

*Translated from Russian*

## **Commonwealth of Independent States**

### **Executive Committee**

25 May 2010

Ref. No.: 7/570

Sir,

In response to your letter of 17 February 2010, we wish to inform you of the following. Mindful of the threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction for terrorist purposes, the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) are taking measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring such weapons.

In the context of global initiatives, an analysis is being carried out of information in the database of the CIS member States specialized units about individuals and organizations that are committing or planning to commit crimes using radiological, chemical or biological weapons or their components.

Under the programme of cooperation among CIS member States on combating terrorism and other violent manifestations of extremism for 2008-2010, concerted and/or joint efforts are being made to stop the illicit production of and trafficking in potent chemical, biological and radioactive substances, and the information in the specialized databank of the CIS Anti-Terrorism Centre on individuals and organizations that are committing or planning to commit crimes using radiological, chemical or biological weapons or their components is being expanded and used.

States' cooperation within the CIS to prevent radiological and nuclear terrorism primarily involves harmonization in the legal sphere.

The Joint Commission on the Harmonization of Legislation to Combat Terrorism, Crime and Drug Trafficking in the CIS, which reports to the Standing Commission of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly on Defence and Security Issues, has discussed draft recommendations on harmonizing and unifying the legislation of CIS member States with regard to countering terrorist acts relating to chemical and biological security.

In addition, an equally important priority in the work of the special services and law enforcement agencies is the physical protection of hazardous sites (organization of site security, introduction of identity card and intra-site security systems, provision of technical security equipment and physical barriers), arrangements for authorizing individuals to work with ionizing radiation sources and protection of information on radiological infrastructure sites.

Mr. Sergio Duarte  
United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs  
New York

Issues relating to future collaboration among the special services of CIS countries with regard to countering nuclear, radiological and biological terrorism are discussed regularly in the context of multilateral and bilateral cooperation. For example, at the twenty-seventh session of the Council of Heads of Security Agencies and Special Services of CIS member States, held in Aktau, Republic of Kazakhstan, in September 2009, regulations on inter-agency cooperation to ensure the security of transnational transport of nuclear materials were approved.

In addition, an item on enhancing cooperation among the security agencies and special services of CIS member States on combating nuclear terrorism has been included in the agenda of the twenty-eighth session of the Council, which is to be held on 1 and 2 June 2010 in Ekaterinburg, Russian Federation.

Considerable efforts are also being made in the CIS to research and develop ways of preventing the use of weapons of mass destruction for terrorist purposes.

In October 2009, an international research and practice conference on the prevention of radiological terrorism was held in Moscow. It was attended by representatives of the security agencies and special services of all the CIS member States, the CIS statutory and other bodies and a number of Russian ministries and agencies and international organizations with expertise on the subject in question. At the conference, the Russian Federal Security Service demonstrated a training operation to free hostages and deal with supposed terrorists who had seized a special vehicle containing radioactive waste.

The statutory and sectoral bodies of CIS member States regularly work on the major areas of international cooperation to ensure counter-terrorism security and the protection of critical and restricted sites and military infrastructure against sabotage:

- Exchange of information on known plans by individuals, groups of individuals or organizations to commit acts of technological terrorism and on cases of illicit trafficking in potent chemical, biological or radioactive substances or nuclear materials;
- Cooperation with regard to customs checks on movements of potent chemical, biological and radioactive substances and nuclear materials through State border crossing points and with regard to detecting, preventing and halting illicit trafficking in such substances and materials;
- Concerted and targeted inter-agency preventive operations and special operations to detect, prevent and halt the illicit movement across State borders of potent chemical, biological and radioactive substances and the illicit production of and trafficking in weapons of mass destruction and of materials and equipment that can be used to make them.

Experience has shown that the main forms of cooperation in this area at both the multilateral and the bilateral levels are as follows:

- Mutual exchange of intelligence about unlawful acts involving illicit trafficking in potent chemical, biological or radioactive substances that are being committed or have been committed or for which preparations are being made;

- Fulfilment of requests with regard to criminal cases involving persons participating in unlawful activity on the territory of the cooperating parties and the tracking of such persons;
- Planning and implementation of joint concerted police work to detect, prevent, halt and solve cases of international illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and potent chemical, biological and radioactive substances;
- Cooperation with regard to technical support.

The CIS attaches great importance to the issue of disarmament. As far back as the Agreement Establishing the Commonwealth of Independent States, the member States declared their wish to eliminate all nuclear weapons. Among the first decisions of the CIS were decisions to adopt a number of disarmament instruments.

On 21 December 1991, the Agreement on Joint Measures with regard to Nuclear Weapons was signed in Almaty. Pursuant to the Agreement, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine undertook to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of 1 July 1968 as non-nuclear States, to conclude their respective safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency and to move their tactical nuclear weapons to central facilities areas for dismantling under joint monitoring by 1 July 1992.

On 9 October 1992 in Bishkek, the CIS member States adopted a decision to become parties to the 1987 Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. In accordance with that decision, the member States undertook to implement the Treaty in their respective territories, taking their national interests into account.

The CIS member States, as the successor States of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, made a significant contribution to the implementation of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START I). On 23 May 1992 in Lisbon, the CIS member States — Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Ukraine — and the United States of America signed the Lisbon Protocol, pursuant to which the four parties that were successor States of the former Soviet Union assumed the obligations set out in START I. The provisions of the 1991 Agreement on Joint Measures with regard to Nuclear Weapons formed the basis for the Protocol.

START I expired on 5 December 2009. The new Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms was signed in Prague on 8 April 2010.

There are no indications of large-scale production or use by terrorists of the aforementioned substances and materials or access to technologies for producing them within the CIS.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

*(Signed) S. Lebedev*  
Chairman of the Executive Committee  
Executive Secretary of the CIS

---