



**The Chairman of the European Union Military
Committee
General Claudio GRAZIANO**



Hellenic National Defence College

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DEAR LAMPRO (*LGEN DIMITRIOU, COMMANDANT OF HNDC*)

DEAR ALL, KALIMERA.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THE INVITATION TO JOIN YOU HERE, TODAY.

BEFORE STARTING, HAVING VISITED YOUR COUNTRY AND WORKED WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES IN SEVERAL OCCASIONS, I MUST SAY I KNOW VERY WELL THE HIGH EFFICIENCY OF THE GREEK ARMED FORCES AND THE IMPORTANT ROLE YOUR COUNTRY PLAYS BOTH FOR EUROPE AND FOR NATO.

ON THIS AND OTHER TOPICS OF COMMON INTEREST, I HAD A VERY INTERESTING EXCHANGE OF VIEW WITH YOUR MINISTER OF DEFENCE, MR PANAGIOTOPOULOS, AND WITH THE CHIEF OF DEFENCE, GEN. FLOROS, YESTERDAY.

AMONG OTHER THINGS, WE DISCUSSED ABOUT THE ONGOING CHALLENGES FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION, IN TERMS OF SECURITY AND DEFENCE, AND HOW TO POSSIBLY TACKLE THEM TOGETHER.

I ALSO HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO THANK YOUR LEADERSHIP ABOUT THE GREEK CONTRIBUTIONS TO EU OPERATIONS AND MISSIONS, LIKE IN EU NAVFORMED SOPHIA, EU NAVFOR ATALANTA, EUFOR ALTHEA AND OTHERS.

I MUST CONFESS IT: EVERY TIME I COME TO GREECE, I GET REALLY OVERWHELMED BY THE FASCINATING POWER OF HISTORY EMANATING FROM THE TEMPLE DEDICATED TO ATHENA, THE GODDESS OF WISDOM AND THE ART OF WAR, WHO - BY THE WAY – IS REPRESENTED ALSO IN THE EMBLEM OF THE HELLENIC NATIONAL DEFENCE COLLEGE.

HISTORY, WITH ITS LESSONS, AND WISDOM!

THIS IS WHAT I CALL THE MOST POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE COMBINATION OF PRINCIPLES THAT SHOULD ALWAYS DRIVE OUR APPROACH TO LIFE AND DECISIONS.

PARTICULARLY IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY, AS THE ONE WE ARE LIVING NOWADAYS.

WELL, WHEN I MEET DEFENCE COLLEGE STUDENTS, LIKE TODAY, MY OBJECTIVE IS USUALLY TO PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE AND THE MAIN ITEMS ON THE EU SECURITY AND DEFENCE AGENDA.

BUT SINCE I BELIEVE YOU ALREADY HAVE AN IDEA ABOUT THE EU MILITARY COMMITTEE, AS MY PREDECESSOR WAS GEN KOSTARAKOS, MY DEAR FRIEND MIKI, AND YOUR COURSE DIRECTOR, COL ANOGIANAKIS, WAS DEPUTY MILREP TO EU UNTIL RECENTLY, I WILL ONLY REMIND YOU THAT THE COMMITTEE I CHAIR, AND FOR WHICH I ACT AS SPOKESPERSON, IS COMPOSED OF THE 27 CHIEFS OF DEFENCE OF THE MEMBER STATES.

ALL TOGETHER WE MAKE SURE THAT THE VOICE OF THE END USER OF MILITARY MEANS IS HEARD IN THE EU INSTITUTIONS PROVIDING CONTINUOUS MILITARY ADVICE.

ADDITIONALLY, I AM ALSO THE MILITARY ADVISOR TO THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EU.

HAVING SAID THAT, NOW I WILL SET THE STAGE GIVING YOU MY PERCEPTION ABOUT THE SECURITY SCENARIOS SURROUNDING US.

SUBSEQUENTLY, I WILL TRY TO DEMONSTRATE YOU HOW THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO EUROPE, AND TO A STRONGER EU DEFENCE WHEN IT COMES TO DEAL WITH THOSE SCENARIOS.

