



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Khodorkovsky and Lebedev Verdicts

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 20, 2011

In a December 27 statement, Secretary Clinton said that the guilty verdicts in the second trial of Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev on charges of embezzlement and money laundering raise serious questions about selective prosecution and about the rule of law being overshadowed by political considerations.

No government can nurture a modern economy without also developing an independent judiciary that serves as an instrument for furthering economic growth, ensuring equal treatment under the law, and advancing justice in a predictable and fair way.

Russia, the United States and all other participating States of the OSCE have "categorically and irrevocably" reaffirmed, as recently as at last month's Astana Summit, that "the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned."

In this spirit, the United States will continue to be frank in voicing concerns about the human rights situation in all OSCE participating States. And of course, we continue to welcome any comments other participating States may have about human rights and fundamental freedoms in the United States.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.