



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement in Response to LTG James Duttan, Deputy ISAF Commander

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Carol Fuller
to the Joint FSC-Permanent Council, Vienna
October 14, 2009

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On behalf of the United States delegation, I would like to thank LTG Duttan for his comprehensive report on the status of ISAF activities in Afghanistan. The U.S. believes strongly that the International Security Assistance Force's (ISAF) efforts to provide security for Afghanistan's citizens against the Taliban and al-Qaeda also helps defend citizens in all OSCE participating and Partner States. We also believe the OSCE has a role in this regard to complement and support NATO and ISAF activities in Afghanistan.

What we mean by this is that while NATO and ISAF have a firm hand on providing for hard security in Afghanistan, we believe the OSCE could provide complementary added value in tackling some of Afghanistan's other security issues through border security, customs, counterterrorism, and other law enforcement assistance programs, as proposed by the OSCE Secretariat and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

In 2008, the United States strongly backed the implementation of OSCE projects 15A and 16, which were aimed at training and mentoring Afghanistan border and customs personnel in northern Afghanistan. Unfortunately, as a result of the objections by one participating State, we have not yet been able to implement those needed projects.

We look forward to constructive dialogue – as actually in the Corfu Process – to help us move forward in this important area.

The United States will continue to support increased efforts to train, equip, and mentor border security, customs and law enforcement personnel in Afghanistan. Such efforts can help strengthen Afghanistan's regional identity within Central Asia and contribute to enhanced regional cooperation. Assisting Afghanistan to better secure its borders has the secondary effect of also bolstering the border security of European, Eurasian, and the North Atlantic OSCE participating States, and the provision of border security technical assistance to Afghanistan is consistent with the OSCE multidimensional, comprehensive approach to security.

General Duttan's presentation has shown quite clearly how needed this assistance is. I particularly note his comment that "armies are good at building armies, but they are not good at building police forces".

In our view, when coordinated closely with ongoing border security activities in Afghanistan carried out by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Organization for Migration, as well as bilateral donors, OSCE border security projects could help improve Afghanistan's capacity to:

- Interdict narcotics;
- Thwart illegal trafficking of peoples and illicit goods;
- Interdict material support for terrorist operations;

- Coordinate with NATO and other international actors; and
- Support the full implementation of UNSCR 1540 regarding the interdiction of possible trans-shipment of Weapons of Mass Destruction, related materials, or precursors through Afghanistan.

Attacks perpetrated by al-Qaeda and its violent extremist affiliates in Great Britain, Spain, the United States, Russia, and attempted terrorist attacks in Germany have demonstrated the vulnerability of borders within the OSCE region. Increased support for improving Afghanistan's ability to better police its borders can enhance Afghanistan's security, promote regional stability, and also provide important security benefits to all OSCE participating States and Partners.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.