THE NEW YEAR DID NOT START VERY WELL, UNFORTUNATELY.

THE EVENTS IN LIBYA AND IRAQ WERE NOT A SURPRISE, AS WE KNEW THE SYMPTOMS WERE THERE.

BUT IS THE MAGNITUDE OF THEIR MEDIUM AND LONG TERM EFFECTS THAT REMAIN TO BE DISCOVERED.

IN FACT, BOTH THOSE CRISES MAY HAVE MANY DIRECT REPERCUSSIONS, REGIONALLY BUT ALSO FOR THE WHOLE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

A COMBINATION OF THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT, WITH PROBLEMS ORIGINATING FAR AWAY REVERBERATING ON US, ALONG WITH THE DOMINO EFFECT, WHEN CRISES CAUSE OTHER CRISES.

WE ARE TALKING ABOUT NEW THREATS, HYBRID, ASYMMETRIC BY DEFINITION, ADDING TO THE TRADITIONAL ONES, MOST OF WHICH NOW COMING FROM THE SOUTH, FROM LIBYA TO SAHEL, PUSHING US TO REBALANCE OUR ATTENTION IN THE DIRECTION OF THE IMMEDIATE DANGER, WHAT I CALL THE TRIANGLE OF INSTABILITY, MADE OF:

INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM, FED ALSO BY FOREIGN FIGHTERS,
INCREASED AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION WAVES,
AND DEGRADED SECURITY IN THE WHOLE REGION, WITH FAILED STATES AND LACK OF GOVERNANCE.

AND LET'S REMIND THAT "THE FUTURE OF EUROPE GOES ALSO THROUGH LIBYA AND CONNECTED REGIONS LIKE THE SAHEL", AS RECENTLY UNDERLINED BY THE HRVP, MR BORRELL.

THERE IS A WAR. AND IT'S RIGHT AT OUR DOORSTEP.

AND TO COMPLICATE THE ALREADY CHAOTIC SITUATION, WE HAVE STATE ACTORS SEEKING A NEW ROLE IN THE AREA CREATING *DE FACTO* EXTRA INCOGNITA, PURSUING THEIR STRATEGIES, OFTEN FILLING GAPS LEFT BY OTHERS.

FOR THIS AND MANY OTHER REASONS, THERE IS A NEED FOR A URGENT AND STRONG REACTION, BEFORE THE SITUATION REACHES A POINT OF NO RETURN.

EU INSTITUTIONS RECOGNISED THESE NEEDS, LOUD AND CLEAR, WITH THE GLOBAL STRATEGY, IN 2016.

BUT UNTIL NOW, WE HAVE NOT FOUND A COMMON DENOMINATOR OR NARRATIVE TO TRANSLATE INTENTIONS INTO CONCRETE ACTIONS, EXPLOITING THE FULL POTENTIAL OF THE EU.

IN FACT, WHILE IT IS NOW OBVIOUS THAT NO SINGLE NATION (WITHOUT SECOND INTERESTS!) IS FITTED (OR LEGITIMATED!) TO TAKE ON BOARD ALL THESE CHALLENGES, OUR UNION IS THE ORGANIZATION BEST POSITIONED TO BE PROACTIVE IN THESE SITUATIONS, COUNTING ON A UNIQUE TOOLBOX THAT INCLUDES POLITICAL, DIPLOMATIC, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY MEANS - WHAT WE CALL THE INTEGRATED APPROACH.

A STRONGER, UNITED EUROPEAN UNION, WHICH KNOWS HOW TO USE THE LANGUAGE OF POWER, ALSO TO AVOID - I REPEAT - THAT THE SECURITY VACUUM UNFILLED BY UN, EU OR NATO BECOMES THE TARGET OF SINGLE ACTORS.

OF COURSE, WE COULD HAVE DONE IT MANY YEARS AGO.

