

Austrian Delegation

ENGLISH only

**Annual Security Review Conference
Working Group A (Preventing and Combating terrorism)**

Speaking Notes of the Austrian Delegation (W. Ehrlich)

As most of the positive arguments have been used in our brainstorming by previous speakers - the proposals of which this delegation can largely support – some critical questions might be useful to remind us that much remains to be done. ”

One basic question is : Can we really be proud of our achievements - as indicated in by one of the keynote speakers?.

What is the picture if we try to look on both sides of the medal ?

On our side :

Much has been done: A huge effort to raise and co ordinate international support for the “War against Terrorism”, massive spending on security, intelligence, military build up, on awareness, international co-operation etc. took place.

A panoply of decisions, documents recommendations etc. have been adopted by international organisations such as the UN, the OSCE, as well as by States, more than 3000 suspects have been arrested.

However neither has the Al Kaida movement been destroyed nor has terrorism been drastically reduced.

On the side of the terrorists:

With very limited means : a group of dedicated man and a couple of pocket knives – much has been achieved:

- They perpetrated the most terrible terrorist attack in recent history, killing more than 3000 people
- They succeeded to attack the symbols of power of the strongest country on earth – and to make the first attack on US mainland since the beginning of the 19th. century)
- They have inaugurated a new “post 9/1 era” in international relations by provoking
 - a formal declaration of war by a State against a non state actor and the first application of Article 5 by NATO
 - a dramatic shift in the international security system (new priorities and rules, adaptation of defence strategies of several countries with respect to pre-emptive action etc.
 - international military actions against Afghanistan and Iraq
 - a panoply of costly security measures, which dent the traditional “Western” freedoms, like air traffic, tourism, freedom of press, privacy etc
 - hundreds of millions of “Westerners” to live in a permanent state of alert and insecurity.

Having this “balance” in mind there is not too much reason for satisfaction.

Therefore it might be reasonable complement the main attitude: to further increase existing measures and implement existing documents – by considering a **new approach in some aspects**

1. A more differentiated approach towards terrorism:

Terrorism is too often addressed in a generic way, as if it would be a unified monolithic movement.

As a matter of fact there is not one single kind terrorism but several forms which differ substantially : by their motivation, their targets and their aims:

There is hardly any community in the purpose and aims between e. g. the IRA, ETA and Al Kaida – except that they use similar forms of combat: terrorism!

Only bad doctors use the same pill against all forms of fever: therefore each individual form of terrorism has to be studied in order to use “measure made tools” to eliminate them one by one in a definitive way: I.e. form the roots.

2. An intensified analysis of the aims and causes of different forms of terrorism:

Present measures are mostly of a general nature aiming to address general infrastructures used by terrorists for their financing, procurement with weapons communications etc. This is indeed of great importance.

It can however hardly eliminate terrorism:

- No net is tight enough to eliminate international crime and transfer of money and weapons
- Most importantly: As 9/11 shows, many well intended efforts go in the wrong direction: The most terrible crime has been committed with the simplest weapons and has escaped existing sophisticated means of detection and defence!

The Aims of terrorist action need more attention: they should be analysed for each of the individual terrorisms

The targets - speaking for themselves - and the declared purpose of terrorist attacks give essential indications for the assessment of the aims and on possible future targets which allows to delimitate the scope of future threats. E.g. ETA or IRA will hardly attack US troops .

This analysis is particularly necessary for the terrorism of Al Kaida – which has become the synonym for international terrorism- in order to delimitate in an realistic way existing threat scenarios and avoid generalized and permanent alerts which could lead to loss of attention and credibility.

The causes of terrorist action need equally more analysis – in order to be able to eliminate – to the extent possible - the individual basis of different terrorist movements:

Terrorism as a complex phenomenon which needs a “critical mass” of combined circumstances to go to action, such as a charismatic leadership, a “desperate situation” , a dedicated core group, a large group of sympathisers/ supporters which are strongly motivated – often by understandable concerns - who see no other way to assure their interests.

Priority should be given to analysing the immediate causes and the effective reasons to act in a terrorist way and the motivation of the supporters– be it based on claims of denial of basic political, religious, ethnical, human rights , legal or other reasons.

Those immediate causes should be addressed by trying to eliminate – to the extent possible - justified concerns such as real political, religious, ethnic, economic discrimination etc. in order to take away the motivation for support and separate the radical terrorist leadership from their supporting basis

Secondary - but essential for a long term preventive action - are more remote root causes such as lack of democracy, of education or State authority, or economic and social degradation, poverty etc. which create an environment where terrorists can use existing deprivation and despair to present themselves as the only alternative and get followers, support and cover. Those causes should also be addressed in the framework of a comprehensive long term strategy including development assistance human rights education etc.etc.

The task is therefore to find the right balance between investing in more security equipment – which can easily be outwitted – or investing in better analysis and prevention:

Investment in preventive analysis and action – as in medicine! - is highly recommendable: :

- Based on an analysis of the aims and causes the scope and targets of future terrorist action can be better assessed.
- By addressing in a timely manner emerging tensions and situations which might lead to terrorist action and
- Addressing social political and humanitarian deficiencies, which might be abused by terrorists at a later stage.

1. Address the most dangerous form of terrorism: the one aiming at the use of WMD!

The danger of this form of terrorism has been underlined repeatedly and was one of the main reasons for adapting security doctrines and for military action in Iraq.

It is therefore surprising that no coordinated action has been undertaken to develop efficient tools against this danger.

I would therefore like to suggest that this essential question should be addressed in the framework of the FSC in the near future. Together with other delegations we are considering to make a proposal on this subject.

2. As a last point I would like to draw the attention to something that could be called the **Hydra Phenomenon**” The Hydra was a multi-headed men-eating animal

in the ancient Greek mythology characterized by the fact that for each head cut off two new ones grew.

In the fight against terrorism something similar could happen: A strong reaction to terrorism provokes a strong counter – reaction which might lead to a vicious circle which haunts now a country in the near east.

Therefore more considerations should be given to analyse the effects of anti-terrorist measures: Responding to violence with violence might not always be the best solution.

This aspect might be described by a metaphor of growing grass: The more we cut it, the stronger it grows, but if you cut the water (the causes) the grass dies.