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The annual report of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution aims to inform the citizenry about the main areas of political extremism. Federal Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble delivered the following speech on the occasion of the presentation of the 2005 report. The excerpted passages summarize the most significant developments in Islamic extremism and terrorism, and in right-wing extremism.

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**Speech by Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble on the Occasion of the Presentation of the 2005 Report on the Protection of the Constitution on May 22, 2006, in Berlin**

The recently published Protection of the Constitution Report for 2005 provides information on the extent of anti-constitutional developments and on organizations and groups that engage in activities opposing the free democratic order of the Federal Republic of Germany.

In keeping with the responsibilities of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, the content of the report is diverse and far-reaching. I would like to make a few comments on some topics from three areas, Islamist extremism and terrorism, right-wing extremism, and espionage.

Stability and security in Europe, and therefore also in our country, have been threatened for years by Islamist terrorism. This threat continues undiminished. Germany is part of a worldwide area under threat, and our country is among the targets of Islamist terrorists.

Up to the present day there have been no attacks by Islamist terrorists in Germany, but there have been attacks against Germans abroad. It is thanks to the professional and judicious efforts of the German security agencies, including those of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, and the close cooperation with partner agencies that plans and preparatory actions could be discovered in time.

There is no reason for an all-clear signal or a lack of concern. In 2005, the number of Islamist organizations that are active in Germany grew from four to 28. The number of members and supporters of these organizations also increased slightly, from roughly 31,800 to 32,100.

We must be careful not to equate these figures with the far smaller milieu of violent terrorism. But it is also imperative that we take decisive steps against extremist endeavors that employ non-terrorist means to fight our value system. There cannot be room for a fundamentalist interpretation of the Sharia that eclipses the value system of our Basic Law.

This is why the interior ministries of the federal and state governments are taking executive action against the respective institutions and organizations as soon as there is concrete information on criminal and anti-constitutional activities.

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Since combating terrorism will continue to be a long-term priority of our security policy in the foreseeable future, it is my goal to implement specific supplementary measures to further raise the existing security level.

We will take the steps that are necessary according to the evaluation of the Counter-Terrorism Act (TBG) by extending and supplementing the established powers through the draft bill for an amendment to the Counter-Terrorism Act (TBEG).

Acquiring and exchanging knowledge also involves the use of modern information technology, including shared data from police and intelligence services. To this end, the federal government will present a draft bill to establish a standardized, central anti-terror database and incident-specific project databases.

Furthermore, as provided for in the federalism reform, we will authorize the Federal Office of Criminal Investigation in clearly defined cases to take action to prevent the dangers of international terrorism. The present division of responsibilities – the Federal Office of Criminal Investigation may act only if there is an initial suspicion of activities subject to criminal proceedings, but defending against the dangers that precede those actions falls within the jurisdiction of the federal states – prolongs the response time and thus increases the danger of losing information.

In the long run, we will only succeed in combating Islamism if we can prevent radicalization and recruitment in the first place. Therefore, in the fall of 2005, our security agencies engaged Muslim associations in a dialogue that was oriented toward joint goals. The agreed upon strategy aims to improve our mutual understanding and to spur joint action against the extremist misuse of religion.

Social marginalization, insufficient German language skills, and a lack of career prospects promote the radicalization of young Muslims in our country. A successful integration policy is therefore an essential instrument of any effective anti-terror strategy.

Immigration and integration are two sides of the same coin. Only the transparent control and restriction of immigration can create the necessary climate for the integration of foreign nationals living here. And their successful integration is necessary as a foundation for further immigration.

And so we demand of people who come to our country that they actively contribute to their own integration and acknowledge the basic values of our society. Thus, integration makes a preventative contribution to the internal security of our country as well.

Immigration policy must also guarantee the protection and security of our country and the people living here. The immigration act that took effect on January 1, 2005, provides the federal states, which are essentially responsible for implementing the Aliens Act, with an extended instrument with which to suppress terrorist and extremist threats.

Within the scope of the present evaluation of the Immigration Act, we are also reviewing whether all security questions have been answered satisfactorily or if further legislative action is needed.

Right-wing extremism is a focal point of the present debate. It demands special attention from both the government and society. For this reason, right-wing extremism is a special area of focus for the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution.

It is gratifying that right-wing extremist parties did not score any notable victories in the past year or in the three *Landtag* [state assembly] elections in March of this year.

