



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group, to the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt With by the OSCE Minsk Conference, and to the Head of the OSCE High Level Planning Group

As delivered by Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Gregory Macris
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 8, 2018

The United States welcomes the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group, together with the Chairmanship's Personal Representative, to the Permanent Council. As a Co-Chair country, the United States reiterates our strong support for your work, and we appreciate your steadfast engagement with the sides to advance a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We thank all of you, including the head of the High Level Planning Group, for your astute reports and updates.

The United States is encouraged by recent constructive contacts by the sides at the levels of heads of state and foreign ministers. These contacts appear to be paying direct and positive dividends. All three Co-Chairs and the CiO's Personal Representative reported today a decrease in violence along the Line of Contact and in conflict-affected areas over the past two months.

The sides should seize the opportunity this opening presents and find ways to move the settlement process forward. The Co-Chairs suggested a number of actions the sides can take to further reduce tensions and improve communication. The United States supports these recommendations. Likewise, the United States supports measures to reduce tensions along the Line of Contact such as expanding the monitoring capacity of the CiO's Personal Representative and establishing an investigative mechanism. The United States believes that a meeting between the Foreign Ministers can bring renewed impetus to the discussions on the implementation of these measures.

Mr. Chair, this conflict has gone on far too long. It is time for the sides to refrain from mutual accusations and recriminations and prepare their populations for peace. The United States supports confidence-building measures and increased dialogue between Armenians and Azerbaijanis that can stabilize the security situation and create a more constructive atmosphere for negotiations. Those participating in dialogue must be able to do so freely, without fear of harassment or recrimination when they return home.

We attach great importance to resolving conflicts in the OSCE area, including the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with the strong engagement of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs. That is why the United States has sent high-level envoys such as National Security Advisor John Bolton and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State George Kent to Armenia and Azerbaijan in recent weeks.

Ambassador Kasprzyk, we welcome your assessment of the situation on the ground, and the efforts of your team to promote transparency and confidence among the sides. This work is indispensable and has our full support. We appreciate your close collaboration with the Italian Chair in supporting the Co-Chairs' mediation efforts and stabilizing the situation on the ground.

The United States shares the view that there can be no military solution to this conflict. The status quo is unacceptable. The United States is committed to working with the sides to find a lasting and peaceful resolution, one based on the principles shared by participating States of non-use of force, territorial integrity, and equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as embraced in the Helsinki Final Act.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.