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United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Ukraine's Political Crisis

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
December 2, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As Secretary of State Colin Powell stated on November 24, the United States cannot accept the results of the November 21 balloting of the Ukrainian presidential election as legitimate because of the extensive and credible reports of fraud and abuse.

The United States reiterates its call to all parties in Ukraine to continue to pursue legal and political options that lead to an outcome reflecting the genuine will of the Ukrainian people.

A non-violent solution must be found for the current crisis. We note the November 28 commitment by Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, which includes President Kuchma, that force will not be used against peaceful protesters.

It is the duty of every Government to defend the right of citizens to engage in free, peaceful political expression and assembly.

The United States urges demonstrators to maintain their commitment to a peaceful and orderly exercise of their political rights.

It is also critically important that Ukrainian citizens, political leaders and government representatives avoid any actions or rhetoric that call into question Ukraine's territorial integrity.

The United States fully supports the efforts of European mediators – including OSCE Secretary General Kubis, EU High Representative Solana, Polish President Kwasniewski and Lithuanian President Adamkus. Both the government and opposition should engage these mediators in good faith.

We are pleased that the mediators appear to have had success yesterday in reviving talks between the Ukrainian parties.

The United States urges the OSCE Election Observation Mission to continue to monitor and to report on post-election processes in Ukraine.

We welcome and encourage participating States to heed ODIHR Director Ambassador Strohal's November 30 letter calling on participating States to prepare for supplying observers should another election round be held in Ukraine.

A third round of the Ukrainian election could be a way out of the crisis, but only if it occurs under conditions that meet international standards.

In addition, Mr. Chairman, we welcome the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry's confirmation that the Ukrainian invitation to the OSCE to observe the presidential election is valid for any further rounds.

We support the OSCE Election Observation Mission's recommendations to the Ukrainian Government in its November 30 update on facilitating observation of a potential additional round. Accreditations for observers to either of the first two rounds should remain valid; the Ukrainian government should be prepared to issue visas to observers upon their arrival in Ukraine; and requests for new accreditations should be allowed as close as possible to election day.

We share the concerns expressed by the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media in his November 30 press release. It is important that Mr. Haraszti remain engaged on the issue of media freedom in Ukraine at this very, very critical time.

The United States will continue to follow events in Ukraine closely, and reiterates that a non-democratic outcome of the current crisis would have serious consequences for the United States' relationship with Ukraine and for our relationship with those individual officials responsible for election fraud.

We commend the Ukrainian people for peacefully insisting on their democratic rights.

The United States encourages all participating States to continue to support Ukrainian democracy, Ukrainian stability and Ukrainian territorial integrity.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.