



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Response to Czech Foreign Minister Schwarzenberg**

As delivered by Chargé d' Affaires Kyle Scott  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
January 29, 2009

It is a pleasure to welcome Foreign Minister Schwarzenberg to the Permanent Council. The United States and the Czech Republic have a close bilateral relationship, and we also enjoy a close partnership with the European Union based on shared values and a strategic outlook. We look forward to building on both relationships to address the many challenges facing the OSCE in the coming months. Some of these dovetail well with your country's priorities for its EU Presidency.

An issue of immediate concern is Georgia. First off, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the work of our Chairman-in-Office in helping smooth the way for resumption of gas deliveries to South Ossetia, and hope the commitment for follow-on work on water deliveries will prove just as successful.

Nevertheless, the security situation in Georgia remains highly unstable. While the August 12 cease-fire and the September 8 agreement ended the active phase of fighting in the war, we continue to hear reports of kidnappings, banditry, and ethnic cleansing, and attacks on Georgian officials and property. Human Rights Watch recently called attention to violations of international law by all parties during the August conflict, including indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks by both Georgian and Russian forces, and South Ossetian forces' campaign of deliberate destruction of ethnic Georgian villages in South Ossetia. Human Rights Watch also reported Russia's failure to ensure public order and safety in the areas of Georgia that remain under its control.

These failures underscore the need for further OSCE engagement and an OSCE monitoring presence with uninhibited access to the whole of Georgia. We agree entirely with Foreign Minister Schwarzenberg. Now is the time for more—not less—international engagement; engagement to help prevent violence, to identify ongoing cease-fire violations, to deter human rights abuses, and facilitate humanitarian assistance. In that respect, we highly value the role the EU Monitoring Mission is able to play in ensuring transparency and providing an additional international presence. We also greatly appreciate the contribution by EU Special Representative Morel to launching and sustaining the Geneva process.

We stand ready to work with the Chairmanship to ensure continued OSCE presence in Georgia, and are prepared to support the Chairmanship's basic approach, and we agree entirely with Foreign Minister Schwarzenberg about the importance of remaining sensitive to the need to support Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

We also welcome the Czech Presidency's emphasis on energy security as one of its priority issues. The OSCE affirmed its commitments on energy security in the 2003 Maastricht

Strategy Document and in the 2006 Ministerial Council's Decision. We believe the OSCE can usefully supplement what is occurring in other fora in this critical area.

Our organization brings together energy producers, consumers, and transit countries, all of which have roles in securing supply and transit, protecting infrastructure, managing demand, and bringing new technologies to market. The OSCE should continue with the commitments made in 2003 and 2006 by engaging in activities that will help us identify where our interests converge and what policies and instruments we can bring to bear that will enhance energy security for us all.

As in the past, we will continue to work with the European Union to strengthen all aspects of the human dimension. In line with the spirit of Helsinki, the European Union and the United States, together with other participating States of the OSCE, must resolutely support the core values of this organization—the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the promotion of democratic institutions and the rule of law.

We also welcome the Czech EU Presidency's emphasis on fortifying links with the EU's eastern neighbors through your 'Eastern Partnership Initiative.' These countries benefit significantly from increased contact with the EU and other OSCE partners. This important proposal reinforces our view that the previous enlargements by the EU and NATO over the past decade have made a significant contribution to stability and prosperity in Europe. The integration of additional countries into these euro-Atlantic structures has not come at the expense of any other neighboring country or region, but has strengthened stability, security, and prosperity for us all.

In these and other areas, we look forward to continuing to work with our EU partners.

Please be assured, Mr. Foreign Minister, of the full cooperation of the United States during the Czech presidency.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.