

Canadian NATO
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
canadienne de l'OTAN

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
to the Visit to Rome, Italy by the Mediterranean Special
Group**

Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)

**Naples, Italy
June 14-15, 2009**

Report

The Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association has the honour to present its report on the *Visit to Naples, Italy by the Mediterranean Special Group*, June 14-15, 2009. More than 40 members of parliament from across NATO member countries, North Africa and the Middle East participated in the event chaired by Vahit Erdem (Turkey) and hosted by the head of the Italian delegation to the NATO PA, Sergio De Gregorio. The Canadian delegation was represented by Senator Raynell Andreychuk.

INTRODUCTION

The meeting opened with a keynote presentation by Minister of State Mehmet Aydin of Turkey, who spoke about the need to reinvigorate the “Alliance of Civilizations,” particularly by reaching out to young people who make up much of the growing populations of the Mediterranean region.

MIGRATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Migration was a major theme of the event and participants heard from experts Massimo Livi Bacci of the University of Florence and Derek Lutterbeck of the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies (MEDAC) at the University of Malta.

Dr. Bacci underlined that although population growth trends in North Africa are slowing, the rate of growth there and in Sub-Saharan Africa is still large enough to create many irregular migrants to Europe unless the root causes of migration are addressed. Following a general overview of per-capita income and GNP performances across the European, Middle Eastern and Sub-Saharan regions, Dr. Bacci pointed to the increasing economic performance gap between Europe and Africa and the continuing gap in birth rates between the regions. As a result, there are both “push” and “pull” factors inducing migrants to cross the Mediterranean.

Migration flows across the Mediterranean have triggered new policy trends with the introduction of legal quotas, skill requirements and restrictive family reunification criteria. Dr. Bacci identified the absence of European governance dealing with migration issues as a significant problem. He also pointed to the need to devote more attention to the protection of the rights of migrants.

Dr. Lutterbeck emphasized that co-operation among countries in the region seems to have reduced the number of illegal migrants. It is not clear, however, if increased border control would regulate migration or simply divert flows to different routes. Dr. Lutterbeck also explained that Southern Mediterranean countries do not have the adequate infrastructure to accept returning migrants and few countries were willing to readmit migrants without receiving compensation. He also highlighted the need to find a balance between the safeguard of human rights and security, the biggest challenge he believed the international community had to face when tackling migration in the Mediterranean region.

IMPACT OF GLOBAL ECONOMIC TRENDS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION AND THE GULF

Tariq Yousef, Dean of the Dubai School of Government, provided a framework to analyze the impact of global economic trends in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The GCC countries are facing three main challenges: employment, globalization and government. The GCC population is young and growing and need to find useful employment. Secondly, GCC countries had to tackle the issue of how to expand their economies by integrating into global markets. Finally, GCC governments' accountability, transparency, democracy as well as their capacity to address security matters needs to be improved.

Silvia Valli, Head of the International Economic Affairs Unit at the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance, addressed the effects of the financial crisis on Europe and Italy. The most noticeable response to the crisis was the extraordinarily broad and international policy reaction. Dr. Valli suggested that the worst effects of the current crisis have passed and that a few signals indicated that the situation was slowly improving.

Joseph Saba, Director of the Strategic Cooperation and Technical Assistance in the MENA Region at the World Bank Group, spoke about the importance of remittances in the Middle East. GCC countries are a much larger source of remittances than Europe and their economic development is significant to development in the broader Middle East. Mr. Saba emphasized that all GCC countries have started programmes to diversify their economies. However, he believed the biggest challenge GCC countries faced was improving the education skills of their young population and creating new job opportunities in the private sector. Finally, Mr. Saba accentuated that opening markets to foreign investments is needed to create jobs and encourage growth.

Issues raised during the discussion period concerned the need to diversify the economies in the region, especially those of the Gulf countries. Dr. Yousef pointed to diversification as a tool to create jobs, boost growth and limit migration. The biggest failure the governments in the region could encounter was to misread the moment and decide not to open their economies to global markets. The GCC countries are increasingly looking to the West for examples and opportunities to integrate their economies in the global markets and were eager to engage in know-how practice exchange.

MARITIME SECURITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Admiral Mark Fitzgerald, Commander Joint Forces Command South, provided an overview of NATO security operations in the Mediterranean, and regional co-operation.

Operation Active Endeavour (OAE) is NATO's multi-faceted response to the terrorist threat. OAE had evolved from a small-scale deployment providing a modest military presence, into a comprehensive, continuously adapting, counter-terrorism operation throughout the Mediterranean. Additionally, more than 50 countries provided information for an information-sharing network. Admiral Fitzgerald concluded his presentation by highlighting NATO's efforts to promote regional partnerships in the form of individual partnership action plans and special relationships. Mediterranean security, the Admiral

accentuated, depended on a dual approach that focused on regional capability building and cooperation.

