over 250,000 (UN News, 2020) and is represented by the Cabo Verde Embassy in Washington, D.C. and the Consulate General in Boston, Quincy, Massachusetts.

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Georgia (MOTT, 2020; Lima-Neves, 2015). The diaspora is over 250,000 (UN News, 2020) and is represented by the Cabo Verde Embassy in Washington, D.C. and the Consulate General in Boston, Quincy, Massachusetts.

The USA sees Cabo Verde as an important partner that, since independence in July 1975, has committed itself to building a rule of law that promotes democracy, transparency and accountability of public institutions. Indeed, Cabo Verde is a state that ensures independence, responsibility and impartiality of the courts and the Public Prosecutor's Office, where civil and political rights are respected and the freedoms of expression, association and the press, among others, is safeguarded. It firmly defends the values of pluralist democracy and the rule of law and is based on the idea that the promotion of peace, security and social and economic development constitute the best option. The archipelago maintains relations with partners, whether countries or regions, based on trust, equality and reciprocity. Cabo Verde has sought, despite several limitations, to give consistency to domestic and foreign policies, approaching countries that are part of the southern hemisphere and simultaneously of the north to strengthen its diplomatic agenda. However, one may ask, what have been Cabo Verde's main gains in its relationship with the USA? What strategies should the archipelago adopt for its foreign policy?

The uncertainty and unpredictability that characterise the current international situation require countries such as Cabo Verde to adopt a stance based on pragmatism in their foreign policy (Graça, 2014; Madeira, 2016b). In this context, the historical relationship with the USA can be highlighted as an important anchor as the relations of more than two centuries that has united these two peoples. It is expected that together the countries will adopt a more committed stance and action articulated in principles and values with a view to addressing challenges that are common in security and defence, trade, development aid policy, democracy and human rights.

Cabo Verde, like other small island states, sees foreign policy as a resource for its development and an opportunity to participate in and be useful to the international community. The current financial crisis has been particularly affected partners such as the European Union and the USA. The situation is aggravated when the country is faced with other structural constraints, such as the substantial reduction in Official Development Assistance and the loss of some international grants, with the country still dependent on credit lines/concessional loans. This was accentuated after January 2008 when Cabo Verde moved to the category of Middle-Income Country. All these challenges have encouraged political leaders to rethink foreign policy in an attempt to create new models that point to the self-sustainability. Yet Cabo Verdean diplomacy has given signs of the ability to interpret and responded to problems that, over time, embodied the promotion of various strategic partnerships for the development of the archipelago (Costa & Pinto, 2014).

Cabo Verde-United States: a two centuries old historical relationship

Discovered between 1460 and 1462 by navigators in the service of the Portuguese crown, Cabo Verde served as an important hub for navigation and the slave trade, and the American continent stood out as one of the main destinations (Caldeira, 2013). The



relationship between these two peoples is configured in what Thornton (2012) calls a history as old as the formation of the *Atlantic World*.

With independence on 4 July 1776 and the process of industrialisation from 1865 onwards, the USA gradually asserted itself, becoming militarily, economically and technologically the main superpower of the post-World War II era. The strategy was to develop forms of relationship with practically every country in the world. Friendly relations between Cabo Verde and the USA existed for more than two centuries, to the extent that in December 1818 the first US Consulate in sub-Saharan Africa was installed in Praia. Samuel Hodges, a businessman and native of Massachusetts, presented his credentials to Governor António Pusich as the first American Consul in Cabo Verde. The installation of the consulate was the result of an important element from a historical and diplomatic point of view¹ (Tolentino, 2019). This period undoubtedly marks the first steps in relations between these two peoples in their various forms, as a Colony until 1951 and then as an Overseas Province² until the proclamation of independence in 1975.

In terms of nation state building, Cabo Verde is, in the African context, a particular case and therefore deserves special attention. The opening of the consulate took place approximately one hundred and fifty-seven years before Cabo Verde's independence. Although these relations passed through Portugal until 1975, from that date on they took place between sovereign and independent states. This discussion reinforces the idea that nationhood in Cabo Verde precedes the creation of the independent state by centuries. This differentiates it from most African countries, where it is the state that has been promoting the formation of the nation (Madeira, 2016a). The construction of the Cabo Verdean nation is based on a long-term historical movement that began with the settlement in the 15th century, corresponding to the progressive structuring of the social formation engendered on the islands, with its uniqueness and correlative sociocultural patterns (Madeira, 2018).

