



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **U.S. Statement for the Forum for Security Cooperation: Right of Reply**

As delivered by Demitra Pappas, Chief Arms Control Delegate  
March 9, 2022

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As I said in my statement, I will not dignify the propaganda of a morally bankrupt regime with a detailed response. However, I will address two specific claims that were earlier iterated as well by the Russian Permanent Representative in the Special PC on Monday.

Regarding MANPADS, the United States responsibly transfers conventional arms in line with rigorous export control measures as codified in the Arms Export Control Act and Conventional Arms Transfer policy, as well as in compliance with our international commitments. Ukraine's effective use of MANPADS in the defense of its national sovereignty and territorial integrity is a quintessentially legitimate use of force. The United States, along with many other allies and partners, continues to support Ukraine against Russian aggression with both lethal and non-lethal aid. These transfers are only necessary because of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified aggression and its decision to target an innocent civilian population. Allow me to add that ironically, in January 2021, Russia unilaterally abrogated a 2009 arrangement with the United States on enhancing control of MANPADS.

Regarding nuclear and biological claims, this Russian disinformation is clearly total nonsense. On biological weapons, this is not the first time Russia has invented such false claims against another country and they have been debunked conclusively and repeatedly over many years. It is Russia, not Ukraine, that has an active biological weapons program and is in violation of the Biological Weapons Convention. The United States assesses that Russia maintains and offensive biological weapons program. Russia inherited a program from the Soviet Union and has never fully acknowledged whether all items were destroyed or diverted for peaceful purposes. Russia's accusations about peaceful Ukrainian military biological laboratories and activities in and near Russia's borders are absolutely false. We believe Ukraine is in full compliance with the BWC and we would not cooperate with Ukraine for peaceful purposes otherwise.

The Department of Defense's Cooperative Threat Reduction program has provided training and equipment for Ukrainian-owned and operated biological facilities to reduce biological threats of all types and support public and veterinary health to reduce the risk of disease outbreaks that may cause pandemics. DoD CTR worked cooperatively and peacefully with the government of Ukraine to increase biosecurity and biosafety at many sites to ensure diseases do not pose a risk to the people of Ukraine or the region. Historically, the CTR program was a congressionally mandated program designed to secure and clean up the mess of legacy

Soviet biological weapons programs. This included work in Russia, by the way. As peaceful work continues today, in countries other than Russia, and has evolved to ensure our foreign partners have the tools available to detect and diagnose disease burdens early and to prevent pandemics. These efforts also support broader public and veterinary health goals, such as monitoring the spread of COVID-19.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.