

**Statement of Ian Kelly
Ambassador-Designate to the Organization for Security
and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
February 2, 2010**

Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I would like to thank the President and Secretary Clinton for the trust and confidence they have shown in me. I assure you that if confirmed I will work to advance U.S. values and interests in the OSCE which, along with NATO and the European Union, is one of three key organizations in Europe that play an important role in the promotion of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

I have many people – too many to name – to thank for this opportunity and their support but foremost of all, allow me to introduce my wife of twenty seven years, Francesca, along with my sons Will, Max and Ned, and my daughter Annalisa.

Extensive experience working on issues relating to NATO, Russia, and the Balkans has given me an opportunity to know the OSCE region and appreciate the challenges facing it. I entered the Foreign Service 25 years ago with a doctorate in Russian studies, and have spent much of my professional life in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. After my time spent as the Secretary's spokesman, my most interesting assignment was helping set up new embassies in the former USSR – a job that took me to all 15 newly independent states.

I am particularly honored to be considered for this job this year. 2010 marks the 35th anniversary of the agreement that founded the organization that became the OSCE -- the Helsinki Final Act. At the height of the Cold War, the 35 countries of the trans-Atlantic region pledged to take steps to promote confidence and transparency, and reduce mistrust. Most importantly in the Final Act, for the first time, a security agreement recognized the "universal significance of human rights and fundamental freedoms as essential factors for peace and cooperation." The

OSCE has enshrined the idea that peace *among* states was dependent on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms *within* states. Or, as Secretary Clinton said last week in Paris, “true security entails not only peaceful relations between states, but opportunities and rights for the individuals who live within them.” These rights and freedoms are indeed “universal,” not limited to being American or Western values to be applied selectively, depending on a country’s history or geopolitical position. This universality of rights and freedoms is at the foundation of our approach to relations among countries. In the words of Thomas Jefferson, “the God who gave us life, gave us liberty at the same time.”

The OSCE can be effective at building security and preventing crises, but its broad and diverse membership means it does not always work as effectively as it could. In some cases, participating States may lack the political will to take concrete action. In others, the process of building consensus for decisions and action on issues of core importance is difficult and can be frustrating—as evidenced by the OSCE’s limitations in averting and dealing with the consequences of the invasion of Georgia in August 2008, including the pressing need to monitor the human rights situation in the breakaway regions. Some of OSCE’s core values, especially in the human dimension, are also under assault. It takes hard work to make progress in such an environment, yet those are the instructions Secretary Clinton has given me—to revitalize our engagement with the OSCE and to help make the historic promise of the Helsinki Final Act a reality for all people throughout the participating States.

In this regard, we are working with Kazakhstan to make its chairmanship a success for Kazakhstan and for the OSCE. OSCE has received a mandate to be the central forum for a comprehensive review of transatlantic security, and we are prepared to work with Russia and others to find ways to improve our collective security. With the top-notch team at our Mission to the OSCE and in cooperation with the excellent staff of the Helsinki Commission, we have the energy and experience to work to advance our security in all three of the OSCE’s dimensions: human, economic and environmental, and political-military.

The Permanent Council, where if confirmed I will represent the United States, has established, guides, and supports the work of influential field presences in 17 countries. The promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental

freedoms is central to the OSCE's mission and is critical to strengthening the rule of law, democratization and media freedom. The OSCE is the one place where all 56 participating States openly and regularly discuss the implementation of their own and each other's human rights commitments.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the field missions work throughout the OSCE area to advance democratic values, universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to fight anti-Semitism and other forms of hate and intolerance. These institutions are on the leading edge of a collective effort to enhance security and stability from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

It is no secret that the United States has been a champion of the human dimension – the inalienable rights and freedoms with which, we believe, all persons are endowed as a birthright. We also believe it is important to continue to encourage civil society to play an active role in the OSCE, even though civil society does not always agree with Member States. Indeed at the human dimension conferences, U.S. NGOs openly criticize the United States – but such scrutiny and advice is welcome and only strengthens our ability to better realize the human dimension. History bears witness that the more open and free a society is, the more stable and strong it becomes. That is a foundational standard for OSCE participating states.

Those original 35 signatories of the Helsinki Final Act have become 56 over the last 20 years, underscoring the need for diplomatic dialogue and cooperation in the OSCE space. If confirmed, I will do my utmost to work constructively with the other 55 participating states to advance our common agenda of a lasting mutual security rooted in respect for universal values.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.