Between 1900 and 1920, the USA received emigrants from the archipelago, mostly from the islands of Fogo and Brava, who ventured out on ships that caught cetaceans in the Cabo Verdean seas (Carreira, 1982). Although undocumented, the emigrants managed to enter American territory, fleeing the misery and poor living conditions that plagued the islands, especially the resulting crisis of subsistence caused by the prolonged drought between 1890 and 1903, which culminated in the famines of 1903 and 1904 (Carreira, 1977).

¹ Activities commemorating the two hundredth anniversary of diplomatic relations between Cabo Verde and the USA took place in December 2018. This ephemeris is rightly reinforced by the fact that the first American Consulate in sub-Saharan Africa was established in 1818. In the 19th century, whale oil was used for lighting and many whaling ships sailed from New England to the seas of Cabo Verde, since it was a privileged location for the capture, transshipment, processing, landing and trade of this important substance extracted from the fat of whales fished. Cabo Verdeans participated in the fishing industry in the New England region and the Cranberry Peatlands. In 1843 the USA established the African Squadron in Cabo Verde for the purpose of capturing slave-trading ships (Canney, 2006). Another equally important historical fact refers to the participation of Cabo Verdeans in the United States War of Independence between 1775 and 1783 (U.S. Embassy in Cabo Verde, 2018; 2019).

² See in this regard, Pimenta (2014: 252): "The Revision of 1951 incorporated the Colonial Act into the Portuguese Constitution, with the title "Do Ultramar Português", while the Organic Charter of the Portuguese Colonial Empire was replaced by the Organic Law of Overseas. It was a transformation mainly of aesthetics, i.e. of terminology: the expressions "Portuguese Colonial Empire" and "Colonies" were replaced by "Portuguese Overseas" and "Portuguese Overseas Provinces".



Despite the close relations that existed for more than two centuries, the zof cooperation only became possible in July 1975, when the USA recognised Cabo Verde as an independent state. In 1977, two years after independence, Cabo Verde opened its first consulate in Boston to strengthen cooperation and support its diaspora in the USA (Amado, 2014).

Although these are two countries with substantially different weights in the international system, Cabo Verde and the USA have been engaged in a cooperative relationship that takes economic growth and security cooperation as central aspects. Over four decades, several agreements considered strategic have been signed, including: the *Millennium Challenge Account* (MCA), the *African Growth and Opportunity Act* (AGOA) and the *Status of Forces Agreement* (SOFA).

Table 1: Main Milestones of Bilateral Relations Cabo Verde-USA

Period	Main events
XVIII century	USA ships catch cetaceans in Cabo Verde seas.
1818	Opening in Praia of the first US Consulate in Sub-Saharan Africa.
From 1900 onwards	Cabo Verdeans emigrate to the USA on whaling ships.
1975	The USA recognises Cabo Verde's independence.
1977	Opening of the first Cabo Verdean consulate in Boston.
1983	Official opening of the US Embassy in Cabo Verde.
2004	Cabo Verde benefits from the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) Programme.
2005	Cabo Verde signs the first MCA Compact which ran until 2010.
2007	Cabo Verde benefits from the <i>African Growth and Opportunity Act</i> (AGOA).
2008	Cabo Verde cooperates with the US Africa Command (AFRICOM).
2009	Hillary Clinton, 67th Secretary of State of the United States visits Cabo Verde.
2010	Installation of the Maritime Security Operations Centre (COSMAR) in Cabo Verde with USA funding.
	Ambassador J. Anthony Holmes, AFRICOM Deputy Commander visits Cabo Verde
2012	The archipelago signs the II Compact of the MCA which was in force until 2017.
2015	Group of US Senators visit Cabo Verde.
2016	Cabo Verde hosts the US military exercise <i>Epic Guardian</i> .
2017	Cabo Verde signs Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA) with the USA.
	The President of the Republic of Cabo Verde ratifies the SOFA.
	Ambassador Alexander Laskaris, Deputy Commander of AFRICOM visits Cabo Verde.
2018	Cabo Verde interested in hosting the headquarters of the North American Military Command for Africa.
	Cabo Verde hosts the Africa Endeavor Symposium organised by AFRICOM.
	Beginning of the bicentennial celebrations of the friendly relations between Cabo Verde and the USA.
	Admiral James G. Foggo III, Commander of the Joint Allied Force Command Naples, United States Naval Force in Europe and Africa, visits Cabo Verde.
2019	Government authorises BCV to issue coin commemorating 200 years of USA-Cabo Verde friendship.
	The University of Cabo Verde, in partnership with the Embassy of the United States of America in Cabo Verde promotes events in honour of the 200th anniversary of the relations between Cabo Verde and the USA.
	The United States provides more than US\$1.5 million to assist Cabo Verde in response capacity to COVID-19.
2020	Mike Pompeo, 70th Secretary of State of the United States, on the occasion of the 45th anniversary of Cabo Verde's independence, praises the relationship between the USA and Cabo Verde of more than 200 years and says that the USA intends to support Cabo Verde in "development efforts" and maritime security.



