Plenary II: "Reforming the Security Sector in the Age of Terrorism"

Moderator:
Ambassador Dr. Theodor H. Winkler, Director, Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Switzerland

Presenters:
Professor Rohan Gunaratna, Head, International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research,
Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies,
Singapore

Dr. Andrzej Karkoszka, Director of the Polish Strategic Defense Review, Ministry of
Defense, Poland

Overview

In the second plenary, Professor Rohan Gunaratna helped the conference readdress the definition of terrorism and made an assessment of how flawed some models of dealing with terrorism may be in practice. He went on to address three main points: how the terrorist threat has evolved in the past three years; how the terrorist threat should be addressed; and the specific terrorist threats the United States, Europe, and indeed the world will face in the next decade. Dr. Andrzej Karkoszka furthered the discussion by enumerating some of the primary factors driving security sector reform, only one of which is terrorism. He also suggested that, due to the disparate states of security, economic, and political development of the NATO members and the members of its ancillary organizations, that there was certainly no single model or timetable that can be prescribed to adapt a nation's security structure to meet the challenges of terrorism.

Moderation: Ambassador Dr. Theodor H. Winkler, Director, Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Switzerland

Ambassador Winkler noted that this was a repeat performance for both Professor Gunaratna and Dr. Karkoszka, as they had both presented at a panel moderated by Ambassador Winkler at the 7th Annual Partnership for Peace (PfP) Conference in Bucharest. However, since that time many things have changed (and a book has been published), so one could compare what the speakers said on the topic last year to their comments now.

Professor Rohan Gunaratna, Head, International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies, Singapore

Professor Gunaratna addressed three main points: how the terrorist threat has evolved in the past three years; how the terrorist threat should be addressed; and the specific terrorist threats the United States, Europe, and indeed the world will face in the next decade.

Al Qaeda has evolved from a small group of three or four thousand members to a global jihadist movement made up of thirty to forty separate and loosely connected groups. The common thread is that members of the groups all received training in camps in Afghanistan after the Soviets were defeated and until coalition forces defeated the Taliban in 2002. Today, members of these groups have dispersed from Afghanistan to virtually every corner of the world.

Al Qaeda has suffered since its defeat in Afghanistan, but remains a formidable foe, and the "Global Jihad" movement persists. Prior to the events of 9/11, Al Qaeda was able to launch one major attack a year, but now is unable to do so. Nevertheless, the rate of major attacks has increased, because other like-minded groups have become more active. Not only is

America at risk: the French in Pakistan; Australians in Indonesia; Italians in Iraq; Russians in Chechnya; Spaniards in Spain; the British in the U.K.; and Germans in Tunisia have also been attacked.

Counter-intelligence efforts led by the United States have reduced Al Qaeda's ability to organize and to launch major operations. However, new groups are emerging, such as Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's organization in Iraq, which came to prominence in late 2004. In fact, Zarqawi's group changed its name to "Qaidat al Jihad Bilad al-Rafidayn" (Al Qaeda in the Land of the Two Rivers), and set up training camps near the Iranian border. Zarqawi's group has built a state-of-the-art network, and has spread it effectively throughout Europe. These networks are recruiting Muslims living in European countries to participate in the global Islamic jihad.

The main concern is that those Muslims who have been recruited to go to Iraq are learning skills such as how to make and use car bombs and sophisticated improvised explosive devices. Iraq is the new training ground for terrorists, much as Afghanistan was the training ground for the international fighters who helped the Afghans defeat the Soviets. My concern is that American and European Muslims will learn terrorist tradecraft while fighting in Iraq, then return to their homes and use what they learned there.

Europe and the United States face a threat from North African groups whose interests are similar to those of Al Qaeda and are receiving training in Iraq. These groups have moved south to the Pan Saharan region, where they receive logistical support. These groups will be serious threats to the West for a long time to come.

There has been some success in hindering terrorist activity—the immediate threat—particularly because of successful cooperative law enforcement and intelligence operations. Heightened public awareness and the change in strategy to hunt terrorists "preemptively" have also contributed to reducing the threat. The key is to be a hunter, not a fisherman.

Fishermen set the bait and wait for the terrorists to come, whereas hunters go after the terrorists before they can do harm. But the United States and Europe may not be doing enough to stop the intermediate and long-term threats that originate in regional conflict zones and failed states, which are the breeding grounds for terrorists and the source of terrorist regeneration.

The "decapitation" model, currently preferred in the West, will not work. Simply put, you can't kill them all. In addition to focusing on detecting and preempting terrorist operations, the West must develop a more holistic approach. Counterterror centers in the West are too focused on the terminal or operational stage. They need to focus more on the initial stages of terror—i.e., the process of radicalization, which is largely supported through propaganda. The focus should also be on the pre-operational stages (recruitment, training, planning, and rehearsals), and should address other dimensions of terrorism, such as the need for more counterterror specialists, the need for conflict resolution specialists, and the need to understand the non-military aspects of countering terrorism.

