



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Address by Slovenian MFA, Dr. Dimitrij Rupel

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 24, 2008

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Minister, what a great pleasure it is to once again welcome you to the Permanent Council. The United States has fond memories of our close collaboration with Slovenia, and with you Mr. Minister, during your energetic and successful Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2005. We again thank Slovenia for its commendable service to this Organization.

Mr. Minister, the United States certainly anticipates further cooperation with Slovenia during its Presidency of the European Union to help resolve together the many challenges facing the OSCE in the coming months. Some of these dovetail well with Slovenia's own priorities for its EU Presidency.

Obviously, one immediate issue is Kosovo. As we have said on numerous occasions, the United States believes that the people of Kosovo and the region urgently need clarity about their future, and the sooner the better. The Troika negotiations made a good faith effort to bring the two sides together. But that effort has ended, and it is time to move on. It is our view that reviving negotiations at this point would serve no purpose, and could potentially destabilize the region. We are therefore looking forward to consulting closely with you, Minister Rupel, and all our friends in the European Union, to bring a rapid and peaceful close to this chapter in Balkan history. We remain steadfast in our belief that the plan laid out by UN Special Representative Martti Ahtisaari—including his recommendation for supervised independence—is the best one. We are reaching out to the Kosovars to make certain they are committed to fulfilling the responsibilities that his plan outlines for them. That plan envisions an important and continuing role for the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, which the United States fully supports. In any event, we hope to work with the EU and other delegations to ensure that the Mission's key functions continue.

With regard to the CFE Treaty, the OSCE will most certainly feel some of the repercussions of Russia's decision to suspend implementation of its obligations under CFE. This unilateral action has the potential of undermining the viability of the CFE regime and the arms control basket of the OSCE that the Russian Federation claims to hold dear. We hope that the Russian Federation will reverse its decision on "suspension" and resume implementation of its Treaty obligations.

As in the past, we will work with the European Union to strengthen all aspects of the human dimension. It is important for the European Union and the United States— together with all participating States who support this organization’s core values of democracy, human rights, rule of law and protection of individual liberties—to stand firm in their defense, especially now with present efforts to chip away at their progress. The United States believes strongly that these commitments serve as the foundation for peace and security in the OSCE region.

With respect to our human dimension commitments, we hope to work with our EU partners to ensure that we do not preside over steps to degrade or dismantle key elements of the security and cooperation approaches - the OSCE “acquis”— that have been developed within the OSCE over the last decade and more.

In other areas, the United States looks forward to its work with Slovenia and the European Union in the coming months to build on an already existing solid foundation. In particular, we should support the OSCE’s work in Central Asia, and reach agreement on new cooperation related to Afghanistan. We believe that this new initiative represents an opportunity for this organization to look ahead to future challenges in the Twenty-First Century. It will be important for the OSCE and the European Union to coordinate closely on their current and prospective activities.

Mr. Minister, we wish you and your mission here the best of luck. Please be assured of the full support of the United States as you move forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.