



Maj. Gen. Stefano Castagnotto – Eufor Former Force Commander in Bosnia and Herzegovina

(4th December 2008- 3rd December 2009)

I am pleased to greet Professor Massimo Caneva, whom I had the opportunity to meet and host in Sarajevo in 2009, together with a great group of AESI students, during my mandate as commander of the European Union forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Eufor Althea Operation*).

Guardian of the Dayton Accords for the directive and the executive role, simultaneously assigned to the military component - a guarantee of that Safe and Secure environment, a fundamental prerequisite for mending again the lacerations generated by the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia - *Eufor Althea* represented, together with the Office of the High Representative (HR EUSR/ HR), an indispensable tool through which the international community exercised its stabilizing role in the country. Given this context, *NATO* passed the torch to the European Union's forces in 2004: first through the *Implementation Force (IFOR)*, and then through the *Stabilization Force (SFOR)* always on behalf of the *United Nations*.

What better opportunity for your students than to visit *Camp Butmir's* in order to concretely get in contact with such a particular context? In order to see with their eyes those dimensions of cooperation, security, development, and solidarity. All of which was under the 25 members of the European Union's guidance together with other 5 non- EU countries.

I think that the last week of June 2009 was a great opportunity for AESI students. During those days, the direct observation of the places and the in-depth study of specific issues were enlivened not only by contacts but also by confrontation with other academic realities represented by Rectors of the Universities of Sarajevo and Belgrade.

In this context, I would like to underline the role of Monsignor Alessandro D'Errico as Apostolic Nuncio that met on this occasion Professor Caneva's students. He has been always there for all the Italians of *Camp Butmir* during the most important recurrences. As matter of fact, he has been close to the faithful - to Italians or not, to those in uniform or not - who attended celebrations officiated by Monsignor D'Errico at the functional Chapel of the Base.

Thinking about those moments, I can affirm that we were glad to interact with such qualified students of AESI by showing "from the inside" how much it was being done for the citizens of that country, in a perspective of a European integration through a good synergy between the various components of an articulated presence of relevant international institutions.

With the same pride I affirm that *Eufor*, whom I had the privilege of leading, has always been respected and appreciated because of its balance and equidistance. This has been recognized by everyone and we are proud of it. It was possible to conclude our work, as Europeans and Italians, after the fulfillment of the obligations arising from the military annex to the Dayton peace agreements. Due to the difficulties of the political and institutional context, it was a strong obstacle to remove. Since then, the original mission could be transformed into a non- executive support mission.

I am therefore pleased to have had the opportunity to share those moments and our experiences with AESI.

Offering my greetings to the past and prospective students, I express my best wishes for the achievement of AESI's next initiatives.

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SARAJEVO - GEN. STEFANO CASTAGNOTTO EUFOR COMMANDER AND PROF MASSIMO MARIA CANEVA PRESIDENT AESI

SARAJEVO UNIVERSITY WITH ITALIAN AMBASSADOR APOSTOLIC DELEGATION WITH NUNCIO HOLY SEE



BUTMIR WITH PAST RECTORS UNIVERSITY OF SARAJEVO AND BELGRADE - DELEGATIONS AESI AT SARAJEVO UNIVERSITY