

Prof. Danuta Hübner PhD

**Commendation for Javier Solana  
Academy of Young Diplomats  
5 December 2009**

*Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Guests,  
Young Diplomats,*

I am very pleased to be here with you today so that we can honour two outstanding European politicians, Javier Solana and Valdas Adamkus, who each in their own way have made an invaluable contribution to creating a united and free Europe.

It is all the more fitting that their contribution is appreciated by you, our young diplomats, who aspire to take on the baton in the 'European relay'. Your choice of these two statesmen shows that you realise that it is important to continue what today's prize winners have started. With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and the appointment of a joint diplomatic corps for the whole of the European Union, you will have many more opportunities to influence and shape global politics in accordance with the most important political ethical values which have guided the Founding Fathers of the European Union: freedom, cooperation, tolerance and the ability to change an individual interest into a common interest. I am sure that some of you will make a contribution to the emergent EU foreign service – and it will be your privilege to be able to refer in your work to role models such as our prize winners, whose public activity embodies the political ethics instilled in our continent by the generation of Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman and Alcide de Gasperi.

It was with great pleasure that I accepted the task of writing a profile of Javier Solana, who you are today awarding the much-deserved title of Knight of Freedom and who I have always considered a friend of Poland.

In Homer's *Iliad*, which can be seen as the first epic knight poem in European culture, one of the most important indicators of chivalry was genealogy. In this work each knight is presented through the enumeration of his honourable ancestors. This is intended to show us that a real knight does not come from nowhere. He comes from a great history, which guides him in carrying out his ethical duties and means that he uses his skills and the gifts that fate has bestowed upon him to serve the community.

Francisco Javier Solana de Madariaga, born on 14 July 1942 in Madrid, who we are honouring today, is an outstanding example of individuality born out of a family background of unusually fertile intellect. For many generations it has been one of the great families.

The Polish Nobel Prize winner Czesław Miłosz wrote a beautiful book entitled '*Native Realm*' [Literally, 'Native Europe'], in which he tried to describe his marginal Polish-Lithuanian experience through his depiction of an expanded Europe, although, when he wrote it, the idea of reuniting the divided continent seemed Utopian. The young Miłosz tried to recover the notion of Europe as a legitimate element of his family history. For the young Solana, a 'native Europe' was self-evident thanks to his ancestors. Yet his own country, Spain, which was in the shackles of the Franco dictatorship for many decades, felt isolated and marginalised. We can assume that Javier's determination to regain Europe for Spain and Spain for Europe was similar to the determination of the generation-older Miłosz, who was facing the same dilemma on the other side of the continent.

While studying at the Complutense University of Madrid, Solana joined the active opposition against the regime, for which he was punished by the authorities. In 1964 he joined the underground Socialist Party. In 1965 he went to the USA, where he continued his studies in physics, at the same time taking part in protests against the war in Vietnam. After he returned to Spain after the fall of the Franco regime, he started to work in the re-legalised Socialist Party and quickly became one of its leaders, responsible for its transformation during the post-Franco period. In 1977 he stood in the parliamentary elections for the Madrid region, which he represented until 1995. In 1982 he became Minister of Culture in Felipe González's government and in 1988 he was appointed Minister of Education. In 1992 he was named Minister of Foreign Affairs. He was known as a quiet, composed and discreet diplomat. These features no doubt contributed to Solana replacing NATO Secretary General Willy Claes in December 1995. The new Secretary General gave the Union impetus for reform, which led to the reorganisation of its political and military structure and changes to the strategy which had been pursued up until that point. Solana achieved recognition for his negotiation skills both within NATO and with difficult and demanding partners. His personal success was such that a year after taking up his new role, his own country, Spain, became a member of NATO. And in 1997, after five months of talks with the Russian Foreign Minister, Primakov, the NATO-Russia Founding Act was signed.

In 1999 Javier Solana was appointed High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy. This appointment pointed to the growing cooperation between the two organisations with regard to internal relations and security policy, and also to the ever more evident desire for the Union to enter the wider global political stage, given its increasing readiness to play an important role outside the European arena. Solana

was one of the main architects of the more active role of the European Union in the Middle East as part of the Quartet (the EU, UN, USA and Russia). In 2004 he supported Great Britain, France and Germany in negotiations with Iran concerning the blocking of part of its controversial nuclear programme. He also represented the EU as a mediator with Ukraine in a situation which threatened political stability following the presidential elections. In 2005 he invited President Yushchenko to discussions on the EU. One of Solana's greatest achievements during his time as High Representative was the work he did in the Balkans to avoid a domino effect in the region. Solana also had a substantial impact on the development of the European Security and Defence Policy: we only need remember the innovative programmes against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, organised crime and the process of rebuilding the 'fallen' states and resolving regional conflicts. Solana can be seen as one of the forerunners of the application of the new 3D (*Diplomacy, Defence, Development*) paradigm in ESDP programmes. This paradigm accepts that in order to resolve current regional conflicts we need to use both diplomatic and military resources in cooperation with civil society. It is not enough to settle conflicts temporarily – we need to create an environment in which people affected by the trauma of conflict, often on account of civil war, can regain a sense of stability and predictability through security and the rule of law. Standard examples of this approach include the EULEX programme in Kosovo, the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia and the EU NAVFOR Operation Atalanta, which aims to ward off, prevent and eliminate acts of piracy off the coast of Somalia. We should also remember that a major achievement during his term in office was the appointment of the European Defence Agency, which serves to unify defence policy, and also the incorporation of human rights issues and equal opportunities into the ESDP. I am convinced that these types of innovative programmes and operations

will in the near future create an image of the European Union in third countries, and will reflect its ability to exert its strength worldwide, in both the ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ version. To a very great extent this is thanks to Javier Solana and his unusual ability to build consensus. His motto is *‘Make no enemies and never ask a question to which you do not know or like the answer.’* This approach requires a huge amount of work, as well as prudence and the quiet and systematic acquisition of knowledge. We need to know a person well for their answer to our question not to surprise us. François de Callières, the French author of a diplomacy textbook, writes that an ambassador should be able to read other people’s minds and should have good manners and be approachable. Javier has these qualities, which makes his work a lot easier. He also has a remarkable ability to sense the mood of other people and to do so in the relevant context, which makes him a first-rate diplomat. In his memoirs, the French author writes that *‘in order to succeed in this kind of work, one must rather listen than speak; and the phlegmatic temper, self-restraint, a faultless discretion and a patience which no trial can break down – these are the servants of success.’* Indeed he has this patience: he proved that in the Balkans, in Ukraine and in the Middle East. When I think about Javier’s manner of negotiating, about the way he treats other people, it brings to mind the traditional Spanish dance, the *sarabande*, which is a dance for patient knights who achieve their goals without any sudden movements and without any unnecessary quixotism.

Maria Ossowska, an outstanding Polish scholar, in her work *‘Ethos rycerski i jego odmiany’* [‘The Chivalric Ethos and Its Varieties’], refers to the aristotle-esque concept of ‘the person who is rightly proud’, whose movements should be prudent and who should not get worked up about things.

A person who is rightly proud is generous and friendly but at the same time unyielding if necessary. Only someone who is not prone to provoking negotiating partners and who is not given to quick and unequivocal judgments can successfully dance the diplomatic *sarabande* while giving the observer aesthetic pleasure. Javier, who I have the pleasure of considering as a friend, is that person.

Thank you very much for allowing me to share my reflections with you. And, Javier, thank you for being with us here in Warsaw in our united 'native Europe'.