2021	<p>USA provides US\$1 million to Cabo Verde to strengthen criminal justice and combat organised crime.</p> <p>On March 30, the governments of Cabo Verde and the USA held their Third Bilateral Partnership Dialogue, which was attended by government representatives from both countries and hosted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Communities and Defence of Cabo Verde, Rui Figueiredo Soares and the Acting Assistant Secretary of State of the United States of America, Robert F. Godec.</p> <p>On April 23, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Communities and of Defence of Cabo Verde, Rui Figueiredo Soares, received the AFRICOM/US Department of Defence team that supported the Cabo Verdean government in the delivery of the first shipment of vaccines against Covid-19 to the islands of Fogo, São Vicente, São Nicolau, Sal, Boa Vista and Maio.</p> <p>On 4 July, the first stone was laid for the construction of the new US Embassy on 4.5 hectares of land adjacent to the Government Palace in Praia and representing an investment of over US\$400 million by the US Government in the bilateral relationship.</p>
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Source: elaborated by the author based on Tolentino (2019), U.S. Department of State (2019), U.S. Embassy in Cabo Verde and analysis of data collected on the Inforpress website since 2018.

Millennium Challenge Account and the impact on development in Cabo Verde

Cabo Verde's development has been thanks to the good management of Official Development Aid (ODA) and other international support. These efforts are recognised by countries and international organizations, especially with regard to compliance with the principles of democracy, good governance, transparency and respect for the rule of law. Based on these factors, Cabo Verde was awarded two compacts under the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) Programme that have stood out as one of the main instruments of cooperation between the archipelago and the USA.

The MCA is an ambitious US Government Programme administered by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) through a foreign assistance agency created in 2004 by the US Congress. This programme essentially aims to reward countries that demonstrate a commitment to good governance, economic freedom and investment in their citizens (Mawdsley, 2007). For the USA, economic and social policies and democratic governance guarantee economic growth for the most vulnerable populations. This programme encourages countries to invest in infrastructure (roads and ports), energy, agriculture, land titling and property rights, water and sanitation, health and education (Resende-Santos, 2020: 109) and in promoting an economic and trade liberalisation agenda (Soederberg, 2004; Brainard, Graham & Purvis, 2003).

Cabo Verde applied for the MCA in 2004. From a list of 75 developing countries, it was ranked first place among the group of African countries and second place in the global ranking. Subsequently, the archipelago signed the 1st Compact on 4 July 2005, which was in force for a period of five years. The programme was financed to a total amount of approximately US\$110 million.

The main objective of the 1st Compact was to improve infrastructure. Among the various financings, the expansion and modernisation of the Port of Praia and the construction and improvement of roads and bridges stand out. Furthermore, investment was made in the agricultural sector, namely in the field of capturing and using water and in agricultural production on the islands of Santo Antão, São Nicolau



and Fogo, as well as in the public and private sector, thus promoting reform of the financial intermediation system and increasing competition in access to treasury bonds.

These investments aimed at supporting Cabo Verde in economic transformation, making it less dependent on remittances and international aid (Cardoso, 2014). Investment in the agricultural sector allowed for improved management of water resources and soil conservation and agro-industrial development, as well as access to credit.

