Javier Solana, the High Representative for the European Common, Foreign and Security Policy, is due to leave for the Middle East tomorrow on a four day tour of the region. The visit is aimed at building a framework for peace between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, which Solana hopes can be laid down within six months.

Quote: *"Solana, a frequent visitor to the region, will kick-start his tour on January 18 with talks in Egypt, followed by visits to the West Bank, Jordan and Israel. EU diplomats said Solana's visit was meant to highlight the bloc's determination to step up its presence in the Middle East and to voice support for a resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. The EU's foreign and security policy chief will reiterate backing for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's efforts to set up a national unity government including his moderate Fatah group and the radical governing Hamas movement.*

A lot has happened since Solana last visited the region at the beginning of December. We have seen a meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Olmert and Palestinian President Abbas, and the visit of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to the region. Olmert has also recently met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and undertook a surprise visit to King Abullah II of Jordan. There have been revelations of secret talks between the European Union, with a "mystery" EU mediator, Israel, Hamas and Syria, along with possible secret talks with President Abbas. We have also had both the US and UK donate sizable amounts of money and weaponry to Abbas' terrorist organization in order to prevent Hamas from gaining the upper hand. And all that within the past month.

The next event on the time-table, I would suppose, would be the EU Summit which is planned to " strengthen " Solana's hand in the region. If you remember, the EU has already called on troops to monitor the border in Gaza, so perhaps this troop deployment could be part of that strengthening. This would give Solana a much stronger hand to negotiate between Israel and the Palestinians. Israel would get the security they really need, and the Palestinians wouldn't feel under siege from the IDF. Of course the troop deployment largely depends on the formation of a Palestinian unity government, for I don't think the EU will deploy troops just to keep the peace between Hamas and Fatah. Solana's job description states that the

Common, Foreign and Security Policy should be "backed by credible operational capabilities". Whatever happens, we'll soon find out.

Daniel 11:31

And **arms shall stand on his part,** and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

Source Monsters and Critics