



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response by Ambassador Ian Kelly to the Chairman's Welcoming Remarks

delivered to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 18, 2010

I am honored to be here with you, and grateful for the warm welcome I have received. I was charged by Secretary Clinton to ensure the OSCE lives up to its promise. We see the OSCE as a key to ensuring comprehensive security for all of our states and citizens.

35 years ago, at the height of the cold war, 35 countries pledged to take steps to promote confidence and transparency, and diminish mistrust. The Helsinki Final Act demonstrated that we can turn challenges into opportunities, enshrining the foundational principle that peace among states is dependent on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms within states. These rights and freedoms are indeed universal. They are not American or Western values that can be applied selectively, depending on a country's history or geopolitical position.

I look forward to working with you in order, once again, to find the opportunities in our challenges. OSCE has received a mandate to be the forum for a comprehensive review of transatlantic security, and we are working together to improve our collective security.

Those original 35 signatories of the Helsinki Final Act have become the 56 now represented around this table, underscoring the need for diplomatic dialogue and cooperation in the OSCE space. I pledge to work constructively with each of you to advance our common agenda of a lasting mutual security rooted in respect for universal values.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.