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Alocução de Sua Excelência, o Ministro da Defesa Nacional, ao jantar da Reunião  
do Conselho dos Presidentes do *Eurodefense*

*Speech by H. E., the Minister of National Defense, at the dinner of the  
Eurodefense Presidents' Council Meeting*

Lisboa, 14 de abril de 2016

*Dear Mr. President of the Eurodefense Presidents' Council,  
**General Patrick Bellouard,***

*Dear President of Eurodefense-Portugal, Dear Friend, **António  
Figueiredo Lopes,***

*Your Excellency, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces,  
**General Pina Monteiro,***

*Your Excellency, Chief of the Air Force Staff, **General Manuel  
Teixeira Rolo,***

*Your Excellency, Acting Chief of the Land Forces Staff, **General  
Pereira Agostinho,***

*Your Excellency, Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff, **Vice-Admiral  
António Bonifácio Lopes,***

*Your Excellency, President of the National Defense Institute,  
**General Vítor Viana***

*Your Excellency, Representative of the General Commander of the  
National Republican Guard, **Major General Rui Moura***

*Your Excellences, members of the Eurodefense Associations,*

*Dear Distinguished Guests,*

## Introductory Remarks

I am happy to be both your *host* and your *guest*, on the distinguished occasion of the Eurodefense Presidents' Council Meeting. As you know, this beautiful Fort is the official residence of the Minister of Defence and I am honored that tonight I can say “my home is your home”.

Allow me to thank António – a predecessor of mine, one with whom I share many common views about defense matters – for the invitation to address such a distinguished and qualified audience, on a topical issue.

I'd dare say this is the right forum to treat the subject of the new *European Union Global Strategy*. As a matter of fact, *Eurodefense* has been devoted, since

its inception, to European security and defense matters and, thus, I am certain that, as a specialized civil society organization, it can provide a valuable contribution to the on-going discussions.

## **The European Union Global Strategy**

Let me recall briefly the genesis of the drafting process of a *Global Strategy of the European Union*.

Under the High Representative's initiative, Member States perceived and have agreed, in June 2015, that a new Strategy is needed, allowing the EU to reposition itself as an international actor. This is due to the fact that, in the past two years, profound changes occurred in the security environment. The "arc of instability" around Europe is a fact, from Tunisia to Ukraine and in the South, from North

Africa to the Sahel region. These turbulent times rendered the new EUGS consensually necessary and deemed to be crucial.

That is why the exercise we are now engaged in has been long overdue, considering – to put it in the words of the High Representative – the “increasingly connected, but also increasingly complex and contested world we live in.”

Thus, Portugal has been contributing to the works on this *Strategy*, welcoming the fact it opens opportunities to all relevant stakeholders: Member States, institutions and civil society have here an opportunity to contribute to strengthen our global position and agree on a clear definition of our own strategic interests.

Portugal has submitted two *position papers* on the strategy - one with its national vision for another, presented together with Spain – and two specific

contributions, one of a geographical scope and a thematic one.

The first was drafted together with Italy and Spain and addresses the strategic partnerships with sub-Saharan Africa, reaffirming the vital importance of this regional quadrant, and in particular of the areas contiguous to the Middle East and North Africa. It's from this part of the world - which some call the "global Mediterranean" - that the most pressing challenges to the existential future of Europe emerge. In addition to having recommended the strengthening of the neighborhood policy instruments with the Southern partners and the progress of the revision of the Cotonou Agreement, our paper insisted that the training dimension in the field of "security" and that mechanisms of conflict prevention should be strengthened.

With the other, in line with the *Strategy for Blue Growth* and the *Maritime Security Strategy*, Portugal proposed a concrete agenda to establish a global ocean governance and to ensure maritime safety, both in what concern environment and the preservation of the marine ecosystem and in what concerns economics and the preservation of transport routes of marine resources and energy.

We value the priorities outlined for the Global Strategy: supporting democratic resilience both internally and in the *enlarged neighbourhood* region is the paramount goal of this exercise. Therefore, the Strategy's proposal of a comprehensive and multidimensional approach to *crisis management* and *conflict resolution* is indisputable and almost obvious.

This vision is mostly directed to two quadrants of the compass: one needs only to recall that to the East,





we face the agendas of actors such as Russia and that, to the South, we have an obligation to provide protection to the victims of the conflict in Syria, to defend our interests and values against the terrorism of Daesh and to fight poverty and hopelessness in the African continent. Also, the repositioning of US foreign policy – with American diplomacy focusing its action on the Asia-Pacific regional and in the vertical continental axis with central and southern America is another fundamental factor Europe must take into consideration.

In addition, other challenges to our environment which hardly need to be named - such as cybercrime, trafficking in human beings and nationalist recidivism - call out for the mainstreaming of security and defense in European policies.



