



United States Mission to the OSCE

Cancellation of ODIHR Russian Election Observation Mission

As prepared for delivery by Chargé d' Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 22, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States government supports the decision by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to cancel plans to observe the December 2nd Duma elections in Russia. We understand this decision was made as a result of what ODIHR termed "unprecedented" restrictions on its mission, which included limits on the number of observers and duration of their stay in Russia, as well as other constraints.

The United States regrets that conditions imposed by the Russian government led ODIHR to take this difficult decision. Invitations with such conditions undermine the integrity of ODIHR and its ability to adequately perform its responsibilities, which we and other countries have vigorously supported as the international "gold standard" in election observation. We call on the Russian government to live up to its commitments and allow unrestricted ODIHR observation of the 2008 Russian presidential election.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.