

Cracow Proliferation Security Initiative

On the 31st of May 2003 in Kraków the President of the United States, George W. Bush, announced the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). A year later, the First Anniversary PSI Meeting gathered more than 60 countries, supporters of the PSI in the city of Kraków. The PSI is also known as the Cracow Initiative.

Cracow PSI Aims

The Initiative's participants are committed to stopping the flow of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), their delivery systems and related materials to states and non-state actors of proliferation concern. Participants work cooperatively to impede and stop the flow of WMD by interdicting potential shipments of proliferation concern being transported by sea, air or land.

Participants

The Operational Experts Group (OEG), a group of currently 20 states (Argentina, Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom and the U.S.) works to develop methods for practical cooperation on behalf of all PSI participants. They work to identify effective techniques to counter WMD proliferation.

In addition to the OEG participants, more than 50 other states also support the PSI. The level of participation of any state depends on their respective capabilities to contribute and their level of desired involvement on a case-by-case basis. PSI is fully supported by some regional structures (e.g. EU or NATO). Moreover, UN Secretary General *High-Level Panel Report on Threats, Challenges and Change* appeals for international support for the Initiative.

PSI is neither an international organisation nor an „exclusive club” with limited access. Those states that are willing to endorse the PSI Statement of Interdiction Principles are welcome to participate in PSI exercises and work cooperatively with other PSI participants to stop the proliferation of WMD. Cooperation within the PSI by the participants enhances the ability of like-minded states to effectively work together to stop the proliferation of WMD by improving interoperability and increasing individual nations capacities for interdiction. These efforts enhance the common security of all nations. Practical experiences proved also that PSI is an effective tool to enhance internal cooperation and coordination among various institutions and services involved in participating states in implementation of the Initiative.

PSI Statement of Interdiction Principles (SOP)

During the September 3-4, 2003 Paris PSI Meeting, participants agreed upon a "Statement of Interdiction Principles". The document states that proliferation of WMD poses a significant threat to international peace and security and includes participants' commitment to create effective means of stopping any shipment of WMD, their delivery systems and related materials. The PSI SOP also states that the PSI actions will be consistent with national legal authorities and international law and frameworks, including the UN Security Council. The authority to conduct interdictions in international waters or airspace, for example, is based on a PSI participant's national legal authority and its obligations under international law. PSI participants have also pledged to review their national legal authorities and to work to strengthen them where appropriate.

The Statement of Interdiction Principles clearly stipulates the readiness to cooperate with all like-minded states on the specific actions to prevent proliferation. The statement represents a political consensus for cooperative action and provides a scope for those actions. It is a strong signal that participants are committed to undertake active measures to stop one of the biggest threats facing today's world – the proliferation of WMD.

Poland in PSI

The PSI was first announced in Poland and since that time, Poland remains one of the most active participants of the PSI process, with particular emphasis on activities in the Central and Eastern European region. In 2004, representatives of PSI participating states attended the First Anniversary PSI Meeting in Kraków. Poland organized so far two ground interdiction exercises: “Safe Borders” in 2004 in Wrocław and (together with Czech Republic) “Bohemian Guard” in 2005 in Ostrava, the Czech Republic. In 2006 a joint maritime exercise of Poland, Russia and Denmark is planned in the Baltic Sea.

High Level Political Meeting

Recently the key event within the PSI is the organisation by Poland of the High Level Political Meeting which will be held in Warsaw on the 23rd of June, 2006.

The gathering of so many PSI supportive states provides an opportunity to assess and summarise the three year history of the PSI. The main goals of the Conference will be the promotion of international cooperation in counteracting the threats connected with the proliferation of WMD, the substantive discussion of PSI issues, and to share with the assembled states the best practices and tools which are most effective in fulfilling the Initiative aims. Finally, the HLPM, with so many states coming together to indicate solidarity and work together to prevent proliferation, will provide a strong deterrent effect as well as provide a forum for discussion about the future of PSI development.