

Canadian NATO
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
to the 68th Rose-Roth Seminar**

Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)

**Baku, Azerbaijan
March 6-8, 2008**

Report

The Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association has the honour to present its report on the 68th Rose-Roth Seminar in Baku, Azerbaijan, March 6-8, 2008. Canada was represented by Senator Jane Cordy.

OPENING SESSION

Moderator: Ziyafat Asgerov, Head of the Delegation of Azerbaijan to the NATO PA.

Ogtay Asadov, Speaker of the Milli Mejlis of Azerbaijan, welcomed the participants and stressed that the Euro-Atlantic integration remains a high priority for Azerbaijan. He praised the co operation with NATO which he viewed as mutually beneficial. Azerbaijan is benefiting from the Partnership for Peace programme, while also contributing to multinational efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Azerbaijan is making progress on its armed forces reform, strengthening civil control and adopting appropriate legislation. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline is an extremely important asset for the Euro-Atlantic region in terms of energy security.

The Speaker of the parliament has identified the Azeri-Armenian conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh as the major obstacle hindering the development of the region. He reminded that Armenia is still occupying 20% of Azerbaijan's territory, forcing over one million of Azerbaijanis to flee from their homes. Mr Asadov suggested that the international community pay more attention to the resolution of this conflict, since it has implications for broader security situation because the occupied territories serve as a heaven for terrorists and drug traders. He also made it clear that Azerbaijan is determined to resolve the crisis peacefully, without resorting to military actions.

José Lello, President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, noted that this is the second Rose-Roth seminar in Azerbaijan and the sixth in the South Caucasus since 2002: a clear sign of the Assembly's interest in this region. In regions where political differences run deep and where conflicts are based on apparently irreconcilable national, religious, or ethnic disputes, the Assembly can provide a "neutral" forum for free and frank exchanges. Parliamentary meetings such as this have an important role to play in discussing all possible options, in resolving misperceptions, and in building the necessary contacts and relationships.

The keynote presentation "The Political and Security Situation in the Caspian Region" was delivered by Prof. Anatol Lieven, Department of War Studies, King's College, London. He started by urging international organisations, including NATO, to devote more of their attention to the very fragile regions of South Caucasus and Central Asia. He stressed that concepts such as "The Great Game" or "The Grand Chessboard", often applied to the Central Asia, have dangerous geopolitical implications. Implying that Central Asian countries are mere chess pieces to be moved by Moscow or Washington is inaccurate and insulting. The "zero-sum" thinking should have been replaced by a new approach right after the end of the Cold War.

The entry of a new actor - China - complicates the geopolitical game in the region. India can become involved as well, hopefully as a positive player, as the world's largest

democracy. For that to happen, however, India needs to make progress on reconciliation with Pakistan. Afghanistan used to be a transit country from India to Central Asia, but, under the current circumstances, it will be immensely difficult for Afghanistan to regain that role. Iran could be another route from India to the region, but India's strategic relations with the US present an obstacle for such a scenario. With energy becoming increasingly important, it is possible that India would decide to step outside of the US framework and have its own energy deal with Iran. Finally, the question of Turkey's future path can also have an impact on the region. In recent years, US-Turkey relations have been increasingly complicated. Turkey's strategic orientation is not nearly as clear today as it was in the past.

Central Asia remains a troubled region because the modern state building process is still incomplete. Moreover, external actors do not seem to have a solution to the "frozen conflicts" in the region. There was a danger of Russia establishing hegemony over the Southern Caucasus by exploiting the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. This did not happen mostly because Russia was unable to resolve the conflict in a way that would allow Moscow to preserve good relations with all countries in the region. The West could not offer a "magic solution," either. Nevertheless, that should not prevent the international community from continuing to try to bring peace and stability to this part of the world

Prof. Lieven recommended that NATO should better co-ordinate its activities in the region with the EU: NATO's security role can be effective only if combined with development aid and economic incentives. Secondly, the Alliance has to co-operate, rather than compete, with other international organisations in the region: the "zero-sum" thinking has to be abandoned. Thirdly, success in Afghanistan is critical - NATO's failure there will damage its reputation and undermine its ability to be effective anywhere else.

Questions from the floor were related to the impact of the developments in other regions, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Kosovo, on Central Asia. Khalid Pashtoon (Afghanistan) feared that the whole region might face negative repercussions - possibly even disintegration - if the problem of terrorist bases in Pakistan is not resolved. Prof. Lieven said that the recent elections in Pakistan, where Islamists failed and the moderates won overwhelmingly, yielded positive results. The new government might have a potential to forge a real coalition to defeat terrorists in Pakistan. But this endeavour should be seen as something beneficial to Pakistan, not imposed by the United States. Prof. Lieven also added, with regard to Afghanistan, that apocalyptic scenarios of disintegration are exaggerated. However, if NATO left Afghanistan as a failed state, it could seriously destabilise the region.

While discussing the case of Kosovo, Prof. Lieven said that the country is second only to Afghanistan as a priority for NATO and the EU. If the situation there significantly deteriorates, it will weaken the ability of these two organisations to spread stability further to the East. Obviously, separatists will try, and are already trying, to use Kosovo as a precedent. As a realist, Prof. Lieven believes that the crisis will be resolved on the basis of power, rather than international law.

