



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Fictitious Imedi Television Broadcast in Georgia

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 18, 2010

The March 13 fictitious broadcast on Imedi television was profoundly alarming for many who did not know it was fictitious.

As Ambassador Azimov noted, the U.S. Ambassador to Georgia immediately expressed our concern at the failure to clearly mark the program as fictitious throughout the entire broadcast. He also described it as “irresponsible and frankly very unconstructive in addressing the very real security challenges that Georgia faces.”

We believe independent media and professional journalism are important components of democracies. We strongly hope that similar incidents will be avoided in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Addendum:

To correct a point raised by the Russian Federation: U.S. Ambassador to Georgia John Bass never called into question the culture of democracy in Georgia. Rather, when referring to the Imedi TV broadcast, Ambassador Bass said Georgia was completing its transition to democracy.