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A STATESMAN'S FORUM WITH FREDERICA MOGHERINI, FOREIGN MINISTER OF ITALY

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Introduction:

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Featured Speaker:

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Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. PIFER: It is my pleasure today to introduce the Italian Foreign Minister, Federica Mogherini for today's Statement's Forum.

Let me first extend a couple of acknowledgments -- first, to the Council for the United States and Italy for its collaboration on this event, but also for its broader cooperation with the Brookings Institution and, in particular, for its support for our Italian visiting fellow.

We're very pleased today that we have in the audience Riccardo Alcaro, who is our current visiting fellow from Italy. We're also pleased to have with us Michael Calingaert, who is here. He has two faces, really -- he's at Brookings, but he's also the American face at the Council for the United States and Italy. And he will be moderating the discussion following the foreign minister's opening comments.

An then, finally, we're very pleased with the cooperation that we've had with the Embassy of Italy, both on this event and in general, and we're very pleased that the Italian Ambassador can join us today.

We're delighted to host the foreign minister. She has had the job since February. This is, I believe, one of her first trips overseas for a bilateral discussion, which I think reflects the importance of the American-Italian relationship.

She is the youngest of Italy's of post-war foreign ministers, and she is the third woman to occupy that position. And I think that was a topic that she was discussing last night when she was seated next to Madeleine Albright, our -- of course, America's first female secretary of state.

The foreign minister has been in the parliament since 2008, on the foreign affairs and defense committees, and last year she headed Italy's delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

She comes to the job at a very busy time for Italy. Among other things, the Italian foreign policy agenda includes the fact that Rome, on July 1st, will take up the presidency of the European Union, and for the second half of 2014 will have a very busy agenda. One possible priority could be the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership which, if progress can be made and that can close, will bring the opportunity for economic growth on both sides of the Atlantic.

Another issue which I think we'll hear about is that Italy, as a member of both the European Union and NATO, like the United States, is trying to figure out how to grapple with the challenge posed by a Russia that appears to be breaking some of the key rules of the post-war order.

And also, Italy, given its geographical location, naturally is going to look to the south, towards, towards the Mediterranean and North Africa. And that brings certain issues, including Italy now experiencing some of direct consequences of continued turmoil in Libya, including thousands of irregular immigrants' turning up on Italian shores.

And, finally, the minister has long had an interest in disarmament and nonproliferation, which I personally hope she'll touch on in her conversation.

We're very happy to have you, Minister.

Last night, she told me she did not come here with a long prepared speech, and I said, "That's great." She will give us basically some opening comments, and then leave the bulk of the time for questions and answers. And I have promised her that Brookings' audiences always have good, interesting, and challenging questions.

So, Madam Minister, we look forward to your presentation. Thank you for joining us. (Applause)

MS. MOGHERINI: And, actually, I used yesterday night to prepare long speech. No -- that's a joke.

No, just a few words -- first of all, to thank you. It's really good to be here to see some faces of good friends, Italians not only. And it's really good to be in Washington as a minister. It's, as you said, my first official visit, bilateral visit. I've been traveling around, these two months, mainly for multilateral meetings, Europeans not only, but we decided to make the first bilateral visit in D.C., to show how strong, how special, the relationship is between Italy and the United States, after having hosted the visit of President Obama last month in Rome that was a key event for our country.

As you said, Italy has a new government since February, the end of February. That, I guess, is no news that we changed government. But the news is that it's the youngest government ever in Italian history. And it's the first government that is half women and half men. And I think that is a major change for the Italian -- not only for Italian politics, but also for the Italian culture. And, on top of that, it's women that, like me, have key positions in government -- foreign affairs, defense, economic development, energy, institutional reforms, and so on.

So, let me say how happy I am to represent this government here in a country that -- yes, has some very good, excellent, and inspirational women that have done the job before.

You actually raised the issues that I think are on the agenda. I'll start from Europe. Because this new government, I think, can represent the best possible way, a new generation of Europeans, not only in Italy, but also in other countries in Europe. And we will try to use our semester of presidency, starting from July, to face, first of all, an institutional transition that will be quite challenging probably. We have European elections 25th of May that is known as the election day in Ukraine, but is also

election day in Europe and in Egypt -- and probably somewhere else in the world. But these are the three, a sort of triangle of the interests that we have, probably, these days.

