



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to PC Presentation by Bulgarian FM Solomon Passy

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Paul W. Jones
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 3, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It's a pleasure to welcome our former Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister Passy, to the Permanent Council. We want to thank you Mr. Minister for an extraordinarily wise and well-articulated analysis of what the OSCE stands for and where the organization is headed. It's just what I think we needed to hear.

Mr. Minister, we really appreciate the time and energy that you continue to devote to OSCE issues. The organization as a whole can only benefit from the insights of someone such as yourself who has experienced the Chairmanship.

We took special note of your call for the organization to stick to what it does well – and what it does that makes a difference. Namely, to assisting states in the long-term transformation process that will enhance their stability, promote their external security and build closer links with the international community.

We often revert to tried and true phrases when we refer to OSCE's work. We refer to our concept of common, comprehensive security. In reality, the phrase has different meanings to different participating States. But what cannot be disputed is that the foundation of this concept is that the most stable and just security is built on democracy, respect for human rights, free and fair elections, an open, tolerant civil society and responsive state institutions that are accountable to the people they are meant to serve.

While there are other organizations that share the same norms, principles and values, and some that even work on some of the same issues of promoting democracy, human rights and rule of law, none can match the accomplishments of the OSCE. It's value to the vast majority of OSCE states rests in its continuing to be able to set the bar – higher, not lower – for all of us.

I can assure you that the United States is as committed as ever to the core work of the OSCE. We have been an active and creative proposer of new initiatives and ideas at the OSCE, one's which match the real needs of participating States. When we become too intoxicated with the comforts of the Hofburg, as wonderful as they are, we lose sight of the fact that the real work is happening outside of Vienna, and that it is our duty to strengthen the OSCE's capacity to effect change and transformation, not to freeze it.

In conclusion, Mr. Minister, as you alluded to this being a year of anniversaries, I'd like to refer back again to the statement we adopted at Sofia on the 60th anniversary of the end of WWII and recall the words that our ministers endorsed: "The fulfillment of commitments contained in the Helsinki Final Act and other agreed OSCE documents are the best way to pay tribute to those who struggled for peace, freedom, democracy and human dignity, to commemorate all victims of World War II and to overcome the past."

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.