**H. Knox Thames, Acting Executive Director , United States Commission on International Religious Freedom**

Knox Thames joined the Commission in February 2009. Before coming to the Commission, he worked in the Office of International Religious Freedom at the U.S. Department of State, leading its engagement on issues of concern in multilateral fora (UN, OSCE) and was the Head of the Multilateral Section. Mr. Thames also served as Counsel for six years at the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (the Helsinki Commission), where he was the point-person for the Helsinki Commission on religious freedom matters and on issues s involving refugees and internally displaced persons. An author of numerous articles on a range of human rights issues, in 2004, Mr. Thames was appointed by the State Department to serve as one of the two U.S. experts on the OSCE Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief. Mr. Thames earned a J.D. with honors from the American University Washington College of Law. He also holds a Master's in International Affairs from the American University School of International Service, and was a recipient of the Amnesty International Certificate of Achievement in the Study of Human Rights. He holds a B.A. from Georgetown College and has studied at Jagellonian University in Krakow, Poland.