And so we will change the European Parliament. We will change the Commission, after that. So, our first challenge in the semester is going to assure that the European institutions have the smooth transition period, one that makes it possible for the institutions to work in the most effective way, and not to spend months discussing among countries, or among political forces, who does what -- and, at the same time, recognizing and responding to the results of the European elections. That is going, probably, to be a challenge. But we know that we have to do our best to accompany that process.

I might go back on our vision of Europe. Just let me mention one issue that is normally very high on the agenda when people ask about what's going to happen in the next European elections, in the next semester -- this debate about populism, or anti-Europeans in the next vote.

We in Italy have quite a tradition of that, we have quite an interesting experience that is, I think, famous also here, the Grillo movement. And let me say that I think it's basically anti-system forces that express this being anti-system at a national level, at European level, not realizing that -- and this will be our message in the strongest possible way -- that Europe is not something you can be in favor or against. It's our natural political space.

And I think is a new way of seeing it. It might be generational. We have grown up being Europeans. And it doesn't make sense for us to choose if we are for or against Europe, as it wouldn't make sense for us to choose if we were Italians or not. It's just our space, it's just our continent, our political environment.

I would put it this way: We are trying to work to make Italy adopt a sort of attitude of grownup Europeans, realizing that that is anymore an issue for discussion, but it is an issue of taking responsibilities, and doing in Brussels what you say in Rome -- or in Paris, or in London, or in Berlin -- and saying in Rome, or in Paris, or in Berlin, what you do in Brussels, which is not necessarily the case all the time. I think that is an act of responsibility. And the only way to stop the attitudes of the people, of the European people, of disillusion in the European institutions is this act of responsibility.

As well as we can be grownup Europeans, so I think we can be -- here, I have a doubt in English, but some friends will help me -- grownup "trans-Atlantists." Does it work in English? No -- yes? Okay. Anyway, you understand what I mean.

Previous generations, especially in politics, especially in a country like Italy that has always been a country deeply pro-American, deeply linked to NATO and to the European Union, and at the same time historically very much aware of how much we owe to the United States of America for the end of the Second World War. There has been in the past generations a sense of having to demonstrate how loyal and how friends we are.

I think we can now give it for granted, understand that we share values, we share interests -- TDIP is one of those, I think. And we will use our semester to make it advance as much as possible, even if we know that, probably due to the change in the European institutions, and also to some discussions here in Washington, it won't be signed during our semester. But we hope that we can make it progress so that it can be signed in 2015.

I will say we share interests, we share values, we share a vision of the world. And we can be now frank among us, and see what we can do together, rather

than discussing of our relationship. Our relationship is strong, is natural, and we can move forward from that.

And I think this is one of the reasons why we have managed to deal with the Ukrainian crisis in a coordinated way. It may be a bit too late. Maybe if we did some efforts of coordinating before the crisis started, things would have turned different. But after the crisis started, I think we worked very well in coordinating actions and reactions. And it was, for me -- I just actually came to office the 22nd of February, so a few days before the crisis openly developed. We managed to coordinate within the European Union -- not easy -- between the European Union and the U.S. in the G-7, in NATO, in the OSC, in the Council of Europe, in the U.N.

I think that was not necessarily an easy thing, coming to relations to Russia and the crisis at the borders of Europe. And I think that was one of the reasons why there were some significant effects on the Russian economy, even before the sanctions. The sense of international unity and isolation that was there, politically first, even before them economically, I think created a dynamic on the currency, on the stock market in Russia that was, I think, important. And that was created by this international coordination in the reaction to the crisis.

On Ukraine, I'm pretty sure there will be some questions, so I will go quick. But that is, for sure, the issue on which we've been working more in these last two months. And that's what I can speak about.

It's clear to everybody that there is no military option to solve the crisis. And this is commonly understood by everybody. So we only have the political way. And I think sometimes we make the mistake of seeing the political dialogue in alternative to the sanctions, and vice versa -- while I think that sanctions are an instrument for political pressure, not an objective in themselves, and sometimes we tend to forget it. And the

real balance we have to find, given the fact that the only way we have is the political solution, is balancing sanctions and the offer for dialogue.

And we are at this stage now, I think. We have, as you know, adopted, in Europe, a first stage of sanctions, then a second one. Now we are at the stage of developing a little bit more the second stage of the sanctions that is targeted to individuals that have responsibilities. We, on Monday at the Foreign Council of the European Union adopted an extended lit that also includes two companies in Crimea. But still, we are in the same framework of the second level.

And we are, since a couple of weeks, probably a month, developing on the technical level, the preparation for the third phase of the sanctions that would be sectorial sanctions to the economy.

