The Chairman of the European Union Military Committee  
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Berlin Security Conference: Europe and its external challenges –  
360-degree approach in uncertain times

"Implementing effectively the EU Global Strategy.  
The military perspective."

Time: 17:10-17:30 (no Q&A)  
Berlin, 26 November 2019

Opening:

• Ladies and gentlemen, DEAR ALL, it is a real pleasure for me to be with you today, here in BERLIN, just few weeks after the 20th anniversary of the historical event of FALL OF THE WALL.

• Before I open my intervention, LET ME THANK GENERAL ZORN, our previous speaker. EBERHARD, I really appreciate your comments on the value of the partnership between EU and NATO, a relationship that needs to CONTINUOUSLY ADAPT to the new scenarios.

• I also believe that we must really WORK TOGETHER to address modern challenges, investing MORE in our cooperation, starting from EXERCISES AND TRAINING to CAPABILITY, WITHOUT GIVING ANYTHING FOR GRANTED.

• From my side, you can rest assured: the EUMC is FULLY COMMITTED to further enhance our partnership.
• Dear all, today, as Chairman of the European Military Committee, I will give you with **MY MILITARY PERSPECTIVE** on how to continue implementing the EU GS, a strategy with a 360-degree approach **BY DEFINITION**.

• I will start from the “pre-GLOBAL STRATEGY” era, coming to **WHERE WE STAND**, and finally looking at what **WE SHOULD DO**, in terms of European Defence and Security, also taking stocks of the outcomes of last week's meeting of the Military Committee at Chiefs of Defence level.

*Where we were:*

It's June 28, 2016.

• **5 DAYS BEFORE**, a British referendum announced the UK’s intention to leave the EU.

• **2 DAYS BEFORE**, the City of Falluja was freed from Islamic State control after a month-long campaign by Iraqi forces.

• **UNFORTUNATELY**, June 28 is marked with a **TERRORIST ATTACK** at Istanbul's Airport, which kills **42**, wounds more than **200**.

• 2016 is also remembered by a **SAD RECORD**: illegal crossing into Europe reaches an **HISTORICAL PEAK**, with a total of **1.3 MILLION** people fleeing their motherlands. At the time, EU has already launched its operation Sophia, with results soon to come.

• It's a world characterised by **RAISING CONCERNS** about the link between **failed states - instability - crime - security**, with spreading **TERRORISM THREATS**.

• A world depicted as “**connected, contested and complex**”, with **STRONG CENTRIFUGAL FORCES** within the EU.
• Well, **ON THAT DAY**, the European Council adopts a **BRAND-NEW** Global Strategy for the EU’s Foreign and Security Policy, a **MILESTONE DOCUMENT** for the security of European Union citizens, **BUT NOT ONLY**…

• The world **IS CERTAINLY DIFFERENT** since the previous Security Strategy was adopted, in 2003, when Europe was defined as "**NEVER BEEN SO PROSPEROUS, SO SECURE OR SO FREE.**"

• At the time, **LIKE NOWADAYS**, the leitmotiv is **UNCERTAINTY**.

• With new threats adding to old ones, while the topic of **TERRITORIAL DEFENCE** comes back into discussion.

• The new strategy is a **WAKE-UP CALL** to address internal and external challenges. **BUT EVEN MORE**.

• **EU TAKES RESPONSIBILITY** and aims to be **A TRULY RELIABLE GLOBAL SECURITY PARTNER** for international stability, filling a new **AUTONOMOUS SPACE**.

• **A NEW LEVEL OF AMBITION** is defined, **EXTENDING** the vision of Europe: while the neighbourhood remains the main area of strategic priority, the concept of the "**BUTTERFLY EFFECT**" is clearly acknowledged, recognizing that a country **FAR AWAY** from Europe can become a **GREAT POWER** but also a source of **BIG TROUBLES**.

• That’s why, **ALSO in the EU**, we get familiar with the so-called **INTERNAL-EXTERNAL SECURITY NEXUS**.

• In order to translate this understanding into action, the Global Strategy calls for "**PRINCIPLED PRAGMATISM**", with solid proposals, converging into the so called “**EU STRATEGIC**
AUTONOMY”, a LONG-AWAITED DREAM and a very welcomed message for many supporters of a STRONGER AND MORE RESPONSIBLE EUROPE.

- Strategic Autonomy, in fact, is about a Union that WANTS AND NEEDS to be able to act independently, IF NECESSARY, with its own means.
- The value given to PARTNERSHIP remains a CORE CONCEPT. Especially with NATO, as the most important partner, in particular for collective defence.
- But now the EU must show the capacity to ACT AS ONE, with ONE VOICE, with the necessary CAPABILITIES and the WILL TO ACT.
- Truth is that EU in 2016 is still FRAGMENTED, both in capabilities and the capacity to act.
- With a defence budget second only to the one of the USA, EU in 2016 has an OBVIOUS IMBALANCE among personnel-research-operations-training and capabilities expenditures.
- MS ARE FAR FROM COORDINATING among each other.
- Something must be done: somebody called it "PAY TO PLAY".
- I'd say: "PAY WELL, TO PLAY BETTER".
- And like for capabilities, the EU must find ITS SINGLE VOICE, to be A CREDIBLE AND EFFECTIVE SECURITY PARTNER, as proposed by the Global Strategy.

