



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

# **On the Occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the End of World War II**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
May 7, 2015

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

On May 8 and 9, many of the countries represented here in the OSCE will commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe. It is fitting that we, as participants in an organization committed to security and cooperation, reflect on the most devastating war in history, during which over 60 million people were killed. Commemorating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe offers an opportunity for us to recognize the sacrifice of those who fought to end the vicious tyranny of Nazism and fascism. By commemorating this event, the United States reaffirms its commitment to a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace.

The United States remembers the sacrifices made by the alliance of nations that fought Nazism and fascism. We remember our own soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who died far from home. We honor the Allied soldiers alongside whom our troops fought, and fell. We honor those throughout Europe who fought to defend their countries and homelands from aggression. We remember the six million Jews and millions of others murdered in the Holocaust, including Roma and LGBT persons, who were killed or consigned to concentration and death camps just because of their identity. We remember the tremendous sacrifices made by the people of the multinational Soviet Union, which lost 24 million civilians and soldiers during the course of the war. We mourn them all.

But as we remember, as we mourn, we also note the incredible progress Europe has made towards reconciliation and integration. The end of the war in Europe was referred to as Zero Hour, a term which implied the end of a tragic period and the promise of a better future. On June 26, 1945, representatives of 50 countries met in San Francisco and signed the UN Charter, which opens with a determination to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.” Out of the ashes of World War II, the United States and several European states collectively forged a transatlantic community governed by shared values, the rule of law and international norms of behavior. The Helsinki Final Act and the OSCE are part of the foundation on which this transatlantic community rests.

Mr. Chair, we must not only remember what happened 70 years ago; we must do more today. One of the ways that we can best honor and respect the memory of the millions who perished is by affirming in word and action the universal principles we embraced in the wake of the war. They are the beacons of light that emerged from that darkest chapter. We must remain ever-vigilant, ever-ready to defend these principles and the promise of a peaceful world grounded in human dignity. And we must ask ourselves whether we are doing enough to fulfill the promise, won at great sacrifice, to build a more peaceful and just world.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.