

**STATEMENT BY
MR. RAKHAT ALIYEV, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN TO THE OSCE, ON BEHALF OF THE
CENTRAL ASIAN CO-OPERATION ORGANIZATION AT THE
SPECIAL MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF
INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

The member States of the Central Asian Co-operation Organization (CACO) are the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The Organization's activities are directed at developing integration processes with the aim of ensuring stability and security in the region, promoting optimum and mutually advantageous relations and bringing about favourable conditions for further reforms.

As one of its priority tasks the CACO has identified the mounting of efforts to combat regional and transnational crime, the illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, illegal migration and terrorism.

The CACO States have repeatedly spoken out in support of the efforts of the international community to counter international terrorism and extremism, the illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and other forms of organized crime.

At the CACO summit meeting held in July 2003, the heads of State emphasized the importance of joint action to avert threats to security by extremist forces threatening stability in the region.

Considerable attention was paid to the processes involved in the peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan and also to the formulation of measures to prevent the illegal transit of narcotic drugs across the territory of Central Asia.

On the basis of the results of the meeting, the heads of the CACO member States signed a resolution entitled "Strengthened co-ordination of actions to combat terrorism and the illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs". In accordance with that resolution, the Second Meeting of Heads of Intelligence Services and Law Enforcement Agencies of the Central Asian Co-operation Organization was held in August 2003 in the city of Osh (Kyrgyzstan).

It was emphasized at that meeting that religious extremism and political terrorism pose a serious threat to the security and stability of all the countries of Central Asia without exception.

It was also noted that, after having suffered certain losses following the conclusion of the military phase of the operation in Afghanistan by international coalition forces, a number of international terrorist and religious extremist organizations are continuing their efforts to create a so-called "arc of instability" stretching from the Middle East through Central Asia to the North Caucasus.

Particular attention was directed at the problems inherent in the illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, since the money obtained from the sale of these drugs continues to be one of the primary sources for the financing of international terrorism.

It is an established fact that recently a considerable volume of narcotic drugs originating in Afghanistan has begun to find its way across the territory of the Central Asian States. This fact represents a serious challenge to our region, primarily because it brings an increased threat that the CACO countries may move from the category of “drug transit” countries to the category of “drug consuming” countries.

The participants in the meeting recognized the importance for CACO member States to create a co-ordinated legal framework in order that specific measures may be taken to counter common threats.

On the basis of the results of the meeting, a protocol was signed reflecting the priority areas of co-operation between the Central Asian countries in the struggle against extremism, terrorism and illicit drug trafficking.

On 20 and 21 February 2004, a meeting for the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the member States of the Central Asian Co-operation Organization was held in the city of Almaty. It was pointed out at that meeting that issues of regional security and stability occupy an important place in the work of the Organization. Statements were made regarding the need to conduct joint measures to put an end to illegal migration and drug trafficking. The ministers also underscored the importance of efforts to combat threats to the security of the Central Asian countries emanating from international terrorist and extremist organizations.

The full text of this statement will be circulated among the participants in the meeting.