



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**Asia-Europe Counter-Terrorism Dialogue
Singapore, 31 October-1 November, 2016**

*Remarks by Thomas Wuchte on
Policy Recommendations for a Europe-Asia Counter-Terrorism Strategy
Acting Director Transnational Threats Department
Head of Action against Terrorism Unit*

Ladies and gentlemen,

First let me express my sincere appreciation to the organizers, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, for convening this important Europe-Asia dialogue on counter-terrorism. It is a great pleasure and an honour for me to be invited for this last session and to address such a distinguished audience before the presentation of Dr. Gunaratna. Indeed, as it has been showcased here over the last two days, dialogue and interaction among international and regional organizations, as well as States, the public and private sector, are paramount in tackling the ever-evolving threat posed by terrorism. During my presentation, I will first identify some opportunities for more collaborative action between Europe and Asia in this regard, then identify a number of concrete proposals for co-operation and finally highlight some obstacles.

First, allow me to recall that the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which I represent today, is comprised of 57 participating States that span the globe, encompassing three continents: North America, Europe and Asia. As the world's largest regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE is playing a bridging role between Europe and Asia, due to its five Central Asian participating States as well as its special relationship with its five Asian Partners for Co-operation, namely Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Afghanistan and Australia, on a wide range of programmes and via a unique cross-dimensional and multi-stakeholder approach. As many probably know in the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Germany is this year's OSCE Chairmanship and I am pleased to be here with a representative of the Chairman-in-Office from Berlin.

From this perspective, I would like to touch upon a few opportunities for increased co-operation between Europe and Asia:

First, countering terrorism is one of the top, if not *the* top, security concern in Asia and Europe but varies by locality in Europe, as well as whether in Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia for example. Following the adoption of key policy documents such as the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2005, different intergovernmental and regional organizations across Europe and Asia such as the European Union and ASEAN agreed on co-ordinated approaches on counter-terrorism. Also, the OSCE region which overlaps with other regional structures such as ASEAN has built a strong track record devoted to countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, complying with the relevant international legal frameworks. Political commitment and correctly allocated resources that translate the international legal framework into regional and nation policy are vital.

Second, the rise of Daesh and other similar groups that led to many of the recent tragic events in both Asia and Europe highlighted our collective concern and need to plan long-term for this challenge – and I noted that many speakers the last two days even referred to a generational approach. Military success in Iraq and Syria may lead these groups to embrace a more decentralised approach. Both our regions are a source of recruitment and at the same time a target for terrorist cells aligning themselves with the so-called Islamic State. We all recognize that terrorism does not respect borders and that national action to counter Daesh violent extremism is often best complemented by regional action.

As a primary opportunity, I would like to flag the growing interest of Asian partners to further shape their preventive diplomacy tools by including transnational and non-traditional security challenges, like transnational crime and terrorism as an important subset. I would like to give Mongolia as an example – initially an Asian Partner for Co-operation of the OSCE; it became a fully-fledged 57th participating State in 2012, seeing co-operation on these matters as vital. This echoes the remarks from our Malaysian colleagues on de—radicalization as this two-way transfer of experiences can only strengthen our efforts.

With these opportunities in mind, exactly where should our co-operation lie? I would like to elaborate on some concrete and forward-looking fields for co-operation between Europe and Asia on counter-terrorism.

1. The need to share experiences and best practices on the prevention of violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism between Asia and Europe

How do we address the appeal of violent extremist groups like Daesh and their subsidiaries to attract supporters, in particular youth? Countering violent extremism (CVE) has become a powerful brand in a very short time span and rightly so, as it has become a top concern of many policy makers in both Asia and Europe. Indeed, the rise of Daesh has clearly shown that both within the European Union and for example ASEAN member states, multiple new or existing radicalized groups have declared allegiance with Daesh. The UN Secretary General's Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism galvanizes us into action to tackle factors conducive to terrorism and calls for more collaborative action in this regard.

Although the need to prevent radicalization leading to terrorism within our societies is high, as is the need for short term results; it should not withhold us from designing well thought strategies. This is a complex and time-consuming task with sometimes little direct result at a high cost, and requires a prudent and adequate approach involving the whole of society. We can learn a lot from each other by sharing experiences, best practices and to come to a shared understanding on the non-security driven responses. Comparing CVE initiatives between Europe and Asia can help us to further build a global movement to address violent extremism. I also noted the resource requirements underscored by many speakers and I hope that this report will capture the need to better fund many of these initiatives for sustainability.

