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**Intervenção Secretária de Estado da Defesa Nacional, Ana Santos Pinto, keynote speech on “Pursuing sustainable development goals in an effort to reduce security hazards – the future of cooperation on defence policies in the 5+5 area”, IV Medthink Forum, Dialogue 5+5.**

Corinthia Palace Hotel, Malta, 1 julho de 2019

Vocativos

It is always a great pleasure to return to a MedThink Forum, within the Dialogue 5+5, and meet familiar faces and long-standing friends. But, above all, it is always reassuring to play witness to the renewed enthusiasm this initiative continues to stimulate around us. I congratulate all involved in the organization of this event and for continue the spirit of dialogue and friendship on which this initiative is based.

I am deeply honored to have been asked to address you as a keynote speaker. Over the last three years, I sat on that side of the stage and listened to others’ views, looked for clues as to how we could enhance cooperation and trust across the two shores of the Mediterranean. So, thank you very much Sénem Florensa and Nasser Kamel for inviting me to be in the IV MedThink Forum. It is with a great sense of responsibility that I address you today, to share some ideas I have

gathered over the course of these years of interaction.

Before addressing the specific issue of cooperation on defense policies in the 5+5 area, allow me to emphasize how profoundly convinced I am that the only sensible and rational political view of the Mediterranean is that of a shared community of values and interests.

Every time we reiterate our commitment to “working together” as we did in Valletta last January, or to building “alliances” and addressing “common challenges” through “shared management”, as we did in Algiers last year, we are not just making a rhetorical statement.

We are making a commitment and acknowledging that present and future challenges can only be dealt efficiently through cooperation. If we compete on issues that are fundamental to the lives of millions of people, on both shores of this historical sea, we will have failed completely in our responsibilities to build sustainability and to promote peace and prosperity for all.

Miles’ law teaches us that “Where you stand depends on where you sit”, and over the last months I have been sitting on one of the political chairs of the Defense Ministry in Portugal. My current position has certainly shaped my views of the world, but it has not changed fundamentally my beliefs – nor the old academic habits of starting with conceptual clarification before a conversation!

And this is where I would begin my reflection on the topic that was proposed to this Keynote Speech. Conceptual confusion can lead to political misleading and inefficiency – at best – and to very negative consequences – at worst.

Linking security and social and economic challenges is a risky business.

We have had plenty of academic and policy-based reflection on the risks of securitizing poverty and the ineffective nature of the conflict-poverty nexus in designing policies that improve people’s lives.

The so called “Global War on Terror” that followed the terrorist attacks of 9/11 [nine-eleven] in the US provided mounting evidence that, although political narratives identified poverty with terrorism, there was neither hard empirical evidence to back that up, nor were subsequent aid policies fully designed to address poverty.

As consequence, at that time some rules of aid were rewritten, some misperceptions were created and there were negative impacts on development assistance, as resources were diverted to hard security priorities.

Currently, a new focus on resilience seems to put emphasis on the importance of local communities developing their own capacity to fight sources of insecurity that affect them and us. But policy change does not happen at the fast pace of political rhetoric.

Administrative and bureaucratic habits linger and institutional interests, new and old, compete for limited resources, including political attention. There is no quick solution to these issues, but we should be committed to monitoring these trends and holding decision-makers accountable. Building new communities of interest that are active and resilient in the promotion of a truly shared view of challenges – as the ones developing out of the 5+5 initiatives – could prove immensely important.

I would like to highlight **two major aspects** that in my view need to be incorporated in our work **to reduce security hazards in 5+5 area**. **The first** is the long-term policy of social and economic regional development; and **the second** is short-term measures for fighting regional security challenges.

**Regarding the first, reduce security hazards in 5+5 area.**

Policy initiatives aimed at supporting integrated and sustainable social and economic regional development are absolutely crucial to respond to existing challenges.

