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United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement in Response to Minister Valionis

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Bruce Connuck
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 27, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States very warmly welcomes Minister Valionis to the Permanent Council today. We work very closely indeed with Lithuania on such a wide range of issues, including regional and international security, safeguarding human rights around the world, and democratization. It is truly an honor and a pleasure for us to have the opportunity to hear the minister's views on the OSCE this morning.

We share Minister Valionis's vision of the organization and welcome his proposals to strengthen its effectiveness. We strongly agree on the need to retain and preserve the OSCE's ability to produce objective evaluations and policy recommendations. As we have noted on many occasions, this is key to the organization's ability to monitor elections and to recommend ways for participating states to improve the fulfillment of their OSCE commitments.

In this regard, we must strongly resist any efforts to weaken ODIHR. We agree wholeheartedly with the Minister's call to provide ODIHR with the resources it needs to carry out its mandate.

The Minister's call to strengthen the role of the Secretary General certainly merits further discussion, and we look forward to this discussion.

The United States also endorses the Minister's notion that the OSCE could better employ its field missions for monitoring, assessing needs and building capacities of local authorities. The OSCE Mission in Georgia, for example, has done a superb job in monitoring that country's border, as well as the Zone of Conflict in South Ossetia. It is a shame that the Permanent Council failed to achieve consensus to extend the Border Monitoring Operation or to increase the number of military monitors in South Ossetia. The OSCE should continue to have the ability to offer capacity-building assistance to participating States that request it.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of my government to express appreciation for Lithuania's interest in assuming the OSCE chairmanship in 2010. We have taken note of that application.

I would like to thank Minister Valionis for his appearance at today's Permanent Council. We wish him all the best.

Thank you.