



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **U.S. Statement for the Forum for Security Cooperation: Closing Statement**

As delivered by Ambassador Michael Carpenter  
March 29, 2023

Thank you, Mr. Chair, dear Siniša, and welcome Deputy Minister Galić to this Forum.

To say that this trimester has been challenging would be an understatement. The new year was rung in with Russia's missile salvos targeting Ukraine's critical infrastructure, cutting off power to hospitals and denying heat to freezing civilians. In the opening session, we heard Belarus repeat the same spurious claims about "defensive" exercises carried out this year that it made about so-called "exercises" conducted before Russia's renewed aggression against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, without even the slightest hint of irony after it knowingly facilitated Russia's war of aggression. The Russian Federation, absent any real successes on the battlefield, invented a few of them to disguise the ineptitude of its military, repeatedly rattled its nuclear saber, and continued its barbaric attacks on Ukraine's civilians. Even just this past weekend, Putin took the extremely escalatory and irresponsible decision to station nuclear weapons in Belarus. This is yet another example of Belarus flagrantly enabling Russia's war against Ukraine and its destabilizing behavior in the OSCE region.

In the face of Russia's crimes against humanity, the overwhelming majority of the participating States in this chamber stood with Ukraine. When Russia put one of its senior propagandists up on this screen to spew lies and disinformation, 50 chairs in this forum were empty. The spirit of the Ukrainian armed forces and the Ukrainian people remains strong and unyielding in the face of Russia's brutal aggression, and so must our resolve to confront and condemn Russia for its war crimes and other atrocities.

Mr. Chair,

The cognitive dissonance exhibited by our Russian colleagues in this trimester has been truly astonishing. As many have said, Russia seems to want to exist in a parallel universe. But Russia's alternate universe does not exist, and

reality is catching up with it at every turn. As we close this trimester, it is clear that the wheels have come off Russia's war machine, and Russia's propaganda machine is running out of new lies to tell. Russia is more isolated than ever, supported only by the likes of North Korea and Iran, pariah states that wish to take advantage of the chaos for their own benefit. The last UN General Assembly resolution, which demanded that Russia quote "immediately, completely, and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine," passed by a margin of 141 to 7. Among the OSCE participating States, the vote was 46 to 2. In addition, the International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Vladimir Putin and Russian Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova for war crimes. You cannot go much lower than that.

Mr. Chair,

Just as we predicted at the outset of this trimester, we all witnessed how Russia, true to form, tried to pressure and bully the members of this forum through personal insults, threats (both subtle and direct), and procedural shenanigans, which only served to highlight Russia's ongoing, blatant contraventions of OSCE principles and values. The most egregious example to date in this forum is Russia's decision to block last week's FSC just because it couldn't get its way. It's the classic tactic of a bully with no friends. Russia's approach to multilateral diplomacy has devolved to "nothing but nyet." Yet, despite Russia's attempts to obstruct the work of this Forum, we have stayed the course, even cancelling its session rather than compromise foundational principles. Throughout this term, we continued to hold Russia to account for its war of aggression against Ukraine and commission of war crimes by its forces against Ukraine's population, and to hold Belarus to account for its complicity in this war.

In closing, I would like to recognize and thank both Belgium and Bulgaria for their strong support for the Chair throughout this tumultuous trimester. The path was not always easy, dear Siniša, but I appreciate your service as Chair, your willingness to listen, and I welcome Bosnia and Herzegovina's continued role as a member of the troika. We are delighted that Bulgaria and Canada will be joining us in the troika and have full confidence in their leadership.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.