



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Secretary General of the Organization of American States, H.E. José Miguel Insulza

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 28, 2010

The United States - as a founding member of the Organization of American States - warmly welcomes OAS Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza to the OSCE Permanent Council, and thanks him for his informative remarks. They help us to understand the similarities between our two organizations and point us to areas for potential cooperation.

We appreciate your clear description of what our two organizations have in common, including shared values and goals, such as the promotion of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. While the OSCE is not as old as the OAS, this year marks the 35th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, a seminal statement of principles and values for the OSCE that parallel the founding principles of the OAS Charter and their restatement and practical application in the Inter-American Democratic Charter of 2001.

The United States recognizes the UN's global responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, but appreciates the crucial role that regional organizations can play in fostering understanding of regional, national, and even local political situations. The aim of our cooperation should be to make the best use of each partner's comparative advantages.

One of the areas in which regional organizations often have a comparative advantage is in the field of conflict prevention and resolution. The in-depth local knowledge of organizations such as the OAS and the OSCE, combined with their familiarity with the security challenges in their regions, enhances their ability to prevent and resolve conflict.

The United States supports the efforts of such organizations to assume a greater role in ensuring regional peace and security. Your comments here today make clear the role that the OAS has played as a regional organization in the Americas to help resolve conflicts in both border disputes between countries and in internal civil conflicts that disrupt the democratic order.

The United States agrees that regional organizations like the OAS and the OSCE should continue to strengthen their respective capabilities in areas such as addressing impediments to humanitarian access, gathering information on alleged violations of human rights, and supporting political processes aimed at resolving conflict. The United States has tabled proposals in the framework of the OSCE's Corfu Process that we believe would enhance the OSCE's capabilities and effectiveness in conflict prevention and crisis management. Early warning and early action to deal with conflicts are critical functions for our regional organizations.

In the post-conflict sphere, we believe regional organizations, including the OSCE, should engage with the parties to help solidify the peace process and take action to address the root causes and consequences of conflict, to prevent its recurrence.

You have pointed out a number of areas where the OSCE and OAS have ongoing cooperation and coordination, including counterterrorism, freedom of expression and the media, elections, and gender issues. You have rightfully pointed out areas where we have learned from one another and where we can learn more through greater cooperation.

The United States values the OSCE's practical, results-oriented cooperation with other organizations. Our shared values that democracy and human rights underpin our efforts to promote peace and security will guide us on the right path.

Thank you once again, Secretary General Insulza, for your appearance here today. We wish you all success in your vital work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.