



## **United States Mission to the OSCE** **U.S. Statement for the** **Forum for Security Cooperation:** **Opening Statement**

As delivered by Ambassador Michael Carpenter  
January 17, 2024

Thank you, Mr. Chair, dear Andreas, and welcome Minister Kombos to the Forum for Security Cooperation.

It is my pleasure to welcome Cyprus as the new Chair of this important body and to hear your priorities for the upcoming trimester.

We are approaching the two-year point since Russia started its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Two full years of Russia's attacks on the people and sovereign territory of another OSCE participating State. Russia's war of choice has killed and wounded hundreds of thousands, displaced millions, and inflicted considerable pain and suffering on all Ukrainians. In November, Russia also withdrew from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. It did this in the midst of its continued full-scale invasion of another State Party, using the very forces the Treaty aimed to constrain. This war is yet another example of Russia seeking its security at the expense of other states, including participating States of the OSCE.

Through its unconscionable actions, Russia has made it impossible for the OSCE to engage in business as usual and has compelled us to make Russia's war against Ukraine the key focus of FSC discussions, in spite of the appalling misinformation that the Russian Federation tries to propagate in this forum. Fortunately, I think it is safe to say that no other participating State believes any of Russia's propaganda and in fact Russia finds itself completely isolated in this body.

I applaud Cyprus's work program and its choice of security dialogue topics for this trimester: Humanitarian Mine Action; International Humanitarian Law; environment and security; and Women, Peace and Security are integral to the FSC's work and mandate. They are directly relevant to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

Mr. Chair,

If it continues as it has for the last two years, Russia will do everything in its power to distract us and to avoid discussion of its illegal war, precisely because it finds itself so isolated on this topic. We have seen its attempts to threaten previous chairs with demands for unqualified speakers to join security dialogue panels. Indeed, Russia has weaponized the OSCE's consensus rule to block three entire FSC sessions from taking place. It has leveled

personal attacks on members of this forum, including its Chair. And it frequently tries to ignore or usurp the authority of the Chair. While there's no telling what nefarious plans the Russian Federation, or its pliant supporter Belarus, has in store this trimester to disrupt the work of the FSC, the United States and the other 54 participating States will stand with you. Together we will uphold and defend the OSCE's principles and values, and we will persevere in our important work.

In the Troika, you have the tested experience of Canada to draw from. And regretfully though we must bid Bulgaria farewell from the Troika, I am very pleased to welcome Croatia, another staunch defender of OSCE principles, as it takes its place. I am confident that, among friends and partners who share similar values, we will be in very good hands.

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