

## Obama and McCain Duke It Out Today in Brazil in Mock Presidential Debate

Contributed by Newsroom  
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A mock US presidential debate will take place today, October 10, from noon to 2 pm (ET) in the auditorium of the American School of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Kevin Ivers, Brazil Chairman of Republicans Abroad, will stand in for senator John McCain, and Steve Spencer, Rio de Janeiro Chapter Committee Chairman for Democrats Abroad - Brazil, will stand in for Senator Barack Obama.

Mac Margolis, award-winning Special Correspondent for Newsweek magazine will be sitting in the moderator's chair. The event is being co-sponsored by the American Society of Rio de Janeiro, in partnership with the US Consulate General - Rio de Janeiro and the American School of Rio de Janeiro.

In addition to questions posed by the moderator and those the debaters will pose to one another, this event will feature the participation of students from the 52 member schools of the Association of American Schools in South America, who will be watching the debate via live Internet streaming. Students from these schools have submitted their own questions for the debaters, of which several will be selected by the moderator.

Introductions will be made by American School Headmaster Robert Werner, American Society of Rio de Janeiro President Walter Palmer, and The Honorable (Elizabeth) Lee Martinez, US Consul General in Rio de Janeiro.

The event will be live streamed over the Internet at: [www.earj.com.br](http://www.earj.com.br).

A few hours following the event's completion, a video archive of it will be available on YouTube for on-demand viewing (key words: Rio Mock Debate 2008).

The debate is expected to attract a capacity crowd at the American School, which is located at Estrada da Gávea 132, Gávea, CEP: 22451-263. The school's main telephone number is: (55-21) 2125-9000.

Democrats Abroad (DA) is the official Democratic Party organization for the millions of Americans living outside the United States. It is a non-profit association, which advances the principles of the party by spreading the Democratic message to Americans abroad and encouraging them to vote for Democratic candidates back home. DA has committees throughout Europe, the Americas, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and the Antipodes.

Country Committees keep Americans abroad informed of their rights and help them participate in the US political process. A small support office is maintained in Washington, D.C. DA is recognized as a "state" party by the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and is represented on the DNC by eight voting members, as well as at the quadrennial Democratic National Convention.

Republicans Abroad (RA) is a non-profit organization which represents and works to protect the interests of overseas

Americans on a wide range of issues. RA also mobilizes Republicans residing abroad to vote in US elections, and educates Americans abroad on how to cast their votes and make them count.

Membership in R.A. provides a unique opportunity for overseas Americans to communicate their concerns to Republican leaders in Washington. RA has fought for issues of concern to Americans abroad like repatriation issues, strong support of Section 911 foreign earned income exemption, anti-terrorism legislation, fair trade policies, and the inclusion of the expatriate population in the United States Census.

The American School of Rio de Janeiro was founded in 1937 to serve the American community in Rio, the Escola Americana do Rio de Janeiro is an independent, coeducational college-preparatory day school (pre-school through 12th grade). Its current enrollment of approximately 700 students includes students from 37 nationalities, a majority of whom are Brazilians.

The school is located in Gávea on the edge of the Tijuca Forest on a steep hill overlooking Rio. It also has smaller growing campuses for younger children in Barra and Macaé. All students pursue the American diploma and can also attain the Brazilian diploma and the International Baccalaureate diploma. A full program of extra-curricular activities, sports, and fine arts is offered in addition to the academic program.

EA meets the high academic standards of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools of the US and the State Board of Education of Rio. The student teacher ratio is 11:1 and the 98% of the students go on to study in competitive US universities and in Canada, Europe, and in Rio.

#### Moderator and Candidates

Mac Margolis was born in North Carolina and pursued intercultural studies at Trinity College at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. He is a longtime correspondent for Newsweek magazine, reporting on Brazil and other emerging markets, as well as contributor to other publications, including The Economist, The Washington Post, and The Los Angeles Times. Margolis is the author of *The Last New World: The Conquest of the Amazon Frontier* (W.W. Norton, 1992).

He was awarded the 2003 Maria Moors Cabot Prize from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism for his dedication to making comprehensible the countries of the Americas. In 2002, his reporting on the failure of agrarian reform in Brazil garnered the Embratel Award in the Best Foreign Reporting category. Mac is married and has one daughter. He has resided in Brazil since 1982.

Kevin Ivers launched Center Strategies LLC in 2002 as a means to move beyond his decade-long base in Washington to a more global international consulting practice. His company promotes pro-development solutions for the range of challenges being faced by the public and private sectors of emerging economies.

From 1992 to 2002 he was the Public Affairs Director for Log Cabin Republicans, working on behalf of local, statewide, congressional, and presidential campaigns. He also played a key role in raising several million dollars for political candidates and causes, while spearheading candidate training seminars and university campaign workshops.

From 1994 to 2003, Ivers worked on the development of federal and global HIV/AIDS policy, both in Congress and the Bush Administration. Kevin's work has led to appearances in the US in all major newspapers and on all major TV networks, as well as print and TV news programs in Brazil as a US political commentator. Based in São Paulo, he holds dual US/European nationality, and is proficient in several foreign languages.

Steve Spencer is a public radio professional who has spent almost three decades in front of and behind the microphone. For most of this time, he has held administrative positions at National Public Radio (NPR) member stations (Assistant General Manager for WRHU-FM, NY; Operations/New Media Services Manager, WESM-FM, MD; and General Manager of KOPN-FM, MO and WYSO Public Radio, OH).

He served as President of Ohio Public Radio and on the Board of Directors of the Association of Independents in Radio (AIR). In 2006, Steve conducted a training workshop for radio journalists in Croatia and has since been providing consulting assistance to the former BBC Croatian Service, now operating independently as Radio.net.

Steve pursued undergraduate studies in Public Telecommunications and History, receiving his Bachelor's degree from Excelsior College (formerly Regents College of the University of the State of New York). His Master's degree in Management is from Antioch University McGregor, where, in 2000, he first began researching opportunities for the growth and development of Brazilian Public Radio. This led him to his current position as Executive Director of the Brazilian Public Radio Association. Steve lives in Rio de Janeiro with his wife and stepson.

## The Place

The American Society of Rio de Janeiro is a non-profit association, which was founded in 1917. The school presents itself as "dedicated to celebrating American heritage and ideals, building cross-cultural relationships, and contributing to the Rio de Janeiro community through social, educational, and charitable activities."

While over 80 individuals have served as its president during the past nine decades, perhaps Ralph Greenberg is the one who is best remembered today because of the founding of the prestigious community award that is given annually in his name.

The list of Greenberg Award winners is a Who's Who of distinguished, private Americans who have lived and served selflessly in Rio de Janeiro, contributing to the well-being of both the American community and its Brazilian neighbors. Membership in the American Society is open to all nationalities.

The Consulate General of the United States of America in Rio de Janeiro was established in November, 1971, when the US Embassy was transferred to Brasília. Headed by a Consul General, the office is responsible for a broad range of consular and commercial functions, and for coordination of United States government activities in its Consular District, which covers the Brazilian states of Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, Bahia, and Sergipe.

The Consulate General also houses offices of the Public Affairs Section, responsible for a variety of cultural exchanges and information programs in the 5 states of the district. Besides the Department of State, other US government agencies that maintain offices in the Rio Consulate General include the Department of Defense and the Library of Congress.

The Consulate General occupies a building in the center of Rio overlooking Guanabara Bay. The building was constructed in 1952 as the United States Embassy Chancery.