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United States Mission to the OSCE
U.S. Statement for the
Forum for Security Cooperation:
Agenda Item 2: General Statements

As delivered by Deputy Arms Control Delegate Spencer Fields
October 5, 2022

Thank you Mr. Chair,

Two hundred twenty-two days into Putin's premeditated, unprovoked, and unjustified full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia is a weaker, more isolated, and a poorer country, both in terms of personnel and materiel, than it was on February 23rd of this year. One man chose this war. One man can end it. If Russia stops fighting and withdraws its forces from inside the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine, the war ends. Instead, Vladimir Putin chose to escalate his war of aggression through so-called referenda, a half-baked mobilization, and the purported annexation of sovereign Ukrainian territory, and he appears intent on dragging Russia into the abyss with him. The Russian people see this, and many of them are literally running for their lives to escape Russia. As a result of Putin's unilateral decisions and unchecked power at home, we do not know when this war will be over, but we know this: Ukraine will emerge victorious, and the liberation of Lyman this past weekend only underlines this inevitability. The United States will continue to stand united with Ukraine for as long as it takes.

The Kremlin's sham referenda and hollow declarations of annexations are futile efforts to mask what amounts to a further attempt at a land grab in Ukraine and are signs of desperation as Russia continues to lose this war. To be clear, the results of the referenda were orchestrated beforehand in Moscow and do not reflect the will of the people of Ukraine. The United States does not, and will never, recognize the legitimacy or outcome of these sham referenda or Russia's purported annexation of Ukrainian territory. This spectacle conducted by Russia and its proxies is illegitimate and violates international law. It is an affront to the principles of international peace and security. Reports that Russia is drafting residents of Crimea, including Crimean Tatars, for its brutal war are abhorrent. Russia's illegal conscription in occupied Ukrainian territory forces them to fight their fellow citizens, adding more personal tragedy to Russia's violation of Ukraine's sovereignty.

Ukraine's people have consistently expressed their desire for a free and democratic future. They want their country to remain independent and undivided. Their soldiers are fighting bravely, and citizens in Russia-controlled or occupied areas of Ukraine are resisting Moscow's efforts to change Ukraine's internationally recognized borders by brute force. The United States and our Allies and partners will continue to assist Ukraine in its fight to defend its territory against Russian aggression. We salute the Armed Forces of Ukraine and all its citizens who continue to inspire the world with tremendous skill and profound courage. America and our Allies and partners support their efforts to defend their country and protect their fellow citizens.

On September 28, the U.S. Department of Defense announced a further \$1.1 billion in support for Ukraine's defense through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI). This package supports the longer-term acquisition of the kinds of advanced military platforms that have helped Ukraine turn the tide of this war in its favor. NATO Allies have responded to Russia's brutal aggression by supporting Ukraine with military, financial, and humanitarian aid so that Ukraine can defend itself, in accordance with its inherent right of self-defense as reflected in Article 51 of the UN Charter. We will do so for as long as it takes for Ukraine to eject Russia's forces completely. The Kremlin could unilaterally declare that it has annexed the moon if it likes, and the Duma could sign off on it, but that does not make it so, and thus we resolutely reject, in no uncertain terms, Putin's absurd attempts to foist his false reality on Ukraine and the rest of the world.

To be clear, the United States and NATO do not seek a war with Russia and the Allies are doing everything possible to prevent Russia's war from escalating. We will continue to respond to Russia's escalatory rhetoric in a united and responsible way. We seek stability and predictability in the Euro-Atlantic area and between NATO, a defensive alliance, and Russia. As such, NATO poses no threat to Russia. Rather it is Russia that is the biggest threat to global peace and stability.

Mr. Chair,

In almost every case in recent memory, one cannot help but see that when Russia points a finger, it is clearly pointing three back at itself. Putin's recent claims that the West governs using "suppression, exploitation, enslavement and violence" and is "imperialist, aggressive, deceitful and hypocritical" are ironically very accurate descriptions of Putin's own governing style in Russia. His accusations that others "drown the truth in an ocean of myths, illusions and fakes,

using extremely aggressive propaganda, lying recklessly, like Goebbels” is a textbook description of Russia’s own disinformation campaign. As we marked on September 29 the anniversary of the massacre at Babyn Yar, where nearly 34,000 Jews were murdered by the Nazis and their accomplices in 1941, we are also reminded that Russia’s missiles damaged Babyn Yar and its memorial on March 1. And yet Russia continues to irresponsibly invoke Nazi imagery in a cynical effort to justify its war. When one side is supported by more than 40 democratic nations and the other is supported by a handful of international pariahs, it is clear who is on the right side of history and no amount of propaganda, speeches, or edicts can ever change that.

Today, estimates from a variety of sources indicate that Russia’s authorities and its proxies have detained, interrogated, and/or reportedly tortured hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens. We unequivocally condemn these actions and all of Russia’s crimes and atrocities in Ukraine, and the United States is fully committed to ensuring accountability for war crimes in Ukraine. We are working closely with Ukraine and our Allies and partners to ensure accountability both for those who perpetrated atrocities, as well as for those who ordered them. Just this year, a 101-year-old concentration camp guard was convicted for his complicity in war crimes during the Holocaust. No matter how long it takes, the world will find those responsible for Russia’s atrocities in Ukraine and hold them to account.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.