



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the Geneva Discussions

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 10, 2011

The United States was pleased to participate in the fifteenth round of the Geneva Discussions on Georgia. We continue to believe these talks have the potential to lead to concrete improvements in the security and humanitarian situations on the ground. We appreciate participants' relatively constructive approach in last week's discussions and hope this will lead to further cooperation, in particular through the Joint Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms, which all agree are playing a useful role in helping to prevent and resolve security incidents. In future rounds of discussions, we urge participants to work toward agreement on international security arrangements, confidence-building measures, and humanitarian initiatives.

It remains essential to strengthen security and stability in Georgia, address ongoing humanitarian concerns, and improve human rights conditions on the ground. We continue to urge the Russian Federation to implement the August 2008 cease-fire agreement fully, as well as its September 2008 implementing measures, signed by Presidents Medvedev and Saakashvili and mediated by President Sarkozy. We note, in particular, the important commitments made by the Russian Federation in these instruments to withdraw its troops to positions held prior to the start of hostilities and to allow humanitarian access to the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia. The Russian Federation's deployment of troops and weapons in the regions is inconsistent with its cease-fire commitments and clearly threatens stability. It also demonstrates the need for additional transparency, including an international presence in the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions. We continue to encourage the Russian Federation to demonstrate its commitment to the peaceful resolution of the conflict by making its own pledge to the non-use of force, corresponding to President Saakashvili's unilateral declaration before the European Parliament last November.

We remain convinced that a meaningful international presence throughout Georgia, to include the OSCE and other international actors, can play a valuable role in reducing tensions, facilitating humanitarian assistance, and monitoring and improving human rights and humanitarian conditions on the ground. The successful implementation of OSCE-led water and gas projects would represent a positive step forward. We note, however, that the success of any international effort depends on unhindered access to the whole of Georgia.

Our commitment to Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity is clear. Equally clear is our commitment to finding a long-term, peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.