

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION

A meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was held on November 23, 2002 in Moscow. It was attended by the Secretary of State - Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan K.Tokaev, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China Tang Jiaxuan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic A. Aytmatov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation I. Ivanov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan T. Nazarov and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan A. Kamilov.

Constructive and interesting discussion focused on the two sets of issues: the SCO activities and urgent international problems.

It has been noted with satisfaction that the cooperation within the SCO in various fields stipulated by the Organization's Charter signed at St. Petersburg summit on June 7, 2002, is progressing well and becoming increasingly rich in content. The parties have agreed to prepare specific proposals for better structured and intensified multilateral cooperation in the framework of the Organization by the next meeting of the foreign ministers of the six countries.

The ministers have stated that in line with the agreements reached at the meeting of the heads of the SCO member states in St. Petersburg, intensive efforts have been initiated in support of the early launch of the SCO mechanisms. To date, basic elements related to the establishment of the SCO Secretariat in Beijing have been agreed upon and common approaches to issues of the SCO budget and location of the headquarters of the SCO Regional Antiterrorist Structure in Bishkek have been developed.

The Council of National Coordinators and relevant expert working groups continue to draft legal documents necessary for the functioning of the SCO and its bodies with a view to ensure their signing at the next meeting of the heads of state in 2003.

It has been deemed expedient that, guided by the St. Petersburg Summit Declaration, the foreign ministries of the six countries agree, by the next CMFA meeting, on specific proposals regarding the SCO multilateral cooperation in addressing the growing threat of trafficking in drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors.

Based on the fundamental principle of the SCO openness and non-alliance and in an effort to ensure that the SCO, already at its founding stage, could take an active part in the international dialogue and make real contributions to

strengthened stability, security and peace regionally and globally, the ministers have signed an Interim Scheme of the SCO relations with other international organizations and states that will provisionally apply until respective SCO regulations come into effect.

Following the exchange of views on the situation in the world, the ministers have noted the urgent need to consolidate the efforts of all countries in the fight against international terrorism, separatism and extremism, organized crime, drug and weapons trafficking, proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery, environmental degradation, depletion of natural resources, large scale illegal migration, persistent poverty and backwardness, AIDS and other new challenges. The ministers have reaffirmed the importance of the early establishment of the Global System for addressing modern threats and challenges equipped with relevant multilateral mechanisms of cooperation, including early warning and prevention of emerging threats and firm and adequate response to their manifestations.

The meeting has noted that, while the fight against terrorism has acquired a global dimension, terrorist attacks do not discontinue posing a serious threat to international peace and security. In this regard, the ministers have expressed strong support to the firm actions by the Russian Federation leadership to free the hostages taken during the October terrorist act in Moscow that resulted in many fatalities among innocent people.

The ministers consider it urgent for the international community to strengthen the international law framework to combat terrorism, *inter alia*, through an early adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on Combating International Terrorism and the Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism supported by the strengthened United Nations leadership in the fight against terrorism. The SCO member states support the international community's efforts to stop the channels of terrorist activities financing and, *inter alia*, they fully subscribe to the provisions of the Declaration on Financial Measures to Counter Terrorism approved by the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in July 2002.

The ministers have noted their common understanding that strengthened stability in the Central Asian region remains the top priority of the SCO member states in the field of security. In this context, the SCO confirmed its intention to cooperate with the international organizations acting in the region.

The ministers have expressed concern over the reemergence of separatist trends in various countries in Asia and strengthened links between terrorism and separatism. They have stated their firm resolve to continue fully supporting the efforts of states aimed at ensuring their sovereignty and territorial integrity. It has been underscored that attempts to justify terrorism and separatism by religious, national or political reasons are inadmissible.

The ministers have reaffirmed the common interest of the SCO member states in the peaceful development of Afghanistan and they have expressed support

to the Afghan Interim Administration's activities aimed at normalization and stabilization of the country and its economic reconstruction on the basis of the Bonn Agreement of December 5, 2001, outcomes of the June 2002 Loya Jirga, as well as the UN Security Council resolutions.

Positive assessment has been made of the international cooperation to eradicate terrorism in Afghanistan. However, serious concerns have been voiced regarding increased drug production which serves as the main source of financing for the internal armed conflict and international terrorism, as well as the threat of narcotic drugs to the SCO countries. In this context, proposals regarding the establishment of anti-drug security belts along the perimeter of the Afghan borders have been regarded as helpful.

The ministers have agreed that the six SCO member states will intensify the exchange of views, *inter alia*, through their permanent representatives to the United Nations, on issues related to Afghanistan, including assistance in resolving Afghanistan social and economic problems and humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people.

The ministers have expressed their support to the international efforts, both collective and individual, that facilitate the search of ways to ensure peace and stability in the Middle East and to the unconditional implementation by the both parties to the conflict of the appropriate UN Security Council resolutions.

The ministers have expressed their hope that the UN Security Council Resolution 1441 on Iraq and resumed mission of the international inspectors to Iraq will help to resolve the Iraq issue by peaceful means in accordance with all international norms.

The ministers have argued in favor of a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula and have reaffirmed their support to the solution of the issue through peaceful dialogue. They have stressed that peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula meets the interests of all parties.

The ministers believe that multilateral negotiation mechanisms for ensuring security in Asia should not compete, but rather complement each other.

The ministers support establishing working relationship between the SCO and ASEAN in order to intensify the exchange of information and cooperation.

The ministers have called for further dynamic development of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia in accordance with the principles adopted at the First Summit of the CICA (Almaty, June 4, 2002).

The support for the establishment of nuclear weapons free zones in Asia has been reaffirmed with the understanding that such zones must fully recognize the interests and concerns of all States.

The SCO member countries stand ready for meaningful engagement, on the basis of equality, with all interested states and international associations in order to

promote peace and development in the region and throughout the world in accordance with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.