Good morning everybody.

I guess I did all the due acknowledgments of gratitude yesterday.

So let me profit today for a couple of minutes of a commercial, a short presentation of the Elcano Royal Institute of International and Strategic Studies.

We are, obviously, an international relations think tank. Relatively small, at least by US standards. Quite young: Elcano was set up in 2001, largely as a consequence of the opening up, not just of Spain’s economy, but of Spanish society as a whole, to the outside world.

During the past decade, we have paid special attention to Europe, Latin America, the MENA region (especially the Maghreb), and transatlantic relations. We have also developed particularly strong programs in defense and security affairs, global terrorism, energy, and international political economy.

We have always been, and personally I have always been, strong defenders of the Atlantic alliance, in a complicated country, and frequently through difficult times. After all Spain and Portugal were the first European countries to become Atlantic, and one has just to mention the Latin American Community to support this statement.

Although we are relative newcomers to the think tank community, we are gradually making a name for ourselves. Last year, the University of Pennsylvania’s Think Tanks and Civil Society Program placed two of our papers among the best three published worldwide (both prepared in collaboration with other European think tanks, Chatham House and the Istituto d’Affari Internazionali included)

Finally, we are a Royal Institute. His Majesty King of Spain (very much interested in international relations; as you probably know he has a MA degree from Georgetown), King Felipe has been our honorary president since 2001, when he was still the heir to the throne. It goes without saying that we are particularly proud of this fact.

Finally, my experience shows that very few foreigners know what the word “Elcano” stands for, so let me explain that to you.

Elcano, Juan Sebastian Elcano was his name, was a Basque sailor who accompanied Ferdinand Magellan in his last trip. As you may recall, together they discovered what we now call the Strait of Magellan, in 1520, crossed then the Pacific Ocean for the first recorded time, and when Magellan was killed in an ambush in the Philippines, Elcano
took over as commander of the fleet, finally returning to Spain in 1522, after many, many hardships.

It was the first recorded circumnavigation of the world, the first physical globalization, the beginning of globalization.

Today, globalization is an everyday reality that we experience in our smartphones or cars, in world trade, investment flows or, as we will see later, in global terrorism or refugees flows.

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After the commercial, let me now turn to the issues that bring us here today. NATO and the new arc of crisis.

It is widely believed that Auguste Comte, the founding father of sociology, said once that “demography is destiny”. It's not true. He never said that. But se non e vero e ben trovato. The idea is correct.

So let me start with some basic demography.

When my father was born, at the beginning of last century, Europe accounted for 25% of the world population. When I was born, in the middle of that same century, 20% of the world population was still European. Today, it is slightly above 7%. In fact, there is currently only one European country – Germany – among the twenty most populated countries in the world.

Meanwhile, Asia accounts for 60% of the world's inhabitants, and Africa will soon have a population of two thousand million people, as much as Europe and the Americas combined, in other words, as much as the whole of the West.

Figures that show that a new world order is taking shape.

The bipolar world of the past is long behind us (or so it seemed); the unipolar moment has come and gone, and we seem to be transitioning towards a brave new world, kind of a neo-Westphalian international society. A world full of opportunities but also of risks and uncertainties. And a world where the Atlantic alliance suffers from strains. Some think that Europe is a question of the past. Some think that the US may be more a liability than an asset. Euro-bashing and anti-Americanism may have faded with Obama's administration, but they linger here and there.

The latest US National Security Strategy describes Europe as an “indispensable partner”, and the EU officially classifies the US as a key “strategic partner”. Frankly speaking, I would like to see much stronger language on both sides; in my view, this is really the only relationship that is truly “indispensable” and “strategic” for both of us.

Our most significant joint effort today is the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). And we know that an ambitious TTIP could significantly boost our
economies and provide us with a unique opportunity to advance global economic governance.

But of course, in many, many ways, NATO remains the bedrock of the transatlantic relationship, and may be seen as the bedrock of international security overall.

An alliance that now confronts new challenges, a new arc of crisis.

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An arc that builds risk scenarios on the borders of the Middle East, North Africa, the Sahel and Gulf of Guinea. To confront this NATO has adopted three basic functions in the Lisbon Summit: collective defense, crisis management and cooperative security. The hard part is knowing what is the right mix to be applied in each of these scenarios.

