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United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the OSCE's Role on Conflict Prevention in Kyrgyzstan

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 22, 2010

The United States would like to welcome Ambassador Salber back to the Permanent Council and to express our appreciation for his tireless efforts and those of the Conflict Prevention Center to support Special Envoy Karibzhanov in establishing peace, stability, economic development and democracy in Kyrgyzstan.

We continue to follow events and to monitor the situation closely in Kyrgyzstan. We are encouraged that law and order are improving, but we agree with Ambassador Salber that the situation remains fluid and potentially unstable. We call upon all parties to refrain from violence and to oppose any steps that foment civil conflict. It is important that law and order and democratic governance be reestablished as soon as possible and that respect for human rights be ensured.

The United States also joins in the assessment you provide today that the OSCE has played an important role over these critical days in Kyrgyzstan. This shows that the OSCE can and should be a strong force in the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms – even during, or perhaps especially during, times of crisis.

Events in Kyrgyzstan demonstrate the value of OSCE field missions, the ODIHR, and the Representative on Freedom of the Media in conflict prevention, management and resolution; their involvement will be critical in the days, weeks and months ahead as we move forward. The efforts by Ambassador Andrew Tesoriere and his staff at the OSCE Center in Bishkek have been invaluable, as the interim government seeks to restore public order and works towards the creation of a new constitution in keeping with Kyrgyzstan's OSCE commitments.

We also welcome the high-level commitment the Chairmanship-in-Office has brought to brokering international engagement and assistance. Presidents Medvedev and Obama had the opportunity to discuss the situation with President Nazarbayev on the margins of the recent Nuclear Security Summit, as did other leaders from participating states.

While the circumstances in this instance allowed for swift and coordinated action, we need to ensure that that will always be the case. It is critical that participating States muster the necessary political will to ensure that OSCE resources and our comprehensive security commitments are consistently brought to bear on resolving crises. In order to strengthen this Organization further to respond to developing crises, we need to enhance still further the mandate and capabilities of our Chairman in Office to address unfolding crises, even or especially in those situations when the Permanent Council has not taken a formal decision one way or the other. We want to ensure that the kind of response that proved possible in the case of Kyrgyzstan can be repeated in other crises.

We steadfastly continue our firm support for the people of Kyrgyzstan.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.