



United States Mission to the OSCE
U.S. Statement for the
Forum for Security Cooperation:
Agenda Item 1: General Statements

As delivered by Arms Control Counselor Daniel Wartko
October 12, 2022

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and Good Morning Excellencies, Colleagues

On September 30, the world witnessed the bizarre and carnivalesque ceremony staged by Vladimir Putin in Moscow to supposedly formalize Russia's purported annexation of some 15 percent of Ukraine's sovereign territory. This spectacle quickly collided with the reality of Russian forces retreating from Lyman and other towns and villages in Donetsk, Luhansk, and Kherson oblasts. Simultaneously, we witnessed tens or even hundreds of thousands of Russian men fleeing their own country to avoid being drafted into a war they do not support. Putin's propaganda stunts only succeed in revealing the yawning chasm between the Kremlin's triumphalism and reality.

The sinister reality behind the lights and glitz of Putin's shows in Moscow is that the Kremlin continues to escalate the tensions arising from this war. Putin seems intent on destroying Russia's future in the same way he is destroying his own army in a war that he is clearly losing. Meanwhile, the Kremlin continues to scrape for cannon fodder to throw into this needless and brutal war. And the fact that Russia cannot even define the borders of the area that it purportedly attempted to "annex" lays bare the very weak position in which Russia finds itself. This is an act of desperation from a desperate man – Vladimir Putin, who is attempting to justify the ruinous costs his people are bearing for his self-defeating war of aggression.

And we heard this morning from our Russian colleague that the Kerch Bridge was "a fitting symbol of the Russian Federation." Well, on this we can agree. The Kerch bridge was an illegal violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and now lies in twisted, broken, smoldering ruins. A fitting symbol indeed. So desperate is Putin that he has resorted to nuclear saber rattling. We have been very clear with the Kremlin publicly as well as privately that it must stop this irresponsible rhetoric involving nuclear weapons. Any use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic effects not only for the country using them, but for others as well. Secretary Blinken has stressed that the United States and our Allies and

partners are focused on making sure that we are all acting responsibly, despite this kind of reckless rhetoric from Moscow.

Mr. Chair

The United States reaffirms its full support to Ukraine's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty in its internationally recognized borders. In line with international law, in particular the UN Charter, Ukraine has the legitimate right to defend itself against Russian aggression and to regain full control of its territory within its internationally recognized borders.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's recent attacks against civilian infrastructure and cities across Ukraine, leading to the death of innocent civilians. The United States recalls that indiscriminate attacks on innocent civilian populations constitute a war crime.

Further, Belarusian authorities must stop enabling the Russian war of aggression by permitting Russian armed forces to use Belarusian territory and by providing support to the Russian military. The announcement of a joint military group with Russia constitutes the most recent example of the Belarusian regime's complicity with Russia.

Mr. Chair,

The United States does not, and will never, recognize the legitimacy of Russia's purported annexation of Ukraine's territory. It is clear from the UN Security Council resolution condemning that action, which Russia vetoed, that Russia is alone. Not a single country voted with Russia -- not one. The United States alongside our Allies and partners, however, continue to engage in round-the-clock diplomacy to support Ukraine and the aspirations and will of its people. As President Biden has said, "Winning the war in Ukraine is to get Russia out of Ukraine completely." Because Russia has thus far been unwilling to leave peacefully, the United States has provided more than \$16.8 billion in military assistance since Russia launched its premeditated, unprovoked, and brutal war against Ukraine on February 24. On October 4, under authority delegated by the President, Secretary of State Blinken directed another \$625 million in additional military assistance from the U.S. Department of Defence's inventories for Ukraine's self-defence.

Contrary to the falsehoods being spread by our Russian colleagues here at the FSC, we are providing this military equipment responsibly. Even as we have expeditiously provided Ukraine the items it needs on the battlefield, we have maintained the Department of Defense's stringent due diligence to identify appropriate recipients, and we continue to review the overall transactions. The United States is not aware of any credible evidence that Ukraine has permitted any diversion of the weapons provided. We laud Ukraine's effective and professional use of these advanced systems, as well as the close cooperation and support of Ukrainian forces in securing them.

Mr. Chair,

As we underlined last week, one man chose this war. And one man can end it. If Russia stops fighting and withdraws, the war ends. And if Ukraine stops fighting, Ukraine ends. The United States will continue to stand united with Ukraine for as long as it takes to see Russia's military forces depart the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.