

REMARKS FOR THE RECORD  
WILLIAM HUDSON  
ACTING DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NEAR  
EASTERN AFFAIRS  
BEFORE THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN  
EUROPE  
JULY 23, 2009

“THE FUTURE OF THE OSCE MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERS FOR  
COOPERATION”

Distinguished Chairmen, Members of the Commission:

I want to thank you for calling this important hearing and for providing us the opportunity to participate in this exchange on engagement of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) with Mediterranean Partners. I also welcome the interest of our partners in participating in this forum with members of the United States' Congress on an issue that is vital to many of our shared interests.

The OSCE's special relationship with the six Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation goes back to the start of the Helsinki Process. The 1975 Helsinki Final Act included a Mediterranean chapter emphasizing the close links between security in Europe and security in the Mediterranean region. This security link has been underscored in subsequent OSCE documents, such as the 1999 Charter for European Security and the 2003 Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the 21st Century. The OSCE participating States have committed themselves to exploring new avenues of cooperation and interaction, as well as to examining the scope for broad exchanges on OSCE norms, principles and commitments.

Through ongoing dialogue and joint activities with the Mediterranean Partners, the OSCE has successfully shared its unique, comprehensive three-dimensional approach to security with the Mediterranean Partners on a number of topics, including:

Confidence and security building measures,

OSCE as a platform for dialogue and the fostering of norms of behavior,

21<sup>st</sup> century threats to security and stability,

Protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms,  
Linkages between the environment and security,  
Media and new technologies, and  
Migration and integration policies.

The annual OSCE Mediterranean Conferences, which are usually hosted by a Partner State, provide the opportunity to exchange views and contribute to further developing the relationship between the OSCE and the Mediterranean Partners. The conferences are also attended by international organizations, parliamentarians, academics and NGOs, leading to a unique cross-fertilization of ideas and recommendations. In fact, a number of very interesting recommendations came out of the 2008 Conference in Amman, including suggestions to promote closer involvement of civil society in counter-terrorism efforts; to address climate change and desertification through regional cooperation; and to support the creation of civil society networks in the Mediterranean region. The United States is very interested in following up on these and other recommendations.

Mediterranean Partners have many opportunities to get involved in the work of the OSCE. In addition to attending and participating in a wide range of OSCE meetings and conferences, they are also invited to send observers to electoral missions of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), who have received training in Warsaw to that end. Thanks to the OSCE's Partnership Fund, we now have increased opportunities for conducting joint projects. The United States has already used this Fund to support two projects, and hopes to be able to contribute more in the future.

We were particularly encouraged by lively discussion at the June 2009 workshop conducted in Vienna on the topic of Media self-regulation. This workshop, which was based on a suggestion made by Egypt, brought together more than 35 experts from the OSCE and Mediterranean regions to discuss challenges and best practices in setting up and promoting self-regulatory mechanisms. Such exchanges provide us with an opportunity to learn and work together to foster security and stability in our countries.

The United States is interested in increasing cooperation with the Mediterranean Partners in all three OSCE dimensions and in hearing Mediterranean perspectives on broader regional issues. We sincerely look forward to engaging with our Partners on issues such as their approach to the reintegration of Iraq into the community of nations and ways to resolve tensions over oil and gas supply and

demand issues in Eastern Europe. The Mediterranean Partner countries are at the crossroads of Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. Their historical and existing ties with other regions have distinctively positioned them to play a key role on issues ranging from regional conflicts, such as in Chad and Sudan, to Middle East peace, migration, terrorism, and more. The Mediterranean Partners have played a positive role in both the regional and world arena and have the potential to make an even greater contribution. We believe the onset of a new U.S. administration offers a new chance to engage in the OSCE Partnership and to intensify and reinforce our relationships in this critical region.

The Obama Administration has shown its willingness to listen and think critically about the United States' foreign policy priorities and objectives. In President Obama's June 4<sup>th</sup> Cairo speech, he said that had "come to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect..." We have seen a promising start to the new administration's engagement with the Mediterranean. Secretary Clinton met with the foreign ministers of Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and other regional allies on the margins of the Gaza Reconstruction Conference in Sharm El Sheikh in March to discuss regional cooperation and other concerns of mutual interest. Special Envoy for Middle East Peace Mitchell subsequently visited the region to solicit their ideas and support for peace. We continue to look for opportunities to engage our North African partners bilaterally and regionally on a wide range of issues, including migration, terrorism, economic cooperation and regional security.

In doing this, we are committed to working with the OSCE, via the Mediterranean Partners as well as other multilateral fora arrangements, to ensure that our efforts with the countries of the region are consistent and mutually-reinforcing. The OSCE participating States and the Mediterranean Partners should work together productively to confront the challenges at hand, and promote security, stability, and individual freedoms throughout the region and throughout the world.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I'm happy to take any questions that you have.