



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

As delivered by Deputy Arms Control Delegate Spencer Fields  
September 27, 2023

Thank you, Madam Chair,

Ukraine has now taken back more than half of its own territory that Russia's forces had seized since February 2022. Ukraine continues to push Russia out of more Ukrainian territory every day. Ukraine's soldiers are fighting bravely and continue to inspire the world with their courage.

Last week, the world witnessed a stark contrast between Russia and the friends of Ukraine. On one side: A veritable "Arsenal of Democracy" -- More than 50 countries, many represented in this room, gathered at the 15th meeting of the *Ukraine Defense Contact Group* to organize the security assistance Ukraine needs to defend itself and carry out its counteroffensive. On the other side, we saw Russia desperately trying to scrounge support from North Korea -- a pariah state against which Russia itself voted in favor of multiple rounds of UN sanctions.

Despite Russia's claims about its supposed economic miracle, international sanctions and export controls are clearly strangling Russia's industrial base. Russia is now reduced to seeking whatever support it can obtain from wherever it can find it, turning to other oppressive regimes to prop up its faltering war machine. By every measure, Russia's invasion is a strategic failure.

Last week, our Russian colleague even admitted as much, commenting that "Russia is virtually alone," in its war. Yes, Russia is very alone right now because of the path it has chosen.

Judging from Russia's statements we have heard here, it seems that Moscow hopes it will outlast the commitment of so many of Ukraine's partners, that we will all tire and simply give up. To this, I would like to remind Russia of Secretary Blinken's pledge: quote, "The United States -- together with our allies

and partners – is firmly committed to supporting Ukraine’s defense today, tomorrow, for as long as it takes.” End quote.

Russia’s inclination to cast its situation as the result of various western entities all ganging up to threaten Russia ignores the fact that the *Ukraine Defense Contact Group* meeting was a powerful demonstration of a global commitment to resist imperialistic wars of aggression that have no place in modern times. Participants included Japan, South Korea, and Tunisia, among others. The attendees showed continued resolve to provide Kyiv with the resources needed to fight and win. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin announced that, in addition to supporting the Allied training of Ukrainian pilots on F-16s, the United States itself would also train Ukrainian pilots. The skills these pilots will develop will help Ukraine build a credible and capable combat force for the long term.

Russia’s narrative, which we heard last week in this room, alleges that Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine is a response to a so-called looming threat from NATO. This narrative is false, plain and simple. Before Russia invaded Crimea and eastern Ukraine in 2014, NATO’s military posture reflected a shared conviction that conflict in Europe was unlikely. The United States had significantly reduced its forces in Europe since the end of the Cold War, from 315,000 troops in 1989 to 61,000 at the end of 2013. Most European countries’ spending on defense had been declining for years. NATO’s strategic doctrine at the time identified Russia as a partner. NATO had no plans to deploy forces in the eastern part of the Alliance before Russia’s attempted annexation of Crimea. All the while, Russia poured millions into building up its own armed forces.

The measures Allies have implemented in response to Russia’s aggression have been defensive in nature and proportionate. NATO is a defensive Alliance. NATO does not seek confrontation and poses no threat to any nation.

Russia has shown us all that it is the primary threat to European peace and security. Russia is waging an active war of choice against Ukraine. Russia put itself in this position and has only itself to blame for its isolation.

Thank you, Madam Chair.