



S331/06



**Acceptance speech of**  
**JAVIER SOLANA**  
**EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy**

**On the occasion of receiving the Carnegie-Wateler Peace Prize**

**The Hague, 23 November 2006**

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

The Spokesperson of the Secretary General, High Representative for CFSP

 +32 (0)2 281 6467 / 8239 / 5150 / 5151  +32 (0)2 281 5694

internet: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/solana>

e-mail: [presse.cabinet@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:presse.cabinet@consilium.europa.eu)

Excellencies, distinguished guests, dear friends,

I am honoured but also humbled by the decision of the Carnegie Foundation to present me the Carnegie-Wateler Peace Prize for 2006.

Let me begin by thanking you Hans for your warm and carefully chosen summation of the reasons that have motivated the jury. The prize may have been awarded to me personally. But I feel this is very much a recognition of the contribution that the European Union has made to building peace - in Europe and around the world.

The timing and place of this ceremony are fitting. The Netherlands has just had an intense general election. And it is always good to see democracy at work. Receiving the award in this Great Hall of Justice inside this magnificent building, the Peace Palace, adds to the occasion.

Democracy, Justice and Peace. These are big words. But they mean a lot to me. In many ways, the search for democracy, justice and peace has been the guiding force of my political life.

It is no accident that the world's most important legal institutions are based in this country. You are traditionally known for values such as openness, liberty and compassion. I myself benefited from Dutch hospitality when I spent a year in Eindhoven while my country Spain suffered under an authoritarian regime. The spirit of acceptance, tolerance and freedom made me feel welcome.

This same spirit has long defined the role of the Netherlands. Also in the European context, as one key contributor to the process of European integration. I hope this spirit returns to the Dutch political arena after yesterday's elections. Both Europe and the wider world need this country to play an active, self-confident role. Staying engaged; committing resources; taking risks for peace.

Dear friends,

I sometimes feel we are too complacent about the 60 years of peace which Western Europe has enjoyed. That we are now so prosperous, so free and so secure is thanks largely to the vision of men like Jean Monnet, a previous winner of this Prize, and Robert Schuman. These founding fathers knew very well the horrors of war. They were determined that Europe should end the cycle whereby every generation prepares to go to war with their neighbours.

I know it is no longer fashionable to describe the European Union and its previous incarnations as a peace building project. Instead, in the eyes of some, the Union has become a distant bureaucracy without popular support. I disagree.

The idealism behind the EU's foundation is vital to defining who and what we are today. And it helps to appreciate the value of the European Union as a force for good in the world. We have carefully built a zone of peace, democracy and the rule of law of more than 500 million people.

Now we have to extend that zone further. And to answer the call for Europe to act. To promote peace and protect the vulnerable. That is the aim of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. It is also my personal mission. It may be hard for some to imagine that in Asia, Africa and Latin America, people speak with great admiration of the European experience.

It is true, building peace can feel like a Sisyphean task. Sometimes, your hard work done over years is unravelled in weeks or days. We know that creating a self-sustaining peace is hard. It requires stamina, creativity, resources and above all commitment. But unlike Sisyphus, we also know that the peace agreements, which we push up the hill metaphorically, can succeed.

We did so in the Balkans and in Aceh in Indonesia. And we are trying to do so in the Middle East, Darfur and elsewhere. In many ways, the European Union is one big mediation and conflict resolution machine, based on law and non-stop negotiations. This puts us in a position to not only advocate preventive diplomacy but also to implement it.

I am pleased that by awarding this prize, the Carnegie Foundation has underlined both the results achieved to date - and the need to continue our efforts. We tend to forget how young our European Security and Defence Policy is. Our first mission started a little more than three years ago. But we now have more than 10 in the field, on three continents. From 'classic' peacekeeping, to police training, to border monitoring, to security sector reform.

This is also a natural growth area for more work. If you don't like preventive wars, you must develop preventive policies. We always aim for bespoke solutions. Our vision is one where crisis management tools are used to create the space for politics to work. Because at the end of the day, conflict resolution requires political agreements.

Thus far I have spoken about 'classic' conflict resolution where the parties and boundaries of the conflict are relatively easy to identify. But there is another type of conflict we have to discuss. It involves a toxic brew of group and ethnic identities. A sense of alienation and resentment. The use and misuse of religion.

It is a global conflict in which our values are tested. It is a borderless conflict, taking place in distant countries and our cities and societies. Some of the flashpoints are Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Kashmir. But also Amsterdam, London, Copenhagen and Madrid. Globalisation and new media mean that perceptions from different parts of the world can collide.

Part of the answer lies in more inter-faith dialogue and inter-cultural dialogue. A dialogue in which we seek common ground. In this dialogue we have to be aware that 'we' are numerically in the minority. But equally we should stand up for the universality of some of our values. Insisting on the universality of our values also helps against the charge of double-standards.

It is not easy to conduct this dialogue. I experienced this first-hand during the Cartoon crisis. But I am pleased that Europe's message of profound respect for others was well-received. And it was important that everyone could unite on the importance of mutual tolerance.

There is also the difficult question of who to engage. Should we talk to radical Islamists who profess to hate the West. And if so, up to what point? And what about those who have justified or used violence, now or in the past? These are intensely difficult moral and political questions. But all conflicts have ended by talking to 'the other' at some point.

I see all the pitfalls, especially for governments. But my sense is that this larger conflict will not be resolved if we talk to ever fewer people. And I am worried that the gap between this part of the world and the wider Muslim world is growing. Without compromising our values, we should do all we can to close that gap.

Let me end by thanking, once again, the Carnegie Foundation for bestowing this honour. It is true that the European Union has done a lot for peace. But there is even more to be done.

Thank you very much.

---