I guess that is also going to be an issue for questions, so I'll go quickly on that -- saying that, apart from that, we are developing, we're trying to develop the political dialogue, which is the real challenge that can lead us to a solution -- political dialogue within Ukraine, because the country is profoundly divided, more that we represent sometimes. And we need to make them talk to each other, build trust among each other -- which is not easy at all -- and that is what, at the moment, the OSC is trying to build, with the first meeting that was held today. A difficult process aimed at, first of all, stopping the violence on the ground, which is the first condition, basic condition, also to hold elections.

That is going to be key -- elections that have to take place possibly all over the country. You might it's Italian, the person that is coordinating the election observers of the OSCE Tana de Zulueta, former colleague from a senator. And also, together with that -- stopping violence, disarming, working on the elections -- together

with that must go the reform of the constitution that allows all Ukrainians to feel ownership in the process, and the recognition of the institutions.

The real point that is being that, the mid-term, long-term big question, is if, in the end, we as European Union, as NATO, think that Russia is lost forever, or if, at a certain point, we have to rebuild a partnership with Russia.

And I think this is a question we haven't answered at the point. I have my personal answer -- I think we have to rebuild a strategic partnership with Russia, the sort of point that it's in our interest, in their interest. But I think we haven't had this discussion so far. We've started to, but we haven't developed that so far.

And this brings me to NATO, because obviously, well, this is a key issue for NATO, as well. Just to say one sentence, and then I'll go to the Middle East and Mediterranean very quickly, as well, because I guess that can be of interest of some questions afterwards.

All the preparation of the September Wales Summit of NATO was, before January, February, concentrated on how we rethink NATO's role in the after-operational era -- finishing Afghanistan, finishing (inaudible) -- how we deal with global security in the smartest way, how do we work on conflict prevention and conflict management and post-conflict management. How do we try to see things before they happen? And, most probably, it's quite doable if we just think of doing that.

How we work on partnerships, global partnerships -- because the areas of the world that are dangerous to us are not only around us, as we have very well realized, I think, with Afghanistan. It can be the Far East, it can be Northeast Asia. North Korea can be the nuclear threat. It can be proliferation around the world -- many things.

And I think it would be wise not to shadow this agenda for the next summit in Wales, for the crisis in Ukraine. To say it very frankly and very opening, I think

we run the risk of thinking that Ukraine brings us back to an old-time agenda for NATO, and we missed an historic opportunity of looking forward.

We need to face the challenge of Russia and Ukraine at the moment, but we also need to stay concentrated on what kind of role NATO can have for the next decade, hoping that Ukrainian crisis will not take our work for the next decade. We need to solve it before.

Middle East -- the same. Ukraine is shadowing conflicts that are open and that stay open all around the Mediterranean. That is our region, our Italian, European, but that is the main area of instability also of concern of the United States. If you think of the place of the world where the major instabilities, and the major threats to security come from, probably that is around the Mediterranean. Think of going around Syria, Middle East, with a peace process that is suspended, Egypt, Libya, Africa.

And you're right, the numbers of -- I wouldn't say illegal immigrants, I would say people that are for one reason or another leaving their countries. And mainly we've seen a shift in the composition of the flows. Today it's much more asylum-seekers and refugees coming out of conflicts, rather than economic immigrants. The point is that it's difficult to -- it's starting to get difficult to define one or the other.

And that brings us back to conflict prevention and post-conflict management -- because if we work on the long-term periods, then we prevent this kind of elements. And you're right, the numbers in the first four months of this year increased, in comparison with the first four months of last year, by 800 percent. And if you want, I can go back to that later. But that is basically, for one very stupid reason: The weather was good -- which was partially good for us but, so the summer season was somehow anticipated, and the sea was calm. And, second, the conflicts are increasing, people

fleeing are increasing. And Libya has no border control, no government -- or two prime ministers at the time. So, what do you expect different?

Sometimes the question is asked, "What is left of the Arab Spring as it turned into winter?" I think you have been discussing that for a long time. And I think that the first issue is to recognize that there are different stories that need to b e seen as different, and as complex. And already seeing the complexity of things, that it's not black and white, already helps us to deal with the trends.

I think it has not turned into a winter. I think there are some success stories that we have to support more. I say two of them -- Lebanon, that is by miracle surviving the three years of war in Syria, and Tunisia. There is a success story that we are probably supporting too little at the moment, and we should do more.

