



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Tensions in Estonian-Russian Relations

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 3, 2006

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome the restoration of calm in Tallinn following the relocation of the Bronze Soldier monument. Decisions on placement of the memorial to soldiers who died fighting the Nazis in World War II belong to the Estonian government. Throughout the past week's controversy following the Estonian Government's relocation of the Soviet-era memorial, we have urged the Estonian and Russian governments to maintain dialogue and respect for the strong feelings on both sides.

We are concerned, however, about continuing reports of violence and harassment, including harassment of Estonian diplomatic personnel and premises in Moscow. We welcome President Ilves' call yesterday for reconciliation among Estonia's citizens and for dialogue between Estonians and Russians. We urge authorities in Moscow to do everything possible to reduce tensions, carry out responsibilities under the Vienna Convention concerning diplomatic premises and diplomats, and avoid harsh words and escalation.

Thank you.