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United States Mission to the OSCE
U.S. Statement for the
Forum for Security Cooperation:
Agenda Item 1: General Statements

As delivered by Arms Control Counselor Daniel Wartko
November 2, 2022

Thank you Mr. Chair, Good Morning Colleagues

More than eight months into Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, the Kremlin appears to have settled into a well-worn pattern of first committing egregious atrocities and then making outrageous accusations to distract from its own conduct. Hiding behind inflammatory rhetoric, like we've heard today, Russia has laid bare to the world its brutal campaign against Ukraine's people with a rolling air campaign using dive-bombing drones obtained from Iran, as well as precision-guided munitions hitting hospitals, residential buildings, schools, and other critical infrastructure. Russia's tactics have only succeeded in uniting the Ukrainian people and its friends and partners.

We have evidence that Russia deployed UAVs that it purchased from Iran into Crimea in September and that Russia's forces in Crimea have used them in attacks on civilian and military targets in Ukraine. We assess that Iranian military personnel in Crimea assisted Russia in these operations. Russia has received dozens of these UAVs so far and will likely continue to receive additional shipments in the future. Furthermore, considering Russia's ongoing supply shortages, we believe that Russia may also seek to acquire advanced conventional weapons from Iran, such as surface-to-surface missiles, that will almost certainly be used to support Russia's war against Ukraine.

With Russia's atrocities and violations of UN Security Council Resolutions on the front pages of newspapers published around the world, Russia has now brought to the UN Security Council blatantly false allegations against Ukraine that Ukraine is preparing to use a dirty bomb on its own territory. We firmly reject this allegation as patently absurd. In what world would a country, which is successfully reclaiming control of its own territory from an invader, contaminate its own land with radioactive material, so that it could not be used again for generations? U.S. Secretary of Defense Austin made clear to Russia's Defense Minister Shoigu that we reject any attempt by the Kremlin to use this preposterous allegation as a pretext for escalation. The world can see through this ploy as it has

seen through all the others that Russia has attempted since its invasion of Ukraine in February.

We have been very clear publicly and privately with Russia that any use of nuclear weapons in this conflict on any scale would be completely unacceptable to us, as well as the rest of the world, and would result in severe consequences. Russia knows where we and the rest of the world stand on this.

Mr. Chair,

The Department of State notes that Russia's press and government frequently and erroneously refer to U.S. citizen and other foreign national members of Ukraine's armed forces as "mercenaries." This spurious characterization seeks to deny these individuals serving with Ukraine's armed forces their protections and rights as prisoners of war under the Geneva Conventions. In light of comments made here by our Russian colleague about "liquidating" non-Ukrainian members of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, I would remind him that Russia's obligations as a party to the Geneva Conventions and their First Additional Protocol apply to its detention and treatment of any individuals in this armed conflict. Members of Ukraine's armed forces – including U.S. citizens and other third-country nationals – must be treated as prisoners of war under the Geneva Conventions and afforded the treatment and protections commensurate with that status. In addition, fundamental guarantees of treatment apply to all persons who find themselves in Russia's hands, whether or not they are POWs. And we assure you, the United States remains fully committed to ensuring accountability for those who commit war crimes in Ukraine, both for direct perpetrators as well as for those who ordered them.

That concludes my statement, but as right of reply to something that our Russian colleague said earlier. He called United States' support for Ukraine an anti-Russian gambit. And it is not. It is not an anti-Russian gambit. It is in support of Ukraine. It is in support of the international system that we all share, that we all participate in, that we all benefit in. It is support for the international rule of law.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.