



United States Mission to the OSCE

Looking to Athens

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Carol Fuller
to the Reinforced Permanent Council, Vienna
November 24, 2009

The United States remains deeply committed to this organization, and to the principles and commitments enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and other jointly agreed documents.

We see the OSCE as a central forum for engagement, dialogue, and the development of common responses to contemporary challenges. We value the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security, and believe it is precisely this multi-dimensional approach that makes the OSCE an essential element of our security architecture. To this end, we have provided considerable political and financial support here at the OSCE over the years--and will continue to do so.

At our Ministerial in Athens, we hope to see a reaffirmation of our existing commitments -- particularly those relating to the promotion of democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms. Fulfilling our commitments in these areas is critical to long-term peace and prosperity across the OSCE region. There is a direct link between individual and inter-state security.

We hope also to reach agreement on sustaining the Corfu Process. As the most inclusive security organization in Europe and Eurasia, the OSCE clearly is the best place for these discussions. We support the Secretary General's observations on the "remarkable distance" we have already covered in launching a new European security dialogue in the framework of the Corfu Process.

Our dialogue thus far has shown that the full implementation of existing commitments across the OSCE's three dimensions would bring about a marked improvement in security. It is time now to consider practical, concrete ways to better implement our commitments, and to strengthen the OSCE's capacity to exercise its core crisis prevention and conflict resolution mandate, particularly in light of the recent return of military conflict to the OSCE region.

In future Corfu Process discussions, we would like to see an emphasis on the key areas identified in our 10 weeks of discussions, with an eye to making concrete progress on improving the implementation of OSCE commitments in all three dimensions; strengthening democracy and the rule of law; protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms; improving the OSCE's conflict prevention and resolution capabilities; intensifying efforts to address transnational threats and cross-dimensional challenges; and ways to create or more effectively use existing OSCE mechanisms and instruments across the organization's three dimensions. These address some of the key security areas we have identified where more work is needed on European and Eurasian security.

The Corfu Process provides a unique opportunity. We should seize this opportunity by summoning the political will, not merely to make incremental changes to OSCE mechanisms, but to address the underlying problems. We have made concrete suggestions in this regard, and will continue to contribute constructively to the discussion.

We firmly believe additional dialogue and practical approaches are needed, and would welcome at the Athens Ministerial a declaration and decision on the continuation of the Corfu

Process. Before committing to hold a high-level meeting, however, the participating States need to work together, through the Corfu Process and in other OSCE venues, to achieve concrete results in each of the three dimensions. We believe that only then should the participating States consider the question of the timing of such a meeting. We would welcome an overall political declaration that forcefully addresses key issues, especially where key principles and values are at stake.

Indeed, no European security regime can be truly effective unless it is based on shared principles and values. In our founding documents, we jointly committed to these values, including respect for democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms, territorial integrity, and the right of sovereign states to determine their own security arrangements. The August 2008 war in Georgia and the persistence of unresolved conflicts in the OSCE region demonstrate that we clearly have work to do.

On decisions, we believe we are moving towards consensus on some important decisions, some of which reflect our Corfu discussions. For example, in the first dimension, we are pleased that on transnational threats, for the first time, the United States and the Russian Federation are working together to cosponsor a decision. We look forward in 2010 to working not only with the Russian Federation but with other partners, and with the leadership of the Kazakh chair, in this area. We also have an opportunity--and we should seize it--to adopt a decision on counter narcotics--drug trafficking--that includes limited, and I emphasize limited, project work inside Afghanistan--the source of much of the drug problems, especially in Central Asia and throughout the OSCE region itself.

In the second dimension, we have another opportunity and that is on energy security. Here the Corfu Process does yet not seem to have trickled down--in the words of our esteemed Canadian colleague who mentioned this about seven weeks ago, I think. We need to have the Corfu Process permeate what we are doing. At this point, we have an opportunity there, and we would call on all participating States to find consensus language on establishing an OSCE mandate for a role for which it is appropriately suited.

And in the third dimension we have a number of good decisions that are in process. It looks like women's participation in politics, for example, is moving forward very nicely. But, again, it looks like the Corfu Process hasn't yet trickled down to the freedom of media decision, which is one of the major areas that we discussed during the Corfu Process.

In conclusion, Madam Chair, in Athens, we look forward not only to reaffirming our existing commitments, but also to looking for ways to strengthen and improve our implementation of them.

And again, thanks from my delegation to the government of Greece for all of the excellent work you have done and to the Secretary General for his presentation this morning. We look forward to working with the Kazakhstan chair next year and to furthering the work of our collective organization.

Thank you, Madam Chair.