

**CONFERENCE: CENTRAL ASIA IN THE 21ST CENTURY:
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCING PEACE AND SECURITY**

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Talking Points

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I. Introduction

Introductory remarks with short biographic comments.

Background on CPC: As not all of you may be entirely familiar with the role of the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) within the OSCE Secretariat, I should mention that the CPC is mandated to provide support for the Chairmanship and other OSCE negotiating and decision-making bodies in the fields of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation. Of primary importance is that the CPC assists the OSCE field operations in implementing their mandates and the guidance from OSCE bodies. In Vienna we have well-established working relations with the Central Asian representatives to the OSCE and I am happy to say that we intend to even increase our Central Asian and Caucasian desks in the CPC should participating States agree to our proposal.

General remark on conference: From the OSCE Secretariat, we are very pleased that this conference takes place. Secretary General Kubiš, whom many of you around this table know very well, has supported this idea from the beginning. This exchange of views of current developments in the Central Asian region is for us an important contribution to political dialogue and co-operation, which are the core principles of the OSCE. Of particular interest for me are the views of our Central Asia partners. Some of you will also participate in the Ministerial Council Meeting in three days in Porto which will be of utmost importance, because the participating States will decide on the future of the OSCE.

II. Substance

Please let me, in addition to what was said already by Ambassador Salber, add five points on the role of and the challenges for the OSCE's co-operation with Central Asia in the context of the new security environment, peace and security in the region.

1. In my view, the OSCE needs to continue with the diversification and broadening of our co-operation, following a real comprehensive approach. September 11 has not only raised the international attention for the greater Central Asian region, it also altered the focus on the discussion of security within the OSCE. Long before the tragic events last

¹ In accordance with the conference modalities, all statements and comments are made *ad personam*. The organisers suggested that the intervention should not exceed 10 minutes.

year, our Central Asian partners had used the OSCE as a forum to express their concern that the international community does not pay enough attention to certain security threats. As a very concrete example, I would like to mention the October 2000 OSCE/UN ODCCP "Tashkent Conference" in which for the first time within the OSCE the fight against international drug trafficking was put on a prominent place of the agenda. At this conference two documents were endorsed by all five Central Asian States which are still relevant today. This thread was picked up and was further developed in the framework of the December 2001 "Bucharest Ministerial Meeting" and the "Bishkek Conference", where the fight against terrorism was discussed in the framework of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. In particular, the Bishkek "Programme of Action" lead to new forms of concrete, operative co-operation:

- CPC is focusing on **border issues** in a broad sense. For this it would be interesting for me to hear the views of our Central Asian partners in which concrete areas they could see a larger role for our common organisation. The fight against trafficking of SALW has been targeted at national and regional workshops during the last two years. Recently, at the beginning of November, a substantial training programme (at the Termez-Heyraton checkpoint) for border and customs officials which was co-ordinated by CPC and aimed at enhancing the implementation of the OSCE Document on SALW was completed very successfully. This activity took place in close co-operation with the UN ODCCP.
- A comprehensive **Police Assistance Programme** has been put on track in Kyrgyzstan. The newly established unit in the Secretariat on Strategic Police Matters is just about to carry out a needs assessment mission to Tajikistan (starting 7 December) and to see where the OSCE can assist in police and border guards training in this country. The Senior Police Advisor has visited four CA countries (NOT TURKMENISTAN) in the region and is eager to develop further projects with those interested.
- In two CA states national workshops have been held in co-operation with the UN ODCCP on the issue of **combating money laundering and suppressing the financing of terrorism**.
- In two weeks time, the OSCE will launch an "**OSCE Academy**" in Bishkek, which aims at offering young people opportunities to learn and practice tolerance and to familiarize themselves with peaceful conflict resolution methods. It is foreseen that in future, both, teachers and students from the entire Central Asian region will participate in its work. This project is another concrete implementation step of the Bishkek Programme of Action.

It is very important to note that in addition to what I just mentioned many elements of the "Bishkek Programme of Action" are implemented in Central Asia in co-operation with other OSCE participating States on a bilateral basis. In line with the co-operative approach, all measures are developed together with the respective host country to meet specific needs and requirements of individual countries.

2. The relation between the fight against terrorism and human rights is a sensitive and complex issue. Therefore, this diversification which I just described should not mean that the OSCE withdraws from the co-operation in the field of the Human Dimension. To the

contrary: The promotion of political reforms towards democracy, respect for human rights, strengthening the rule of law, the freedom of the media, the freedom of belief, minority rights – all have been a priority on the agenda of the OSCE. These issues are highly security relevant, and no preventive policy can neglect these aspects.

3. A key condition to maintain stability in Central Asia is related to the socio-economic development. Here the OSCE of course plays only a facilitating role. Poverty reduction and some minimum economic development will be a key to keep the region stable. There are also a number of environmental challenges in the region that might pose security threats. Our Centres try to identify potential dangers also in this regard; to name only one example: the Center in Bishkek is facilitating a scientific assessment of the Maili Suu nuclear waste dump site in the South of Kyrgyzstan. There is currently a good environment to attract ODA (official development assistance) for Central Asia. A fruitful co-operation with the OSCE on the promotion of political reforms is one relevant indicator to donors. The OSCE, in turn, offers the Central Asian States a platform to voice their assessment on the relation between domestic stability and economic development.
4. A fourth aspect is the increasing need for co-operation among the Central Asian states. In this regard, we followed with interest the establishment of new regional mechanisms, such as the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation, the Shanghai Co-operation Organization and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence in Asia (CICA), just to name a few examples. When analysing concrete security risks and common problems in Central Asia, it is clear that many of the pertinent challenges are not a matter involving only one single country. Many concrete challenges in the region involve more than one country, issues of border security, ecological questions such as water related issues, the fight against trafficking, in particular drugs, to name just a few examples. It would be desirable to hear your opinions in how the OSCE could utilize its field operations more concretely in issues involving more than one country.
5. A fifth, more long-term oriented aspect, related to the region in a wider sense. It is clear that a key factor determining the future security and stability in Central Asia are the developments in Afghanistan. Without a sustainable stabilization and rehabilitation of Afghanistan, it will be difficult to achieve stability in Central Asia. The OSCE's role is very limited here, but the CA pS play an essential role in the international effort to help Afghanistan on its way to normalisation. Nevertheless, we should not overlook the possibility that with a gradual stabilization of Afghanistan new opportunities for co-operation emerge in the region.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate that there is large consensus in the OSCE and its participating States that more attention should be paid to the CA pS and their concerns. I can say that the OSCE Secretariat, and in particular the CPC, stands ready to enlarge assistance and co-operating with the Central Asian pS when- and wherever it is deemed useful.