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**Javier SOLANA,
EU High Representative for the CFSP,
sees chance for re-launching the Middle East Peace Process
during his visit to the region**

Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), is currently in the Middle East to contribute to the efforts of the international community in order to re-launch the Peace Process.

The High Representative was today in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. In Jerusalem he met President Shimon PERES, Foreign Minister Avigdor LIEBERMAN, Defence Minister Ehud Barak and Kadima Chairwoman Tzipi Livni. In Ramallah, Mr SOLANA met Prime Minister Salam Fayyad.

In Jerusalem, Mr SOLANA will meet Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Chairman of the Palestinian Negotiations team, Saeb EREKAT, prior his departure to Lebanon and Egypt.

The following is an edited summary of Mr SOLANA's remarks to reporters during his visit to Israel and the Palestinian Territories:

"The Middle East is a crucial region for the European Union and for the International Community. I am a frequent visitor here. For me, to come back at a time when a series of important events takes place, is fundamental.

Prime Minister Netanyahu will deliver an important speech on the Israeli approach to the peace process on Sunday. I would like to hear from him a clear commitment to the two states' solution, a commitment on the issue of settlements and a commitment to reinitiate the relationship with the Palestinians. That is precisely what we expect to hear. I am sure that something of that nature is what we will hear.

Settlements are a very important question. They have been on our agenda for quite a long time. Today, the US and the EU are on the same wavelength and share a constructive attitude to encourage a process that leads to peace.

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The 'interpalestinian' talks remain one of the most critical issues that I have been discussing with my interlocutors in the Palestinian territories and that I will discuss in Egypt on Sunday. We have confidence in the mediation role of President Mubarak and his team. We expect positive and constructive results in early July when a new round of negotiations will take place.

The situation in Gaza remains critical. We have to act urgently to resolve the humanitarian situation there. I want to recall the importance that all donors fulfil their commitments of pledges, and to comply with the engagements made at the Sharm el-Sheikh conference last March.

Time is a question of vital importance. In January 2010, the Palestinian territories may face a new electoral process. 2009 should not be wasted. I would like to see progress and decisive steps towards stability and prosperity in the region. The EU, together with the US and other international actors, will assist in creating a positive dynamic towards peace.

The latest developments in Lebanon represented a new step towards stability in the region. Tomorrow I will be in Beirut and I will encourage the formation of a coalition government as soon as possible."
