



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the Geneva Discussions

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 28, 2010

The United States was pleased once again to participate in the Geneva Discussions on Georgia.

We continue to believe that these talks have the potential to lead to concrete improvements in the security and humanitarian situations in Georgia. We note the Russian Federation's October 18 decision to remove its checkpoint in Perevi. We hope this development will be followed by the full implementation of the August 12, 2008 cease-fire agreement and its September 8, 2008 implementing measures, signed by Presidents Medvedev and Saakashvili and mediated by President Sarkozy, which includes commitments by the Russian Federation to withdraw its troops to positions held prior to the start of hostilities, and allow humanitarian access to the separatist regions.

The August 12 agreement also called for "no recourse to the use of force" and the September 8 agreement of course called for the OSCE observers "to continue to carry out their mandate" in South Ossetia.

While we believe firmly in the potential of the Geneva Discussions, we also believe they remain an under-utilized forum. The South Ossetian de facto authorities chose not to participate fully in the October 14 round of discussions, but we are pleased to hear reports that they chose to participate in today's meeting of the South Ossetia Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM). These meetings can play a critical role in helping to prevent and resolve detentions and other security incidents.

We urge participants in the Geneva Discussions to engage constructively in future talks, which we hope will focus on completing the implementation of the 2008 ceasefire commitments. It is essential that we strengthen transparency, security and stability in Georgia, address ongoing humanitarian concerns, and improve human rights conditions on the ground.

As the OSCE Summit approaches, and as we continue to seek concrete improvements in the security and humanitarian situations in Georgia, we will continue to urge the re-establishment of a meaningful international presence, including the OSCE, throughout the country. We remain convinced that the OSCE and other international actors can play a valuable role in reducing tensions, resolving problems, providing humanitarian assistance, and monitoring and improving human rights and humanitarian conditions on the ground. The successful implementation of OSCE-led water and irrigation system rehabilitation projects would represent a positive step forward. We note, however, that the success of any international effort is contingent on the provision of 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 conflicts.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.