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Report – Public Talk

“The Role of the European Union in the Global Scenario”

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The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized a Public Talk under its Distinguished Lecture Series titled, “*The Role of the European Union in the Global Scenario*” on November 7, 2019. General Claudio Graziano, Chairman of the European Union (EU) Military Committee was the guest speaker at the occasion. Ms. Androulla Kaminara, Ambassador of the EU to Pakistan also spoke on the occasion.

Welcoming the speaker and guests, Chairman, ISSI Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, said the topic was important, especially for EU-Pakistan relations. He talked about the background and progression of EU starting from the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951, followed by the European Economic Community providing for a Common Market and Custom Union in 1957, which was converted into the present-day EU after the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. Ambassador Mahmood further added that from a humble free trade and a customs union among six Western European countries, the EU has grown into a supranational entity that governs many aspects of the daily lives of some 508 million people spread across 28 European countries. It has its own flag, anthem, currency, President and a diplomatic service. The result is that there is free flow of goods, services, people and capital among the member states.

EU was originally intended to focus on the promotion of economic integration among member states. Since 1999 it has proceeded, at a steady pace, to delve into foreign policy and military domains. Over time, it has developed institutional, command and control and crisis management capability, as well as military assets which it has deployed in several cases, some of them not so successfully. Questions have been raised as to what was the need for EU to make a foray in the security and military field in the presence of NATO, especially after the security threat had abated following the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

He also added that EU has many achievements to its credit. Of late, it is encountering diverse challenges including the Greek debt crisis and lingering concerns about the Eurozone, ongoing migrant and refugees’ flows, a resurgent Russia, a heightened terrorism threat, and BREXIT. These developments have led to the rise of populist, xenophobic and ultra-nationalist parties in various EU member states who control one third of all seats in the European Parliament. They are opposed to further European integration and share a desire, at the very minimum, to return

some of the EU powers back to nation states. It marks a departure from an era of regional integration in Europe, witnessed after the carnage and destruction of World War II.

These and other challenges are testing the strength and resilience of EU. However, serious thinking and efforts are afoot to find common solutions to these challenges, as indicated in the Bratislava Declaration of September, 2016. Talking about the future of EU, Ambassador Mahmood stated that various European policy makers and analysts have likened the European integration project to a bicycle, which must keep going forward lest it starts wobbling or falls over. He ended with a quote from German Chancellor Angela Merkel: “Individual member states, of course, have different ideas about how we shape the future, but the overall way forward is clear: more cooperation.”

Ms. Androulla Kramina thanked the institute for hosting the talk. She said that the EU is not about trade and commerce only, but security and strategy as well. She added the visit of General Graziano, to Pakistan will help to highlight an important aspect of the EU which is its security domain, which goes hand in hand with its other political functions. Security cannot be achieved without development and vice versa. On behalf of the European delegation, she welcomed any interaction with the Pakistani community on common security and defense policy issues.

General Claudio Graziano, in his presentation, said that the EU Military Committee is the highest military body within the EU institutions, composed of the 28 Chiefs of Defense of the EU Member States. He said that the EU strongly acknowledge one point: if we want to properly tackle security issues of common concern, interaction between us cannot be just an option. He shared a quote from His Excellency, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, where he said, “It is only with united effort and faith in our destiny that we shall be able to translate the Pakistan of our dreams into reality.” He added that the EU approach toward its goals follows a very similar principle, particularly in the field of security and defense.

General Graziano said that back in 1951, six European countries joined up for economic reasons and understood very quickly that a peaceful and globally respected Europe would also need a common defense. It seemed just a dream at that time. It is true, the founding nations' first attempts did not give the desired result, but not only is their thinking still valid, but the EU is proving it to be real. Some years ago, when the new security challenges increased in quantity,

but above all changed in quality, like transnational terrorism, failed states, human and arms smuggling, without replacing but adding to the previous ones, and requiring a diversified approach, the EU found itself at a crossroads: Keep the status quo or engage another gear?

