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**Working Session I:
Transnational challenges to security in the OSCE area**

Please find attached the presentation by the EU Special Representative for Central Asia,
Amb. Pierre Morel.

OSCE 2008 Annual Security Review Conference

Working session I

Transnational challenges to security in the OSCE area

Intervention EU Special Representative for Central Asia Pierre Morel

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1. Central Asia has a special situation that distinguishes this region in the vast geographical and political territory of OSCE, "from Vladivostok to Vancouver".

On the one hand, Central Asia is a transit region through which external actors extend their influence deep into the OSCE area. Traffickers of drugs, weapons and human beings have established their networks that function (unfortunately) reasonably well and grow, exploiting the weakness of state institutions and the culture of corruption in parts of Central Asia. Extremists and terrorists have active support cells in Central Asia. These liaise and cooperate with main terrorist centres abroad, seeking to overthrow the secular governments in Central Asian countries.

On the other hand, Central Asia is a borderland that could become an efficient barrier or defence line against the above-mentioned threats. Stopping extremists and traffickers on the border between Central Asia and South Asia would protect the whole OSCE area, including the EU. However, one cannot build a wall between Tajikistan and Afghanistan or between Turkmenistan and Iran. This would be both impossible and counterproductive, since isolation is not a recipe against security challenges of the modern world.

A coherent approach to tackling transnational security challenges should comprise both the control of external borders and internal stabilisation through political, economic and administrative reforms geared towards increasing living standards of the population, strengthening the rule of law and accelerating economic development.

2. The EU is building its policy in the region on the basis of this combined approach. EU Strategy for Central Asia provides a comprehensive framework for action comprising intensive political cooperation, community assistance and bilateral projects of the Member States. The Strategy was adopted in June 2007, and the first Implementation Report was endorsed by the European Council in Brussels ten days ago.

In the last 12 months, the EU has significantly advanced the political dialogue and practical assistance to Central Asian countries. We have adopted five "National Priorities Papers" for the implementation of bilateral programmes, as well as coordinated projects for all Central Asian countries. We have established the conceptual basis for regional initiatives covering the whole of Central Asia in the fields of the rule of law and education. We are working intensively on the concept for regional initiative covering water resources management, including security and energy aspects of this subject.

However, one should recognise that it will take a lot more time and resources to stabilise Central Asia and put it firmly on the track of sustainable development. Any informed expert would agree that the relative stability in Central Asia cannot be taken for granted. There are signs of resurgence of terrorist groups. The IMU, once defeated in Afghanistan, has regrouped itself in Pakistan into the Islamic Movement of Turkistan (IMT). Several thousand foreign fighters (called "Uzbeks" by the local population) are still there and may come back to Central Asia. There are reports that the IMT is establishing bases in some areas of Central Asia.

One cannot entirely separate terrorism from extremist teachings and extremist groups that do recruitment work for genuine terrorists. I do not want to blame any specific organisation, but there is enough evidence that the radicalisation of large numbers of population in some parts of Central Asia has happened simultaneously with growing activity of the HUT and similar groups. This process is going on, and harsh policies, including vigorous repression of all "independent" Muslim groups in some cases, have failed to stop this. On the contrary, dynamic social policies can be the best answer to extremist recruiting tactics.

The EU, for its part, is trying to address the problem in a complex manner. Together with Central Asian authorities, we are promoting education and secular values, including democratic values, in Central Asia. The Regional Education Initiative of the EU and a number of bilateral education projects are instrumental in this respect. All of us - the EU, the OSCE, other international bodies and individual countries - can make a difference by providing a substantial alternative to the propaganda of radical Islamist groups.

3. The EU and its Members States are preparing a series of international events that would directly address the security situation in Central Asia. Several key events, focused on security, will take place under the aegis of the French Presidency of the EU.

In anticipation of this sequence, the Afghanistan Donors Conference held in Paris on June 12 paid special attention to the issue of chemical precursors that feed drug production in Afghanistan. The Donors conference also helped to prepare the field for ministerial-level EU-CA Security Forum that would be held in Paris on 18 September. The Forum will cover 3 major aspects: (1) politico-military threats, including non-proliferation, (2) trafficking, including drugs, weapons and human beings, (3) energy and environmental security. It is important, that, along with EU member States and Central Asian countries, a number of international organisations will be invited to participate in deliberations of the Forum. These include the UN, the OSCE, NATO, the CSTO, the CIS, EurAsEC, the SCO and the ECO. In my understanding, the Forum could become a regular event, promoting Central Asia as a case for cooperative approach to security.

In autumn 2008, the Paris Forum will be followed by three related events: (1) a reinforced EU Central Asia expert-level meeting on chemical precursors in Brussels on 1 October, (2) a joint EU-OSCE-UNODC

conference on integrated management of borders and drug trafficking in Dushanbe on 20-21 October; (3) an Energy ministerial conference of the Baku process on 28-29 November. These gatherings should reinforce the comprehensive approach to Central Asian stability, establishing a link between different dimensions of security in the region which link relatively new threats as drugs and even newer challenges like border control, water management and energy security.

4. Of course, the EU intends to pursue its work on Central Asian security in close partnership with the OSCE, which remains to be our privileged partner in this part of the world. We highly appreciate the very special value of OSCE presence on the ground: the OSCE Centres and project implementation units in Central Asian capitals, OSCE offices in other cities and towns as well as OSCE Academy in Bishkek. The EU has benefited a lot from the fact that the OSCE is there, well representing our shared values and standards.

Nevertheless, it is high time that we move further from mutual political support to very practical cooperation in the field. We are both active in assisting Tajikistan's efforts to control its borders. Let us expand and deepen this cooperation by coordinating our activities and embarking on cooperation with third parties - be it Japan, China, the CSTO or any other partner willing to contribute to stabilisation of Central Asia. Far from fancy considerations on a new "great game" and renewed "heartland theories", there is room and need for everybody's good work in this very sensitive region.

We know that many good documents have been produced by structures supporting border management in Central Asia. The OSCE Border Security and Management Concept is an outstanding reference in this context. However, documents alone cannot make a difference on the ground. Cooperation of interested and committed actors certainly can. Let us start discussing in operative terms the concept and opportunities for cooperation between our structures on the ground.