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Remarks at the presentation of *Frontlines of Transformation: Ukraine and European Security*

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Brussels, Belgium

Professor Chifu, Dr Vdovychenko, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by congratulating Victoria on the publication of this important book, and by thanking her for the opportunity to take part in its presentation.

I am particularly pleased to be here not only because this is an important subject for Europe, but also because Victoria is a friend. I have followed her work with great interest, and I know the commitment, expertise and personal engagement that lie behind this publication.

The title, *Frontlines of Transformation: Ukraine and European Security*, is already very telling. It invites us to look at the war in Ukraine and its consequences from a perspective that is both necessary and, perhaps, still insufficiently recognised.
Ukraine is not simply the object of European security policy. It is increasingly one of the actors shaping the future of European security.
This, for me, is one of the central messages of Victoria's book.

For too long, Ukraine has often been approached primarily as a country requiring assistance: financial assistance, military support, institutional reform and, ultimately, protection. All of these remain essential. But this perspective is incomplete. As the book convincingly argues, Ukraine has also become a source of experience, innovation and strategic knowledge from which Europe itself has much to learn.

The first chapter takes us back to the Revolution of Dignity of 2013–2014. I think this is a particularly important starting point. The resilience demonstrated by Ukrainian society after February 2022 did not emerge overnight. It has deeper roots in a society that had already demonstrated its determination to defend its freedom, dignity and European aspirations.

This is not only a military story. It is also a story about citizens, institutions and communities, about a society capable of organising itself, taking initiatives and responding creatively under extraordinary pressure.

The subsequent chapters bring this transformation into the field of defence and security. Victoria examines, among other things, the development of unmanned systems, technological innovation, new forms of military organisation and what she describes as Ukraine's approach to smart defence.

For European countries, these are not merely interesting developments to observe from a distance. They raise important questions about our own defence capabilities, our preparedness and our ability to adapt to a rapidly changing security environment.

Europe cannot afford to treat Ukrainian experience as something peripheral to its own security planning. It must become part of our common strategic thinking.
I was also interested in the book's broader understanding of security. The chapters on Russia's shadow fleet, the legal possibilities of using frozen Russian assets, and the resilience of Ukraine's energy infrastructure remind us that contemporary security cannot be reduced to military spending or weapons systems.

It also concerns the rule of law, the effectiveness of sanctions, the protection of critical infrastructure, energy independence and the capacity of local communities to withstand disruption.

This wider perspective is particularly relevant for the European Union. Our response to the war must combine military and political support with economic instruments, legal action, energy policy and the strengthening of our own resilience.

There is, however, one fundamental point that I would like to emphasise.
Ukraine's security and Europe's security are inseparable.
The outcome of this war will have consequences far beyond Ukraine's borders. It concerns the principles on which the European security order has been built: respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, international law and the right of peoples to determine their own future.

A peace settlement is urgently needed. But peace cannot simply mean the absence of fighting, whatever the conditions under which it is achieved. A peace that rewards aggression or leaves Ukraine exposed to renewed coercion would not provide lasting security for Ukraine, nor for Europe.

Supporting Ukraine is therefore not an act of charity or simply an expression of geopolitical calculation. It is also a matter of responsibility towards the European project and the values on which it rests.

From the perspective of the Catholic Church in Europe, this responsibility has a profound human dimension. Behind the language of strategy, defence capabilities and security architecture are human lives: families separated by war, people who have lost their homes, communities facing destruction, and a population that continues to defend its freedom at an enormous cost.

Our commitment to peace must never make us indifferent to justice. And our desire for dialogue must go hand in hand with the defence of human dignity and the rights of the Ukrainian people.
Let me conclude by returning to the book itself.

Victoria has brought together academic analysis, policy experience and the insights of practitioners, institutions and people working on the ground. The result is not simply an account of how Ukraine has been transformed by war. It is also an invitation to rethink how Europe understands security, resilience and its own responsibilities.

I hope this book will reach not only scholars and specialists, but also political decision-makers and all those who are concerned about the future of our continent.

Dear Victoria, congratulations once again. Thank you for your work, for your friendship, and for reminding us that Ukraine is not merely defending its own future. In doing so, it is also helping Europe to understand and defend its own.
Thank you very much.