



IX Conference of Forte de Copacabana International Security A European-South American Dialogue

**Security and Responsibility
in a Multipolar World**

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Introduction

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This year's International Security Conference "Forte de Copacabana" takes place under the banner of "Responsibility and Security in a Multipolar World". A title that unites three key themes in international security debates. As the process of redistribution of power in the international system continues, established as well as emerging powers must share the responsibility in providing security to a restive world. This in turn will enable prosperity for all. As in all times, security remains paramount as a facilitator for all human progress.

In last year's edition of this publication, the introductory essay referred to an arc of instability that spans from the horn of Africa to the Hindu Kush. Unfortunately, this trend continues to accelerate. Agents of disorder have thrived in the climate of uncertainty and turmoil, and have further expanded this arc of instability, now encompassing regions as far as Mali in Western Africa, all the way to South East Asia.

One of the most fascinating but also unpredictable catalysts for change in recent history has of course been the "Arab Spring". At first this event of historical dimensions was greeted with enthusiasm, many a spectator saw in it the triumph of the legitimate desire for freedom over the tyranny of oppression. The deterministic premise of the Enlightenment that liberty must be the natural endpoint of the historical process seemed back in vogue. The young dynamic leaders that emerged at the revolutions' outset all over the Muslim world, who used Facebook and Twitter to organize and coordinate the demonstrations which eventually lead to general uprisings and downfalls of authoritarian governments appeared frequently in global media out-

lets suggesting that the upheavals would soon ebb away, leaving in its wake States molded on universal ideals of freedom, tolerance and inclusion. However, this once heroic narrative was quickly stained by stories of terror and despair.

In Libya the downfall of Colonel Gaddafi resulted not only in surprisingly peaceful elections – the first in over 40 years – but also in the proliferation of arms and battle hardened soldiers throughout the region. This in turn led to the disintegration of already weakened Mali and the proclamation of a jihadist state in the heart of Western Africa. Thousands have since perished, many more have fled. Further to the East, on the Arabian Peninsula, a power struggle between several contenders is being fought out. Its flashpoint is set for now on Syria, where an initially peaceful uprising has evolved into a proxy war, with powerful players backing different sides. The patterns of this conflict resembles, with each passing day more, the terrible past of Lebanon: a sectarian war, where one does not fight for one's convictions but is judged and bound by sectarian and ethnic identities. Fear of a potential spill over of the conflict into neighboring countries is rising in the region.

While it is not clear where the “Arab Spring” might lead us yet, it must be clear that spreading instability challenges the very workings of the international system. In trying to understand the correlation between security and prosperity, a glance back in history might be of use. In the opening parts of the 18th century epic work “The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire”, Edward Gibbon attempted to answer the question, where and when might have been the happiest place and time in the history of mankind, concluding that it was Rome in the second century AD. In this judgment he was influenced by what he read in the writings of the Roman historian Tacitus, who lived through these times. Tacitus had complained that there had been no great military deeds for the last few generations for him to write about, so solidly entrenched were peace and security within his world; its border regions secured through complex networks of alliances and defensive pacts.

In Tacitus' time, security brought peace and prosperity. Extensive road systems and shipping lanes would allow for sophisticated trade and commerce networks. Metals mined in Britain were exchanged for olive oil and wine from southern Europe. Surplus food production from Egypt would feed more specialized professionals in the growing cities of the continent. From Lisbon through Rome and Constantinople, and from Alexandria to London, craftsmen, artisans and philosophers could focus on their particular trades, create the wonders of their times, some of which we marvel at even today.

In the fifth century this world of affluence was put to the sword and was not to rise again until more than a thousand years thereafter. Goth, Vandals, Franks and other ferocious barbarian tribes took control of the West and roamed the lands in search of blood and plunder. Trade and commerce crumbled and so did prosperity. Soon the once proud cities were depleted of people. Millions perished. The dark ages had arrived; a Hobbesian World had taken hold, where man was wolf to man:

In such condition there is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; [...] the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. Thomas Hobbes, the Leviathan, Book I, Chapter XIII

This conditionality that there must be security for industry and trade to flourish and in turn to render prosperity and progress holds true for our own times. Our times are defined by sovereign nations that agree on global institutions through which cooperation and dialogue are facilitated and disagreements are resolved peacefully, all based on an ever expanding framework of international law. It is this fertile soil on which globalization and modernity sprouts, making life for seven and more billion people possible.

Never has the world been more interlinked. Raw materials are mined in Australia or Brazil, from where they are shipped by Indian or Greek shipping companies to industrial sites in China or Germany. Once arrived at their destinations, the raw materials are processed and turned into our everyday goods - designed at again other locations, for example in the USA or Sweden - that make our modern civilization work. However, such a constellation also means that once one link in this global production chain is obstructed, the whole of the world may feel the consequences. What happens on one side of the globe can have a direct impact on the point most distant to it, there is no *far-away* anymore. The escalating struggle in the South China Sea may leave a price hike for advanced information technology in its wake; increased pirate activities around the Horn of Africa might lead to hungry bellies in Sub Saharan Africa; a closure of the Straits of Hormuz would skyrocket oil prices and thus be felt by each and every woman and man on our planet.

Fortunately, the society of states does not stand idle. Motivated by the understanding that security and stability must be guaranteed, paired with a strengthened will to stand up on behalf of whole populations in the face of slaughter, action has been taken whenever possible. The UN mandated intervention in the Ivory Coast was able to secure repose for that country by avoiding a bloodbath; naval deployments around Somalia have thwarted the further expansion of piracy in that area, and all around the world the international community is present in post conflict areas, providing assistance in the quest to build up new stable political and societal entities. However, whether these and other measures are enough must be put under scrutiny. Disagreements in the councils of power and action in favor of perceived national interests by some members of the global community have too often obstructed necessary development. And while some members of the international community have been more active in providing resources, other powers that equally depend on a stable world order have so far not committed themselves.

As mankind progresses through world history, ever into the unknown, it must be in the interest of all to define it's course, to weather storms and to evade perils. South America and Europe find themselves in relative fortunate situations, with no hot conflicts on their territories. But their security also depends on the security of others. The resolution of the above described challenges also depends on their continued commitment. It is under this premise that the International Security Conference Forte de Copacabana opens its doors each year, to provide a forum for specialists as well as the interested public from both sides of the Atlantic, to identify challenges and to discuss possible solutions. This book is anchored in the debates that come about within the conference and is designed to further promote dialogue and mutual understanding. This year we have slightly modified our concept, by providing a platform for participants of last year's conference as well as for those debating on this years gathering. Thus combining the intellectual products of the VIII and the IX conference in one volume.