

Canadian NATO  
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire  
canadienne de l'OTAN

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation  
Visit to Rome, Italy by the Mediterranean Special Group  
Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)**

**Rome, Italy  
July 4-5, 2008**

# Report

The Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association has the honour to present its report on the *Visit to Rome, Italy by the Mediterranean Special Group*, July 4-5, 2008. The visit was led by Chairman Jean Michel Boucheron (France), and the delegation consisted of Parliamentarians from 35 different NATO countries and their Mediterranean Associates. The Canadian delegation was represented by Senator Raynell Andreychuk.

This year's seminar aimed at evaluating the state of Euro-Mediterranean relations against the backdrop of new and existing regional policy initiatives, persisting challenges and limited transformation in the region.

## **THE EVOLUTION OF EURO-MEDITERRANEAN RELATIONS: A TALE OF CONTRASTS**

The opening session aimed at introducing the rationale of the seminar and setting the general framework of the discussions that were to follow. After welcoming remarks the Vice-Chairman of the GSM emphasised the importance of building confidence in the region as a prerequisite for healthier Euro-Mediterranean co-operation and highlighted, in this regard, the efforts of the NATO PA's GSM as a forum for dialogue between lawmakers from NATO countries and their counterparts in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Ambassador Florensa, for his part, provided in his presentation a comprehensive account that traced the evolution of Euro-Mediterranean relations, emphasising, throughout, the contrasts that have marked their development particularly since the establishment of the European Community (EC) in 1957. As a prelude to his presentation, the seminar's keynote speaker remarked that development in the northern (European) shores of the Mediterranean was matched, by and large, by a backward movement in the southern (Arab) Mediterranean countries. In his view, the failure of the latter group of countries to nurture "indigenous modernisation" is an ill that has stayed with southern Mediterranean countries (SMCs) to date. In support of his argument, the Ambassador asserted that the "modernisation" introduced by the European colonial powers in these countries had been rejected as "imposed modernisation", but that, on the other hand, the socialist developmental paths followed subsequently by most of the Arab world had led to an impasse. The controversial nature of Ambassador Florensa's opening remarks, not helped by the absence of a clear definition of the concept of "modernisation" in his presentation, was inevitably picked upon by the audience, starting with Vahit Erdem (Turkey) who asked the speaker about his view on the likely impact of Turkey's eventual EU accession on the "modernisation" of other SMCs.

When tracing the evolution of Euro-Mediterranean co-operation, the Ambassador rightly pointed out that, prior to 1972 and for a number of reasons, the EC had had no coherent Mediterranean policy, but that its relations with the southern Mediterranean countries had been codified by a patchwork of mostly commercial co-operation agreements. In 1972, however, the EC devised what was known as the 'Global Mediterranean Policy', which in turn achieved very few of its declared objectives. It was not until the fall of the Berlin Wall, argued the Ambassador, that Europe's Mediterranean policy had received a

real impetus, which, along with the overall conjectural optimism relating at the time to resolution of the Middle East conflict, had culminated in the Barcelona conference of 1995, giving rise to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP).

Eight years after its much-celebrated launch, the EMP was largely deemed to have failed to deliver on the expectations it raised in 1995. At that point, argued Ambassador Florensa, and in response to its “big bang” enlargement of 2004, the EU decided to introduce a new policy framework, designed to govern its relations with its new Eastern neighbours, known as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Realising that its existing southern Mediterranean policy had become bogged down with (sub-) regional conflicts, the EU seized the opportunity to present the ENP as a framework for “enhanced bilateral co-operation” with its southern Mediterranean neighbours. While the ENP’s bilateralism is seen as having been beneficial to some SMCs but not others, its overall performance in the ‘South’ remains modest, not least because of its relatively weak financial instrument (ENPI).

In conclusion, Ambassador Florensa suggested that, having tried multilateralism and bilateralism in its relations with the SMCs, the EU seemed to have attained a convergence between the two approaches in its Mediterranean policy. The new strategy, argued the Ambassador, was incarnated by the model proposed in the new UfM which, besides conjoining bilateralism and multilateralism, introduced co-ownership of the new decision-making structures. In the debate that followed the keynote address by Ambassador Florensa, questions from the audience revolved around the issue of how can the proposed EU policy frameworks tackle the problems of demographic “explosion” and conflict in the South. While the Ambassador’s reply affirmed that, as regards the demographic dimension, recent trends in the SMCs were indicating a slowdown of population growth and an inevitable gradual convergence of growth rates in the South with those of the North, he reminded the audience that most of these regional policy initiatives did not directly provide for the active resolution of the existing conflicts. He argued that, it was only through the promotion of South-South cooperation and economic integration that these frameworks can be expected to indirectly provide sustainable solutions to these problems.

