



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Secretary General on the Alliance of Civilizations

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 4, 2009

Madam Chairwoman.

The United States has studied with great interest the Secretary General's ideas on possible next steps for collaboration between the OSCE and the Alliance of Civilizations.

The United States supports the goals of the Alliance of Civilizations to improve understanding and respect among various religious communities and cultures, and to help counter forces that fuel polarization and extremism. We believe there is value in an ongoing dialogue among cultures and religions, encouraging mutual understanding and tolerance. In fact, President Obama is in Cairo delivering a major address on precisely these issues as I speak. In our view the OSCE has made a positive contribution in this regard in the past, and should continue to do so in the future.

As the Secretary General noted in his report, the OSCE has developed a broad range of principles, structures, mechanisms, and activities that substantially go in the same direction as the Alliance's goals and activities. We believe there is merit in inviting the Alliance of Civilizations to participate in and observe OSCE events on tolerance and non-discrimination, on freedom of religion and media freedom. We do not, however, support the establishment of an institutional structure or formal partnership between the OSCE and the Alliance of Civilizations.

In light of our active and principled support for interfaith and intercultural dialogue, the United States will continue to follow with interest the progress of the Alliance of Civilizations in establishing a successful track record in this important area. We welcome efforts to identify where the activities of the OSCE and the Alliance of Civilizations can usefully be aligned to further serve these goals.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.