

Statement by the United States
Opening Session – OSCE Follow-up Public-Private Partnership Conference:
“Partnership of State Authorities, Civil Society and the Business Community
in Combating Terrorism”
September 15, 2008, 10:30 a.m., Vienna

Distinguished representatives, thank you for attending this important meeting and special welcome to the participants and panelists from the business community, civil society, and academia, as well as from OSCE participating and Partner state governments. I also want to offer my gratitude to the Finnish Chairman-in-Office, OSCE Secretary General, and OSCE Secretariat (in particular the Action against Terrorism Unit and the head of the ATU, Mr. Raphael Perl) for their strong leadership in organizing this important event.

Fighting terrorism requires global strategies, as well as regional, national, and local implementation. Just a few weeks ago, the United States was pleased to support the United Nation’s General Assembly’s review and renewal of its Global Counterterrorism Strategy, which encourages non-governmental organizations and civil society to engage – as appropriate – in implementation efforts. Multilateral and regional cooperation, exemplified by the work of the OSCE, is critically important. Over the past two years, in the OSCE and other venues, the United States, together with many other states represented here today, has worked to highlight the importance of private sector engagement in the fight against terrorism. While governments have the primary role in defeating terrorism, businesses, NGOs, and educational institutions also play a vital role.

Governments can use all the tools of statecraft – including diplomacy, law enforcement, and military operations to eliminate terrorist safe havens and bring terrorists to justice. But this is not enough to succeed in the fight against terrorism. Because terrorists are generally non-state actors who thrive among disaffected populations, private sector efforts are also as important as government activity. Youth organizations, educational institutions, businesses, women’s groups, and development initiatives can all play a role. In Europe, for example, the private sector is supplementing government efforts to create jobs for new immigrants, helping them learn languages and finding and training imams who speak European languages. We need to expand upon these projects, seeking even better ways to engage and empower the very same population that is being targeted by the terrorist leaders as recruits.

We also need the assistance of the private sector to promote economic development and provide employment opportunities for isolated and disaffected people. The private sector can help generate change quickly by creating jobs for minority communities and developing targeted mentoring programs that use the power of information to connect with local populations. The business community helps to extend the rule of law by demanding improvements or reforms in the legal infrastructure that underpins business. Such private sector efforts can empower individuals and limit the ability of terrorists to exploit political, economic, and social weaknesses that aid in radicalization and recruitment.

We hope this conference will raise awareness of the need for public-private partnerships to counter radicalization and recruitment and foster the development of concrete, follow-on initiatives. We also hope that it can highlight successes for creating new partnerships and strengthening existing ones.

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, cooperative multilateral efforts between the U.S. and others have produced genuine improvements in securing borders and transportation, enhancing travel document security, disrupting terrorist financing networks, and restricting the movement of terrorists. At the same time, however, terrorists have adapted to our successes. Moreover, there is a growing threat of violent extremism and radicalization of youth, immigrant, and alienated populations. Evidence shows that terrorists manipulate grievances – whether real or perceived – to subvert legitimate authority and create unrest. Terrorist groups convert alienated or aggrieved populations to extremist viewpoints and turn them, in stages, into sympathizers, supporters, and ultimately, members.

There is also increasing overlap between terrorist and criminal enterprises. In many cases, terrorists use the same networks as transnational criminal groups to improve mobility, build support for their agenda, and avoid detection. The United States, together with our partners, is seeking to create a global environment that is inhospitable to terrorism. Our strategy to defeat terrorism operates at four levels: global, regional, national, and local.

We can no longer assume that every state can effectively control and respond to threats emerging from its territory. We cannot afford to assume that weak and poorly governed states are problematic solely for their own people or for international humanitarian efforts. Technology has eliminated the distances that once clearly separated us across land and sea.

We must attack all three aspects of the terrorist threat simultaneously: leadership, safe havens, and the conditions that terrorists exploit. The lack of political choice, rule of law and economic opportunities are factors that terrorists exploit to spread their radical ideologies.

To combat the multi-layered, polymorphous terrorist threat, we must work together to build trusted networks among our governments, businesses, private citizens, organizations, and multilateral institutions like the OSCE. We must use and integrate all the tools at our disposal to disaggregate – that is, break down – terrorist networks and interrupt their systems of communication, recruitment and radicalization, training, intelligence, and financing. While breaking these links does not remove the threat, it helps reduce its scope.

Successful public-private partnerships displace and isolate terrorist efforts; they discredit the terrorist ideology, and empower alternatives to extremism. By addressing the isolation and desperation that terrorists exploit for their own benefit, economic empowerment will strike directly at terrorist recruitment efforts. Over time, public-private partnerships can help wean at-risk populations away from subversive manipulation by creating mechanisms to address needs and grievances. With a brighter economic future and legitimate channels for airing grievances, these trusted networks can provide a way out for those who are radicalized.

Now let me talk about how the U.S. has applied this approach by sharing a few examples of successful public-private partnerships that we have created. We will, of course, hear numerous more examples over the next two days.

