Opening speech of High Representative Vice President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini at the 4th EU symposium on security and defence cooperation between the European Union and the United States.

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It is no coincidence that we are having this discussion at the U.S. Institute of peace. Our transatlantic cooperation is designed to strengthen world peace. The important work of this Institute on the prevention of conflicts – identifying their root causes – is essential to crisis management. We need it more than ever to spot early on the possible triggers of war and work to create better conditions for peace to be built and mantained.

In today's world, working for peace is harder than it has been in a long time. Our meeting comes as the international security environment has taken a turn and definitely for the worse.

The UN estimates that more than 1.5 billion people live in conflict-torn countries – that is about a fifth of the world population. Seven out of 10 people live in countries where inequality is rising fast. Coupled with fragile state structures, and sometimes no state structure, inequalities create fertile ground for conflicts. Until those circumstances are reversed, such vicious cycles will continue.

Violence and poverty often force people to flee. In so many cases their very life and liberty are at stake. Or they leave their homeland in the pursuit of happiness, of a better future for them and their families.

Nowhere is human drama more starkly played out than in the fate of those migrants who attempt to cross the sea to reach Europe. Thousands are exploited by smugglers and human traffickers, who sell death and call it hope. Two days ago I was, with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and Italian prime minister Matteo Renzi, aboard the San Giusto ship of the Italian Navy, who saved 17,000 lives in just a month and a half, like many other vessels involved in the European Triton border protection operation. But as we saw a week ago, hundreds, thousands of others die at sea. Not to mention those that are exposed to sufferings all along the journey from their countries to the Mediterranean shores.

Now finally as Europeans we are increasing our efforts to tackle the humanitarian crisis we are facing. As we do that, though, we must also tackle the causes of migrations. Including the conflicts in Europe's neighbourhood.

Not only Da'esh brutalizes populations in large parts of Iraq and Syria, where war has already exacted a high price and created a gigantic refugee crisis. Their terrorism, and the intoxicating idea it represents, is also making inroads in other countries in

the region, most notably Libya, where the absence of a state has offered the space for terrorist groups to take hold.

To the East of Europe, the situation in Eastern Ukraine continues to be tense, despite the Minsk ceasefire agreement and Crimea has been illegally annexed by Russia.

The global security environment is changing dramatically and it is very clear that the impact this is having on the lives of millions is huge and is terrible.We are talking about big pictures but it's about people's life.

Modern times come with modern challenges. While an interconnected world is the hallmark of globalization, which has brought our countries closer together and has improved living standards in all corners of the globe, this connectivity and interdependence is also bringing about unprecedented challenges to global human security.

Take social media. They are a powerful, very powerful tool to communicate and to connect people, and people and institutions, with a potential to strengthen our democracies. But they have also become a means for propaganda and recruitment.

And it is not just the social media. Indeed the 21st century has seen the emergence of a new phenomenon: the weaponisation of information. It is part and parcel of "hybrid" or "non-linear" warfare – a state in which the lines between peace and war are blurred, and cyberattacks target the arteries of our economies and institutions.

But there are other "new" -even if not so new- unconventional threats we also need to be well aware of. The World Bank estimates that by 2025 climate change will result in 1.4 billion people across 36 countries facing crop or water scarcities. This is not just a matter of saving lives. This is another factor of instability: environmental threats bring about security threats. Sustainable development and energy security have become crucial issues for our security. And we know it very well if we look at the East and the South.

As it is crucial to the world security an effective and ambitious work on nuclear disarmament and non proliferation: we recommitted to it yesterday in Ny at the NPT Review Conference, and we -and me personally- are intensifying our efforts in this last mile of negotiations with Iran to finalize the understanding we reached in Switzerland a few weeks ago.

It is to draw a clearer picture of this more connected, contested and complex world, that I have launched in the EU a Strategic Review, a process of reflection on the implications of the evolving international security environment and the role that EU can and must play in it. This is intended to be a first step in the process that might culminate in a new EU external strategy. This first step will be completed by the end of June, and will provide the basis for further decisions by the EU on how better to

prepare for and act upon the challenges to peace and prosperity that we face on both sides of the Atlantic.

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Since assuming my functions, 6 months ago, I have stressed the need to work on a stronger Europe when it comes to security and defence matters. Europe is usually more willing to define itself as a soft power, which we are. And a very successful one. But getting at least some integrated defence capacities is something we cannot do without. The choice here is not between hard and soft power. It is between being a global power or a powerless spectator of regional and global events that concern us Europeans in any case. Like it or not.

Strengthening European security and defence capabilities is therefore one of our big projects. We are working on reinforcing all the dimensions of our Common Security and Defence Policy, from the strategic policy framework down to the foundations – namely, the defence industrial base that supports our ambitions.

On the one hand, we are expanding the reach of our common operations – both to new areas and to the cyberspace. Today's networked militaries as well as civilian missions or even governments are vulnerable to cyberattacks, as "hacktivists" increasingly aim at sabotaging government or business networks. Through our new Cyber Defence Policy Framework, we have established a firm foundation for countering threats from cyberspace, but we cannot take on this global challenge alone. That is why one of the steps we have taken is to improve cooperation between the EU Computer Emergency Response Team and the NATO Computer Incident Response Capability.

