

34/2013

3rd June 2013

Mario Laborie Iglesias

**NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY (MAY
2013)**

[Visita the WEBSITE](#)

[Receive our NEWSLETTER](#)

This document has been translated by a Translation and Interpreting Degree student doing work experience, DIANA RUIZ DE LOS PAÑOS BARBERO, under the auspices of the Collaboration Agreement between the Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Madrid, and the Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies.

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY (MAY 2013)

Abstract:

On May 31, 2013, the Government passed the new "National Security Strategy. A shared project ". The document, which updates the previous version dated in June, 2011, articulates the National Security as a State Policy. It contains directives in order to re-assign all the available resources of the State for the preservation of the National Security. The present document analyzes the principal keys and innovations that the NSS 2013 present. At the same time, an annex offers a comparative with the version of 2011.

Keywords:

National Security Strategy; risks; threats; National Security System.

ANALYSIS

On the 31st of May 2013, the Council of Ministers adopted the National Security Strategy¹ (NSS) of 2013, which updates the previous version dating from June 2011². Having the title “National Security Strategy. A Shared Project”, the importance of the document is determined by the reference value of the political leaders of our nation. The decision-making process regarding security issues should be made ruling out one-time events, of temporary nature, while it is also useful to determine the possible medium and long term actions. Additionally, it provides coherent behavior to the different public administrations as it overcomes the departmental model followed until 2011.

From a national security perspective, the NSS suggests the comprehensive management of all the elements that compose the capacity of the state of achieving the national objectives within the international system. This IEEE document analyzes the main keys and novelties that the 2013 NSS presents and attaches a detailed and schematic comparison of this and the previous version of 2011.

KEYS AND NEWS

It is unquestionable that each nation is a product of its own history and that is present in the evolution of its activities. Therefore, the national security strategies depend of the “strategic culture” of the country, and consequently, it has a deep repercussion on the way the governments take decisions when confronting a problem. Also, and just like the President of the Government points out in the presentation of the NSS, “National Security is a public service, that has to be a sustained over time object of the State Policy, capable of overcoming temporal settings and political agendas of each Governments.” Due to these two reasons, it does not come up as a surprise the continuity nuance of the NSS compared to the 2011 version.

In this regard, the 3 main aspects that are considered of greater significance are: the concept of national security; the risks and threats to National Security and strategic lines of action; and the creation of a new system of National Security.

The concept of national security of Spain

The NSS determines the change tendencies suffered by a world are considered to be multipolar. The power transfers between States, the transformations in an Arab world, the bigger interdependence or the adoption of a new strategic stance by United States are some

1 Available at: http://www.ieeee.es/Galerias/fichero/OtrasPublicaciones/Nacional/Estrategia_Seguridad_Nacional_2013.pdf

2 Available at: http://www.ieeee.es/Galerias/fichero/OtrasPublicaciones/Nacional/EstrategiaEspanolaSeguridad_junio2011.pdf

of them.

These global tendencies that shape the current world are pushing the appearance of new risks and threats that need to be faced by modern societies. Its complex constitution hinders the counteraction with the instruments that the States have traditionally used. A wider scope of national security is needed, in one hand, to overcome the traditional meaning of military defense along with issues such as economy, health or the environment; and on the other, to integrate all the instruments that the State has available to assure its interests.

In this regard, the NSS sets for the first time an official definition of National Security: *State action directed to protect the freedom and well-being of its citizens, to guarantee the defense of Spain and its principles and constitutional values, as well as contributing along with our partners and allies to international security in the compliance of the assumed compromises.*

The NSS is equally defined as: *the fundamental articulation of National Security as a State Policy. It is formed with directives with the intention of reassigning all the available resources that the State has in an efficient way for the preservation of National Security. In particular, it diagnoses our security environment; it specifies the risks and threats that Spain has to confront in a world of constant transformation, it defines the strategic lines of action and it organizes a new National Security System. This definition points out the structure that follows in the document previously adopted.*

Risks and threats for National Security and strategic lines of action

Unlike the 2011 version, the new strategy does not have a specific chapter dedicated to the factors that can generate new risks or threats or multiply and worsen the effects, restricting to pointing out poverty, inequality, ideological extremism, demographic imbalances, climate change or the generalization of the damaging use of the new technologies.

