



United States Mission to the OSCE

Concluding Statement at 2004 ASRC

As delivered by U.S. Undersecretary for Political Affairs, Ambassador Marc Grossman,
to the Annual Security Review Conference
Vienna, June 24, 2004

Mr. Chairman, delegates – may I thank you for allowing me during this closing session to say a few words to you.

I want to first congratulate the Bulgarian Chairmanship and the conference coordinator, Colonel Peter Gorissen of The Netherlands, for having organized a successful second Annual Security Review Conference.

We are pleased that this conference, developed from a U.S. initiative, provided participating States with an opportunity to assess the OSCE's effectiveness in meeting our common security challenges.

This is critical. The threat environment is evolving; the key organizations involved with maintaining Euro-Atlantic security – NATO, the EU and the OSCE, as well as the UN - must periodically review how to better meet our needs and to avoid duplication. The ASRC provides the OSCE with a chance to focus on areas where it can best contribute to security and stability.

Before commenting on conference specifics, I would like to highlight OSCE's unique role in safeguarding our security. The OSCE's greatest contributions come from the day in, day out work of its field missions and institutions to promote human rights, democracy, conflict resolution, post-conflict rehabilitation, and economic opportunity. By helping to strengthen democratic institutions and civil societies, OSCE field missions help defeat the underlying causes of instability. The bulk of the OSCE's resources are rightly devoted to its field missions and outreach through other institutions; the United States believes this should continue, even as the OSCE identifies areas where it can add value on counter-terrorism and what we call "homeland security" issues.

Turning to the work undertaken here over the past two days, we are pleased with the constructive proposals that have been put forward.

Counter-terrorism: My government is grateful for the opportunity the ASRC provided to Department of Homeland Security Deputy Secretary Loy yesterday to deliver the U.S. message on the need for continued hard work on the counter-terrorism tasks, specifically toughening travel document security and closing down terrorists' funding sources. I strongly urge action on Admiral Loy's proposal by OSCE participating States to make a collective political commitment at this December's ministerial to enhance shipping container security.

Border Management and Security: This conference's dialogue on border security has been productive. We need to do all we can to ensure that the legitimate transit of goods and people is both free-flowing and secure. The OSCE has a role to play beyond its commendable work on travel

document security, Man-Portable Air Defense Systems, the Balkan Border Security Conference, and border guard training.

First, we strongly urge the OSCE and its participating states to join the United States in committing to share information on lost and stolen passports thorough Interpol's database.

Second, we encourage the OSCE to increase its cooperation with other international organizations to determine where it can provide value-added training and expertise.

New Threats: Over the past two days, we were encouraged to hear several delegations address new threats, among them small arms and light weapons (SALW), excess weapons and ammunition stockpiles, MANPADS and non-proliferation. We are pleased with OSCE's initiatives to help dispose of excess stockpiles of ammunition in Georgia, Ukraine, Russia and Belarus, as well as to tighten export controls for MANPADS. Notwithstanding these successes, much remains to be done. We are heartened by support from OSCE states to roll up their sleeves and pitch in.

Closer Cooperation with Partners: Participation in the ASRC by NATO, the EU and the UN, as well as partner countries, provides a good basis for coordination. While we strongly support enhanced security cooperation with all partners, I want to single out U.S. support for greater OSCE engagement with Afghanistan. In particular, we strongly urge the OSCE to consider mounting an election observation mission in Afghanistan for the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections. The OSCE has expertise that would lend credibility and legitimacy to the upcoming elections. This is in all our best interest.

Before closing, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to say a few words on a topic that has come up several times over the past two days, and that is the notion of "root causes" of terrorism.

We need to be careful about how we use the term "root causes" to make sure that we are not, even inadvertently implying a misleading causal relationship.

In the OSCE Bucharest Plan of Action, we said that there were many areas and factors, economic, social, political, that contribute to conditions that facilitate terrorist organizations and efforts to recruit and win support and no one should dispute this. And that is why all of us in our own ways and collectively, are working to deal with some of the worse problems in this world. For us, for example, through the Millenium Challenge Account, we're spending money to defeat HIV-Aids, and to bring peace and security to other areas of the world.

The OSCE's core mission is to promote tolerance, confidence, cooperation, democratization, human rights, market economy and freedom of the media. These are the things that are essential to dealing with the conditions that terrorists exploit. And that's why the United States feels so strongly that this work should continue and in fact be expanded where necessary. We need to use all of the means we have to defeat terrorism, and we need to use all of the means and the possibilities before us to make sure that there are not areas in this world that the terrorists can exploit. But as we do that, and we will do that together, doing these important things should not deflect us from the requirement for concrete action to limit the movement of terrorists, to halt the flow of illegal weapons, to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to terrorists and States that sponsor them and very importantly to cut off terrorists finance.

Mr. Chairman I appreciate again the opportunity to speak at this final session. You have put together an ambitious plan for work through the end of the year. The OSCE and its partners can make a difference in winning this struggle. With our combined resources, our determination, we will meet these challenges. We can do far more together than separately.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.