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Stabilisation of Afghanistan: challenges for the EU and the international community (debate)

Ana Maria Gomes, on behalf of the PSE Group . - (PT) I congratulate the rapporteur, André Brie, on his careful analysis of the serious problems that we are facing in Afghanistan and, in particular, on his efforts to find a wording that would allow all the political groups to vote in favour of the compromise amendments.

Unfortunately, during the vote in committee, two important ideas contained within the compromise amendments fell victim to the political prejudice of colleagues who prefer to ignore the problems facing the international community in Afghanistan, problems horrifically illustrated by yesterday's suicide attack on the Indian Embassy in Kabul. As a result, the reference to the need for the international community to reassess its civil and military strategy fell by the wayside, as did the passage underlining the growing popular discontent at the corruption spreading through government institutions.

In this respect, I call on my fellow Members to support the amendments reintroduced by the PSE Group in order to rebalance the report. How can a report of this House on Afghanistan refrain from mentioning the role of Pakistan and its military regime that for so many years has misgoverned that country? How can we, as Members of the European Parliament, ignore the secret prisons of our US allies in Kabul and not only that? Why do some Members reject legitimate criticisms of the Afghan judicial system? The position of the PSE Group is clear: it is possible to support the increased presence of international troops in Afghanistan while, at the same time, defending the need to reassess the military strategy of the ISAF (International Security Assistance Force). It is possible to be in favour of close cooperation between Europe and the United States in Afghanistan, without closing our eyes to the crimes committed by the Bush Administration in the name of the fight against terrorism.

Finally, it is possible to support the Afghan institutions while, at the same time, drawing attention to their severe limitations. Europe will only be able to assume a strategic role in Afghanistan when it stops being afraid of presenting its own vision for the future of the country. Why not start here and now with this report?