



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the Geneva Discussions on Georgia

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 29, 2010

The United States was pleased to participate in the July 27 round of the Geneva Discussions.

We continue to believe that these talks have the potential to serve as an important forum for improving the security and humanitarian situations in Georgia. Constructive engagement from all participants can lead to positive developments on the ground, but we have seen continued problems and obstruction, not least the refusal of the South Ossetian de facto authorities to resume regular meetings of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) for South Ossetia. In addition, commitments clearly made by the Russian Federation in the August 12, 2008 cease-fire arrangement to withdraw its troops to pre-hostilities positions and to allow unhindered humanitarian access have not been fulfilled.

In this session of Geneva, as in previous sessions, the Russian Federation and the de facto authorities continued their insistence that Georgia make additional commitments on the "non-use of force." The U.S. position on this was clearly articulated in the press statement issued after the eleventh round of the Geneva Discussions in June. We note that the August 12 cease-fire arrangement signed by Presidents Saakashvili and Medvedev already establishes the sides' commitment to the non-use of force. Full implementation of the agreement – which we still await from the Russian Federation – would render additional commitments on the non-use of force unnecessary. We hope that future rounds of the Geneva Discussions will focus on completing the implementation of the August 12 agreement and help us achieve our common goals of strengthening security and stability in Georgia, addressing humanitarian concerns, and improving human rights conditions on the ground. It is essential that we find solutions to these pressing problems of those whose day-to-day lives remain affected by this conflict.

As we work to improve the security and humanitarian situations in Georgia, we will continue to urge the re-establishment of a meaningful international presence throughout the country, including a presence by the OSCE. We remain convinced that the OSCE and other international actors can play a valuable role in resolving problems, providing humanitarian assistance, and monitoring human rights and humanitarian conditions. In this regard, unhindered access to the whole of Georgia is essential.

The United States remains committed to finding a long-term, peaceful resolution to the conflict in Georgia. Secretary Clinton delivered this message July 5 in Tbilisi and reiterated our steadfast commitment to Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.