It has ups and downs, the whole region. It needs time. I think it's a long and complicated process. And I think that our role in there is, first of all, understanding what happens, which is not always easy. respecting the processes -- understanding that a lot is up to us, but not all is up to us. The majority of the things that happen there, it's up to the people that live in these countries, and they have to feel their ownership of the processes that are going on. And that is key also for the responsibility they can show in dealing with these processes.

And also the regional ownership -- because I have the impression that the regional actors, especially the big regional actors that are around the areas of crisis -- I think of Turkey, the Gulf countries, Iran -- might have -- well, they have a role that is clear to everybody, I think, but might have a potential positive role that is for the moment not really developed to all its extent. And so I think that could be a key for trying to move things forward.

And basically, I think that our role could be, and should be, to support the transitions and the positive developments when we see them, to abstain from making mistakes. I'm sorry, this sounds very simple, but sometimes we do big mistakes, and then we realize afterwards that, just by impatience, or by not understanding complexity, we've done damages.

And so just -- I think that just understanding complexity, giving ownership to the countries, to the people, and to the region, supporting the positive processes, and abstaining from making mistakes, would make us helpful in the region.

I think I was even longer that I expected. I thank you very much for the attention, and I welcome your questions. (Applause)

MR. CALINGAERT: Thank you very much, Minister Mogherini, you certainly covered lots of ground, and there are lots of issues and lots of problems around the world. And I'm sure that a lot of people here would like to ask you more specific questions.

Before we do that, I will take my prerogative, I'll ask only one. I might come in later.

Let me ask you a bit about Iran. Italy is not a direct party to the negotiations, not a part of the P5-plus-1, but it has very great interests there, and lots of experience, and lots of history going with Iran.

And I was just wondering what you could tell us about your perception of the prospects for the negotiations, and it there's anything in particular about Italy's role in that whole process?

MS. MOGHERINI: Shall I answer right now?

MR. CALINGAERT: Mm-hmm.

MS. MOGHERINI: You're right, we share a lot with Iran.

First of all, from an historic point of view, I would say, I was surprised when I visited Iran on a completely personal basis many years ago, the driver of the care that was taking me from the airport to the place where I was living in, told me, "Oh, you're Italian. We, you, the Egyptians, and the Greeks, we are the core of the civilization." And this is something that no Italian would ever say to an Iranian, because we just don't have that perspective.

So, you're right, we share a lot, I think.

My impression is that, first, it's difficult to talk about Iran as one unique entity. There are dynamics there, again, that we don't always recognize. And my impression is that the new -- "new," well, now one year -- leadership in Iran, let's say the president, is committed to solving some of the problems -- starting from the nuclear issue, which is not the easiest one, as those that with nuclear issues know very well. And that's, Rouhani needs to deliver on this in order to win the internal dynamic, and that we have a responsibility in there.

One of the things we sometimes underestimate is the power of our actions or reactions in internal political dynamics in a country. And I think Iran is the right example.

Today, I think they started in Vienna the negotiation of the last definitive agreement. And I talked about that with Katie Ashton before she left, and she was quite positive about getting to a result. I don't know if they will manage or not. I expect, if I had to bet, I would bet on them to succeed, to find an agreement.

And I also think that if a definitive agreement is found on nuclear, we should test the willingness and the capacity of Iran to play a positive role in the region -- which is not only Syria, it's also Afghanistan on the other side. Iran is a huge country. I think the other countries of the region that traditionally have difficulties with Iran might be

ready to move faster than we are, or that we expect, because we're talking about very pragmatic countries that are mainly interested in stability in the area.

So, I think we might have some surprises, positive surprises. And I would be happy to see -- I don't talk about the U.S., but I expect, I think it would be wise for Europe to be on the front line in this, trying to test their possibility to be a positive player in the region.

MR. CALINGAERT: Great. Thank you.

All right, let's go to questions. At the outset, let me just say that at six o'clock sharp, the Minister has to leave because she has to catch an airplane. She has a rather strange travel route: She's going to New York, but she's stopping in London on the way. (Laughter)

MS. MOGHERINI: Not for fun.

MR. CALINGAERT: As usual, kind of the ground rules: Please state your name and affiliation clearly, as a courtesy to the speaker, and others. Please be succinct. Please make your intervention a question and not a statement, and one question per person, at least as we start out. We'll hopefully have time to take care of everybody.

MS. MOGHERINI: Stricter rules than the European Union. (Laughter)

MR. ALCARO: Thank you. Riccardo Alcaro, I am here with Brookings.