The West also needs to stop being so "politically correct." For example, Canadians and Europeans have neglected to stop radical imams because of religious tolerance issues. Unfortunately, these imams have radicalized a large number of Muslim youth, who are now capable—at least intellectually—of carrying out terrorist acts.

The six most prominent terrorist regions are: the frontier areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan; Kashmir; the Philippines and Indonesia; Uzbekistan and Tajikistan; Yemen and Saudi Arabia; and the Horn of Africa. Asian terrorist groups are becoming more active, and will probably account for 50 percent of worldwide terror attacks in the next ten years. Groups in the Persian Gulf region will continue to be active too; 60 percent of the foreign jihadists fighting in Iraq are from Saudi Arabia and Iraq. The new generations of terrorists generated in these regions will be more formidable than their predecessors for three reasons: they are better networked, they are more willing to put

aside their internal differences and work together, and are more willing to use weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

In conclusion, I would challenge this audience to develop a multi-pronged, multi-jurisdictional, multi-national effort to combat terrorism. Partnerships such as NATO and the PfP must work together to counter the global, networked terrorist threat.

Dr. Andrzej Karkoszka, Director of the Polish Strategic Defense Review, Ministry of Defense, Poland

Dr. Karkoszka's comments placed terrorism in the framework of the post-Cold War security environment. He stressed that we now face significant, multi-dimensional challenges, and that terrorism must be considered in the context of many other security challenges.

There is no one single way of reforming the international security sector. After all, PfP includes a much larger variety of members than ever before. We have old members of NATO, new members of NATO, Membership Action Plan (MAP) states, partner states that aspire to NATO membership, partners who do not have such aspirations, Mediterranean dialogue states, and the initiative covering the Gulf states. We are now covering an enormous variety of security sectors, in completely different stages of development, in terms of economics, law or legal norms, and institutions. These states operate under different conditions, have different security requirements, and are under completely different social and political pressures to change, both internally and externally.

We are observing a comprehensive, multifaceted, complex phenomenon of dynamic change across Europe, in Asian territories, and to some extent in the world as a whole. This is caused by several factors; among them—and recently the most significant among them—is the terrorist threat. Terrorism only adds to all those factors already in existence that are currently acting on our security sectors.

These factors of change are very different in substance, and change over time. In the early 1990s, the first, and still most important factor was the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union. We had enormously superfluous military capabilities—in numbers, in material, and in orientation, being too offensive on one side and too defensive on the other. Hence, early on, the main change in the security structures in much of the world was the reduction of capabilities and the push take advantage of the peace dividend. The other finding of this time was that many nations had inadequate postures and doctrines in light of the new security environment. They were too antagonistic, too offensive, and thus they had to change to fit into the cooperative security framework that emerged after the Paris and Rome Conferences and the announcement of the Partnership in 1994. The forces that epitomized that era were too heavy, too static, and too territorial.

The next factor is that we also had a new threat during those times: the threat of internal instability around us—specifically in the post-Soviet and Yugoslav territories—requiring completely new international mechanisms in terms of new international structures and new norms. We had to face the problem of getting entangled in the internal developments of other states, develop new norms for the use of force and for human rights as a primary goal of the international community, and confront the challenges posed by new international borders, movements of national self-determination, and the succession of states.

We became more involved in peace-keeping and peace-making, so that we were able to function in the international framework of institutions such as the UN, OSCE, NATO, and the EU by stepping into these problematic situations, at least in military terms. The necessary adaptations of this post-Cold War era are still not finished, as Poland is still fighting against some of the same liabilities of this period in our military and other structures.

The second factor that appeared in the mid 1990s was the drive toward greater integration, or the urge to join the affluent and secure club of states. The reason for this was the belief that membership in organizations such as NATO, the EU, and OSCE was a way of avoiding the "gray zone" in terms of security. With this came a number of consequences for the countries involved, especially in civil-military relationships, and the imposition of democratic control over the security sector. Joining these formal institutions opened the way for other, more substantive, less formal, and more comprehensive forms of integration with those affluent and secure countries.

The third factor is the need to rationalize security sector reform. Again, this came about in the mid 1990s, still exists with us today, and will be with us for a long while. This need for rationalization centered on a need for efficiency in all aspects of the sector, including financial, military, and administrative areas, as well as the need to make the structure of the security sector more adequate to meet existing security needs. States need new norms and procedures for planning and implementing certain new measures, new democratic institutions, and new relationships between different elements of the security sector. This includes new models of education, new ways of working with the media, and so on.

Fourth, toward the end of the 1990s there was a drive for modernization—not necessarily just in research and development—but rather a push to catch up with modern military technologies. So there was a shift in the overall direction of technological efforts away from firepower, heavy platforms, and dedicated C^3 systems toward more effect-oriented systems that addressed battle awareness, information, and decision-making supremacy on the battlefield. Thus we are moving from threat-based structures to more capability-based structures and systems.