Where we are

- From June 28, 2016, ladies and gentlemen, we have walked a LONG WAY.
The Global Strategy was NEVER meant to be a THEORETICAL EXERCISE, but the statement for GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY and a compass for REAL ACTIONS, for what somebody would call a EUROPEAN DEFENCE UNION.

- Both in terms of CAPABILITIES and WILL TO ACT.
- As for CAPABILITIES, we launched a cascade of initiatives.
- EARLY 2017, we started with the Co-ordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), a COHERENT MAPPING of Member States defence planning and spending.
- Still in 2017, we initiated the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) for exploring SHARED DEFENCE PROJECTS. Two weeks ago, during the FAC meeting, the third wave of 13 PESCO projects has been agreed, bringing the total to 47, with SOME ‘strategic’ projects for the benefit of EU, its Member States and NATO.
- Finally, in June 2018, the 13-billion euro European Defence Fund project was presented, an INNOVATIVE TOOL to promote a competitive defence industrial base and contribute also to the Strategic Autonomy.

- So far about capabilities.
- But all the efforts in procuring capabilities will be IN VANE if not exploited in our MILITARY MISSIONS AND OPERATIONS in support of the Global Strategy.
- Our military actions, in fact, THAT YOU CAN SEE IN THE SLIDE, are one of the ways to demonstrate our WILL TO ACT, providing HIGH VISIBILITY to the EU foreign policy and ITS CAPACITY to address crisis situations.
• Accordingly, the Global Strategy inspired a **NEW APPROACH** about the **NATURE** of our CSDP missions and operations, their **MANAGEMENT** and the **WAY TO CONTRIBUTE** to them.

• **FIRST OF ALL**, our Common and Security Defence Policy actions are now **MORE FOCUSED** (geographically), **MORE STRATEGIC** (looking clearly at potential butterfly effects) and **MORE JOINED-UP** (because of the enhanced partnerships with international and regional organizations).

• In terms of objectives, **CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING** of partners remain the priorities of our military missions and operations.

• In particular, in the context of **CAPACITY BUILDING**, as discussed during the CHODs meeting last week, we agreed on the **POSSIBILITY TO ENHANCE THE NATURE** of our training missions, for which we have now an **autonomous managing tool**, the **MILITARY PLANNING AND CONDUCT CAPABILITY**.

• Making these missions **MORE ROBUST AND INFLUENTIAL** in the regions of interest **WILL MAKE THEM MORE EFFECTIVE**-  

• Additionally, I think, it could make them **MORE ATTRACTIVE** for potential contributions, providing a solution to the **CONTINUED SHORTFALLS** in personnel, often in **CRITICAL AREAS** of expertise.

• For the moment, in fact, as confirmed by the Global Force Generation Conference held last 19 November, we continue to witness a **NEGATIVE TREND** in troops and equipment contribution.
• These shortfalls - I DULY REMIND - affect not only the achievements of our objectives, but also the EU external actions CREDIBILITY. As I said, shortfalls are evident in ALL our activities, but in particular for EUTM Somalia, EUTM RCA and EUTM Mali, where, IN SOME CASES, EVEN THE LEVEL OF AMBITION IS AFFECTED.
• And to contrast this trend, in June 2018, the EU proposed the EUROPEAN PEACE FACILITY (EPF). This new 10 billion euro tool aims at FUNDING MILITARY RELATED ACTIVITIES, possibly providing more impetus also to initiatives like the EU BATTLEGROUP CONCEPT.
• We truly expect the EPF, ONCE IMPLEMENTED, to improve the EU’s ability to SAFEGUARD European security interests, by PREVENTING CONFLICTS, BUILDING PEACE and STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL SECURITY.
• And I believe that not fulfilling the expectations about the EPF will send A VERY NEGATIVE SIGNAL.
• As I already mentioned, we OBVIOUSLY look with particular attention at our cooperation with NATO, AS OUR MAIN PARTNER, with which there will NEVER BE COMPETITION, even in reference to the EU Strategic Autonomy.
• EU and NATO MUST CONTINUE to work together, to be sincere partners, COMPLEMENTING each other on many issues of common interest, truly MOVING from declarations to implementation of projects, OVERCOMING difficulties, sometime at staff level.
And doing so, we will also continue to send a **POWERFUL MESSAGE** both to partners and competitors: **A STRONGER EU MAKES A STRONGER NATO.**

