



United States Mission to the OSCE

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Mr. Chairman,

The title of this presentation – Implications of New Threats to Security for Security Sector Reform and Their Reflections in National Security Concepts and Military Doctrines – is quite a lot to digest, but I think can be distilled into two simpler questions. First, can we adequately recognize all the new threats to security that are out there, not just what they are but their character and scope? Second, can we link these new threats to the debates on national security policy which we have in each of our countries?

We parliamentarians need, of course, to be concerned about what these new threats are as we undertake our oversight responsibilities. I believe it is more important, however, for us to ensure that the institutions responsible for security have the capability and resources – human and financially – to uncover new threats, to identify and recognize them, and make the necessary adaptations accordingly. This is especially true for governments which have entrenched bureaucracies accustomed to looking only at certain things and doing things a particular way. In short, oversight should not be viewed as simply reacting to what the military, intelligence and law enforcement personnel are doing or not doing. Oversight should also play a facilitative role, trying to ensure that threats and changing trends are addressed with sound policies from the outset.

We have learned in stark and deadly ways that events can develop in ways that segments of the security sector simply did not predict. Security institutions have recognized the threats – terrorist groups, organized crime, rogue regimes, extreme nationalist demagogues, among them. But, my experience has shown that when these same security institutions decide how to respond to the threats, too often there is less than full consideration given to the character and scope of these

threats. There can be a real hesitation when determining how to adjust to the identified threats, or pinpointing the next steps which should be taken.

For example, Milosevic could not stop the NATO intervention in 1999, but he could ethnically cleanse virtually the entire Kosovar Albanian population, making the Alliance question the wisdom of the step it had taken. Similarly the security sector was caught off-guard, whether in part or in whole, in the War on Terrorism, or perhaps even in the intervention in Iraq. Ultimately, governments must gather the strength and conviction not to allow those posing the threat to succeed. By repeatedly being placed in a mode of reacting to the actions of terrorists or rogues regimes due to a failure in predicting their choice of options, however, we add considerably to the cost of security that our societies have to pay in time, in resources and ultimately, in lives.

When viewed from this perspective, an important implication of new security threats for security reform is the need to improve communication between the bureaucracies which define the security sector. The spectrum of new threats has shifted from state to non-state actors; it has shifted from neighbors within the OSCE region to threats from outside the region. As one U.S. arms control negotiator noted earlier this year: "One could say that we have entered a period in the OSCE when we have no threats on our borders and no borders on our threats." As a result, our respective armed forces, police services, border guards, intelligence services, immigration officers, emergency responders, diplomatic representatives and transportation managers must all be able to communicate with each other like at no other time. Ultimately, they must be able to communicate with their counterparts, including at local, regional and national levels as well as internationally.

To deal with new threats, OSCE participating States must deal with everything from common security features for travel documentation to tighter controls on MANPADS (man-portable air defense systems). They must cooperate in dealing with everything from excess stockpiles of ammunition to the proliferation of weapons that might destroy us all. They must share experience in border controls, community policing and Civil-Military Emergency Preparedness. To serve the same security goals, there must be communication and coordination among those dealing with these issues in various agencies and departments of government.

I will leave it to others to detail how this implication manifests itself in reform, especially since the necessary reform probably differs widely from country to country and is quite a complicated subject. In the United States, the collection

of many different government agencies into one Department of Homeland Security is but one example. As parliamentarians, however, we can play a constructive role in making certain that communication is taking place. As the United States examines what happened leading up to September 11, 2001, it becomes clear that a failure in communication hurt our ability to prevent the tragedy and be prepared for its aftermath. For al-Qaida, on the other hand, excellent internal communications allowed the terrorists to succeed.

If improved communication is of urgent importance, the preservation of democratic principles is of paramount importance. The fact that new threats can be internal, not just external, cannot be allowed to make our security sectors become, either consciously or unintentionally, threats to the very liberties they are supposed to protect. Similarly, the fact that the new threats often take the form of people operating well outside the bounds of law and norms of human decency cannot be allowed to make our security sectors feel they have authority to act in the same way.

In the United States, there has been a vigorous and healthy, and ongoing debate -- despite the effect of September 11 of closing ranks in American society -- over various aspects of the Patriot Act as it affects the human rights and fundamental freedoms of citizens. There has also been a strong desire, including through congressional visits, to ensure that the detainees in Guantanamo Bay are treated correctly. We, as Americans, now have to come to grips with the horrible realities of the outrageous abuse inflicted by some of our own personnel upon detainees at Abu Gharib prison in Iraq.

Something obviously went terribly wrong. We feel an obligation not just to condemn it in the strongest terms but also to take the necessary actions to ensure that no other detainees under United States custody and control will ever again be subject to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Important investigations and legal proceedings are underway. The Armed Forces are moving expeditiously and decisively to identify, try, and punish those who were responsible or culpable for the abuses. Ultimately, these abuses were not only wrong, morally and legally, but they are themselves a new threat to the interests of the United States in the reaction they evoke around the world.

In the United States House of Representatives, this very question was dealt with just last week. By an overwhelming vote (416 to 4, with 13 abstentions), an amendment was made to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005 which states that the abuses committed were offensive to the principles and values of the American people. The abuses are completely incompatible with the

professionalism and standards of our military. They contradict the policies, orders and laws of the United States and the military. They undermine the ability of our military to achieve their mission in Iraq. The House is now on record with a clear message that the U.S. Army and appropriate military authorities must continue to undertake corrective action to address chain of command deficiencies and the systemic deficiencies identified in these incidents. The Congress has a responsibility to make sure that this happens. We have asked a host of questions and we will continue asking difficult and critical questions. I can tell you as a member of the Intelligence Committee that the military has been extremely responsive, forthright, and forthcoming and that answers will be had.

Defending democratic principles at home, moreover, allows us to interact with colleagues around the globe with our greatest asset, which is not our military might or our intelligence gathering abilities. Rather, our greatest asset is the freedom we enjoy. While threats may change, the inherently peaceful character of democratic government remains the same. New threats are most likely to emerge where people are denied freedom and opportunity. The OSCE, despite the valuable contributions to the military aspects of security, continues to make its greatest contribution by defining security in its most comprehensive way to include respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The participating States should therefore use the organization effectively to respond to human rights violations when they occur.

In closing, my presentation today has stayed in the realm of generalities. Perhaps I have raised more questions than I answered. There are no apologies for this. Ultimately, the responsible parliamentarian, in my opinion, is the one who helps state the political priorities that the security sector must implement. As responsible parliamentarians, we also must be ready to ask the questions, again and again, until satisfied the path being pursued is the right one. For what it all boils down to is without transparency and oversight, there is no way of ensuring that international commitments are adhered to. And all the accountability and transparency in the world will not put an end to horrors unless there are real consequences for violating codes of conduct.