

Concluding Remarks / Press Statement

Concluding remarks from the conference on Maritime Security in the Red Sea and Gulfs of Aden and Oman

The conference on Maritime Security in the Red Sea and Gulfs of Aden and Oman concluded its activities in the Jordanian capital, Amman, on Monday - September 20. The conference was organized by the Maritime Security Unit and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, with the participation of delegations from the United States, Russia, NATO, UK, Germany, Japan, Australia, Sweden, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the State of Qatar and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

The meeting was held due to the importance of the Red Sea region and the Gulfs of Aden and Oman in guaranteeing the flow of oil and gas supplies needed to achieve energy security. Additionally, this geographical zone represents an important pillar in maintaining international economy and trade. Despite the importance of this maritime zone in maintaining global security, the prescribed zone did not receive the proper attention by resident countries. On the contrary, most initiatives relating to the Red Sea, the Gulfs of Aden and Oman were drafted by transit countries and not by resident countries (under the so-called umbrella of Indo-Pacific zone). To indicate this, the meeting reviewed internationally declared strategies pertaining to the Red Sea which were formulated by extra-regional parties, including strategies adopted by the United States, Russia, Japan,

the Netherlands, France, Germany, Denmark, and several other countries.

It is a well known fact that existing strategies reflect the interests of countries that formulated those strategies without a true representation of the visions of countries making up this region. This has led to a conflicting vision between resident countries and transit countries, as well as an emphasis on the tactical perspective rather than the strategic concept, thus bypassing the priorities and interests of the countries of the region. Despite the importance of the strategies referred to above, there is an urgent need to formulate a regional (and perhaps an Arab) strategy that reflects the visions/objectives of the region and its residents. Since the Red Sea region, the Gulfs of Aden and Oman is a vast region consisting of three of the most important global straits, it was necessary to preserve the interests of countries bordering this vast and important region.

Based on currently existing structures and strategies, the Maritime Security Unit considers the necessity of establishing a maritime security forum in the Red Sea region and the Gulfs of Aden and Oman. The Forum stresses on the unification of efforts and does not aim to marginalize existing dynamics. The Forum also appreciates the important efforts made by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and its leadership in the field of enhancing maritime security. The meeting stressed on the importance to coordinate closely with the Council of States bordering the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, which is hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The meeting also recommended the necessity of fostering an academic, diplomatic and technical approach with membership open to international organizations, specialized institutions, think tanks and academic institutions. The concept of a safe zone has to be integrated within the geographical scope of the Red Sea, Gulfs of Aden and Oman.

The meeting recommended coordinating efforts with all parties in the region for the purpose of formulating a strategy for the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Oman in order to achieve the ambitions and goals of the countries making up the region.

The meeting also recommended the necessity of regulating the transfer (and) prohibiting the acquisition and storage of non-conventional capabilities on board ships and naval vessels transiting the region. This is an urgent requirement in view of the spread of violent non state actors that could use (or) target non-conventional capabilities carried on board transiting naval vessels, including chemical, biological, nuclear and radiological capabilities. The achievement of this goal is among the important priorities of the United Nations, most importantly non-proliferation objectives.

In a related context, the meeting recommended the necessity of holding periodic coordination meetings to examine key developments and to identify the most prominent threats facing the maritime sector. In addition, the meeting agreed on the need to organize advanced training programs in cooperation with NATO to build capacities

and increase efficiency of naval forces in the countries bordering the Red Sea and Gulfs of Aden and Oman. The proposed training programs should take into consideration combating human trafficking and preventing illegal immigration. All activities should be geared towards supporting the vision of the Council of States Bordering the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, which is hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.