



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, Ambassador Andrew Tesoriere

As delivered by Chargé d' Affaires, a. i. Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 26, 2011

The United States wants to extend a warm welcome to Ambassador Tesoriere and to thank him for his very thorough report. The report casts light on the issues and events that have shaped Kyrgyzstan for the last 18 months – and especially the valuable role the OSCE has played. The more than 130 activity and spot reports during that time have served this body well in keeping abreast of breaking events in Kyrgyzstan. Please also extend our sincere appreciation to the members of your staff whose work has been so exemplary. We also commend you for the coordinating work the Centre has done in the International Tri-partite cooperation – an important function for an OSCE field mission as the key regional security organization that the OSCE is.

Kyrgyzstan is an important ally of the United States. We are pleased to participate in providing continuing and ongoing support to the government and the people of Kyrgyzstan, including through the OSCE Center in Bishkek.

The United States concurs with your assessment that the achievements in Kyrgyzstan are real and have exceeded the expectations of many. Of course a great deal remains to be done – especially in the highly sensitive field of reducing ethnic tensions.

Until the underlying issues concerning differences in treatment between ethnic groups are addressed, this cycle will remain unbroken. Kyrgyzstan has begun taking some steps necessary to begin this process, including its full cooperation with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry into the Events in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010 led by Finnish Parliamentarian Kimmo Kiljunen. We urge the government to follow through by carefully reviewing the recommendations of the commission and implementing them to the fullest extent possible.

We also urge the government to address, as your report indicates, the lack of ethnic Uzbek representation in the government. Similarly, the disproportionately high number of ethnic Uzbeks facing prosecution in the south appears inconsistent with the numbers of ethnic Uzbeks among the victims of violence in June 2010. We also urge the government to address immediately the arbitrary detentions, torture and extortion by law enforcement officials.

We have repeatedly urged the government to review and address serious irregularities in the case brought against detained human rights activist and ethnic Uzbek Azimzhan Askarov.

The United States joins in your assessment that the Community Security Initiative has a continuing role to play in reducing ethnic tensions and re-establishing people's trust in law enforcement in Kyrgyzstan. We also agree that the CSI has established good community-level relations with both local police and the public – the key to its eventual success. As you know, the United States has asked for clear, objective benchmarks by which the progress of the CSI can be gauged and the report in March was a good start; however, as we go forward, more detail will be needed. The United States has supported the CSI with one million dollars in funding and by seconding three members of the international team. We look forward to being able to provide additional support following an objective demonstration that benchmarks are being met.

The United States also supports the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and the important role it plays in promoting regional security dialogue. To this end, I am pleased to announce today we are making a new contribution of 50,000 Euros to the Academy in support of a Masters program in Economic Development. I believe, Ambassador, these comments provide a partial response to your four questions about potential future work. We will engage with you actively on the others in the future.

Finally, the United States wants to voice its support for the work the Center has undertaken in connection with the upcoming presidential elections. We urge the government to take advantage of the assistance offered by ODIHR in completing the election legislation and improving voter lists. OSCE/ODIHR found last year's ballot reflected "the political will to hold democratic elections in line with OSCE commitments." This becomes the base upon which future democratic elections must be built. The United States stands ready to assist Kyrgyzstan in its democratic aspirations and we support the work of the OSCE in advancing those goals.

Thank you again Ambassador; we wish continued success to you, the OSCE mission, and all the people of Kyrgyzstan.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.