



United States Mission to the OSCE

Revisiting the 1996 OSCE Framework for Arms Control

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
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Thank you, Madam Chair, and thanks to the Chair of the Permanent Council for giving us the opportunity today to revisit and discuss the 1996 OSCE Framework for Arms Control.

The United States would also like to welcome Ambassador Seixas da Costa and Ambassador Baumann to this joint FSC-PC meeting, and thank them very much for their illuminating and informative remarks, ranging from the history and background of the 1996 *Framework* to today's challenges facing conventional arms control *writ large*.

Ambassador Baumann or her colleagues can pass on our thanks for further elaborating on Germany's current perspective. Ambassador Seixas da Costa, I'd like to thank you for your personal remarks, and I can assure you that while we may not have made progress on some things, we have made progress in having frank exchanges from time to time in this room. So you were not at all out of place.

I wanted to just respond to one of the comments you made at the end, which I think was an important one and actually applies even more broadly than you applied it to the so-called "protracted conflicts." The idea that there are different views on instability in our community today is, I think, a really important one. We have seen that at least one country sees instability as a useful long-term tool in what it sees as strategic geopolitics, while the vast majority of the rest of us pursue sustainable and comprehensive security -- that is to say, an antidote to instability -- seeing it as a win-win for the citizens of all participating States. And I think that contrast which you drew out also has implications for the political environment in which we might pursue additional efforts as a community. As to the distinction from the different times in the past, you rightly pointed out that we have done good work together in difficult times in the past. But those difficult times arguably had more of a common view of the value of stability and security than today's times do.

Twenty years ago in Lisbon, OSCE participating States agreed to a framework for arms control intended to strengthen cooperation, and improve transparency and predictability. The *Framework* embodies our strong commitment to full implementation of all existing arms control agreements, such as the CFE Treaty and the Vienna Document, among others. The *Framework* stated that these, and I quote, “existing obligations and commitments lie at the heart of the OSCE’s concept of co-operative security.”

Until the past few years, the *Framework* and other elements of a rules-based international order helped to preserve peace and prosperity in the Euro-Atlantic area because they espoused and defended key principles, such as the right of states to choose freely whether to allow the stationing of foreign forces on their territory.

Fast forward twenty years, and we now face a situation where some call for acknowledging the so-called “new security realities” in Europe. The premise underlying many of these calls is that the core principles that make up the foundation of our international system are somehow outdated or are simply not up to the task of strengthening cooperation and increasing transparency and predictability.

This premise is patently false. The *Framework*, the CFE Treaty, the Helsinki Final Act, and other elements of the OSCE acquis reflect core principles that have guided our work on security issues at OSCE since the organization was established. Those principles are sound, proper, and correct.

Any declarations for the Ministerial this year should be substantive and reflect the importance of adhering to commitments and to using our existing tools.

The principles are, however, under assault given Russia’s unilateral suspension in 2007 of CFE Treaty obligations and its present refusal to engage in the modernization of the Vienna Document. There are important steps that could be taken via modernization of the Vienna Document to re-build military transparency. Lowering notification and observation thresholds as well as increasing available inspection opportunities would benefit all OSCE participating States, including Russia, which has said it has questions about NATO military activities.

Russia’s occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea and aggression in eastern Ukraine are the gravest challenge to the European security architecture since the end of the Cold War. Russia’s ongoing violation of core principles of international law, coupled with its demonstrated poor and/or non-compliance with arms control treaties that it finds inconvenient, are the causes of the so-called “new security realities” that we face in the Euro-Atlantic area.

Arguing otherwise distorts the proud legacy of the *Framework* and detracts from the urgency and necessity for all participating States to call on Russia to comply with these core

principles, agreements, and commitments that have kept the peace in Europe for decades.

The United States still firmly holds that conventional arms control serves a stabilizing role in European security and that the OSCE must remain the focus of such efforts to enhance transparency and build confidence. Taking note of the recent proposals by the Chairman-in-Office, Foreign Minister Steinmeier, regarding conventional arms control and dialogue on security concerns, the United States believes the idea of a “structured dialogue” within the OSCE could contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of our conventional arms control instruments and ensuring that our existing commitments are fully implemented and respected. But one still has to wonder if, in light of Russia’s continuing destabilizing activities, if the time is even right to engage in envisioning or negotiating something new with a key player who won’t uphold today’s commitments.

In an effort to identify trends affecting the Euro-Atlantic security environment and ideas for managing challenges, a structured dialogue might address the following, along with other issues echoed in the 1996 Framework: (1) threat perceptions of OSCE participating States in all three dimensions, including current and protracted conflicts, as well as transnational and multidimensional threats and challenges; (2) developments in military doctrines and trends in force posture; (3) military activities which have the potential to heighten concern, along with possible ways to improve confidence and reduce tensions; and (4) utilizing OSCE tools for early warning, conflict prevention and crisis management.

Because a number of our colleagues have commented today, I should note that the ideas that we have shared about what a structured dialogue could look like have been intended as an elaboration of a key part of Foreign Minister Steinmeier’s initiative, not an alternative to it.

The United States remains committed to multilateral conventional arms control as a means to increase military transparency and, thereby, improve security in Europe, and recognizes the OSCE’s value as a unique and vital forum for dialogue toward mutual understanding as a prerequisite for further progress in these areas.

As such, a structured dialogue focused on the aspects of security in the OSCE region could serve as a confidence-and security-building measure in and of itself. Such a structured dialogue must reflect our unwavering commitment to core principles reflected in the Helsinki Final Act and complement and enrich ongoing work to update the Vienna Document, including improvements to the chapter containing risk reduction tools.

The United States is committed to engage in serious discussion to examine ways to confront today’s challenges and take action to overcome them.

Thank you Madame and Mister Chair, and thank you, again, to our speakers.