



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Statement on the Anniversary of the 9/11 Attacks

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Gary Robbins
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 8, 2011

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

On this 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, we remember that 9/11 was not only an attack on the United States, it was an attack on the world and on the humanity and hopes that we all share.

We remember that among the nearly 3,000 innocent people lost that day were hundreds of citizens from more than 90 countries, including 20 OSCE participating States. They were men and women, young and old, of many races and many faiths. On the eve of this solemn anniversary, we join with their families and their nations in honoring their memory.

We remember with gratitude how ten years ago the world came together as one. Around the globe, entire cities came to a standstill for moments of silence. People offered their prayers in churches, mosques, synagogues and other places of worship. Those of us in the United States will never forget how people in every corner of the world stood with us in solidarity in candlelight vigils and among the seas of flowers placed at our embassies.

We remember that in the weeks after 9/11, we acted as one international community. As part of a broad coalition, we drove al Qaeda from its training camps in Afghanistan, toppled the Taliban, and gave the Afghan people a chance to live free from terror.

As an international community, we have shown that terrorists are no match for the strength and resilience of our citizens. We have been clear that the United States is not, nor will it ever be, at war with Islam. Rather, with allies and partners we are united against al Qaeda, which has attacked dozens of countries and killed tens of thousands of innocent men, women and children—the vast majority of them Muslims. This week, we remember all the victims of al Qaeda and the courage and resilience with which their families and fellow citizens have persevered, from the Middle East to Europe, from Africa to Asia.

Working together, we have disrupted al Qaeda plots, eliminated Osama bin Laden and much of his leadership, and put al Qaeda on the path to defeat. Meanwhile, people across the Middle East and North Africa are showing that the surest path to justice and dignity is the moral force of nonviolence, not mindless terrorism and violence. It is clear that violent extremists are being left behind and that the future belongs to those who want to build, not destroy.

We have made clear that all nations and people seeking a future of peace and prosperity will have a partner in the United States. In the Arab world and beyond, we will stand up for the dignity and universal rights of all human beings. Around the world, we will continue the hard work of pursuing peace, promoting the development that lifts people from poverty, and advancing the food security, health and good governance that unleashes the potential of citizens and societies.

Mr. Chairman, the events of 9/11 also changed this organization. It spurred us to create new structures and new tools within the OSCE, such as the Action against Terrorism Unit and the Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department, in order to more effectively address threats to our security in the 21st century, while protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. It led to agreement on a new generation of OSCE commitments, not only in the field of counter-terrorism, but also in the human dimension. We in the OSCE embraced one of the most important lessons learned from the events of 9/11, namely the importance of fostering tolerance among disparate groups and faiths.

Those who attacked us on 9/11 attacked us all. They hoped to drive a wedge between the United States and the rest of the world. They failed. On the eve of this 10th anniversary, we are united with our friends and partners in remembering all those we have lost in this struggle. In their memory, we reaffirm the spirit of partnership and mutual respect that is needed to realize a world where all people live in dignity, freedom and peace.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.