BUT IT'S NEVER TOO LATE, AS THE GREEK PHILOSOPHER CLEOVULO, ONE OF THE 7 WISE MEN OF ANCIENT GREECE, SAID OVER 2500 YEARS AGO.

EU MUST NOT MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY.

OF COURSE - AND I SPEAK AS A MILITARY - I DO BELIEVE THAT TODAY'S CRISIS CANNOT BE ADDRESSED WITH ONLY ONE OF THOSE TOOLS IN ISOLATION.

WHILE THERE IS NO MILITARY SOLUTION TO CRISIS, NO CRISIS CAN BE SOLVED WITHOUT THE MILITARY, MEANING THE EMPLOYMENT OF MILITARY MEANS, TO A PROPER DEGREE.

IN FACT, HISTORY TEACHES THAT WHEN WE SEEK FOR DIPLOMATIC SOLUTIONS BETWEEN CONTENDERS, WE ALWAYS NEED TO ESTABLISH A SECURITY FRAMEWORK, USING MILITARY MEANS, AT LEAST, AS AN ENABLER, ALLOWING DIALOGUE TO TAKE PLACE.

I WANT TO BE CLEAR: TALKING ABOUT A MILITARY TOOL AS AN ENABLER DOES NOT DIRECTLY MEAN TO ENGAGE IN COMBAT, OF COURSE!

IT MEANS, I REPEAT, TO BE ABLE TO COUNT ON SOMETHING THAT HAS OFTEN PROVEN TO BE INSTRUMENTAL OR COMPLEMENTARY FOR OTHER TOOLS TO COME INTO THE GAME, OR TO SUPPORT AND MONITOR THE DIFFERENT PHASES AND DEVELOPMENTS OF A CRISIS, UP TO DE-ESCALATION AND RETURN TO NORMALITY.

LET'S LOOK AT THE SITUATION IN LIBYA, FOR WHICH WE HAVE SOLUTIONS AT SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG TERM, OF COURSE, INVOLVING ALL THE INSTRUMENTS OF POWER AVAILABLE.

BUT IF WE FOCUS ON THE SHORT TERM, ON WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NOW, WE HAVE TWO ISSUES TO DEAL WITH: THE ARMS EMBARGO AND THE CEASEFIRE.

AND SINCE I AM TALKING TO EXPERIENCED OFFICERS, YOU CAN EASILY UNDERSTAND HOW BOTH THESE IMMEDIATE ACTIONS REQUIRE AN IMPORTANT INVOLVEMENT OF MILITARY MEANS.

YOU CANNOT JUST DECLARE A CEASEFIRE AND LEAVE!

YOU NEED TO REMAIN, PROTECTING THE CONDITIONS AND MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION.

THE SAME IS VALID FOR THE ARMS EMBARGO.

THE EU MUST TAKE ITS RESPONSIBILITY, BOTH FOR THE CEASEFIRE AND FOR THE ARMS EMBARGO.

IN FACT, THE EU IS SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING TO FULLY REACTIVATE THE MANDATE OF OPERATION SOPHIA, IN ORDER TO MAKE IT MORE EFFECTIVE AND FOCUSED ON ARMS EMBARGO, THROUGH ALL THOSE ASSETS THAT ARE CRITICAL TO ENFORCE IT.

WE ARE SPEAKING NOT ONLY OF NAVAL ASSETS, WHICH ARE INDISPENSABLE, BUT ALSO OF INTELLIGENCE, AN INCREASED NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT, UAVS AND A FULLY-FLEDGED HQ.

AS IT IS NOW, IN FACT, OUR APPROACH IS SIMPLY INEFFECTIVE, AS MR BORRELL SAID VERY CLEARLY.

IN FOLLOWING STEPS, ARMS EMBARGO MIGHT GRADUALLY BE EXTENDED ASHORE. IN THIS SENSE I WOULD LIKE TO REMIND THAT SOPHIA - IN PHASE 2 BRAVO – HAS ALREADY THE POSSIBILITY TO ACT IN TERRITORIAL WATERS AND IN PHASE 3 TO ACT ASHORE (UNDER THE REQUEST OF THE LIBYAN AUTHORITY AND/OR PRESCRIBED BY A SPECIFIC UN RESOLUTION).

