



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement re Kyrgyzstan

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Special Permanent Council, Vienna
June 21, 2010

Today marks the 11th day since the outbreak of violence in Kyrgyzstan. For those who fled their homes, for those living in tents, or the parking lots of dilapidated factories, for those living without access to food, water and other basics, this must seem like an eternity.

A week ago, we, the Permanent Council, drafted a statement urging quick action. We, the Permanent Council, have taken no action. Let me be clear that we're very grateful to the Secretariat, to the Center in Bishkek, and to the Special Representative of the Chairmanship, Mr. Karibzhanov, for their quick action and their hard and tireless work.

Mr. Chairman, no decision to act is in itself a decision. We need to take positive action. We should act on the five projects that the Secretary General has outlined to us in very general terms, separately and based on their merits. Of course, we should only take actions our Kyrgyz and Uzbek colleagues are comfortable with. But some of these actions, such as enhancing the work of the Center, or the activities of the High Commissioner, can be done incrementally, and within the mandates the Secretary General pointed out.

But by taking no action, even incremental action, reasonable people, including in my own capital, could conclude that this organisation is not ready to step up, and prefers to talk rather than act. One step is better than no steps.

You all know that I've spent my career in communications, and I can tell you that the message that we're communicating is that we prefer to stand on the sidelines. This is not the kind of message I feel comfortable with, and not the kind of message that any of my colleagues around this table should feel comfortable with.

Ambassador Imanalieva has pointed out that this organization has expertise – very needed expertise – in conflict management, and we need to help. And we need to take even small steps, even some small actions, as the Permanent Council, to show that we're engaged.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.