Thank you for that warm introduction. It is an honor to be here in today with so many distinguished colleagues and friends to discuss how we can support the government and the people of Kyrgyzstan in their pursuit of democracy and national reconciliation.

I want to thank the Carnegie Endowment for hosting this event, and for asking me to participate.

Given the tragic events of last June, I hope that today's discussion will be of value to the Kyrgyz government and others as we work together to promote and sustain local efforts toward continued peace and lasting reconciliation.

As we all know, in just a few days last summer the lives of hundreds of thousands of Kyrgyzstan's citizens were uprooted and displaced by horrific violence. The scope of the resulting upheaval posed an enormous challenge to the humanitarian relief efforts of the governments of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, the UN, and the international community, which rushed to reach the victims and the displaced.

Though many people returned to their homes within a few weeks of the crisis, many more are still housed with friends and relatives or in temporary shelters. In addition, many of the communities to which people returned sustained emotional as well as physical damage that will take many months and years of concerted effort to repair. Although much has been accomplished, it is obvious that more must be done as we continue to move beyond the immediate recovery phase toward building lasting social structures.

At the State Department, I lead the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, and we are one of the U.S. government’s sources of assistance for Kyrgyzstan's relief and reconciliation efforts. We typically support the work of multilateral organizations such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross; and in the case of Kyrgyzstan we are funding the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

I visited Bishkek and Osh in the last days of June to demonstrate U.S. support for relief and rehabilitation, and to promote reconciliations efforts. Many displaced people speak of a strong connection to family, home and community in Kyrgyzstan, and a keen desire to rebuild both the physical infrastructure of their towns and neighborhoods as well as relationships with neighbors and friends. This of course will take time, but the United States will be a continuing partner in support of these efforts.
The State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration is contributing $9.5 million to UNHCR and ICRC in response to their June and July funding appeals in the aftermath of the crisis. PRM also contributed $1 million to support the ongoing human rights and protection work of the OHCHR in Kyrgyzstan. We urge continued cooperation with these organizations as they seek to provide assistance to the displaced and protect the human rights of all Kyrgyzstan's citizens.

In my role as Assistant Secretary I’ve traveled to many places that have been affected by displacement, including some long-term, seemingly intractable situations. Based on my trips and my encounters with vulnerable persons, it is clear to me that refugees and displaced persons most desire to be able to return home in safety, to have an opportunity to earn a decent living for themselves and their families, and to feel that processes to restore justice and reconciliation are supported by their governments. Many of these processes are underway in Kyrgyzstan, but we are still at a fragile stage.

So what are some key factors that can promote reconciliation? Let me suggest six essential elements.

First, basic human needs of affected populations must be met. Critical assistance is not only a humanitarian imperative, but can also help to prevent despair and desperation. We are pleased to see that construction of temporary shelters for displaced persons is underway in Osh and Jalalabad regions. Yet as we enjoy this beautiful weather today in New York we are reminded that we are on the cusp of the change in seasons. Time is short until the winter is upon us, and so we urge the government of Kyrgyzstan to facilitate the work of the UNCHR-led Shelter Cluster in providing protection for needy persons in the coming weeks and months.

Second, impacted communities need to have control of critical decisions that will have an impact on their well-being. For instance, it will be essential that residents be given free choice in terms of shelter. They will also require firm guarantees of their right to rebuild on their own land, as well as the replacement of all needed documents, so that confidence is restored and risk of additional displacement is minimized. Similarly, October’s elections present a crucial opportunity to sustain and deepen democracy, and rebuild trust and security.

Third, security is a key enabler for reconciliation efforts, and the government should welcome efforts of the international community to play a supportive role in this area. The risk of disenfranchisement and instability during the campaign and on election-day, particularly in the southern regions, could derail the careful work of the past few months. Efforts by the
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), including the deployment of police advisers, to work with local law enforcement officials to improve community policing would help reduce tensions in the southern regions. More broadly, the government should ease access to the many international organizations and NGOs that are willing and able to provide assistance. Greater access for NGOs and others can only improve the overall sense of well-being among affected communities.

Fourth, reconciliation requires that aggrieved communities believe that there will be a process of accountability for the crimes to which they were subjected. A full, transparent and effective investigation with international participation into the events of June will do much to restore confidence among local communities, and with the government.

Fifth, while Kyrgyzstan’s challenges will have to be met by the people of Kyrgyzstan, close cooperation with neighbors can play a helpful role in supporting the politics of tolerance and inclusion. The United States has sought to encourage such engagement by governments in the region, including Russia and Uzbekistan.

And finally sixth, in an environment where some, unfortunately, may seek to fuel ethnic violence to promote their political objectives, enlightened political leadership is critical. Senior Kyrgyzstan officials must continue and strengthen their efforts to publicly affirm principles of political tolerance and inclusion.

I returned from my trip to Kyrgyzstan last June with the strong conviction that despite the daunting challenges and continuing obstacles, the combined energy and determination of the people and government of Kyrgyzstan -- with the support of the international community -- can have a real impact in promoting a brighter future, and the Obama Administration is committed to sustaining its support for this critical objective.

Thank you.