



The Secretary-General

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**REMARKS TO PERMANENT COUNCIL OF
THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
Vienna, 8 April 2010**

It is a great pleasure and honour to me to meet with you today and to be back in this marvellous city of Vienna.

As many of you know, I have fond memories from my time as Ambassador in Vienna, and indeed from my time in the Permanent Council after the Republic of Korea joined as an Asian Partner for Cooperation. It was 1999 - exactly 11 years later I have come back to this city in my new capacity as Secretary-General - when my predecessor Kofi Annan addressed this Council. So for me it is 11 years later. I hope to have many discussions and exchanges of views in the future.

Mr. Chairperson, as you said I am just back from visiting your country and the region. Just yesterday, I was speaking with your President Mr. Nazarbayev.

Let me begin by congratulating you on Kazakhstan's historic Chairmanship – the first Central Asian country, and the first post-Soviet republic, to chair the OSCE.

You bring unique experience. Since independence, you have successfully built a nation. You have introduced policies of reform and modernization. You have preserved and celebrated the multi-cultural character of your nation, with full respect for religious and ethnic diversity.

These experiences, coupled with your talent for consensus-building, will contribute to the OSCE's search for solutions to a host of difficult issues.

You have described the guiding principles of your Chairmanship as “trust, tradition, transparency and tolerance.” These are bedrock principles of both the United Nations and this Organization, as well as the people we serve.

Let me also thank you - all of you - for welcoming me during this holiday week. I am also happy to be here in this 35th anniversary year of the founding document, the Helsinki Final Act.

Throughout the years, the OSCE has shaped our modern world. By promoting dialogue, cooperation and human rights, you helped end the Cold War.

You have championed human dignity and empowered your citizens.

Excellencies,

We could not be meeting at a more important time.

Let me repeat what I said at every stop of my visit in Central Asia:

The United Nations is committed to assisting the countries of the region to live up to their potential and to their international obligations.

My message was simple and direct: modernization and social progress depend on a vibrant civil society, political participation, freedom of speech and also, critically, upon the rule of law.

The bloodshed in Kyrgyzstan is a deeply troubling reminder of the vital importance of addressing such issues. As the Chairperson-in-Office said yesterday, there are political, economic and social issues underlying the unrest.

Just a few days ago, I was in Bishkek and talked with Parliamentary leaders. I had in-depth long discussions with President Bakiyev. Protestors were on the streets. Tensions had been building for months and were growing. We have all seen what happened next.

I am deeply concerned about the violence and shocked about the loss of life that occurred in recent days. I urge restraint. It is time to work urgently on establishing constitutional order.

Perhaps nothing better illustrates the need for the United Nations and the OSCE to work closely for a common cause. In fact this morning I called the Chairperson-in-Office, Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev, to discuss the situation. I have decided to send Mr. Jan Kubis as my Special Envoy to Kyrgyzstan. And Foreign Minister Saudabayev informed me that he is also dispatching an envoy to the country. We have agreed to coordinate closely on the ground.

That is why I am here today.

Chapter VIII of the UN Charter envisaged a world in which regional organizations and the United Nations work together on all continents to prevent and manage and resolve crises.

I deeply believe in this cooperation.

In January, I convened a retreat in New York with heads of regional organizations. I thank the OSCE Secretary General for his participation and important contribution.

We are only beginning to realize the great potential of what we can do together. We have identified areas for improvement: better coordination, more sharing of information, more exchanges among our staff.

Today, I would like to briefly address five practical areas for stronger, broader, and deeper cooperation.

First, disarmament and non-proliferation.

In Kazakhstan two days ago, I visited the former nuclear test site at Semipalatinsk. It was a sobering experience: poisoned land, one and a half million people still suffering the after-effects of cancer and related disease, children with terrible birth defects. President

Nazarbayev closed Semipalatinsk and banished nuclear weapons — that was a visionary and courageous act. But that was 20 years ago.

