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Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe

At the request of the Delegation of Canada, please find attached the statement by Ambassador Evelyn Puxley at the Plenary Session of the First Annual Security Review Conference, June 25, 2003.

**Canadian Delegation to the OSCE
Statement by Ambassador Evelyn Puxley
Plenary Session of the First Annual Security Review Conference
25 June 2003**

Mr. Chairman,

“Responding to change”: This was the theme of our Porto Ministerial Declaration. We agreed to reinforce the effectiveness of security-related activities in the OSCE, and to establish an Annual Security Review Conference.

The ASRC provides a framework for enhancing security dialogue, and Canada welcomes this opportunity to not only take stock of our past initiatives, but also to use and, as necessary, improve the tools available to develop a clear path forward.

The results of our deliberations over the next two days should also help us in making a substantial contribution to the OSCE’s Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century, an important task to be completed for the Maastricht Ministerial.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to refer briefly to the joint Russian-American paper which helped launch this Conference, and which to my mind, sums up the challenges the OSCE faces more generally and at this first Annual Security Review Conference.

“The complex nature of the (security) threats requires a comprehensive, cross-sectional response based on unprecedented levels of cooperation. Drawing strength from our diversity we shall meet these challenges together, through the OSCE in partnership with other international organizations.”

On cross-sectional approaches: The Netherlands Chair has rightly underlined the need to bring about a better geographic balance and a better balance among the three OSCE dimensions. In the view of my Delegation, this does not mean trading one OSCE basket for another – an approach appropriate only to a bygone era of confrontation between East and West. It means devoting appropriate resources and attention to the security challenges we face across the OSCE region, including by using the instruments usually associated with the first dimension.

But it also means better integrating our three OSCE dimensions. For example, security sector reform – the better to confront trans-national and cross-border threats – is not so much about improving equipment but improving regional cooperation, ensuring the internal accountability of security forces to civilian leadership, and ensuring that in undertaking security tasks, these forces respect human rights.

On partnership and diversity: If the OSCE is to be effective in meeting the security challenges of the 21st century, it must adapt to changes in the current security environment. Enlargement of security organizations and institutions is bound to have an impact on what we have done here and what we continue to do. We need to look seriously at what would be the best way forward, taking into account the limited resources available.

But as I have said before in Council and repeat again today, we should not be too modest about the OSCE's capabilities, or too eager to leave to other organizations to which some of our participating States belong – organizations without our track record, or our unique Institutions, or our field operations – to leave them to do what can best be done here. Yes, we must reinforce our links with other international organizations, such as the UN, the European Union, NATO, CIS.

But my Delegation considers that the OSCE is well-placed – and this is linked to our comprehensive concept of security and our inclusive membership – to address typically 21st century security challenges through attention to such issues as trafficking, policing, border security, and most particularly, counter-terrorism.

We affirm that combating terrorism should continue to feature prominently on the OSCE agenda. In this Organization, we have gone beyond condemnation of acts of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable, to concrete, action-oriented strategy. It is important to continue this momentum.

In this context, Canada strongly supports the efforts to follow-up and implement our counter-terrorism commitments. Canadian experts have participated in a number of OSCE-sponsored legislative assistance workshops, most recently in Baku and Bishtek. We believe that hands-on assistance is the best way to ensure that all OSCE states enjoy equal capacity to respond to the challenges of the fight against terrorism.

We should continue our efforts to enhance the peace dividend which has been secured in the OSCE region through the conventional arms control treaties and confidence and security building measures which this Organization conceived. We need to continue to improve follow-up and implementation of the various tools at our disposal and provide assistance to those OSCE participating States which are not fully engaged in them. In addition, each participating State is challenged to assess the extent to which these tools continue to meet evolving security needs. Canada has indeed started its own national reflection on many of these issues and encourages others to do the same, particularly in light of the various upcoming review conferences.

Mr. Chairman,

Building on the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in which Canada has taken keen interest since its inception, we must also ensure that terrorists are denied access to SALW, including man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS), a focus of the recent G8 meeting under French Chairmanship in Evian. We look forward to further discussion within the FSC on achieving this goal.

Finally, we agree with those who have stressed the importance of improving intra-OSCE coordination – between our field operations, Institutions and Vienna, as well as between the PC and FSC – as key to future success.

We hope that the next two days will lead to similarly concrete recommendations on the way forward, as we anticipate on the MANPADS issue.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.