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Intervenção da Secretária de Estado da Defesa Nacional, Ana Santos Pinto, na sessão de abertura dos Colóquios C4.

Forte de São Julião da Barra, Oeiras, 28 de maio de 2019

It is my absolute pleasure to address this distinguished audience and to express how honored we are to host this 24th edition of the C4 colloquiums.

This has been a remarkable collaborative effort, bringing together the Defense Research Institutes of France, Italy, Spain and Portugal, to which we are very pleased to contribute since 1996.

This initiative, as you well know, promotes mutual knowledge of the research being conducted in each country in the field of defense, but it also provides an excellent opportunity for exchanges of views on the central topic covered in these meetings – The Mediterranean Sea.

This is indeed a fundamental endeavor to build mutual understanding and to develop of a common approach to making the Mediterranean an area of peace and security, and an area of prosperity and development for all the communities in its shores.

Dear directors, dear auditors and researchers,

Considering that I have a bit of time to address you, allow me to share my views on the challenges we face in the Mediterranean. These are the thoughts I have gathered both in my current capacity as Defense Secretary of State of Portugal and throughout my work as a researcher particularly focused on the security dynamics affecting the Mediterranean and the Middle East region.

My first remark is to highlight that cooperation remains simultaneously the only way to develop a positive future for the region and a very difficult road to travel.

As I see it, cooperation is crucial across the Mediterranean – between European and African partners. The challenges we face have common sources although they are perceived differently by all involved, making cooperation so much harder.

I can mention the 5+5 initiative that has had some positive results, namely on defense issues, or the Union for the Mediterranean, which despite all the difficulties, has made significant contributions, namely on gender issues as well as precisely on climate-related issues and energy development.

But cooperation is also fundamentally necessary at a horizontal level, among European countries and among African countries, in order to create common diagnoses and common governance mechanisms.

Although this task may seem easier to achieve in Europe, considering that we share common institutions through the European Union, this view may be deceiving. Italian researcher Federica Bicchi's work in particular has helped to shed light onto the many difficulties that southern European states have felt in developing a common view of the Mediterranean upon which a coherent European policy could be developed.¹

¹ https://brill.com/abstract/journals/hjd/13/1/article-p117_117.xml e <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13629390600682917>

The remnants of colonialism are still palpable in many instances of our interactions across the Mediterranean, whereas a shared understanding of the security challenges we face in this region is hampered by the fact that the effects of instability are felt differently by European countries. The result has naturally been a perception of limited political options, and the reality of blocked political forums and unilaterally developed proposals that reflect the minimum common denominator.

Cooperation among African partners is also a non-starter in many ways. The Israeli-Arab conflict, the Western Saharan conflict, and Libya's profoundly troubling situation and the increasing violence in the Sahel region, all contribute to a fragmented regional context.

The destabilizing effects of these conflicts and external interference reinforce regional divisions. In this scenario, cooperation is indeed hard, but the challenges cannot be overcome through individual and competitive approaches.

This leads me to my second point: the global challenges of Population Growth and Migration, Climate Change, Financial Inequality, and Resource Management, just to name a few, are all critically present in the Mediterranean.

This is why the topic you have chosen for this year's edition of the Colloquium is so timely and needed. "The security impact of climate change in the Mediterranean" is an excellent point of entry into the complexities of these challenges.

And these challenges do not know borders, ethnicity, religion or economic status. They do affect the poor more, they affect minorities more, and they reinforce existing patterns of discrimination, but ultimately their impacts are felt across the full spectrum of society. For complex challenges like the ones we face, comprehensive responses are needed. There are no easy or ready-made solutions.

And the Military has a role to play in building these solutions. On the one hand, armed violence is still part of the daily lives of many communities, and on the other hand the military has been called-upon to respond to humanitarian emergencies.

In my view, policies aimed at building human security can only be developed in the absence of direct violence. Professional and equipped Armed Forces are needed to create a context that is favorable to development and political dialogue and, by doing so, reinforce state sovereignty and protect populations from arbitrary violence.

Portuguese military engagement abroad has privileged these types of missions: protecting civilians and also training local forces in order to strengthen state capacity to protect individuals and defend legitimate state institutions. This is the case in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in Mali, or the Central African Republic.

We have also been engaged in providing relief to populations affected by complex emergencies and catastrophes, as was recently the case in Mozambique. So, here as well, the military has a role to play.

The provision of human security, which is often associated with assistance and economic development, may nevertheless depend on the ability to strengthen our responses to sudden incidents as well as on our ability to adapt to the new realities of climate change, resource scarcity, and population growth.

Which leads me to my third and final point: the security implications of climate change and how national security strategies and military strategy on both sides of the Mediterranean need to adapt to this reality.

Here, I have four ideas to propose:

First, prioritize. The effects of climate change may be ample and too big to handle all at once. It is our responsibility to define clear priorities of action that are feasible and that address the most important issues. The sustainable management of scarce and primordial resources like water and arable land seem to me an urgency for all Mediterranean countries.

The Union for the Mediterranean's Experts on Climate and Environmental Change network has reported that "water-poor" population² is projected to increase from 180 million people in 2013 to over 250 million within 20 years. A study published in 2018 in the *Journal of Climate* evidenced an expansion of 10% of the Saharan desert with implication in the water and arable land available, including in countries like Chad.³ This has potential implications in the livelihoods of millions of people across the

² having access to less than 1000m³ of water per capita per year

³ <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/03/180329141035.htm>

Mediterranean and further afield that require concerted action and the protection of these resources in order to ensure its fair use by all.

Second, complement national strategies with empowered communities. By developing homegrown solutions to specific problems, we are more suited to have tailor made answers. This does not mean that states should not be fully invested in this process. Rather it means that the state should actively provide support for local answers as part of its global national strategy.

Third, avoid excessive securitization. Security concerns have the benefit of mobilizing resources, but this does not mean that the right types are mobilized. In times of fear and scarcity, cooperation becomes nearly impossible, so we have an obligation to address the challenges brought by climate change in a positive light that produces more resilient societies.

Creating well-articulated responses to climate-related events in the field of civil protection and humanitarian assistance is an absolute need; establishing channels for information exchange and transparency in order to promote trust on resource management is also critical; sharing technological solutions and financing sustainable energy development that can boost a reshaping of all regional economies is another major opportunity offered by climate change.

Forth, mainstreaming climate change. This priority means that all areas of life, all areas of government, need to look at their model of development and question what needs to be different to assure their sustainability.

Portugal has adopted several legal documents as a follow up to Paris Climate Agreement, but the military face a particularly difficult task in this regard. Reducing the environmental footprint of our military operations is only a small but necessary contribution to reducing our impact on climate. But much like the technological age we are entering, which requires education across all sectors and ages in our societies, climate concerns also need to be mainstreamed, if we want to start preparing for a more sustainable future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Your “food for thought” on these urgent matters are timely contributions to policy making. You are particularly well positioned to understand the specificities of the Mediterranean region and to design proposals that produce tangible results.

I would like to thank all of you for your commitment to this exercise and, particularly, thank General Vitor Viana and all the staff at the Institute of National Defense for organizing the event in Portugal and being host to our partners over the course of the next three days.

I wish you all a fruitful stay in Lisbon and I look very much forward to reading the final documents produced.

Thank you very much.



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