



Proliferation, Counter-Proliferation, and NATO

(Remarks in the SHAPE Lecture Series on “Weapons of Mass Destruction: Risks & Challenges To Alliance Security”.
Brussels, March 9, 2006)

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Colaboraciones n° 866

March 28, 2006

I don't think I have to stress before this audience the importance of systems and weapons of mass destruction (WMD). There is no, to my own knowledge, more powerful weapon than a nuclear device. That's to say, there is only one blunter tool at the disposal of a government than the threat to use a nuclear bomb, to actually use it.

Nations, and NATO's member states, realized early on that the spread of WMD, particularly nuclear systems, would pose a severe threat to the World stability. That's why the western community has been promoting treaties and more informal agreements in order to consolidate what we can call a non-proliferation regime. I think the At-

lantic Alliance can congratulate itself for the work it has carried out in this field. It has played a role in convincing certain countries to abandon their programs, and it has also provided credibility and support for various mechanisms that make up the current non-proliferation regime.

Having said that, I also must say that we presently find ourselves at a critical point. The effectiveness of the non-proliferation regime that we have put in place has been called into question, while, at the same time, new strategic realities call for an urgent review of its founding principles. Let me explain myself.

First, the effectiveness of the regime was based on three basic assumptions: a) the goodwill of the parties involved; b) the technical intelligence capability to know about the status of nuclear programs, whether open or clandestine; and c) the possibility to put in place and enforce sanctions by the international community against those who breach the commitments of non-proliferation.

We now know that these original assumptions have proved wrong. Many signatories of the NPT have carried out covered research programs that have led to a de facto opaque proliferation, or placed a few countries inches away to become nuclear powers. We now see the efforts and progress made by NPT members, like North Korea, Iraq or Iran, not to mention those who refrain themselves from becoming NPT parties.

We have discovered also that our inspections mechanisms and intelligence services have been incapable of preventing and thwarting the trafficking of technological means and know-how, activities that have spread widely during the last years. Furthermore, we have learned that isolated individuals with a minimum infrastructure at their service have been able to develop international networks for trafficking nuclear components, operating at levels that exceed the worst possible forecast prepared by intelligence analysts.

We also know today the diplomatic and political difficulties in rallying

the international community to denounce specific nuclear proliferators. Iran likely will have to face a Security Council deliberation on its failure to accept its obligations regarding nuclear programs, but it took three years of discussions to do, and even so it is not clear that the UN body will reach a consensus on what to do next.

Secondly, it is something more than the effectiveness what is being called into question. For years the international community considered the handling of non-proliferation matters to be a question among states, since only states had the capacity to finance and sustain sophisticated research programs and the ability to exploit them, weaponizing the results. This is no longer the case. I already said the certain well-placed individuals could move proliferation at shocking speeds. But there is more. A new sphere outside or beyond the State boundary has emerged: there are already too many indications of attempts by terrorist groups to acquire the knowledge and technology required to produce and use weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear and radiological systems. In sum, new actors made themselves present in the proliferation game complicating it.

The second principle to be reviewed concerns the traditional western vision that nuclear weapons exist to deter not to be used. Which has been valid for the western world for so many years may be not so valid for other people, particularly the terrorists linked to Islamist extrem-

ism. If we take seriously the words of Osama bin Laden, there is no room to doubt that Al Qaeda, if possessing a nuclear device, would have no problem whatsoever in using it if a nuclear explosion move them closer to obtain their goals. Thus, we are not talking anymore about a deterrence game. We should prepare ourselves to deal with a real nuclear threat, and if all preventive measures fail, with the management of the consequences of a terrorist nuclear or radiological attack in our soil.

Proliferation is the second threat to our security after Islamist terrorism. But the convergence of proliferation and terrorism should alert us of the real dangers entailed by the triangle of WMD, rogue states, and terrorism.

In this respect, I'm convinced that the non-proliferation regime we have today has been overtaken by events. Nonetheless, the Alliance continues to provide an ideal framework for member states to reflect upon the new challenges to our collective security. In my view, these reflections should lead to new proposals for adapting mechanisms and for preparing NATO itself to take the necessary measures to combat all the various stages involved in the proliferation process.

