



Chairman of the EU Military Committee

"The European Union after the Global Strategy: What's next?"

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Admirals, Generals,

Officers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and an honour for me to be here today, at the place where Portuguese officers receive top-level education, they sharpen their skills and deepen their understanding of the contemporary international system, its challenges and its complexities. At the place where leaders are shaped. Thank you for having me here.

I will begin my speech with a **non-politically correct** phrase, which nonetheless laid the foundations of geopolitics:

*"The strong do what they can
and the weak suffer what they must."*

This phrase summons the true and eternal nature of geopolitics, unaffected by the passage of time and equally valid today, as it was in the fifth century B.C. Even today, despite the progress our societies have made and the importance we place on universal values,

*"The strong **(still)** do what they can and the weak **(still)** suffer what they must."*

With this cynical view in mind, I will present you the power Europe has, with a focus to the **"Hard"** element of it. In the course of my speech, I will touch upon:

- The role of the European Union as a credible and important **global** security actor
- The European Union's Comprehensive Approach in order to establish and maintain security.
- The importance of the military element in applying "**Smart**", in the sense of **holistic**, **balanced** and **comprehensive**, responses, to protect and advance EU interests.

I will also touch upon the EU Global Strategy, an issue that I regard as extremely important for the future of Europe.

Let me begin by putting our discussion into context. The European Union is widely regarded as an institution with, mainly, financial and diplomatic characteristics. Although this is in general terms true, it overlooks the fact that the European Union also has a military element. And as a matter of fact, it **does** place a great deal of value on developing its "**Hard**" power, as clearly portrayed in the Global Strategy. Hold this thought for a while and I will come back to it later.

The **European Union Military Committee**, which I chair, is the highest military body set up within the European Council. It is composed of the Chiefs of Defence of the Member-States, who are on a daily basis represented by their permanent Military Representatives based in Brussels. The European Union Military Committee exercises military direction of all EU military activities and provides the Political and Security Committee with advice and recommendations on military matters. As Chairman, I have been elected by the Chiefs of Defence of the Member-States and appointed by the Council for a three year term.

Last June, HR/VP presented the European Union's Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy. Its title, "**Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe**" is revealing and it also serves as an executive summary of its contents! The Global Strategy is the Union's top-level document that offers a structured analysis of EU's current and future position in the international system. For the first time, the EU interests, the threats and security challenges the Union faces, its envisaged role in the future and the ways to achieve this objective were examined, identified and described in a structured way in such a high-level document.

What the Global Strategy calls for is for a better concerted use of the sum of the available instruments in its wide toolbox, including the military. It also calls for further developing the EU's "Hard Power ", a structural element of its **"Smart Power "** that had been largely on the side-lines until recently, following the abrupt realisation that Thucydides' phrase still applies to the contemporary international system. What we need, as a mean to build a Stronger Europe, is to adjust the setting of the "Smart Power " rheostat, fine tuning the usage analogy of each and every component of the EU's Comprehensive Approach to match any specific crisis we encounter.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today's world is not safer compared to what it was ten or twenty years ago. New challenges and threats are added to old, traditional ones. Transnational terrorism, proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and their delivery systems, cyber, hybrid, piracy, organized crime, climate change, access to global commons, state failure, I am sure that we all agree that they present challenges and threats to the global security and therefore to the EU.

There are however two threats that are of the highest importance, each one for each own reasons:

- The first one is the threat from the East. A threat coming right out of the past. A threat against the territorial integrity or the political independence of some of the EU Member-States and their neighbours. In countering this threat from the East, NATO has the leading role.
- The second one, totally different in every aspect, comes from the South. It is the threat posed by transnational terrorist organizations like Da'esh, AQIM, Boko Haram. A threat not only against the countries in which they operate but also a threat against our citizens, our societies, against the entire civilised world. And then, there are also the waves of the refugees and immigrants that try to illicitly arrive in Europe through our maritime borders in Greece and Italy.

What fuels them to engage in this perilous trip to Europe? The terror induced by these organizations, of course, and war are the first things that comes to mind. But at the same time, poverty, hunger, unemployment and bad

governance have their fair share. Short version? **Lack of a future.** An even shorter one? **Despair.**

In order to refer to the multiple regions of instability and to "visualise" their geographic proximity to Europe, the term **"Arc of Instability"** has been coined. Here, I would argue that this area, this arc, is also our **"Security Belt"**. **Together**, EU Member States and partners, we **extend the European Union's physical borderline. Homeland defence begins abroad**, in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Mali, Central African Republic. It begins **right where the problem exists, not where the symptoms appear.**

The military of the European Union does not stand guard behind walls, **stationary** at the physical external European borders. Deployed thousands of miles away, we provide an extended **Safe and Secure Environment**, establishing a new forward borderline of values, security and stability. A *"security belt."* We **do not** provide security in the traditional way, with the use of force. Instead, we bridge the security gap, providing advice and training to the local Security and Defence Institutions. In doing so, we become ourselves a bridge to transfer security. To promote stability in distant places and build security there, locally. Together and in concerted use with other EU instruments, we present a typical European approach based on our trademark, as I mentioned before, the **Comprehensive Approach** to multilayer problems.