### **“ANNAPOLIS”: A NEW DYNAMIC IN AN ENDEMIC PROBLEM?**

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the longest-standing obstacle to peace and harmony in the Mediterranean. Despite the laying of a few milestones in the peace process during the 90s, the conflict took a dramatic turn at the end of that decade. After more than seven years of renewed hostility, exacerbated by a deteriorating international security context, the main protagonists convened in Annapolis, in the US, in November 2007 to give a much-needed impetus to an elusive peace process. But does this effort amount to “too little, too late”, as deemed by many observers? Are the local and international conditions of the conflict ripe for meaningful progress to take place? The first session of the seminar brought together representatives of both belligerent parties (Israel and Palestine) and an independent expert, with a view to assessing the merits of the “Annapolis Process”, if at all.

Ambassador Oded ERAN, Israel’s former envoy to the EU and NATO and currently director of Tel Aviv’s Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), began by setting out

his vision for the way ahead in the peace process, starting out from the premise that “Annapolis” has a 50% chance of success. Indeed, the session’s first speaker pointed out to the current weaknesses underlying the actions of the US, Israeli and Palestinian leaderships as constituting an unfavourable political reality to contend with. As such, the Ambassador posited that the current conflict-resolution paradigm applied to the Israel-Palestinian case, aiming at nothing less than a comprehensive solution – i.e. including the resolution of the major contentious issues such as the status of Jerusalem and borders, ought to give way to a more pragmatic approach that aims at achieving ‘what is feasible in the current circumstances’. In this vein, Ambassador Eran recommended that, as far as Israel was concerned, it should 1/ begin implementing its commitments in relation to settlements, 2/ ease travel restrictions in the West Bank to alleviate the economic pressure on the Palestinian territories, 3/ help promote intra-Palestinian dialogue, 4/ release Palestinian prisoners especially those supportive of Abu Mazen, 5/ transfer the security authority to the Palestinians in the West Bank. Based on his negotiation experience, Ambassador Eran concluded by referring to Israel’s peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan as illustrations of the merits of the alternative model he recommends.

This last contention, however, was the starting point of the presentation of Leila SHAHID, General Delegate of Palestine to the EU, who refuted the analogy between Israel’s peace processes with other Arab countries and that with Palestine on the basis that the latter, contrary to Egypt and Jordan, was not a fully-fledged state. Ms Shahid then described the Annapolis conference as an effort aimed at returning to multilateralism in the framework of the Road Map, while regretting that the absence of implementation mechanisms is a serious shortfall of this endeavour. Commenting further on Ambassador Eran’s recommendations, Ms Shahid indicated that his prescriptions were inscribed in the Road Map, but that limiting the objectives of peace to improving the status quo was a non-starter. “We should discuss where we are going (final status)”, she affirmed, for “Annapolis” is a two-track process consisting of 1/ the Road Map and 2/ final status negotiations. Moreover, while sharing her Israeli co-panelist’s evaluation of the political weakness characterising the US, Israeli and Palestinian leaderships, Ms Shahid expressed more pessimism than Ambassador Eran as regards the prospects of “Annapolis”. Her skepticism derives from what she described as the “fragmentation of the West Bank” which resembles anything but a homogenous territory on which a future viable Palestinian state could be built. Finishing on a positive note, Ms Shahid acknowledged that, so far, the only encouraging aspect of “Annapolis” had been the financial donations (Paris and Berlin conferences), showing that the EU can and should play a more proactive role in the resolution of the conflict. She warned, however, that despite all the obstacles, failure was not an option as it would only benefit extremist forces.

Faced with the almost impossible task of providing an impartial analysis of the latest developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Roberto Menotti of the Aspen Institute Italia settled for a discussion of the international dynamics of the conflict as the main focus of his contribution. The events of 11 September 2001 (9/11) in the United States were inevitably the starting point of the senior researcher’s presentation, as a turning point for the international order in general, let alone the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For Mr. Menotti, “Annapolis” is the result of a mounting international sense of urgency

relative to the situation in the Middle East, which, to him, helps explain the “absurdity” of the proposed timeline (end of 2008). While acknowledging the increasingly influential role played by Iran in this conflict, especially since the invasion of Iraq, Mr. Menotti refuted the idea that “Annapolis” was a US-led attempt to contain Iran through the Israeli Palestinian conflict. Whatever the international origins of “Annapolis”, the last presentation concluded by recognising that bilateral negotiations between the main protagonists had to remain the focus of all international efforts.