Thank you, Madam Minister, for a very interesting speech. A very quick question concerning Italy's preferences concerning the Western response to the crisis in Ukraine.

You said Italy prefers an incrementalism, a phased approach, and it sees coercion, pressure, much more on the economic side rather than in the military or strategic field.

So, my question is, to what extent is Italy willing to go, in terms of applying (inaudible) economic sanctions. You said the European Union has so far only adopted second-stage sanctions. It is my understanding that Italy does not see, is not convinced that the time is ripe to adopt third-stage sanctions.

But is it that possibility Italy is willing to consider? And, if it is so, what's the threshold?

MS. MOGHERINI: Yes -- well, not only Italy or the EU adopted only the second-stage sanctions, but also the U.S. at the moment, as we are acting in a coordinated way.

We are preparing the third phase of the sanctions, on a technical level, which is quite a complicated exercise to do, because we said -- and we stated it in an official conclusion of the Council, of the European Council -- that the burden of the sanctions, let's say the consequences of the sanctions on our own economies should be equally shared by all member states, and each and every member state could survive with that.

So, the studies on how to work them out are on the way, and it's complicated.

Still we are ready for adopting them, as we stated -- I think that was one month ago -- when we started preparing them. You don't start preparing something if you're not ready to adopt them. Still, I think it might be more complicated than expected.

In any case, it would require a higher -- the highest political decision, in terms of a new decision of the Council, in terms of heads of states and governments. So there will be, there must be another step in terms of political decision.

But the main point that we have to concentrate on, I think -- and I will stress it again and again and again -- is not what is the red line for adopting the third

phase of sanctions, as if the sanctions were our objective. Our objective is solving the crisis in Ukraine, making the Ukrainians talk to each other, and the Russians talk to the Ukrainians in Kiev and sustain a de-escalation on the ground, and to stop the violence, and institutional reforms. Our goal is, the political process, is the sanctions are only an instrument if they are functional to that (inaudible).

Sometimes I have the impression that we only discuss about our threshold, and not what sanctions are supposed to work for. And that's why I don't like the idea of a red line -- first of all, because it makes you not flexible at all. When you're negotiating, or when you're trying to negotiate, you have to be flexible, you have to see what changes on the ground.

In the beginning of the crisis, we said we are going to pass from stage two to stage three if the Russians get in militarily. That was a red line. Are we sticking to that? Even if now it appears quite clear that it's not going to happen because they have other means to destabilizing the country? Are we saying that the red line is if elections don't take place? I think the elections will take place.

What we need is not putting to ourselves, imposing to ourselves a red line. I know that this is not necessarily the message that we give.

I think what we need to say is -- to the Russians, first of all -- is: You're going to pay consequences if the situation in Ukraine is not getting better. And we have to say that also to the government in Kiev. This is another part of the work we have to do, and we are doing. And Russia knows that there are instruments for them to pay more, in economic terms.

But I don't think rigidity is necessary a positive instrument there.

Does that answer the question?

MS. PERLMAN: I'm Diane Perlman, School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason, and also Abolition 2000. Anyway, thank you very much. I really appreciate your depth and thoughtfulness of your analysis of Ukraine and sanctions.

I spent the last two weeks at the NPT in New York, and your name came up several times, very favorably, among the NGOs. So, I would appreciate it if you would comment on the role of Italy and the EU in some of the issues that we're looking at for 2015, like Article VI, and also having a conference on the nuclear weapon-free zone in the Middle East -- and anything else related to that.

MS. MOGHERINI: Thanks. I was actually, yesterday -- I'm not sure it's politically correct to mention another think-tank when you're in another one -- but I was actually taking the chance of being here also to visit the Nuclear Threat Initiative here in Washington. As some of the friends here know, as a member of parliament, I've been working quite a lot on nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation.

And I think this is a major threat to our security, and we should take this as a threat to our security. It's not part of the, naive peace movement, it's a matter of security.

So, yes, Italy is going to play a role. We were commenting before coming in, it's probably not the best time, this month, to tackle the issue.

But I think this doesn't mean that we should be working so that we're ready once the situation over Ukraine and Russia gets better, and we can be ready to do more. I'm thinking, for instance, of, yes, all the nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation agenda.

2015 is going to be an important year. We are hosting, in Italy, just probably before that, the conference, the review conference, a meeting of the group of

people that is working on the ratification of the CTBT. That is going to be probably difficult, but someone has to deal with that.

