



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the 16th Round of the Geneva Discussions

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 10, 2011

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States was pleased to participate in the sixteenth round of the Geneva Discussions on Georgia.

We continue to believe these talks have the potential to lead to concrete improvements in the security and humanitarian situations on the ground. With regard to the security situation, we remain concerned about the recent spate of bombing plots in Georgia. In Geneva, we urged all participants to treat the incidents seriously. We hope to see enhanced cooperation among the Geneva participants, in particular through the Joint Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms, which all agree are playing a constructive role. In future discussions, we hope participants will work toward agreement on international security arrangements, increased confidence-building measures, and strengthened humanitarian initiatives.

We remain convinced that a meaningful international presence throughout Georgia, to include the OSCE and other international actors, can play a valuable role in reducing tensions, facilitating humanitarian assistance, and monitoring and improving human rights and humanitarian conditions on the ground. The successful implementation of OSCE-led water and gas projects would represent a positive step forward. We note, however, that the success of any international effort depends on unhindered access to the whole of Georgia.

We continue to urge the Russian Federation to fulfill all of its commitments under the 2008 cease-fire agreement, including withdrawing its troops to positions held prior to the start of hostilities and allowing full humanitarian access to the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia. The Russian Federation's continued militarization of the breakaway regions is inconsistent with these commitments and undermines security and stability. It also demonstrates the need for additional transparency, including an international monitoring presence in the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions.

We continue to encourage the Russian Federation to make its own pledge to the non-use of force, corresponding to President Saakashvili's November 23, 2010 unilateral declaration in front of the European Parliament.

The United States remains committed to Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and to finding a long-term, peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.