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United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the Situation in Kyrgyzstan

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 15, 2010

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like very briefly to reiterate our appreciation to the Chairmanship for your very swift action on this and to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Salber personally for going out to Bishkek in this very tense situation. As was noted, our Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia, Robert Blake, is in Bishkek. He had meetings yesterday, and he continues his meetings today. He discussed with Roza Otunbayeva a number of ways the U.S. can help in this situation and expressed our optimism about the steps that the provisional government has already taken, and, of course, we, the United States, look forward to helping in a bilateral way in supporting this process as it moves forward.

I agree with Mr. Salber that the key to the resolution of this very tense situation is returning the country to a legal footing, and, as our Russian colleague has pointed out, the OSCE has the tools to help in this regard, and of course two of those most appropriate tools are ODIHR and the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

On the one hand I must say I'm encouraged that the government plans to hold elections within six months. On the other hand, of course, as you point out, this very strict timetable presents some real challenges. And this means, I think, that we have to develop this coordinated list of assistance, where we can help return the country to a legal footing, and I would just urge all involved to try and finalize this list as soon as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.