



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Address by the MFA of France, H.E. Bernard Kouchner

As prepared for delivery by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 17, 2008

Mr. Chairman.

The United States warmly welcomes Foreign Minister Kouchner to the Permanent Council today and thanks him for his address. Mr. Minister, we salute your considerable efforts in the human rights and humanitarian fields, and we note that progress in the human dimension throughout the OSCE region is a shared objective for the United States and the European Union. We consider the European Union to be a key partner in our engagement in the OSCE, and we look forward to further cooperation with France during its Presidency.

There are many challenges facing the OSCE in the coming months, and it is our hope that we can work together to promote our shared values of security, stability, democratic development, and respect for human rights.

One immediate issue is the South Caucasus, where unresolved conflicts are posing serious obstacles to our shared goals. The United States reaffirms its commitment to the territorial integrity of the countries of the South Caucasus, and we stand prepared to work together with the European Union in helping these governments to negotiate peaceful solutions to these conflicts as we continue to promote democratization and human rights.

We appreciate that France has set as a priority for its Presidency the security and development of Central Asia and Afghanistan. We share the goals of the EU and OSCE to help the countries of Central Asia develop into strong societies -- independent, democratic and prosperous. The Afghanistan donors' conference held in Paris in June elicited pledges of almost \$21 billion—an amount that will surely help create a brighter future for Afghanistan. Nevertheless, as you are well aware, the international community needs to do more to consolidate security in the region. We therefore welcome France's support to expand OSCE engagement with Afghanistan to help stabilize its border with our Central Asian participating States. France's experience in the region will contribute greatly to the OSCE's ability to have a positive impact on security in the region.

With regard to Kosovo, Mr. Minister, your tenure in Pristina set the stage for close cooperation between the United States and the European Union in working towards our shared vision of a multi-ethnic society. The United States is pleased with the relatively smooth transition to independence and we strongly support the enhanced role for the European Union under the banner of the EU Rule of Law Mission (EULEX). We understand the EU will deploy EULEX personnel throughout the country, ensuring that there will be no policing gap as UNMIK reduces its presence in Kosovo. We also fully support and look forward to the continuing role of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.

In other areas, the United States anticipates close cooperation with France and the European Union in the coming months to promote our shared values of security, stability, democracy, and human rights in the OSCE region.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.