

3-0 Security in Europe and Finland

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Speaker : **Dr Juha Mäkelä**

Dr Juha Mäkelä is currently the new director of the Finnish Institute for Middle Eastern Studies. Not only is he an expert on the Middle East, but he also has a long academic career in the field of Finnish national defence, following a 35-year military career as an officer in the army. The Finnish Institute for Middle Eastern Studies is based in Beirut. However, as we all know, it is currently difficult to carry out research there in peace. It has proved to be a somewhat challenging location for a headquarters.

Juha Mäkelä

Distinguished members of Eurocapitales, it is a pleasure for me to address you today. I shall do so in two parts:

- The first part will focus on security in Europe and Finland,
- Then, after a short break, the second part will look at the global challenges facing Europe

Security in Europe and Finland

- The views I am about to express are my own. At the end of February, I retired from the Armed Forces and do not represent the Finnish Institute of International Affairs; I am speaking as a citizen with an interest in geostrategic issues.
- Having reviewed your programme, I learnt of the presentation by Colonel Petteri Korvala, Secretary-General of the Security Committee, scheduled for this afternoon, and have slightly amended my own remarks to avoid any repetition.
- Throughout its history, Finland has demonstrated that, as a nation, it knows how to defend itself and stand up to its enemies. The current context, however, calls for it to strengthen its ties with countries that share its values and face the same threats. I am aware that, even within Europe itself, these threats are perceived differently: Mediterranean countries, facing migratory pressure, attacks and terrorism, are particularly sensitive to these security issues, whilst the countries of northern Europe feel the threats posed by their large neighbour, Russia, more acutely. Nevertheless, we are members of the European Union and, more recently, of NATO.

I spent three years in Istanbul, Turkey. So I am also aware that there are disputes between Turkey and Greece, particularly in the Aegean Sea. I therefore fully understand that not all European countries perceive Russia as the main threat. They recognise other threats. And we need to find compromises and reach a consensus on how we allocate our defence resources and how we allocate our funds.

- So, in 1951, when the European Coal and Steel Community was established, it was fairly straightforward with just six members. The six member states all played a similar role. And the same applied to decision-making. But unfortunately, the situation today is that we have 27 European nations in the European Union, and 32 in NATO. So even ordering a coffee is quite a difficult task these days. They all want their own coffees, their special coffees. And that illustrates just how complicated it is.

Europe's global challenges

- The nuclear dimension is also one of the aspects we must take into account in our deliberations, and we are open to President Macron's proposals.

- In Finland, we have the Centre of Excellence for Hybrid Warfare in Helsinki. It was established in 2017 in response to Europe's experiences in 2014 when Russia invaded the Crimean Peninsula. At that time, Russia deployed what we call 'green men'. These were soldiers without insignia. It was impossible to identify where they came from. And this created legal challenges because, in the face of an armed attack, you have a legal mandate to use the armed forces. But when the aggressor remains unknown, there were legal loopholes. Can we use the army to defend ourselves against them? Can we use the police? Can we use our border guards? That is why Finland coined the term 'hybrid threat'.
- This concept of hybrid warfare is of interest to all European countries, which must incorporate it into their strategies. It is, in fact, a situation that has emerged between peace and war. And I would like to say that, unfortunately, we no longer live in times of peace. We are living in this situation. Russia's Chief of the General Staff, Valery Gerasimov, asserts that in modern warfare, eighty per cent of all actions are likely to fall below the threshold of conventional warfare, with only twenty per cent involving conventional warfare. Cyberwarfare, sabotage, financial and diplomatic means, and the manipulation of information have become the weapons of this hybrid warfare.
- Another example worth mentioning concerns the vulnerability of our critical undersea infrastructure. Here you can see a map of the world's undersea cables. In Finland, over the last three years, we have faced a number of incidents. Our data cables were severed by ships that happened to drop anchor on the seabed. Was this a mistake, or was it deliberate? Those working at the Hybrid Centre of Excellence say it was deliberate. It was a hybrid tactic used against Finland.

And, of course, we're all reliant on data cables these days. So cutting the cable off the Finnish coast doesn't just disrupt Finnish and Estonian cables. It disrupts the entire banking system stretching from Northern Europe to Central Europe.