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REMARKS

Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the press briefing during her visit to Washington D.C., United States

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Washington D.C., 7 November 2017

Check against delivery!

Thank you very much for coming.

It is quite a regular thing that I come to Washington D.C., I think it is my third visit in the last nine months, for regular contacts both with the administration and with the Congress on a series of issues we have in common and exchange of views on the main priorities of the time. Beyond this, obviously, we have regular contacts in Europe, in Brussels, elsewhere, wherever we have the chance to meet.

This visit gave me the opportunity to discuss mainly with friends and colleagues in Congress - both in the Senate and in the House [of Representatives] - about the main security challenges we are facing today.

First of all, the work we are doing to strengthen the European Union defence, in strong coordination with NATO. I will be at the NATO Defence ministerial meeting tomorrow night in Brussels. We are developing, fast, a deep coordination and cooperation with the European Union Member States on defence and security, and we are strengthening more than ever our cooperation with NATO, especially on cyber and hybrid threats but also maritime security and other issues. So, I took the opportunity to debrief our friends

in Congress about this process, especially those who are working on security issues.

We are also facing threats and challenges in our region: obviously, the situation in the Middle East, the ongoing crisis in Syria, the work we are planning to do with an upcoming conference in Brussels - the second of this type that we will host in spring to accompany the work in the de-escalation areas - and obviously we discussed also related issues in the region.

It is no secret that on the Iran nuclear deal we had exchanges in the recent weeks and obviously that was also part of my discussions with the colleagues in Congress, with full respect of the national domestic side of the debate, here in the United States. But we thought it was important to explain and present to our American friends the clear European position on the fact that the nuclear deal with Iran is delivering and working.

I know that the Director General of the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency], [Yukiya] Amano, is in town in these very same hours, we had a meeting yesterday here in these premises. We trust the IAEA and its eight reports on the fact that Iran is fully compliant with its nuclear commitments and we have, as Europeans, a clear top priority, a strategic interest that is linked to our security to keep the full implementation of the deal in place, from all sides, and we discussed the way ahead.

I heard from our colleagues in Congress their views and the state of play of their work, after the presentation by the President [of the United States, Donald Trump] of the new American policy on Iran. As you have seen, the European Union is completely united in supporting the deal and its full implementation; both at the level of foreign ministers and Heads of State and Government, we used very clear expressions and words. And again, we wish to see the United States continuing its implementation of the deal in the future and we are ready to work with them in this regard.

We also discussed other pressing issues we work on together in these months. Still nuclear related - the situation in the DPRK [Democratic People's Republic of Korea], especially in a time when President Trump is visiting the region. I have had the chance to discuss the ways in which the European Union can support the diplomatic efforts. The European Union has increased its sanctions on DPRK - we are now the ones who have the toughest sanctions regime on DPRK in the world and DPRK is the country in the world against which we have the toughest sanctions regime.

We believe that pressure has to be at its maximum, both economically and diplomatically, and we are doing our part on this, in coordination with the United States. We also believe that sanctions are a way to push for opening a political space for negotiations - a political space that we have not seen so far. But we hope to see it as a result of a coordinated, united pressure from the international community and we appreciated the United States approach on DPRK, especially when it worked on the UN Security Council Resolution last September. So we are coordinating policies also on this.

And last but not least, we have a common interest in working on security but also on

development and the management of migratory flows in Africa. The European Union has increased its work in Africa with partnerships all over the continent. We see an interest and have seen this also today in Congress to work more and more together, especially on the security angle - counterterrorism, control of the territory.

I noticed with satisfaction that the United States announced last week in New York in the Security Council a contribution of USD 60 million for the military joint force of the G5 Sahel, which is following a EUR 50 million contribution the European Union made during the summer. We welcome this and this is also a field where we will work together more and more.

We will host in Brussels in December an international conference to coordinate the international support to the countries in the Sahel to better manage their security challenges and especially the organised crime and trafficking in the area.

So, a wide range of issues and I am sure I am not covering all of them, but I count on your questions to complement the picture. A lot on Iran, but not only. Thank you.

Link to the video:

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