Prof. Rustan Mammadov of the Baku State University responded to the keynote presentation by discussing the security situation in the region from the point of view of

international law. Although some political leaders, particularly in Azerbaijan, have repeatedly called for the demilitarisation of the Caspian region, in recent years several naval force projects were launched, including the US-backed "Caspian Guard", designed to protect the energy infrastructure of Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, and the Russian-backed CASFOR, focusing on counter-terrorism. The Iranians and the Chinese are also considering stepping up their military presence there. Prof. Mammadov strongly argued against the apparent arms race in the Caspian Sea region, indicating that Azerbaijan should not agree to host any foreign military bases on its territory. Multinational naval initiatives in the region have to be co-ordinated and should not turn into direct competition and confrontation. He also suggested that relationships among the regional players should be more pragmatic and based on economic rationale rather than on political prejudices. The economic presence of the third countries in the Caspian region should be regarded as a source of a profit rather than as a threat to national interests.

SESSION I. SECURITY IN THE CASPIAN REGION: SOUTH CAUCASUS PERSPECTIVES

Moderator: Markus Meckel (Germany), Chairman of the Political Committee, NA TO PA.

Dov Lynch, Senior Advisor, Office of the Secretary General, OSCE, spoke in a personal capacity. He noted that the methods of the democratic transformation in Central and Eastern Europe cannot be directly applied to the South Caucasus, partly because the powerful vehicle of the EU enlargement does not play its role in this region. Nevertheless, there is an array of positive trends: state institutions are becoming stronger, more consolidated, as well as more transparent, and the states themselves are becoming increasingly engaged in international co-operation. Most importantly, despite problems, the countries choose to remain on the path to democracy and see themselves as a part of Europe.

A number of immense challenges are yet to be resolved, such as economic weakness and re-militarisation. The frozen conflicts constitute the most outstanding challenge which impacts stability, prospects of democratisation, and economic recovery. The developments in Kosovo can exacerbate the problem not only directly, by encouraging breakaway tendencies, but also indirectly, by diverting all of the West's attention to the situation in the Balkans.

The speaker singled out three main misconceptions about the conflicts in South Caucasus:

- "These are frozen conflicts". In fact, the situation is constantly changing, and it should be followed closely.
- "Peace has held since ceasefires". In fact, there are many new victims in these areas.
- "Separatists are isolated". This thinking relies on the hope that South Caucasus states can develop even without these conflicts being resolved. This is an illusion. Isolation of separatists does not facilitate negotiations. The absence of societal contacts across the conflict lines is not helpful either.

Mr Lynch suggested a comprehensive approach, linking security with broader issues, such as socioeconomic rehabilitation, strengthening institutions, and good governance.

"There is no autoroute to democracy, it is a local route with many detours", Mr Lynch said.

Tariq Musayev, Director of the Foreign Policy Planning and Strategic Studies department of the Azerbaijan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has reiterated the statement of the Speaker of the Azerbaijani parliament that Azerbaijan's future lies in the Euro-Atlantic community. Azerbaijan values cooperation with NATO and regards it as one of the key factors providing security in the area. Practical cooperation with the Alliance and its member's states takes place in a range of areas, including military interoperability, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, anti-terrorism, civil emergency planning, border security and the security sector reform. Azerbaijan was among the first in the region to join PfP and Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP).

The speaker also discussed the role of GUUAM; the organisation established by Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova as a political, economic, and strategic alliance designed to enhance regional economic cooperation through development of a Europe-Caucasus-Asia transport corridor. It has also become a forum for discussion of existing security problems. Azerbaijan is currently chairing GUUAM, seeking to strengthen its role as a bridge between Europe and Asia, promoting common values and interests.

The top priority for Baku's foreign policy is the resolution of the Azeri-Armenian conflict which is the main source of instability, hindering durable peace and leading to extensive violations of human rights. The speaker condemned the attempts of the occupational forces to change the demographic composition of the occupied territories. Azerbaijan is determined to continue diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict through international mechanisms, particularly the UN. The preconditions for a peaceful settlement, as seen by Azerbaijan, are the following: military occupation should be ended; demographic situation restored; negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the status of the Nagorno-Karabakh should take place; and economic rehabilitation of the occupied territories should proceed. However, the speaker noted that there is not much ground for optimism, as Armenia relies on a military approach. Azerbaijan, on the other hand, will never compromise its territorial integrity.

Dennis Sammut of the London Information Network on Conflicts and State-building stressed that the frozen conflicts have a significant international and interstate dimension and are no longer mere internal ethnic conflicts. A multi-tier approach with some interim arrangements is the only way forward: there are no quick fixes.

Mr Sammut offered some creative ideas on how to tackle these problems:

- the process should be inclusive - de facto entities must be involved as well;
- all major players need to agree that "independence is not an option" - once this principle is established, negotiations could concentrate on more practical arrangements;
- environment for international business and foreign investment needs to be improved;

- contacts between the two sides at the level of local communities need to be expanded;
- a more ambitious EU strategy towards the region is necessary.

SESSION II. ENERGY SECURITY IN THE CASPIAN REGION

Moderator: Markus Meckel (Germany), Chairman of the Political Committee, NATO PA.

