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United States Mission to the OSCE

Joint FSC-PC on Structured Dialogue

As delivered by Ambassador James S. Gilmore III

October 16, 2019

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

We commend the Czech leadership of the Forum for Security Co-operation, the Slovak leadership of the OSCE, and the Dutch Chairmanship for hosting a constructive Structured Dialogue session last month. That discussion proved exceptionally valuable in facilitating discussion of cross-dimensional aspects, demonstrating the importance of OSCE's multi-dimensional approach to security. The first dimension is the political-military aspects of security, the second dimension is security, and the third dimension is security.

The hybrid conflict session was particularly useful in offering participating States the opportunity to share their experience and lessons learned in countering the range of the destabilizing effect of hybrid threats. Participating States cited the broad array of hybrid threats they have faced. They also highlighted the need for a whole-of-government and whole-of-society response to these threats, which are themselves directed against the whole of society, and not confined just to the military-security dimensions of OSCE.

As the U.S. noted during our intervention, hybrid threats are among the most immediate and potent challenges to our security and the integrity of our democratic institutions. The OSCE is a right venue for discussion of these challenges. We found particularly valuable the comments made by a number of participating States on steps they have taken to build resilience against hybrid threats in various dimensions. These are exactly the type of security challenges that participating States are encountering in real time, right now. They should be discussed in the Structured Dialogue; it's the correct thing to do, even if their remedies fall outside of the traditional military responses.

We were intrigued by Spain's suggestion of addressing some specific aspects of hybrid threats in the OSCE forums, such as ODIHR, the Security Committee, and the Cyber Working Group. We would welcome further insight from Spain and other interested parties on the ways for realizing this idea, perhaps in a food-for-thought paper.

While we would welcome in-depth work in specialized forums on how to counter hybrid threats in specific areas, we believe we need to continue to use the Structured Dialogue to develop our thinking on how to identify and frame the hybrid threat to stability and security, and what this community should do to address it.

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Looking ahead to our next meeting in 2020, we believe it is important to keep the scope of Structured Dialogue discussions as broad as possible in order to explore the range of threat perceptions in depth. We look forward to hearing from other participating States on how they envision building upon our Structured Dialogue discussions in the coming year.

One area discussed in the Structured Dialogue is incident prevention and military confidence building. As addressed here today, the Structured Dialogue has already identified the most important way ahead: that is for the Forum for Security Co-operation to update the Vienna Document. Time and again speakers from think tanks and within governments have said the same thing: full implementation of Vienna Document confidence and security building measures is the best incident prevention measure and confidence builder that we have. They underscored we can make the Vienna Document better with well-trying ideas, including basic steps to increase confidence by providing for prior notification of military exercises above the realistic lower thresholds, for example, or allowing more opportunities for inspections of activities of concern.

The interactive session for military experts on Incidents at Sea and National Practices on Incident Prevention at the Structured Dialogue session yielded valuable discussions on a real-world challenge facing many participating States. The discussion illustrated that international rules on maritime safety are not designed to address intentionally hostile acts at sea. As we have said before, not all military incidents are susceptible to remediation through arms control, confidence building measures, or more and better communication modalities. We should focus on identifying those risks that can be mitigated or prevented through remedies that institutionalize increased contact, transparency, and risk reduction.

Our discussions of threat perceptions in the Structured Dialogue thus far have demonstrated a need for increased military transparency as a way to begin to rebuild trust, reduce risk, and increase predictability. Updating the Vienna Document to reflect modern day security realities is the best and most practical means to do this.

With this in mind, we believe it is time for us as a community to develop a unitary, balanced, and substantial package of proposals to modernize the Vienna Document to increase predictability and confidence on a reciprocal basis. This has been widely discussed. We anticipate such a set of ideas will be advanced by a number of participating States at the October 23 Forum for Security Co-operation meeting to open the way for negotiations among all 57 participating States.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.