



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Response to Azerbaijan regarding its concern over excessive force used by police in the United States**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
April 23, 2015

The United States would like to thank the delegation of Azerbaijan for raising its concern over excessive use of force by police in the United States. It is a legitimate and real issue that, importantly, President Obama, Attorney General Holder, my delegation, civil society organizations such as Human Rights Watch, and many others in the United States have addressed in recent months.

In particular President Obama's remarks last November on Ferguson I think were particularly powerful, and I commend those to colleagues; I actually urge you to look at the video version on YouTube because I think the delivery adds more than just the reading alone.

My delegation will continue to speak on this topic, including a voluntary report on the Department of Justice's findings regarding the Ferguson Police Department. The United States recognizes that being open about our shortcomings is part of addressing them. We rely on civil society and independent media to keep government, both national and local, accountable for its actions. Further, we "reaffirmed categorically and irrevocably" in Astana, as did all of us around this table, "that the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned."

As we said at the SHDM last week, the United States does not apply a double standard with regard to human dimension commitments. There is a single standard that applies to everyone including ourselves. The United States categorically and irrevocably affirms its human dimension commitments. That is why we address the situation when human rights are violated in the United States, and we speak out when they are violated by other participating States.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.