

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΕΝΩΣΗ
ΓΙΑ ΑΤΛΑΝΤΙΚΗ
& ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΗ ΣΥΝΕΡΓΑΣΙΑ

Μέλος της ΕΝΩΣΗΣ ΑΤΛΑΝΤΙΚΟΥ ΣΥΜΦΩΝΟΥ



GREEK ASSOCIATION
FOR ATLANTIC
& EUROPEAN COOPERATION

Member of the ATLANTIC TREATY ASSOCIATION



NATO Parliamentary Assembly

MEDITERRANEAN AND MIDDLE EAST
SPECIAL GROUP (GSM)
SUB-COMMITTEE ON NATO PARTNERSHIPS (PCNP)

Intervention by

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Mr. President, Respected Members of Parliaments, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a big honor for me to participate in this conference and I would like to thank Mr. Stylianidis, Mr. Lamers, as well as the organizers for giving me the possibility to share with you some information and thoughts.

Your Former President and Vice-President, Dr. Karl Lamers asked me to say few words about the NGO of NATO, the Atlantic Treaty Association, in which he is also the President and I was a President some years ago.

So, I can take my invitation like a proof of sensitivity of You, the Parliamentarians, to the role that NGO plays.

Mr. President, today the international system is composed of many structures of interaction. Governments are not the only actors on the global level. Interdependence and globalization reinforce the role of Non-Governmental Organizations since they do not face the restrictions of Governmental actors.

With this is occasion, allow me to repeat what I have very often emphasized in several of my presentations.

I have pointed out many times that one of the most fundamental issues in democracy, is that of public support.

We all know that without recognition and strong public support, NATO's future could be at risk, not because there is no role and task for NATO, but because sufficient public recognition and support are essential requirements, for the long-term survival of any organisation in democratic societies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

NATO membership is nothing more than a promise by each of its members to be part of a community of values, and to act diplomatically and militarily to protect that.

Public support guarantees the political will of the signature to be member of the Alliance. It provides the legitimacy, which matters as much as power.

And as you know public support requires educating public and educated public means efforts on the way that the people know the reason of being member of NATO and how this issue will affect their life.



The Atlantic Treaty Association and its role

In order to establish a new framework for security and cooperation, the NGOs of NATO, such as the Atlantic Treaty Association and its partners must play a dynamic role in promoting education, transparency and confidence in all the trans-Atlantic area.

The Atlantic Treaty Association and each national committees and councils have played this essential role for the last 60 years.

The Atlantic Treaty Association is an international body composed of National Organisations from all member Countries of the Alliance and all Countries members of the program Partnership for Peace.

The A.T.A. strives to defend and develop the basic principles of the Treaty: peace, freedom, well-being and security.

The purposes of the Atlantic Treaty Association are:

- to educate and inform the public concerning the missions and responsibilities of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization;
- to conduct research into the various purposes and activities of the Organization and its development in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in the Mediterranean countries;
- to promote the solidarity;
- to promote democracy;
- to develop permanent cooperation between all its member organizations for a better achievement of such purposes.

There should be regular exchanges of information and ideas between the National Committees about the situation in the particular countries, to achieve a deeper understanding, which leads to the elimination of provocative behavior.

This will result in improving awareness on how one country's actions affect the security perceptions of neighboring countries.

The spirit of co-operation generated by this atmosphere of good will allows the Atlantic Associations to play a discrete but efficient role in promoting understanding and collaboration among the countries of the Euro-Atlantic area.

Besides having to educate the public opinion, being the best recipients of messages coming from the public, they should address these messages to their Governments, Parliaments, Political Parties, the leadership of NATO and other decision makers.



This means, that it is very important for the A.T.A. and its National Committees to maintain and strengthen their links with Governments and Parliaments, so that both of them can be fully aware of public opinion on confidence-building.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is why I think that the President of ATA, Karl Lamers, who also was the President of the NATO PA, with these two positions has contributed greatly to building a bridge between Your Parliamentary Assembly and our Atlantic Treaty Association.

