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United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Head of the OSCE Center in Bishkek and the Director of the OSCE Academy

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 30, 2013

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States warmly welcomes Ambassador Sergei Kapinos and Dr. Maxim Ryabkov to the Permanent Council and we thank you both for your reports.

Ambassador Kapinos, we very much appreciate your detailed and comprehensive report. Your dedicated and hardworking international and national staff has continued to do vital work to support Kyrgyzstan's implementation of OSCE principles and commitments across all three dimensions of security. Indeed, many of the Center's most important efforts defy easy categorization within the three dimensions, illustrating how true security rests on an intertwined foundation of political-military, economic, environment, and human security.

For instance, the exemplary work being done by the Community Security Initiative (CSI) necessarily incorporates all three dimensions – policing from the first, a focus on transparency from the second, and respect for human rights from the third. By including all the aspects of security, CSI has managed to markedly improve relations between Kyrgyzstan's police force and the communities they are sworn to serve and protect, thereby enhancing security both in Kyrgyzstan and across the region. This cross-dimensional approach sets a standard to be emulated throughout the OSCE. As you work to revitalize the police reform program in Kyrgyzstan, I urge you to follow this cross-dimensional model to ensure second- and third-dimension issues are included in the broader reform process.

We strongly support the Center's efforts to develop a training center for Kyrgyz and Afghan customs officials. We applaud the close cooperation with Afghanistan's Customs Academy, the "train the trainers" approach, and the use of Kyrgyz trainers in the project. All of these features serve to amplify the impact of this important project. We encourage the Center to incorporate the 2012 Ministerial Declaration on Good Governance in its law enforcement and customs training projects and to look for further ways to promote the principles of good governance, transparency, and combating corruption that were reaffirmed in that Declaration.

Ambassador Kapinos, we have greatly appreciated your mission's spot reports on potentially destabilizing events during the past year. For example, your informative report on the clash between border guards and residents of Uzbekistan's Sokh enclave last January provided timely and clear information about a complicated issue. We urge the Center to continue providing this sort of helpful early warning reporting.

We highly value the Center's efforts promoting political development in Kyrgyzstan. Through its work with Parliament, political parties, civil society, and the broader electorate, the Center is providing Kyrgyzstan with invaluable assistance in its efforts to forge a robust democratic system. We applaud the Center for its efforts to support the implementation of Kyrgyzstan's National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality.

Dr. Ryabkov, please allow me to make a few comments about the OSCE Academy, an institution you so ably lead. The Academy has become an exemplar of regional cooperation in Central Asia and a pillar of the OSCE. We congratulate you and your superb staff for the successful graduation of the first class of students in the new Master of Arts program in Economic Governance and Development. With your regional focus and devotion to serious scholarship you are training Central Asia's future leaders. We also applaud the Academy's efforts to maintain a robust alumni network; promoting lasting connections between these future leaders will become one of the Academy's greatest legacies.

We encourage you to consider how the Academy can continue to find new ways to promote regional cooperation through scholarship. The Government of Kyrgyzstan recently proposed establishing an Afghan Security Study Center at the Academy and explored the possibility of admitting students from Mongolia into the two Master's programs. Both are intriguing possibilities that deserve serious consideration.

Thank you again Ambassador Kapinos and Dr. Ryabkov for your remarks to the Permanent Council today, and for your excellent work in Bishkek.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.