



United States Mission to the OSCE
U.S. Statement for the
Forum for Security Co-operation:
Security Dialogue – Code of Conduct

As prepared for delivery by Arms Control Counselor Daniel Wartko
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Thank you, Mr. Chair,

When preparing our statement, I reviewed our remarks from when we last discussed the Code of Conduct at the FSC, and I found that, sadly, little has changed. This forum is still unable to delve deeply into the implementation of the Code of Conduct because we are still witnessing the continued assault by the Russian Federation upon Ukraine – its sovereignty, its territory, and its people.

With Russia's flagrant transgressions, it becomes very difficult to get beyond even Article I of the Code of Conduct, but that article is indeed worth exploring.

From paragraph 3: *Participating States "remain convinced that security is indivisible and that the security of each of them is inseparably linked to the security of all others. They will not strengthen their security at the expense of the security of other States. They will pursue their own security interests in conformity with the common effort to strengthen security and stability in the CSCE area and beyond.*

You cannot reconcile Russia's actions – an illegal, unprovoked war of conquest – with the indivisibility of security in Europe. Russia cynically invokes this paragraph to justify its war, because Ukraine's choice to reinforce its independence and cooperation with other states made Russia feel insecure. The Kremlin has attempted illegally to cleave the Donetsk and Luhansk regions from Ukraine and claimed them for itself, directly contradicting the principle of not increasing one's own security at the expense of the security of other States.

From the Code of Conduct Paragraph 4: *"Reaffirming their respect for each other's sovereign equality and individuality as well as the rights inherent in and*

encompassed by its sovereignty, the participating States will base their mutual security relations upon a cooperative approach.”

It has been more than two and a half years, and the only “cooperative approach” that the Russian Federation has taken in its illegal war against Ukraine was collaborating with Belarus to mask its invasion force under a sham military exercise. Russia has no such respect for Ukraine’s sovereignty. In public remarks at the outset of Russia’s illegal war, Putin denied Ukraine’s independence and even openly questioned Ukraine’s right to exist. This again wildly contradicts the Code of Conduct principles the Russian Federation agreed to abide by.

Mr. Chair,

While it is difficult to see through the fire, the smoke, and the bloodshed of this war, there is still reason for optimism and confidence that the system created by the participating States of the OSCE – Russia was among them – remains strong enough and resilient enough to withstand that assault. This is because we see that:

Paragraph 5 of the Code of Conduct says that *participating States “are determined to act in solidarity if CSCE norms and commitments are violated and to facilitate concerted responses to security challenges that they may face as a result. They will consult promptly, in conformity with their CSCE responsibilities, with a participating State seeking assistance in realizing its individual or collective self-defense. They will consider jointly the nature of the threat and actions that may be required in defense of their common values.”*

That is indeed a concise description of exactly what Ukraine, the United States, its Allies, and its partners have been doing since Russia’s February 2022 invasion.

- We came together in this body to act in solidarity when Russia violated OSCE norms and its own commitments.
- We have worked on a concerted response to the security challenge that we all face.
- We consulted with Ukraine, and continue to consult, and are providing assistance for it to defend itself.

- We are jointly considering the nature of the Russian threat and the actions that may be required to defend our common values.

Mr Chair,

The United States again calls upon the Russian Federation to rediscover its commitments as described in the *Code of Conduct* and the *Helsinki Final Act*, stop its illegal war, and withdraw its forces from the internationally recognized sovereign territory of Ukraine and return them to Russia.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.