



United States Mission to the OSCE

PRESS RELEASE

September 6, 2013

Looking to the Future of the OSCE

Excerpts from Ambassador Ian Kelly's Final Remarks to the OSCE Permanent Council, Vienna September 5, 2013

Before [making] some personal remarks, I'd like to offer some parting comments about this unique organization. The predecessor of this body was founded in the 1970s to promote East-West dialogue. The OSCE was – and remains – unique among international organizations in its adherence to the concept of a comprehensive security with economic, environmental and human dimensions, in addition to the traditional political and military. In the 1990s, it took on the mission of helping the newly independent states manage their transition to democracy.

Regrettably, the consensus in favor of this democratic mission has been eroding, and human rights and basic freedoms are increasingly under threat. Despite the evidence of history – including recently in the Middle East – that no state that restricts fundamental freedoms is ever truly secure or stable, certain governments continue to impose tighter restrictions on democratic space in the name of “security.”

Even as the consensus for promotion of democracy at the OSCE has been wavering, the Organization's instruments for democracy promotion have not. The activities of ODIHR, particularly its human dimension meetings; of the field missions; the Parliamentary Assembly; the High Commissioner for National Minorities; and the Representative on Freedom of the Media, all remain robust and can count on my government's continued support. Maintaining the autonomy and vitality of these institutions, and preserving the freedom of NGOs to express their views and concerns at the HDIM and other fora, must remain top priorities of the Organization.

While the commitment of certain participating States to all aspects of comprehensive security has become a major concern, I believe that a recommitment by all participating States to the principle of inclusive security – “from Vancouver to Vladivostok” – is also essential to the future success of the OSCE. There are still pressing security threats in Europe, with danger of conflict remaining, particularly in the south Caucasus, as well as in Central Asia. We need to work together to address these challenges in a multilateral context. The OSCE is an important vehicle for realizing a vision of cooperative security, emphasizing elements of civilian power, including border and resource management, community policing training, combating trafficking of

narcotics and human beings, and implementing confidence building measures to reduce the danger of conflict. These cooperative activities can also count on our firm and abiding support.

In the '90s, we also created three arms control instruments: the CFE and Open Skies treaties and the Vienna Document. They were designed not only to knit the region into one space, but more importantly, to promote military transparency and predictability. Unfortunately, like the other creations of the 1990s, they too are eroding and are in significant danger of sliding into irrelevancy.

As the threat of large-scale conflict in Europe has receded, we should take the opportunity to carefully examine the current military environment in the OSCE region to determine how best to fashion arms control agreements for the 21st century, and with the intention of preserving the transparency and predictability that have made us all safer. At the same time, we should also endeavor to develop confidence and security building measures in areas, such as cyber security, that were not foreseen during the 90s. The OSCE's tradition of CSBMs provides a model for regions, such as the Middle East and South Asia, where greater transparency and predictability are sorely needed. But we must also make a greater effort here in Vienna, to invest more in the survival and renewal of CSBMs to address the security demands of the new century.

I hope you will extend your usual warm hospitality and collegiality to Ambassador Dan Baer, who arrives next week. His appointment is yet another sign of the United States' deep and abiding commitment to the OSCE.

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