14TH ASIA SECURITY SUMMIT

THE IISS SHANGRI-LA DIALOGUE

FIFTH PLENARY SESSION

GLOBAL SECURITY CHALLENGES
AND THE ASIA-PACIFIC:
BUILDING COOPERATION BETWEEN REGIONS

SUNDAY 31 MAY 2015

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FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY POLICY;
VICE-PRESIDENT, EUROPEAN COMMISSION

AS DELIVERED
Dr John Chipman, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to begin the fifth and final plenary session of the Shangri-La Dialogue. I would like to make a few remarks just to introduce this session. I was actually just reminded by the Minister of Defence of Australia that Giuseppe Verdi described an overture as a ‘piece of music totally unrelated to the following opera, the purpose of which was only to quell the audience’.

I suppose that is what my remarks have so often served in this Shangri-La Dialogue. I speak for a couple of minutes and you need not pay too much attention, but the fact that you begin to sit down, find and take your seats means that the people to whom you really want to listen have a chance properly to be heard. The last 200 words I have just uttered have been exactly like Verdi’s overtures, totally unrelated to the excellent pieces of music you are about to hear, but happily have now served their principal purpose of quelling the audience.

We have three speakers this morning in our concluding plenary. It is a delight to bring to the Shangri-La Dialogue and have her here, Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, also holds the title of Vice-President of the European Commission. She comes to Singapore following an important EU–Japan meeting in Tokyo. There have already been questions at this Dialogue about the engagement of the European Union in Asia and even the specific relationship of the European Union with ASEAN, and so you have no higher authority to question on those issues than Federica Mogherini.

Delighted to have Kevin Andrews here, Minister for Defence of Australia. Australia hold the joint record with Singapore and Japan for perfect ministerial attendance, since 2002, every year at the Shangri-La Dialogue. Thank you, Kevin Andrews, for ensuring that record is secure. And of course it is always a signal honour and privilege to welcome to the podium our host Minister for Defence, Dr Ng En Hen. So those are the authors of the pieces of music you are about to hear.

Could I please invite Federica Mogherini to address the 2015 Shangri-La Dialogue.

Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-President of the European Commission

Thank you, John. Let me start with a sincere thank you. First of all for the invitation, because it is not to be given for granted that the European Union, that for sure is not an Asian or a Pacific power, is considered relevant in this Dialogue.

Still, it is, and very much so. We share economic relations, investments and trade interests, and that is evident to everybody, especially here in Singapore. But we share much more than that. We share
political partnerships, security cooperation, global challenges to which we need to give responses that will be effective only if they will be joint ones. From terrorism to climate change, from natural disasters to cyber attacks, the threats we face today have no borders. They are global by nature, by definition, and we need strong global partnerships to face them. That is why it is natural to be here, to invest in our friendship. That is why you find a lot of Europe here, if you look around the people in this room.

Let me come here to my second big thank you, to my friends that here with me, in these days, have represented Europe, because the European Union is not just institutions in Brussels. It is a family, a community, where we share values, interests, visions, a lot of history, often a difficult one. I know Ursula was speaking about that this morning, but most of all we share a lot of common future, and when we say ‘Europe’ we say ‘all of us’, each different but all together.

Let me thank the Defence Minister of Germany, Ursula; of the UK, Michael; of Spain, Pedro; friends and colleagues representing other European Union member states like France; other European parliaments; European business; think tanks; research institutes; and last but not least, the Chairman of the EU Military Committee, General De Rousiers, that is now an habitué of these Dialogues.

Because yes, the European Union has a military dimension as well. Our economic face is the one that most Asians and also most Europeans are more familiar with, and that is natural, that is good, also. There are more goods and services travelling between Europe and Asia than across the Atlantic. That is amazing to us as well. We are one of the major investors in this continent, both in qualitative and quantitative terms, and the biggest development donor in this part of the world, but our engagement with Asia goes well beyond trade, investment and aid. It is political, it is strategical and it needs to develop more also in the security field.

