



United States Mission to the OSCE

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**Remarks as delivered by Bruce Turner, Director, European
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to the opening session of the ASRC
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Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

This Security Review Conference is being held at a critical moment for the OSCE. It is time to take a hard look at the security challenges Europe is facing. But we cannot succeed if some call into question the relevance of the OSCE in addressing those challenges. The same is true for the CFE regime, which has provided unprecedented transparency and driven down deployments of heavy military equipment across Europe.

Beginning with the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, the OSCE has created an admirable record of accomplishment. The first agreements of the then-CSCE made human rights, as well as security and economic cooperation, part of the framework that endures today as a guide to relations among participating States. In the security area, the confidence and security building measures that became the Vienna Document included an inspection provision that broke ground for later arms control agreements. And it was under the aegis of this organization that the CFE and Open Skies Treaties were negotiated.

Today, we also face a series of new threats:

- Violent extremism and terrorism are on the rise.
- Many countries are actively pursuing a nuclear weapons capability, and there is always a risk of nuclear weapons and related materials getting into the hands of terrorists.
- Protracted tribal, ethnic and religious conflicts threaten to spill over into the OSCE region, not only in the Caucasus region.
- The denial of fundamental human rights and political repression of citizens by their leaders heightens instability and undermines intergovernmental relations.
- An overdependence on fossil fuels endangers our security, our economies, and the health of the planet.
- Poverty, corruption and disease stand in the way of progress and cause great suffering in many parts of the world.

- Cybercrime and state-sponsored intrusions threaten the integrity of our vital information systems.
- Narco-terrorism provides the economic fuel for insurgencies.
- Increasing competition for limited resources such as water, minerals, and energy has potential security implications.

While many of these threats trace their roots to areas outside the OSCE, they have relevance, consequence and impact on the future of all OSCE participating States. It is important to explore how OSCE's institutional capacity can be strengthened to help us address traditional and new threats. That is the basis for this meeting and our discussions here today and tomorrow. At the same time, we must not forget that the best starting point for addressing new threats is to meet existing commitments and solve current problems.

The protracted conflicts in Georgia, Moldova and Nagorno-Karabakh remain a threat to peace and stability in the OSCE region. It remains vital that we continue to address the underlying causes for possible conflict in Europe in each of the OSCE's three dimensions, but a first step has to be confronting and solving the conflicts we are currently facing. The United States remains committed to the principle that territorial disputes be resolved through peaceful means. This principle applies to all OSCE member states.

As the Chair, the EU, and Georgia have pointed out, we are meeting here less than a week before the final expiration of the OSCE presence and monitoring mission in Georgia. Regrettably, Russian actions in Georgia since the August invasion, such as its recognition of the "independence" of the separatist regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, its subsequent establishment of military bases in those Georgian regions, and its deployment of FSB border guards to the administrative boundary lines, have undermined trust and confidence in the region. Russia remains out of compliance with the August 12 cease-fire agreement and the September 8 implementing measures, which require Russian forces to return to their pre-war deployments. Finally, Russia has twice blocked consensus – in December 2008 and again in May 2009 – on worthy status-neutral compromise proposals from the OSCE chairmanship to extend the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, and Russia also recently vetoed a proposal to continue the UNOMIG mandate. Sunday's incident near Eristskali in which an armored EUMM vehicle was damaged and the Georgian driver of an accompanying ambulance was killed shows how volatile the situation is.

The United States remains committed to stability and long-term conflict resolution in Georgia and the region and strongly supports the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders. The United States believes a continued OSCE presence in Georgia might have played a critical role in efforts to restore stability to the region, resolve humanitarian and human rights concerns, and promote the implementation of OSCE commitments.

Today's session is meant to focus on our interest in exploring a comprehensive dialogue on strengthening Euro-Atlantic and European security, including existing commitments as well as other proposals. We view the OSCE as the key multilateral venue for this dialogue, although other fora, such as the NATO-Russia Council, can complement our efforts.

We believe that any such discussion should be held to restore confidence in the region, and should be based on the core principles and values of the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris, and the 1999 Charter for European Security. We think it is important to build on OSCE's comprehensive concept of security, which includes human and economic dimensions, as well as political-military aspects. And our aim should be to enhance the effectiveness of existing Euro-Atlantic institutions and agreements, not replace them with new ones. There may indeed be additional commitments that we, in the course of our discussions, can identify that would benefit European security. But if such commitments are to be meaningful, we first need to rebuild confidence that members of the Euro-Atlantic community will actually implement the commitments to which they have agreed.

Finally a couple of words in defense of NATO enlargement, as discussed earlier today. It is our view that those states who have joined NATO are more free, more prosperous, more stable, and more secure than they were before. We believe that this is ultimately also in Russia's interest. I would note that these states have joined NATO of their own free will. I would note that NATO is a defensive alliance and that, indeed as a result of enlargement, in fact, NATO has reduced its military equipment levels across Europe. Finally, I would note that NATO is interested in cooperation with Russia, as well as with our Mediterranean partners, other partners, the United Nations, and other organizations.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.