



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Policing in Kyrgyzstan

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 23, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In calling attention to the June 17 storming of government headquarters by protestors in Bishkek, the United States takes this opportunity to congratulate the Kyrgyz security forces for demonstrating restraint in evicting demonstrators and preventing the disorder from escalating.

At the same time, we call attention to the fact that this incident, along with other recent disturbances, clearly underscores a prevailing security environment in Kyrgyzstan that remains unstable and, therefore, unpredictable. Nor can we ignore the potential impact of the recent violence in neighboring Uzbekistan on the security situation in Southern Kyrgyzstan.

With elections just around the corner in July, we are reminded that democracy cannot take root where disorder and lawlessness, or the constant threat of them, hang like a cloud over society. The United States is therefore convinced that the creation of a competent, well-trained police institution that is responsive to the needs of the people and accountable to their political leaders is a matter of urgent priority. This force must not only be trained to deal with future incidents and threats to stability, but it must be able to do so without resorting to the use of deadly or indiscriminate force.

Following elections in July, Kyrgyzstan will begin the long and complicated process of consolidating democratic gains and building up its civil institutions for the future. For this to happen, a stable security environment is absolutely essential.

The United States therefore calls upon its fellow participating States to join Belgium, Norway, France and the United States in making extra-budgetary contributions to the Interim Police Program, which will, among other things, train Kyrgyz police to employ international standards that respect human rights.

Kyrgyzstan is now undertaking a historic challenge to establish a truly stable, democratic state in Central Asia. It urgently needs an effective police institution, supported by the OSCE and the international community, to help make this opportunity a reality.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.