



United States Mission to the OSCE

Concern over the Situation in Georgia

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 29, 2006

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Last week, several OSCE delegations remarked upon the increasingly tense situation in Georgia. Unfortunately, recent events in South Ossetia have once again underscored the instability of the region.

The spot report of June 26th notes that the OSCE Tskhinvali Field Office in South Ossetia was surrounded on the night of June 22 by some 100 demonstrators, many of whom carried signs critical of the OSCE. They barred entry to or exit from the premises and caused damage to several OSCE vehicles, including the slashing of several tires. This took place during the visit of Chairman-in-Office de Gucht in the conflict zone. There was no attempt by the South Ossetians to bring order to a situation that could very easily have spun out of control. This inaction does not reflect a readiness to work towards true stability in the region.

As we noted two weeks ago in Brussels, international donors can only help the parties, we cannot solve their problems. Success will depend on the willingness of Georgians and Ossetians to make a sincere effort to promote peace and security, to come together to solve common problems. We would again encourage all parties to exercise restraint and promote an active dialogue for peace. In this context, we welcome the June 22nd discussion in Tskhinvali between Georgian Interior Minister Merabishvili and South Ossetian authorities aimed at bolstering law enforcement cooperation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.