



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to General Gafarov

As delivered by Political Counselor Casey Christensen
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 14, 2009

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

Mr. Gafarov, thank you for traveling to Vienna once again to present to us a comprehensive report on joint OSCE-Tajikistan border management projects. As you are aware, border security is becoming an increasingly important component in the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, and Tajikistan is paving the way for OSCE's involvement in the region.

The United States notes positively the close cooperation between Tajikistan and the OSCE in undertaking activities to enhance the security of Tajikistan's borders. We hope that the recently completed National Border Security and Management Strategy—for which your agency played a key drafting role—can serve as a "best practices model" for other participating States.

The United States congratulates you and the OSCE on completing the first phase of the customs assistance project in Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast. We look forward to this project's continued implementation, encourage close cooperation with the joint U.S.-Asian Development Bank project to reconstruct border crossing points at Kulma and Kizilart, and advocate continued focus on strengthening the southern border.

The United States sees Tajikistan as a contributor to regional stability and an important partner in tackling the challenges along Afghanistan's border. We are therefore encouraged by Tajikistan's efforts to include Afghan officials in its various training projects, including the soon-to-be-opened regional Border Management Staff College.

Thank you again, Mr. Gafarov, for taking the time to join us today. We wish you continued success as you, your government and your country's neighbors, as well as your OSCE colleagues and partners, take the important next steps in implementing these border management projects.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.