

# 5th International Seminar on Security and Defence in the Mediterranean

## Multi-Dimensional Security

Balance

The Barcelona process and the European neighbourhood policy.  
Rafael Dezcallaraz

### Rafael Dezcallar

*Director-General of Foreign Affairs,  
Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation*

Security in the Mediterranean is perhaps one of the central issues in international relations at the beginning of the 21st century. I am not going to speak about more specialised aspects on this topic, which you know far better than I do, but rather I am going to try to give you a vision of how this issue is seen from the point of view of the current Spanish government.

Security, of course, is a subjective concept. It is necessary to begin by saying that security is not the same for those who have it as for those who do not, and, moreover, the fact of having it sometimes has more to do with perceptions than with reality. The subjectivity of security, that is to say, the ambiguity of the concept in a world like, for example, the Mediterranean, so accustomed to subtleties and the double-dealing nature of words, must not allow us to forget the ultimate political objective which it deals with: to prevent undesired, forced, mandatory changes in situations that are better to handle on the basis of consensus, co-operation and mutual agreement.

On the other hand, the concept of security is a very broad one. It can include both the idea of the use of force in order to prevent those changes or to cause them, and the search for common agreement to generate such changes. It is in this conviction that the word ownership arises, a word which is a key concept in the Barcelona Process, which Spain and the countries that have impelled it firmly believe in. Without ownership the Barcelona Process would have never been possible, because it is a process which is understood as being shared by both parties due to their interests. The same thing, of course, is applicable to the European Neighbourhood Policy or the Alliance of Civilisations initiative which is being promoted by Spain, Turkey and United Nations.

However, security by means of force (or at least by the possibility of using the force when it is strictly necessary out of national interests) and security by means of mutual conviction (collaboration on the basis of shared interests) are non-exclusive paths. That is, no state is going to abandon the instruments of defence and security that guarantee their security by means of force, in exchange simply believing in the idea that through negotiation and dialogue those shared objectives will be reached. Both instruments will continue to be necessary. Of

course, when we are speaking of security, we are not only speaking of its foreign dimension, it is necessary to consider also the domestic dimension of security. Good governance, that is, the control that citizens have over their own lives, their governments and their political systems, is probably the greatest source of domestic security we all have.

So, how have we conceived the generating of security in the Mediterranean within the Barcelona Process? We have conceived it by creating a complex framework of relationships that generate a structure of shared interests, that is, a situation in which the interest of one party must necessarily be taken into account by the other and, in this way, allow the process as a whole to move forward. It is a matter of creating a framework of shared interests to generate a process in the end, the Barcelona Process or other processes that can follow the same direction.

The Barcelona Process, which is the process that has advanced the most since its creation eleven years ago, has a series of dimensions you know very well: political dimension, economic dimension and also a security basket. The political dimension is, without a doubt, the most important because it is the one that creates the ultimate source of legitimacy for all the other dimensions. High-level meetings have taken place (the first summit took place in Barcelona last year) as well as ministerial meetings. However, it must be recognised that the political process has been limited to a certain extent by the contamination of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The political process (councils of ministers, Summit, the existence of a concept of shared interest) exists, and if it did not we would miss it enormously. If all this did not exist, it would be necessary to set to work immediately to start creating it. But, it is true that on its way, in terms of the scope and ambition that have managed to take shape in specific objectives, the political process has been contaminated by the ups and downs in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Lately a basket has been created which is really important when speaking of subjects such as justice and home affairs, immigration issues like the meeting that must be held next year, or the code of conduct on terrorism that was approved in the last summit. Important instruments have been created to generate this awareness of shared interests and values like the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation, whose future potential is very large. All in all, in other words, the limitations of the Barcelona Process must serve us exclusively as stimuli for looking for the way to overcome them and never as arguments to invalidate a process, the need for which is still as vital today as when it was created.