Iran was the main subject of the discussions that followed the three presentations. While it was unanimously agreed that Iran’s acquiescence had to be factored in, the role of non-state actors was perceived as more worrisome and requiring concerted action. Also, questions related to the feasibility of a future Palestinian state were debated, with issues like the impact of Israel’s “security wall” and borders representing the main points of disagreements and divergence.

### **ENERGY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

The Mediterranean energy scene has invariably been characterised by interdependence between consumers in the northern flank and producers on the North African shores. Yet, in the current context of global energy tensions, this state of affairs seems to have failed to translate into a relationship based on trust, capable of ensuring energy security in the region. Instead, energy relations in the Mediterranean have exhibited many of the dilemmas facing producers and consumers on the global energy market. To take stock of the state of Euro-Mediterranean energy relations, the second session of the GSM’s Rome seminar brought together representatives from consumer- and producer-countries as well as an independent expert, in the aim of discussing the preoccupations and priorities of both sides and debating the way in which relations between them could be optimised.

From the ‘consumers side’, Alessandro Ortis, President of the Italian Regulatory Authority for Electricity and Gas, opened the session with a comprehensive account on the role of regulators in the promotion of a stable Mediterranean energy market and ensuring energy security in the region. In so doing, Mr. Ortis spoke at length about the role of the Association of the Mediterranean Regulators for Electricity and Gas (MEDREG), a recently-created permanent working group composed of regulatory authorities and energy ministries of 20 Mediterranean countries, whose primary objective is the harmonisation of the electricity and gas regulatory frameworks around the Mediterranean, in the aim of facilitating the establishment of a transparent energy market in the region. To this end, MEDREG has established close links with a number of structures and organisations around the Mediterranean, not solely in the energy sector, helping promote Euro Mediterranean co-operation further.

Representing one of the major Mediterranean energy players, Chawki Rahal of Algeria’s Sonatrach provided, in his presentation, the view from the producers’ side as regards the streamlining of Euro-Mediterranean energy relations. After introducing the state-owned hydrocarbon company, of which he is the executive vice-president in charge of Marketing activities, Mr. Rahal set out the extent of the interdependence characterising Algeria’s energy relations with Europe by showing a/ his country’s economic dependence on energy exports, b/ the predominance of partnerships in Sonatrach’s

upstream development, c/ the reliability and share of Algeria's supplies in the total gas imports of a number of European countries and their likely increase in the near future, and d/ the heavy investment of Sonatrach in infrastructure (pipelines notably). However, Mr. Rahal deplored that, despite all the efforts and commitments of producers like Algeria's Sonatrach, "mixed signals" were emanating from the consumers' side, especially as regards allowing third-party suppliers access to the final downstream European markets, which is now constituting one of the main commercial objectives of producers. For Sonatrach's vice-president, it was clear that the energy security of European consumers is intrinsically linked to balanced relationships with producers that guarantee equitable market access, which in turn depends on stable and non-discriminatory legal frameworks. In view of the emergence of more competitive and growing markets in Asia and the United States, anything less than this (ideal) situation would only be detrimental to Europe.

To put these two accounts (consumers and producers) in a broader, global perspective, Giacomo Luciani, Director of the Gulf Research Centre Foundation in Geneva, provided an insight into the dynamics of the global energy context especially as regards prices, supply, demand and investment. He then analysed, in detail, the challenges that pertain to the Mediterranean energy scene, which he categorised into 1/ the oil market reform challenge, 2/ the energy security challenge and 3/ the de-carbonisation challenge. The first challenge, according to Professor Luciani, consists of shifting price discovery from futures to transparent and efficient physical markets. In the Mediterranean, the organisation of such markets could be envisaged around the hub-ports of Ceyhan in Turkey and Trieste in Italy. In discussing the energy security challenge, furthermore, the session's third speaker referred to variables relating to market liberalisation, investment, redundancy and resource nationalism. Across the board of these factors, cooperation between producers and consumers was identified by Professor Luciani as a prerequisite for the success of any strategy. As far as de-carbonisation is concerned, the implications for the Mediterranean revolve around the promotion of new technologies such as carbon capture and sequestration and the widespread use of renewable and nuclear energy sources. Finally, Professor Luciani concluded by highlighting the importance of energy as a key component of co-operation in the Mediterranean and opined that devising a strategy to tackle these three challenges would be a good start in this direction.