Given the aggressive behavior of Russia in the East, some allies and experts suggested to return to basics, to collective defense. But the basics of NATO has always been the combination of deterrence and détente, the Harmel doctrine, which allowed NATO to successfully face the arc of crisis between East and West.

The difficulty of finding suitable answers deeply concerns us because we live in the South. Spain, along with Portugal and Italy, keep the southern border of NATO. Spain is the only European country with land frontiers in Africa.

And the South is the great frontier of the Western world, where revenge of geography has far exceeded the clash of civilizations, to make a couple of references all of you recognize immediately.

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Let me make a short comment on this frontier.

Historians and intellectuals, mainly French ones, have frequently considered the Mediterranean as the Romans did, an area of communication, kind of an internal lake, the *Mare Nostrum*. However, and more frequently, the Mediterranean has been a frontier, a border, one of the two borders that have shielded Europe and helped create a specific European civilization.

I am not going to discuss the other border, the Eastern one. More confused and mixed, a wide area moving east were religions, languages and identities crisscross along a patchwork linking Europe, Asia and MENA region. A confused border.

Not so the southern border of Europe. That is, probably, the most marked, deep, contrasted frontier of the world that separates two completely different social realities. A cultural, political, economic, demographic and, finally, security frontier.

Obviously, a cultural divide. Two major religions, two cultures, languages, histories, customs, beliefs, views of the world.
A political divide too, between mature democracies on the north, on the European shore, and authoritarian or, semi-authoritarian regimes in the south, on the African border. We know that the MENA countries have been the least friendly to the third wave of democratization.

Third, the biggest socio-economic divide in the world, except that existing between North and South Korea. The GDP per capita of Spain and Italy is about 35,000 dollars; that of Morocco is about 5,000 dollars; Egypt's is above 6,000 dollars, Algeria's above 7,000. A difference in wealth of one to seven, exactly twice the gap between the US and Mexico, to make a relevant comparison.

Fourth, a demography divide. The African median age is 20, while the median age of the EU is 42. By 2050 Africa will have more than 2.5 billion inhabitants to be 3.75 billion by the end of this century. Europe will be not even one billion by then.

Add to all of this, finally, a security frontier. The Islamic terrorist groups moving freely throughout the huge lands of the Sahara and the Sahel, from Mauritania to South Sudan, pressing north and south, destabilizing the MENA countries, some of them failed States, and penetrating as well in the Mediterranean through the Libyan corridor, and pushing to the Atlantic towards Western Africa and the Guinea Gulf.

Just some data on that: terrorist attacks in the Maghreb countries (mainly Algeria, Tunisia and Libya) multiplied by 47 between 2011 and 2014. There were 15 terrorist attacks in the region in 2011, 90 in 2012, 300 in 2013, and almost 700 last year.

All of this is on the backstage of the Syrian / Iraq tragedy.

Now we can understand the dramatic flow of refugees and immigrants. A few years ago from Eastern Africa to the Canary Islands and Spain. Later, (and because of a successful containment policy implemented by Spain with countries such as Morocco and Mauritania), later, from North of Africa to Italy. And now from the Middle East to Turkey, Greece, Hungary and, finally who knows.

A human tide of huge proportions that is putting Schengen Treaty and even European democracies to the test.

This is not a European frontier. It's a world frontier, a West frontier.

Spain is trying to show the reality of a NATO Southern border as a major problem. Not an easy task because problems in the Eastern one seemed more tangible and urgent.

And let me finish now.

As president Obama has acknowledged, no single country in the World, however powerful, is capable of dealing with the challenges of the new world on its own. That's why we Europeans are trying to build an ever closer Union, a Union that should bridge the Atlantic and be linked to another closer union: e pluribus Unum.
We strongly believe there is no alternative to a strong and healthy transatlantic relationship for the 21st century.

I hope that at the end of the day, Ted Whiteside can gather useful conclusions. We need answers before next year’s Summit in Warsaw, but I'm sure with the participation of all of you, with your ideas, it will be possible to start building a proper answer to the arc of crisis that gathers us today.

Thank you very much to all of you.