Obviously, the Alliance should not replace the non-proliferation control framework in place. Simply, this is not its mission. However, it must give shape to a counter-proliferation strategy that clearly defines the measures to be adopted and possi-

ble joint action to be taken in view of the inability of the current regime to respond to a crisis situation. For instance, NATO must continue to make progress with regard to the ever-complex matter of intelligence sharing. But the truth is that in face of a global threat, States must provide information and intelligence so that the Alliance can effectively evaluate the seriousness of any particular threat, establish monitoring mechanisms, and coordinate the various governments. The joint handling of a problem facilitates the decision-making process and strengthens the ties among NATO members.

Equally, the sheer variety of traffickers and links established between certain governments and terrorists groups obliges us to adopt new approaches and create new structures. NATO must consider whether the current structure is the most effective when it comes to sharing the information needed to deal with the present threat.

Well, up to here I have been lingering on what NATO should face and reflect upon, particularly before the coming summit at the end of this year. Let me tell you now what I do believe NATO should do. On a personal bases, of course.

My ideas can be found, nonetheless, in a little book we produced at FAES, the Foundation I'm the president in Madrid, last October, and titled "NATO, an Alliance for freedom". By the way, freely accessible through our web site.

First of all, I do believe in the Atlantic Alliance. Sincerely. NATO was created to better safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of western nations. It was built upon the principles of democracy, individual liberties and the rule of law. And as such is equally vital today.

Second, NATO has been a very successful organization. The Alliance was able to protect our freedom and democracies from the soviet threat; and it has been very relevant in exporting security and stability to troubled areas. Now is imperative to defend our values and way of life against a new threat, Islamist extremism and terrorism. The main purpose of NATO should remain to collectively preserve our democracies, though its mission must be adapted to the new environment, as it has been adapted before, during the Cold War years and after. The new mission should be clear: to combat jihadism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These are slightly different threats, I know, but they tend to merge in the Greater Middle East. If the allies want to prevail collectively over the gathering threats, NATO must refocus itself in fighting terror, the major threat today. Indeed, an existential threat if we bear in mind what Islamist terrorism plan for ourselves, crusaders and infidels.

Third, in order to fight effectively jihadism, NATO must undertake a whole set of reforms. Some conceptual, other structural. I propose, for instance, the development of a homeland security dimension by the

Alliance. Jihadism is not only a police or an intelligence matter; it has become a security and defense issue as well. If a ICBM, a ballistic missile, nuclear tipped is launched against our soil from a distant country, X, the attack will be considered an attack against all, according to our famous article 5 from the Washington treaty, and NATO could be involved institutionally without any doubt or complain. Why then if a container carries a nuclear device into one of our civilian harbours, in a terrorist plot, should we consider it a police matter? Why jihadist elements, living among us, are activated to conduct a devastating strike against us in our own soil must be declared an internal or domestic affair?

I do think NATO must come to terms with the new strategic realities, that we are at war because some foes declared it upon us. They could be hidden in a cave far away, but their vision is crystal clear: they want to impose a social regime over a vast extension of land; they want to recreate the caliphate, from Al Andalus to the Philippines; they want their fundamentalist reading of Islam to be the ruling law.

It is true that Al Qaeda and others do not have planes, tanks, they don't hold today a territory for themselves, and they don't present a lineal front. Furthermore, the casualties of this war in what we are in are very limited in historical terms. Nonetheless, Islamist terror is not a criminal activity. Is something more. To win over terror we will need much more than just intelligence or

police actions. We will need more than defensive measures. And that's where NATO should play a vital role.

We cannot say that today the frontier between internal and external security has become blurred, and at the same time keep old administrative and institutional barriers, separating them. NATO must become an integral defense and security organization. In order to do so, I propose that interior ministers, or those responsible for homeland security, should be invited to NAC meetings, as the EU foreign affairs minister one day, not too long ago, invited defense ministers for informal council sessions. At the same time, NATO must engage the EU at the homeland security level, given the fact that the EU has developed some cooperation in internal and judicial affairs.

