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Subject: Scharping urges Europe to take on a global role

PES

[IMAGE]

EUROPE URGED TO TAKE ON A GLOBAL ROLE

PES vice president Rudolf Scharping sets out seven "theses" on Europe's future role in the world in a paper published by the PES today.

The paper, entitled "Europe's Global Responsibility", describes the European Union as 'a model of civilisation for the world' and declares that Europe's global interests, including historical and cultural links, underlie its global responsibility. The full text is available on the PES Web site – www.pes.org

Says Mr Scharping, who is Germany's defence minister: 'The fight against hunger, underdevelopment, repression, the population explosion, ecological impasses, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international criminality and international terrorism cannot be won without Europe.'

He adds: 'Europe's interests, political weight and economic clout, as well as our values and convictions, oblige us to make a contribution towards resolving the major issues facing mankind in the globalised world.'

The paper gives statistics that spell out the extent of Europe's global links:

- The EU has just six per cent of the world population but accounts for 30 per cent of gross world product
- Europe accounts for 20 per cent of world trade in imports and exports
- Half of all Africa's exports, 30 per cent of Asia's exports, 25 per cent of US exports and 12 per cent of Oceania's exports go to the EU
- Half of EU states' energy needs are met by imports with the trend set to increase
- The EU and its member states' Third World aid is more than double that of the US and Japan put together
- EU states provide 17 per cent of all UN troops, police forces and observers as well as 60 per cent of the SFOR and KFOR troops and 90 per cent of the troops in Macedonia.

Rapid advance in EU integration is needed, says the paper, because: 'The voice of Europe will only be heard in the world if all the European countries speak as one.'

Specific political and institutional developments are needed in foreign and security policy, says Mr Scharping, so that a European Security and Defence Policy can be used in civil and military crisis management as well as in the fight against terrorism.

Stressing the importance of practical co-operation between regions in establishing security, Mr Scharping highlights Europe's role in the Middle East. 'The greatest donor of funds,' he says, 'it is making an indispensable contribution towards the Middle East peace process by engaging in refugee relief activities, by launching regional projects and by supporting Israel's neighbours.'

'Now that its political weight is meeting with increasing acceptance, the EU must in future wield it even more, in agreement with the USA, to put an end to the escalation of violence and to improve the prospects for peace.'

Mr Scharping warns that failure to invest now in unstable regions – in developing their economies, securing water supplies and establishing democracy – will have a future payback in economic and environment problems, migration pressures, criminality and even terrorism.

In the light of 'stagnation' at the Geneva disarmament talks, EU organisation of a non-proliferation conference in association with anti-terrorism efforts around the world 'would be a wise move.'

The paper concludes: 'Europe and America will remain the principal anchors of stability in a restless world, especially whenever crises and conflicts arise elsewhere around the globe.'

'It would be asking too much of the USA, the only remaining world power, to guarantee global security on its own. Europe is meanwhile strong enough to bring its potential to bear in global peacekeeping and to assume a major, active role.'

End

For more information please phone Tony Robinson, PES Spokesman, on Belgian GSM



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