Four out of ten of the EU strategic partners are Asian countries: China, Japan, India and the Republic of Korea. It is not by chance that I have personally travelled to the region twice in less than a month and in the very beginning of my mandate. I was in Japan, as you mentioned, John, for our EU–Japan summit just before flying here. I was in Seoul and Beijing a few weeks ago, and we are preparing to host the EU–China summit in Brussels at the end of June, while a summit with South Korea is also planned. I am here today, I will come back again in the region in August for the ASEAN Regional Forum in Kuala Lumpur, and I look forward to chairing the ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Luxembourg in November.

Yes, we are here, even if we are clearly not part of the region, because we are partners of this region, and we believe it is our reciprocal interest to invest even more in our friendship and in the work that we can jointly do for the security of our people. Please, please do not look at us just as a big free-trade
area. Continue looking at us also in this way, but consider that the European Union is also a foreign-policy community, a security and defence provider for our own people, within our borders and in the rest of the world, in our own region, that we know at the moment is one of the most turbulent ones, and we are ready to take more responsibility to bring security and stability in our part of the world, together with our neighbours, and with our global partners, Asia included. As while the European Union continues to be deeply engaged in Asia, we want to be more and more engaged with Asia, to address together our common challenges and to take full advantage of our common opportunities.

In today’s world, no region is as dynamic as Asia. There would be really good reasons to be optimistic about Asia’s future. Still, the world of economics is closely connected to the world of security, and security threats are multiplying by the day. The most striking feature of Asia today is this unique combination of optimism, dynamism and fragility. We see signals of rivalries among powers re-emerging. Some maritime disputes are far from being settled. I believe we cannot afford it.

We, Europe and Asia, have a strong interest in global security. A very basic interest regards the freedom of navigation on the outer areas of the global economy. It is basic but essential, if you think of how integrated economic supply chains have become. We have a direct interest in the respect for international law. We believe regionalism and multilateralism are the framework for cooperative international relations, and cooperation calls for everyone to play by the same rules. Agreed rules make states secure, people free and companies willing to invest. When some decide to play by their own rules, cooperation gives way to confrontation, and in today’s world, that is bad news for everyone.

The same applies to maritime disputes, too. We need to maintain a maritime order based on international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. We are not getting into the legitimacy of specific claims, but we are resolute, as Europeans, on how they should be resolved – that is, peacefully, without use or threat of force.

We support the ASEAN–China negotiations for a Code of Conduct, and we hope they can be concluded soon.

The region, and the world, can only benefit from a cooperative order. Our own European experience tells us that regional integration is about prosperity, for sure, but it is also about security, and it brings added value to all.

As Ursula just said this morning, in Europe – I quote her – ‘we partly gave up national sovereignty, but we gained way more economic and political power’. Now, each region has, and will have, its own
way to integration. For sure, it is not about exporting models, but we can for sure be partners in integration, sharing experiences and supporting each other, in particular with ASEAN.

As we are working towards an upgrade in our cooperation with ASEAN, we have just adopted a policy setting out our vision of a partnership with a strategic purpose. Not just vague ideas on increased cooperation. This time, we list a number of concrete commitments and priorities.

First, the EU has unique means and expertise on what ASEAN calls ‘connectivity’ – in other words, eliminating barriers among member countries. With no other organisation in the world can ASEAN discuss connectivity at a continental scale, including issues as the single market, aviation research, higher education and others.

Second, we are more than doubling our assistance to ASEAN, increasing it to €170 million, and add our bilateral assistance to ASEAN member states, and the figure gets close to €3 billion. We also expect to use bilateral free-trade agreements as stepping stones towards a full region-to-region free-trade agreement.

Three, our cooperation on non-traditional security is a huge growth area. The EU–ASEAN High Level Dialogue in Malaysia last month was an opportunity to exchange the lessons we learned on piracy, maritime surveillance, port security. We are announcing dialogue on disaster relief, combined with greater capacity-building, and we are increasing our engagement in the ASEAN Regional Forum. Last year, the European Union organised the first-ever ARF training on preventive diplomacy and mediation.

Fourth, in this light, it is quite obvious that we are talking about substantive steps towards a strategic partnership, heeding the call from ASEAN for a greater EU involvement in the region, and here we are in the region. We are here because we believe we have to work more and more together.

