



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **OSCE Annual Security Review Conference 14-16 June 2010, Vienna, Austria**

**Speech for Session II – Conflict Prevention and Resolution  
as delivered by Nancy McEldowney  
15 June 2010**

Thank you very much Mr. Moderator.

I'd like to begin by thanking all the keynote speakers who have given us really insightful and valuable contributions upon which to base our discussion. What I would like to suggest as we deliberate on the topic of conflict prevention and resolution is that we use the events of the past few days in Kyrgyzstan as a prism through which we evaluate the strengths and the weaknesses of our capacity to do the tasks that are before us.

In that regard, I would applaud the invocation by the High Commissioner on National Minorities of the early warning mechanism. I would also express our very strong regret at the inability of the OSCE to issue a public statement yesterday following our deliberations on this issue.

I would also express our regret that in the statement we did issue we were unable to take up the High Commissioner's call for the OSCE to refer the matters in Kyrgyzstan to the UN Security Council. Despite our inability to agree, the Security Council did take up the issue and the presidency issued a public statement following those deliberations condemning the violence, calling for the provision of humanitarian aid as well as for a restoration of calm.

But as we look at these events and look at how we responded, it is clear that we need new capacities and it is clear that we need to look at practical, concrete steps that the OSCE can take. Not as a theoretical exercise, but as a real world example of how to deal with the problems that are at hand. I think that this is a very clear and very compelling interest that all of us have, that we share in strengthening the OSCE capacity in this area.

We must do what former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan referred to as the creation of a "culture of prevention". And if the OSCE does nothing else it should work to create, to foster that culture of prevention.

And as we look at supplementing our capacity, not just for early warning, but – as our keynote speakers have referred to it – early action. We need to think hard about how we can take that early action, how we can most effectively respond. And here we need to look just not at the tools, not just at the capacities, but at the other element that every single one of our keynote speakers has mentioned – political will. Political will to act when we need to, political will to act where we need to. And unless we have both the capacity and the will, we will not live up to the challenges that face us.

Now in some cases we know that the capacities we need already exist, and the Moscow mechanism is a good example. But I think many of us have acknowledged that we need new capacities and you are all aware of the proposals that the United States has put forward. As part of the Corfu Process, the U.S. has put forward initiatives in all three dimensions that will strengthen the OSCE's ability to prevent and resolve conflict, manage crises and conduct sustainable post-conflict rehabilitation.

The first and most important is that we have put forward a proposal for the creation of an OSCE crisis prevention mechanism so that we could do precisely what we had talked about yesterday: respond efficiently and effectively to emerging situations. It would empower the OSCE to offer rapid humanitarian relief, and provide impartial monitoring to build confidence and reduce tensions on the ground.

If we look back at recent conflicts and consider how the OSCE might have been a more effective first responder, we believe that providing the Chairmanship with limited flexibility and the tools to act quickly and decisively is a vital step for us to take to improve our collective security. We also co-sponsored a proposal on a possible energy security early warning (ESEW) mechanism that would perform a similar function in terms of bringing greater expertise and needed transparency to potential energy flashpoints before they become possible triggers for conflict.

In the human dimension, recognizing that there have recently been a number of setbacks throughout the OSCE region in the field of media freedom, we proposed to strengthen the ability of the Representative on Freedom of the Media to conduct fact-finding of events in participating States having serious implications for media freedom.

We have also supported a Romanian initiative to highlight the importance of civilian operations and missions to improve the OSCE response in post-crisis and post-conflict stabilization and rehabilitation and we would like to look for ways in which we can capture that valuable OSCE experience to benefit other international efforts.

We also believe that more attention must be devoted to resolving the protracted conflicts, as these are a serious, ongoing threat to security and stability. We believe that restoring a meaningful OSCE presence in Georgia would help reduce tensions and facilitate resolution of the conflict. We could also envision additional Confidence Building Measures in all three dimensions and increased outreach to civil society.

We see these proposals as a means to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the OSCE without making any fundamental changes in the OSCE's mandates, structures or procedures.

We have recently heard concerns that the OSCE is becoming too "flexible". We have the opposite concern – that the organization is becoming too rigid, and is hampered in carrying out the very tasks for which it was created. Enhancing the OSCE's ability to prevent and resolve conflicts is the right way to show that we are serious about strengthening this organization and endowing it with the tools needed to live up to its promise.

Thank you, Mr Moderator.