



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

As delivered by Deputy Arms Control Delegate Spencer Fields  
January 25, 2023

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

On January 26, 2022, one year ago tomorrow, the Belarusian and Russian delegations told us about the joint Belarusian-Russian military exercise “Union Resolve-2022.” The Russian delegation said that this exercise would be carried out, in their words, “to practise defence ... during a defensive operation.” One year ago, both Russia and Belarus told this Forum that “Given the number of personnel involved and quantity of major weapon and equipment systems, the forthcoming [Union Resolve-2022] inspection is not subject to notification in accordance with the Vienna Document 2011.” Less than a month later, Russia’s army poured across the Belarusian border into Ukraine, invading in numbers that had blatantly exceeded the Vienna Document thresholds for notification and observation of concentrations of forces. Now, almost a year later, our Belarusian colleagues tell us of another joint Belarusian-Russian military exercise, which they claim is “purely defensive in nature.” Why should we trust them? How could we trust them when they lied about this very thing less than one year ago. When we hear Belarus make references to air reconnaissance, air support for groupings of troops, and tactical air assault landings -- just like the one used in the failed attempt to seize Antonov airport outside of Kyiv on February 24, 2022 -- we are not reassured.

Last week in this forum, our Russian colleague suggested that we all “familiarize” ourselves with the January 17 statement of Russian Minister of Defense Shoigu, which advertised President Putin’s decision to increase the size of Russia’s Armed Forces to 1.5 million servicemen. Let us recall that no country has invaded Russia since 1941, yet Russia has invaded its neighbors multiple times since 2008. The Russian delegation has repeatedly decried the enlargement of NATO over the years, yet somehow, it has not registered the fact that it is Russia’s imperial wars of expansion along with its publicly broadcasted desire to expand its own borders, and the continued presence of Russian forces without host nation consent that threatens its neighbors.

I suggest that the Russian delegation familiarize itself with the Helsinki Final Act, upon which this organization was founded. In particular, Article II: “The participating States will refrain in their mutual relations, as well as in their international relations in general, from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations and with the present Declaration. No consideration may be invoked to serve to warrant resort to the threat or use of force in contravention of this principle.”

Russia’s renewed invasion of Ukraine and its relentless and barbaric attacks wreak death and destruction, target civilian infrastructure, freeze and starve Ukraine’s civilians, force them from their homes, and drive up food and energy costs around the world. Russia’s attack has made it clear to all of us that we must stand together with Ukraine in its defense. Russia must completely withdraw from Ukraine’s internationally recognized borders. It has failed to learn from its repeated disasters on the battlefield or from its flailing economy that continuing this war will bring Russia nothing but sorrow, suffering, and ruin. Russia’s rudderless campaign has come at the expense of tremendous losses of its own personnel. Thousands of Russia’s conscripts have been killed because they were poorly trained, meagerly equipped, and incompetently led. Russia is failing because Putin and his cohort failed to appreciate the fortitude and ability of Ukraine’s leader and fighters who valiantly defend their own land and freedom. Russia also failed to appreciate that nearly every participating State in this room would act to defend the international order’s cardinal rule: Thou shalt not take thy neighbor’s land by force.

Inexplicably, Putin continues to double-down on his destructive war of choice, and as a result, Secretary of State Blinken announced on January 19 a significant new security assistance package to help Ukraine continue to defend itself. This \$2.5 billion dollar assistance package will provide Ukraine with hundreds of additional armored vehicles, including Stryker armored personnel carriers, Bradley infantry fighting vehicles, Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles, and High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled vehicles. The package also includes critical additional air defense support for Ukraine, including more Avenger air defense systems, and surface-to-air missiles. The package also contains night vision devices and other items to support Ukraine as it bravely defends its people, its sovereignty, and its territorial integrity.

As we discussed this morning in today’s security dialogue, the United States takes very seriously our responsibility to ensure appropriate oversight of all U.S.

assistance. We are actively engaged with the government of Ukraine to ensure accountability, despite the challenges inherent in doing so while Russia relentlessly bombards Ukraine.

Mr. Chair,

No amount of Kremlin lies can change reality. No amount of Putin's propaganda can weaken our resolve. Russia's attempts to prolong or escalate this war will be met with unwavering resolve. We will stand united with Ukraine for as long as it takes.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.