

United States Mission to the OSCE



Opening Plenary Session

As delivered by Dr. Michael Haltzel, U.S. Head of Delegation
OSCE Review Conference
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Mr. Chairman, Excellencies,

The United States welcomes the continuation of this Review Conference in Vienna. We believe the first segment in Warsaw covered very important ground, demonstrating the accomplishments our organization has made over the past thirty-five years since the Helsinki Final Act, yet spotlighting the remaining work necessary to fulfill our shared commitments.

Looking to December, we believe that a successful Summit in Astana must commit the OSCE to further progress in all three areas of our shared security. Permit me to summarize our priorities.

On political-military issues, the United States believes that we need to revitalize work in this dimension, and we have already advanced specific proposals to jump-start the discussion. The situation surrounding the CFE Treaty is a concern for all the members of the OSCE, not only the Treaty's 30 current States Parties. We welcome the discussions now underway and underscore the need for creative thinking and concrete progress in strengthening and modernizing this key regime if we are to overcome the long impasse. At the same time, we need to enhance the OSCE's conflict prevention and crisis management capabilities, move forward on updating and modernizing the 1999 Vienna Document, and begin to take on a series of new security challenges. The OSCE must also intensify its efforts to resolve protracted conflicts, including through restoration of a meaningful, status-neutral OSCE presence in Georgia. This restoration is seen by large segments of public opinion as a litmus test of the OSCE's effectiveness as an organization. In the economic and environmental dimension, we support measures

to improve transparency and consultations, in particular as regards energy security, combating corruption, and strengthening good governance. To meet these challenges, we believe that OSCE Structures and Activities must be adapted to the needs of the 21st century.

Now to the details.

The OSCE has had great success in promoting European stability, but we believe it can be enhanced to take on the security challenges that remain. Secretary of State Clinton has made it crystal clear that we do not see a need for new treaties or new institutions in order to advance cooperative security in Europe. I cannot stress this point enough. We do, however, agree with the Russian Federation that we need to work together more effectively – and our institutions need to work more effectively – if we are successfully to confront the daunting security challenges all of us face today. The Corfu process has been enormously useful as a forum for highlighting problems that need a fresh look, and ideas for helping us to move ahead.

One result of the Corfu dialogue – and of recent experience – has been to clarify the nearly universal view that OSCE needs better capabilities for responding to crises. Specific proposals have been advanced on this issue, including by the United States and the Russian Federation. There are differences between those ideas but there is also common ground. My government is ready to work hard during the next weeks to identify a way forward so that the Astana Summit is able to record agreement on a new mechanism to enable this organization to respond in a timely and concrete way to situations of tension in the OSCE area.

On Arms Control and CSBMs, we are seeking greater transparency about each other's military forces and activities. The OSCE has an impressive body of commitments and practice in this area, some of which need to be updated to be more responsive to today's security concerns. We are pleased with the richness of the dialogue on modernizing the Vienna Document 1999 and the substantive updates that have been proposed. We believe it will be essential for heads of state and government to set specific priorities and goals at the Summit for future work on enhancements to the Vienna Document.

Above and beyond the traditional issues of the political-military dimension, there is an extremely important array of emerging security challenges. We anticipate an Action Plan that will begin to develop a cohesive profile for the

organization in combating transnational threats. This profile should encompass areas where the OSCE has already been active – border management, counter-terrorism, counternarcotics, combating trafficking, and policing work – in a more integrated fashion, with the potential to grapple with newer, more persistent and destabilizing threats such as cyber attacks and WMD proliferation. The United States is committed to working in a positive spirit with all participating States in all these crucial areas in order to enhance European security.

All of us have come to realize that security in Afghanistan – an OSCE partner State that shares borders with three participating States – is inextricably linked to security in Central Asia and in the OSCE region as a whole. Many of us have registered our continuing concern about the numerous challenges facing the Government of Afghanistan. These include terrorism and violent extremism, organized crime and corruption, and illicit trafficking in narcotics and chemical precursors, weapons, and human beings. These threats are closely inter-related and inherently cross-dimensional. We must adapt the tools we have and, if necessary, develop new ones to confront and defeat these threats while energizing political will and committing resources to this worthy endeavor. Moreover, we support the CiO's Perception paper on Afghanistan engagement and consider it a meaningful foundation for the Summit's Action Plan on Afghanistan.

This Review Conference will also take a hard look at the economic and environmental dimension, assessing where we have made a difference and have contributed to comprehensive security, and considering how to take that work forward in an environment of shifting institutional and political landscapes. We believe there is scope for more work on environmental issues as they have the potential to impact regional security, with water issues in Central Asia being a prime example. We also think the OSCE has an important role to play in energy security, particularly in promoting greater transparency in infrastructure and commercial arrangements. The United States places special emphasis on good governance and fighting corruption, vital themes on which the OSCE needs to develop its work further.

How we approach these tasks will be an important part of this Review Conference and the resulting Summit documents. The United States firmly believes that we have a chance to make the OSCE an even more relevant and effective organization. This requires taking a look at how the OSCE has been able to meet the challenges of the past, and discussing how we can strengthen its ability to assist us all in addressing ongoing and future challenges.

Effectiveness is about getting the right job done right, and at the right time. Permit me to be specific. We value the accomplishments of the field operations and believe that these missions are one of the most important aspects of the OSCE's work. We support empowering ODIHR to follow up on recommendations for election monitoring as outlined in a Food for Thought paper submitted by the United States and nine other participating States on May 14th of this year. And we advocate strengthening the powers of the Representative on Freedom of the Media. My government has submitted a Food for Thought paper with a detailed proposal on May 12th of this year.

One important obstacle to the effectiveness of this organization and its operations has been the continuing absence of a legal personality. The United States continues to believe that the agreed text of the Convention on Privileges and Immunities should serve as an excellent basis for developing such a legal personality and removing the uncertainty and expense we have faced without it. We hope that in Astana our leaders will be able to give an important impetus to completing the work on that Convention.

We have a busy week and a half ahead of us with an enormous agenda. It remains our hope and expectation that, in reviewing our work and looking ahead to the challenges we face, we can contribute to shaping an ambitious yet credible Summit outcome that will allow us to set the OSCE on a productive path forward.