Briefing in the Chamber – Protests in Turkey, Syrian crisis and security in Libya

2013-06-12

The Gezi Park protests, the Syrian crisis, the attempted attack on the Italian Embassy in Libya. These were the three dossiers on which Foreign Minister Emma Bonino's day at the Chamber of Deputies focused. This morning she gave an urgent Government briefing on developments in Turkey. The briefing was followed by addresses to the joint Foreign Affairs and Defence Committees of the Chamber and Senate on the state of our international missions and Development Cooperation initiatives to support peace and stabilisation processes.

Taksim Square is not Tahrir Square, said Bonino of the protests in Turkey

Speaking to the Chamber about the protests that began on 31 May in Istanbul and other major Turkish cities, the Minister was at pains to remove certain misconceptions and called on Deputies to "avoid the error of looking at Turkey through a lens blurred by misleading models". She pointed out that "Taksim Square is not Tahrir Square" and the demonstrations in Istanbul have more in common with those we have seen in our capital cities, or the American "Occupy Wall Street" protests, than with the Arab Spring.

Italy wants a fully democratic Turkey in Europe

Turning to Turkey's accession to the European Union, the Foreign Minister was clear: "Italy wants a fully democratic Turkey in Europe. And I am convinced that the EU accession process can have a beneficial effect on the country […] A 'graduation exam' for the Turkish government is taking place in the country's squares and streets […] perhaps the first serious test of the soundness of Turkey's democracy and its European accession process. An exam that some people thought Turkey had already passed, with its economic dynamism. But much more is needed".

"The disproportionate use of force by the police, and the arrest of 20 lawyers, is unacceptable. The right to demonstrate peacefully is a vital pillar of democracy". At the same time, explained Minister Bonino, "recourse to force or violence is often an expression of weakness […] Free elections alone are not enough. Turkey must decide if it wants to become a mature democracy".

Security in Libya a cause for “grave concerns”

After her briefing to the Chamber of Deputies, in the afternoon of Wednesday 12 June 2013 Emma Bonino addressed the joint Foreign Affairs and Defence Committees of the Chamber and Senate, focusing in this case on Libya and Syria. In the wake of the car bomb explosion – involving a car belonging to the Italian Embassy in Tripoli and which fortunately did not result in deaths or injuries –, Minister Bonino expressed “grave concern” over the situation in Libya. She assured the Committees that the security situation in Libya, at present “somewhat precarious”, will be one of the topics discussed during Libyan Premier Ali Zeidan’s visit to Rome on 4 July. It will also be on the G8 agenda.

On the subject of the car bomb, Bonino praised the driver’s prompt reaction. Having spotted a piece of suspicious piping protruding from the vehicle, he got out of the vehicle along with his passenger, an Italian diplomat (not Ambassador Giuseppe Buccino Grimaldi, she clarified) before the device exploded. “Our diplomat’s life was saved thanks to the driver’s action”, she underscored.

Minister Bonino to visit Syrian refugees in Jordan on 25 June

Turning to the Syrian crisis, the Minister announced that on 25 June she will be visiting Syrian refugees in Jordan, who currently number about 600,000. Preparations are continuing for the “Geneva 2” international conference, which she thinks could take place on 6-7 July. However, problems still remain as to “who will be taking part, the format, and the very content of the conference”.

At present, “no military solution to the conflict is possible. Efforts must focus on a mediated solution, which is the only option to follow”, reiterated the Minister. She condemned Hezbollah’s interference in the crisis, “which exposes the Lebanese community to reprisals. Just as worrying is the infiltration of Salafi extremists in Syria”, she explained.

Mogadishu: Italian Embassy scheduled to open in September

The last section of Minister Bonino’s address focused on Somalia, “where the building that will house the Italian Embassy in Mogadishu has been identified and must now be made secure. We expect to open in early September”, she announced. The Minister remarked that the opening of the embassy (currently based in Nairobi) will make it possible to monitor the situation in Somalia more closely. The new government there, in power for less than a year, is working harder than ever to stabilise the country.

Source :
https://www.esteri.it/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/approfondimenti/2013/06/20130612_bonino_alla_camera/