

Statement by Mr. Marek Siwiec
National Security Adviser to the President of the Republic of Poland
at the inauguration of the Fourth International Conference on Export
Controls
Warsaw, Poland
September 30, 2002

Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to the Fourth International Conference on Export Controls held this year for the first time in Poland. Your participation demonstrates commitment of your governments to the subject of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, means of their delivery and export controls. Poland strongly believes in importance of multilateral meetings such as this Conference to facilitate a direct contact between people, exchange of ideas and information among states, non-governmental organizations, representatives of industry that are directly engaged in developing and strengthening effective national export control systems.

Following the uncertainty and shock of the horrendous attacks in the United States on September 11 last year, the world community and governments have been increasingly focused on practical action that can be taken to respond to the new security environment. In November 2001 Poland hosted an inaugural conference on combating terrorism with the participation of countries of central and eastern and south-eastern Europe, representatives of the United Nations, the European Union, the OSCE and the North Atlantic Alliance. This Conference adopted an Action Plan that included a commitment to explore ways and means to address terrorism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe this Conference is an important contribution to that Action Plan and occurs at an important time.

Both terrorism and the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction are more often being spoken of in the same breath. The problems are not new in themselves, but it is increasingly clear how closely they are linked, how complex the problem is, and how great the risk has become. And just as trade has become globalized, so has terrorism. The terrorist seeks to exploit the very freedoms and technology that we seek to enjoy and they so despise.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This kind of forum has a special significance and importance with the purpose of strengthening export controls as a deterrent against the spread of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems, related dual-use items and advanced conventional arms.

The Conference positively contributes to a better understanding of complex and sensitive issues and concerns in the field of non-proliferation and export controls. Exchange of ideas and experience helps experts to identify priorities and possible opportunities in development of new technologies that can be then incorporated into national export control systems.

Success in this endeavour requires effort taken both on national and international level. Without an intensification in national efforts supplemented by enhanced regional and international co-operation such as this Fourth International Conference on Export Controls – those who seek sensitive technology, equipment or materials for weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems will continue to make a progress. The chain of control is only as strong as its weakest link.

The Polish Government has placed the highest importance on non-proliferation, arms control, disarmament and export controls issues in order to use them as a tool for combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

With the tragic events of September 11, 2001 the challenges have changed. They are more compelling. In some ways the world is becoming a more dangerous place as some countries and non-state actors look for technologies and weapons that can threaten our existence. Now, more than ever before, we need to implement effective export controls and make strong efforts to stem proliferation. We must develop effective ways to regulate exports of potentially dangerous technologies and dual-use items – while also addressing the national imperative of economic growth.

This Conference will focus on the international security environment, with emphasis put on countries' efforts to standardise procedures, share information, improve enforcement of law and eliminate opportunities for criminal and terrorists to obtain weapons of mass destruction or advanced conventional arms.

In the forthcoming days we will discuss various issues in order:

- to assess the threat of weapons of mass destruction and the means of their delivery falling into hands of the terrorists, states of concern, groups and individuals and to consider from this point of view the possibility of further improvements to, and implementation of existing export control law;
- to plan for co-operation in the field of controlling transfers of sensitive and intangible technologies;
- to exchange information concerning regional contacts and establishing a relationship between industry and governmental agencies with regard to implementation and strengthening of export controls with particular focus on catch-all controls, brokering, and enforcing embargoes and sanctions;

- to enable international export control officials to consider the issue of compliance with licensing laws and regulations, the effectiveness of information sharing, end-user checks, post detection follow-up, investigation and prosecution;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, the threat caused by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is more diverse and unpredictable than ever. Countries of concern are becoming now “secondary proliferators” providing other states or terrorist groups with sensitive technology and assistance.

Evidence discovered during operations in Afghanistan shows that terrorists are actively trying to develop weapons of mass destruction capabilities. The international community must strengthen its efforts both on the national and international level to keep materials used for weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems out of the hands of proliferators and terrorists.

In this connection, I would like to refer to the results of the 17th MTCR Plenary Meeting which was held in Warsaw last week (between the 24th and 27th September). This important event marked the start of the Polish Chairmanship of the Regime for the years 2002/2003.

Referring to the world-wide fight against terrorism, the MTCR Partners agreed to issue a statement on Joint Action. They stated, inter alia, that the MTCR would continue to contribute to the fight against terrorism by limiting the risk of controlled items and technologies falling into the hands of terrorist groups and individuals. The Joint Action also called upon all states to take similar action.

But no-one should be expected to do this in isolation, we should work in partnership to tackle threats and risks that we all share. Poland, as Chair of the MTCR, will be doing this over the next 12 months. But that is also the purpose of this Conference, to share experience, build on our knowledge and skills, create partnerships and add weight to our collective effort towards stronger export controls.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the MTCR chaired by Poland this year, as other export control regimes remain the most effective systems to curb the proliferation of delivery vehicles for Weapons of Mass Destruction. They will remain reliable instruments of export control, limiting the risks of proliferation of delivery systems for Weapons of Mass Destruction as well as fostering regional and international security.

I do believe that this Conference, through the discussions over the next few days, will lead to co-operation in the area of export controls and a strengthening of all related regimes. Ultimately we should hope to contribute to both international peace and security.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to extend to you my best wishes and the hope that your work during the Fourth International Conference on Export Controls will be productive and enjoyable.