Today, we are at a new beginning. As Secretary-General, I have made disarmament and non-proliferation a leading priority of the United Nations. In October 2008, I offered my own five-point action plan for nuclear disarmament, and last September the Security Council held a historic summit meeting.

Today in Prague, the Presidents of the United States and the Russian Federation signed a successor agreement to the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms. That was a fresh START indeed.

I welcome U.S. President Obama's recent initiative to limit the use of nuclear weapons. Next week we will meet for the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington. In May, we gather again for the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We must use every opportunity to realize our ultimate ambition — a world free of nuclear weapons.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me make a last point on this topic: We must not lose sight of the need for action on conventional weapons. The run-away trade in arms is a plague on humankind. It destroys societies, encourages conflict and undoes our good work in social and economic development.

That is why my Five-Point proposal includes limits on conventional weapons. In turn, that requires progress on the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

Negotiations on an arms trade treaty are scheduled for this summer in New York.

The geography spanned by the OSCE includes the largest arms exporters in the world. OSCE members have already shown they take this as a serious responsibility, and the time set aside for negotiations is limited -- a mere two weeks.

Therefore, I urge all of you to make the most of this opportunity to work toward a strong and robust treaty.

Excellencies,

Our second opportunity: let us work together to secure peace.

Today, a joint UN-OSCE Mediation Training exercise gets under way in Sweden. It is yet another example of ever-closer consultation.

The United Nations is working on conflict prevention with a number of OSCE institutions. Among them: the Conflict Prevention Centre, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the High Commissioner on National Minorities.

In the Balkans, we have worked effectively to help stabilize the region and prepare the way to a better future.

We know what is required for success:

A clear mandate, close coordination between headquarters and the field and a focus on areas of respective expertise.

Our cooperation has been most effective when it concentrates on issues that matter most to people: rights of return, de-mining, security sector reform.

Today, let us pledge to deepen our cooperation and sharing of information. Let us explore how this can be done practically, at every level, from headquarters to field missions.

If concrete proposals emerge from our next staff-level talks next month I will welcome them.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Securing peace also requires us to fully implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. 2010 marks its 10th anniversary.

The eradication of sexual violence in conflict and the full inclusion of women in peace negotiations are not options. Both are prerequisites for sustainable peace.

In June, the annual Tripartite Meeting between the United Nations, the OSCE and the Council of Europe will review our progress in implementing Resolution 1325.

We all look forward to other action.

The third area of future cooperation: elections.

The United Nations is working in dozens of countries providing technical advice in building democracy. As you may know, there are going to be at least eleven elections this year and next year in Africa alone.

Our electoral work has expanded in recent years, as has yours.

The OSCE is widely seen as the “gold standard” in international election observation.

I particularly encourage the OSCE to follow up on the recommendations it made in its report regarding necessary long-term electoral reforms. In the future, let us work together in concrete ways to build on our joint strength and put it to good use around the world.

Fourth, the environment and development.

You are making the essential connections between climate change, economic development and security through your Economic and Environmental Dimension.

We have before us two key opportunities for progress.

First, to make September's High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals a success.

Second, to turn the commitments of the Copenhagen Accord into a legally binding climate change treaty.

In the Balkans, Eastern Europe, the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia, the UN and the OSCE are teaming up through the Environmental Security Initiative.

These environmental challenges are extensive and varied, but solutions share a common denominator, and that is cooperation.

Again, we have only to look to Central Asia to recognize the dangers. In Uzbekistan a few days ago, I visited the Aral Sea. Where once there was water, sea, I saw endless sand and a graveyard of ships. As waters recede, tensions will rise.

It was so shocking for me to have seen for myself – that such a vast sea had shrunk to only 13.5 per cent of its original size. I computed for my own information: it was just two thirds of the whole South Korean territory. This has become dry land, salty, a vast salt flat. It was so surprising and shocking. I remember my own visit to Lake Chad. It seemed to me much more serious than the situation in Lake Chad. In any event, the fourth largest inland sea has become a small lake and it is by any standard one of the worst environmental disasters of this international community.