Against this background, Europe cannot fail to achieve its role as a major international actor and take the lead regarding its own defence and security. This is why Portugal welcomes the preparatory works to draft and adopt a *European Defense Action Plan*, in close articulation with the *Global Strategy*, of which it should become a key instrument for countering the growing threats to our security environment.

But above all it is urgent we commit ourselves to implementing it, once it is approved. In this regard, let me highlight three points in this Plan, which will be capital in fostering the strategic autonomy the EU is lacking:

- i) We need to further reinforce the technological and industrial defense base of the EU. In this regard, the investment in the scientific and research

dimensions of our defense industries of dual use – civilian and military - is fundamental.

ii) Then, we need to set up mechanisms, which enable us to use our defense technologies in an integrated manner, so as to maximize its benefits.

iii) Finally, we have to take seriously the need to counter our dependency from non-European resources, which undermines our ability to use our defense capacities according to our needs, and develop an internal market of defense.

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A European common defence should be an essential instrument of foreign policy, serving Europe's geopolitical and diplomatic priorities: from maritime security to the fight against proliferation of chemical weapons and to online threats to our security and defence.

That is why “defence” cannot be consumed or absorbed by “security”, as the first is increasingly a

guardian of the second, which requires we maximize the potential of the “D” component of our *Common Foreign and Defence Policy*, enabling it to act preventively rather than reactively.

In this regard, I would like to underline that Portugal participates, without exception, in all of these different dimensions: EUNAVFOR ATALANTA and EUTM Somalia, in the crucial Horn of Africa, EUMAM in Central African Republic, EUTM in Mali and, finally, we will also participate in SOPHIA, to help in the critical efforts to stabilize Libya.

Coming back to the process of drafting a Global Strategy, let me highlight some of the challenges it should be able to provide an answer to, in the field of security and defence: i) How can the European Global Strategy promote a common strategic culture among Member States? How will this culture translate into a common defence grammar? How will

this culture and practice help mitigate and act preventively towards the threats that affect our citizens, protecting their rights and freedoms? How can the EUGS be recognisable by the EU's international partners? What kind of partnerships should the Union develop with NATO, the UN and OSCE or other regional institutions?

Among all these questions, allow me to briefly elaborate on the EU/NATO relationship, as without denying the fundamental genetic value of NATO to our defense, I am convinced there is room not for competition but for true complementarity.

Thus, the Global Strategy should also contribute to help reassessing perceptions of organizational efficiency between EU (and its CSDP) and NATO, underlining their complementary strategic functions and their specific added value to regional and

international security. This is a difficult task, considering that NATO and the EU comprise some states with distinct strategic cultures and outlooks, which affect the comprehensiveness of security agendas.

The defence dimension of EUGS should pave the way to solve the problem of access to NATO's command, control and planning capabilities, by CSDP operations, under the *Berlin Plus agreement*. This could be done, whether by introducing an 'opt-out clause' option, for those NATO allies and European Member States that often block the use of this mechanism, therefore abstaining, without impairing access to those capabilities by the EU, as a part or a whole.

A clearer position of the US administration on European defence would also be welcomed. This

would facilitate the building of coalitions of willing, under a NATO-EU partnership flag and the development of commitments regarding Permanent Structure Cooperation among like-minded and strategically capable partners, without unnecessary capabilities overstretch and undesirable institutional tensions. On capabilities, EDA has identified deficits, which a better cooperation with NATO and the US could help overcoming, on what concerns strategic air lift, air-to-air refuelling, surveillance, reconnaissance and suppression of enemy air defences.

## **Concluding Remarks**

Dear Friends,



I have talked for long enough, and please forgive me for that...

It is true that the present European moment is fraught with contradictions: on the one hand, the transnational terrorist attacks in the heart of Europe and symbolically directed at our integration project, require greater internal cohesion and the economic and financial crisis requires that we revisit the idea of "federal deepening". On the other, centrifugal forces, as manifested by the threat of the *Brexit* and by the self-exclusion of the Visegrad group states (and not only them...) of the obligation to host their share of refugees, do not seem to augur anything auspicious for this Strategy.

Indeed, for now we ignore its content. And the threat of delaying its adoption by the European Council, as the June session will coincide with the British



referendum, and the difficulty of deciding on the “status” of such strategy as an EU document reflect our unfortunate internal inconsistencies and weaknesses.

However, despite the concerns I acknowledged with regard to what will be the final fate of the *project of a European Global Strategy*, I cannot resist ending on a note of trust in the vitality of the European project to overcome the many challenges ahead and the somber shadows left by the three-fold crisis we have been suffering from: i) the financial crisis; ii) the socioeconomic crisis, which has mostly affected the southern European countries and iii) the general and somehow blurred crisis of the democratic legitimacy of the European process and institutions.



I am convinced a credible common European defense, that is capable of countering our citizens' feelings of unrest and able to deter threats to the enjoyment of human rights at home and abroad, can decisively contribute to our *ever closer union*. That is, in my view, the role defense can - and should - play in materializing the dream of our founding fathers.