### **THE SAHEL REGION: A NEW FRONT IN 'THE WAR ON TERROR'?**

The Sahel is a sparsely-populated transnational desert belt that runs from the Atlantic coast of North-West Africa to the Red Sea in the east. Its Western parts, south of Algeria, Western Sahara and Libya, have been a hotbed of illicit trafficking, rebellions and terrorist activities with implications often reaching further than the boundaries of the region. As a result, developments in the Sahel have for the last few years been on the radars of world powers, especially the United States. The aim of the third session was to get an insight into the US assessment and policy towards the risk emanating from the Sahel and to evaluate the regional and international dynamics constraining and shaping this policy.

Ambassador Dell L. Dailey, the US State Department Counterterrorism Co-ordinator, opened the session with a comprehensive presentation of his government's assessment

of the threat posed by the situation in the Sahel not just for countries in the region, but for Europe and the United States too. Unequivocally, the main risk to these countries' interests was said to reside in the ability of al-Qaeda and its affiliates in the region, notably al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), "to operate, train, equip and rest" in this vast terrain. Though not the only group operating in the region, AQIM is a newly-formed terrorist organisation capitalising on the residual structures of Algeria's GSPC (Groupe salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat) and conducting its operations mainly in Algeria, regularly targeting government forces and Western symbols such as the UN and foreign workers. As a response to this menace, the United States, in co-operation with the countries of the region, devised the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCP) in 2005 as a strategy aimed at 'supporting individual country and regional efforts to build and sustain capacity to prevent and defeat terrorism and extremism in the Maghreb and the Sahel'. Building on the 'Pan-Sahel Initiative', the TSCP involves countries from the region, marshalling resources from a number of US Departments and agencies, including the US Department of Defense, Justice, USAID, the Treasury, etc. Before moving on to explaining the rationale behind the creation of AFRICOM (United States Africa Command), Ambassador Dailey insisted that, though labeled as a military programme, the TSCP recognises that extremism can only be defeated by a holistic strategy that includes the promotion of good governance and security-sector military and nonmilitary reform. In other words, the US policy in the Sahel consists of "hard" and "soft" elements. In conclusion, Ambassador Dailey described AFRICOM, which will assume mission responsibility as of 1 October 2008, as a "Unified Command" that would "serve as the Department of Defense operational lead for support to the State Department's implementation of US foreign policy in Africa". Its purpose was said to be "to support diplomatic and development initiatives, and to ultimately pursue optimal integration of the 3Ds—diplomacy, development, and defence".

To put the current US policy towards the Maghreb in a broader perspective, Yahia H. Zoubir of EUROMED Marseille School of Management in France described the evolution of US-Maghreb relations since the Cold War period. He asserted that, for a long time, the United States was not interested in the Maghreb as such, considering it Europe and particularly France's *chasse gardée*. This attitude, however, was all to change after the events of 9/11. Compared to Europe, the US policy towards the Maghreb often differed, but similarities were drawn by Professor Zoubir between European and US attitudes towards democracy promotion in the region, Moroccan Algerian relations and the Western Sahara conflict and the economic potential of the Maghreb. Concluding by using the 'rehabilitation' of the Libyan regime as an illustration of the recent change in US policy in the region, Professor Zoubir warned against the precedent that would be set in the region by the current US administration's explicit support for Morocco's 'autonomy proposal' for Western Sahara.

The third presentation, given by Hugh Roberts, formerly the head of the North Africa project at the International Crisis Group (ICG), analysed the correlation between the state of political reform in the Maghreb countries and security in the region. Warning that "security concerns should not be a pretext for delaying overdue political reform", Dr Roberts reminded the audience that, 20 years on from the events of 5 October 1988 in Algeria, political reform in the Maghreb as a whole had been very meager indeed, especially when compared to what has been achieved over the same period in Eastern

Europe. What is more, Dr Roberts argued, parallels can be drawn between the current political and socio-economic conditions in Algeria and the situation prevailing in the country in the months and years leading up to those landmark events. Turning to the Western policies of democracy promotion in the region, the session's third speaker criticised their approach on many accounts. Firstly, models applied to undermine Communism in Eastern Europe cannot be applied to the 'authoritarian regimes of the Maghreb', where political pluralism is nothing but a façade for military rule. Secondly, Dr Roberts pilloried Western policies for wrongly politicising 'identity fault-lines' in the Maghreb countries. The third lacuna consisted, in the eyes of the speaker, of neglecting the imbalance between power branches in these countries, helping sustain the prevalence of the executive over all other branches. Finally, Dr Roberts remarked that, as a result of this disenfranchisement, Maghreb societies show no active loyalty for the state elites and cautioned that security policies should not be allowed to prevent restoring state-society relationships.