Charles Esser, Energy Analyst, International Crisis Group, noted that the term "energy security" has a different meaning for different entities. For the EU, energy security depends on reliable and affordable supply. For a country like Georgia this means invulnerability to the use of energy as a tool of political pressure. Conversely, for Russia it is associated with the possibility of using energy resources to enhance its security objectives. Finally, for Azerbaijan the security of demand is the priority.

From the European perspective, Russia is likely to remain a significant energy supplier, particularly in terms of natural gas. The non-Russian Caspian resources are widely seen as a viable alternative to Russian oil and gas; hence the importance attached to pipeline projects that bypass Russia - BTC oil pipeline and the South-Caucasus/Nabucco gas pipeline system.

Nevertheless, Mr Esser concluded that a number of factors might prevent the Caspian region from becoming Europe's energy saviour. Maximum future capacity of Nabucco is 20 billion cubic meters (bcm), while the forecast for OECD Europe gas consumption in 2010 is almost 600 bcm. Furthermore, even if transportation issues are resolved, the gas production in the region might not be sufficient. Even Turkmenistan, the largest Caspian gas power, is reportedly facing difficulties as the lack of investment reaches a critical level. Therefore, Mr Esser suggested not to overemphasise the importance of the Caspian resources to Europe. He also warned of the "resource curse" for energy-rich countries in the region, which manifests itself in over-dependence of the economy on oil/gas sector, revenues mismanagement, corruption, environmental damage, and the "Dutch Disease," and can even have political ramifications. He also made an important observation that dependency on a single energy supplier is not a problem in itself as long as the supplier is a stable and democratic country, such as Canada or Norway. Thus, the spread of democracy is ultimately the answer to energy security concerns.

Murad Heydarov, Adviser to the President of the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan (SOCAR), discussed the prospects and challenges of the oil and gas sector in Azerbaijan. Currently, Azerbaijan accounts for less than 1% of the world oil production - roughly 770 million barrels per day (mb/d), and it is expected to reach 1000 mb/d in coming years. There are three oil export routes by pipelines: 1) to Novorossiysk, Russia; 2) to Supsa, Georgia; 3) and the BCT pipeline. The latter has become the principle route since 2006 when it was inaugurated. The speaker stated that the BTC, which bypasses Russia and the Bosphorus, is changing the overall energy security landscape in the region and beyond. In terms of gas, Azerbaijan is becoming a net exporter, and its gas sector is expected to grow significantly. Physical security of energy infrastructure is of paramount importance to Azerbaijan. Energy infrastructure can be an attractive target for terrorists, especially since the country participates in the anti-

terrorist coalition in Afghanistan. An attack against the Sangachal oil terminal would have grave consequences, including the shutting down of the BTC pipeline. The attack on offshore installations would also be very detrimental since they are very difficult to repair.

John Roberts, Energy Security specialist, Platts, suggested focusing on natural gas rather than oil. Unlike oil, natural gas is not a globally traded commodity and there are very few ways of reaching the market. The role of gas, however, is increasing. It is even believed that the world is entering a new gas century, partly due to the climate change concerns.

40% of the world's gas is located in the Middle East, but it is essentially unavailable for a variety of reasons, including soaring domestic consumption and restrictive governmental policies. Iran, the second largest gas producer in the world, is essentially a net importer of gas. Russia's gas production is growing, but so does domestic consumption which is heavily subsidised. Russians consume three times more gas per capita than do Europeans. Therefore, the increase of available Russian gas for export to Europe will not be very significant.

This makes the Caspian a very important gas region. Unlike the previous speaker, Mr Roberts believes that the gas resources in the region are vast; for example, Azerbaijan's gas resources seem to be much bigger than previously estimated. Turkmenistan also possesses roughly 5-6 trillion cubic meters of gas. Therefore, projects such as the Trans-Caspian Pipeline and Nabucco are extremely important to Europe's energy security. However, Europe is not the only potential customer. Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan plan to export considerable volumes (40 bcm) of gas to China. Gazprom also needs the Caspian gas to fulfil its commitments to the European consumers.

SESSION III. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE WEST AND CENTRAL ASIA

Moderator: Jane Cordy, Member of the Canadian Delegation to the NATO PA.

Pierre Morel, EU Special Representative for Central Asia, reminded the audience that relations between Europe and Central Asia were established centuries ago. Due to historical circumstances, the region was isolated for a long time, but the collapse of the Soviet Union marked the beginning of a new era in its co-operation with Europe. The TACIS (Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States) programme was the most important vehicle for the EU to provide support for Central Asian countries in their state building efforts. However, the TACIS project had a mixed record of success, and some in Central Asia felt "forgotten". In 2005, the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan and the Andijan massacre in Uzbekistan forced the EU to revisit and reinvigorate its engagement in the region, and to appoint a Special Representative for Central Asia. Russia-Ukraine dispute over gas supplies in 2006 provided yet another reason for the EU to shift its attention to Central Asia as an alternative supplier.