We therefore create a new, far-away from us, borderline, which we *"defend"* **not with walls and fences and bunkers**, but by **building security and prosperity**. By **restoring hope**, trying, with the use of *"Soft"* Power and security, to create favourable conditions for the local population to stay home. The EU troops do not **provide** security *per se* to the respective host nations but they are rather **"founding"** security. They are there to train and assist local Armed Forces build their own capacity to provide security in a responsible and professional way, adhering to the rule of law and to international conventions. By doing this, they provide **"forward defence"** for the European people, some thousand kilometres away from the physical European borders, being our first line of **"proactive defence"**.

Let me briefly introduce you the missions and operations that are active today, as well as the objectives we seek to accomplish:

- **The EU Naval Operation Atalanta** is tackling piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Indian Ocean since 2008.

Compared to previous years, piracy at sea is now at the lowest level. However this does **not** mean that the threat has disappeared. **Capability** and **intent** are still present. The only thing missing and results in zero piracy incidents, is **opportunity**. And this is what we deny to the pirates.

So, the level of security established in this critical to the European interests maritime region means that **collectively we are efficient**. And the deterrence we project is the result of our readiness and our resolve.

- **In Somalia**, the EU Training Mission is helping building up the new Somali Armed Forces. Over the past years, more than 4.000 Somali military personnel have been successfully trained and are now contributing to foster stability in their country alongside their African Union partners.
- At the beginning of April 2014 the EU launched its operation EUFOR RCA in the **Central African Republic** upon request from the United Nations. Today, EUTM RCA is a Training Mission that followed and succeeded a successful Advisory one, EUMAM RCA which in turn replaced EUFOR.
- **In Mali**, the EU is assisting the Malian authorities in building up their own professional military capabilities. **About 535 military personnel from 21 EU Member States** are engaged in the professional training and the provision of advice to the Malian Ministry of Defence. As of today 8 Malian battalions have been trained.
- Since June 2015, a large maritime operation has been launched in the Southern Central Mediterranean, **Operation Sophia**. The aim of this military operation is to identify, capture and dispose of vessels as well as enabling assets used, or suspected of being used, by migrant smugglers or traffickers. Twenty four member states contribute to this operation. Operationally, the EUNAVFOR MED assets conduct boarding, search, seizure and diversion, on the high seas, of vessels suspected of being used for human smuggling or trafficking. In 20 June 2016, the Council

extended Operation Sophia's mandate until 27 July 2017, reinforcing it by adding two supporting tasks:

- Training of the Libyan Coastguards and Navy;
 - Contributing to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya.
- Last, but most certainly not least, let me also mention the EU's military engagement in Europe, in the Balkans, **in Bosnia-Herzegovina** where the EU-led operation ALTHEA has guaranteed a safe and secure environment for the population for more than 11 years now.

Bearing in mind all the CSDP operations and missions mentioned, you will realize that the European Union is an **important security provider**, with the military being **one out of a wide range of tools** involved. Today, we understand that internal security in Europe cannot exist without an external dimension.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is a reason I left ALTHEA for the end of the missions and operations brief. ALTHEA is an example that clearly portrays the added value and inherent advantage of an EU-led operation under CSDP, applying the European Comprehensive Approach. ALTHEA succeeded NATO SFOR operation in 2004. This transition meant much more than just repainting helicopters and vehicles. It was the first operation of the European Union, organized under the "Berlin Plus" arrangement and the first real crash test of the European Union. And it was successful. The security issue is very important for Bosnia-Herzegovina. Their membership to NATO Action Plan and a future membership are of great importance. But this will just be on the surface, as the underlying factors that led to the crisis will have not been addressed. This is what the European Union, with its Comprehensive Approach, brings to the table. A holistic approach, expanding to all relevant sectors of the government and the society, doing an in depth job, gradually removing the layers of tension, sharing good governance best practices tailored to the specific country.

