

Original: ENGLISH



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Head of the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, Miroslav Jenca

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 20, 2010

The United States is pleased to welcome Ambassador Jenca to the Permanent Council. The United Nations Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) has established itself as a unique and beneficial presence in Central Asia. Your mandate is clear, but by no means simple. Assisting the governments of the region in building their conflict prevention capacities through enhanced dialogue, confidence building measures, and establishing a genuine partnership in order to respond to existing threats and emerging challenges in Central Asia becomes more and more crucial every day. On behalf of the United States, I would like to extend my thanks to you and to your staff for the work they do in Ashgabat and across the region. With experience has come an improved appreciation of the foresight of the Central Asian states in establishing the UNRCCA. Since the Center's inauguration in December 2007, transnational threats such as international terrorism and extremism, drug trafficking, organized crime, and environmental degradation continue to pose serious threats to the peace and the stability of Central Asia and beyond. The need to continue addressing these issues in a coordinated and regional manner is more important than ever.

The existence of threats requires common responses, and nowhere is this more evident than in the case of Afghanistan. Your visit to Kabul earlier this month to promote engagement of the Central Asian states with Afghanistan is synchronized with OSCE goals for increasing regional cooperation with Afghanistan. In a Food for Thought paper on an OSCE Summit promulgated by the United States this past week, we underscored this very theme: the importance of Central Asia to the OSCE's collective security, realized particularly through promoting border security across the region, including with Afghanistan, and by redoubling our efforts to build democratic institutions and secure human rights throughout the region. We see this as vital to affirming the relevance and the usefulness of this Organization in the years to come.

Similarly, your repeated visits to Kyrgyzstan in the wake of the events of early April, along with the OSCE's efforts, have been instrumental in helping to coordinate efforts in constitutional reform, economic development, and reconciliation. You have been true to the request by the Secretary General to assist Kyrgyz authorities in ensuring conditions for the peaceful, prosperous, and democratic development of the country. When considering the challenges present today in Central Asia, we must also consider water distribution issues, energy concerns, the Aral Sea, and other environmental matters. Clearly these provide opportunities for continued cooperation between the OSCE and the UNRCCA. We look forward to exploring those with you and wish you continued success in the vital service you provide, Ambassador Jenca, to all the people of Central Asia.

Thank you, Mister Chairman.