IN THE SAME VEIN, FOR THE CEASEFIRE, THAT HAS TO BE INITIATED BY DIPLOMATIC AND POLITICAL DIALOGUE, A PROPER DEPLOYMENT OF A MIX OF MILITARY FORCES WOULD BE NEEDED TO MONITOR THE IMPLEMENTATION AND TO ENSURE THE SECURITY.

IF SO REQUESTED, BY THE PARTIES, AND/OR DIRECTED BY THE UN, ALSO A FORCE OF INTERPOSITION PROVIDED BY THE UE COULD BE ENVISAGED.

IN SUM, BY REVITALIZING OR RELAUNCHING, IN ANY CASE STARTING BY A MISSION ALREADY ON TRACK LIKE SOPHIA, OR WITH OTHER CONCRETE ACTIONS ON THE GROUND, IN THE AIR, OR AT SEA, THE EU WILL SEND A STRONG, UNIQUE SIGNAL OF COHESION AND DETERMINATION, ACKNOWLEDGING THE SENSE OF URGENCY RAISED FROM MANY SIDES.

HAVING SAID THAT, IF EU WANTS TO ACT NOW OR IN THE FUTURE, IT NEEDS THE CAPACITY AND THE CAPABILITIES.

AS FAR AS THE CAPACITY, WE SAID IT, THE EU MUST SHOW UNITY OF INTENT, SOLVE IDEOLOGICAL OBSTACLES THAT HUMPER THE COOPERATION EU-NATO AND IMPROVE MULTILATERAL COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH ALL RELEVANT ACTORS WILLING TO ACT IN SYNERGY FOR SHARED OBJECTIVES.

BUT IN ORDER TO FULLY BECOME A CREDIBLE SECURITY PROVIDER AND BE ABLE TO COMPETE WITH OUR ADVERSARIES IN THE SECURITY SCENARIO, WE ALSO NEED TO HAVE THE PROPER TOOLS AND CAPABILITIES.

EVEN THE PRESIDENT OF THE EU COMMISSION, URSULA VAN DER LEYEN, RECENTLY CONFIRMED THAT WE NEED CREDIBLE MILITARY CAPABILITIES IF THE EU WANTS TO BE RELEVANT, AS A RELIABLE INTERLOCUTOR ON THE GLOBAL SCENARIO.

I MUST SAY, IN THE LAST 4-5 YEARS THE EU HAS DONE A HUGE AMOUNT OF PROGRESSES, AGREEING ON A SERIES OF TRULY INNOVATIVE SECURITY AND DEFENCE INITIATIVES.

FROM THE HEADLINE GOAL PROCESS, WHICH TRANSLATED THE EU'S POLITICAL LEVEL OF AMBITION INTO MILITARY TERMS, TO OTHER INITIATIVES LIKE PESCO (PERMANENT STRUCTURED COOPERATION), CARD (COORDINATED ANNUAL REVIEW ON DEFENCE) AND THE EDF (EUROPEAN DEFENCE FUND).

VERY BRIEFLY, PESCO IS A FRAMEWORK TO CREATE A MORE INTEGRATED COOPERATION AMONG MEMBER STATES, BY DEVELOPING AND ACQUIRING DEFENCE CAPABILITIES AND MAKING THOSE CAPABILITIES EASILY AVAILABLE FOR EU MILITARY MISSIONS AND OPERATIONS. IT IS A LIST OF 47 PROJECTS, LIKE THE EURODRONE, THE COMBAT HELICOPTER AND THE INTEGRATED UNMANNED GROUND SYSTEM - TO MENTION A FEW.

47 OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBER STATES TO ACHIEVE NEEDED CAPABILITIES IN A JOINT MANNER.

CARD, INSTEAD, IS A USEFUL TOOL THAT CONSISTS IN MAPPING DEFENCE SPENDING AND CAPABILITY PLANNING BY MEMBER STATES, IN ORDER TO HIGHLIGHT AREAS AT RISK OF DUPLICATION OR OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATION.