The Mediterranean dimension

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Permit me to provide some thoughts about the Mediterranean Dialogue of NATO, the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, and the decisions of the last NATO Summits.

I cannot stress how important these frameworks are for promoting and ensuring security and stability in the region.

First of all, they provide a forum for a constructive security dialogue. Secondly, they offer practical cooperation activities in various security matters. And thirdly, they allow Partners to participate in NATO peacekeeping-related operations.

Coming to the current problems, I think that it is safe to say that although there are certain similarities between what is happening in each of these countries that make the events appear as a “snowball”, each individual situation has its own particularities.

What is needed on a diplomatic level is to be supportive of requests for assistance and cooperation by these countries, without pompous and arrogant statements or, and this is very important, without patronizing tendencies, but in a spirit of true cooperative partnership.

My sense, however, is that the people calling for change, and in the name of those that have already lost their lives in the struggle of “freedom versus power”, will not readily accept the replacement of one hegemon by another, whether this be internally or externally.

There is general agreement that because the complexity of problems, no single initiative can address both the longer term and proximate of instability of this region.



Only a combination of institutions and policy tools can produce most of the desired results. Complementarity is the key word and each organization should concentrate its effort on it.

As we speak about Mediterranean issues let me remind to you an Arab proverb:
“In the desert of life, the wise person travels by caravan, where the fool prefers to travel alone”.

Emphasis should be laid upon support of civil society and institution building, while promoting, at the same time, economic and social development in the countries in question.

Respected Members of Parliaments,

Lets come again to one fundamental issue that is tyrannizing the relations between these countries and the West. It is the suspicion and mistrust!

The issue of Mediterranean Security is full of misunderstandings: misunderstanding on behalf people of Europe and misunderstanding on behalf people of Mediterranean. Only with information and transparency we can overcome the problems causing confusion.

This is why, many years ago our Atlantic Treaty Association begun to establish Antennas in all Mediterranean partner countries and we started dialogue and cooperation with think tanks, Universities, other Institutions and Individual Experts.

Permit me to put in your discretion the need to spread this message within your constituencies.

The issue of migration

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Yesterday and today we have discussed a lot about migration. During the first six months of this year, when Greece hold presidency to the Council of the European Union, they have put this issue as one of the top in the agenda and they made certain decision.

Migration is a long - lasting and difficult issue for Europe in general. At the same time it is a bloody issue, in particular, for these EU member states having been suffering directly the implications of it (Greece, Italy, Spain, and also Turkey), remaining, also, both a complicated and contentious issue for a number of other EU member states.

Nowadays, with conflict mounting in the Middle East, with violence and oppression driving people out of parts of Africa to Europe, EU countries are facing a big challenge concerning migration as thousands of migrants have drowned in the Mediterranean trying to reach Europe's shores in search of both asylum and work.

In this very Hall of Senate, we organized in cooperation with an international organization namely AWEPA, European Parliamentarians for Africa, a dialogue with approximately 40 Members of Parliament from Europe on the subject on migration and development.



This dialogue was continued one month ago in South Africa, in Johannesburg, in Pan-African Parliament, with hundreds of African and European Parliamentarians. I had there the honor to inform the audience there about the decisions taken during the Hellenic Presidency, tackling the problems arising from illegal migration in economy, social cohesion and political stability.

If you are interested, you can easily discover these results on the website of the European Union.

Also, the new Greek Commissioner, Mr. Dimitris Avramopoulos whom many of you know for his previous position of the Minister of Defense, and who I hope will do his best in his new post as EU Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship; epigrammatized that “legal migration is a fence against illegal migration”.

Distinguished Guests,

I strongly believe in the role that NATO Parliamentary Assembly plays also in the Parliamentary diplomacy, because you are the best bridges between citizens, Political Parties, Governments and the Alliance.

Thank you.