Subsequently, the EU has developed a comprehensive strategy for the region, which mostly focuses on supporting alternative pipeline projects as well as on facilitating European investment in the energy infrastructure. Mr Morel admitted that Europe's increased focus on energy supplies sometimes results in democracy and human rights issues being somewhat overlooked. He strongly criticised such trends and suggested

strengthening the emphasis on democratic values. The EU also needs to reinforce other elements of its strategy, including support for judiciary reform, education, accession into the World Trade Organisation (WTO), water management (for instance, using the EU's experience with the Danube river to save Amu Darya and Syr Darya), fighting criminal activities, and preserving region's cultural heritage.

Lt Gen Bulat Sembinov, Deputy Minister of Defence, Kazakhstan, highlighted the importance of the decision of the 56 OSCE member states to entrust Kazakhstan with chairing the organisation in 2010. This decision reaffirms the fact that Kazakhstan has developed into a strong and independent actor capable of contributing to stability in Europe and Central Asia. General Sembinov also stated that this decision recognizes the democratic reforms implemented by President Nazarbayev.

Kazakhstan is contributing to the international efforts in Afghanistan by providing its airspace to Allied and Partner aircraft (more than 6,300 over flights since 2003, and over 100 emergency landings on Kazakh airfields). Kazakhstan has dispatched 4,000 tons of wheat to Afghanistan. It has also prepared a comprehensive assistance plan which includes measures for active involvement of Kazakhstan in rebuilding Afghan economy.

Other key priorities for Kazakhstan include demilitarisation of the Caspian Sea; the strengthening of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and nuclear disarmament (Kazakhstan voluntarily abandoned its nuclear weapon capability, the 4th largest in the world at the time); UN reform; counter terrorism and religious extremism; as well as strengthening the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA).

The Shanghai Co-operation Organisation and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation also have a potential to play a positive role in the region as long as they are not directed against any other countries or alliances. Co-operation with NATO is regarded as extensive and productive, especially in terms of enhancing interoperability, preparation for peace-keeping operations, scientific co-operation, civil emergency planning, and the fight against terrorism. Kazakhstan has agreed an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with NATO. KAZBAT peacekeeping battalion is fully trained and equipped to meet NATO standards and joined the UN stand-by forces. KAZBAT's explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) unit has been present in Iraq since August 2003, disposing over 4 million pieces of explosives. Paramedics rendered medical assistance to more than 2,500 Iraqi civilians. Kazakhstan also enjoys extensive bilateral military co-operation with the United States.

Tajikistan's perspective was discussed by Nigina Sattarova, Project Co-ordinator, Information-Education & Cultural Centre (IECC), Vector Intellect. She pointed out that Tajikistan's relations with the West are plagued by stereotypes on both sides. Westerners think of Tajikistan as "a poor small country next to Afghanistan," insecure, primitive, and a haven for terrorists. Many Tajiks, on the other hand, believe that the West is "something far away," hostile towards Muslim cultures, aggressive and arrogant towards small countries.

Despite these stereotypes, a number of multinational organisations are present in the region. The civil conflict with the Islamic opposition in Tajikistan was resolved largely

thanks to the efforts of the international community. The post-conflict situation in the country remains very difficult; the majority of the population lives on less than \$1 per day, while cheap narcotics and HIV are widespread. The reconstruction of Tajik economy can only be effective with outside help. However, many multinational initiatives are often nothing but empty words. Ms. Sattarova urged the involved parties to focus on less ambitious but practical projects, such as demining borders. She also highlighted the importance of NGOs, but regretted that conditions for societal activities are not favourable.

Prof. Irys Beybutova, Dean of the School of International Relations, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, pointed out that the Central Asian region is accumulating a considerable "conflict potential." The following factors are particularly disquieting:

- major powers, including China, Russia, and the United States, are involved in harsh competition over oil and gas resources in the Caspian;
- Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Turkmenistan do not agree on the issue of delimitation of state borders in the Caspian Sea;
- the Central Asian republics are competing over distribution of water from the major rivers in the region;
- environmental concerns, in particular desertification, present an enormous challenge;
- the possibility of ethnic and border conflicts cannot be ruled out.

Prof. Beybutova also observed that the UN and the norms of international law are losing relevance as the world's major powers are increasingly favouring unilateral approaches. This trend can have a negative effect on Central Asia, potentially causing a re-militarisation of, and a new arms race, in the region. However, she expressed the belief that military conflicts in the region can be avoided owing to two major virtues that are intrinsic to the Central Asian nations, namely tolerance and adaptability.

Rasham Alimov, visiting professor at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, said that Central Asia has a lot to offer: it has a rich cultural heritage, and it lies at the crossroads of civilisations. It is also energy-rich and intellectually developed. The countries in the region have a goal of building democratic societies and a functioning market economy. The democratic processes are partly hampered by the perception that the Western democracies are hypocritical and only concerned about energy resources. The economies in the region also have to be diversified to diminish their reliance on oil and gas production. Another serious challenge is to maintain secular regimes vis-à-vis rising Islamist radicalism.

The current geopolitical landscape is a mosaic of different interests. Central Asian republics seek to balance foreign influences and induce external powers to take their interests into account. The Russian interest in the region is natural and unquestionable. As China becomes a major global player, it is also increasing its role in Central Asia. The US presence is unprecedented, and partly based on a desire to prevent a

domination of the region by other powers. The EU was less involved in the past, but that situation is rapidly changing. Essentially, the competition in the region is centred on two axes: the East-West axis, sponsored by the EU and the US, and the North-South axis, supported by Russia.

