



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

### **Security Sector Governance and Reform**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Harry Kamian  
to the Joint Permanent Council and Forum for Security Cooperation,  
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Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Terrorism. Trafficking. Conflict. Successful responses to some of these pressing challenges across the OSCE region have one requirement in common: an effective security sector that is transparent, rights respecting, accountable to government authority, and responsive to the needs of the public. Conversely, abusive, incompetent security services can be a driver of conflict, and their misconduct fosters conditions that are conducive to terrorism. Corruption within the ranks of security services also results in complicity with organized crime. In the absence of basic security, economic and social development are put at risk.

Mr. Chair, the United States subscribes to the position that security sector governance and reform (SSG/R) is important to all three dimensions of the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security. Recognizing the importance of SSG/R, the United States joined 28 other participating States at the 2017 Ministerial to emphasize that "supporting national authorities in their efforts to build an effective, accountable, and democratically-governed security sector is a challenge – and opportunity – we all share." That statement builds on a long-standing OSCE commitment. In adopting the OSCE's 1994 Code of Conduct, all participating States recognized democratic control of security forces as a fundamental component of promoting international peace and security.

Mr. Chair, the OSCE Code of Conduct continues to be a vital part of our work. Last October, the U.S. Defense Department co-hosted with the OSCE Conflict Prevention Center a conference on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Affairs, with the U.S. Helsinki Commission as an honorary co-host. The conference, which was held in the halls of the United States Congress, addressed democratic control of the armed and security forces, security sector reform, parliamentary oversight, respect for human rights – including the human rights of armed forces personnel – and compliance with international humanitarian law. There, the United States was pleased to share its approach to implementing international humanitarian law within the Department of Defense, specifically drawing on the insights of Department of Defense lawyers with experience in drafting the Department of Defense Law of War Manual and applying them to U.S. military operations. The United States firmly believes that this manual and other efforts to implement international humanitarian law play an important part in the United States' efforts to implement the Code of Conduct.

To our distinguished speakers today, thank you very much for your insights. We agree that national accountability is essential if reform is to be both meaningful and sustainable. This is in keeping with our recently released National Security Strategy, in which the United States resolves to "build upon local efforts and encourage cultures of lawfulness to reduce crime and corruption... and strengthen the rule of law." In this regard, Ambassador Orizio, your

presentation on the partnership between the OSCE and the Republic of Serbia on security sector reform is instructive. As you know, the United States has been a proud supporter of Serbia's security sector reform efforts and our assistance has focused on the tactical level, such as sharpening police investigative skills and working with prosecutors to target organized crime, corruption, and financial crimes; as well as on the strategic level, including investing in the media outreach, public relations, and government accountability functions of the Ministries of Interior and Justice.

Striking a balance between operational support and institutional reform is necessary to sustain resources and capacities after assistance ends – a principle that we are pleased to see reflected in the OSCE's staff's guidelines on SSG/R. For U.S. military assistance to the security forces of partner countries, this is not merely a matter of policy, but U.S. law. Under U.S. legislation, the Secretary of Defense must certify that a country receiving assistance under that authority will also receive a program of institutional capacity building "to enhance the capacity of such foreign country to organize, administer, employ, manage, maintain, sustain, or oversee the national security forces of such foreign country." Such efforts are already underway in six pilot countries in Africa as part of the United States Security Government Initiative. And one concrete example of successful results: recently Niger's Ministry of Defense approved new planning guidance that will enable the armed forces there to align existing resources with their strategic goals more effectively.

Charting a roadmap for reform, however, should begin with a systems-based scoping assessment that identifies weaknesses and vulnerabilities. But institutional capacity building is not quick, and results don't come easily. There is need for patience and commitment on the part of the government building its institutions and frankly that commitment ultimately depends on political will and institutional leadership.

Successful programs also involve efforts to strengthen the relationship between government institutions and local communities. Our esteemed ODIHR Director in her remarks mentioned one key member of local communities - civil society. As one example, the United States, together with the Netherlands, United Kingdom, and Denmark, supports the Border Community Engagement Project – an effort in an unstable area of the Sahel region in Africa between Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. The project not only trains border security units, but also works to improve their relationships with the communities they serve. In Niger, another example the United States is supporting is efforts on behalf of the government to improve communication and collaboration between Niger's security forces and citizens. This program improves public dialogue around citizen security needs, encourages local solutions, and increases accountability through both external and internal monitoring – both are critical for a region of increasing concern.

In concluding Mr. Chair, let me recognize Slovakia's commitment to advancing SSG/R as well as the important work of several preceding chairs. We appreciate the valuable contributions that have been made in leading the Group of Friends and we are open to exploring the possibility of broadening our discussions. As we here in the OSCE consider how to move forward, I wish to offer a few suggestions:

First, I think it's important to take stock of the OSCE's comparative advantage in advancing SSG/R, including the Organization's mandate, its history of institution building, and its

breadth of security experience. Conversely, we should consider whether there are any downsides or disadvantages to OSCE involvement in particular types of SSG/R work.

Second, let's assess how adopting an SSG/R approach could change the way the OSCE carries out security sector assistance. For example, what are the likely long-term consequences if the OSCE does – or does not – fully ground its security assistance within an SSG/R framework?

Finally, as we've heard from our colleagues today who are visiting from New York, other actors are – and have been for some time – working in this field. In light of UN Security Council Resolution 2151 on SSG/R, we should further consider how the OSCE can coordinate, de-conflict, and partner with the United Nations and other international organizations in this important line of work.

Thank you.