



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Attack on Report of ODIHR Trial Monitoring in Uzbekistan

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 27, 2006

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States welcomes the release of the ODIHR report on the monitoring of last fall's trials in Uzbekistan of 15 men charged with crimes associated with the tragic events a year ago in Andijon. We would like to commend ODIHR for organizing quickly a team to observe the trials and for providing this report. We are also very pleased the Government of Uzbekistan allowed ODIHR monitors to travel to Uzbekistan to attend the trial.

The United States has taken note of the conclusions of the ODIHR trial monitoring report and we are disappointed the Government of Uzbekistan continues to fail to abide by its numerous OSCE and international commitments. In particular, we note ODIHR's valid concerns regarding the readiness of Uzbek authorities to ensure defendants' right to a lawyer in pre-trial stages and the right to effective legal counsel.

We read with interest also the comments by the Uzbek government, but I have to say that we are a bit disappointed by the content. The accusation that ODIHR "uses 'rude professionalism' in political insinuations and juggles with facts to (its) own advantage," and the questioning of OSCE's sincerity in promoting the ideals of freedom and human rights are particularly offensive, and downright false. Many of the criticisms leveled against the way Uzbek authorities reacted to the Andijon events and the conduct of the subsequent trials have been corroborated by numerous sources, including independent media reports, human rights organizations, and the observations of our own diplomats in Tashkent.

In addition -- and Mr. Chairman, I find it hard to believe that this must be said -- ODIHR specifically, and the OSCE more generally, are not seeking advantage over Uzbekistan, nor are they working against it. On the contrary, we all want to see a stable, free, and prosperous Uzbekistan. The criticisms and, more importantly, the recommendations of this report are intended to help Uzbekistan meet its OSCE commitments, commitments that all participating States have agreed to as the best way to achieve security and prosperity. Ignoring or actively thwarting these commitments are in no one's interests, including Uzbekistan's.

I would like to restate our condemnation of the violent attack and hostage-taking by armed individuals on government facilities that took place in Andijon last year. Our criticisms of Uzbek authorities should in no way be taken as justification for such acts of violence.

All countries must promote respect for human rights and democracy as the only source of long-term stability. We encourage Uzbek authorities to re-engage with the OSCE, and would like to see the commencement of open dialogue concerning the Andijon events, as well as

OSCE activities in Uzbekistan in all three OSCE dimensions. From our considered perspective, it appears that such engagement is in the long-term interest of the Uzbek government and its people.

The United States would also like to reserve the right to address these issues and the trial monitor's report more fully in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.