

SUMMARY OF THE 8TH INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON SECURITY AND DEFENCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: NEW SCENARIOS FOR COOPERATION

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INTRODUCTION

This document is a summary of the addresses and debates which took place at the 8th International Seminar on Security and Defence in the Mediterranean, held in Barcelona on 26 October 2002. The aim of the seminar, annually organised by CIDOB and the Ministry of Defence of Spain, is to increase transparency and trust between governmental representatives and experts – both civilians and members of the armed forces – from both shores of the Mediterranean.

In this edition, which was held at the Palace of Pedralbes, the participants analysed new scenarios for cooperation in the area of security and defence. The seminar opened with a conceptual analysis of the challenge of human security in the Arab world. The second topic for debate was the role of the Mediterranean and the Middle East in the transatlantic dialogue, analysing whether there is a desire for coordination on both sides of the Atlantic, and the impact on the Mediterranean region. The third subject for debate (organised in the format of working groups) was the way to improve the coordination and involvement of all the countries in the Euro-Mediterranean region in sectors such as maritime security, civil protection and crisis management missions. Fourthly and lastly, the seminar closed with a look to the immediate future, including an examination of the preparations of the Mediterranean agenda or Spain's EU Presidency in the first half of 2010.

The seminar was inaugurated by Narcís Serra, President of CIDOB, who affirmed that these seminars offer an invitation to analysis, reflection and action. Serra acknowledged that the debates on the issue of security in the Mediterranean are contaminated by the Arab-Israeli conflict, but that it was important to lay the foundations for greater cooperation in this field. The next speaker, Luis Cuesta, Secretary General for Defence Policy, declared that this forum was becoming an unmissable event, that opportunities for cooperation were emerging in the Mediterranean, and that Spain will attempt to push forward this agenda in the coming years, by organising, for instance, meetings between EU Defence Ministers and their Maghrebi counterparts. Hakan Jevrell, the Swedish Secretary

of State for Defence Policy, claimed that progress could be made in the sectorial fields selected for this particular seminar – maritime security, civil protection and crisis management missions – and he suggested that certain experiences implemented in the sphere of maritime security in the Baltic Sea could be reproduced in the Mediterranean.

HUMAN SECURITY

Narcís Serra stressed that CIDOB has made human security a top priority of its agenda. He mentioned, for example, that the doctrine of human security has been gradually incorporated into the European Union approach. As an example of this, he made reference to the inclusion of the responsibility to protect into the recent revision of the European Security Strategy in 2008.

Mustafa Kamel Al-Sayyid, an Egyptian expert on development issues, focused on the challenge of human security in the Arab world. Al-Sayyid summarised the origins and dimensions of the concept of humanisation and explained that this approach is based on guaranteeing individuals' survival and autonomy. He pointed out that the degree and type of insecurity from which citizens suffered varies from one country to the next. While in some cases, the threat might be a lack of basic elements for survival (a phenomenon generally aggravated by environmental degradation), in others, violence may derive from external aggression and occupation, or from repression by authoritarian regimes. Al-Sayyid stressed that all attempts to make security and development compatible must be adapted to specific realities, and he highlighted, in the case of the Arab world, the negative consequences produced by attempts to impose democracy by force, as well as the need to work with social actors. In the opinion of the Egyptian expert, making progress in the area of human security is the best guarantee to achieve peace and development in the region, and he added that if no human security exists, there can be no security for the State, and that if the security of the State is in danger, then the security of its citizens is also at risk.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION

Carlos Westendorp, adviser of the European Union Reflection Group and with a long diplomatic career (former Minister of Foreign Affairs and ambassador to Washington), chaired a round table at which different approaches to the Mediterranean and Middle East in Transatlantic dialogue were presented. The Arab-Israeli conflict and the impact of political change in the United States were the subjects of many of the addresses and comments.

Álvaro de Vasconcelos, Director of the European Union Institute for Security Studies, began his address by referring to the pessimism that is present in certain European and American views on foreign policy, a policy that (they say) is always guided by the interests of the most powerful, and in which none of the elements appear to change. In contrast, Vasconcelos claims that the Obama factor demonstrates that things can change. With Obama, the approach becomes closer to the European approach; that is to say, global challenges are seen as a way

to bring people together. Based on this approach, Vasconcelos proposed an effective multilateralism, to bring about a system that is not solely based on the classic balance of power. We live in a world in which the alliance between two powers is not enough. We need the others, and not through the use of force, but through diplomacy and agreement. In this respect, Vasconcelos highlighted that the Mediterranean region (extended to Iran and Afghanistan) is at the core of Obama concern; this became clear when Obama decided to make his first call to the president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, and his first speech in Cairo.

Vasconcelos stressed that Europe and the United States have a mutual need for each other. For the US, Europe is essential for issues such as disarmament and support in Afghanistan. For Europe, the United States becomes extremely important for issues such as climate change, the Neighbourhood Policy and the Middle East. Vasconcelos concluded his address pointing that the Obama administration represents an opportunity. Nevertheless, he reminded that his term of office would not go on forever, and that he could not act alone. In the Middle East, Europe needs to do what Obama cannot do, such as working to create a coalition with the Arab countries to support Obama's foreign policy.