Table 2: Main projects developed under the 1st MCA Compact

Projects developed	Results
Watershed management and support for agricultural production	Twenty-eight water reservoirs; twenty-six catchment dikes; twenty-seven torrential correction dikes; forty-three small dams; three boreholes; twenty-seven water distribution systems; three rural extension centres; one post-harvest centre; five hundred and forty-nine farmers benefiting from drip irrigation systems and the installation of fifty-seven demonstration fields.
Construction and rehabilitation of road and port infrastructure	39.3 km of roads rehabilitated; four road bridges built; expansion and modernisation of the Port of Praia.
Credit for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises	Creation of a private credit information centre.
Support to the e-governance system	Commitment to e-Government; improvement in the transfer, financial management and accountability of public administration; creation of a budget classifier and approval of a public market code.

Source: elaborated by the author, based on Cardoso (2014).

The 2nd Compact was signed on 10 February 2012 and was in force from 30 November 2012 to 30 November 2017. Its main objective was promoting economic growth and poverty reduction in Cabo Verde. The Compact focused on reforming two strategic sectors, namely the water, sanitation and hygiene sector and the property management or land registry sector. This package was funded to the value of US\$66.2 million for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Property Management for Investment Promotion (LAND) and also a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (M&E).

The WASH project was conceived with the objective of supporting the restructuring of the Water and Sanitation Sector and sought to re-establish, through a thorough reform, a financially sound institutional base that would provide services to Cabo Verdean households and businesses. Under this project the following institutions, programmes and plans were created: the National Agency for Water and Sanitation (ANAS), the National Water and Sanitation Council (CNAS), the Social Integration and Gender Plan for the Water and Sanitation Sector in Cabo Verde, the Intermunicipal Company Águas de Santiago (AdS), the Water and Sanitation Fund (FASA) which integrates the Social Access Fund (FAS). The later provided the most vulnerable populations in urban and rural communities with access to water and sanitation services in the fight against poverty. LAND is a project to reduce the time and costs associated with property registration, thus providing greater legal certainty to real estate transactions, as well as promoting land investment and productivity. Within the scope of this project, the institutional, procedural and legal bases were created to guarantee greater legal



security in access, management and property transactions (MCA Balance Magazine, 2017).

Table 3: Main Projects Developed under the II MCA Compact

Projects developed	Results
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)	Restructuring of the water and sanitation sector; creation of the National Water and Sanitation Agency (ANAS), the National Water and Sanitation Council (CNAS), the Social Integration and Gender Plan, the Intermunicipal Company Águas de Santiago (AdS) and the Water and Sanitation Fund (FASA) which integrates the Social Access Fund (FAS).
Investment Promotion Property (LAND)	Installation of the Land Information System; creation of the National Institute for Land Management (INGT); approval of the Special Legal Regime for the Execution of the Land Cadastre; publication of the Regulations for the Legal Regime of the Land Cadastre; Officialization of the Operations Manual.
Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (M&E)	Discussion and definition of relevant issues in order to assess the sectoral impacts of the Water and Sanitation and Property Management for Investment projects

Source: prepared by the author based on data available in MCA Balance Sheet Magazine (2017). II Compact of the Millennium Challenge Account Cabo Verde.

Cabo Verde was the first country to be selected by the MCC Board of Directors, for the 2nd Compact and also the first to apply for a 3rd Compact, but without success, as it was not selected. These Compacts have enabled development in several areas: infrastructure, agriculture, sanitation, hygiene, water resource mobilisation and property management. Furthermore, they have contributed to the transformation of the country, especially in its modernisation and in its social and economic progress (Tolentino, 2019).

AGOA: opportunities and benefits for Cabo Verde

To improve sub-Saharan countries' development, in May 2000 the US Congress enacted the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). This was a trade agreement that encourages sub-Saharan African countries to export products to USA markets. AGOA, as an integral part of the U.S. Foreign Trade and Development Act, allows more than 6,000 varieties of products and facilitates these countries' access to credit. It also provides technical assistance and training (Páez; Karingi; Kimenyi, 2010).

AGOA allows more than forty-five sub-Saharan African countries to export to the USA market duty-free and quota-free. Since coming into force, this agreement has served as an important pillar in the relationship between the USA and Africa, providing economic opportunities, facilitating regional integration and the business environment (Shapouria; Trueblood, 2003). Indeed, the creation of a favourable environment for private sector investment has been a priority, making African companies more competitive. With the implementation of this programme, exports increased by more than 300%, thus enabling the creation of about three hundred and fifty thousand direct jobs and hundreds of thousands of indirect jobs (Montezinho, 2015).



