

Introduction

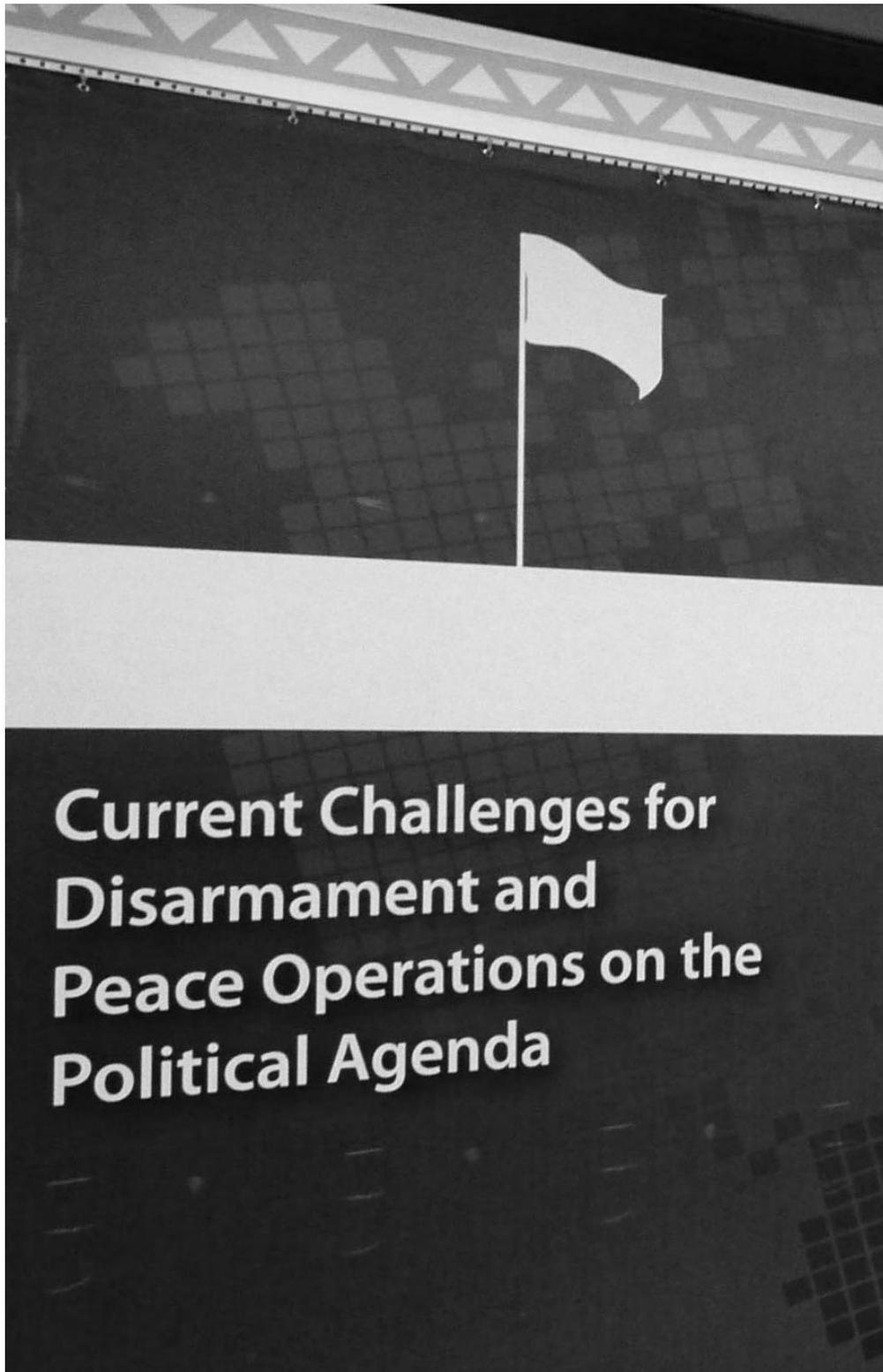
Thomas Knirsch

Representative of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Brazil

Security challenges are in a constant flux. The Financial Crisis, the Arab Spring as well as the massive leak of US Diplomatic Cables have, among other unforeseen events with a major impact, all contributed to accelerate the already ongoing process of redistribution of power in the international system. As a result, much uncertainty has been injected in the complex framework of international security architecture. The framework itself is defined through the acceptance of a common language by the society of states. Spoken through the institutions of power it however progressively fails to reach many areas of the world.

A global arc of instability now spans from the Horn of Africa to the Hindu Kush, with further flash points dotting all of Eurasia as well as Africa. Concerted efforts by the International Community to hem in agents of conflict and to bring back stability have so far showed mixed results; in some areas they have arguably even further fractured already fragile power relations and thus opened space for more conflict. The world faces the prospect of a series of protracted conflicts, some of which have the potential to threaten the very working of the modern world; should this trend not be reversed.

In this sea of peril South America and Europe remain islands of stability, with no hot conflicts in sight. As such, South America and Europe must work together to guarantee that conflict doesn't re-emerge in their vicinities as well as to promote peace and prosperity around the world. To achieve this goal each partner must comprehend the interests and priorities,



as well as the domestic considerations of his counterpart to avoid misunderstanding and to accelerate further cooperation on the global stage.

In this light and with the premise of promoting cooperation and dialogue, the International Security Conference of Forte de Copacabana was organized in November 2010, in Rio de Janeiro, by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Brazil and the Brazilian Centre for International Relations (CEBRI). The forum was supported by the Delegation of the European Union in Brazil. This seventh edition of the Conference aimed to further facilitate discussions concerning the main points of interest related to defense in South America and Europe.

Current debates play a decisive role in the process of developing and implementing practical strategies for the South American/European defense agenda. This year's edition features a variety of topics: an account of the current process of transformation of the national defense *forces of Venezuela*; arguments concerning nuclear non-proliferation; the impact of the financial crisis on defense budgets; as well as general European perspectives on security. Other topics touch upon questions concerning the South American Defense Council, provide views from Colombia and Venezuela in examining domestic as well as regional considerations and the potential of further Latin America defense-cooperation.

New needs always create new forms, a wise diplomat once said. The need, to which the International Security Conference of Forte de Copacabana corresponds, is confirmed through the large public interest it draws each year and the illustrious range of speakers it attracts. The maturing of the discussions on South American defense and security in a bi-regional context is gaining importance in an increasingly globalized world. Europe and South America, sharing common culture, language and history, have a common interest in being able to formulate together the terms in which the future of this globalized world will be built.

The intent of this publication is to provide the readers with detailed analyses of the contributions made during the event and an in-depth view on the topics debated. Furthermore its objective is to present fundamental studies for the comprehension of South American/European dialogue concerning defense and security.