

Presentation to the benefit of AESI's students of UNIFIL Force Commander, General Del Col, address to UNIFIL peace-keepers.



PRESENTATION BY ITALIAN AMBASSADOR GABRILE CHECCHIA **Former Italian Ambassador in Lebanon**

Dear AESI students,

as a member of AESI's Scientific Committee and former Ambassador to Lebanon I am pleased to accept Professor Caneva's invitation to accompany with a short introduction UNIFIL Force Commander's video - message to UNIFIL peace-keepers - against the background of the dramatic corona virus pandemic - on what he and his staff are doing to prevent the spreading of the epidemic to UNIFIL's area of operation: that is the one South of the Litani river.

It seems to me in the first place that the very fact of sharing this video- message with AESI is a testimony to the quality of the relationship which has been developing over the last decade between AESI and UNIFIL at the highest level: a relationship based on mutual trust, respect and shared values.

UNIFIL Force Commander's decision to make AESI and its students aware of his message to the UN peace-keepers in Lebanon - and we all warmly thank him for this- is in the second place a further evidence of the intense and fruitful dialogue under way (not only in Lebanon but also in other UN operational theaters as well as in New York and Geneva) between AESI and the United Nations whose objectives to build a more human and safer world AESI shares and supports.

Thirdly , and finally, it is my conviction that the Force Commander's acceptance of the proposal to share with AESI his message - in the dramatic and in many ways unprecedented situation the world is going through - provides a forceful example of the potentialities , also in terms of growth in awareness , of AESI as a player able to fruitfully interact in the name of shared values with three distinct realities : the United Nations as such ; bilateral diplomacy/Embassies at large ; the Academic world and the Universities' network.

Potentialities which may prove most useful when it comes to supporting fundamental principles, such as the defense and promotion of human dignity, peace, dialogue and mutual respect.

Let us simply consider what each of these "players" can do to contribute to the pursuance of the said goals with the means at its disposals: the UN also in operational terms - in addition to its undisputed legal and moral authority - via its "peace-keepers" in a number of difficult areas world-wide (UNIFIL being a case in point); Diplomacy, with its essential role in facilitating dialogue between counties and governments (a role made particularly clear by nowadays the need to provide a concerted response at international level to the current pandemic) ; Universities : not only as a precious reservoir of culture and specific knowledge - more important than ever in difficult times - but also the as breeding ground of future leaders in their respective countries

Let me give you an example - just because of my direct knowledge of it but definitely more examples could of course be mentioned - of how AESI interprets its role. When a decade ago I was Ambassador to Lebanon , Professor Caneva - AESI's President- proposed to me to explore the possibility of launching a master between the prestigious Rome's University "La Sapienza" and two Lebanese Universities (very different in nature : the Lebanese State University and the private , and mostly attended by Christian students, "Kaslik University") on peace- keeping, human rights and diplomacy.

The experiment - once overcome some initial hesitations on the Lebanese side – proved a success and the master has now been going on for more than a decade offering a major contribution also to student - to - student contacts between Italy and Lebanon.

AESI innovative initiatives on the ground, in other words where the action takes place, are therefore producing results of which AESI is proud. Based, as they are, on AESI's deep- seated conviction that when good-wills converge around shared and noble objectives, such as the ones I referred to above, a lot can be achieved in the interest of young generations, of future leaders and of society as a whole well beyond any confessional or community based artificial barrier.



**Ambassador Gabriele Checchia with AESI Students Delegation
ITALIAN EMBASSY IN LEBANON – BEIRUT**



**President AESI during Mission in Lebanon
BLUE LINE BORDER LEBANON / ISRAEL**