But high-level politics must be accompanied by operational measures as well. Thus, I defend the creation of a functional command devoted to counterterrorism. This command should promote –as the transformation command does in its field– a new NATO approach, where the organization take stock of all available assets, including interior forces of a military nature, like the Spanish civil Guard, the French Gendarmerie, or the Italian Carabinieri. It should also promote structures, procedures, special units, training and deployment of the armed forces so they can be used, when needed, against terrorism. But by changing the way armed forces– and us– conceive the terrorist phenomenon, it

should help to transform our armed forces to better understand what jihadism means, and the best way to fight it.

Finally, we must accept that jihadism is a global movement, in its geographical scope as well as the different levels of its expression, from the car bomb to the sermons in the radical mosques, or Internet sites, or TV stations. It's a global phenomenon. But because it is global geographically, NATO must adapt itself to this reality. We have been enlarging as a way to cope with the old division from the Cold War; and in order to promote stability in NATO's traditional periphery. It is my view that we must change the way we conceive geographically the Alliance. If defending our own values against the radical Islamists is the future of NATO, we must open the doors to those nations that share our values, that defend them on the ground, and that they are willing and able to join the fight against jihadism. I propose that NATO invite as full members Japan, Australia and Israel.

I know that Israel will present some political difficulties. Or, at least, more difficulties than the other two I propose as potential candidates. But let me be clear I consider that treating Israel as it were not an integral part of the western world is a deep mistake that will affect our ability to prevail in this long war against jihadism. I think it is in our mutual interest to have Israel as a formal ally.

I don't want to take much more time but allow me to present to you two different cases that, in fact, are complementary when talking about Israel in NATO. The first one is Iran. I think that nobody will have doubt already about the real intentions of Teheran concerning the nuclear program. The ayatollahs want the bomb, and unless we do something to thwart their effort, the bomb they will get. We have spent three years now trying to incite the Iranian diplomatically to free their research, to no avail. And now we are caught in an evil alternative: to keep playing the diplomatic game, or to take action. And if so, of what nature, strike Iran, promote regime change? While we decide ourselves, we should prepare for the worst, and the worst here is to face a nuclear Iran at some point.

I think we must do whatever is in our hand to prevent Iran to become nuclear, but we should also prepare ourselves to force a nuclear Iran to behave wisely. If Iran see and feels that Israel is an integral part of our side, I think our deterrence posture will be strengthened; having a NATO umbrella in the Middle East will have, that's my view, a beneficial impact. I won't weaken stability, on the contrary. Alternatively, having an Israel that is isolated from us will increase the chances that a miscalculation of some short may happen, engulfing everyone, including NATO members, into a conflict that incalculable consequences.

Secondly, we are witnessing day after day that the Palestinian nationalism is being transformed in

Islamist extremism. Hamas victory is not bringing to the Palestinian territories just a hot rhetoric against Israel, but a social order based in theocracy and religious intolerance, among other things. Just count the growing number of Palestinian women veiled in the Gaza Strip, something not seeing before. So, Israel is exposed to a new threat, the one emerging from Islamic extremism and terrorism. And as such has become another piece in the global puzzle the jihadists are trying to put together.

So, let me conclude my remarks by saying again that I believe in the Atlantic Alliance. But NATO must rise up to the current challenges, and adapt to the new strategic environment that is not made exclusively of peace support operations. NATO has been through a severe crisis during the last years, not just because of Iraq. The divisions over Iraq were simply the expression of deeper maladies. It is time to face reality. We need to redress the capabilities gap between American and Europeans, NATO must engage in a constructive relationship with the EU; and it must keep the enlargement as an open process. But even if we tackle successfully these issues, NATO will not be at the center stage as a collective security organization. NATO again was created to defend and preserve our freedom against the threat of the day. Today's threats are different, but they are for real. That we must accept. If we prefer the other road, negating that we have a declared enemy, a powerful one, and keep our business as usual, NATO is

condemned to failure. Even worst, we, as free societies, will be condemned to be defeated.

Thank you very much.