



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Events in the Middle East and North Africa

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 10, 2011

Given the busy schedule of PC statements today, I will keep this brief. Nonetheless, I think it is a very important issue to raise.

The citizens of OSCE countries are naturally interested in the ongoing developments in North Africa and the Middle East, which are creating widespread opportunities for democratic and economic progress throughout the region.

The OSCE, in accordance with its founding principles, should be prepared to consider seriously requests from these countries in areas in which this organization has capacity and expertise. We are not suggesting any kind of lasting presence in these countries but the OSCE has expertise – human rights, migration and minority policies, media freedom, election laws, and constitutional reform – these are all areas which the OSCE can usefully offer in this time of urgent need. We should be thinking now of what we may be able to do through ODIHR, CPC, HCNM and other OSCE structures. The United States stands ready to confer with other participating States in preparation for potential requests for assistance from OSCE or ODIHR.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.