The European Neighbourhood Policy, for its part, is in a certain way a complement to the Barcelona Process. It is a policy based on the concept of neighbourhood, an innovative concept in the European Union, and it takes as a basic premise that the security and prosperity of the EU's near abroad are keys to the stability and prosperity of the region and of the Union itself. For this reason, the neighbourhood policy has not only financial but also co-operation instruments, as well as instruments for generating relationships and monitoring. They are very powerful instruments that, by the way, I must emphasise have been mainly oriented towards the Mediterranean. The Southern countries

have absorbed 70 percent of the budgetary funds of the neighbourhood policy, versus 30 percent of the funds for Eastern countries.

The neighbourhood policy is complementary to the Barcelona Process. Just as the Barcelona Process has a series of horizontal co-operation mechanisms and a meeting structure, the neighbourhood policy establishes a bilateral relationship between each country and the EU. Through such a bilateral relation, each country generates, in common agreement with the Union, an action plan that tries to bring the domestic mechanisms of that country closer to the mechanisms of the single market, thus creating the conditions for an economic and political collaboration with the EU at the highest level.

It has often been stated that the neighbourhood policy is thought to give to those countries which benefit from it all the benefits of the EU except for participation in its institutions. Nevertheless, unlike the countries of the South, for the countries of Eastern Europe, the neighbourhood policy can be contemplated as a prelude to accession. Sometimes when the countries of Eastern Europe insist on speaking about their accession without being prepared yet and the option of the neighbourhood policy is offered to them, they do not understand it so much as an alternative to accession but as an anteroom. While for them it can be an anteroom, for the countries of the South it is the best possible alternative to a relation with the EU based on sharing the single market and interests of all type. Perhaps the term single market sounds excessively economist, but the neighbourhood policy does not refer only to instruments and economic and commercial matters but also to all types of collaborations, including the political collaboration as well as in other spheres.

As mentioned above, security in the Mediterranean is such a central concept in the contemporary international relations that neither the Barcelona Process nor the European Neighbourhood policy are the only routes that are being used to try to enhance, deepen and ensure this security. I can tell you, for example, that this was one of the major issues of the last NATO summit in Riga. There interventions were made by specific countries that have focused on the subject of security in the Mediterranean as a basic concept. Both the Alliance of Civilisations and the question of Afghanistan, a country of an Islamic culture, are subjects very closely connected with the questions of security in the Mediterranean.

And, what are the causes for this question to be such a key subject nowadays? Without a doubt it is due to the series of political and military crises that have been succeeding each other in a series of Islamic countries and that have their political repercussion in the Mediterranean: the problem of the Middle East, the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan, the problems of terrorism, the questions of immigration and, of course, the questions of good governance. It is really difficult to affirm projects of collaboration and good governance between both shores of the Mediterranean when differences in income still exist like that, for example, between Spain and North Africa, differences on the order of thirteen or fourteen times in income per capita. It is fundamental to establish good governance so that stability and security may be possible between both shores of the sea.

I was saying that, aside from the Barcelona Process and the European Neighbourhood Policy, the NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue, the 5+5 Process and the Alliance of Civilisations itself are other routes for trying to tackle the problem. The Alliance, at heart, is a way of supporting the moderate sectors in the face of the extremist ones, affirming the common values that unite the moderate sectors of the north and south. Stigmatisation can be avoided, not only of Islam as a religion supposedly linked to violence (a totally false statement), but in general of any ideology that does not embrace violence. With these common values as a starting point, it is a matter of defining common actions, already specified in the Action Plan presented in the Report of the High-level Group to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in its Istanbul meeting a couple of weeks ago. These common actions must encompass the political sphere as well as the spheres of education, the media and youth.

Deep down, it is a matter of fighting in a battle about the ideas, since the problem of security is going to be resolved much more on the level of ideas and principles than on the level of force. This is precisely the result of seeing the limitations of the use of force or unilateral policies to obtain the objectives that they supposedly achieved. The legitimacy of ideas is a weapon which must not be underestimated; although naturally one must not be ingenuous either and it must always be a complement to other operative forms, for example, in the fight against terrorism. Against terrorism we fight not only with ideas but also with operational co-operation. It must be made clear that, of course, the Alliance of Civilisations is not an instrument to fight against terrorism; it is an instrument to fight against destabilisation, threats to security, the separation between the values and the negative drift in mutual perceptions.

