

## United States Mission to the OSCE



### **Session 3: Partners for Co-operation**

As delivered by Alex Johnson, Representative of the Helsinki Commission  
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The world seems to be getting smaller, binding the OSCE participating States and our Partners for Cooperation closer together. International travel has never been easier or faster. New communication links among our countries are virtually instantaneous. Growing immigrant populations maintain a web of connections back to their countries of origin. These close and interconnected links also mean that we face many of the same challenges – from the threat of terrorism and violent extremism, to problems of environmental degradation and violations of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms.

So, it is entirely appropriate and encouraging that the OSCE, the only organization representing all the states of the wider European, Eurasian, and transatlantic community, provides an umbrella under which OSCE participating States meet Mediterranean and Asian Partner States. Central Asia, Europe, North America, North Africa and the Middle East, as well as Asia, have common interests upon which to build. We need initiatives in which we can cooperate constructively and build mutual understanding and confidence in order to approach today's difficult security issues. We should view the OSCE as a platform for common action to address the threats and challenges that we all face, as a means to improve security and long-term stability in all our countries.

I'd like to take the opportunity to respond to the introduction made by Mr. Nunez. While we understand Spain's interest in giving a positive impetus to the Mideast Peace process, we believe it is still premature to grant Partnership to the Palestinians. The United States fully shares the goal of two states – Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. We will continue to do everything in our power to facilitate such an outcome. However, we do not believe that granting the Palestinians de facto partnership, not in accordance with our own Rules of Procedure, is in the best interests of either the Palestinians or our organization. We believe there are sufficient other fora in which our countries can engage with the Palestinians and support their institutional capacity-building efforts.

There are a number of areas of interest and possibilities for cooperation on which we can move forward purposefully – if the political will and resources are found to do so. That political will must be driven by the Partners to ensure productive cooperation and localized solutions that exceed wishful thinking. Thus, we urge our Partners to keep the OSCE a priority in their multilateral diplomacy by continuing to graciously host annual conferences and additional seminars as funded through the OSCE's Partnership Fund. This ownership of our cooperative endeavors will ensure that the dialogue remains meaningful to our Partners.

We have made significant progress in recent years in further integrating the Partners into the activities of the OSCE, and in securing funding for joint projects. The U.S. has given over 70,000 euros in funding to support a roundtable with the Mediterranean Partners, civil society meetings in Jordan and South Korea, as well as the attendance of government officials and civil society representatives in OSCE meetings. And we will do more.

The United States encourages all of the Partners to look at the OSCE's body of experience, and to consider how they can voluntarily implement OSCE norms, principles, and commitments. The OSCE has much to offer its Partners in terms of technical assistance and a wealth of practical experience. We urge our Partners to take advantage of these resources, as well as actively to engage in proposed exchange initiatives for personnel and expertise. In addition, we find immense value in election observation exchanges with our Partners and hope that such cooperation continues. Moreover, we support the CiO's Perception paper on Afghanistan engagement and consider it a meaningful foundation for the Summit's Action Plan on Afghanistan.

We do this because we firmly believe in the positive power of the OSCE's acquis and its practical applicability to both the Mediterranean and Asian regions. As a direct result of the principles and commitments agreed to in the Helsinki Final Act, which were renewed and elaborated upon in subsequent OSCE documents, the bitter divides of the Cold War were replaced by unprecedented security and cooperation across Europe. They helped us bring an end to the old confrontation and to foster a new era of democracy, peace and prosperity throughout the OSCE area.

While acknowledging that implementation of commitments is lagging in the OSCE area, particularly in the area of human rights and fundamental freedoms, we continue to believe that adherence to OSCE commitments in all three dimensions is essential for lasting peace and wellbeing within and among our States – including in our Partner States – in this 21<sup>st</sup> century.