Fifth is the need to respond to new threats, which is the real substance of the matter, and there are many of these new threats beyond just terrorism. These new threats include

organized crime, the fall of weak states, the proliferation of WMD, and the fragility of national critical infrastructures. Each one of these, while connected to the others in certain ways, calls for very specific responses. Thus, our security assessment and response must be concentrated on all of them at the same time.

There are some general observations that can be made on the structural responses to these new threats. First is the decline in the importance of military force, relative to the other elements of the security sector. There is a new paradigm of security, which is not necessarily confined to the defense of the state or the protection of its territory or its boundaries, but instead includes crisis management and response. This is the fastest-growing network of institutions in our security sector.

We are also observing the blurring of the line between local and national responses and external international responses. Security challenges today are often defused or defended far from home, so we are now faced with a worldwide security battlefield. With this comes a growing interaction with the security sectors of our allies. This international cooperation is indispensable, and hence we have seen the transformation of NATO or EU attitudes toward crisis response.

There is also the blurring of the line between *strategic* and *tactical*, which is very important, especially for the military. This includes the integration of national security sectors, which is best epitomized by the notion of homeland security systems that call for the redefinition of legal norms, institutions, and the reallocation of attention, money, and technical measures. To be successful, this integration must take place across the full spectrum of crisis management systems, from border guards, to police, to civil protection response units, to fire brigades, to security services, to local and central civil administration, and finally to international organizations. And in our intelligence agencies we need more cohesive missions, exchanges of information, formatting, tagging, analyzing, and fusion of data.

Specifically with regard to terrorism, our understanding of the threat and its sources is inadequate. As Dr. Gunaratna

stated, there is a problem in our definition of terrorism, because it is too sweeping. There are also the problems of discerning between causes and consequences, the problem of interactions between organized crime and terrorist groups, and other elements of a worldwide network. Among the partner nations, there is also a varied level of awareness of the threat and of the lack of a cohesive approach by the international community. There is difficulty in persuading the public, decision makers, and political elites that it is necessary to abandon old assumptions and stereotypes of threat perception and to adopt new ones that will lead to change. There is also inadequate resolve. We need resources, and there are too many "free riders" on this journey. There is also a lack of clarity regarding the depth of change required. A very delicate balance must be struck in all our countries between the classical threat response—which we still have in many of our security structures, such as the police, border guards and so on—and an investment in new approaches, new procedures, and new capabilities. There are a multitude of demands—from new weapon systems, new platforms, new logistical capabilities, long-range transformation, multiple communication systems, individual soldier gear, international reconnaissance targeting, C^3 systems, and so on—all of which must be balanced against very limited resources, which are getting constantly smaller.

So what is the priority? We cannot aim at a comprehensive solution against the entire front. This would be impossible for our budgets. There is what can be called the "U.S. syndrome"—that is, acting with all available potential toward change in international systems or in other countries in the name of the campaign against terrorism, but being unable to sustain the desired process of nation-building. There are many reasons for this problem, and this is a lesson that we must learn from the experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan. We can obtain the immediate goal, but the strategic, long-term goals of nation-building are not being fulfilled.

Ambassador Dr. Theodor H. Winkler, Director, Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Switzerland

Ambassador Winkler followed the two presentations with some remarks of his own regarding the nature of the new security environment.

We face a serious asymmetric threat by which we are attacked where we are weakest, but not attacked where we are prepared. Such a threat requires a full-spectrum response, as a response only by military means would be courting failure. We are challenged not only within the armed forces, but also within the entire security sector: border guards, police, intelligence agencies, homeland defense, and drug enforcement agencies. This is a threat discussed not only in forums such as this, but also in the UN, as seen by Kofi Annan's recent report on reform, in which he makes a clear identification of the triangle between democracy, defense/security, and development and post-conflict reconstruction. It is within this triangle that the game will be played. You cannot separate development from security; there is no point in digging wells if someone is poisoning those wells.

The new security challenge requires more than just the armed forces; it requires the interaction of all aspects of the security sector. Fusion of intelligence assets is of course an important part of this, but it still goes further. If we don't have the entire security sector involved, there is no exit strategy, so we will always have troops on the ground. If we want to cope with the problems posed by this new and very dangerous threat, we need to look at the issue in a different way. We need to see conflict prevention, war fighting, and post-conflict situations as part of a continuum. We cannot artificially separate these aspects and assign them to different actors, and just leave it to chance that a solution will arise. We need a holistic approach, which must begin at the planning stage of operations, not once the operation is conducted. We need an approach that fuses all aspects of our security sectors as part of our doctrines.

As it is not possible to continue in the old ways, we must adapt military doctrine and transform it into a security doctrine. This also implies changes in our training, since things that we do not train, we do not master. This must go beyond merely the military academies; this debate must also include the academies of the other institutions that make up our security sector: border guards, police, intelligence, etc. The Consortium could play a major role in this enterprise as one of the few organizations in the world that brings together individuals that otherwise would probably not meet. We should pursue this strategy and bring in an even broader variety of expertise to this gathering.