Brian Lisko, Captain of a US frigate, gave a more technical address. He explained how the US Coast Guard service operates and its role in the sphere of maritime security, maritime defence, maritime mobility, the protection of natural resources and national defence. He highlighted the chameleon-like ability of these forces to operate seamlessly with both military and civil organisations. He also stressed their blend of law-enforcement capabilities, particularly important for fishing and port security. Furthermore, summarized the international operations that the Coast Guard service had carried out in the fight against drug trafficking and the illegal trafficking of immigrants.

With respect to the Mediterranean, Lisko exposed the initiatives that had been promoted, including the International Maritime Organization's International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI), the Mediterranean Coast Guard Forum and the Proliferation Security Initiative. Finally, Lisko noted that regional and global challenges require regional and global collaboration and that coast guards, thanks to their equipment and maritime capacities, play an important role in this attempt to improve regional stability.

David Hacham, adviser on Arab affairs to the Israeli Ministry of Defence, attempted to clarify his country's foreign policy regarding Palestine. Among the various points he made, he declared that the State of Israel was in favour of accepting the two-state solution, as well as of entering into negotiations with legal representatives, and discussing refugees since 1968, the settlements and Jerusalem. He also pointed out that Israel had withdrawn from the Gaza Strip. However, he stressed that the main obstacle to peace is not Israel, but the Palestinian actors and their internal fractures – factions with international connections (he claimed) as it would be proved afterwards with the links between Hamas and Iran.

With respect to the transatlantic dialogue, Hacham said that Israel considers relations with NATO to be of great importance; they are viewed as a platform for offering a common response to the threats and challenges in which a convergence of interests between the two parties has

taken place. However, Hacham stressed that despite decades of cooperation with NATO, there is still not enough cooperation to deal with the strategic challenges and the threats represented by Iran, terrorism and proliferation in the region. Finally, the speaker proposed a few guidelines for improving relations and cooperation between NATO and Israel. In this respect, he underlined that key issues to be tackled are: the transfer of knowledge, the lack of political stability in the region, the strengthening of radical Islamism, terrorism, the potential threat for oil resources and possible threats which affect not only Israel but also the European Union and NATO.

Yilmaz Aklar, researcher at the Turkish think-tank TEPAV, gave a summary of issues that are of great interest to transatlantic cooperation, such as regional and global scenarios, threats and risks, the triangle of United Nations, NATO and the European Security and Defence Policy, how the new US administration is perceived in the Mediterranean basin, Turkey's importance and role in transatlantic relations, and security in the Mediterranean. Aklar proposed a prospective analysis over the next decade. His analysis revealed the importance of strengthening the structure of transatlantic relations in order to achieve a secure and peaceful world.

As for Turkey, he called on European leaders to be more sincere and predictive with respect to Turkey's inclusion into their structures. Turkey's great experience and key position in the Mediterranean and Middle East should not be ignored, and leaving Turkey aside will not produce positive results. Looking toward 2020, his view was optimistic: he visualised a country that stresses and has consolidated democratic values, freedoms and the Rule of Law, a country that has set out on the path toward modernity. Concerning the relations between Turkey and the United States, he said that the current "give and take" approach should be replaced by a relationship based on more productive cooperation. Finally, Aklar mentioned as elements for consideration the configuration of Asia as a new centre of gravity and the strategic role being played by energy, which is increasingly important.

John Bell, Director of the Middle East programme at the Toledo International Centre for Peace and an ex-diplomat for United Nations and in Canada, based his address on the subject of the Middle East. He began his presentation claiming that a third force is required for stabilisation in the Middle East, due to the fact that there are weak states in the region. Secondly, he commented that we are currently facing new political conditions in which there is a huge margin of error, as the delicate situation in Jerusalem fully demonstrates. Finally he declared that Europe must play a role of greater responsibility.

Unlike Hacham, Bell claimed that NATO should not be the protective umbrella for the different parties, but that this should take place by means of an agreement between the parties (*a sine qua non* condition in the Middle East), in which even non-state actors are involved. Finally, and looking to the future, Bell also stressed the idea of an effective multilateralism with greater US participation in the Golan Heights and more European participation in Gaza. Within this scenario, he considered that Turkey could play a key role, that Europe should intensify its involvement in the region and that Obama, whose intentions are good, should re-examine certain aspects of his foreign policy.

SECTORIAL COOPERATION

The seminar participants divided up into three working groups in which they debated the possibilities of collaboration in the specific areas of maritime security, civil protection and crisis management missions. Each of these groups featured actors who currently have or have had important responsibilities in these areas, in addition to leading experts. The discussions in each of the working groups were carried out in accordance with Chatham House rules, and as a consequence, only the conclusions presented by the group chairmen will be exposed.

