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United States Mission to the OSCE

On the Occasion of the 75th Anniversary of Nazi Germany's Invasion of the Soviet Union

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
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Nazi Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, marked a terrible escalation of the Second World War, which began in Europe when Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. We remember with deepest respect and sorrow the tremendous sacrifices made by the people of the multinational Soviet Union, which lost 24 million civilians and soldiers during the course of the war.

We would like to note the words of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, German Foreign Minister Steinmeier, who marked this anniversary with a sober reflection on the significance of the Second World War for Germany, the people of the Soviet Union, and all of Europe. Minister Steinmeier stated that at times like the present we must remind ourselves of the importance of preserving a lasting, stable, and peaceful order in Europe based on respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. The unilateral attempts to alter internationally recognized borders in breach of international law and the failure to respect the territorial integrity of neighboring countries, take us back to the times from which we believed we had escaped, times to which nobody should want to return. Minister Steinmeier highlighted the Helsinki Final Act, the major disarmament treaties, the Charter of Paris, and the process of European integration as achievements made in the wake of the Second World War, which should be respected, preserved, and jointly advanced.

The United States would like to thank Minister Steinmeier for his thoughtful reflections marking the anniversary of a solemn date in our common history.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.