Javier Solana, the High Representative for the European Common, Foreign and Security Policy, met with Israeli and Palestinian officials yesterday on the second day of his tour of the Middle East. Yesterday Solana spent over four hours talking with Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres, and urged him at the request of President Abbas, to ease restrictions on the Palestinians, including opening the crossings, and that perhaps this would give less reasons for the Palestinians to attack Israel. Shimon Peres told Solana that Israel has a responsibility first and foremost to the security of their own people, and that it was the Hamas government's policies that had forced Israel to close the crossings, bringing about "collective punishment" for the Palestinian people. Yesterday Solana also met with President Abbas, and stated the time for the " occupation " that started in 1967 was over.

Quote: *"The European Union Foreign Policy Chief Javier Solana said following a meeting with Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah Thursday that the Palestinian people have suffered and suffered a lot, and it is time that the occupation that started in 1967 is over. "That is the objective of the Road Map," he said, referring to an internationally drafted plan which seeks to create a Palestinian state living in peace alongside a secure Israel, but has been largely dormant since its inception in 2003.*

Solana's choice of words are likely to irritate the Israelis, for Solana seems to imply here that its the "occupation" that is the cause of the suffering and not the cause of the "occupation". Israelis have also "suffered and suffered a lot", with the daily barrage of rockets and attempted suicide bombings. Solana also questioned whether or not Hamas' stated goal was the destruction of Israel .

Quote: *"Pressed as to whether he was underestimating the fundamentalist religious imperative at the heart of the Hamas ideology, Solana said, "I cannot imagine that the religious imperative, the real religious imperative, can make anybody destroy another country... Therefore that is an abuse of religion... "* ***I don't think the essence of Hamas is the destruction of Israel. The essence of Hamas is the liberation of the Palestinians,*** *" he added. "The liberation of their people, not the destruction of Israel."*

It seems Solana is mistaken. The essence of Hamas is the liberation (by means of violence) of all Palestine - including Israel, which necessitates the destruction of the Jewish nation. I think the Hamas charter is clear...

Quote: *"Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it" (The Martyr, Imam Hassan al-Banna, of blessed memory).*

Source YNet News , Jerusalem Newswire , Jerusalem Post , MidEast Web