



Closing Remarks by FSC Chairperson Courtney Austrian

March 24, 2021

Good morning, Ambassadors, colleagues and distinguished representatives, and welcome to the closing session of the U.S. FSC Chairpersonship. We are delighted to be joined today by Deputy Assistant Secretary for Defense Laura Cooper. Before turning the floor over to our distinguished closing speaker, I would like to take a moment to reflect back on our last few intensive months as FSC Chair.

It has been an honor for the United States to lead this Forum for the first time in nearly 18 years. As Acting Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Philip Reeker underscored in the opening session, the core objective of the U.S. Chairpersonship has been to promote “goal-oriented dialogue” to enhance security cooperation -- a foundational principle of the FSC, ever more relevant and necessary today for us to *collectively* address current challenges to European security and build back trust.

A priority goal of this Forum and of the U.S. Chairpersonship has been the furtherance of the Vienna Document, including through military-to-military dialogue in the High-Level Military Doctrine seminar. It was our privilege to convene the HLMDS, a key highlight of our tenure. The U.S. Chair promoted substantial progress on modernizing the Vienna Document, as 45 participating States had called for at the Tirana Ministerial Council, including by directly and openly addressing any misperceptions (or misrepresentations) regarding the entirely defensive nature of NATO’s enhanced Forward Presence. We also advanced the FSC’s longstanding work on Small Arms and Light Weapons and nonproliferation with two security dialogues on the respective topics of MANPADS and Explosive Hazards in Central Asia. At the same time, we engaged in ground-breaking discussions of new and emerging threats emanating from below-threshold competition in the HLMDS and in our last security dialogue on “Confidence Building Amid Strategic Ambiguity.” There is no denying that such competition employing all elements of national power has a direct impact on political-military aspects of security, and that the strategic ambiguity it creates undermines our confidence. This is a real and present danger we must countenance together.

In all of the core areas of the FSC’s work, it is also clear that the advancement of our collective security cannot be achieved without the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, as 52 participating States agreed at the Tirana Ministerial Council. It was a distinct privilege for me to co-Chair the FSC-PC on implementing the UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS) with the Swedish Chair-in-Office. As was also the case with Albanian CiO, the United States fully shares the Swedish Chair-in-Office’s priorities, including with respect to WPS and Vienna Document modernization. During our Chairpersonship, we further built on the solid foundation laid by the German FSC Chairpersonship which preceded us on these and other

priorities, and now look forward to collaborating closely in the Troika with the incoming Armenian Chairpersonship and the Austrian FSC Chair later this year.

Of course, we owe the success of our Chairpersonship to our outstanding FSC team and to the sustained support we received from the CPC and across the OSCE Secretariat, about which I will say more at the end of this session.

For now, it is my honor to turn the floor over to Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia, in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Laura Cooper who will share her further reflections on key take-aways from the U.S. Chairpersonship.