

Address by Javier Solana to the WEU Assembly (Paris, 18 June 2001)

Caption: On 18 June 2001, in Paris, Javier Solana, Secretary-General of Western European Union (WEU) and of the Council of the European Union (EU), informs the WEU Assembly about the new arrangements introduced as a result of the transfer of the responsibilities of WEU bodies and structures to the EU.

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Address by Javier Solana, WEU Secretary-General, to the first part of the 47th session of the WEU Assembly (Paris, 18 June 2001)

Mr President,
Members of the Assembly,

Let me begin by thanking you, Mr President, for the opportunity to address this Assembly today. The quality of the reports presented to this session once again demonstrates the contribution you are making to the European security and defence debate.

In a few days time, a page will be turned in the life of Western European Union. A process that was begun in 1984 at the meeting of WEU Foreign and Defence Ministers in Rome will be concluded at the end of this month with the ending of WEU's crisis management functions. When I addressed you in December I outlined what I considered to be the lasting legacy of WEU's work during this period to European security and defence.

Today let me briefly describe where WEU now stands in its transition.

Our police mission in Albania – MAPE – has already handed over responsibility to a programme run by the European Commission.

In the coming days, the WEU Military Staff will cease its operational activities following the successful completion last week of the Joint Exercise Study with NATO. This exercise demonstrated once again the excellent cooperation WEU has built up with NATO over recent years and means the Military Staff can bow out on a suitably high note. Let me take this opportunity to pay tribute to all those officers and NCO's who have served in the WEU Planning Cell and Military Staff since October 1992. Their achievements have in so many ways laid the groundwork for the military structures now created in the EU.

I have kept you informed of the process of restructuring the Secretariat-General made necessary by the transformation of WEU. This is now almost complete and I am glad to report that, with a very small number of exceptions, all those staff who wished to stay on in the reduced Secretariat have been found posts. Those staff who have not been able to find posts in the European Union or Coordinated Organisations have been compensated in accordance with the provisions of the Social Plan agreed by the Council last year. Let me pay tribute to work of the staff of the WEU Secretariat-General who have served the Organisation so effectively and loyally and let me also say that I am confident that the Secretariat-General will continue to support WEU in the same way in the future.

Finally new premises in Brussels will soon be gradually occupied and will serve as the WEU Headquarters from the beginning of July.

Some transitional arrangements will continue into the second half of the year.

WEU's demining mission in Croatia (WEUDAM), funded by the EU, will continue until November.

The Satellite Centre and Institute for Security Studies will remain WEU's responsibility until the creation of the equivalent agencies within the EU at the beginning of next year. I am hopeful that some key decisions concerning the creation of these new agencies may still be taken this month under the Swedish EU Presidency. These decisions may allay some of the misgivings, which members of this Assembly have drawn attention to, concerning the staff of the WEU bodies and also concerning the role of non-EU nations.

I can today assure this Assembly that everything is in place so that, from the beginning of July, WEU can perform the tasks which remain under its responsibility, notably those flowing from the modified Brussels Treaty and in particular its Articles V and IX. Let me stress in this context that the Council will continue to fully assume its responsibilities with regard to this Assembly. WEU will also continue to provide the support necessary for the important armaments cooperation activities of the Western European Armaments Group

and Western European Armaments Organisation. While the involvement of the non-full member states of WEU in Council activities will naturally diminish following the ending of WEU's crisis management functions, their formal status in the Organisation will remain unchanged. This is of course particularly important with regard to the WEU Assembly where the debates among the parliamentarians from the 28 WEU countries and beyond is one of its most distinctive features.

This transformation of WEU has been possible due the significant strides made by the European Union in strengthening the European Security and Defence Policy. Let me indicate where the process has got to.

We are keeping up the momentum on the crucial task of enhancing European crisis management capabilities. In the military field, over the last six months, the EU has

- refined the operational and strategic capability requirements for achieving the Headline Goal
- identified those forces and capabilities which would already be available to the EU before the end of 2001
- and has identified shortfalls based on the contributions Member States have already made.

The key task now will be for member states to review their contributions and indicate planned national or multinational projects to fill the gaps. This should be the concrete outcome of the Capabilities Improvement Conference planned for November this year.

Achievement of the Headline and Capability Goals requires sustained efforts by the Member States. The offers by the non-EU European NATO members and EU accession candidates have been welcomed as significant additional contributions to the improvement of European military capabilities and will increase and bolster those available for EU-led operations. The compatibility of the commitments made in the EU with, for the countries concerned, those undertaken in the NATO defence planning process or the planning and review process of Partnership for Peace remains a criterion for the success of our efforts. The support of NATO expertise in the EU's work on capabilities continues to be essential therefore.

But it is not just in the military field where progress has been made. The Gothenburg European Council last week approved a Police Action Plan to help make the EU fully operational in the planning and conduct of police operations. Principles have also been agreed for the contribution of non-EU states to EU police missions. And new concrete civilian crisis management targets have been set in the areas of rule of law, civilian administration and civil protection.

The EU structures for crisis management have in recent months now become permanent – the Political and Security Committee, the Military Committee and the Military Staff. A key task now is to develop effective crisis management procedures and to test them through the recently approved exercise policy and programme. In so doing we will providing a clear demonstration of one of the EU's principal comparative advantages, namely its ability in a crisis situation, to bring to bear the full range of diplomatic, economic, civilian and military instruments in a coordinated and coherent fashion.

The European Union's relations with NATO are also a key criterion of ensuring effective EU crisis management. The permanent arrangements agreed by the EU and NATO earlier this year are now being actively implemented. Let me emphasise that while we still need to do more particularly with regard to the Berlin plus arrangements, the EU and NATO have been able to establish genuinely profound and effective cooperation when confronted with real security challenges in Southern Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Once again in the history of European security and defence, we are discovering it easier to find practical solutions in the real world than to write down on paper what we wish to achieve.

ESDP is an open, transparent process and good progress has been made in implementing the arrangements for cooperation with the non-EU European NATO members and other EU accession candidates. In addition to the meetings of Ministers, PSC and Military Committee representatives with their counterparts from those countries, the non-EU European NATO members and other candidates for accession to the EU have

appointed interlocutors to the PSC and points of contact to the EU Military Staff.

Mr President,
Members of the Assembly,

WEU can be proud of its contribution to European security and defence over recent years. The EU is now taking up the baton and linking it to the other instruments at its disposal to ensure that Europe plays a more effective role on the international stage. This is an immense challenge as I know only too well as Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union and as High Representative for CFSP. You will, I hope, understand therefore that the attention I can dedicate to my functions as WEU Secretary-General is not as much as I would wish. But let me assure you that, among my ongoing responsibilities as WEU Secretary-General, I intend to place a high priority on maintaining an open and full dialogue with this Assembly.

Thank you