The State Department's Economic Empowerment in Strategic Regions (EESR) initiative focuses its efforts on job creation by helping entrepreneurs, one proposal at a time. EESR is an inter-agency U.S. government initiative that sources, develops and markets business proposals from regions where a lack of economic opportunity exacerbates conflict or fuels extremism. This program was launched just this year, and currently has 25 proposals from Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. EESR doesn't fund projects, but complements U.S. foreign assistance by helping local businessmen and women develop their business ideas and market them to potential partners and investors. Teams of volunteer MBA students help draft business proposals and identify their needs. Once complete, proposals are posted on the web and distributed through targeted marketing. Working by phone and email, and without leaving their dorm rooms, these MBA students are already helping entrepreneurs 5,000 miles away. By leveraging the simple power of the internet, EESR is a new platform for entrepreneurs in conflict regions to access the

full range of potential private and public sector partners. Building out this network and supporting local businesses is simply an additional tool to combat the economic frustration so frequently exploited by terrorist groups.

The State Department's Office of the Counterterrorism Coordinator has developed the Public-Private Partnership Strategic Empowerment Initiative (SEI) to inject resources into a wide array of programs associated with our counterterrorism agenda. The SEI is dedicated to holistically combating the underlying causes of terrorism by aligning the interests of the multinational corporations, academic institutions, NGO's and USG entities to address the drivers of radicalization in focused areas of the globe.

In addition to economic empowerment, the U.S. is committed to freedom of the media as a method of correcting terrorist misinformation. The Edward R. Murrow Journalism Program is a specialized exchange program that encourages dialogue between international and American journalists. Approximately 200 international media professionals are brought to the United States each year to participate in programming, first in Washington, D.C., and then at one of the 12 partner journalism schools. An active and independent media serves a critical role in combating the spread of terrorist propaganda to disaffected populations.

In addition, several public-private partnerships have been launched with the specific goal of educating and promoting women in business. In one example, Microsoft and the International Institute for Education are currently training 1,000 women in the United Arab Emirates in information technology. The U.S. also started the Fortune Women's Entrepreneurship Initiative, which brings female business leaders from around the world to America to work with America's most powerful and influential female executives at Fortune 500 companies. In 2007, American women went to the Middle East as part of the Women Business Leaders Summit in Jordan to facilitate connections between American and Middle Eastern business communities. These programs are improving the lives of women in the region while also disrupting terrorist efforts to radicalize the population.

Public outreach and engagement initiatives with American Arab, Muslim, Sikh, South Asian, and other communities play a major role in the USG's mission to protect America while preserving our freedoms. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff is thoroughly engaged in this effort on domestic and international levels through outreach to community leaders, visits to mosques, and high-profile public appearances extolling the role of Muslims in American public life. The Department of Homeland Security has partnered with key domestic cities

like Washington, D.C., Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Houston to develop outreach initiatives that serve as a basis for dialogue and redress for individuals concerned about their rights as Americans. Recognizing the potential vulnerability of Arab, Muslim, Sikh, Middle Eastern and South Asian communities following future terrorist acts or homeland security incidents, the USG has created an “Incident Community Coordination Team” to enhance dialogue between officials and community leaders. Following a terrorist attack or security incident, the team can provide timely information to the leaders while in turn receiving information on the response of the communities. It has already been activated in response to the London plot arrests of August 2006 and the JFK airport plot arrests in June 2007.

The Department of the Treasury works domestically with Arab-Muslim communities and with the governments of Muslim countries to disrupt terrorist financing networks and promote economic development in at-risk regions. Terrorist organizations often use charitable organizations in order to raise and move funds, provide logistical support, encourage recruitment or otherwise cultivate support for their operations. In line with the Financial Action Task Force’s Special Recommendation VIII, the USG has adopted an integrated strategy to combat terrorist exploitation of charities to include: enhancing transparency of the charitable sector through coordinated oversight, protecting the charitable sector through targeted enforcement actions, raising awareness of the terrorist financing threat, and multilateralizing our efforts through international engagement. Internationally, the USG has instituted the U.S.-Middle East and North Africa Private Sector Dialogue. This dialogue, which links the banking and regulatory communities from the U.S. with the region, focuses on addressing ongoing implementation challenges for effective anti-money laundering, combating terrorist financing controls in the banking sector. Improvements will pave the way for further business development and commercial relationships. Our interaction supports Muslim moderates and allows us to build relationships with organizations like the Arab Bankers Association of North America.

All of these examples are partnerships that build networks of allies – state, non-state, and multilateral – that support the rule of law and work to alleviate the conditions that terrorists exploit. In practical terms, our most important task is not the “destructive” task of eradicating enemy networks, but the enduring “constructive” task of building economically stable and prosperous societies that display good governance, transparency, and rule of law.

The U.S. deeply values its participation in the OSCE and appreciates the important work we have done collectively to combat terrorism through dialogue and confidence-building measures, as well as practical, capacity-building activities. My government looks forward to working productively with all of you. This conference should not be the end of our efforts, but rather serve as a catalyst to further concrete, working-level efforts that will advance our shared security goals.

Thank you.