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Co-operation of the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States on countering contemporary security challenges and threats

Countering contemporary challenges and threats remains an important priority in the joint activities of the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The efforts of the competent agencies and structures in the CIS are focused mainly on such key areas as combating international terrorism and transnational crime, ensuring military security, and arms control.

In the joint efforts to counter international terrorism, a programme of co-operation among CIS Member States to combat terrorism and other violent manifestations of extremism for 2017–2019 was successfully implemented.

During the implementation of the Programme, 130 terrorist acts were prevented, 17,000 firearms and over 640 kg of explosives seized, 72 persons wanted for terrorist crimes tracked down and 315 persons involved in the financing of terrorism identified.

The CIS Heads of State have approved a similar programme for 2020–2022. The new Programme takes into account the state, trends and dynamics of combating terrorism and violent manifestations of extremism on the territories of CIS Member States. Measures have been agreed regarding persons returning to the territory of CIS States after participating in the activities of terrorist organizations. They provide for an increase in the range of tasks and the number of participants involved in the implementation of practical measures.

At the same time, there are plans to improve the force component in the fight against terrorism by enhancing the interaction between military units and intelligence services on the basis of the experience gained in military operations in Syria.

Thus, during the counter-terrorism exercise “Ararat Anti-Terror 2019”, great attention was paid to the development of co-ordinated measures for the release of hostages and the suppression of planned terrorist acts, and a military training operation to frustrate and destroy armed terrorist groups was conducted.

The CIS believes that it is now important to develop an international legal framework for security co-operation so as to identify and track money flows derived from economic crimes and to prevent attempts to divert them for financing terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which is a very real threat and one that concerns all States without exception.

In that regard, a draft treaty has been developed within the CIS on combating the legalization of illicitly obtained funds (money laundering) and the financing of terrorism and of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The procedure for intra-State approval of the draft document is being finalized.

Today, the role of information in inter-State relations is increasing significantly. New types of threats are emerging in this regard, and information security is becoming particularly important.

With that in mind, in October 2019, the Heads of Government approved the Strategy for Safeguarding the Information Security of CIS Member States.

This Strategy provides the basis for greater consolidation of efforts and more effective co-operation in the information sphere so as to achieve and maintain an adequate level of protection for CIS Member States. We regard the conclusion of international legal agreements to be an important mechanism for the practical implementation of the Strategy, and work has already started on their development by the relevant CIS bodies and their working groups.

Co-operation between military agencies plays a particular role in ensuring the military security of CIS Member States.

Military co-operation capacities are being built up both in traditional and essentially new areas of interaction. Improvements continue to be made in joint military systems, including a joint air defence system, a joint monitoring and assessment system for radiation, chemical and biological conditions, and a joint military geo-information system. In military co-operation, great emphasis is placed on improving professional military training through joint exercises, international games and competitions. Over the years, the geographical scope has expanded and the number of participants has increased.

The CIS Member States remain committed to fulfilling existing arms control obligations, including agreements on joint restrictions on nuclear weapons and on principles and procedures for implementing the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Within the CIS, a procedure has been developed and is in place for the exchange of identification data on explosives, ammunition and firearms, and measures are being implemented to monitor man-portable air defence systems.

However, the plans by certain States to launch weapons into outer space give rise to valid concern in the CIS. In that regard, the joint statement of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the CIS Member States on support for practical steps to prevent an arms race in outer space, adopted in October 2019, stresses the importance of the immediate adoption of practical measures, the most effective of which is the negotiation by the international community of a legally binding multilateral instrument that would provide reliable guarantees to prevent an arms race in outer space and the deployment of arms there.

On these and other disarmament issues, the CIS reaffirms its openness to co-operation with relevant international and regional organizations and with other States.

The appeal made by the Heads of State to the peoples of the CIS countries and the world community in connection with the 75th anniversary of the victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War of 1941 to 1945 is of real political importance. It notes the decisive contribution of the peoples of the CIS Member States in achieving the complete and final defeat of fascism. It calls for resolute opposition to the rehabilitation of the ideology of Nazism, as well as concerted efforts to build a just and secure world order based on respect for the universally recognized principles and norms of international law.

The CIS Member States and their peoples are eager and determined to do their utmost to ensure that the horrors of war will never happen again.

We believe that the work carried out by the CIS countries makes a useful contribution to joint efforts to ensure international security both at the regional and at the global level.

The experience of integrative co-operation gained by the CIS shows that there is currently no alternative to broad and all-round international security co-operation.