



United States Mission to the OSCE
Annual Security Review Conference
Special Session:
European Security and the Role of the OSCE

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires a.i. Kate Byrnes
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The discussions over the past two and a half days underscore the continued relevance of and need for the OSCE's role in European security. The United States has, in each of the sessions, emphasized the necessity for all participating States to implement their Helsinki commitments fully. We have also noted our concern that there are numerous instances of total disregard for Helsinki guiding principles and commitments, most notably but not exclusively by Russia through its illegal and ongoing military aggression in Ukraine.

The Helsinki Decalogue, elaborated over the past four decades in subsequent OSCE documents, remains our guiding path to the achievement of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. These principles give us a clear framework for how states should interact with each other and with their own citizens. If implemented, they can help us, individually and collectively, realize the vision of comprehensive security that will protect the people of the OSCE region from security challenges within and across borders.

As we contemplate how best to strengthen the OSCE's role in European security, we do not need to reassess or renegotiate the Helsinki Final Act principles or other fundamental documents that serve as the basis for European security structures. The existing architecture is not the problem. And I must add, Ukraine is not the problem. All 57 states around this table voluntarily committed to uphold the OSCE principles. We don't need a new construct for European security; we need the political will to abide by our commitments – the commitments that after 40 years must remain our guide.

In the wake of this morning's session on arms control, I want to underscore that the need for fulfillment of OSCE commitments is not limited to the Decalogue. Key arms control agreements, such as the Vienna Document, are a cornerstone of European security, and they are being ignored or violated by a number of countries, notably Russia. The level of military transparency in Europe is radically diminished as a result of choices made by Russia. It is not credible to tout a national commitment to arms control while violating or failing to fulfill existing arms control obligations and violating basic commitments, such as respect for the territorial sovereignty of neighbors. We need genuine political will to strengthen this Organization, and a real commitment to the tools of cooperative security.

In meeting these commitments, we should focus on practical steps the OSCE can take to enhance its ability to anticipate and respond to crises. This Organization needs a sustained, rapid reaction capability to allow for prompt, impartial reporting on a crisis from its inception. We should support and strengthen OSCE institutions and field missions, as part of

efforts to mitigate conflicts before they break out. As we have noted in numerous sessions throughout the Annual Security Review Conference, a review and update of the Vienna Document can make a useful contribution to this discussion. We offered concrete proposals in this morning's session that we hope this organization will act on.

We look forward to working with all delegations in the run up to the Belgrade Ministerial to identify concrete steps that do, indeed, reinvigorate the implementation of the Helsinki commitments and move us closer to a more stable, peaceful Europe.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.