



United States Mission to the OSCE

Opening Session ***Addressing Current Security*** ***Challenges and the Role of the OSCE***

As delivered by Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Brent Hartley
to the Annual Security Review Conference, Vienna
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Last year, the U.S. representative to this conference, Eric Rubin, urged that the participating States use Helsinki + 40 to make progress on the persistent problem of unequal security within our community. He agreed with other speakers that at that time there were profound security gaps in Europe, regions where there is less military security, less economic security, and less human security than elsewhere in our common space. He cited the regions affected by protracted conflicts to exemplify the problem, and called upon the OSCE to take concrete steps to make progress toward resolving the conflicts as part of the Helsinki + 40 process.

The events of the last months have demonstrated the truth of that analysis; 2013's security gaps are now a gulf. Sadly, Europe today is not whole, free, and at peace. Ukraine chaired this Organization last year and today its citizens, particularly those in eastern Ukraine and Crimea, enjoy markedly less security than they did at the same time last year. The insecurity we see in Europe today is not the result of aspirations of States to membership in NATO or the EU as some may have indicated. Nations seeking to join those partnerships must have a record of respect for the rights of their citizens and their neighbors even as they seek to build security and prosperity for their people.

It is thus timely that this year's ASRC should focus on how to build security and stability in Europe. Our Russian colleagues have often reminded us that security is indivisible. We agree. Most of us recognize that nations will not succeed in building security for themselves if they are threatened by – or they themselves threaten – their neighbors.

What is it that we as an international community need to do to create a space where all nations enjoy security on essentially equal terms, where nations and

people can freely choose their future, in safety? My government would offer a simple prescription: nations need to live up to their commitments.

This means that we need to take the Helsinki Final Act seriously, that OSCE participating States should respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their neighbors, and refrain from the threat or use of force against them. Russian military action in Ukraine and its occupation of the Crimean region have breached those basic norms; Russia's massing of forces on Ukraine's border this spring and again recently is an obvious effort to intimidate and destabilize a neighbor. Russia's military intervention in Ukraine is contrary to basic tenets of international law and the guiding principles of the Helsinki Final Act. Russia committed to de-escalatory steps in Geneva and at Normandy. We welcome Russia's endorsement of President Poroshenko's cease fire proposal. Now those commitments need to be met. Russia needs to cease support for separatists, work with the Ukrainian government to support the peace plan, halt the flow of weapons and fighters across the border into Ukraine, and repatriate Russian citizen fighters back to Russia.

When my government is asked how members of the international community can begin to re-build security and stability in Europe, our first answer is that nations must start by fulfilling their international commitments. There is no path to stability when territorial integrity and sovereignty is violated, journalists are attacked, minorities are persecuted, and civil society is threatened.

Second, we need to respond to threats to military, economic, or human security, with action.

If we turn a blind eye, the risks to democracy and to peace itself will only multiply, especially for those who live in the parts of our space that are most directly affected. If there is one lesson we as a community should have learned during the last 20 years, it is that in this interconnected, interdependent world, threats to security that give the appearance of being regional – like the protracted conflicts – in fact affect us all.

What actions should we take in the face of unlawful use of military force that breeds, and is intended to breed, insecurity and fear? How do we build security and stability in the face of asymmetric threats?

Ukraine has set a courageous example. In May, Ukraine's government – although embattled in all three dimensions – managed to hold a free, fair election. That is a stunning victory for the people of Ukraine and it is a victory for our shared values and for Europe.

And I am proud to say that this Organization itself has set another such example of action in response to unlawful use of force. In the last six months, the OSCE has proven its mettle and its worth. The work of the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine continues, despite the fact that some of its members have been taken hostage and some held by armed separatists since late May. The dangers to its members – and also to the Vienna Document teams observing in the region – are significant. My government has called upon the Russian Federation to use its influence with pro-Russian separatists to ensure the safety of the monitors and to respect their work, which is simply to provide impartial reporting of the situation on the ground, and help defuse conflict. Experience has shown that wherever there is no international presence and no transparency, abuses are greatest. The fate of the population of the Crimean region is increasingly opaque. OSCE and other international observers must be given access to occupied Crimea.

When OSCE states stand by our values, and take steps to shine a light on threats to security and stability, including human rights abuses, we provide the foundation for a way ahead, to build trust and restore an international order that respects the sovereignty of nations and the rights of individuals. Those steps must be practical, timely, and responsive to actual needs. They can and should include all elements of the OSCE tool kit – including established and enhanced field missions, observer teams, special representatives and missions, arms control, and CSBMs. During the next days I hope we can discuss some specific ideas for actions we can take together and individually to build security in our shared space, so that by the time of the Basel Ministerial meeting we can look to the future with restored confidence that all participating States in this Organization share a common commitment to peace.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.