



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement in Response to Special Representative Kubiš on Afghanistan

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 30, 2014

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States warmly welcomes Ambassador Kubiš, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for Afghanistan, to today's Permanent Council meeting. Ambassador Kubiš, thank you for meeting with us and for providing us a clear overview of the current situation in Afghanistan.

As we have said many times in the past, the success of Afghanistan's ongoing political, economic, and security transitions is in the interest of all 57 OSCE participating States. We will work together with the rest of the international community and our Afghan partners to help ensure these transitions are successful, in recognition of the fact that a prosperous, secure, and democratic Afghanistan can serve as a bulwark for increased prosperity, security, and democracy in the OSCE space.

The recent Presidential and provincial council elections were a critical step forward towards that goal and we applaud the Afghan election institutions, the Afghan National Security Forces and, most of all, the Afghan people for the achievements of the first round election on April 5. We congratulate the millions of Afghan men and women who went to the polls on April 5 to vote for their next President; the Afghan people turned out in force to choose the direction of their country. As the Presidential election heads to a run-off, we continue to urge all political candidates and parties to respect the process and to help ensure that the outcome reflects the will of the people of Afghanistan and cements national unity.

We also commend ODIHR's highly successful effort to support Afghanistan in administering these elections. ODIHR's election support team performed admirably under remarkably trying circumstances. We thank the dedicated members of that team, as well as those participating States and Partners for Cooperation – including Albania, Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, South Korea, and Sweden – that have provided financial support for the team's activities. Unfortunately, and despite these States' generosity, the Election Support Team is not yet fully funded. The outstanding funding gap of €800,000 will need to be filled by May 1 –tomorrow – in order for the EST to be able to remain in Kabul and continue its work through the run-off. We urge all participating States to contribute generously to ensure that this team is a success.

The year 2014 does not represent the end of the work needed to secure Afghanistan's future or the end of the international community's commitment to Afghanistan. As illustrated by

last week's deplorable acts of violence at the CURE International Hospital of Kabul and the resulting deaths of three American doctors, many challenges remain in Afghanistan, and much work still needs to be done to address those challenges.

The OSCE has much assistance to offer Afghanistan in meeting these challenges, including improving border management and business practices; countering corruption; promoting democratic values, rule of law, transparency, and human rights; reducing illicit trafficking; and promoting legitimate trade and economic development. Since 2007, the OSCE has supported a number of initiatives designed to support Afghanistan and its neighbors. The United States remains convinced that the region should remain a central focus of the OSCE's activities in the coming years as well. We regret that opposition from a single participating State has prevented us from funding one of the OSCE's marquee endeavors to assist Afghanistan – the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe – in this year's Unified Budget. We hope we will find consensus on this important issue next year.

We continue to support a sovereign, stable, unified, and democratic Afghanistan, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with the new government chosen by the Afghan people on the basis of mutual respect and mutual accountability.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.