They are all well known to you: from demographics to resource management, from employment and education to political participation, all these issues require that we take seriously our development policies and our commitments to promoting Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

The work developed by the European Union, which has historically been committed to these principles, continues to be irreplaceable. The attention devoted by the Union for the Mediterranean to the opportunities of energy development and climate-related action is critical to harness this opportunity to build integrated and more sustainable economic development models, on both sides of the Mediterranean.

*We are learning together.*

Infrastructure development, technological innovation, logistics and transports, but also developing local solutions to local challenges and adapting processes – all these principles will remain critical for success.

So, my vision is one where EU cooperation with regional organizations like the Arab Maghreb Union, the 5+5 initiative or with regional development banks, creates proposals where all partners' interests are represented and where ownership and accountability are more than buzzwords.

But short-term responses to security challenges are also needed, and this takes me to my **second point: the role of defense initiatives in**

**this context.**

In the absence of the positive results that long-term sustainable development should achieve, we will be faced with increasingly complex security contexts. There is a real danger that security hazards and political and social instability will increase in the region, affecting communities on both sides.

Defense and security policies are taking these scenarios into account as they plan and prepare for future action.

And I can only speak from the view point of my country and from a European perspective. We can address citizens' security concerns in a constructive and collaborative manner, but there is also a real danger that competitive approaches, based on the illusion of security through segregation, may prosper.

Portugal has, so far, managed to avoid nationalist and xenophobic political forces from taking root in society, and so, for instance on migration policies, the government has pursued a rather liberal and open policy. Defense has remained largely removed from this policy field.

At the European level, however, we have witnessed a growing securitization of EU responses to migration flows. Portuguese Armed Forces have been engaged in the Mediterranean, mostly focusing on saving human life at sea.

The EU's strategic agenda for 2019-24, approved by the European Council on June 20<sup>th</sup>, sets the priorities for the next European leaders that will take over EU institutions for the following years. The mandate is clear: reinforce EU values and democratic institutions; reenergize European economy through technological innovation; assure environmental sustainability and fair social Europe that leaves no one behind; and actively promote its interests worldwide.

This approach, set on protecting the "European way of life" in what is perceived as a volatile and competitive context, should not be pursued at the expense of others. The risks to these goals are shared by all, because prosperity, freedom, human dignity are not only European values, they are human values. The risks are therefore shared and do not require only security responses.

But in my view, there is a role for defense in this process. And in my last remark I would like to highlight how the 5+5 Defense Initiative, which was established in 2004, has proved a surprisingly positive and resilient format. Regular meetings at Ministerial level have not been interrupted since 2004 and we have regularly enlarged our areas of

cooperation, working to promote dialogue and knowledge sharing, to increase interoperability of armed forces, as well as to enhance trust and mutual understanding.

Today we cooperate on surveillance and maritime security, air-space security, armed forces contribution to civil protection, training and research, but also cyberdefense, green defense, unmanned aerial vehicles and security releases of climate variables.

Guided by the principles of pragmatism, voluntary participation, consensual decision-making and economy of resources, the non-binding nature of this initiative has proved a useful format with concrete results improving people's security.

Defense has also been actively involved in contributing to reach sustainable goals, either by improving healthcare in military hospitals, which are also open to the population, or investing in education as is the case of the 5+5 Defense College.

Gender equality and climate action are two areas which we are cooperating to mainstream in defense. Portugal has recently approved a sectorial plan for gender equality in defense and we have a long-standing award for environmental innovation.

More needs to be done on this issue, including on the need to adapt the mission of the military to respond to climate-related catastrophes and playing an active role in climate change mitigation.

In this regard, there is a particularly urgent challenge related to the need to consensual views on how climate change should be reflected in national defense policies. The 5+5 defense initiative is particularly important in this regard. Securitizing access to vital natural resources like water and land must be avoided and cooperative solutions need to be incorporated in our national security strategies.

Now is the time to have these discussions.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends

Let me finish by reiterating how thrilled I am to see that this rich 5+5 community is growing, that it is becoming an influential advocate for cooperative solutions and how much it can contribute to mitigate divergent views of what can only be our shared future.

I wish you all inspiring and fruitful days of work ahead!  
Thank you very much.