Under the law, USA exports to sub-Saharan Africa have tripled. The USA has an interest in enhancing its influence and strengthening relations with African partners. Sub-Saharan African countries undergo an annual review of their statutes. Several criteria are also evaluated, including good governance, market economy, elimination of trade barriers and promotion of US investments, development of anti-corruption mechanisms and protection of labour-related laws. The countries eligible to participate are determined based on these parameters.

In addition to this annual assessment, to enter the US market, products must meet certain requirements regarding their origin. In particular, they must originate from one or more AGOA beneficiary countries, be imported directly from a beneficiary country into the USA and be 100% grown, produced or manufactured in one or more beneficiary countries.

In 2007, Cabo Verde graduated as a middle-income country and has benefited from this programme by being able to access a range of financing alternatives. Despite the recognition that the AGOA programme represents an important step towards the aspirations of an island and archipelagic country, there has been much discussion about its use. The reports point out that exports of Cabo Verdean products to the US market have fallen far short of expectations. Indeed, within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), only Gambia and Guinea-Bissau performed less well than Cabo Verde (Montezinho, 2015).

Economists, policymakers and business associations sought to understand the reasons for the poor results and recommended strategies for improving exports under the programme. The President of the Sotavento Chamber of Commerce, Jorge Spencer Lima, said that the main barriers for Cabo Verdean companies include difficulties in terms of costs and bureaucracy, as well as language barriers. In Spencer Lima's opinion, everything happens in English, which in many cases, Cabo Verdean business people do not understand or master. João Alvarenga, economist, believes that the main problem is related to the Cabo Verdean workforce because it is not minimally prepared for the quality criteria required by the program, adding that the country, historically, has a trade deficit. This is because it imports more than it exports. AGOA would be an opportunity to reverse this scenario, at least with the USA (Montezinho, 28 June 2015).

The former Minister of Tourism, Investment and Business Development, Leonesa Fortes, believes that Cabo Verde has a small number of companies producing for export. She also argues that it is necessary to further strengthen the industrial fabric in order to take advantage of AGOA. The first step to reverse this scenario was to create institutions specialised in these areas, namely the Institute for Quality Management (IGQ), created by Resolution no. 41/2010 of 2 August. In addition, the state should continue to work on developing industrial and trade policies so that Cabo Verdean companies can organise themselves and acquire greater production capacity (Expresso das Ilhas, 12 September 2015).

According to current Minister for Industry, Commerce and Energy, Alexandre Monteiro, eighteen years after the promulgation of AGOA, Cabo Verde has not known how to take advantage of this window of opportunity. The archipelago is still making initial steps towards creating an environment to produce and export more competitive goods and services. Ana Lima Barber, president of Cabo Verde Trade Invest between 2016 and



2020, said the country has products that could be exported under AGOA, but they still need to be qualified in order to unblock obstacles at the logistics level (Santiago Magazine, 21 February 2018). Donald Heflin, US Ambassador to Cabo Verde between 2015 and 2018, also draws attention to the following: Cabo Verde should take more advantage and thus explore the USA market, as it could export 7% of its goods but unfortunately has done nothing in this direction, as the country is very dependent on the European economy (Inforpress, 2018). The US Ambassador to Cabo Verde since September 2019, John Jefferson Daigle, said that USA companies and entrepreneurs do not know much about investment opportunities in Cabo Verde. He believes it is possible to put Cabo Verde on the US investment map and stresses the importance of initiatives such as the Cabo Verde Investment Forum (CVIF) held in Boston between 30 September and 1 October 2019. This type of meeting is an opportunity to attract high-level business interests and a chance to establish business partnerships.

The ambassador points to the interest of the Cabo Verdean government in carrying out the project to implement the Amilcar Cabral Submarine Cable linking Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Guinea-Conakry and Sierra Leone with the possibility of also linking Gambia and Senegal. This is an ambitious initiative under the project to create a connectivity hub in Cabo Verde for the development of broadband telecommunications in the countries of the region. The US Ambassador to Cabo Verde made it clear that he intends to bring together, the government of Cabo Verde, technicians, the US Embassy and the US Department of Commerce in order to address this possibility (Montezinho, 2020).