The maritime security working group stressed the importance of the sea as a geostrategic factor. The members of this group agreed on the importance of adopting a regional solution and not a functional one when it came to tackling the challenges of maritime security. It was also highlighted the risk of growing piracy and the huge role that naval forces could play. Moreover, participants stressed the need to improve cooperation and the capacity to tackle common problems and challenges. It was also noted that information-sharing was highly important, as well as all support to the countries of the southern shores of the Mediterranean. Finally, even though participants considered that the Union for the Mediterranean could become a space for cooperation in the field of maritime security, it was also mentioned that close attention should be paid to the EU actions and to the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty.

Meanwhile, the civil protection group stressed the need to strengthen cooperation for both objective and subjective reasons. The objective reasons underlined particular vulnerability to all kind of natural disasters to which the countries of the Mediterranean basin are exposed. The subjective reasons included the importance of cooperation as a mechanism for exporting trust and stability. Furthermore, it was pointed out that civil protection projects exist, and that their focus on prevention is increasing. Nevertheless, there is still the need to foster cooperation and common work to consolidate and harmonise the concept of civil protection; which in some countries is still linked to the concept of war. Finally, it was emphasised that the armed forces should play an instrumental role in the sphere of civil protection, in prevention and in post-conflict rehabilitation.

As for the crisis management missions group, it was noted that there are experiences in the Mediterranean region, such as FINUL, from which we can extract lessons. Likewise, there are recent elements such as the Euro-Atlantic convergence, the launching of the Union for the Mediterranean and the development of the ESDP that influence the defining and setting up of crisis management missions. To conclude, it was said that it is too soon to coordinate broad cooperation in the area of crisis management missions. Participants stressed the lack of cooperation from the southern countries in the EU-NATO framework, and the fact that neither the countries from the southern shores nor EU countries had led any major projects. To conclude, it was stressed was the need to regain the OSCE, and the importance to take advantage of the new opportunities to act from a pragmatic point of view for a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

CONCLUSIONS: LOOKING TOWARD 2010

Once the addresses and work groups had ended, the seminar began its closing session with a conclusions table. Miguel Angel Ballesteros, Director of the Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies, chaired the discussion. In his address he stressed the importance of the Mediterranean, an area with undeniable risks and threats such as organised crime and terrorism. Ballesteros underlined that integrating the East with the West and the North with the South is large part of the solution— solutions that do not necessarily offer points of convergence. As an example he mentioned the 5+5 initiative and NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue. Ballesteros noted that these initiatives are forums of complementary cooperation that facilitate understanding and collaboration.

Eduard Soler, Coordinator of CIDOB's Mediterranean and Middle East Programme, underlined the centrality of the Arab-Israeli conflict when considering, during the course of the seminar, new cooperation scenarios in the issue of security in the Mediterranean basin. Yet, Soler pointed out that looking to the future, opportunities have opened up for stronger transatlantic cooperation which will in turn take into consideration the views and priorities of new emerging powers. He emphasised the existence of a demand for a stronger presence of Europe in many fields, as well as in that of security. Furthermore, he stressed that one aspect that was repeated during the course of the seminar was the growing role of Turkey, both at the transatlantic level and in the evolution of the Middle East.

Finally, Fidel Sendagorta, Director General for the Mediterranean, Maghreb and the Middle East of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, brought the seminar to an end with an analysis of the current situation and a preview of Spain's EU Presidency. The summary was not encouraging, as he reminded participants that we began the year with the crisis in Gaza, the consequent paralysing of the Union for the Mediterranean until well into spring, and that even now serious difficulties persist.

Sendagorta agreed that the importance of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a destabilising factor must be stressed, and noted that if anyone ever believed that the Euro-Mediterranean partnership could be depoliticised, this was the product of an illusion. For this reason, nowadays there is greater pressure and conviction about the idea that if we fail to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict today, it may be too late tomorrow. Yet, the Union for Mediterranean could prove to be a major advantage for restarting dialogue on a regional dimension. As for the situation in the Middle East, Sendagorta mentioned, in addition to the aforementioned Arab-Israeli conflict, the nuclear issue in Iran, Iraq's return to full sovereignty, Syria's overcoming of its international isolation, the stabilisation of Lebanon and the diplomatic repositioning of Turkey. Furthermore, Sendagorta mentioned the new external factor; that is, the Obama Administration and its new relationship with the Arab world. He pointed out that while the US government has not achieved much in its first attempts at negotiation; it has a steely determination to make progress towards peace in the region.

In light of all these issues, Spain's Presidency of the EU is conceived as a contribution to peace, stability and dialogue. Spain will take steps to restart peace discussions and to ensure that the institutional reform of the Union for the Mediterranean is consolidated. Finally, the speaker referred to the different priorities for the global agenda that could be transferred to the Mediterranean. Among the issues mentioned were the economic crisis and climate change, including such issues of key importance as the cleaning up of the Mediterranean Sea, sustainable economy and the correct management of water.