



**OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President
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Parliamentary Conference on Combating International Terrorism

St. Petersburg, 28 March 2017

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me first thank you, Madam Speaker Matvienko and the IPA of the Commonwealth of Independent States, for hosting this important conference on combating international terrorism.

There are few issues that strike as deeply to the core of our humanity as the indiscriminate violence carried out against innocent people by terrorists. Wherever this violence strikes, it is a painful reminder of both how fragile life is and how cruel people can be.

Since being elected President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly last July, I have issued statements of condemnation and condolences regarding terrorist attacks carried out across the OSCE area – from North America to Europe to Asia, including just last week condemning the attack at the Parliament building in London.

The questions we keep on asking ourselves are threefold. How do we counter the development of terrorism, the “breeding grounds” for terrorists? The second important question – the one that the ministers of interior and defense primarily are tackling – is: how can we stop terrorists from carrying out these crimes? And the third question is crucially interlinked with the first two questions: how can we do all this without infringing on human rights and fundamental freedoms?

I am afraid, dear colleagues, that there are no simple answers to these questions. However, there are some general principles that I would like to outline. For an effective counter-terrorism strategy a multifaceted and co-ordinated response is urgently needed. This means combining prevention and detection with proactive steps to mitigate the terrorist threat.

We should encourage efforts to detect the movements of terrorists, we should monitor their activities and counter the use of the internet for terrorist recruiting – not to forget the

needed suppression of the financing of terrorism, and improving the security of international transportation.

Yet, only proactive approaches to terrorism will achieve the long-term security we need. We also have to address the conditions that lead to violent extremism and radicalization – these include poverty, political exclusion, lack of rule of law, human rights violations, and religious and ethnic discrimination.

Focusing on a purely militaristic solution to our global challenges is very short-sighted. Therefore we must ensure that the foreign policies of our governments do not inadvertently contribute to emboldening terrorist groups. It has terrible results when weapons fall into the wrong hands or our military strikes harm innocent people.

And, in response to the third crucial question, I think that good governance and democracy, the rule of law and mutual respect between cultures, nations and religions, and last but not least political dialogue are essentials for combatting terrorism.

There is also an environmental aspect to terrorism. Climate change and water shortages can contribute to an uncertain, unstable world where terrorism can thrive.

Against this background, international co-operation in combating terrorism is more important than ever. In times of growing political divides, this should be an issue that brings us together despite whatever differences we may have. We owe it to our populations, to our children and grandchildren to do all that we can to keep them safe and secure.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Solid international parliamentary co-operation is an important tool in combating terrorism. Therefore this conference is very important. And this is why I am pleased that we are joined today by member of the State Duma Nikolay Kovalev who serves in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly as Special Representative on Anti-Terrorism. Today he will be chairing session two on the humanitarian aspects of counter-terrorism.

I look forward to exchanging ideas with you and to continuing the productive co-operation between the IPA of the CIS and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

I conclude with a quote from Albert Einstein. “From the standpoint of daily life,” he said, “there is one thing we know: That we are here for the sake of other men [and women, I might add] – above all for those upon whose smile and well-being our own happiness depends, for the countless unknown souls with whose fate we are connected by a bond of sympathy.”

In that spirit of sympathy and solidarity, let us work together in developing an effective response to this collective scourge of our time.

Thank you!