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## United States Mission to the OSCE

# Security Sector Governance and Reform

As delivered by Chargé d’Affaires, a.i. Harry Kamian  
to the Joint Permanent Council and Forum for Security Cooperation  
March 20, 2019

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Let me start by thanking you and Ambassador Radomír Boháč for this joint session, as well as welcoming the three speakers for their presentations. Ambassador MacGregor, I especially appreciate the direct and frank way in which you engage us and I’ll do my best to reciprocate within the limits that I am afforded.

As we assess the evolving security concerns that affect our work at the OSCE it is important to consider the role that effective security sectors play in combating these challenges.

As our experts in the First Committee sessions regularly remind us: societies with democratically controlled security sectors that respect human rights and are not above the law can help prevent conflicts and they can help build and sustain lasting peace. In stark contrast, as we know from several countries around the world, corrupt and abusive security services can facilitate violent extremism and radicalization that leads to terrorism and drive conflict and transnational crime.

People across the OSCE region must be able to count on the security services to work on their behalf and protect their lives and livelihoods. And our respective security services must regard human rights, effective civilian oversight, and independent judiciaries, as essential components of their work.

We share the view expressed by many speakers that Security Sector Governance and Reform (SSG/R) is a cross-cutting issue that affects all three dimensions of the OSCE’s comprehensive security philosophy.

The United States joined 34 other participating States on the 2018 Group of Friends of Security Sector Governance and Reform statement in Milan. We were pleased to see the number of participating States signing on to the statement increase over the previous year. The 2018 Statement declared that an effective security sector could: “significantly contribute to preventing the outbreak and recurrence of conflicts, as well as building and sustaining peace.”

Respective Chairs, as also noted in the Group of Friends statement, the OSCE is “well-positioned to promote a comprehensive and inclusive SSG/R approach and to support the participating States and Partners for Co-operation in many important areas.” Tapping into

our individual experiences affords us all the opportunity to improve security in our respective countries and in our region.

The OSCE's 1994 Code of Conduct on Political-Military Aspects of Security serves as an effective blueprint for further consideration of SSG/R. In adopting the Code of Conduct, the participating States signaled their recognition that the democratic control of security forces is a fundamental component of promoting international peace and security. The important work described in that document continues today across all three dimensions via programs relating to migration, trafficking, border management, and police, judicial, and prison reforms.

Ambassador MacGregor, I appreciate the detailed presentation and your perspective on the way in which one of our field missions can work constructively and effectively with the host nation, as well as a broad range of actors on the ground in Uzbekistan, in this important area. You make several valid points: each field mission is indeed different, each host nation is indeed different. There are a variety of tools that we have at our disposal. And we should look at that arsenal, collectively, across all three dimensions, to find out ways in which we in the OSCE can most effectively and constructively work with respective host nations to implement our principles and commitments.

However, I do share the view that the tools alone would not be enough. Labels are important. Understanding the value and the meaning behind the principles and commitments guide us in identifying in which tools, which approach, might be most constructive, and ultimately effective. I don't necessarily think they are mutually exclusive, and I don't mean to suggest that you do, either. But I think it is worth making that point.

I think we also should recognize that other organizations, most notably the United Nations, and here we are happy to have a representative from the UN, are indeed working in this area, and we should continue to identify methods to complement that work and avoid overlapping areas of effort.

In this regard again, again Ambassador MacGregor, I appreciate the efforts that you shared with us today, but also in some of your earlier discussions before the Council, that you and your team on the ground are taking, to use these limited resources that you have to avoid duplication and de-conflict, to coordinate and to identify ways that we can use these limited resources to maximize their value. Our field missions truly are our value-added.

On this note, you may have heard that there is under consideration to Central Asia this year with PermReps. If a trip emerges, and if I am able to participate, I hope that a stop in Uzbekistan figures prominently, and I hope that the overall majority of the time on the ground that we'll spend talking to you and your team, together with the host nation, and a wide range of actors to understand how you and others are partnering to implement your important mission there on the ground.

In closing, thank you very much, Chairs, for the opportunity to engage on this important issue as we further consider the best way to promote continued and productive engagement on Security Sector Governance and Reform.

Thank you.