Peter Hinchliffe, Marine Director of the International Chamber of Shipping, focused on the current problem of piracy in the waters off Somalia. An enduring solution to piracy in Somalia could only come from the establishment of a functional government and provision of law both ashore and in Somali waters. To this end, the international community as well as the UN and NATO could play a vital role. This said, Mr. Hinchliffe drew attention to the fact that the international shipping industry had recognized its role in terms of passive defence of its ships, crew vigilance, and preparedness. Possible strategies to combat the spread of acts of piracy further into the Indian Ocean and down the East African Coast could be: increased air surveillance, increased inter-navy cooperation and provision of armed uniformed military guards on vulnerable merchant ships.

In answer to a question on examples of anti-terrorist activities under OAE in the Mediterranean, Admiral Fitzgerald explained that suspicious activity was detected and reported to appropriate law enforcement agencies. Examples of these reports were: drug trafficking, movements of explosives, large numbers of irregular immigrants, and several ships behaving suspiciously - some of which were subsequently impounded.

Other issues raised were the identification of specific routes for ships that could be easily patrolled, the lack of an international legal framework dealing with piracy, and the desirability of armed guards on ships.

Both speakers emphasized that the Indian Ocean had too many available routes, making patrolling almost an impossible task. Both Admiral Fitzgerald and Mr. Hinchliffe underlined the importance of tackling Somalia's internal conflict and instability as well as working collectively to enhance an effective international legal framework. Moreover, the piracy problem could only be solved by confronting the country's fragility and raising security awareness. NATO could certainly bring an added value to international efforts against piracy by adopting a "comprehensive" approach, ensuring proper communication and co-ordination of anti-piracy operations.

ENERGY SECURITY IN THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

Francis Ghilès, Senior Research Fellow at the International Relations and Development Studies Foundation (CIDOB), focused his presentation on the role of the Mediterranean region in European energy security. The differences in energy consumption between the two shores of the Mediterranean highlighted the existing economic gap between North African countries and their European counterparts. Mr. Ghilès explained that average consumption in North Africa stood at 1 ton of oil per capita compared with 3 in northern European countries. Moreover, the population of North Africa, some 83 million today, would probably exceed 100 million by 2020. Mr. Ghilès believed that, in order to satisfy their increased energy requirements, Maghreb countries would need to invest more and co-ordinate more among each other. Furthermore, high-energy demands and high costs risked putting considerable pressure on the supply of energy, which could lead to shortages in some European countries.

In answer to questions raised by parliamentarians, Mr. Ghilès underlined that Maghreb countries needed to present themselves as reliable and united partners to the EU and international companies. Secondly, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) as well as the Union for the Mediterranean could contribute to a growing awareness of the benefits of economic integration in North Africa. He also stressed that the EU needs to reduce its dependency on Russia. The EU is Russia's biggest market for gas and an integrated energy policy among all member states would provide the EU with greater negotiating powers.

POLITICAL TRENDS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Andrea Margelletti, President of the Centre of International Studies (Ce.S.I.), discussed the Shi'ite renaissance in the Middle East. The liberation of Iraqi Shi'ites from the Sunni-dominated regime of Saddam Hussein had empowered the country's Shi'ite majority and helped launch a broad Shi'ite revival with the potential of changing the balance in the Middle East for the years to come. Mr. Margelletti pointed to the Shi'ite revival as a golden opportunity to build bridges with the region's Shiites, especially in Iran, and pave the way for a more stable Middle East. Shi'ites accounted for about 90% of Iranians, some 70% of the people living in the Persian Gulf region, and approximately 50% of those in the arc from Lebanon to Pakistan - some 140 million people in all. Many, long marginalized from power, were now clamouring for greater rights and more political influence.

Alessandro Politi, Director of the Nomisma Outpost for Strategic and Security Scenarios (OSSS), provided the parliamentarians with a geopolitical overview of the Levant, the Gulf regions and Eurasia, focusing on strategic scenarios. Mr. Politi highlighted the increasing importance of the Indian Ocean where Iran, India and China had increasing military and commercial abilities to compete in the region. Moving to the Gulf-Levant region, Mr. Politi pointed to Iran's atomic program and support for Hizb'Allah in Lebanon as sensitive issues that, even if addressed, would not help further the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. The US was identified as the only actor capable of enhancing an imperfect Middle East peace

Final questions focused on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Mr. Margelletti believed that Hamas had missed out on an important opportunity to bring stability to Gaza. Lack of democracy and dialogue had only helped pave the way for the alienation of the majority of the population. Moreover, Mr. Margelletti did not see a concerted effort between Hamas and Al-Fatah or the establishment of a Palestinian independent state as a future scenario.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Leon Benoit, M.P.
Chair

Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)
ACTIVITY	Visit to Rome, Italy by the Mediterranean Special Group
DESTINATION	Naples, Italy
DATES	June 14-15, 2009
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Senator Raynell Andreychuk
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$2,401.59
ACCOMMODATION	\$670.80
HOSPITALITY	\$0.00
PER DIEMS	\$184.68
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$3,257.07