At the end of last year, the NPD [National Democratic Party of Germany] had 6,000 members, that is, 700 more than a year earlier. By renewing their contact with the neo-Nazi scene and concluding their "Germany Pact" with the DVU [German People's Union], the NPD has tried to increase its significance in the right-wing extremist scene. But having received less than two percent of the vote in the last Bundestag election and in this year's *Landtag* elections, they did not succeed in making the breakthrough they had hoped for.

There is nevertheless cause for concern that extremist right-wing ideology is attractive to a considerable segment of young male voters between 18 and 24 years of age. More than 5 percent of the young male vote nationwide, and even almost ten percent in the new federal states, went to the NPD. This must be an incentive for us to promote our democracy more intensively, especially among young people.

The DVU and the *Republikaner* have consistently missed their mark in the elections. Moreover, both parties' membership figures have fallen again (the DVU by about 2,000 to a total of 9,000, and the *Republikaner* by 1,000 to 6,500).

People in the right-wing extremist scene who own large arsenals of weapons, munitions, and explosives pose a particularly grave threat. There are also groups within the skinhead scene that demonstrate a great proclivity toward violence. The acts of violence perpetrated by these skinheads are mostly xenophobic; they do not have strategic, terrorist motives and are generally driven by feelings of hatred and committed under the influence of alcohol.

The susceptibility of youths and young adults to right-wing ideology is evidenced by the increase in the number of people considered susceptible to neo-Nazi activity by 300 to 4,100. The popularity of skinhead concerts, the number of which rose by 40 percent last year, makes this even clearer. The lyrics of skinhead music are racist and anti-Semitic and they glorify violence; they serve to create enemy stereotypes, influence ideological opinions, and promote a propensity toward violence.

In March 2005, the Federal Court of Justice rejected the appeal of the leader of the skinhead band "Landser," who had been sentenced to several years' imprisonment. In December of last year, four members of the skinhead group "Race War" were charged with membership in a criminal association. These cases show that extremism and racism will be dealt with resolutely.

It is extremely alarming, however, that the number of politically motivated crimes with a right-wing extremist background has increased by 27 percent, up to 15,361. This number has also risen by roughly 23 percent in the subset of right-wing extremist violent crimes.

One cause for this rise in violent crimes could be the growth in right-wing demonstrations, which often lead to violent conflicts with left-wing extremist counter-demonstrators. Left-wing extremists with a propensity toward violence seek direct confrontation with their political adversaries and the police.

This becomes evident in the developments reported in 2005 in the area of left-wing politically motivated crime. The number of crimes in this area rose by 39 percent over the previous year. The subset of left-wing politically motivated violent crime even rose by 57 percent and exceeded – in contrast to the trend in previous years – right-wing politically motivated violent crime, also in terms of absolute numbers.

The monitoring activities of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution and the threat of prosecution by law enforcement agencies have brought success in the crackdown on the right-wing extremist scene. Fortunately, this has been backed up by court verdicts. For instance, this past March, the Federal Court of Justice confirmed the verdict against five members of the "Havelland Free Corps" *Kameradschaft*, who had committed a series of arson attacks. The Brandenburg Court of Appeals had convicted the defendants of forming a terrorist organization. They were given youth offender sentences, some of which involved several years' detention.

The changes to the criminal code and the right of assembly that took effect in 2005 have greatly improved the options available to authorities to ban right-wing extremist meetings.

Consequently, last year it was possible for the first time to prevent the annual march of right-wing extremists in commemoration of Rudolf Hess. Furthermore, authorities banned demonstrations that neo-Nazis had planned for the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the war and for the dedication of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe.

I'm very pleased that most of Germany's federal states are taking advantage of the opportunity to designate additional sites for the commemoration of the victims of National Socialism, thereby prohibiting gatherings at these places.

In the preamble of the coalition agreement between CDU/CSU and SPD it says that "Tolerance and openness are the hallmarks of a liberal society. Extremism, racism, and anti-Semitism must not be tolerated." This sets the guidelines for the policies of the federal government: we are fighting xenophobia and every form of extremism with the utmost diligence in support of freedom, democracy, and tolerance.

It would be inadequate to rely solely on repressive measures to combat right-wing extremism. The public, especially young people, must learn how to deal with right-wing extremist subject matter. Therefore, political discourse and social education must be given priority.

Regrettably, there is no ideal solution for preventing extremist ideology. It is certain, however, that not only the state but also all its citizens are called upon to take a courageous and engaged stance when it comes to preventing anti-constitutional statements and actions. We cannot be successful unless we get all of civil society involved.

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Source: Speech by Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble on Occasion of the Presentation of the 2005 Report on the Protection of the Constitution on May 22, 2006, in Berlin, <http://www.bmi.bund.de>.

Translation: Allison Brown