

Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the OSCE

**STATEMENT BY MR. VLADIMIR V. MOCHALOV,
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RUSSIAN FEDERAL SECURITY SERVICE, AT THE
SECOND OSCE ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE**

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Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bearing in mind the format of today's meeting, I should like briefly to touch on certain questions associated with the work of the Russian Border Control Service. At the same time I shall endeavour to expand on or clarify various approaches to border security as well as the concept of border management mentioned by the principal rapporteur.

The threats to border security mentioned by Mr. Kass have been carefully studied and analysed in Russia over a fairly long span of time. In fact analysis of these threats, together with the study of a number of other factors, provided the starting point for initiating reforms in the border control structures of our country.

We believe that in the course of the last few years a number of new threats to the safety of individuals, society and the State have emerged, threats which by now have assumed a transnational character and menace not only Russia but other countries as well. We must be united in a common effort to fight these threats.

At present the main threat comes from international terrorism. For Russia the most alarming situations are still to be found in the Caucasus and on the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

Another interesting point is that during the last few years we have observed a forging of close contacts between terrorist organizations and transnational criminal groups. In this context we see an intensification of the threats associated with drug trafficking, arms smuggling and illegal migration.

In view of the fact that drug trafficking provides one of the main sources of finance for terrorism, the quantities of drugs confiscated at the frontiers are growing from year to year. During the last four years more than 21 tons of narcotic drugs have been seized by Russian border guards and more than half of the material confiscated has been heroin. As in the past, Central Asia has been the most critical area for Russia as regards narcotic drugs.

Thus, in 2003 alone the Border Control Service operating for the Russian Federal Security Service in the Republic of Tajikistan forestalled 54 attempts to cross the border illegally. One hundred and forty persons were detained in these illegal border crossing attempts. The various subunits of the Russian Border Control Service have had 25 militant encounters with illegal migrants, in 11 of which they came under fire. On the Tajik-Afghan border, the Border Control Service has seized 37 firearms, nearly 6,000 rounds of ammunition of various kinds, more than 100 kilos of explosives, more than 5 tons of narcotic drugs, including 2.7 tons of heroin, and more than 78 containers concealing firearms and narcotics which were destroyed.

This year Russian border guards have forestalled 19 attempts to cross the frontier illegally. One hundred and fifty-two illegal migrants have been detained. The members of a military unit serving on the frontier have been involved nine times in armed confrontations with illegal border-crossers, in the course of which two Russian border guards were wounded. On the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, the border guards have seized 14 firearms, more than 30,000 rounds of ammunition of various kinds, and a ton of narcotic drugs half of which consisted of heroin.

As you know, a portion of the frontier between Tajikistan and Afghanistan is guarded by the Border Control Service of the Russian Federal Security Service under an agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan on the status of border control personnel of the Russian Federation who have been serving on the territory of the Republic of Tajikistan since 25 May 1993. This agreement provides for a gradual handing over of frontier protection responsibility to the national border troops of Tajikistan as they become prepared to assume such responsibilities.

So far under this agreement the Tajik-Chinese section of the border has been handed over in its entirety to our Tajik colleagues, together with 73 kilometres of the Tajik-Afghan section and all air traffic transit points.

Under an agreement reached in the course of a meeting between the Presidents of Russia and Tajikistan in June this year, the process of transferring responsibility for border control to our Tajik colleagues is to be continued.

At the same time, it is planned that Russian-Tajik border control collaboration should be retained in a slightly different form.

Russia, like other States, is interested in ensuring reliable control of the border in Tajikistan and is doing everything in its power to ensure that this goal is achieved.

In 2004, Russian expenditure on maintenance of the border control operations group in Tajikistan will amount to more than 37 million dollars, or about 43 times the expenditure of Tajikistan. We view this situation with understanding, despite the fact that the agreement provides for equal financing of the Russian group by both sides.