Robert Simmons, NATO Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Security Co-operation and Partnership and Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, discussed the role of the Alliance in the region. He noted that NATO's engagement there has particularly increased after the last enlargement of the Alliance. Mr Simmons identified a number of instruments for co-operation with Central Asia, including the appointment of the Special Representative and liaison officers for the region, as well as programmes in the framework of the PfP, the Partnership for Peace Planning and Review Process (PARP) and IPAP, tailored to specific needs and conditions in the countries concerned. The key areas of co-operation include military training and education, enhancing interoperability, defence budget planning, review of military doctrines, demining, civil emergency planning, and science projects, such as the Virtual Silk Highway which provides internet access to academic resources for scholars in the Central Asian countries. The scope of co-operation varies from country to country: for example, Kazakhstan is the only one to participate in the IPAP process. NATO does not see itself as competing with other organisations on the region, such as the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation or the Collective Security Organisation, with which the Alliance hopes to have good co-operative relations. Nor does NATO's engagement compromise the declared neutrality of countries like Turkmenistan. There are concrete areas in each Central Asian country where NATO could bring added value, for instance in the strengthening of peacekeeping capabilities in Kazakhstan, uranium disposal project in Kyrgyzstan, demining in Tajikistan, and civil emergency planning in Turkmenistan. Mr Simmons admitted that relations with Uzbekistan in recent years were somewhat restrained, but the situation might be changing and the co-operation recovering.

An important co-operation aspect is the institutionalised political dialogue between NATO and Central Asian senior political and military leaders and diplomats. This dialogue is extremely important in the context of common challenges such as bringing stability to Afghanistan and tackling the issue of narcotics production and trafficking. Other potential themes for co-operation include countering religious extremism, environmental challenges, as well as protection of critical energy infrastructure, an area where the Alliance's contribution is projected to increase following the decisions of the Riga Summit.

When asked if the co-operation with Central Asia and South Caucasus would eventually lead to NATO membership, Mr Simmons replied that NATO continues its 'open door' policy. If a country applied for membership, it would be only between that country and other members of the Alliance to decide. Each applicant will be assessed individually. No third country could have a veto in this regard.

SESSION IV. SECURITY IN CENTRAL ASIA: THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

Moderator: Dennis Sammut, London Information Network on Conflicts and State-building.

Oksana Antonenko, Programme Director for Russia and Eurasia at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), observed a remarkable transformation of the post-Soviet space: old legacies are being replaced by a new set of realities on the ground, shaping the new strategic directions. South Caucasus seems to have chosen the westward gravitation, while Central Asia is developing regional and multi-vector strategies.

South Caucasus is a very dynamic region and attracts considerable attention of both Russia and the West; in fact, there is little agreement among major powers as to who will dominate this region. The resolution of the frozen conflicts will therefore largely depend on the interplay among the major powers.

The situation is very different in Central Asia. This region has been developing in a surprisingly stable manner, except for the civil war in Tajikistan. But even this conflict was effectively resolved and can be considered a success story. The turmoil in Afghanistan did not spill over to Central Asia; in fact, the region has become the most stable neighbour of Afghanistan. The Central Asian model is also unique because one can witness the coexistence of major geopolitical powers that were able to find a genuine *modus vivendi*. Ms. Antonenko concluded that the success of this unique coexistence and co-operation lies in the realisation that the most acute issues - energy, terrorism, narcotics and the like - are of global nature, whereas in South Caucasus, the frozen conflicts are considered to be local.

Despite these optimistic observations, Central Asia also faces tremendous challenges, including the building of pluralist societies as well as judicial and security sector reforms. Sustainable stabilisation of Afghanistan is of crucial importance, and the potential of the Central Asian republics in this regard is vastly underestimated. While drug trafficking is a very acute issue, the international community has to focus more on the source of the problem, i.e. drug production, and help provide alternative economic solutions.

Ivan Safranchuk, director of the consulting company LaTUK, discussed the Russian perspective. He pointed out that while there is no direct military threat to the Central Asian region, the security environment is far from perfect. The risk of internal instability varies from country to country, but none of the Central Asian republics are completely immune to it. The threat of terrorism is fuelled by both internal and external factors: the murky social and demographic situation and the consequent discontent, combined with assistance from abroad, can seriously undermine the fragile stability in the region. The potential for conflict among Central Asian countries should not be neglected. Current borders in the region are often perceived as artificial and based merely on ad hoc compromises. Ultimate solutions are yet to be found.

Foreign military presence in the region is a very sensitive issue for Russia because it does not have a "hard security" border with the region. Russia does not welcome foreign presence in the region.

Regarding the two organisations designed to provide security for Central Asia, namely the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) and the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO), Mr Safranchuk found it ironic that NATO seeks to establish closer co-operation with SCO, which is reluctant to accept it, while neglecting CSTO, which is willing to co-operate with the Alliance, particularly in the area of combating drug

trafficking. According to Mr Safranchuk, NATO/SCO co-operation can be impeded by two popular misconceptions about SCO: 1) that SCO "is owned by China," and 2) that SCO is anti-American. In fact, even though China has a right to veto any SCO initiatives, Beijing is not in a position to induce this organisation to accept all of its proposals. Furthermore, SCO is not intrinsically anti-American; rather, it prefers not to encounter the US at all and calls for the "US-free" Central Asia.