And on the nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East, I think that would be an excellent result for security in the area. That would be a mutual interest of all the actors.

As for many things, also in this case, the problem is where to start. Because no actor would accept to step in this process if the others don't. So either you jump in together, or nobody jumps. And so far, as you know, the process is quite blocked.

But I think that it would be extremely positive to revitalize it. And if the Finnish are ready to try again to convene a conference on that, they will have all the Italian support.

MR. CALINGAERT: Nina?

MS. GARDNER: Yes -- Nina Gardner. I am a consultant on the sustainability, but also an adjunct professor --

MR. CALINGAERT: Can people hear?

MS. GARDNER: -- here at Johns Hopkins, across the street, actually.

I have a question -- you mentioned, as a generational shift, how you don't even question Europe. And I was just wondering -- this is a softball question, but it's a question of smart, young power now -- does the fact that you're young and a woman change your vision and your priorities?

Do you think there's something that is going to be different as you look forward to your term and priorities for the Italian semester?

MS. MOGHERINI: That's a most difficult question.

For sure, it changes people's view on the foreign minister. And that is part of the job, contributing to change the culture in our country. And we know it's part of the mandate, I think.

If it changes my view? I don't know. Probably being -- first of all, only in Italy you're young when you're 40. I thank you very much, but -- that is also part of the cultural change we have to bring. At 40, you're not young, you're an adult. You've been working for 20 years, you have kids, you have -- I mean, you have a normal life, you know. Otherwise, you pass from being young to being (inaudible), and there's nothing in between.

I don't know if that changes my view on the priorities and on the semester. It might be. The generational thing changes the perception, I think. Being naturally Europeans, being naturally, as I said, trans-Atlantists, but I think it's the wrong word, but, anyway, feeling it's natural to be friends with the U.S.

And there are things that you give for granted -- the fact that people move in the world, that people move in Europe, that you don't have a single aspect of your culture, but your culture is a mix of different things coming together.

So there are things that are, I think, natural for a generation rather than another. And there are younger generations that feel it even more natural -- the use of the social media and things like that, the speed of the world somehow.

And being a woman, I don't know. That might probably take a different setting and different seminar to analyze that. I don't know, I don't know. I think it does, but that's not my specialty, as you know.

MR. CALINGAERT: I see a lot of hands, so let me take three at a time, starting with this gentleman here.

MR. MATERA: Thank you very much. My name Michael Matera. I'm an independent consultant on foreign policy and a former U.S. diplomat.

You've already mentioned Libya. I'd like to hear, given Italy's proximity to Libya and its long history in Libya, I'd like to hear a little bit more your thoughts on assessing the current threat that Libya poses to Europe, and the rest of the world, if things really go south.

And then if you could share your thoughts also on the international role that's currently being played in trying to reorder Libya? Anything that you could share on that would be very interesting.

Thank you.

MS. MOGHERINI: Yes --

MR. CALINGAERT: Let me get a couple more.

Okay, this gentleman here in green.

SPEAKER: Yes, good afternoon. My name is (inaudible), I'm a student at Johns Hopkins SAIS, just in front.

I'd like to throw out the question on Ukraine, in the sense that there are some (inaudible) saying that maybe the responsibilities in Ukraine are kind of shared between Russia and the West. There is also a lot of talk now, I think, within the EU about our energy dependence on Russia, and some countries are trying to avoid this dependency in the future.

Do you think there is a risk that, by doing so, we might push Russia in the arms of China?

And you mentioned some avenues of renewed cooperation with Russia, so do you think that there is a risk that Russia will go more towards China than towards

the West? And if that is the case, would that pose threats in addressing the issue that we have to face as a global community? I mean, in terms of climate change, for example?

Thanks a lot.

MR. CALINGAERT: Okay, and this gentleman in the back there.

MR. HARRIS: Thank you. My name is Geoffrey Harris. I'm an official of the European Parliament, based here in our liaison office with the U.S. Congress.

And I would like to just, if I may, say, underline something which, as a British person, an argument I've tried to get across since the time you were born, Madam Minister, in my country, that the European Union is a political space. You don't have to like it or hate it, it's just there. Of course, political spaces can be redefined by referenda, but it is perhaps the best, and simplest, and least controversial way of making the case, rather than overly idealizing something, even if the European Union is a worthy ideal --

MR. CALINGAERT: Sir -- sir, can you get to the question?

