



United States Mission to the OSCE

Countering Threats to Regional Security

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to Session II of the OSCE-Thailand Conference, Bangkok
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Thank you, Mr. Moderator. I want to thank the government of the Royal Kingdom of Thailand for their work in organizing this conference.

We have heard today about a number of new or emerging threats to security, such as violent extremism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and pandemic diseases.

However, without - and in no way - minimizing these dangers, we should not lose sight of the more traditional as well as ongoing threats to security. Corruption, deficiencies in the rule of law, trafficking in persons and drugs and violations of human rights are all real and continuing problems. Although not as visible or shocking as suicide bombings, they pose serious and significant dangers to the stability of a number of OSCE participating and Partner States.

This is not to say that we should not make a concerted effort to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons or prevent a worldwide avian influenza epidemic. These are extremely important and immediate threats to the security of us all. The United Nations as well as other global organizations devote significant resources to exactly these tasks.

What can - and should - the OSCE focus on? The OSCE has a role to play in dealing with these security threatening issues, primarily as a forum to exchange information and best practices and provide guidance as appropriate.

The OSCE's real contribution to solutions is in dealing with the more low-key threats to stability and security such as corruption, trafficking and violations of human rights.

Over the years, the OSCE has developed a comprehensive acquis to help States deal with such types of security threats. In addition to commitments, Action Plans and the Strategy on Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, best practice guides exist on a number of topics of interest also to the Asian Partners - Small Arms and Light Weapons as anti-corruption measures to name only two.

As past discussions on these issues have shown, the Asian Partners have also developed strategies to deal with similar threats to their security.

Cooperation and exchange of best practices between the OSCE participating States and the Partners for Cooperation should therefore be beneficial to both sides. This fact has been pointed out by a number of speakers today, as well as over the last few years in other meetings.

So why has cooperation between the OSCE and its Partners remained so infrequent and ad hoc? What has prevented us from working together to solve common problems?

Certainly not a lack of ideas - the Report on Outreach presented to the Sofia Ministerial Conference provided an extensive list of ideas for possible joint projects and activities. Previous OSCE-Asian Partner conferences have highlighted a number of topics where cooperation would be both feasible and desirable. And yet, little concerted action has been taken.

As a realistic and yet meaningful first step the OSCE participating States and the Asian Partners should decide upon a short list of priority areas for activities to be undertaken later in 2006 or 2007 - but not later than 2007. Such an approach should also be taken with the Mediterranean Partners. We are all missing the boat if a strengthened relationship fails to become a reality.

The United States sincerely hopes that the decision on the Partnership Fund, which will be discussed at the Prep Comm in Vienna, will help give renewed impetus to our cooperation efforts.

And together, the participating and Partner States should probably be looking ahead to a time when the big OSCE salmon in Vienna spawns Asia's own OSCE as well as those on other continents.

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.