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**Working Session II: The role of the OSCE in early warning, conflict prevention and  
resolution, crisis management and post- conflict rehabilitation**

**Presentation by Ambassador Bolat Nurgaliyev,  
the Special Representative of the CiO for Protracted Conflicts**

*15 June, 2010, Vienna*

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

Dr. William Hill chose well the title of his keynote presentation for our working session. Indeed, “Old themes leading to new directions” has provided us with good basis for practical discussion of very important issues of the OSCE’s capabilities and performance on a wide range: from early warning onwards to post-conflict rehabilitation.

Discussing the strengths and the weaknesses of our Organization, we can not avoid the topic of protracted conflicts, the very existence of which in the area of the OSCE responsibility is a sad testimony to our collective failure to fully protect the ideals of the Helsinki Final Act.

If we look at different protracted conflicts from the point of view of the stages of their development, be it in the Southern Caucasus or Transdnistria, with all the differences and nuances, they have certain universal patterns: from determination of stark divergence of goals of the sides of the conflict, escalation of tension, pressure without resorting to use of force and use the force to resolve the conflict and then – post – conflict management.

I totally agree with Dr. Hill that one is better able to decide on future course of action if one has a proper understanding of how one arrived at one’s present position. On the other hand, experience tells us that overconcentration on the past can limit the perspective for eventual resolution.

Equally important is to determine the direct and indirect participants’ level of intended involvement and current capabilities, the very subject of the conflict, because sides often can offer quite opposite reasons for the very emergence of contradictions. Some may, for example, see the problem in the military presence of a party in the region, while that party may see the problem in the absence of security guarantees for a certain community as a justification for that military presence. That happened in the past and is happening currently.

While assessing the potential for a resolution of a protracted conflict, we have to understand well the differences in the goals, which guide the parties and the values, on which these goals are based. Those who try to mediate, have to accept that you can not do much about the values – they are just not a subject for compromise. What may be a subject for compromise and hence a basis for negotiation efforts is agreement of the participants to narrow the scope of

contradictions. That is possible, and review of resolution efforts proves it, when the conflict passes from a stage of its culmination to a stage of recession of hostile relations. In other words, when parties stop to see each other as enemies and look to build future relations as, if not truly comfortable, but inevitable partners, trying to find mutually acceptable *modus-vivendi*.

If we are at this dynamics vis-a-vis conflicts around Nagorny Karabakh and Transdniestria, and Georgia-South Ossetia, Georgia-Abkhazia situations is a subject for long and possibly hot dispute. As we can witness, every party believes in the fairness of its position.

Again, one has to assume that conflict resolution process needs maximum patience among all the participants. Constant interaction throughout years and regular sessions create the spirit of cooperation.

The resolution of the conflict can be possible if and when the sides are ripe for that. Mediators are limited in their ability to push things, prevent escalation and arrange settlement. That is the point we, Ambassador Pierre Morel of the EU, Ambassador Antti Turunen of the UN and myself on behalf of the OSCE are trying to stress at Geneva Discussions. Though, I have to confess, there is always a temptation to blame the Co-chairs for lack of progress in the settlement.

Dr. Hill referred to the Minsk Group as an example of sustained relationship of harmony and cooperation between the mediators. What is encouraging from my perspective is that representatives of the participating states and international institutions involved in the 5+2 format for Transdniestria as well as Geneva Discussions demonstrate collective determination to move forward. I personally enjoy excellent working relations with my colleagues from the EU and the UN.

Speaking about the capabilities of the OSCE in conflict resolution, I would like to emphasize the importance of harmonious combined efforts of the special representative of the Chair and the head of the mission. With Ambassador Philip Remler we work closely in dealing with the whole range of problems related to Transdniestria situation.

I can not miss the opportunity to stress the expediency of restoration of the OSCE presence in Georgia in a form acceptable to all stakeholders. We are working on that, as well as on the resumption of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism in the South Ossetian context.

Finally, about potential turf battles. They are not inevitable. The presentation of Brigadier-General Manione is illustrative of that. Without compromising its effectiveness the OSCE can maintain constructive relationship with other international organizations in our joint endeavour to manage protracted conflicts.

Thank you for your attention.