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Summary of remarks to the press by
Javier SOLANA,
EU High Representative for the CFSP,
Beirut, 12 August 2006

The following is an edited summary of remarks to the press made by Mr Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), in Beirut on 12 August 2006, following meetings with Lebanese leaders, including the Prime Minister, Mr Fouad SINIORA, the Minister for Social Affairs, Mrs Nayla MOAWAD, and the Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, Mr Nabih BERRI:

"I am very pleased to be with you on this very important day. I came here when the war broke out and I am very pleased to be with you here, now, today, the day the UN resolution was adopted.

I arrived yesterday and I had the opportunity to meet your Prime Minister, Mr SINIORA, I had a long and very constructive conversation with him on the resolution which was, at that time, still to be adopted by the UN. Then I had dinner with the whole of his government and we had long discussions about the resolution that we hoped would be adopted during the night. I have also met with your Minister of Social Affairs, Mrs Nayla MOAWAD, and Mr Nabih BERRI, your Speaker of Parliament.

I welcome the adoption of the UN Security Council resolution to end the war between Israel and Lebanon. I think it is a good resolution, a resolution that can provide what has been the will of the Lebanese people for a long time, that is peace, a stable country and the possibility to live in peace.

The resolution must be implemented now, very rapidly, so that we have a ceasefire immediately and a lasting peace. It is not enough just to have a resolution, it must be implemented and implemented rapidly. That is what the people of Lebanon deserve. And you can be sure that the European Union is with you.

It is a good resolution and it must be implemented, rapidly and in good faith.

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The European Union will contribute in every way it can to the stabilization and reconstruction efforts and to the peace force in Lebanon. We are working with your government along three main lines of action. There is the humanitarian action, to help those who have suffered, to help people return home, to help those who are displaced.

There is the international force, a more robust, strengthened UNIFIL force. Work has started already, this morning, on the reinforcement of UNIFIL that is contemplated in the resolution. As you know, UNIFIL will play a very important role, It will have a new mandate, a Chapter Six mandate that will be robust, and strengthened in numbers. I can tell you that a good number of European countries will contribute to this force.

And there is the reconstruction effort, which must begin as soon as possible. You can be sure that the European Union, the EU Member States and European society as a whole will help you with the process of stabilization and reconstruction.

You have an opportunity now for a comprehensive settlement, and not just fixes here or there, so that wars, crises like the one we have had over the past month are not repeated. The sooner we have a ceasefire, a permanent ceasefire, the better so that we can begin thinking collectively, in the region, about a comprehensive and durable peace.

The people in Lebanon know that they have friends in Europe. You can count on friends. You have a very profound, institutionalised relationship with Europe and we want it to be as deep and as close as possible. We will look at the future with you as soon as ceasefire is in place. You can count on us.

Question: *The resolution has been adopted but Israel is not stopping the war. Why?*

Answer: *The resolution was adopted at four this morning and it still requires both sides to accept and implement it. I trust that the Lebanese Government, which meets today, will accept the resolution and I hope very much that tomorrow the Israeli Government will accept the resolution.*

It is then very important to begin implementing the content of the resolution. The most important thing is that the ceasefire becomes a reality on the ground as soon as possible.

Question: *Who will be responsible for implementing this new resolution?*

Answer: *That is very clear. The UN Security Council adopted the resolution and the UN Security Council is responsible for implementing it.*

The last but one paragraph of the resolution talks of a comprehensive solution and I think the resolution can provide the basis for a lasting settlement for the region.

Question: *What about the difference between "defensive" and "offensive" operations?*

Answer: *The resolution is clear enough to be implemented thoroughly and in good faith and I hope everyone will implement it in good faith, that is what I expect.*

The resolution has taken a long time to be approved, because it was very difficult to find a common position in the Security Council that can be accepted by both sides. But now we have it, so I hope that it will be accepted today and tomorrow by the Lebanese and Israeli governments. First we must have the ceasefire. Then we must take immediate steps to provide humanitarian assistance and to deploy the Lebanese and reinforced UNIFIL force and begin to look at the reconstruction of Lebanon.

Question: *Do you not think the ceasefire should be implemented immediately?*

Answer: *The sooner the ceasefire can be implemented and become a reality on the ground, the better, and I will do everything I can to get that.*

Question: *Do you think the resolution is a good one, despite the ambiguity between "offensive" and "defensive" operations?*

Answer: *By definition, a resolution seeking to solve a conflict cannot be perfect but it is important to find formulations that are accepted by both parties and I think that this resolution is well worked out, well formulated, and I think that with good faith it can be implemented by everyone.*

Question: *What about the release of the prisoners?*

Answer: *The resolution allows the possibility of a second resolution to deal with all such issues. The immediate objective for now is the ceasefire.*

Question: *There was a major offensive by Israel this morning.*

Answer: *Today and tomorrow, both Israel and Lebanon are accepting the resolution. Then we have to get the ceasefire in place and begin to get UNIFIL deployed. Israel will withdraw to the Blue Line once the ceasefire is in place. I measure this in hours, not days or weeks.*

I hope that today and tomorrow both countries will accept the resolution. I am going from here to Israel to present the same arguments for implementing the resolution. It is a resolution that is good and should be applied and applied rapidly.

Question: *What happens if the ceasefire is not implemented?*

Answer: *I do not consider this possibility. I think the resolution will be implemented and I think it will be the end of the war. I will work day and night for this.*

Question: *What about the fear of civil war in Lebanon?*

Answer: *I am glad you asked me that question. I had a long dinner last night with the Prime Minister and the government discussing all the issues you can imagine and I can tell you that civil war is out of the question. I have seen a leadership which is united and very happy that we have an opportunity to bring about a lasting peace. It is trying to get the resolution implemented and trying to put the country back together again. It is the will of the leaders of this country to move this forward and they have the help of the international community and of Europe.*

Question: *What about Hezbollah's weapons?*

Answer: *That question is very easy to answer: UN Security Council Resolution 1559 must be implemented.*

Question: *How quickly can the 15 000-strong force be deployed?*

Answer: *It will be deployed step by step, up to the level of 15 000.*