Taking into account the opportunities that AGOA offers, Cabo Verde has worked on empowering businesses by creating conditions to attract investment and improve the business environment. AGOA forums are promoted annually and should be used by the country to debate and find the best alternatives, especially with regard to reducing trade barriers.

AGOA Resource Centres (ARCs), established by the West Africa Trade Hub (WATH) in all AGOA beneficiary countries in the region, including Cabo Verde, have sought to advise businesses on maximising investment opportunities under the AGOA provisions. This has facilitated linkages between businesses in the sub-Saharan Africa region. CRA's and AGOA Information Centres are under the responsibility of Cabo Verde Trade Invest.

Cabo Verde and the AFRICOM

After the September 11, 2001 attacks, US foreign policy assumed another dimension, regarding international security. As a way of safeguarding its interests, US military forces began intervening more regularly, mainly in regional spaces where there are threats (Bernardino, 2008), including the proliferation of illegal immigration networks, drug trafficking and terrorism.

Due to the growing geopolitical and geoeconomics importance of the African continent, the US government established a specific Command for Africa, called AFRICOM, based in Stuttgart, Germany, within the African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership (AMLEP). AFRICOM, like other Commands, namely EUCOM, CENTCOM, SOUTHCOM,



NORTHCOM, PACOM, work to combat terrorism, drug trafficking and maritime piracy (Strategic Culture Foundation, 30 August 2018). In addition, the Command is responsible for operations, exercises, training of military personnel and security cooperation with African countries. The creation of AFRICOM in 2008 is considered by Munson (2010) as one of the most important moments in the relationship between the USA and the African continent.

The U.S. Military Command for Africa installed more than fifty networks and small military readiness bases or stations for the purpose of executing advanced security and contingency operations. It has a permanent support base in the Republic of Djibouti and has under its jurisdiction all African nations with the exception of Egypt which is under the jurisdiction of CENTCOM. The Command contributes to the improvement of sustainable development and security levels on the continent (Strategic Culture Foundation, 30 August 2018). AFRICOM seeks, in collaboration with other US government agencies and international partners, to carry out military security actions through specific programs aimed at promoting a stable and secure environment in Africa. The Command creates the conditions and contributes to African ownership to ensure that African countries create the conditions for the resolution of their own security problems (Breschinski, 2007: 50). Cabo Verde, for having a vast maritime area is, in the view of the former AFRICOM Deputy Commander Alexander M. Laskaris, a quality partner in the materialisation of the Command's objectives (Lusa, 04 May 2018). The archipelago, as well as other West African countries, has the potential to produce far-reaching benefits in terms of patrolling and surveillance of its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), in addition to developing professional and practical training programmes in security. The focus has been on promoting technical and material conditions for the Coast Guard.

It was within the framework of AFRICOM in June 2010 that the US government funded the installation of the Maritime Security Operations Centre (COSMAR) based in Praia, Santiago Island. The Coast Guard and the Naval Squadron are based in Mindelo, São Vicente Island.

Since then COSMAR worked on the planning of joint operations within the framework of maritime surveillance agreements with other countries with the aim of combating phenomena, not only concerning drug trafficking, but also human trafficking, terrorism, piracy and other similar acts. The surveillance and enforcement work is carried out in coordination with various national entities with responsibilities in this area (Madeira, 2019b: 164).

Cabo Verde accepted AFRICOM assistance (Garcia, 2017: 104) by investing in the planning of joint operations with special emphasis on maritime surveillance and prevention of illicit trafficking (e-Global, 2018). Investment in security is part of the country's ability to attract foreign investment through a marketing strategy of good governance (Baker, 2009) in favour of well-being, democracy, human rights and transparency. This point reinforces the idea that, since independence, elements of Cabo Verde's foreign policy have accompanied successive governments, namely [1] the privileged geostrategic position in the Middle Atlantic; [2] political stability and good governance; [3] the perspective of territorial security and non-alignment in ideological blocs, however, maintaining political-diplomatic relations with various states; [4] a



culture of social peace reflected in internal and external policy; [5] a commitment to diplomacy of modesty and proximity based on the principles of peace with the aim of resolving or circumventing socio-economic constraints (Madeira, 2016b).

