



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the Attack on Kosovo President Rugova

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 17, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States wishes to strongly condemn the apparent assassination attempt on the life of President Ibrahim Rugova that occurred on March 15 in Pristina. We reiterate that violence in any form will not be tolerated and can only hurt Kosovo's future. The perpetrator or perpetrators of this attack have to be apprehended and should be brought to justice as soon as possible.

We encourage Kosovo's leaders not to let this incident derail their commitment to forming an effective new government that is focused on implementation of the standards and reforming local government. The United States will continue to support Kosovo as it prepares for the comprehensive review later this year.

We also appeal to everyone in Kosovo to maintain the calm that has generally prevailed in Kosovo since Mr. Haradinaj's March 9 voluntary reporting to the Hague.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.