The impact of Afghanistan on the region's security is profound: it has become a place that attracts all the "bad guys", thus threatening the security situation in neighbouring regions. Therefore, Russia does not want NATO to fail in Afghanistan because Afghanistan would once again turn into a country projecting insecurity rather than absorbing it. On the other hand, the ultimate victory of NATO in Afghanistan might not be in Russia's interests, either, because such a course of events would challenge Russia's influence there. Fortunately for Russia, Mr Safranchuk observed, NATO is far from winning, yet it is not planning to withdraw from Afghanistan, either.

Assiya Kuzembayeva, of the NATO Resource and Information Centre, focused on the role of the SCO. Central Asian republics are still hesitating in their choice of the most efficient security system, and, as a result, there are several security mechanisms in the region. The Kazakh-Uzbek rivalry for leadership in regional affairs is causing additional problems. The great powers have their own interests, and each prefers to promote their own regional organisation: Russia is associated with CSTO, China with SCO, and NATO with PfP.

SCO has shown its effectiveness solving border issues between its member states, for example between China and Kazakhstan. SCO aims to combat the "three evils": terrorism, separatism, and religious extremists. In addition to the security goals, SCO also seeks to promote trade and economic co-operation among its members. The pipeline network that connects Russia, Kazakhstan, Central Asia and China is considered a key element of the Asian energy market. For Central Asian countries, as well as Russia, SCO is above all a framework for co-operation with China. Beijing, on the other hand, regards SCO as an important instrument of its economic strategy in Central Asia. China is interested not only in the region's energy resources, but also in the access to European markets. Thus, China advocates the shift of SCO priorities from security to energy and economy. The organization, in Beijing's view, must not become the "Eastern NATO." Granting a permanent member status to India and Pakistan could further increase the geopolitical weight of SCO. As for NATO, the speaker suggested to be realistic and acknowledge that the role of the Alliance in the region will be limited by two key powers: Russia and China. Nevertheless, there is a substantial basis for co-operation between SCO and NATO, particularly in the field of anti-terrorism.

SESSION V: CENTRAL ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN

Moderator: Jean-Michel Boucheron (France), Chairman of the NATO PA's Mediterranean Special Group (GSM).

Dr. Shirin Akiner of the London University's School of Oriental and African Studies started her presentation by pointing out that the term "reconstruction", frequently used with respect to Afghanistan, is somewhat misleading, because even before 1978 Afghanistan was one of the least developed countries in the world (e.g. adult literacy

rate was 8%, average life expectancy 42 years). Thus, the task today is a "construction" of the state.

State-building and nation-building processes are not identical. Some progress has been made in state-building: an array of newly formed institutions is now in place. Nation-building, however, has scarcely begun. Yet it is a strategic necessity, since without the articulation of a strong national identity the country could well disintegrate.

Dr. Akiner stressed that handing over responsibility for national security to the Afghan National Army (ANA) can only be successful if ANA troops share common values and purpose. Training and money alone will not equip them for this task. Rather, there is a heightened risk that they will switch sides or become "guns for hire." Thus, inculcating a sense of patriotism grounded in a non-sectarian national identity is not only a political issue, but also a security issue.

Promoting good governance is another NATO/ISAF priority. The underlying problem, however, is that governance and leadership are closely intertwined, and personal authority is a crucial factor. President Karzai has many good qualities, but they tend to be appreciated abroad more than at home.

With regard to economic policies, billions of dollars of economic aid have been pledged by bilateral and multilateral donors. There is a perception that this is helping to lay sound economic foundations, but this is not necessarily the case. Donor fatigue will set in sooner or later, and donations will be replaced by loans and credits, thereby adding to an already substantial external debt. The country has few natural resources. Energy and transportation projects are bypassing Afghanistan. Handicrafts and agricultural products will scarcely be sufficient to support a modern economy. It is hard to see how, in a competitive global market, Afghanistan will attract the investment necessary to generate jobs and development. The demographic trends imply that each year over 500,000 people join the queue for food, housing, jobs and medical care. Unless their needs are met, widespread poverty will not be eradicated. There is also a gap between salaries for Afghans in the public sector and those employed by foreign organisations. As a result, the public service sector cannot attract good calibre local staff and is thus unable to function effectively. The middle class - the progressive, pro-reformist sector of the population - has been marginalised and alienated. The narcotics problem remains looming, and the West has to take its share of responsibility by dramatically curbing the demand for drugs.

Dr. Akiner concluded by saying that Afghanistan is currently experiencing a "life in the zoo" - nurtured and protected by external sponsors. When this situation ends, Afghanistan has to be prepared to "return to the natural habitat". There is much that NATO/ISAF can achieve in Afghanistan, but if mission creep is allowed to take hold, efforts will be dissipated and will become counter-productive, leading to resentment and disappointment for all concerned.