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The archipelago has also participated in joint military exercises that demonstrate the country's commitment and interest in straitening the relationship with the United States. Examples are the exercises Saharan Express, Flintlock and Obangame Express held in the West African region. In 2016, the US Military exercise Epic Guardian took place on the island of Sal, Cabo Verde. It was the first time that Cabo Verde hosted an exercise of this magnitude, whose objective was to strengthen cooperation between the two-armed forces in the fight against transnational threats.

Sal Island was also a host between July 30 to August 3, 2018, as part of the 13th Africa Endeavor Symposium which was attended by over thirty African countries. The event enhanced communication between African nations and Command capabilities, seeking to encourage African Union (AU) forces and the African Force on Standby (ASF) for the purpose of engaging in humanitarian assistance missions, natural disasters, conflict resolution and peacekeeping. The event provided delegations from the attending countries, international, regional and sub-regional institutions an opportunity to address the main cyber challenges on the African continent and thereby find viable solutions to ensure access to information technology (Government of Cabo Verde, 30 July 2018).

The USA interest has been to deepen its relationship with Cabo Verde, as the archipelago is strategically located in the Atlantic Ocean and can serve as an important regional security partner. The USA encourages Cabo Verde to combat threats and to continue investing in democratic institutions in order to promote socio-economic development.

SOFA: strategic agreement between Cabo Verde and USA

With the aim of ending security threats and encouraging international peace, the USA has negotiated strategic agreements with countries to provide a legal basis for strengthening the defence and security of the signatory states and which allow the US



Armed Forces to operate in their territories for a certain period, as well as to use their military facilities for refuelling, transit, surveillance, among other functions. Several cooperation agreements were also signed, including the Foreign Forward Operating Sites (FOSs) and the Cooperative Security Location (CSLs), supported by Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA).

The SOFA falls under the Bilateral Immunity Agreements ('BIAs') based on Article 98 (2) provisions in the Rome Statute of 1998 not to surrender US citizens to the International Criminal Court (ICC), which are in accordance with the American Service-Members' Protection Act (ASPA) approved by Congress in 2001. The ASPA provides for cuts in military assistance to ICC member states that do not sign bilateral agreements not to surrender US Citizens to the ICC with the US Government. In practice, this means that all recipients of US Assistance who are signatories to the Rome Statute are required to sign a document conferring immunity on US citizens present on their territory, preventing them from being prosecuted by the ICC. In this context, it is important to note that since the early 2000s, agreements of this kind have been signed in more than 100 countries (Resende-Santos, 2020).

The good relationship between Cabo Verde and the USA was reflected in the September 2017 signing of the SOFA that opened up space for strengthening military cooperation between the two. It created legal conditions to allow the presence of US forces in the archipelago. The agreement, which was under negotiation since 2008, defined the terms of military cooperation between Cabo Verde and the USA, with special emphasis on the status of US soldiers in Cabo Verdean territory. Washington and Praia have made it clear that, after signing the agreement, they will work together in the area of security and stability, especially with regard to maritime safety (Tolentino, 2019).

Notwithstanding the debate around the advantages and disadvantages of the SOFA for Cabo Verde, which was ratified in 2018 by the President of the Republic of Cabo Verde, Jorge Carlos Fonseca, it could serve as an important instrument for closer cooperation with the USA, considering that security should be seen as an important pillar of development for any state. With the signing of the SOFA, the Cabo Verde government recognised the need to strengthen a legal structure for managing and monitoring cooperation, which could become an important instrument for supporting the country's security and development.

The proliferation of transnational threats puts African states on alert, including Cabo Verde. Due to its strategic location in the Atlantic, Cabo Verde has been a prime target of transnational criminal organisations (TCOs). As such, the country has the mission and obligation to ensure national defence and security, which will only be possible if the archipelago continues to invest in improving its relationship with international partners (Madeira; Monteiro, 2017).

This paper does not explore the advantages and disadvantages of the SOFA, nor the constitutionality or otherwise of the clauses contained in this diploma, but rather to understand its scope, insofar as Cabo Verde is still unable to guarantee the security and defence of its territory on its own. It is based on the following assumption: defence and security have come to assume a transnational character and require from states, regardless of their size, forms of cooperation in the military, economic and technological fields through the establishment of partnerships considered relevant.