Prime Minister Lee, in his keynote speech on Friday, reminded us all that we share common challenges, starting from terrorism, prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism. This is a top priority in our European political agenda, and we can only benefit from working more on that together, because the threat we are facing has no borders, no state, no region. It is global.

Defeating Daesh and other terrorist groups is not just about military power. It is necessary, but it will not be sufficient. We will need a stabilised and inclusive Iraq, a Syria that finally helps towards national reconciliation and a fully successful transition in Afghanistan, just to start with. The only path towards stability in the long run is built on democracy and respect for human rights. These tasks call for a truly global alliance among civilisations, and we need to work in our own countries, as the boundaries between external and domestic threats have quickly disappeared. Europe and Asia can do
so much together, learning from each other on confronting the terrorist recruitment practices, for example, on preventing radicalisation, on supporting capacity-building in partner countries.

Complex threats call for articulated responses, mixing military and civilian tools, good reflexes to act fast and foresight to prevent new crises. We know in the European Union that we need to use our tools better, that we need to deserve our Nobel Peace Prize, not only for our history – and still, let me say, our history has a particular value today, a value that the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War reminds us every single day. But we need to transform the lessons we learned in our past, in willingness and capacity to play a role, a major role, for the future.

I take this as my personal, main responsibility; that of using all the potential that the European Union has, all our tools, all our policies, all our strength, in a coordinated and coherent way. Not easy, but possible and very much needed.

A big part of my job as Vice-President of the European Commission – thank you for mentioning it – is coordinating all commissioners whose portfolio can impact on our common foreign policy, and we are finding out that that means potentially all commissioners, as there is no field of work that nowadays is purely internal. It is a team that is capable of dealing with trade, development, humanitarian aid, but also energy, counter-terrorism, climate and migration. The same goes for the coordination of our 28 member states, a work we do not just with all European foreign ministers, but also with those of defence, development ministers and more and more often the interior ones.

Let me confess to you one thing I found out coming to Brussels: that our mission can sometimes be a little bit complicated, a little bit bureaucratic, yes, but we do have the tools to ensure the whole is more than the sum of its parts, and we are finally starting to make good use of them, including the military ones.

Maybe not many people in this part of the world, or not even in Europe – this is also my job – are aware that the European Union has been deploying its personnel in crisis zones for more than ten years. We are currently running five military and 11 civilian missions on three continents. Seven thousand women and men are deployed under the EU flag, taking risks and working for peace. Some Asian partners are contributing to our common security and defence operations, and let me thank those that do it, and those that are willing to do it in the future.

Take the Atalanta mission, the EU naval operation in the Horn of Africa which helped to bring down piracy attacks from 163 in 2009 to only two last year, and this is not an issue in these two days of work today, but maybe it was a few years ago. As part of this campaign, we have undertaken security cooperation with China, with Japan and the Republic of Korea. Expanding our cooperation also in
this field carries a huge potential. The work we do together for our common security is not limited to
the elements I mentioned, but I am afraid my time is limited, so I will stop here.

I will stop by saying that, indeed, our security today is indivisible. Thinking of zero-sum games
brings us completely out of reality. Our interdependence forces us to work together, to build
partnerships, strong ones. When both parties are strong, the partnership is strong. To diffuse tensions
and invest in cooperation – this is why we are here. Not for an attempt to change geography and
pretend we are part of the region, as we limit our ambitions to the reasonable ones, but because we
know that we need each other in today’s world. Count on us, count on Europe, as we count on you.

We want to be engaged in Asia, we want to partner with Asia, and I know that together we can work
for Asia, for Europe and for a world more stable, prosperous and peaceful. I am looking forward to
doing that together in the next five years.

Thank you.

Dr John Chipman, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you for informally announcing a new five-year plan for Europe–Asia cooperation, and for
reminding us that the EU is a security and defence provider. I know there is quite a lot of discussion,
of course, in Europe and within the EU about whether it is time to update the documentation on
European foreign policy and strategy, and as that is being considered and potentially drafted, of
course it will be of interest to this region to see what place Asia has, formally, in Europe’s foreign
policy and defence strategy.