



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Response to the Report by the Head of the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe, Ambassador Vladimir Pryahkin**

As delivered by Chargé d' Affaires Kyle Scott  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
October 18, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Pryahkin, we would like to welcome you back to the Permanent Council in your new role as Head of the OSCE Center in Dushanbe. We have high expectations for your tenure there given the commendable job you did for this organization while in Yerevan. Like you, Ambassador Pryahkin, we are upbeat about the progress Tajikistan has made, moving beyond a post-conflict/peace-building chapter in its history, and toward the creation of a more stable, secure state.

We are encouraged by the Center's increased dialogue with the Government of Tajikistan and are pleased that it has resulted in an expansion of OSCE activities. We support robust attention to and funding for the human dimension, as well as the request of the Government for the OSCE to increase its engagement in economic development, including programs that promote trade, employment, and transportation. The United States was proud to play a role in the development of cross-border trade by helping to build a bridge linking southern Tajikistan with northern Afghanistan.

Projects that promote economic development must, of course, be coupled with activities that combat corruption. We were interested to hear about the Center's initiative along with the UNDP to work with the new Government Agency for Financial Control in devising ways to prevent and detect corruption, and we hope you will report back to us soon about any programs that develop from this initiative.

We welcome also the Government of Tajikistan's interest in increasing OSCE involvement in security-related programs. In our view, Tajikistan can play an important role in improving the security situation regionally, especially along the border with Afghanistan where - as you mentioned in your report - substantial amounts of opium are passing through. A tightened border that can reduce the trafficking of narcotics will reduce organized crime and improve public health and welfare within the region. We have been awaiting Tajikistan's response to the four proposed OSCE border projects for some time now, and we are hoping that the Government's meetings with the OSCE border management specialists later this month will result in a positive outcome. In addition, any OSCE involvement in Afghanistan's border management and security will require intensive cooperation with Tajikistan. Certainly the government of Tajikistan will have an important role to play in this initiative.

In addition to the border, the OSCE Center should continue to prioritize de-mining and the secure storage or destruction of small arms and light weapons. By all accounts, the Center's work on these issues has been very effective.

This expansion of OSCE activities in the first and second dimension is reflected in the 2008 budget proposal, but we also want to ensure that the third dimension receives sufficient attention, and funding, as well. We would like to see economic and security-related activities working in harmony with projects that help Tajikistan meet its commitments on strengthening democratic institutions and engaging civil society.

We encourage the Center to redouble its efforts to encourage the Government of Tajikistan to incorporate ODIHR's recommendations on the draft Law on Religion, and by following through with the creation of a Human Rights Ombudsman at the end of this year. We expect that the OSCE Center will continue to work with the Government on these issues, as well as on electoral and political reform in preparation for the 2010 parliamentary elections. This should include, per previous OSCE recommendations, the adoption and implementation of a new electoral law and reform of the election commission.

In closing, I would like to thank you again, Ambassador Pryakhin, for all your efforts. We have also taken note of your statement regarding salary levels within the center. We'll take a closer look at this within the context of the budget negotiations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.