The Alliance does not have to be a means to generate radical changes overnight, either. The battles of ideas are by definition mid-term battles. But whereas it seemed until now that these mutual perceptions, these ideas on double standards, on the operational ability of the Security Council in some cases and the lack of operational capacity in others, were generating greater and greater disagreement between the moderate sectors of the North and the South of the Mediterranean, the Alliance is basically trying to change tendencies, so that the trends do not only go down a negative path, but rather to generate trends in a positive direction as well. Although the Alliance is not a crisis management instrument, I can tell you that has fulfilled this function on one certain occasion. When the cartoon crisis took place, a meeting of the Alliance of Civilisations was held in Doha, and in a parallel way, Kofi Annan called another meeting with the Islamic Conference, the Arab League and the Spanish and Turkish ministers, out of which emerged a declaration calling for moderation and understanding at the height of the crisis. It was the first call for moderation, in the midst of a situation in which it seemed as if nobody would stop the spiral of mutual recriminations and lack of understanding. This meeting took place on a Saturday. The following Monday, this call for moderation was endorsed by the EU Council of Ministers. As I have told you, it is not a matter of trying to change the world overnight, but to reverse tendencies, to take negative trends and try to transform them into positive ones.

None of this will be possible if political crises at heart of the threats or security in the Mediterranean are not tackled. These crises are, for example, the crises of Iraq, where the only solution is the creation of internal consensus and determined, sincere support on the part of the neighbouring countries. I do not believe that there is any country in the region that has an interest in the indefinite continuation of the chaos in Iraq or its dismemberment; it is essential to continue working in the direction I have just outlined. The Afghanistan crisis is another example. At this moment there is still an important degree of support for the presence of international troops in Afghanistan to favour the stabilisation and the institutional reconstruction of that country. It is essential to capitalise on that support, broaden the security work of the international community to other spheres, such as generating concrete co-operation projects so that people perceive that their lives are improving thanks to them. The fight being waged in Afghanistan, as in almost all parts, is not going to be resolved at a military level but at a political level. We must be conscious of the fact that security in the Mediterranean is also at stake in Afghanistan, Iraq and naturally in the Middle East, which continues to be a permanent source of mutual recriminations, accusations, double standards and a lack of understanding between the Western and Islamic worlds.

Thus, there was the necessity for the EU to adopt a political approach, an initiative of its own in this sphere. Spain, France and Italy have decided to take the initiative and to submit to the EU a project of ideas to make the political process advance. It is not a matter of replacing the Quartet, or by all means placing itself in the place of the parts. It is a question, nevertheless, of the EU adopting a higher, more ambitious, and more determined profile in the political impetus of the Quartet. That is to say, the EU cannot be simply waiting for decisions to be made by others and then try to adapt to them, but rather we must push those decisions in the direction of most interest to us, which is none other than the direction of political negotiation. Spain, France and Italy, three countries with troops deployed on the ground in Lebanon, are very conscious of the need to do so and that the option of remaining still, with our arms crossed, waiting for the next crisis or the next war to break out, is not an option. For this reason, we need to give impetus to the political process. For this reason, we were trying to activate the rest of the EU countries. For this reason, we are trying to get the European Council of 14 December 2006 to pass a declaration in which the EU was given a mandate to perform actively in the Quartet and push the political process. As I was saying, the EU is not going to act on its own, but rather it will always do so within the framework of the Quartet, which is the most useful existing structure in the international community for tackling this problem.

As I was saying, security is of course a matter of armies, defence mechanisms and operating agreements, but, in the end, it is much more a question of policy, ideas and principles. The most difficult thing, naturally, is to generate common values and interests and, from there, common actions. That is what the Barcelona Process has been doing for many years. That is what the EU must do now, perhaps with a greater role towards the countries of the South, and that is also what this present conference is undoubtedly going to contribute to developing.