

4th International Seminar on Security and Defence in the Mediterranean

Ten years of the Barcelona Process: Results and new aims

New threats according to the European security strategy

Some comments on the European security strategy
Noureddine Mekri

SOME COMMENTS ON THE EUROPEAN SECURITY STRATEGY

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1. The document that deals with the European Security Strategy (ESS) identifies new threats for European security, and for this it reintroduces ideas, analyses and concepts extensively developed fifteen years ago in political discourses and academic writing.

The first impression is that this strategy stems from a process of making a “sanctuary” out of Europe, which sets the principle of “securitization” of Europe without really bearing in mind the international and regional milieu, nor even contemplating the possibility of an interaction with it.

The result is that the threats are enumerated, not so much as risks for the whole international community and therefore with possible joint responses, but rather as so many other intrinsic “phenomena” susceptible of harming the interests of European security.

From this appreciation, it becomes a more or less explicit will to do everything possible to safeguard Europe’s prosperity, stability and security, as if this continent were evolving sheltered from and without interaction with the international environment and the other contiguous geopolitical spheres.

2. These risks and threats, regardless of how real they may be –such as the cases of the planet’s ecological balance or terrorism, at least– appeal to much more strong-willed responses than the measures advocated by the European Union. Regarding these essential, if not vital, issues, *the response should be political and not strategic, and it should flow from a strong international consensus, one which is as wide as possible, in the international institutions, particularly in the UN.*

The strategic response reactivates the threats, even when it is transparent, like that of the European Security Strategy, and it remains prisoner of a short-term view and of a logic, if not of confrontation, at least of opposition.

What we would like is a *frank, constructive political management among members*. And in this partnership we have our ideas and our trump cards to play. This is not a call for charity but rather for partnership. Strategic management is a zero-sum game, in which one

wins and the other loses. What we propose is a partnership in which both win. We prefer to be political partners and not the objects of a strategy.

3. On other issues, such as, for example, the cases of non-proliferation and migration flows, the ESS does not contemplate the underlying problem and seems to be more concerned with safeguarding its own security, power and prosperity. The measures postulated cannot guarantee any of the political, economic and social achievements of Europe in the long run, and even less the peace, security and harmonious development of the euromediterranean region as a whole.

To be convinced of this, two simple questions suffice:

- Why would a nuclear weapon be more dangerous in the hands of one, demonised as needed, than in the hands of the other, exonerated a priori from all responsibility?
- Who can –and with what means– detain a young aspirant to immigration from a country of the South whose horizon is closed and who inexorably appeals to the American and European opulence displayed on hundreds of satellite television channels?

The issue of immigration is a problem that fundamentally requires a collective strategy and a joint action founded not on short-sighted police management but on co-operation and negotiation with the countries of the South from a point of view of development and stabilisation of the populations in the South.

4. In a finite world like today's, totally interconnected and globalized and yet fractured, the problems posed can no longer be dealt with only in terms of threats but also as challenges that must be constructed in a concerted, solidary way for all humanity.

The principal challenge today, readily visible throughout the Mediterranean arc, is the formidable concentration of wealth, power, excessive consumption and waste of resources in Europe and North America; while the immense majority of the planet survives and dies of hunger, ignorance, epidemics, wars and conflicts.

This is a formidable challenge posed in the South, but also by the force of things, in the countries of the North due to the worldization and the interdependence that lead to a world turned into a "global village".

This global challenge makes up the set of threats that the European Security Strategy poses in a fragmented, incomplete way.

5. Democracy and good government, before being dictated to our countries, should prevail in the relations between nations and states.

In this respect, is it necessary to recall that no western State has appeared through spontaneous generation, already prosperous and democratic? Centuries of misery, totalitarianism, dictatorship, wars, slavery, plundering, exploitation of entire peoples in our countries and

of the working class in Europe and America have prepared and made possible the democracy and good government put forth today as the joy that will make our lives better and our future more secure. Who recalls the sufferings that this old land of Spain went through not so long ago?

The purpose here is not to seek out justifications and pretexts for delaying or postponing the necessary democratisation of our countries of the South.

Today it is considered that this is not only an ethical and political demand but also a condition for economic and social development. Nevertheless, the purpose is to greatly underscore the idea that democracy and development are intimately linked in a dialectical relationship.

We admit that there cannot be development without democracy, but it needs to be admitted –and we have experienced this painfully– that wanting to democratise without developing, without institutional mechanisms that point toward preventing a return to the hardest forms of dictatorship and to a pace which is not that of the historical time of the society concerned, reopens the doors to fascism.

6. The Barcelona Process, as well as the NATO Euromediterranean Dialogue, offer the framework for elaborating a true policy of euromediterranean security, if courage, clear-sightedness and good will prevail in one and all.

From this perspective, I would like to recall that since a little over two years ago, the European Union has opened, in the Barcelona Process, a political and security dialogue on the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) with the partner countries of the South. This dialogue, albeit recent, has generated an important potential for agreement and co-operation that could facilitate a greater understanding of the problems of global security in the Mediterranean. Undoubtedly, it would be useful if this dialogue were not confined to a debate on the ESDP but rather went beyond that, integrating the legitimate security concerns of the countries of the South. In this way, it will surely be easier to agree upon the challenges that are posed in the whole region, their breadth and their treatment.

7. Spain has played a front-line role in the rapprochement between the North and South of the Mediterranean, in keeping with its historical vocation as a bridge between the two shores. It has demonstrated this masterfully, arbitrating the Euromediterranean Conference in Barcelona in November 1995, and it is preparing to host the Summit of the Heads of State and of Government of the Barcelona Process on the 27th and 28th of November, 2005.

We hope that on this occasion it achieves establishing the bases for a renewed dialogue on joint security between the North and South of the Mediterranean. It has the political means, and the international climate lends itself to this.