However, the new NSS does present the same risks and threats that the previous version did – armed conflict, terrorism, organized crime, economic and financial instability, energetic vulnerability, proliferation of mass destruction weapons, cyber threats, irregular migration fluxes and emergencies and catastrophes – as well as adds 3 more – espionage, vulnerability of the maritime space³ and de vulnerability of the critical infrastructure and essential services-.

³ However, the 2011 version included the need of controlling the maritime space as a one of the risks coming from energetic vulnerability (supply chains and networks).

In line with the risks and threats there are 12 action priority environments defined. The main objective is limited for each one of those to achieve, as well as several strategic lines of action that will frame the answers and specific actions. From the Ministry of Defense setting, the objective established for National Defense is especially significant, which is facing the armed conflict that can have its origin as a consequence of both the defense of its own interests or the values exclusively national such as the defense of interests and shared values. The strategic lines of action that answer to this objective are:

- Provision of military capacities that allow both the compliance of the assigned missions and a credible level of deterrence.
- Maintenance of the Spanish compromise regarding collective security;
- Continuous transformation of the Armed Forces;
- Adaptation to the current economic situation (shared capacities but that allow the compliance of the mission);
- Conscious encouragement and culture of defense;
- Strengthening of the industrial infrastructure of the Spanish Defense.

These strategic lines of action will presumably impulse a revision and update of the documents that conform the reference frame of the Department: The White Paper on Defense, Strategic Revision of the Defense and Military Strategy.

A new National Security System

The participation of multiple ministries, administrations and even companies requires the definition of a structure capable of coordinating efficiently all the organisms that intervene in security as of the approval of the National Security Strategy. The 2011 Strategy reclaimed the creation of an “integrated institutional model” that “responded effective and completely to the complex challenges of security in the current world”. However, given the circumstances in which it was approved, it has not been possible to make more progress than the established theory.

In this regard, the 2013 NSS moves forward when creating the structure of the National Security System on the basis of two new organisms: the National Security Council⁴ and the specialized committees. And what is more important, it is determined that within 6 months the National Security Council will elaborate an Organic Law draft on National Security for its subsequent elevation to the Council of Ministers. This law will create definitively an

⁴ When NSS was being approved, the Government passed a Royal Decree that modifies another from 2011 that established the government Delegated Commissions, in order to include within them the National Security Council.

institutional architecture that will allow the constitution of an integral security system, designed to provide strategic coherence to the state security policy, encompassing aspects from Foreign Affairs, Defense, Homeland, Industry and IRS among others.

The presence at the National Security Council of the Cabinet Director of the President of the Government, and not other specific official similar to the existent in other states surrounding us – normally called the National Security Counselor -, makes us think that the referred Cabinet Director will execute the necessary tasks to continue with the National Security System.

CONCLUSION

The NSS has a multidisciplinary perspective that takes into consideration the new set of threats, risks as well as the strategic conception typical of Spain. Like all the most advanced countries, Spain conceives its National Security through the prudent equality of all the available instruments, both public as well as private. Following the path established in 2011, the NSS is turning into a rational process conformed by a variety of carefully integrated actions. In any case it has more to do with the leadership that has to guide its conception and implementation than with the used resources.

The Strategies of National Security cannot be considered as an end in itself. These documents constitute the highest level of reference to comply with the strategic planning, which as comprehensive political activity will bring decisions to resolve the security problem. Therefore, the implantation of an institutional structure seems like an essential element for the achievement of the security that Spain and the Spanish people precise.

*Mario Laborie Iglesias
TCOL.ET.ART.DEM
Main Analyst of the IEEE*