At the present time, the units serving under the Russian Federal Security Service include about 1,500 Russian citizens of Tajik nationality and 6,000 Tajik citizens; there are also about 1,500 persons with dual citizenship, both Russian and Tajik. The total expenditure on maintaining military personnel in this category, including expenditure on monetary allowances, food, provision of uniforms and social contributions, amounts to about 1 billion roubles (29 million euros) per year.

Service with the Russian border control units enables the Tajik personnel to obtain a certain amount of experience and qualifications in border control work. According to our calculations, about 3,000 Tajik citizens per year receive instruction and basic training and acquire various skills needed for border control activities.

Furthermore, under the protocol of 31 March 1994, signed by the Federal Border Control Service and the Commander-in-Chief of border control troops of the Russian Federation, as well as the Ministry of Security of the Republic of Tajikistan, officers of the Republic of Tajikistan are receiving training in Russian academies run by the Border Control Service of the Federal Security Service.

This type of training has been going on since 1997. Military personnel of units of the Committee of State Border Control attached to the Government of Tajikistan are trained in the Border Control Service Academy and in two other frontier institutions. Between 1997 and 2003, 27 individuals were trained in this way, 15 in the Border Control Services Academy and 12 in the other frontier control institutions.

By now the number of persons undergoing training has increased to 56, 18 in the Border Control Services Academy and 38 in the other frontier control institutions. Thirteen further candidates are to begin training in 2004/2005.

Along with the training of officers for border control specialization in Russian institutions, the Border Control Service of the Russian Federal Security Service has assisted in the training of candidates from the Border Control Institution in Dushanbe.

All expenses associated with the training of Tajik specialists are borne by Russia independently.

At the same time we support the idea of international financing for control of the Tajik-Afghan border. The effectiveness of international financing of our border control work in Tajikistan is demonstrated, alas, by just one example.

In August 1999 a UNDCP project entitled "Strengthening of control over movements of narcotic drugs along the Tajik-Afghan frontier" (No. AD/TAJ99E) was launched, for which the work of the Border Control Service of the Russian Federal Security Service in Tajikistan was to be financed with a sum of 830,000 dollars. The funds thus made available were used to purchase technical equipment (motor transport, communications technology, etc.) and this made it possible to improve substantially the technical facilities available to our group.

As a result, while in 1999 only about 600 kilograms of drugs were seized on the Tajik-Afghan border, in 2000 the amount was already 3 tons and in 2001 more than 5 tons.

Returning to our general characterization of the situation in the border regions subject to our control, it should be noted that attempts to smuggle arms and ammunition across the border have not ceased. In the last four years, Russian border guards have seized more than a thousand firearms and 300,000 rounds of ammunition. The largest quantities of weapons, ammunition and explosives have been seized in the Northern Caucasus and in various regions of Central Asia.

Contemporary international terrorism is characterized by increased attempts to obtain weapons of mass destruction, something which poses a serious threat to the world community and means additional problems for border guards who have to prevent these weapons from being taken across the border.

In that connection, it would be useful to say a few words about the Russo-Georgian border, which representatives of the OSCE have been monitoring for several years now.

Recently we have been observing clear changes in approaches to border matters.

On 21 and 22 April this year, a delegation of the Border Control Service of the Russian Federal Security Service headed by Colonel-General Vladimir Pronichev visited Georgia. The head of the delegation was received by the President of Georgia, attended meetings with the Ministers for Internal Affairs and State Security and held talks with his Georgian colleague. Agreements were reached on the organization of co-operation in the waters of the Black Sea, and specific co-ordinated joint measures were outlined to strengthen border control along the Russo-Georgian land border. An interdepartmental protocol was signed on information exchange and a plan was approved for co-operation in controlling the Russo-Georgian border during the period up to 2006.

The results of the meeting and the agreements reached made it possible to raise our border co-operation with our neighbours to a qualitatively new level, characterized by mutual understanding and mutual confidence. We believe that as co-operation with our Georgian colleagues improves in the near future there will be no need for additional monitoring on the part of the OSCE.

