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United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Macedonian Foreign Minister Antonio Milososki

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 10, 2010

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States welcomes the visit of Foreign Minister Milososki to the Permanent Council today. Mr. Minister, we thank you for your informative and insightful remarks. Macedonia's current Chairmanship of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers clearly demonstrates Macedonia's commitment to playing a constructive role in its region and beyond. The priorities you have set for your Council of Europe Chairmanship have clear relevance as well to the OSCE's body of commitments and principles and will contribute to continued cooperation and collaboration between our two organizations.

Macedonia has been a steadfast partner in international peace support operations in recent years, and its current contribution to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, where it is in the top five contributing nations on a per capita basis, speaks for itself. On the issue of Kosovo, Macedonia's recognition of Kosovo and agreement on border demarcation are major contributors to stability in the region.

The OSCE Mission in Skopje continues to play an integral role in supporting the government in its reform process. The Mission's work on issues related to rule of law, good governance, elections, confidence building, as well as the monitoring activities carried out by the Tetovo field office, remain relevant, and we do not believe now is the time to pursue major reductions in these activities.

Mr. Chairman, recent events on the Kosovo-Macedonia border have reminded us that we should not be complacent about interethnic tensions. The Governments of Macedonia and Kosovo responded quickly and responsibly, with political leaders on all sides condemning the violence. While the events seem to be limited and contained, they underscore the need to promote ethnic harmony.

Mr. Minister, we thank you again for taking the time to come to the Permanent Council to address us. The United States looks further to continued cooperation and collaboration, both bilaterally, through the OSCE, and in other forums and organizations, and we wish you every success in your important role in chairing the Committee of Ministers in the Council of Europe.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.