



United States Mission to the OSCE

Special Session: Ensuring Security and Stability in the OSCE Region in Light of Recent Developments in Ukraine

As delivered by Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Brent Hartley
to the Annual Security Review Conference, Vienna
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Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to join others in welcoming Ukraine's newly-appointed Foreign Minister Klimkin. We also welcome Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini and Ms. Elizabeth Spehar. We thank you all for your remarks at this session.

During the last four months, this organization has made headlines internationally and experienced a renaissance. The cause of the renewal, however, is one we should all regret. Nonetheless, the presence of the OSCE in Ukraine has shone a light on the events on the ground, saved lives, and helped allow an election – judged to be largely free and fair – to take place. We must now work together to define the role that the OSCE plays in helping secure peace in Eastern Ukraine and in supporting President Poroshenko's fifteen-point peace plan.

In response to the Ukrainian government's request, the OSCE and its participating States used a wide range of tools and institutions—including the rapid response of the Secretariat and the Chairman in Office; Vienna Document confidence-building measures, including inspection and observation missions; election monitoring by ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly; timely visits by OSCE senior representatives; and extra-budgetary projects facilitated by the Project Coordinator in Kyiv—to de-escalate the situation, share information, and pursue a peaceful resolution. In the Permanent Council we came together to agree on the deployment of the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, which has played a key role in facilitating dialogue and providing a window to the world and a voice to people throughout Ukraine.

Russia's occupation of Crimea and ongoing destabilizing actions in eastern Ukraine are antithetical to the most fundamental OSCE commitments that Russia and all other participating States have freely adopted, from the 1975 Helsinki Final Act to the present. We support not only the immediate hopes of the people and government of Ukraine for a democratic, inclusive, prosperous, peaceful future, but those of all in the OSCE space who seek the same. As I mentioned in my opening statement, I hope we can use this conference to discuss some specific ideas for actions we can take together and individually to build security in our shared space.

Mr. Chairman, we remain deeply concerned that separatist forces in Ukraine continue to hold hostage eight OSCE Special Monitoring Mission monitors abducted on May 26 and May 29. We welcome that communication has been reestablished with the hostages, but condemn in the strongest terms their abduction and call for their immediate and unconditional release. We

call on all OSCE participating States, and in particular Russia, to use their influence to secure the release of the monitors, to guarantee the security of all OSCE monitoring teams as they carry out their mandate throughout Ukraine, and to denounce the use of OSCE monitors as hostages.

We welcome President Poroshenko's implementation of a ceasefire last Friday as a first step in his peace plan. President Poroshenko reiterated that amnesty would be offered to those separatists who lay down arms voluntarily and who are not guilty of capital crimes. He also committed to providing a safe corridor for Russian fighters to return to Russia. President Poroshenko has been clear that he will continue discussions about decentralization and constitutional reform to address the legitimate concerns of all the people of Ukraine. We commend these good-faith efforts on the part of the Ukrainian government to pursue national unity and peace.

But President Poroshenko and the Ukrainian government need partners in this effort. The separatists must lay down their arms. We welcome the diplomatic efforts underway, and, in particular, welcome the discussions begun yesterday regarding a peaceful resolution of the crisis. Now, Russia must fulfill the commitments President Putin made in Normandy to secure the Russian side of the border and halt the flow of arms, material and fighters into Ukraine. And Russia must support the reconciliation by using its influence with the Russian fighters and Russia-backed separatists to do this.

President Obama has made it clear that we want to give Russia the opportunity to pursue de-escalation. Russia needs to cease support for pro-Russia separatists in eastern Ukraine and stop the provision of arms and material across the border. A failure by Russia to take the necessary steps toward de-escalation will only deepen Russia's isolation.

Mr. Chairman, the United States wishes to thank Ambassador Tagliavini for her stalwart efforts in working for a peaceful resolution to the crisis in eastern Ukraine. In support of her efforts and those of the Swiss Chairmanship, we strongly urge the OSCE to address the challenges of monitoring the ceasefire in eastern Ukraine, including, as conditions and needs dictate, by deploying increased numbers of Special Monitoring Mission monitors and by establishing an extra-budgetary fund to help purchase cameras and other equipment necessary for the OSCE to monitor the ceasefire. We also support the recent German proposal for a Ukraine-Russian border commission that would be facilitated by the OSCE.

Mr. Chairman, the United States will continue to support the people of Ukraine's aspirations for an independent, prosperous, and democratic Ukraine, and an end to the occupation of the Crimean region. The time for a peaceful resolution is now. The stakes could not be higher – for Ukrainian democracy, for European stability, and for the future of a rules-based international order.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.