BUT AMONG THE MENTIONED INITIATIVES, THE EDF HAS ATTRACTED MUCH INTEREST, ALSO BY OUR COMMITTEE, FOR THE GREAT POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE EUROPE OF DEFENSE.

THE EDF IS A MECHANISM DESIGNED TO PROVIDE THE MEANS AND THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN THE FIELD OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, MAKING COOPERATION MORE ATTRACTIVE TO PARTICIPATING STATES.

ONE OF ITS CLEAR OBJECTIVES IS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF EUROPEAN DEFENCE COOPERATION, AVOIDING WASTE OF RESOURCES OR DUPLICATION OF EFFORTS, INCLUDING FROM AN INDUSTRIAL POINT OF VIEW.

THE EDF SETS THE GROUND FOR THE EU DEFENCE INDUSTRY TO RETAIN IN EUROPE THE KNOW-HOW AND THOSE CRITICAL DEFENCE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CAPACITIES, WHICH ARE INSTRUMENTAL FOR A LONG-TERM STRATEGIC AUTONOMY.

IN MY OPINION, THEREFORE, THE EDF CONSTITUTES A MILESTONE IN OUR PATH TOWARD A STRATEGIC AUTONOMY THAT WILL ALLOW THE EUROPE OF DEFENCE TO ACT ALONE, IF NECESSARY, OR IN BETTER SYNERGY WITH ITS PARTNERS, NATO IN PRIMIS.

IN FACT, IT'S PARAMOUNT TO REMEMBER THAT WHAT WE WILL ACHIEVE WITH THE EDF WILL BE BENEFICIAL ALSO FOR NATO.

AND THIS IS WHY I TRULY BELIEVE WE WOULD BE BLIND CONSIDERING A CUT OF THE RESOURCES FORESEEN FOR THE EDF.

IN ALL THE MENTIONED PROCESSES, THE EUMC PLAYS A CRUCIAL ROLE, PROVIDING OUR CONTINUOUS AND UNFETTERED MILITARY EXPERTISE AND ADVICE, SUPPORTING THE EU AND THE MS DECISION MAKING.

IN FACT, WE DO LOOK AT THOSE INITIATIVES WITH GREAT INTEREST AND EXPECTATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGING THE VALUE OF THE OUTCOMES AS KEY ENABLERS FOR OUR MILITARY MISSIONS AND OPERATIONS, WHICH CONTINUE TO PROVIDE HIGH VISIBILITY TO EU FOREIGN POLICY.

AS A QUICK OVERLOOK, LET ME RECALL WHERE WE ARE CURRENTLY ENGAGED, STARTING FROM THE OLDEST OPERATION, ALTHEA, IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA.

THE OPERATION AIMS AT CONTRIBUTING TO A SAFE AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT, PROVIDING CAPACITY-BUILDING AND COLLECTIVE TRAINING TO THE LOCAL ARMED FORCES AND SUPPORTING THE OVERALL EU COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR THE COUNTRY.

MOVING SOUTH, WE HAVE THE ALREADY MENTIONED OPERATION SOPHIA DESIGNED TO DISRUPT THE BUSINESS MODEL OF ILLEGAL SMUGGLER AND ARMS AND HUMAN TRAFFICKERS FROM LIBYA TO EUROPE, BUT ALSO INVOLVED IN TRAINING THE LIBYAN COASTGUARD AND NAVY IN ORDER TO BUILD ITS CAPACITY TO COUNTER ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES.

THEN, OPERATION ATALANTA IN THE GULF OF ADEN AND THE INDIAN OCEAN, WHICH HAS ACHIEVED EXCELLENT OPERATIONAL RESULTS OVER THE 10 YEARS, PROTECTING WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME TRANSPORTS AND OTHER VULNERABLE SHIPPING FROM PIRACY AT SEA. THE OPERATION ALSO OFFERS AN IMPORTANT PLATFORM FOR COOPERATION WITH THIRD STATES.

