



United States Mission to the OSCE

Remarks on OSCE Support for Kyrgyzstan

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 24, 2010

At the outset, I want to express my thanks to the Chair for issuing its Concept Paper Tuesday afternoon outlining urgent and concrete steps that the institutions of the OSCE can take immediately in response to the crisis in Kyrgyzstan. As Ambassador Kelly stated on Monday, we appreciate the hard work of the OSCE to help the citizens and government of one of our own participating States at a time of great need.

The situation in the south of Kyrgyzstan, while having seen some improvement in past days, remains dangerously fragile. We remain concerned about the prospect of further violence and abuses of human rights. With the constitutional referendum only days away, the need for us to send a clear message of action is vital.

The United States therefore welcomes, endorses, and is prepared to support the measures set forth in the Chair's concept paper. These measures give meaning to our collective statement on June 15 that this Organization stands ready to assist Kyrgyzstan in resolving the current crisis, preventing the spillover of tensions in the region, and promoting post-conflict rehabilitation and reconciliation.

Specifically, we fully support the proposal to enhance the capabilities of the OSCE Center in Bishkek. The Center is uniquely positioned to draw upon its contacts and experienced staff to assist in critical ways. The United States is prepared to assist the Center in Bishkek through seconded personnel as needed, perhaps with expertise in Conflict-Resolution/Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and/or in strategic communications.

We also support sending a police task force to enhance the capacity of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek to support the efforts of Kyrgyz authorities to restore public order through responsible policing, strengthening the professionalism of local law-enforcement authorities and reducing inter-ethnic tensions. Immediately upon approval, the United States will begin working as rapidly as possible to identify our share of police experts willing and able to take up this assignment.

As called for by the High Commissioner last week, we also support the establishment of an independent and international body to assess and evaluate the events beginning on June 10 that have led to this humanitarian catastrophe, and I note the Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan's comment about the need for an objective and independent assessment. Such a commission could be critical in reestablishing trust among the people of Kyrgyzstan, most particularly between ethnic Uzbek and Kyrgyz citizens, and ensuring accountability for human rights abuses. As known, trusted and impartial interlocutors, ODIHR and the HCNM would be well placed to begin this process. We would support an ODIHR team traveling to both Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan – with the consent of both governments – as quickly as circumstances and security will permit.

And we are also pleased to hear that the HCNM will be making the trip very soon, which he offered to the government, and the government had welcomed his visit.

Of paramount importance at this moment is letting the victims of the violence know that help is coming -- and coming soon. The presence of a team of international police officers will go a long way to encouraging people to return to their homes and begin taking the steps necessary to rebuild the peace that, as Ambassador Imanalieva told us, existed for so long between Uzbek and Kyrgyz citizens in Kyrgyzstan.

We also need to ensure that food, water, medical supplies, tents, blankets and other necessities are reaching those in most need. On a bilateral basis, the United States has provided or planned for approximately 32 million dollars in aid to Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to meet immediate humanitarian needs, provide assistance to displaced and returning families and to address the roots of the conflict through community development mitigation programs.

Mister Chairman, the plan you have submitted for our consideration is a good one. The time and the place for action are here and now. The United States strongly urges all participating States to lend support to these measures immediately so we can begin making a difference for those desperately in need of our collective effort. To fail the people of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan now would also be a failure for us as an organization.

In conclusion, I would like to cite the words of Woodrow Wilson, one of the most noted statesmen of the U.S. in the beginning of the 20th century, who said "We are not put into the world to sit and know - we are put into it to act." And the time for us to act is now, to help our fellow participating State.

Thank you Mister Chairman.