

REMARKS OF MR. ALFRED SCHANDLBAUER, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF
CICTE AT THE NATIONAL POINTS OF CONTACT MEETING

FEBRUARY 25, 2016

Good morning,

My name is Alfred Schandlbauer. I'm currently the CICTE Secretary.

First, I would like to welcome all of you to this, the Fourteenth Meeting of National Points of Contact to CICTE. Thank you all for coming.

You have been invited to participate in this meeting – your meeting -- to exchange views, thoughts, to express your interests, and to provide advice on “how to improve international, regional, and sub-regional cooperation to prevent technology, communications and other mechanisms and resources to be used for incitement, radicalization, recruitment and other support of terrorist acts.

As we are all aware, this is an issue of the utmost importance around the world today, and more intertwined than ever with the scourge of terrorism, and in particular with the phenomenon of foreign fighters and international terrorism.

For further context, I will remind all that in 2014 The UN Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations adopted Res 2178. Resolutions adopted by the Security Council acting under Chapter VII of the Charter are considered binding, in accordance with Article 25 of the Charter.

That resolution establishes or reiterates a series of obligations and responsibilities for member states to carry out in regards to terrorists in general and foreign fighters in particular. More specifically, member states shall:

Prevent the movement of terrorists or terrorist groups by effective border controls or controls on issuance of identity papers and travel documents, and through measures for preventing counterfeiting, forgery or fraudulent use of identity papers and travel documents;

Cooperate in efforts to address the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, including by preventing the radicalization to terrorism and recruitment;

Prevent foreign terrorist fighters from crossing their borders, disrupting and preventing financial support...and developing and implementing prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies; and,

Prevent and suppress the recruiting, organizing, transporting or equipping of individuals who travel to a State other than their State of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, and the financing of their travel and of their activities.

Additionally, that resolution recalls the UN's decision, in Resolution 1373 (2001), also binding, that all member states shall ensure that any person who participates in the financing, planning, preparation on or perpetration of terrorist acts or in supporting terrorist acts is brought to justice;

And further -- and this is especially relevant to our gathering today -- it calls upon Member States to improve international, regional, and sub regional cooperation, including the sharing and adoption of best practices, something I hope we will see today.

So we see what we knew, that states are obliged to act cooperatively when taking national measures to prevent terrorists from exploiting technology, communications and resources to incite support for terrorist acts.

And our aim is the prevention of radicalization and recruitment by developing strategies to counter the violent extremist narrative that can incite terrorist acts. That is a complex and multidisciplinary task that requires every country's cooperation.

If you will permit me a comment: individuals are getting radicalized not just because they display any particular religious characteristics; or because they were born to an area that primarily professes one faith and migrated to other places where that faith is less commonly expressed, causing them to feel culturally, politically or economically isolated; or because they travelled to Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria or other conflict areas.

All of what I've just said happens, of course. But people are also becoming radicalized through social media and other innovative recruitment methods that are accelerating this phenomenon. There is a critical role of the internet and, in particular, social media, in the radicalization and recruitment processes.

Using social media, recruiters and propaganda, terrorist recruiters can micro-target. Some of the most important information about individuals is no longer private. Much is now plastered on message boards or a young boy or girl's Twitter or Facebook feed. Within the last year there has been a shift away from Twitter towards platforms such as Instagram, Google+ and Snapchat.

Purely web-driven, individual radicalization cases are numerous. In other cases, online and offline dynamics complement one another. Personal contact may expand extremist ideas cultivated through social media. Foreign fighters, or just witnesses or bystanders could to a troubled individual bring a sort of moral authority, like prophets or witnesses to the truth.

The violent extremism and radicalization processes are spreading, evolving; incorporating new methodologies and ingredients. They are also changing in scale and dimension. Different profiles and new components appeared every time we have a new terrorist attack. The profiles of individuals involved in ISIS-related activities differ widely in race, age, social class and education. Their motivations are equally diverse and defy easy analysis.

But we also understand that there are a number of factors and processes that lead both men and women, especially young ones, through a process of radicalization with distinct patterns. Understanding these pathways is fundamental in efforts to adequately challenge the threat of violent extremism; both in targeting front-end prevention of radicalization as well as developing infrastructures for de-radicalization.

The fact that Latin and Central America have so far been spared the worst should not give us a false sense of immunity to the virus. There are Spanish, English, and Portuguese speaking fighters joining ISIS. We may discover too late that they bring their experience and ideology to this side of the Atlantic Ocean.

So, we gather here today because we require your knowledge, experiences, views, interests and needs, to explore how the CICTE Secretariat can best assist Member States and all of you in the process of increasing awareness, understand, prevent, counter and mitigate this terrible phenomenon and its effects.

We need your guidance and advice, to design our approach to support your country's efforts to prevent technology, communications and other mechanisms and resources from being used for incitement, radicalization, recruitment and/or support of terrorist acts.

We are here to listen and learn from you all.

Thank you,