

## **PAM 10<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session**

### **Tirana, Albania, 18 February 2016**

***Statement by Hon. Andrea Manciuoli, Head of the Italian Delegation to the NATO PA and Rapporteur on Counter-Terrorism – interpreters' audio transcript***

First of all I would like to thank you for the invitation and I would like to bring to your important Assembly, the greetings of the Parliamentary Assembly of NATO, which doesn't have such a broad mandate as you have, but we do share some of the issues with you, especially the issues we are dealing with today.

In the NATO Parliamentary Assembly I am the Rapporteur on Terrorism, on Jihad related terrorism, and on the fight against Daesh, and I am here today with you in order to have an exchange with you on this topic, which I believe is very important, because in my opinion all international organisations, where parliamentarians meet, should share this key challenge to our security and to our future, and particularly the organisations encompassing Mediterranean countries.

NATO has dealt with Daesh, especially because we are not convinced that we are only dealing with a group of terrorists.

In the report that we have written, very often we have spent much of our time in order to explain that what we are facing is not terrorism but it is an asymmetric warfare, which is taking place at different levels, and because of this we need to fight these terrorists with appropriate weapons, and these weapons, are not just military tools. This is why the contribution of Assembly like PAM is very important.

We are facing a threat which is a three-headed mythological monster and that has three different aspects. An aspect of conventional warfare, because unlike Qaeda, which is based on Daesh, today we are facing an organization which is trying to build a state through conventional warfare, and we need to contrast this war there, where we will find the terrorists.

This part has been followed in some countries like Iraq and Syria, and there a conventional fight is being fought in order to build a new state entity, which is an aggressive entity, first of all against other Islamic countries, and then against the west. May I underline this, first of all against other Islamic countries, because the main victims of Daesh are victims in Islamic countries, in Muslim countries, and if we perceive this threat as a threat which we do not share with the Muslim world that would be a serious mistake and then we would end up doing a favour to Daesh.

But secondly, there is something more than a conventional war, and it's another type of war, which is a new type of war, and it's the media and cultural war, that had never been part of Jihadism before Daesh, and it is a war which is the most insidious, the most tricky, and we need much more than the effects that we can make as parliaments of the countries washed by this mare nostrum, by the sea of us. Because as long as Jihadist terrorists were classic terrorists, like Al Qaeda, which had its network cells, but they seem like clandestine, so as long as that was the case it was different from the present situation, because now we have people who are trying to build up a State, they have their own flag, they are advertising their actions through internet and they are generating proliferation, they are generating supporters, in a way which is much broader than Al Qaeda ever did.

There are numbers that show this, because the phenomenon of foreign fighters has already existed before, has already existed in Afghanistan for example, but in 10 years of war in Afghanistan there

were about 8.000 to 9.000 foreign fighters, that was the number generated in 10 years of war in Afghanistan, and now in 3 years we have seen over 40.000 foreign fighters emerging, and the number is not the most important thing.

While foreign fighters in Afghanistan were older people and they were already radicalized 30 years old people, now the average age for foreign fighters is between 17 and 25 years of age. Very often they do not come from a strong background of radicalization, they are very unsophisticated, and there is a new media wave, which doesn't just talk ideology, but that enters into the cracks of our civilizations and in our society.

Then, the third aspect is that there is an exponential growth of terrorism, and the quality of terrorism is changing, because all our countries had to change the legislation in order to tackle this new form of terrorism, because this terrorism does not just take organized forms (well, it does, as we have seen sometimes in Paris and Tunisia), but there is another phenomenon, the phenomenon of the lone terrorists, people who adhere to this cause just on their own, and they represent an individual and unpredictable threat.

So we are facing 3 aspects which are different, but unfortunately are gathering in Daesh. So while we can fight a conventional war with military instruments, this war cannot be fought only with military tools, we need to put in place tools of culture contrast, and we need a strong sense of unity.

I would like to conclude by saying 3 things; the real strategy, the strategy for the future, and I would like to underline this aspect that we share between NATO Parliamentary Assembly and PAM, we need to understand what the target is, the target is those cracks where the State is not strong, geopolitically, and socially and culturally.

Tunisia is a country that is looking to the future, and that countries, countries like Tunisia, are afraid for Daesh, and Daesh want to hit, economically and socially, country like Tunisia, and it is clear that Daesh is feeding on the contradictions of Europe.

We can not think that this is a problem that stays in Arab countries, the Arab countries that are friendly with us, this is also a problem in Europe. If today in many of the countries, starting with my own country Italy, but there are other countries that witnessed this phenomenon even more than Italy.

In our countries we have generations coming from the Arab world, and they are meeting with generations that are all European, but yet they enroll with Daesh, why do they do that? Because Daesh speaks to them directly, because for instance the attack in Paris was done by a French citizen, and only French citizen, and Giovanni del Nevo, was an Italian who fought with the Jihad in Syria, and he was a totally Italian citizen, of Italian origin, 100% Italian. So there are not frontiers between us, between North and South Mediterranean, so this is a challenge that we must face together, we must develop together the cultural and social tools to fight against Daesh.

Europe must lose part of its selfishness, and should start thinking that here we are fighting a common fight for civilization.

I would like to conclude by saying that today we are guests in a country that is in the Western Balkans, and in the Balkans this phenomenon is growing, and this is a source of concern for all of us, for Europe, for the West, and really the last thing that I want to say is, I was quite shocked, a few weeks ago Daesh made the first video clip in Albanian language, a twenty minutes video clip, where they make worrisome comparison between the wars that have been happening in these countries, and the challenge of fighting with Daesh, and they are drawing their inspiration from

conflicts in this area, from wars in this area, than have not healed yet.

So we are not just talking about the security over there, it is our own security, the security of European countries that is at stake and we need to speak with the countries, that wants a future of peace for the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean has to be again what it was in its past, during the best age of the Mediterranean.

I come from Florence and in my own town Florence we hosted the mathematicians from Alexandria of Egypt, mathematicians that gave Europe a boost, which Europe would not had without their support, without their input, and I believe this is the task that lies ahead of us, and we should not fail to perform this task.

Thank you very much, and I hope to have a further cooperation in the future between our two assemblies.