ONE ASPECT TO NOTE IS THAT THERE IS A CAPACITY BUILDING COMPONENT IN ALL THE OPERATIONS.

OF COURSE, THIS IS EVEN MORE VALID FOR THE NON-EXECUTIVE ACTIVITIES, EU MILITARY TRAINING MISSIONS, IN MALI, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC AND SOMALIA, WHICH ARE BORN TO COVER THE CAPACITY BUILDING OBJECTIVE, PROVIDING TRAINING TO THE LOCAL ARMED FORCES AND ADVICE TO THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP.

FOR THESE ACTIVITIES, I WOULD LIKE TO REMIND YOU, WE HAVE ESTABLISHED OUR OWN COORDINATING STRUCTURE, THE MILITARY PLANNING AND CONDUCT CAPABILITY, A CLEAR SIGN OF THE EU EFFORTS TOWARD THE STRATEGIC AUTONOMY.

THE EXISTENCE OF AN MPCC WILL ALSO BE VERY RELEVANT FOR THE ONGOING REVIEW OF OUR MISSIONS, POSSIBLY MAKING THEM MORE ROBUST, MOVING - FOR INSTANCE - FROM A BASIC TRAINING ROLE TO A MENTORING AND ACCOMPANYING ONE.

I AM REFERRING TO THE TRAINING MISSIONS IN THE SAHEL REGION, BUT ALSO IN SOMALIA.

THIS WOULD NOT ONLY CREATE MORE EFFICIENT MILITARY CSDP ACTIVITIES ON THE GROUND, BUT ALSO CREATE THE PERCEPTION OF MORE INFLUENT AND EFFECTIVE EU ACTIVITIES IN THE EYES OF MEMBER STATES, OUR PARTNERS, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND, WHY NOT, OUR ADVERSARIES AND STRATEGIC COMPETITORS.

ADDITIONALLY, RAISING OUR LEVEL OF AMBITION FOR THE MISSIONS, MAKING THEM MORE EFFECTIVE, COULD BETTER MOBILIZE MS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THOSE MISSIONS SOLVING ALSO THE EXISTING SHORTFALLS IN PERSONNEL.

DRAWING FROM MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE ON THE GROUND AS BATTALION COMMANDER IN MOZAMBIQUE, MULTINATIONAL BRIGADE COMMANDER IN AFGHANISTAN IN NATO'S ISAF AND IN PARTICULAR AS FORCE COMMANDER FOR UNIFIL IN LEBANON, I KNOW VERY WELL THE PROBLEMS THAT FORCE GENERATION BRINGS TO THE COMMANDERS IN THE FIELD.

THIS IS WHY, BESIDE THE COMMITMENT OF MEMBER STATES, WE ENCOURAGE AND WELCOME PARTNERS CONTRIBUTION, ALSO TAKING ADVANTAGE OF TOOLS LIKE THE EUROPEAN PEACE FACILITY, A VITAL PROPOSAL BY THE HR FOR A FUND THAT WILL ENABLE THE FINANCING OF OPERATIONAL ACTIONS UNDER THE COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY THAT HAVE MILITARY OR DEFENSE IMPLICATIONS.

AND I CONCLUDE:

IN THE LAST 15 MINUTES OR SO, I GAVE YOU MY PERCEPTION OF THE SECURITY SCENARIOS THE EU AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ARE CURRENTLY FACING.

I ALSO TRIED TO STRESS THE SENSE OF URGENCY TO REACT THAT THOSE SCENARIOS ARE RAISING, A SENSE OF URGENCY THAT NEEDS TO BE WIDELY COMMUNICATED AND UNDERSTOOD.

AND IN THAT CONTEXT, I DESCRIBED AS THE EU, WITH ITS APPROACH AND CAPABILITIES, COULD BE THE REAL GAME CHANGER FOR THE CRISES THAT ARE AFFECTING OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD. THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION AND I STAND READY FOR YOUR QUESTIONS.