New diversified security threats, the annexation of Crimea by Russia, the evolution of transatlantic relations, the appearance on the scene of new powers claiming a more important role, the return of the competition between great powers, have given new impetus and strength to the EU on defence matters. Consequently, European leaders did seriously reconsider defense as a priority strategic sector, delivering the new Global Strategy, a vision for Europe's place in the world, promoting greater coherence in our Union's external action. The Global Strategy raised the Level of Ambition of the EU, with the aim of promoting a stronger and more secure union, so that it could be identified as an effective actor in the global security scenario, not only in defense of its citizens, but as a promoter of security and stability at a global level.

General Graziano said the new Level of Ambition defined three strategic priorities for EU security and defence:

- 1) To respond to external conflicts and crises,
- 2) To protect the EU and its citizens, and
- 3) To help building the capacities of our partners, making them able to stand on their feet after a period of crisis.

The EU in its role, taking into account the capacities expressed in Collective Defence by the main partner, namely NATO, has been addressed mainly at a specific activity: The Capacity Building, which is the overall process aimed at helping the countries in crisis "to get back on their feet", supporting them from a military point of view, but also in terms of economic development and reconstruction of the institutional apparatus.

He added that in this activity, the EU can be particularly effective, thanks to a unique set of tools, diplomatic, economic, political and military, acting in an autonomous space to provide training and assistance, in a truly integrated manner, as demonstrated by our engagements in military missions and operations. But there is another important new point introduced by the Global

Strategy: the “Strategic Autonomy”, not an autonomy "from" someone or something, but rather an autonomy "to do" something, the ability to decide if-where-when to intervene, with partners where possible, but also in full autonomy, if necessary. Since the Global Strategy has never been thought as a mere theoretical exercise, but rather as a compass to guide our actions which - as recently mentioned by the EU High Representative Mogherini, of whom the General acts as military advisor - recently witnessed a "snowball effect", with a series of innovative initiatives and efforts, at all the mentioned levels: diplomatic, political, economic and military.

General Graziano said that in terms of capability to act, for instance, for managing missions, the EU established the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), enabling it to react in a faster, more efficient and effective manner as a security provider outside its borders. In term of capacities, on the other hand, EU started working from the evaluation of needs for defense and security, defining the so-called Headline Goals, the immediately needed capabilities. The appropriate planning and financial mechanisms to support all the Member States (and consequently the EU), with several initiatives was set up. The first one to mention is definitely PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation), a framework to create a more integrated cooperation among member states, by developing and acquiring defense capabilities and making those capabilities easily available for EU military missions and operations. Then, the CARD (Coordinated Annual Review on Defense), a useful tool for mapping defense spending and capability planning by member States, in order to highlight areas at risk of duplication or opportunities for cooperation. Finally, the EDF (European Defence Fund) and the EDIDP (European Defence Industry Development Programme), which complement the previous tools, providing the means and the financial support to achieve projects and objectives, making cooperation more attractive to participating states.

A very ambitious Global Strategy, but also a responsible answer to the increasing expectations by European citizens (70% of Europeans support a strong EU role in the world) and by the international community, all asking for a Europe that can and wants to be a trusted security partner. But partnerships are a "give and get" relationships, a mutual-benefit activity where the EU should never be taken for granted. He said the EU firmly believes that investing in these friendships, partnerships and like-minded relationships, bringing the relevant regional and global powers to the negotiating table, is a key and successful activity. It takes a strong commitment,

true, with uninterrupted diplomatic efforts, at the political and military level. He emphasized, in this context: from his experience, perhaps because of a common language, he truly believed that military dialogue keeps on representing a very practical channel for EU external relationships.

General Graziano said that as Chairman of the Military Committee, he constantly engaged with his counterparts (among the EU Member States and outside the EU) and this trip falls exactly in this approach. Partnerships are a strategic necessity, in the widespread certainty that the dispersion of efforts weakens everyone in face of crises that develop on global scales and multidimensional environments, often in a hybrid manner. The value EU gives to partnership is very high in their own region, starting with their neighborhood, the Western Balkans, but also for the rest of the world. Like in South East Asia, a region where the EU is already deeply engaged, as testified - for instance - by the commitments with the ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations), but where they are also looking for more cooperation, with single nations or organizations, for common security issues.