From cyber to the seas: the effective fight against piracy in the western part of the Indian Ocean, has revamped EU interest in the security of our marine global commons. So, we have adopted the first ever EU Maritime Security Strategy. Having, together with the United States and other partners, brought down by 90% piracy incidents off the Horn of Africa, we are now fine-tuning our policy to handle piracy and other forms of criminality in the Gulf of Guinea. And we are looking at ways to fight human trafficking and smuggling in the Mediterranean as well.

A recent report by the European Union Institute for Security Studies assumes that continued state fragility will trouble parts of Africa for many years to come. This continent already hosts the lion's share of the EU's CSDP activity. We can, as we do today, act as bridging operations, before the UN 'blue helmets' take over. We can respond to emergencies until a lead-state volunteers to deploy advanced operations, as has been the case in Mali, followed by a CSDP engagement. Or we can insert CSDP forces into high risk areas, as we have done in Chad. Over the years the EU has gained significant experience and can deploy its missions on many different scenarios, depending on the situation, the demands and the availability of partner's forces.

We learned an important lesson from the CSDP training missions in Somalia, Mali and Niger: that the troops we train must often be supplied with very basic equipment – tents, uniforms, radios, rudimentary infrastructure. Yesterday the Commission adopted a Communication based on my proposal to enable the EU to "train and equip" forces of local partners. Since they will bear the brunt of crisis management, they deserve our strongest support. Ultimately, we believe that the best approach is to enable our partners in Africa to handle crisis management with minimal outside intervention. This is a goal of the African Union. It is what the African regional communities aim for. I believe it is a joint task of the EU and the US to support our African partners in their efforts to reach their goals, in close coordination with the UN.

But as we expand our ambitions, we also need to fill our defence capability gaps. The efforts to get the Eurozone finances in order have brought about much belt-tightening. At a time of reduced public spending, states seek ways to engage in pooling and sharing of capacities and resources, especially at the high-end capabilities. This can end up providing Europe with a good opportunity to reshape its defence spending. We have made some important steps towards implementing the collaborative projects we agreed back in 2013: Air-to-Air refuelling capacity, Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems, Satellite Communication, and Cyber. Their development, notably on the first of these projects, is now in an advanced stage.

The European Parliament reminds us that the cost of "non-Europe" in defence amounts to some €26bn per year, an enormous amount of money. And even more: 70% of European citizens support more integration in defence. For us, that is a call to action, and we want to fulfill this gap.

The recent international crises have prompted many EU members to reassess threat perceptions. Twelve EU Member States have increased defence spending, or are planning to do so, and several have stopped the freefall. All EU Member States that are also NATO members have committed to increase defence spending at the Wales NATO Summit. But we need to spend also better and focus on the output.

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All I have said leads me to a straightforward conclusion: the United States and the EU are reliable partners on security and defence. And our commitment as Europeans Is to move further in this direction.

As we speak, 7,000 European men and women, in military uniform or civilian attire, are serving in 17 CSDP missions and operations, deployed on three continents.

The European Union could not have conducted successfully over 30 missions and operations without the valuable contributions from some 45 partner countries. Just

last year, three new framework partnership agreements on contributions to CSDP activities were signed.

The US has to date contributed personnel to three of our missions. It may sound like a small number, but the support of the US has been immensely beneficial in multiple ways beyond participation. A perfect example is when the US took on the responsibility for vetting, paying stipends for and transporting Somali recruits, which were in turn being trained by the EU. Together with other partners we have brought under control piracy off the Horn of Africa. And the US lent great assistance to shoring up security in Kosovo. Our cooperation is really an important result in many parts of the world.

One of the promising strands of our cooperation has been increased military-to-military interaction. We must further step up information-sharing and collaboration between US and EU's military and civilian planners at all levels. We cannot afford to be duplicating efforts.

The same applies to transatlantic cooperation on intelligence. Countering violent extremism and stopping foreign fighters has become an all-hands-on-deck job. We can only succeed if we join forces, as we said here in Washington at the conference for countering violent extremism.

Last but for sure not least, let me conclude on our partnership with NATO, which is not just enduring: it is essential. Hybrid, non-linear risks have put a premium on enhanced cooperation and contingency planning. The old debate on a NATO-EU rivalry has lost all meaning, if it ever had some. Our work to strengthen our capabilities through CSDP goes hand in hand with deepening ties with NATO. And indeed the EU is strengthening its cooperation with the Alliance, we have developed an excellent working relationship. This relationship is mirrored at all levels across the broad spectrum of shared interests and activities. Since Member States have but one set of capabilities, strengthening European defence capabilities also means strengthening NATO.

The two sides of the Atlantic are coming ever closer together as peace and prosperity cannot be taken for granted. The new US National Security Strategy heralds the strengthening of the "enduring alliance" of the United States with Europe. Let me respond by expressing the EU's commitment to strengthening our enduring alliance with the United States of America. In today's world no power can assume to be self-sufficient on security issues. Europe needs a strong and committed America, as its oldest and closest ally. And America needs a strong Europe, for its own national interest. We hold a joint place in the world. We can only stand to today's challenges if we stand together.