



United States Mission to the OSCE

Annual Security Review Conference Working Session II: Transnational Threats & Challenges

As delivered by
Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs John Heffern
Vienna, June 24, 2015

With its cross-dimensional approach to security based on a common understanding of threats we all face, the OSCE is a vitally useful, collaborative platform from which to respond to the most pressing transnational threats (TNTs).

Addressing Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Violent Extremism

While the foreign terrorist fighter (FTF) phenomenon is not new, its recent scale and scope are unprecedented. Moreover, recent terrorist attacks in France, Denmark, Tunisia, and Libya, to name a few, remind us that no region, country, or community is immune to the threat of terrorism. Strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism are most successful when government and community leaders work in partnership, and with the private sector where appropriate, to support innovative programs that address the underlying drivers of violent extremism. To that end, in February we were pleased to host the White House Summit to Counter Violent Extremism (CVE), which convened a diverse set of stakeholders from government, civil society, and the private sector, including Secretary General Zannier on behalf of the OSCE, to outline an affirmative, action-oriented agenda. We welcome the OSCE's active role in promoting the CVE Summit agenda and the resulting strategy and initiatives, and greatly appreciate the Serbian CiO's proactive leadership in developing next week's event aimed at addressing FTF recruitment. We also note the OSCE's significant contribution in developing a set of recommendations on women's contributions to CVE efforts. Once these recommendations are adopted by the Global Counterterrorism Forum, we will look to partner with the OSCE and with requesting participating and Partner States to develop national and regional training seminars to promulgate and share good practices. We would like to see the OSCE follow up on capacity-building requests identified through the various regional CVE Summits. We look forward to engaging with the Serbian Chair and next year's CiO to craft and promote value-added, concrete OSCE FTF and CVE initiatives. The OSCE's comprehensive approach to security is as relevant to combatting terrorism as it is to any other issue, and something which sets the OSCE apart from others who seek to counter terrorist threats through a more limited--and ultimately self-defeating-- approach.

Reducing Risk and Building Confidence in State use of ICTs

Threats to information and communications technologies (ICTs) have expanded dramatically during the past decade and continue to grow. It is important that we strengthen our international partnerships to address increasingly sophisticated threats to the reliability, integrity, and availability of the ICTs on which we all increasingly rely. We welcome the OSCE's 2013-adopted set of eleven cyber confidence-building measures (CBMs), and we deeply appreciate the implementation steps participating States have taken. Our goal is to ensure that these CBMs are actionable and enhance interstate cyberspace transparency, predictability, cooperation, and

stability. To accomplish this goal, we have two near-term objectives: first, to strengthen implementation of the first set of measures, and second, to expand our confidence-building efforts to identify common approaches in addressing shared security challenges. We believe that with hard work and good faith efforts by participating States we can achieve a second set of CBMs, which will advance our shared cybersecurity goals and continue the OSCE's leadership on cybersecurity.

Strengthening Border Security

Efforts to promote secure borders remain a principal component of the OSCE's work. By strengthening efforts such as implementing hands-on "green border" training programs, conducting customs training, empowering a highly trained cadre of female border officials, and addressing corruption, the OSCE can combat transnational threats while helping establish conditions that foster regional economic growth, stability, and connectivity. The United States has been a donor to several of the OSCE's regional efforts and we will continue to support these and related initiatives. We call on all participating States and Partners to redouble their efforts to commit resources to vital programs that meet Afghanistan's needs and promote broader regional stability. We should work together to strengthen the Border Management Staff College (BMSC) in Dushanbe. We stand united with our colleagues from Tajikistan and strongly advocate for the BMSC to be funded, at least in part, from the OSCE's 2016 Unified Budget.

Promoting Police Reform

We continue to strongly support the OSCE's efforts to cultivate respect for the rule of law and promote police reform with a systemic, holistic approach. The success of the OSCE's Community Security Initiative in Kyrgyzstan demonstrates participating States' commitment to uphold the principles of community policing and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We encourage the OSCE to be ready to work with other participating States to develop additional community policing programs, which can be a key component of a strategy aimed at engaging youth and women in countering violent extremism.

Closing

Evolving transnational threats, including addressing the recruitment and cultivation of foreign terrorist fighters, not only challenge stability and security within the OSCE region, but also highlight the need for enhanced global collaboration, as our speakers have highlighted today. Our collective response requires engagement that builds policy, practices and law enforcement capabilities that are consistent with universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, and engage and promote civil society, thereby enhancing societal and community-level resilience to transnational challenges. The United States looks forward to partnering with all who join us in tackling our most acute transnational threats.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.