In the discussion that followed these three presentations, the questions raised revolved around the definition of terrorism and the difference with the right to resistance of oppressed people and the link between al-Qaeda and local terrorist groups in the Maghreb. In response, Ambassador Dailey affirmed that there was no universal definition of terrorism, but that regional organisations such as the African Union had one. He also confirmed that the United States was "born out of resistance" and that, therefore, it was not against resistance "so long as it did not target civilian populations". The Ambassador also confirmed that there was evidence demonstrating financial and "guidance" links between the global al-Qaeda leadership and local North African affiliates.

### **UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN: JUST WHAT IS NEEDED?**

The GSM seminar in Rome took place a week before the Paris Summit of 13 July, which was to bring together the heads of states and governments of over 44 Euro-Mediterranean countries in order to officially launch what is now known as 'The Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean'. This originally French initiative, introduced by President Nicolas Sarkozy in 2007, that has since integrated the EU's foreign policy apparatus, adds to an already complex architecture of (European) policy initiatives in the Mediterranean and is presented as a panacea to the paralysis that has characterised the Euro-Mediterranean political scene. Having gone through some of the main challenges facing the Mediterranean region today, the seminar had to devote a session to this new political project in order to evaluate its added value and prospects to meaningfully address these problems.

To this end, two of Ambassador Alain Le Roy's closest aides, Gilles Mentré and Lauren Gimenez, from the Presidency of the French Republic, were invited to present the content and format of the proposed Union. Speaking in sequence, the two French officials confirmed that the UfM was born out of the realisation that the greatest menace to peace and stability in the Mediterranean emanated from the persisting socio-economic disparities between the North and South of the Mare Nostrum. Its aim, it was contended, is not to replace the existing regional cooperation frameworks, notably the Barcelona Process, but rather to inject them with enough political impetus and institutional novelty to overcome these challenges. Learning from the shortcomings of



its predecessors, the new policy was said to concentrate on micro-level projects (renewable energy, natural risk management, education, research and professional training, etc.) in order to avoid the political complexity and rigidity of the region. In terms of new governance structures, furthermore, the French representatives indicated that the purpose of the new co residency and secretariat was twofold: firstly, to embody co-ownership and equal footing and, secondly, to circumvent the European Commission's inherent rigidity both in terms of mandate and decision-making mechanisms. The other novelty of the UfM, the speakers asserted, relates to relying on both public and private funds for the financing of the devised projects.

Providing an independent perspective on the project, Roberto Aliboni of the Istituto Affari Internazionali of Rome drew attention to the adaptation that the initial proposal of Nicolas Sarkozy required in order to secure the necessary support of Germany and the European Commission primarily. Though the result has been a different and diluted project, its added value was deemed, nonetheless, sufficient to get the 'Mediterranean' on the move again. Like most of the audience, Mr. Aliboni's assessment of the UfM was largely positive. Members of parliament from both NATO and MENA countries also applauded the initiative and expressed their wish to see it involve countries beyond the Mediterranean borders, such as from the Gulf and Africa. Overall, the participants concluded the seminar on the positive feeling that the UfM was just what is needed at this particular juncture in the Mediterranean. Only for most academic experts, this enthusiasm was much too reminiscent of the euphoria that accompanied the launch of the EMP in 1995. For them, it was more a matter of 'wait and see'.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Senator Raynell Andreychuk  
Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)

## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)	
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Visit to Rome, Italy by the Mediterranean Special Group	
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Rome, Italy	
<b>DATES</b>	July 4-5, 2008	
<b>DELEGATION</b>		
SENATE	Senator Raynell Andreychuk	
HOUSE OF COMMONS		
STAFF		
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>		<b>\$3,638.59</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>		<b>\$1,042.80</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>		<b>\$ 0.00</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>		<b>\$ 297.75</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>		<b>\$ 0.00</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES</b>		<b>\$ 0.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$4,979.14</b>