



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**Summary of intervention
by EU High Representative Javier SOLANA**

at the

**Conference of Foreign Affairs Committee Chairs
of National Parliaments of EU Member States**

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I am very happy to be speaking to you, the Chairs of the Foreign Affairs Committee of National Parliaments, once again. The role of the national parliaments in the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the European Security and Defence Policy is very important — it is important that we exchange views among all 27 Member States — also at the level of parliaments.

Western Balkans

Kosovo

In the Balkans, the focus of the EU has been mainly on the Kosovo status issue. The current situation is very complex. After some Kosovo Serbs took over a UN courthouse building, UNMIK initiated negotiations to end the situation calmly but had to act, in accordance with its responsibility under Resolution 1244, to take back the building. I am very concerned about the violence that has occurred in Mitrovica today and very saddened to hear that people have been wounded. I have appealed to everyone to act calmly. Violence leads nowhere. I fully support the efforts of UNMIK and KFOR to restore law and order in Mitrovica North. Their role is essential under UN Security Council Resolution 1244.

Kosovo's declaration of independence of 17 February is now a fact. A negotiated settlement would have been preferable for everyone. However, the negotiation process was exhausted and the status quo was unsustainable.

On 18 February, the Council agreed on a common reaction to Kosovo's declaration of independence. The Council underlined that Kosovo is a *sui generis* case and noted that Member States would decide — in accordance with national practice and international law — on their relations with Kosovo.

Acting collectively at 27, we also took the decision to launch the ESDP mission on the rule of law, EULEX Kosovo. Maintaining the rule of law and stability is in the interest of everyone, in particular the Serbian community. EULEX was formally launched on 15 February. Deployment has started and it will continue in phases over the coming months. Close coordination with the UN is part of our preparation.

The EU Special Representative, Pieter Feith, has been on the ground for three weeks and has started contacts with all key stakeholders.

Serbia

Serbia is going through a difficult period. As you know, Prime Minister Kostunica has announced his resignation and President Tadic has accepted it and has called for new elections. The elections need to take place in a calm and rational atmosphere.

This is a crucial period for Serbia's relationship with the EU. It is up to Serbian citizens to determine the future course of their country. We have to reassure them that the door of the EU remains open to them. We have very close relations with Serbia, which is a country of fundamental importance to us. Our aim continues to be to bring Serbia as close as possible to the EU.

Bosnia- Herzegovina

In Bosnia, the situation is that the Stabilization and Association Agreement can only be signed once four remaining conditions are met, the first of which concerns police reform.

There have also been attempts to weaken the institutions and legitimacy of the state and renewed tensions between political actors over the future constitutional make-up of the country. These steps are unacceptable challenges to the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Middle East

MEPP

The situation in the Middle has again become extremely difficult. Regardless of all the obstacles the EU should stay engaged. That is why I visited the region recently (Israel, Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, Egypt). The aim was to de-escalate the situation.

It is positive that the violence has declined and the negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians will continue. I stressed to all my interlocutors that it is vital to maintain the Annapolis process and that changing realities on the ground and implementation of Roadmap are essential.

Lebanon

The situation in Lebanon is very serious. The parliament has been paralysed since November 2006 and the situation has been aggravated since November 2007 by the presidential vacuum. It is an abnormal situation that cannot continue. We support the Arab League's initiative and we want to see a newly elected president representing Lebanon at the Damascus Summit. We continue to support the democratic and constitutional institutions of Lebanon, particularly the Siniora government. At same time, should stay in touch with our Arab League partners to step up pressure for a solution before the Damascus Summit.

Iran

Nuclear Issue:

The Iranian nuclear issue remains a serious concern for Europe and the international community. Our policy, based on the dual-track approach, remains valid. We offer Iran wide-ranging co-operation including in the nuclear field. But if they continue to reject negotiations, we will also continue to build up pressure through the UN Security Council.

The most recent report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed that Iran still has to answer key issues that point to a possible military programme. These issues need to be examined thoroughly by the IAEA with the full co-operation of Iran. In addition, Iran must implement the Additional Protocol and further transparency measures, as requested by the IAEA, to build confidence in the civil nature of their current nuclear programme. The UNSC resolution 1803 (passed with only one abstention - Indonesia) is a signal of the unity of the international community and its resolve to react to Iran's defiance of the UNSC. In their declaration accompanying resolution 1803 the six countries, with my support, make clear that the way remains open to negotiations and that the offer of cooperation, made to Iran in June 2006, remains on the table. I will continue to pass this message to Iran and I am ready to talk at any point with the Iranian side.

Sudan / Chad

The conflict in Darfur is high on the international agenda. The EU is taking action to stabilise the region and alleviate the suffering of the people in Darfur and the surrounding region.

I am concerned about the recent conflict between Sudan and Chad. Destabilising events have underscored the importance of EUFOR and MINURCAT as an essential counterpart to UNAMID in Darfur.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan is not a failure. A number of successes can be reported. Yet we are more worried today than three or four years ago regarding security, governance, and narcotics.

The Afghan government has to deliver more on corruption, appointments, narcotics and general governance. The challenge for the international community is to improve its coordination. The appointment of Kai Eide as the UN Special Representative is extremely welcome. We will cooperate fully and I hope to meet him, shortly.

Coordination is a central aspect of our police mission, EUPOL Afghanistan, notably through the International Police Coordination Board. EUPOL is one of the main EU tools along with the EU Special Representative's office and the European Commission.

EUPOL Afghanistan is currently deployed in the North and West of Afghanistan in four provinces and is expected to be deployed in 16 provinces, thus covering all regions, by end of spring.

Climate change and international security

At the European Council, I presented a joint report with the Commission. The point of this report is twofold.

- to underline that climate change is already having a profound impact on international security. It is more than just an environmental or a humanitarian challenge. It also causes political and security risks that affect our interests; and
- to set out a range of things that we could do, as the EU and with other countries.

To pick out just three of the threats:

- Conflicts over resources, especially where access is politicised, for example, water but also arable land;
- Increased migration, putting extra pressure on transit and destination countries;
- Political tensions likely as coastlines change, islands disappear or access to new routes and resources open up. We are already seeing countries asserting claims in the Arctic.

What are we proposing?

- To build up EU capacities across the board: from monitoring and early warning, to conflict prevention, crisis management and disaster response;
As ever, comprehensive solutions are needed. Climate change has a geopolitical impact but is not really addressed by "hard power" solutions;
 - to work with major international partners (US, Russia, others) and with those that will be hit the hardest, both to raise awareness and to equip them to deal better with the likely consequences;
 - to address the implications for territorial claims, exclusive economic zones and access to new trade routes, on the basis of existing international frameworks, which perhaps need strengthening;
A report platform for future action. I am glad that the initial reactions from Member-States have been positive. We now need to translate them into action.
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