**Now:**

- **WHAT SHOULD WE DO** to continue implementing **EFFECTIVELY** the Global Strategy?
- In my humble opinion, the main challenges remain essentially **THREE:**
  - **FIRST OF ALL,** we should **PROPERLY COMMUNICATE** to our internal and external audiences the **SENSE OF URGE TO INTERVENE** at the roots of potential international stability and terrorism, with energy and commitment.
  - Our citizens **MUST CLEARLY UNDERSTAND IT:** curing the symptoms of a disease **IS NOT ENOUGH.**
  - **SECONDLY,** MS must **UPHOLD THEIR COMMITMENT** in force generation for our operations and missions, the latter to possibly become **MORE ROBUST,** moving from training **TO MENTORING AND ACCOMPANYING** our partners, for a **TRUE EU’s INTEGRATED APPROACH AND LONG-TERM RELIABILITY.**
  - Let me add that substantial contribution to missions and operations will also demonstrate that MS have fully understood that sense of urge, in the eyes of the **HOST NATION,** of the **INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY,** and in front of **POTENTIAL ADVERSARIES AND STRATEGIC COMPETITORS.**
  - **THIRDLY,** as a necessary enabler for our missions and operations, MS must continue to **fully embed all the mentioned**
capability initiatives in their national defence planning.

OVERCOMING national approaches and demonstrating unity of intent

- This way, we, the military will have the necessary tools to support the Strategic Autonomy.
- And in regard to the implementation of the Global Strategy, let me recall Sir Winston Churchill, who once said: “however beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.”
- Exactly what the EU will do soon, with its Strategic Review, to include a PAUSE for our PESCO projects, while we consolidate existing initiatives, capture lessons and achieve tangible results, BEFORE introducing new projects.
- To me, this is a clear demonstration that the EU is not an organization for which the "PROCESS BECOMES THE PRODUCT."
- Our role as Military Committee will be to MAINTAIN OUR PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY, remain fully involved in all the processes, to make sure that our voice is CLEARLY HEARD, that security and defence REMAIN HIGH in the EU political agenda.
- This way, we will help our political leadership to make the BEST CHOICES, in the interest of the European Union, the Global Strategy and its objectives.
- Like we are doing nowadays, supporting the decisions about Operation Sophia, for which the EU Member States - HOPEFULLY - will manage to find an agreement that could allow our EU presence at sea TO BE RESTORED, so what has been achieved so far, in terms of knowledge, DOES NOT GET LOST.
• In this context, **LET ME HIGHLIGHT ONE POINT**: think about the sea line connecting the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Strait of Hormuz, and the maritime area where the narcotraffic is originated.

• Now associate our engagements as European Union in the areas concerned (Sophia, Atalanta, EUTM/EUCAP Somali).

• You will see a **LINE OF INSTABILITY CONNECTING ALL THE DOTS.**

• Well, **ENHANCING OUR ENGAGEMENTS** - also through information sharing initiatives like the **MARITIME COORDINATION** Presence - and activities, like Crisis Management, Capacity Building, Training and Mentoring, **IN COORDINATION WITH ALL RELEVANT ACTORS**, will be a clear example of an **EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED GLOBAL STRATEGY.**

• **AND I CONCLUDE.**

• EU has been sometime portrayed as a **SHIP**, with **TWENTY-EIGHT** potential captains: it is vital to have a **SHARED SENSE OF DIRECTION.**

• In 2016 we set our destination.

• **BUT** although we have reached important results, **THERE IS NO TIME TO REST.**

• Seems strange when said by an alpine troops officer: the **BIGGEST OBSTACLE** in front of us **IS NOT** the **TROUBLED WATERS** we may encounter in our journey (and we will!)
• INSTEAD, it will be our LESS-TAN-FULL COMMITMENT in maintaining the course, translating the "UNITY OF PURPOSE” into “UNITY OF ACTION”.
• With a future that remains UNCERTAIN - I wished I had a magic crystal ball, but I don't - and that will probably surprise us again (as we learned from the past), we need to continue to implement the MILITARY COMPONENT OF OUR STRATEGY, along the diplomatic, informative and economic tools.
• In fact, as the incoming European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen recently said: "SOFT POWER" WILL NO LONGER BE ENOUGH, if the EU wants to assert itself on the WORLD stage, AS THE WORLD IS ASKING FOR…
• And in order to unleash the full potential of a strong strategy we need THREE THINGS: the WILL TO WIN, the DESIRE TO SUCCEED, the URGE TO REACH OUR OBJECTIVES.
• I firmly believe that the URGE and the DESIRE are there.
• We need to express the FULL WILL TO WIN, hic et nunc, here and now, working on our resilience, when we may face those surprises.
• FAILURE in delivering the promised and expected results will probably bear a HEAVY COST.
• Many thanks for your attention.