Another threat facing Russian border guards is illegal migration, which has recently become a big and highly profitable business and the principal supplier of human resources for international terrorism, drug trafficking and crime. According to the information available to the Russian Border Control Service, illegal migration channels are frequently used for transporting terrorists, weapons and other instruments of terror. Despite all this, the majority of people cross the border by legitimate means and thus become illegal migrants only afterwards. The Border Control Service of the Russian Federal Security Service has certain means for identifying and closing down illegal migration channels. Over the last four years, more than 330 million people have officially passed through border checkpoints. At the same time, more than 340,000 people, the majority of whom were potential illegal migrants with forged or incorrect documents, were not allowed across the State border.

Following the study and careful consideration of the threats that have again emerged to State security, qualitatively new approaches to the organization of State defence and security control have been developed.

Within the State security system one of the leading departments is the Federal Security Service and the Border Control Service has been incorporated into that structure. Moreover, this is not just a switching of signs or a cosmetic change; the very substance of the border service is changing too. With a view to devising more effective and civilized means of protecting Russian interests along its borders, the service will be transformed from a military organization to a special service.

So far a concept has been worked out for protecting State borders and work is being concluded on a special federal programme for equipping State borders appropriately by 2010.

There is also a special programme for equipping borders within the Russia-Belarus Union State.

In fact, all of Russia's borders are intended to be fully equipped by 2010 under this special federal programme. Priority will be given to the border in the Caucasus.

In accordance with the concept of establishing a modern system for the protection and control of the State borders of the Russian Federation, it has been decided that there should no longer be a border in the old sense with barbed wire and a ploughed security strip. However, in view of an analysis of the developing situation, the military approach will for the time being be retained on some of the most dangerous sections of the border. This largely applies to the Northern Caucasus, where the situation remains tense and border guards continue to play an active role in counter-terrorism operations.

I am not going to quote any figures. I should merely like to recall the events of last December when an armed group led by Gelaev, while attempting to cross the border into Georgia, penetrated the territory of the Tsuntin district of Dagestan and ambushed a group of border guards, shooting eight of them and brutally killing another.

As has already been said, the main threats at the current time are terrorism, trafficking in narcotic drugs and transborder crime. At present we are witnessing a process in which transborder criminal groups are uniting. For that reason, it is all the more important that we have forged close co-operation with other countries and arranged for joint control of borders.

In that regard, we need to emphasize that the Border Control Service of the Russian Federal Security Service is actively co-operating with the border structures of all contiguous countries. Priority attention is being given to co-operation with neighbouring States.

From 1993 to the present day, the Border Control Service has established co-operative links with the border structures of 36 countries; it has formalized relations with 34 of them by means of international treaties. During this period, more than 230 international treaty documents have been signed, including 28 inter-State documents, 52 intergovernmental, 141 interdepartmental and eight multilateral.

Multilateral border co-operation with the border authorities of the member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is in progress within the Council of Commanders of the Border Troops of the CIS Member Countries and the Council for Border Issues of the Member States of the Eurasian Economic Community.

Multilateral border co-operation has also been organized in the Baltic and Black Sea regions and in the northern part of the Pacific.

Bilateral border co-operation is also based on treaties. We have co-operation agreements with all CIS member countries.

We attach great importance to maintaining close ties with a number of non-contiguous countries — the countries of the European Union, Turkey, the United States of America, Canada, Japan and the Republic of Korea. We hope to be able to co-operate with Afghanistan.

Co-operation, as we know by experience, affords great opportunities of finding effective solutions to the problems of frontier guards. The principal area for co-operation here is the exchange of information and work experience.

In our view, we have amassed considerable experience in border co-operation, primarily in Europe. This makes it possible to raise the question of the usefulness of consolidating, analysing and sharing this experience within existing international organizations.