Abdu Vohid Shamolov, Head, National Security department, Institute for Strategic Studies, Tajikistan, singled out several important aspects to be considered with respect to the situation in Afghanistan:

- The central government has virtually no control beyond Kabul. One has the impression that the Taliban is on the verge of an ultimate offensive to gain control over most of the country.
- Regional players excluded Afghanistan from all Eurasian security co-operation frameworks, thereby undermining the prospects of sustainability of the stabilisation efforts in this country.
- Afghanistan is excluded from multinational transportation and communication routes linking Central Asia with South Asia.

The Afghan government proved unable to deal with socio-economic challenges facing the country, thus stimulating the growth in narcotics production, which, in turn, is fuelling terrorist activities.

Central Asia is vulnerable to the security threats originating in Afghanistan, including the Taliban-inspired religious extremism, the smuggling of weapons, and human trafficking. The speaker called for concerted action by all involved countries and international organisations, possibly based on a joint, long-term and comprehensive action plan, encompassing both economic and security aspects of reconstruction.

During the discussion, Mr Pashtoon (Afghanistan) noted that the Taliban is not only an Afghan phenomenon: some 40,000 fighters, including Uzbeks, Arabs and Chechens, came from abroad to fight in Afghanistan. Many of the guerrilla fighters now operating in Afghanistan were trained and supported by the West in the 1980s to fight Communists. Thus, the Western community has an obligation to help the Afghans to combat the terrorists and re-build the country. He also criticised Dr. Akiner's presentation as being overly pessimistic, thus encouraging a notion that Afghanistan is a hopeless country, and that all international efforts there are destined to fail. Moreover, Afghan people should not be blamed for growing poppy: it is the only way for many of them to survive. For her part, Dr. Akiner said that it would be unfair to blame others for all the problems in Afghanistan - there is a civil war going on, and the nation remains divided. She also stressed that the poppy issue is so complex that its resolution requires a profound reconstruction of the society, which is beyond the Alliance's mandate. Some participants suggested several ways of addressing the poppy issue, including partial legalisation for medicinal purposes, but others questioned the feasibility of these proposals. It was also suggested that focusing on the interception of narcotics on the recipient end of the flow - the Western world - is not an effective strategy because by the time narcotics reach consumers it is too late. We have to fight this at the source because it becomes more difficult to cope when drugs are already dispersed.

SESSION VI. SECURITY IN CENTRAL ASIA: NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Moderator: Tchetin Kazak, Member of the Bulgarian Delegation to the NATO PA.

Farkhad Tolipov, of the National University of Uzbekistan, discussed the threat of politicisation of Islam in Central Asia. The relationship between Islam and secularism differs across the region: while Uzbekistan is a recognised centre of Islamic culture, religion seems to play a lesser role in Kazakhstan. The radical anti-American Islamism has no internal roots in Central Asia, but the region is nevertheless vulnerable to the

threat of religious extremism. Radical Islamists openly deny the key principles that Central Asian states recognise namely secularism and democracy. The destabilising role of religious extremism already manifested itself during the civil war in Tajikistan as well as the Andijan events in Kazakhstan. The Islamist movement in the region has moderate and radical wings. The latter receives considerable support from abroad, and its tactics include resorting to violence.

The speaker noted that political manifestations of the Islamic movement can be quite different and singled out several possible scenarios, including the "Algerian", "Palestinian", "Iranian", or the "Turkish-Malaysian." These scenarios range from "Talibanisation" to the incorporation of Islam into a liberal democracy model. At this juncture it is difficult to predict where the process of Islamisation in Central Asia will lead. However, Mr Tolipov predicted that the importance of religion in the political process would inevitably increase. Unfortunately, the existing regimes seem to be ill-equipped to deal with this challenge. Religious values need to be gradually incorporated into democratic mechanisms. It is also important not to fall into another extreme - the "secular fundamentalism."

Dr. Shirin Akiner asserted that radicalisation trends in Central Asia are much more pervasive than one might expect. To a large extent it is related to the fact that in the Soviet era people in the region were deeply affected by communist ideals. The fall of the Soviet empire left a psychological vacuum in the people's minds. This vacuum to some extent has been filled with radical religious ideas.

The Central Asian republics, although officially secular, promote Islam as a part of their national heritage, thus making it a de facto state religion. Religious ideas are also spread by non-governmental groups. Some of these groups are home-grown, but in some cases they are inspired from abroad. These groups offer readings and interpretations of the Koran. It is likely that a clash between the radicalised groups and the secular state authorities will occur sooner or later. The civil war in Tajikistan is an example of such a clash.

On the global level, Dr. Akiner was concerned about the influence of such radical religious movements as the Hizb ut-Tahrir, banned in most Muslim countries but legal in the UK. The Hizb ut-Tahrir has chosen Uzbekistan as its ideological battleground.

Overall, the radicalisation trends within Muslim communities, especially among young people, are not well understood. These trends cannot be attributed only to economic factors, as many well-off Muslims are engaged in these movements as well. These influences penetrate Central Asian societies to a much greater extent and much more rapidly than previously thought. Political Islam is becoming a part of the mainstream of the societal process in Central Asia. However, Dr. Akiner strongly suggested making a clear distinction between political Islam (there is nothing wrong with it, and it is not intrinsically anti-democratic) and the rise of terrorism. Unfortunately, the fight against terrorism is likely to result in further curbing civil liberties in the countries that face this threat.