I saw this everywhere I visited over the past week.

Rhetoric and emotion ran high in all five capitals, often focusing on a single issue: the region's management of natural resources, that is water and energy.

As I see it, this is a collective responsibility, shared among communities and shared among nations of the international community, which demands collective action – not only from the region’s leaders, but the international community as well.

For the United Nations, this is a great challenge.

It is why we established our new Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy.

Today, in this moment of urgent need, the time has come to think more ambitiously.

If ever there were an opportunity for the UN and the OSCE to partner in managing a potentially dangerous security situation, this is it.

We need to work together, with full political engagement, to bring the various parties to the negotiating table, before tensions grow worse.

Fifth, human rights.

There is no security without human rights.

Again, at every stop of my visit to Central Asia, I spoke this basic truth. Robust civil society, grounded in the rule of law and the human rights of free expression, free assembly, tolerance and democracy, is a powerful force for prosperity.

Here again, the United Nations and the OSCE are working together closely. The Human Rights Council, for example, benefits from its exchange of information with OSCE institutions.

We are often asked by many countries in question: “How do you expect us to promote, to protect human rights when there is no peace? We have to keep peace first, and restore security first before we can talk about human rights. How can we expect human rights without development?”

These are seemingly pertinent questions, but I have made it quite clear to all my UN staff, senior advisors, development agencies and specialized agencies that when there is some conflict of

interest or priority issues, human rights should prevail over everything, particularly when it comes to development. Human rights is a universally accepted principle, it is an absolute value and there can be no compromise, no second thought. Peace and human rights should go hand in hand.

One more thing: You cannot have protection of human rights when there is no peace. It may sound reasonable: if there is no human rights, peace and security cannot be sustainable. It may be just a temporary arrangement of peace and security. Therefore, I am always urging that peace and security and justice, accountability and human rights should go hand in hand.

Looking ahead, we can do more.

One area for greater cooperation is better follow-up to the reports and recommendations from various UN human rights bodies, such as the Universal Periodic Review.

Our aim should be to avoid duplication and create synergies that advance our common goals.

In all these matters, I welcome the commitment of the OSCE Chairmanship, Kazakhstan, to the fundamental values and principles of the OSCE, including those pertaining to human rights.

I also applaud your efforts to organize a high-level conference on tolerance and non-discrimination in June.

Excellencies,

Greater coordination and cooperation between the UN and the OSCE is important. But it is not an end in itself.

Our success will not be measured in terms of “process” or “mechanisms.” We will be judged by the difference we make in people’s lives. We are all accountable. We must deliver.

I look forward to continuing to strengthen ties with the OSCE, a crucial partner in building a safer, better future for all.

Thank you very much for your attention. Thank you.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Chairperson,
Excellencies,

I deeply apologize for not being able to sit until the end of your debate. I really highly value your thought-provoking and thoughtful consideration and ideas.

I take great heart in your views and assurances that we are in this together.

The United Nations counts on our regional partners. That is what I will continue to do.

And you can count on us.

We continue strengthening our conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building capacities. Today I have outlined some of my thoughts on how we can expand the areas of cooperation. I hope you will continue to render support to us.

I am happy to note that your discussions in the Corfu process follow a similar approach.

When reviewing options for closer engagement, let us continue to be practical. Let us be demanding with ourselves. And let us never lose sight of our shared values and common goals to promote opportunity, security, prosperity and better lives for all.

I know our respective Secretariats will soon have more contacts at the working level to follow up.

Once again, I pledge my full support and partnership and I also expect the same from your Organization.

Danke schön, Muchas gracias, Grazie mille, Merci beaucoup, Spasibo bol'shoe, Thank you very much and Rakhmat.

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