



United States Mission to the OSCE
U.S. Statement for the
Forum for Security Cooperation:
General Statements –
Russia’s War of Aggression Against Ukraine

As delivered by Deputy Arms Control Delegate Spencer Fields
March 6, 2024

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

As the United Kingdom so aptly put it last week, Russia would like nothing more than “for us to debate the technical wranglings of arms control, perversely attempting to obfuscate the key point that Russia invaded another country.” Meanwhile, Russia continues its war of aggression against Ukraine as we speak.

Nevertheless, it is important to set the record straight when it comes to the baseless accusations that the United States is not meeting our commitments. The claim that we did not submit our Vienna Document Chapter II defense planning information on time is incorrect. Our Russian colleagues know this since they received the compact disk and note verbale in their pigeonhole in December, as is done every year. Yet, its delegation still decided to claim three weeks ago that they had not received it.

Regarding Vienna Document paragraph 10.3, related to increases in personnel strength and temporary activation of non-active units, the United States does not, as a matter of course, send Vienna Document F-5 and F-6 notifications if neither activity is carried out within the Zone of Application. Historically, the United States has never submitted notifications about the activation of non-active units because the United States does not have non-active units that could meet the criteria in paragraph 10.3.1. The last time the United States submitted an F-5 notification, which itself was a nil report, was in 1997. February 14, 2024, was the first time this issue has been raised by the Russian delegation. If this such were such a significant concern, surely Russia would have raised it in prior years?

Mr. Chair,

Much like the United Kingdom, we regard Russia's claims as an obvious and clumsy attempt to distract from Russia's blatant violations of international law, including the UN Charter, its defiance of UN Security Council resolutions, and contraventions of international commitments, including the Helsinki Final Act and the Vienna Document. But since we are on the subject of the Vienna Document, let us look at Russia's record of failures to adhere to its Vienna Document commitments.

In 2022, Russia failed to 1) notify its concentration of forces in and around Ukraine, which it falsely labeled an "exercise," prior to its February 24 full-scale invasion of Ukraine, 2) invite observers to this concentration of forces, and 3) to participate in the Vienna Document paragraph 16 risk reduction mechanism initiated by Ukraine in February 2022. The bad faith cultivating these failures became clear with Russia's unlawful and unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, which was contrary to both international law and commitments in the Helsinki Final Act.

Belarus also failed to adhere to its Vienna Document commitments in 2022. It failed to 1) notify an above-threshold military activity occurring on its territory in an accurate and timely manner, namely, the concentration of formations of Russian land forces preparing to attack Ukraine; 2) to invite observers from all participating States to observe this military activity; and 3) to "consult and cooperate" with participating States in good faith under the Vienna Document risk reduction mechanism invoked by its Baltic neighbors, which requested information on exercise Union Resolve and the number, disposition, and timetable for redeployment of forces situated near the Belarus-Ukraine border. Belarus's failure to adhere to Vienna Document commitments facilitated Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, by helping Russia to avoid military transparency in the period immediately preceding the February invasion.

Per Vienna Document paragraphs 2 and 3, participating States recall the continued validity of commitments on refraining from the threat or use of force contained in the Helsinki Final Act and the Document of the Stockholm Conference, as seen in light of the Charter of Paris and the Charter for European Security. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and Belarus's complicity are

contrary to these political commitments referenced in paragraphs 2 and of the Vienna Document.

Furthermore, since its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Russia has failed to submit its Annual Exchange of Military Information (AEMI) in line with Vienna Document Chapter I, including to participating States that sent their data to Russia. Oh, and Russia also failed to submit its defense planning information in line with Vienna Document Chapter II, thus reaffirming Russia's habit of accusing others of doing exactly what Russia itself is doing.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.