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Comments by
Javier SOLANA,
EU High Representative for the CFSP,
following the announcement by Prime Minister Blair on an
international conference on strengthening the Palestinian Authority

Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, made the following comments after the declarations by UK Prime Minister Tony Blair today in Ramallah concerning an international conference on strengthening the Palestinian Authority:

"I welcome the announcement made today by Prime Minister Blair on the UK initiative to convene a conference in London in support of the Palestinian Authority's efforts in building the institutions of the future Palestinian state. I commend the Prime Minister's personal dedication to the cause of advancing the Middle East Peace Process.

This is an important and timely initiative. One clear priority for the international community, following the elections due to take place in January, is to support the Palestinians in their efforts to consolidate their governance.

Helping the Palestinians create a viable State is a key element in our common objective which remains the implementation of the Roadmap by both parties as the only way to reach the goal of peace based on the two-state solution."

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At the 16-17 December European Council, EU Heads of State and governments:

- *reiterated their commitment to the achievement, through the process outlined in the Road map, of a negotiated two-State solution;*
- *noted that the EU would continue to implement the short-term programme of action proposed by HR Solana which they endorsed in November and which covers elections as well as the areas of security, reforms, and the economy;*
- *invited HR Solana and the Commission to present regular reports on the progress in the implementation of this programme of action and the results of the High Representative's consultations with the parties, the international community and the other members of the Quartet.*

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