



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by the Chair of the Security Committee, Ambassador Neil Bush

As delivered by Chargé d’Affaires Harry Kamian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
February 27, 2020

Ambassador Bush, the United States warmly welcomes you and congratulates you on assuming leadership of the Security Committee. At the outset, we’d like to express our profound appreciation for the outstanding work that your Spanish predecessor Ambassador Luis Cuesta did in leading the committee last year

Ambassador Bush, we read with great interest your letter this Monday on the Security Committee work plan for 2020. We believe that, if accompanied by political will and good faith by all participating States, your efforts in the First Dimension can strengthen the security of the OSCE region.

In an effort to respond immediately to your call for greater use of non-prepared statements, I’d like to take a shot at responding to a few of the specific comments that you made in your opening remarks.

One, we appreciate your focus on implementing existing commitments.

Two, your decision to align meetings, and priorities, and work plan with the CiO’s priorities are dead on.

Three, we completely agree with you that “societies are more secure when human rights are protected and defended.”

Four, the whole of society approach that you, as committee chair, intend to take throughout the work plan is one we share completely.

Five, we support your focus on expert-level discussions, and you can count on our experts to participate in each and every meeting fully, and in a transparent manner.

Six, you have our full support for your commitment to greater attention to gender mainstreaming throughout all committee work.

And finally, we very much welcomed the opportunity to participate at that informal meeting that you had at the UK mission to jumpstart your work throughout the year.

Now, in an effort to preserve my standing with Washington, let me return to my prepared statement. Ambassador Bush, the United States supports your priorities for this year: reducing the dangers of terrorism and violent extremism, combating organized crime, and enhancing cybersecurity. We agree that engaging youth is key to building a diverse and secure civil society sector and appreciate that former Committee Chair, Spain's Ambassador Cuesta, is continuing his work in this sphere. We especially welcome your plans to encourage more participation from the OSCE field missions in the Security Committee, and we look forward to participating in the field mission visit that you mentioned. In our view, there is no substitute for hearing the direct experience of those who grapple on the ground with the threats of terrorism, organized crime, and border instability, and we look forward to their insights.

Again, let me reiterate we wholeheartedly share your assessment that a multi-faceted approach or, in your words, a whole of society and government approach, is needed, and that civil society in particular must play a key role in our efforts here in the OSCE.

Ambassador Bush, as you know, earlier this month this organization hosted a two-day conference on the challenges posed by returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs). Policies that help countries effectively reintegrate and rehabilitate FTFs and accompanying family members reduce the risk of terrorism by giving returnees the opportunity to take an off-ramp from radicalization, and instead follow a path to being productive members of society. We reiterate our call for participating States to repatriate their citizens from Syria and Iraq as quickly as possible.

Mr. Ambassador, combating transnational organized crime—including drug trafficking, transnational gang activity, and corruption—is another topic ripe for discussion in the Security Committee, and we welcome your intention to address it. Criminal groups continue to expand their use of the Darknet (also referred to as the Dark Web) in innovative and dangerous ways, constituting a serious threat to the national and economic security of all OSCE participating States. The Darknet requires unique software, configuration, or authorization to access, giving users anonymity that shields their activity from scrutiny, including by law enforcement. Governments and international organizations need to be as nimble as the organized criminal networks if we are to successfully combat their enterprises. Transnational organized crime also has a cross-dimensional aspect, affecting environmental protection, border security, and the human dimension as well.

We agree discussion about transnational organized crime in the Security Committee this year could benefit other OSCE bodies, and we welcome your call for more expert input

and voluntarily reporting—these are excellent ways to pool information in a format we can use across the OSCE for years to come.

The United States also looks forward to discussing strategies for implementing the OSCE's 16 cyber confidence-building measures (CBMs) at the cybersecurity conference in Budapest in June. The UK has always been a leader in our work to develop and implement cyber CBMs at OSCE. Most recently, under Hungarian Ambassador Dan's *Adopt-a-CBM* initiative, the UK took on the CBM in capacity-building. As you know, the United States also adopted one of the CBMs—to support *Protected Communication Channels between States to Minimize the Risk of Conflict*.

Regrettably, the majority of the CBMs have not yet been adopted—we hope this year we can work together in the Security Committee to encourage other participating States to join us in this effort to enhance interstate cooperation, transparency, and stability, and reduce the risk of escalation and conflict. We recognize, however, that our work on cybersecurity does not take place in a vacuum. Last October, to cite only one example, Russia carried out a widespread disruptive cyber attack against a fellow OSCE participating State—Georgia.

Ambassador Bush, we salute you and your team for your hard work and leadership as you steer the Security Committee towards our shared goals for the OSCE. We look forward to a productive year ahead and you can count on our full participation!

Thank you, Mr. Chair.