Investing in defines and security policies is a very significant aspect of development. Indeed, development is only possible if the country becomes aware of the importance of establishing strategic agreements. These instruments make it possible to create conditions at the level of security, essentially in the maritime space, thus improving the capacity of the Coast Guard, the patrolling of territorial waters and humanitarian missions. Cabo Verde has been made efforts in improving political and diplomatic relations with the United States, while demonstrating a commitment to the countries of the southern hemisphere. Cabo Verde, a small state, and the USA, a superpower, have established a magnificent, long-standing, stable and trusting relationship (Tolentino, 2019).

In this context, it is important to note the Strategic Concept of Defence and National Security (CEDSN) establishes the fundamental aspects of the global strategy adopted by the Cabo Verde State in achieving the objectives of the security and defence policy. The CEDSN outlines the sectoral guidelines on security and defence, to instruct for greater effectiveness and efficiency in their application, to articulate and harmonise sectoral policies of activities with an interest in security and defence, to optimise the result and repercussions of the application of the values and objectives of security and defence in foreign policy and domestic policy, and in the provision of security for citizens and public and private property. In this context, the CEDSN states that the Cabo Verdean strategic triangle is only completed with the American side, where countries such as Brazil, to the south, and the USA, to the north, are located. The USA is, in fact, a development partner for Cabo Verde with which the country should further develop relations in the area of security and defence (CEDSN, 2011: 9).

Conclusions

It is widely recognised the importance that Cabo Verde attributes to its foreign policy. Indeed, the country places foreign policy at the centre of importance because it is a strategic concern and contributes to development and national security.

Since independence in 1975, the archipelago has demonstrated a commitment to the promotion of peace. The commitment has resulted in improved living conditions for Cabo Verdeans, overcoming some limitations of a small and insular state dependent on external aid. The country's path is the result of a unique effort and allowed for the creation of an image of a stable state that, despite scarce resources, managed Official Development Assistance, relying on third state support or international organisations. This path provoked special interest from foreign partners such as the USA, which has supported the country in terms of security, aid policy, the fight against poverty and the promotion of democracy and human rights.

Cabo Verde's integration in the international context is not only a strategy but, above all, is unavoidable in maximising

ing its influence. The challenges for Cabo Verde in the current international context are taking actions that allow for a secure international integration in a way that it can continue to establishing partnerships and agreements with countries in the sub-region (Madeira, 2015), as well as improve existing partnerships, such as with the USA.



The historical ties between Cabo Verde and the USA have been developing for over two centuries. Nonetheless, there is a need to strengthen what already exists, whether through the diaspora or initiatives by entrepreneurs, organisations, institutions, media and governments³. In recent years, there has been a growing awareness for Cabo Verdeans to participate in study programs at US institutions of higher learning or exchange programs. Notable examples include the Entrepreneurship Programme for African Women (Project 54/WIA 54 Award) and Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI). These programs facilitate the establishment of future contacts for business and partnerships. In the words of Marissa Scott-Torres, Chargé d'Affaires of the American Embassy in Cabo Verde until 2019, at the Commemorative Gala of the Bicentennial Gala honouring 200 years of historical ties between the United States and Cabo Verde held in Praia on 16 December 2018: "there is a very profound and steady relationship between our two countries—that is not best expressed in words, but in deeds (...) We honour and recognize that relationship. We pay tribute to our past and the future of our relationship"⁴.

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³ The relationship at the bilateral level between Cabo Verde and the USA is reinforced on several occasions, official meetings and gatherings. See, for example, the reference expressed in the Government Program and Confidence Motion (2021-2026) - VIII Constitutional Government (2021: 13): At the bilateral level, Cabo Verde (...) "nation with secular relations with the United States of America, where the largest Cabo Verdean community of the diaspora resides, with emphasis on mobilisation of skills and influence of the diaspora in favor of Cabo Verde, in attracting investment, tourism, knowledge and technology and in strategic defence and security agreement".

⁴ In this regard, see: U.S. Embassy in Cabo Verde (2018, December 16). Bicentennial Gala - Chargée Scott remarks. Available at <https://cv.usembassy.gov/bicentennial-gala-chargee-scott-remarks/>.



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