Javier Solana,
European Union High Representative
for the Common Foreign and Security Policy

"The EU Security Strategy
Implications for Europe's role in a changing world"

Berlin, 12 November 2003
Let me begin by thanking you for this opportunity to be here with you today.

We sometimes forget how young is our ambition to build a common foreign and security policy. Let us remind ourselves that we began this task only in 1992. We have achieved a lot in a short time. Much more remains to be done.

Since we began work, events have strengthened the conviction that the Union has an important role to play in the international community. We have seen dramatic changes in the world around us. September 11 has revealed a world more complex and with threats more potent and urgent than we had feared. The Iraq crisis has been a painful and divisive experience for Europe, but one that we are determined to learn lessons from.

It would be wrong to think that the Union has stood impassive as the world around it changes. The imminent enlargement of the Union is itself a response to the contemporary challenges, reinforcing political stability and economic security on our own continent.

Part of the work of the Inter Governmental Conference is based on the same wish for Europe to play a stronger political role. We must also take care to ensure that our political project is well adapted to the new international strategic context.

A restructuring of international relations is taking place. Today, America is the pre-eminent world power. But no single country, however powerful, can deal with all the problems alone. Europe is becoming a more important actor, but our success is uneven. The other great actors on the world stage are also at the crossroads.

Globalisation brings more freedom and wealth, but if not properly managed it can also generate new frustrations. We must be alive to the prospect of new combinations of threats: terrorism capitalising on the persistence of regional conflicts; criminal organisations acquiring weapons of mass destruction, whether through theft, collaboration with rogue States or the collapse of State structures; collusion between fundamentalists, cyber-terrorists and international criminal organisations.
This new context underlines the need for more effective collective security through a common appreciation of the major challenges facing us. If we identify the threats together, we are better able to deal with them together, to fight together against terrorism, proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, organised crime, violent conflicts and instability in our neighbourhood.

At the same time, we must re-double our efforts to combat the great ongoing challenges of extreme poverty, hunger and the new pandemics, breaking the cycles of insecurity and tackling bad governance, corruption and disregard of rule of Law.

This demands that we develop new and more appropriate strategies at a global level. It is with this aim in view that European Union Heads of State and of Government have asked me to define a security strategy which they will adopt at the end of the year. As the EU grows to encompass 25 countries with some 450 million inhabitants producing one quarter of the world's GDP, we have a duty to assume our responsibilities on the world stage. As a global actor the Union must now face up to its responsibility for global security.

Europe has to be prepared to contribute vigorously to extending the scope of international law, to strengthening the institutions of world governance and to developing closer regional cooperation. Thus, the European Union can make a difference in three areas.

Firstly, we must address threats with effective strategies and on an individual basis with targeted tools and methods. Sometimes these threats may seem distant – think of proliferation in South East Asia or the Middle East – but, they have the potential to gravely affect Europe’s security. Threats cannot be tackled by purely military means.

Rather, they require a systematic policy of preventive engagement by the Union which must be ready to use the full panoply of tools - economic, political, military - at its disposal to confront the threats as they emerge. At the same time, we have to bear in mind that our response has to be adapted to the different nature of each threat. Multi-faceted as well as appropriate strategies are needed to ensure comprehensive approaches.
Secondly, we must promote an arc of well-governed states in our neighbourhood with whom we can enjoy close and co-operative relations, creating a circle of good governance on the perimeter of the Mediterranean and on our eastern frontiers – from the Middle East to the Caucasus via the Western Balkans. Enlargement will dramatically change in particular the Eastern border of the Union, which will be to a great part formed by the Polish border with Belarus and the Ukraine. This is a historic step for the entire European continent and presents a unique opportunity to strengthen co-operation with its neighbours to the East.

Thirdly, we must help create a world both fairer and more secure. To do so, we require an effective multilateral approach to international order with well-functioning international institutions and rules that are enforced. That means that the international order is based on agreed rules, and that we are prepared to ensure the respect of these rules when they are broken. As a Union based on the rule of law we carry a particular responsibility to ensure a rule-based international order, the cornerstone of which is the United Nations Charter.

Regional conflicts as much as injustice and frustration fuel terrorism. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is never more dangerous than when the international community is divided. In short, we must be ready to take appropriate action when the principles of the United Nations Charter are scorned. I passionately believe that the security of the EU in the face of global threats can only be safeguarded if the fundamental values enshrined in the UN Charter and other international regimes and treaties are woven into an extensive web of multilateral instruments.

Within this web, NATO is and will remain key to safeguarding our security: not as a competitor but as a strategic partner. We have seen in practice in the Balkans how this partnership can generate results in terms of peace and stability.

To achieve these objectives, Europeans will be working along four tracks: being more active, strengthening our military and civilian capabilities, improving the coherence of our resources and developing cooperation with our major partners.
Making a stand first requires being more active. The threats are today dynamic. Left alone, they will become more dangerous. The EU must actively counter these threats. It must be ready to act before a crisis occurs. Preventive engagement can avoid more serious problems. Conflict prevention and threat prevention cannot start too early.

The Union will have to deliver that synergy by better co-ordinating assistance programmes, development funds, military and civilian capabilities, trade instruments, diplomatic relations. A better co-ordination between external actions and those in the field of Justice and Home Affairs will be particularly crucial in the fight against terrorism and organised crime.

Secondly, it requires strengthening our capabilities, both military and civilian. 25 European States spending 160 billion euro each year on defence should be able to provide more efficient capabilities. At the same time civilian and diplomatic means are still essential for our success in preventing or managing crises.

Greater coherence is the third track. The European Union is the only regional organisation with such a wide range of political, diplomatic, humanitarian, economic and financial, police and military instruments. Improved synergy in their use is crucial.

But improved consistency and capabilities will not be enough unless Europe strengthens relations with its strategic partners. Better cooperation with them is the key to effective multilateralism. Threats are never more dangerous than when the international community is divided. For this reason in particular, the transatlantic link is irreplaceable. Our security and the effectiveness of the common fight against threats depend on the strength and balance of that relationship.

A stronger Europe with a common strategic vision is also a Europe capable of consolidating relationships with the other great partners – Russia, of course, but also Japan, China, India and Latin America. All are crucial partners in the fight against terrorism and proliferation.
Lastly, this will be a Europe capable of partnership with the other great geographical centres in their quest for stability and development. I am obviously thinking about the Arab world but also of Africa of course.

These are the ambitions behind the preparation of the European Union's security strategy. These are the implications for Europe's role in a changing world. The EU is becoming a global actor. This means that it must also be a pillar of the organisation of a new world, more free and more united, fairer and safer.

Thank you.