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United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Observation of the July 2009 Kyrgyzstan Election

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Jeffrey VanDreal
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 28, 2009

Mr. Chairman,

The United States regrets that Kyrgyzstan's invitation to the ODIHR to observe the July 23rd presidential election attempts to place limitations on the size and make-up of the election mission.

All OSCE participating States have commitments regarding election observation missions, including inviting ODIHR to observe the election process before, during, and after election day. It is the role of ODIHR, not the States themselves, to determine the size and conduct of its observation missions, based upon the particular circumstances of individual elections. ODIHR's professionalism, expertise, mandate and objective methodology have rightfully made it the most credible institution in international election observation.

No OSCE participating State should attempt to hamper ODIHR's effectiveness or distort its professional objectivity by imposing restrictive conditions on ODIHR's election monitoring. To do so would contradict the objectivity of election observation and raise questions about a country's commitment to transparent democratic development. All OSCE States should live up to their democratic commitments, in principle, in spirit, and in practice, and strongly defend OSCE's role in supporting democratic institutions and processes.

Kyrgyzstan's invitation to ODIHR with conditions undermines ODIHR's ability to conduct objective and meaningful election observation, and is inconsistent with Kyrgyzstan's OSCE commitments.

We call on the Kyrgyz Government to live up to its OSCE commitments and allow unrestricted ODIHR observation of the 2009 presidential election, to include both long and short-term observation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.