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Lord Tugendhat
Chairman House of Lords EU External Affairs sub-committee
House of Lords
London SW1A 0PW

Dear Chairman,

Thank you for your letter of 16 February covering the House of Lords European Union Committee's report "Europe in the World: towards a more effective EU foreign and security strategy".

Consultation is a cornerstone of the process of defining a new EU Global Strategy, aimed at helping the EU face the challenges of an increasingly contested, complex and competitive world. As such, I very much welcome your engagement and this input, which is an important contribution to our collective effort. There are many elements within the report that chime very closely with the themes of the draft EU Global Strategy.

To recall the overall rationale of the EU Global Strategy, it is to reflect the EU's role and aspiration as a global actor. The term "global" is also meant as "comprehensive" – in other words, to help the EU make better use of the array of tools and instruments that it possesses, to operate more effectively and achieve greater impact. I therefore very much agree with the report's assessment that the EU has assets that we should be confident in, and that can make a real difference if deployed in a smart and joined up way.

A number of the other recommendations in the Committee's report are very much in line with my approach, including that the strategy should not attempt to be overly detailed and offer policy suggestions on every issue, and that it should enable the EU to be flexible, agile and adaptable. On security and defence issues, the report raises the important points of better cooperation with NATO, and the need for a bolstered CSDP, including the question of resources.

I note the recommendation to prioritise the focus on the EU's neighbourhood. It is correct, as the report points out, that the EU faces an increasingly unstable and threatening neighbourhood. While we should not lose sight of the need for geographic balance, it is right that the EU's immediate surrounds should be a priority. This will come through in the Strategy from various viewpoints and through different thematic elements.

But we will also need to cover the broader region, since our neighbourhood is affected by external influence, too. The point about our limited ability to act as a global security provider is well taken, and I will reflect on how to draw that distinction in terms of the EU's global interests and foreign policy. Yet, we must take some responsibility for managing the global commons. An overriding principle therefore is to promote rules-based global governance as a key mechanism for promoting EU interests and values, and to do so in partnerships with others – in particular the US.

Finally, we are not yet at the end of the process, which remains fully consultative, and it is therefore difficult to set out too categorically either the text as it currently stands or my reactions to the points in report. To do so would risk prejudging final outcomes. Nevertheless, I would like to thank you again for the Committee's important contribution. Parliamentary engagement is critical, both before and after the Strategy's agreement at the Council later this year, and I very much look forward to staying in touch on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Mogherini', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Federica Mogherini