MR. HARRIS: But, to the question -- the question is, how should we read what is happening in public opinion in Italy? Not just the possible results in the European elections, but the outcome of the Pew research published, I think, earlier this week, suggested that in Italy there really was a groundswell of support for leaving the Euro. And, you know, statistical comparisons with the rest of Europe have turned Italy from being sort of very keen on federalism in the Spinelli era, to this very skeptical approach in the Renzi era -- not that I would associate that with him.

MR. CALINGAERT: Okay, thank you.

MS. MOGHERINI: Yes? Okay.

Libya -- is Libya a threat to security? It can be, yes. It can be -- more than Libya in itself, the lack of institutions in Libya that make it a perfect corridor from Africa to the Mediterranean and the European territory.

So, yes, there is a security threat in different ways. There is an energy threat, because we get energy from Libya. And for getting that, you need a government and authorities that are able to deal with that. We know that it is a challenge for the people that are on the ground, a serious one.

I think we are trying to do things, as Italians, and as an international community, as you know. One of the first things I happened to do when I entered in my new position was -- and it's not my merit, it's just something that was prepared before. But, as you're a former diplomat, you know how it works. We hosted a conference, an international conference on Libya. The Ukrainian just started, still we had Lavrov and Kerry at the same table, and others -- China, all the relevant countries were there. We all showed support, we all committed to targets that were very precise. We had some 15 to 20 Libyans, government, parliament -- whatever, congress, they call it -- of all different regions, all different political forces. And after one week, Sidon was gone.

I think we have to be, we have to stay committed to what we say, that we put pressure on the Libyans to find a way of having a national dialogue and building their institutions. It takes time. And we're talking about a state that has never had a state. Even when Qaddafi was there, it was Qaddafi, it was not the state.

Building institutions takes time and efforts. And in a divided country, and in the country that is, I think, getting more arms than Iraq and Afghanistan put together, it's a challenge. It's not easy. There is no -- how do call it, *bacchetta magica*?

MR. CALINGAERT: Magic wand, magic wand.

MS. MOGHERINI: Thanks.

There are no easy solutions. We have to stick to what we say. We have to put pressure on them to do their part of the job. And once they start, as they start, we

have to support this process, which is going to be their process. And we have to respect that.

In the meantime, we have to deal with the security issues -- yes. But I don't see an easy way out of that.

Energy -- yes, first of all, we're working for the first time, really, seriously, to a European energy strategy. And we needed the crisis in Ukraine to really do it -- which is a shame, but at least, finally.

We are working at differentiating. It takes time. I'm sorry, I don't say that to all the questions. But it's like for the military investments, you start and then you see the results in some years. It's the same for the energy infrastructures. It takes some years to reshape your energy supplies.

And so, yes, we are doing that. I think it's wise. At the same time, I think it would be a mistake to break all the connections with Russia, first of all, because think 10 years from now. Putin will not forever be there. Russia has an internal political dynamic that has to be encouraged. Russia is a big country, complex country, a country that has a culture, that has a society that can change, has a young generation that is willing to change. It will not be as it is today forever. And re-changing your energy policy might take a lot of time again.

In the meantime, the risk is that we do not pivot to Asia, Russia pivots to Asia. I'm not sure it's smart.

Italy is leaving the euro? No. Italy is not leaving the euro -- first of all, because that would not be really possible. And then, because I think that the majority of the Italians -- there was a shift. At the times of Spinelli, it was Europe was peace, Europe was peace to Italy, and development, and future, integration.

Now, you know, it's the natural result of 20 years -- I'm sorry, I'm saying a political thing, not an institutional thing -- it's the natural result of 20 years of people in government in Italy -- and this didn't happen only in Italy, but also elsewhere in Europe -- blaming Brussels for anything that went wrong. And what do you expect? You have been telling people for 20 years, "It's Brussels' fault," and now people think it's Brussels' fault. It's natural. It's logic.

So what we need to say is stop this blame-game, and saying if we don't do reforms, if we don't do good at economy, it's not Brussels' fault, it's our fault, or it's the fault of wrong political decisions taken in Brussels, not by Brussels, in Brussels, by all the national governments together. Because sometimes we have national governments saying one thing, and then doing completely the opposite when they're in the European Union level, and we have to stop that.

Our citizens are not stupid. They understand very well. And sometimes what they think is the result of what politicians have been saying to them.

