



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
February 8, 2023

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

One year ago, at the FSC's 1000th session (also known as the "Millennium" meeting), participating States made clear that they were deeply concerned about the growing numbers of Russia's military units in Belarus near Ukraine's territory, and we fully supported the subsequent invocation of paragraph 16 of the Vienna Document seeking more transparency about these unusual military activities.

At the same meeting on February 9, Belarus urged us all "not to blow the situation around the forthcoming Belarusian-Russian exercise [Union Resolve 2022] out of proportion." Russia's delegation walked out during General Statements because it clearly had no explanations for the 120,000 troops lined up to renew its invasion of Ukraine's sovereign territory. Fifteen days later, Russia, with Belarus's complicity, launched its disastrous, shameful, and brutal campaign against Ukraine and its people. A year later, most of Russia's 120,000 troops who entered Ukraine on February 24 are likely either dead or wounded.

It is no surprise to any of us that Russia would decide not to report its Annual Exchange of Military Information or AEMI this year, since much of the equipment that Russia listed in its 2021 AEMI report probably has by now either been destroyed or "donated" to Ukraine by Russia's troops as they fled en masse from Kharkiv.

A year later, Russia is somehow convinced that continuing its brutal war against Ukraine will yield some benefit to Russia, that its tired propaganda in this forum will change anyone's mind, and that doing the same thing over and over again will produce different results. We see Russia's abandonment of reason and rationality in its repetitive and senseless human-wave attacks in Donbas. As President Zelenskyy aptly put it, "This is what madness looks like." Madness indeed.

But it gets worse: Last month, the Deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council Dmitry Medvedev said a nuclear state losing a conventional war could provoke the start of a nuclear war. This is both dangerously reckless and false. History shows that is not the case at all. Listen to what Medvedev is saying -- like a petulant child, if Russia cannot get what it wants from Ukraine, it will punish the world with a nuclear war? That kind of provocative rhetoric from a former Russian president and similar lines from our Russian colleague two weeks ago regarding nuclear weapons is dangerous, increases the risk of miscalculation, and should be roundly condemned here by all participating States. Let us be clear, a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.

Mr. Chair,

It is not only escalatory rhetoric about nuclear weapons – Russia is also putting millions in Europe at risk with its reckless activities near Ukrainian nuclear facilities. Even in the midst of defending itself in this war, Ukraine is responsibly working closely with the IAEA to ensure the safety and security of all nuclear power plants in Ukraine. In stark contrast, Russia has reportedly installed weapons at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, deliberately putting nuclear facilities in harm's way, cynically calculating that it can use these weapons to strike Ukraine with impunity, or else to deliberately draw an attack on or near these facilities with horrifying consequences. We must all avoid becoming so numb to Russia's unconscionable actions that we do not see the potential horror that it threatens to unleash each and every day.

Vladimir Putin has the power to end this war tomorrow by withdrawing all of Russia's forces from Ukraine, including Crimea. Until then, Russia will continue to face more sanctions and Ukraine will continue to receive more advanced defense capabilities, including tanks, armored vehicles, and air defense munitions, to defend itself against Russia's brutal and barbaric war. To this end, in December, Congress appropriated \$45 billion in emergency funds across multiple U.S. agencies in the Additional Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023, to support our response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and to advance Ukraine's overall security, economic recovery, energy security, and capacity to cope with the ongoing humanitarian crisis created by Russia's attacks. Additionally, a number of other participating States have also provided significant security assistance to support Ukraine and the Ukrainian people in this critical time.

Furthermore, on January 26, the Departments of State and the Treasury took actions against individuals and entities linked to the Kremlin-backed, criminal para-military Wagner Group and its head, Yevgeniy Prigozhin – including its key infrastructure and associated front companies, its battlefield operations in Ukraine, producers of Russia’s weapons, and those administering Russia-occupied areas of Ukraine.

Mr. Chair,

The United States and our friends and Allies will continue to impose costs on Russia for its brutal war of aggression against Ukraine, and we will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes until Russia stops its war and withdraws its forces from Ukraine’s internationally recognized borders.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.