Links from my friends Darrell and elijahreborn...

As Germany commences its presidency of the now 27 nation European, German Chancellor Angela Merkel is warning that if Europe does not implement the EU Constitution fully, it will be seen as an "historic failure". So far 18 nations have ratified the treaty. Two years ago MEPs tried their best to convince us to accept the constitution. EU Trade Secretary Peter Mandelson told us European markets would be hit hard by a failure to adopt the treaty, the constitution's author Giscard d'Estaing told us that the document could not be rewritten if rejected and French President Chirac said France would cease to exist politically. European nations have offered several solutions to the ill-fated constitution, from remarketing the document as a "treaty" to adopting parts of it into law without a referendum. Britain declared the EU Constitution dead in the water, but I think that was done to woo the electorate, who are mostly Euro-sceptic. There is no doubt Blair desperately wants a constitution. Now that the EU has become 27, the pressure will be on. Not from the UK though, as our referendum is not legally binding, and if most other European states adopt it, our Prime Minister will be pressured to not "rock the boat". Angela Merkel has stated she intends to build a common consensus during her presidency. And it seems that regardless of what happens to the Constitution, Solana's job will be safe...

Quote: *"This greater coherence in EU foreign policy, she said, demanded that the EU had its own foreign minister. The proposal for a foreign minister was part of the draft EU constitution which was rejected by French and Dutch voters 18 months ago. The constitution was also supposed to simplify working arrangements and decision-making. Supporters of structural reform say it is the only way to keep the EU functioning after its enlargement from 15 to 27 members in the past few years. "The reflection pause is over. By June, we must reach a decision on what to do with the constitution," the German chancellor told MEPs.*

Angela Merkel also stated that the adoption of the constitution is necessary if Europe is to work towards peace in the Middle East. Perhaps that's because prophetically, the only thing that the EU lacks now is an official head who will have the political mandate to make an agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians for the seven year period. Once we have an official leader, the rest will fall into place.

Quote: *""Only a united European Union can achieve peace, stability and development in the Middle East...This applies to the Iranian nuclear program as well," said Merkel as she presented the German EU Presidency's program to the European Parliament in Strasbourg. The EU also wants a successful outcome in Afghanistan, she said,*

adding that only a combination of civilian and military efforts can succeed. "Only together we can succeed. And therefore we need a foreign minister for Europe," said Merkel, whose country holds the six-month rotating EU Presidency from January-June. "And that's reason enough for a constitutional treaty," she stressed. The EU constitution foresees creation of the post of an EU foreign minister, but the treaty is nearly dead after its rejection by France and the Netherlands.

One of the reserves I have in regards to the constitution is, why do so many people have to tell lies in order to get us signed up to it? It's clear all the European politicians want it, only they need our consent because some of us still live in democratic countries. Javier Solana's mandate as High Representative for the European Common, Foreign and Security Policy expires in 2009 . This is of course the year by which Merkel says the EU Constitution must be ratified. If the constitution is passed before then, then Solana may eventually get his official title of EU Foreign Secretary.

Source BBC , IRNA , Friends of Europe