And so I think that -- I didn't say "it takes time" this time. (Laughter) No, I hope it doesn't take time. But if we stop this blame-game, if we start telling the truth, and if we start saying that Europe is the answer, it's not part of the problem -- because there's no way we can find solutions to the economic crisis that is worldwide, to the security challenges that are worldwide, to the immigration problems that are at least regional, and so on -- or climate change, or whatever. There's no way national governments can find the way alone.

So, Brussels, European level, is the minimum level to which we can find solutions to our problems. It's just a matter of doing the right decisions or the wrong decisions once we go to Brussels.

MR. CALINGAERT: Speaking of time, I see there are lots of hands, and I'm going to -- this gentleman here. Yep, you're the one.

MR. BIRNBAUM: I'll take the chance. I'm Norman Birnbaum from Georgetown University.

You're young, you represent a young government from a new party. But the party has interesting ancestry with respect, particularly, to Russia, namely the Italian (inaudible), which was the combined effort of the Vatican, of the democristians under Andreotti, and the eurocommunists under Berlinguer, and the survivor Napolitano.

To what extent is that great legacy a matter of awareness in your party? Or has it somehow just merged with the flow of history?

MR. CALINGAERT: Norm, why don't you let the gentleman next to you -- well, the real last question.

MR. LEES: Hello. Kevin Lees. I write for Suffragio.org.

You mentioned the European Union. Obviously, you know, one of its powers is the soft power it has is as a union of 28 democracies. One of the big issues coming up in the European election is sort of how to determine the next European Commission president.

Are you of the view that under the new Treaty of Lisbon, the winner, the party -- whether it's the EPP, or PES, should nearly automatically be able to -- the winner in the election Europe-wide should be able to name the commissioner? Or are you of the view of Chancellor Merkel, and other intergovernmentalists, that it's still a function of, sort of, the member states to hash that out?

Obviously, this issue has some salience, given Italy's presidency of the European Council over the next (inaudible).

MR. CALINGAERT: You've got two minutes.

MS. MOGHERINI: Two minutes -- okay.

MR. CALINGAERT: But it's your plane.

MS. MOGHERINI: Yes. It will be difficult to define the new president of the Commission.

I think we took a responsibility in Europe, first, when we had the Lisbon Treaty, and second, when the political families in Europe indicated candidates that were decided to go back to the responsibility attitudes and the coherence were decided by national parties that are members of the European families. So it was not just decision of the PS, or of the EPP to choose Juncker or Schulz as a candidate, it was a decision that (inaudible) or SPD, to make the German example, took in their respective European parties. So, I expect some degree of coherence when it comes to after the elections.

And so this leads me to say it has to be -- if the result of these elections is clear, or at least close to clear, it has to be the candidate that has won, somehow, to make it simple. On the other hand, the result could not be that clear, still the candidate has to have a vote in parliament, and the parliament could be very fragmented.

I think it wouldn't be honest to say now that we know what is going to happen. I think it would, in the best-case scenario, one party wins, one European wins, national governments agree with their choices, and with their indications, and who wins is the present Commission. But we don't know how the results will be, and how the European Parliament will look like on the 26th of may, and how the dynamic will take place.

That's why I said -- and I know that it can sound a little bit confused, but I have the impression that we will have to deal with a confused situation after the elections. I might be wrong, I hope I'm wrong. Then we have to keep together the will of the voters, and the need for a smooth transition that doesn't leave us for months discussing who does what, because that would kill Europe. This would kill Europe.

We had a debate in Florence one week ago, less than one week ago, a few days ago, among the candidates. And that was a televised debate. And we spent, they spent, and journalists spent, 50 minutes out of one hour-and-a-half, discussing exactly this issue. This would make the anti-Europeans to 90 percent. If we spend three months discussing who does what and how and why, Europe is killed.

So we have to take the two things together: the political will, and the need for institutions that work immediately -- well, it will take some time. I didn't say that. I'm sorry. (Laughter)

No, but, again, there we have to be flexible. But, still, I think that the perfect outcome would be clear political results, coherence, and who wins, makes the president of the Commission. But we might live in a different reality, and we have to be realistic on the results.

Thank you very much.

MR. CALINGAERT: Before I thank Minister Mogherini, I'd just like to say please be seated and remain here until we can get her and the party out and catch her airplane, and are carted to the airport.

MS. MOGHERINI: So, I have to say that all the friends that I've seen in the room -- with thanks.

MR. CALINGAERT: Thank you very much for spending the time, and going into such detail on all of these issues. (Applause)

MS. MOGHERINI: Thank you.

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