On the military side, taking over from NATO, the European Union maintains a safe and secure environment, providing Capacity-Building and

training to the local security and defence-related Institutions. In short, we help them take care of their own security, in a broader sense and in much more relevant sectors, with a lot more tools because, ultimately, **their security is our security as well**. This is how we differ from NATO.

Portugal is an active and dedicated supporter of this approach, as demonstrated by its contribution to 5 out of 6 CSDP military missions and operations. We thank you for this. At the same time, Portugal will be providing to the EU one of the two envisaged Battlegroups for the second semester of 2017. Unfortunately, no commitments have been made for the second Battlegroup, a fact that only underlines the importance we attribute to your Nation's contribution.

With this reference, let us refocus our discussion on the EU Global Strategy. The EU Global Strategy identifies **three priorities**, to be comprehensively put forward: to **respond** to external crises, to **build** the capacities of partners affected by crises and fragility and to **protect** Europe. The first two, we already do. The last one, the most ambitious one, we are also actively engaged as explained, although indirectly. It is clear that there would be no need to set these specific priorities if everything was perfect and if the EU was satisfied with the results. An urgent need to work more closely together, civilian and military, and to fine tune our cooperation at all levels has arisen.

Drafting and presenting the Global Strategy was an important step. It provided a **solid and agreed** base on what the EU interests, principles and priorities are. This important work must not be left unfinished. Writing strategies is not an end in itself. Strategies need to be implemented. And they have to be implemented in a timely fashion, if they are to produce results and make a difference. While implementing the Global Strategy, we have to take into consideration and be synchronised with other important work-strands that are pursued in parallel. One cannot discuss about the protection of Europe for example, without considering how this is intertwined with the European Defence Action Plan. Nor would it be recommended not to tie it with the Joint EU-NATO Declaration. So, work has to be done in various strands in parallel and in coordination. We have to be clear. The European Union is **NOT** a security Organization. At the same time, the protection of EU's citizens and EU Member States resilience is an obligation of the Member-States, an obligation that is better served if and when working together.

The Global Strategy, as any Strategy should do, does not get into the details of how to achieve the stated objectives. This is the role of follow-on work, such as the *"Implementation Plan on Security and Defence"* that is currently being developed and discussed. It is of importance to remember that we are not discussing solely about the military contribution to the whole effort. On the other hand, the improvement of the functioning, effectiveness and, at the end of the day, of the contribution of the military instrument is a deliverable.

An indicative list of tasks for the EU military instrument will be included in the Implementation Plan, in order to launch the established procedures that will lead to the development of the required capabilities. It goes beyond saying that since all nations possess **a single set of forces**, the capabilities developed by these EU Member States that are also NATO allies will be available to the Alliance as well, **further strengthening the latter**. But this is not all. In the military, we understand better than anybody else that having forces deployed on the ground, is not enough. A **robust Control and Command structure** has also to be in place, to guarantee the smooth relay of orders and reports in a timely and organised fashion, leaving **no room** for gaps, delays or misunderstanding. This C2 structure is something that the European Union lacks and needs to be addressed as well.

As mentioned before, the Implementation Plan is part of a wider package that also includes the Joint EU-NATO Declaration. This will step up and upgrade our contribution to and cooperation with NATO, always the **primary framework** for collective defence for most EU Member-States. The deliverable here is to strengthen the European Pillar of the Alliance, in coordination with the work undertaken therein and in complementarity with it. To this end, the Joint EU-NATO Declaration defines cooperation in specific areas as a strategic priority, calling for speedy implementation. These areas include:

- Countering hybrid threats
- Operational cooperation including at sea, and on migration
- Cyber security and defence
- Developing complementary and interoperable defence capabilities as well as multilateral projects

- Facilitating a stronger defence industry and greater defence research and industrial cooperation
- Stepping up our coordination on exercises, including on hybrid
- Building the defence and security capacity and foster the resilience of our partners in the East and South in a complementary way.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude. The European Union **is** a credible and important provider of peace and security in the world through its many civilian and military EU missions and operations. The European Union's approach to crisis is **always** comprehensive and includes also diplomacy, security, defence, finances, trade, development, and humanitarian aid. So, the military is only one of many tools. The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy is **an open project**. Security challenges arise around the whole world. No country can solve all problems on its own, however powerful it may be. Therefore international cooperation and partnership are crucial elements to maintain or establish security. The EU Common Security and Defence Policy is building on these principles.

Closing my speech, I offer you another famous phrase, this time by Pericles. I leave it for your reflection.

*"Happiness depends on being free,
and freedom depends on being courageous."*

I would like to wish you all, every success in your career and your personal endeavours. I am confident that the future of the Portuguese Armed Forces will continue to be in good hands.

Thank you.