He further said that in this region, the EU knows that Pakistan is playing an important role for security and stability, particularly in promoting an intra-Afghan dialogue on peace and encouraging a secure environment, and in situations like this one, the EU can engage and propose itself as a facilitator. Other areas where both could eventually join their efforts are the threat of terrorism, from which Pakistan has suffered a lot, or the issue of Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, or the Rule of Law. There are activities where the EU and Pakistan are already interacting, starting from the good relationship with the Pakistani Embassy in Brussels; and EU looks forward to a similar cooperation here in Islamabad, between its Ambassador and the Pakistani government.

The EU, welcomes and values Pakistan's continued interest in the EU common security and defense policy. The recently signed Strategic Engagement Plan provides a very solid basis for cooperation that needs to be fully exploited, starting from the vital issue of information exchange at different levels. Additionally, the Pakistani Armed Forces have been invited to send participants to courses at the European Security and Defense College, like the CSDP Orientation Course, very valuable for Defence Attaches based in Europe. Concerning military interactions in the field, EU welcomes the idea that Pakistan may contribute to operation Atlanta in the Gulf of

Aden, fighting piracy at sea, agreeing on patrol zones and conducting exercises. Atlanta is one of the six military activities currently run by the EU and providing contribution to its operations and missions is indeed one of the first ways for a nation to demonstrate sharing of intents.

General Graziano further added that the EU runs three executive operations (Althea in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sophia in the Mediterranean and the mentioned Atlanta in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden). Then it has three non-executive missions, in Mali, Central African Republic and Somalia, providing training and advice to those country's armed forces and military leadership. He also highlighted that five out of six military activities are around the African continent, which is where the EU is providing its main effort, as the root causes of many existing challenges lie there and where the “triangular” relationship between the security variables - Terrorism-Migration-Instability - is more evident. He also stressed that, although there is not a direct connection between terrorism and migration, and recalled that immigrants as such are not criminals, EU cannot mitigate the consequences of migration without supporting the countries of origin, particularly with those capacity building activities. Another common factor, now for all six EU operations and missions is the problem related to force generation: due to their complexity and the contested environment where they occur, and EU is constantly committed to match the operational needs with the contribution of forces, funds and other assets.

Drawing from his 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, he said that he knows very well that the credibility of a mission, during time, is also provided by a solid provision of forces. A multinational participation confirms the perception of a shared project, with a wider, concrete support. This is why, beside the commitment of member states, EU encourages and welcomes partners contribution, also taking advantage of tools like the European Peace Facility, a proposal by the HR for a fund that will enable the financing of operational activities under the Common Foreign and Security Policy that have military or defense implications. The European Peace Facility aims at increasing effectiveness of operations, supporting partners, and carry out broader actions including capacity building, provision of training, equipment or infrastructure. The EPF will assist in building the capacities of partner countries' armed forces to preserve peace, prevent conflict and address security challenges. He said that the good news is that several partners are

already providing some vital assets in EU-led military operations and training missions. In this context, he provided commendation to all women and men in uniform serving under EU and other international organizations flag, for their commitment to peace and security, and their great achievements on the ground.

General Graziano concluded by reiterating that nowadays, the EU is facing opportunities that cannot be missed, fulfilling expectations and making that dream come true, working side by side with the international community and all those willing to share its objectives. As EU, it will be able to do that by assuring itself all the necessary skills and capacities, intervening better, whenever and wherever necessary, speaking with a single voice. By doing so, EU will also increase its credibility toward existing and potential partners, who are constantly looking at it to provide concrete answers to common needs. This is the EU of security and defence being created, based on autonomy but also on partnership, two coherent and complementary concepts for a strategy that the HR called the European way to peace and security. The big steps EU has taken are part of a bigger journey that it needs to undergo with tenacity, convergence of intent and political will.

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General ISSI, concluded the talk by thanking the guests and the participants of the event. He praised General Graziano for his wonderful and profound presentation on the workings of the EU, especially its defense and strategy sectors. He further added that some years ago when the US announced its pivot towards Asia, there was an increased global attention towards Asia, but one can never discount Europe. It is a very resilient continent with a very rich history, intellectual, economic, political and military foundations, and therefore Pakistan is very keen to know the EU perspective on what is happening due to shift in US policy towards Asia, reflected in its Indo-Pacific strategy.

PICTURES OF THE EVENT

