Wednesday, 15 December 2010

Debate:

Pino Arlacchi, rapporteur – Madam President, this has been an extremely interesting and lively debate. I just want to make a couple of observations.

The first is that I am very happy there has been no criticism by anyone of the four main points of the report. The report asked for reform of international aid, elimination of opium poppy cultivation, better coordination of police training, and support for the peace process. All the observations have been on other issues and I am happy that, after one year of discussion in the Committee on Foreign Affairs, colleagues have confirmed their support for the structure of the report – which is not 'the Arlacchi report'. Following its approval by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, this is the committee report that has been approved almost unanimously – with 60 votes for, and one vote against. It also includes several compromises agreed on by all the political groups, so it is very important, too, to refer to the real text of the report, which is the final one.

To Mr Juvin, I would say that there is no mention of occupying forces in Afghanistan. That was the original text. The final text says 'coalition of international forces in place' in Afghanistan. This part of the report has been changed by the amendments.

The most important issue is drones. This is not a report on drones. There are just two lines of a compromise between the political groups on the issue of the use of drones. I believe that an agreement could have been reached sooner on that, but I trust my interlocutors and all the different positions, and I trust the compromise we reached. There is no call in the report for prohibition of the use of drones. There is moderate criticism of it, but I believe that an agreement between groups can be found on that.

I thank you, and I also thank Baroness Ashton. I hope she will take full account of the content of the report, which is a very concrete one and calls for an exit strategy from Afghanistan.

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