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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANVAR AZIMOV,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 March 2009

**Regarding the entry into force of the  
Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia**

Madam Chairperson,

The Russian Federation welcomes the entry into force of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. We are confident that this step will help to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime, promote confidence and stability in the region and achieve peace throughout the world.

As you are aware, similar zones already exist in Latin America, the Pacific region and South-East Asia and bring together more than 100 countries. However, what is unique about this five-party treaty is that it is the first nuclear-free zone in the northern hemisphere, in a region in which there used to be nuclear weapons and which borders on two nuclear powers — Russia and China. If we add to these five nuclear-free countries Mongolia, which declared its nuclear-free status as long ago as 1992, the territorial coverage of the new zone is indeed impressive.

In taking this step, the Central Asian States are setting an example for their neighbours, namely the renunciation of military programmes and the development of the peaceful atom as a key to stability and progress in the region. The more countries that follow this approach, the safer the world will be.

Thank you for your attention.