During the heated discussion that followed, several participants from Muslim countries stressed that terrorists have no country or religion, and that Islam is a genuinely peaceful and tolerant religion. They further added that it cannot be blamed for the deeds

of criminals. In response, Mr Tolipov said that the term "Islamic extremism" is derived from the fact, regrettable though it is that terrorists themselves are convinced that they represent Islam. Their vision is that of an "Islamic caliphate" with no traces of democracy. Dr. Akiner also suggested that not everything is perfect in the Muslim world, and that ways in which the norms of Islam are being translated into political realities are not always commendable.

Kimmo Kiljunen, OSCE PA Special Representative for Central Asia, mostly focused on electoral processes in the Central Asian states. OSCE teams have observed five elections in the region during the last two years. Trends are not always positive: the 2007 elections in Kyrgyzstan were less transparent than the elections during the "Tulip Revolution" in 2005.

OSCE believes in a broader definition of security: the human security element is no less important than the military one, which is why OSCE has decided to develop an expertise in the fields of institution-building and election observation. The OSCE principles regarding elections observation were formulated in the 1990 Copenhagen Document. The ODIHR was established to carry out long-term observations, while the OSCE PA members do short-term observation missions. Until now, OSCE has observed roughly 100 elections, mostly in new democracies. In this area, OSCE works alongside other organisations, including the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, NATO PA and the CIS Parliamentary Assembly. It is normal practice for several observer organisations to publish common conclusions, although CIS PA typically produces its own assessment. OSCE missions always seek to exercise absolute autonomy in their activities, while CIS PA is dependent on the host country in terms of logistics. Therefore, CIS and OSCE assessments often differ.

In Russia, the terms and conditions for the OSCE missions are getting increasingly tougher. When creating new obstacles for international observers the Russian authorities refer to the reluctance of the West, and the United States in particular, to accept international election observation teams. Mr Kiljunen remembered his personal experience during the 2004 US presidential elections, when he was denied the permission to observe the Florida poll. Thus, he had to admit that the Russian argument is a valid one. Discussions have started in the OSCE to review the election observation priorities to allow more attention to be paid to elections "west of Vienna."

Evgeny Zhovtis, Director of the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law, noted that the collapse of the Soviet Union generated expectations that the Central Asian Republics would eventually develop into genuine democracies. However, it was also assumed that the transition process would take years, due to cultural and historical specifics of the region. Therefore, the democratic community was ready to "forgive" the post-Soviet authorities for certain setbacks and deviations from the democratic principles.

However, since the early 1990s, the five Central Asian countries developed into authoritarian political regimes. Absolute power is concentrated in the hands of post-Communist elites. Certain elements of democracy (parliaments, elections, political parties and mass media) are preserved, but merely as a "facade". Private property is not considered inviolable; therefore the elites would perceive any regime change as a

threat to their personal wealth. The political systems are not stable since they are based on personalities and not on institutions, fair game rules, and a system of checks and balances. A growing gap between the elites and the rest of society, combined with growing socio-economic discontent, influence of religious extremism, and xenophobia, may lead to a serious political crisis and instability in the region.

Cholpon Jakupova, Director of the legal clinic Adilet in Kyrgyzstan, stated that words such as "democracy" or "human rights" have almost become a joke and brim with sad sarcasm for the people of Central Asia. They are disillusioned and do not expect these concepts to be filled with content. For years, Kyrgyzstan was considered as a pioneer in the region in terms of democratic development because it was the only country where Communist leaders did not remain in power. However, the new generation of leaders was ousted during the Tulip Revolution in 2005. Unfortunately, contrary to popular expectations, the regime change did not bring about positive results. The current situation in Kyrgyzstan can be described as catastrophic, and the country is rapidly degenerating into chaos.

The idea of democracy has been completely discredited in Central Asia. There is no real opposition in parliaments and elections are routinely rigged. Judges are directly subordinated to the authorities. Free mass media are rare or non-existent. In many cases, censorship is exercised even over the Internet. Private property is subject to constant raids and redistribution. Even ethnic tensions are exploited. Most people live in constant fear.

Ms. Jakupova noted that many negative trends come from abroad. The romanticism of the early 1990s is over, and countries such as Russia are determined to re-establish their influence over the region. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are of considerable interest to great powers because they possess the most important resource in the region, namely water. In order to counterbalance Russia, one would expect an increased involvement of the West in Central Asia. However, human right activists are very disappointed that Western countries seem to have taken a very cautious and pragmatic approach to the promotion of civil liberties and democracy in these countries, preferring to emphasise stability and access to energy resources.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Senator Jane Cordy
Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)	
ACTIVITY	68 th Rose-Roth Seminar	
DESTINATION	Baku, Azerbaijan	
DATES	March 6-8, 2008	
DELEGATION		
SENATE	Senator Jane Cordy	
HOUSE OF COMMONS		
STAFF		
TRANSPORTATION		\$9,064.97
ACCOMMODATION		\$1,025.10
HOSPITALITY		\$0.00
PER DIEMS		\$234.56
OFFICIAL GIFTS		\$0.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES		\$0.00
TOTAL		\$10,324.63