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United States Mission to the OSCE

Right of Reply to the Russian Federation on the Issue of Sovereignty, and Territorial Integrity

As delivered by Ambassador James S. Gilmore III
to the Permanent Council
Vienna, April 23, 2020

The Representative from the Russian Federation made reference to a large number of countries on the Georgian issue, including the United States. And I feel compelled to say one or two additional things before we conclude our meeting here today.

The United States' participation in the OSCE is intended to support the Final Act of the Helsinki Accords, which all of our countries have agreed to, and which is the beginning and the inception, not only of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, but of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. But it stands for certain principles. And one of those principles is that countries can feel secure in their individual territories and their sovereignty, and be freed from aggressive military actions against them by other countries. This is the foundation for the peace and security that has prevailed in Europe for many, many years and which now is perceived to be under threat from the Russian Federation's behavior.

That's the issue that is really on the table here. It is not politicization. It is not anyone being guilty of Russophobia. I certainly don't feel any sense of Russophobia. This is not a matter of *who* is doing something, but of *what* they are doing. In this particular instance we have clear examples of Russian aggression in a variety of places simultaneously in Europe that creates insecurity and concern, and evokes a certain reaction by countries including the United States, and many people with whom it is allied.

It is that behavior that is in multiple places, most specifically in Ukraine, which has been carefully discussed here today. An attempt to take over the sovereign territory of Crimea that belongs to Ukraine is well understood. Ukraine's borders are guaranteed by the *Budapest Memorandum* that was signed by a number of countries, including Russia. These are all issues that are legitimately before the OSCE today, and every day. It is not a matter of Russophobia, and I reject that comment by the Russian Ambassador.

Now all of these issues can, in fact, be resolved. But there has to be a change of policy in Moscow in order to resolve these issues. Every week we are looking for a signal from Russia, both privately, and publicly, for a change in policy in Moscow that will enable a settlement of these issues. So far we haven't seen it. But maybe even today, there was a suggestion that perhaps there could be some welcoming discussion that would, in fact, restore this sovereignty. If that is the case, I can assure my friend, my colleague from the

Russian Federation, the United States would welcome any type of constructive discussions that would resolve these issues and continue to lead towards real peace, safety and sovereignty in Europe.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.