I would like to remind you that the OSCE has done a lot of work on its core efforts regarding Violent Extremism and Radicalization leading to Terrorism (VERLT). Lessons from our experience within the OSCE tell us that there is a need to balance the security driven response to countering terrorism with a human rights compliant, tailor-made and grass root-level practical responses to prevent radicalization leading to terrorism, especially in relation to civil society's role with our governmental actions. For example, the perceived injustices by youth in our societies are not to be neglected. Youth-led and youth-focused initiatives are essential in tackling VERLT. Because youth is so important, I would see it as a strong

recommendation listening to all the speakers that a future format of this dialogue focus on and include active youth participants and voices.

With its multidimensional and co-operative approach to security, the OSCE and Europe overall have also made significant efforts to involve all actors and serve as a platform for dialogue and engagement between States, civil society businesses and media. I see from similarities in regional programs, this dialogue will benefit both of our approaches.

2. Continued efforts to implement the global objectives outlined in UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014) on the phenomenon of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) and to promote such initiatives as the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) Good Practices Documents

With close to 10,000 people within the OSCE region having joined the Daesh efforts, the phenomenon of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) still represents a great risk to us all. The Security Council Resolution 2178 calling on all States to co-operate on preventing the international flow of terrorist fighters to and from conflict zones still bears a lot of potential for cross-country co-operation among our regional security-related mechanisms. There are extensive difficulties for States to bring to justice individuals suspected of the involvement in terrorist acts located outside their jurisdiction. The full investigation and prosecution of a terrorist offence requires co-operation across borders using tools such as effective law enforcement and judicial co-operation including exchange of information.

European and Asian States have taken steps to strengthen border controls and prevent travel and address the return of foreign terrorist fighters. European Union States for example promote the extended use of INTERPOL to share information on foreign terrorist fighters and disrupt their travel. The timely exchange of information, intelligence and data between our regions offers a great potential to improve and refine border control and travel document security. The OSCE is currently working on a decision on Advance Passenger Information (API) to prevent and interdict the travel of FTF as a concrete step to enhance OSCE's support to the UNSCR 2178, and I invite the Asian Partners for Co-operation and other Asian States to also undertake such and similar action.

There is global consensus on the urgent need to strengthen international co-operation in countering the use of the Internet and social media for terrorist purposes, in particular foreign terrorist fighter recruitment, but this is challenged by the lack of harmonization among domestic legal regimes. Terrorists are taking advantage of technology but technology can also play its part when countering terrorist activity by producing counter narratives or by developing effective public-private partnerships. The OSCE is doing both through the establishment of an e-learning module on countering the internet for terrorist purpose and through, in the spirit of raising awareness and developing effective counter-narratives, a social media campaign called “*OSCE United in Countering Violent Extremism*” to underscore the commitment of our Organization. I do very much welcome you to engage with us on these efforts and campaign and to rally behind them with a sharing of social media platforms.

3. The ratification of the international legal framework and the 19 Universal Anti-Terrorism Instruments between Asia and Europe

To facilitate the exchange of information and intelligence and to facilitate the judicial co-operation in criminal matters related to terrorism, Europe and Asia should be further encouraged to ratify and implement the 19 Universal Anti-Terrorism Instruments, and then to share implementation strategies and policies. Also, from the presentations – we have the potential for further exchanges under the legal aspects of terrorism financing to include kidnapping for ransom as a means to fund terrorist activities.

Some observations on obstacles for Europe-Asia cooperation on counter-terrorism

These suggested fields for co-operation above now offer some of the potential to engage on further developing a strategy between Europe and Asia, but I would like to raise the following questions: which institutional structures should be considered applicable to design an Asia-Europe strategy on counter-terrorism? And how can we broaden interaction between the existing regional organizations like the EU and ASEAN? Are we ready for it or do we still need to do more of our own homework? Regional security structures in Europe and Asia have their own features and there is often disparity in capacity at either end, e.g., we should understand what international co-operation among European Union States is compared to Asia’s varied regions that differ as much in themselves.

Moreover, increased international co-ordination and policy dialogue can be challenging as we have to recognise that there are multifaceted and different security and cultural situations in Europe, Central, Northeast and Southeast Asia. Some regions and States have sadly been affected more by terrorism and have been able to mature their policies. The development of effective counter-terrorism policies should be framed within the conditions of one's own regional environment. In point, two areas that I found much to be learned from the Asian perspective concerned inter-faith dialogue and the approaches to resilient education systems – I see both as areas to explore together.

The OSCE's experience within the larger Eurasian bridge can help to foster co-operation between Europe and Asia on countering terrorism and violent extremism. Continuing policy dialogue and stronger joint collaboration between our two regions, through a cross-dimensional, multi-stakeholder approach, would be beneficial to counter terrorism in all of its forms. The dialogue thus remains a potential avenue for future co-operation as it will contribute to generating political will, raising awareness and building capacity.

I am looking forward to engage in a lively and open discussion to conclude this dialogue.
Thank you.