

Statement of Daniel B. Baer
U.S. Permanent Representative-designate to the
Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the Committee.

It is an honor to come before this committee as the President's nominee to serve as the United States Permanent Representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and I am grateful for the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have expressed through this nomination.

I am humbled to be here in front of you, and also humbled to be in such good company, with Ambassador Nuland and General Lute. I look forward to working with each of them—and with you—to advance U.S. interests if we are confirmed. I have worked closely with Toria over the last few years, and she has been not only a great friend but also a great partner in fighting for human rights.

Mr. Chairman, for the past four years I have had the privilege of serving as a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. In this capacity, I have welcomed the opportunity to contribute to a long tradition—through both Democratic and Republican administrations—of putting human rights at the center of U.S. foreign policy and to be part of that team that helps shape our response to emerging human rights challenges, such as growing threats to internet freedom.

This experience has deepened my conviction that human rights must be at the core of any successful long term strategy for peace and security, and that U.S. leadership in advancing human rights is as critical today as it was when Eleanor Roosevelt helped draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights almost 70 years ago. Today, no serious observer can doubt the link between human rights and security. We know that respect for human rights cannot be relegated to the “nice to have, but not essential” category, because there is no genuine security in the absence of respect for human rights and adherence to the rule of law. Recent history has shown us that the apparent stability afforded by repressive regimes is often proven illusory. And we know that because of this, when states violate the rights of their citizens and fail to uphold their international human rights obligations, it is not merely “internal affairs” but the rightful concern of the entire international community.

The OSCE is unique in having embraced this comprehensive approach to security at its founding, and is the only regional security organization that places the human, economic and environmental, and political-military dimensions of security on an equal footing. The 57

participating States of the OSCE have recognized that whether and how an OSCE State is implementing its OSCE commitments is a legitimate concern for all participating States.

This principle is part of a broader framework of highly elaborated human rights, cooperative security, and rule of law norms that are reflected in the mandates of the OSCE institutions and field operations, enabling them to respond to a range of challenges – from attacks on media freedom to ethnic tensions – across the OSCE—from Vancouver to Vladivostok. From election observation to arms control and military transparency and confidence-building regimes; from the quiet diplomacy of the High Commissioner on National Minorities to the exchange of technical expertise in combating trafficking, promoting good governance in the public and private sector, supporting women entrepreneurs, or maintaining border security; the OSCE’s resources encompass expertise and established habits of cooperation that cannot be replaced, recreated or duplicated.

Over almost four decades—from its origin at the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, to its emergence as the OSCE in 1990 when Europe and Eurasia were undergoing deep and turbulent transformation, we have witnessed enormous progress towards our goal of a Europe whole, free and at peace. But there is still more work to be done.

The “Helsinki + 40” process, a three-year framework for action leading up to the 40th anniversary in 2015 of the signing of Helsinki, provides an opportunity for participating States to reaffirm existing OSCE commitments and to bolster the Organization across all three dimensions. Helsinki + 40 should promote trust and mutual confidence in the political-military realm, help revitalize conventional arms control as well as confidence and security-building regimes, and seek to address the protracted conflicts in the OSCE space. The security afforded to OSCE participating States is often uneven, particularly in the so-called “gray zones” of Europe. We should aim to rebuild an environment at the OSCE where military transparency is the norm, creating a more stable security environment for all.

In the economic and environmental dimension, we will maximize fully the OSCE’s unique position to leverage the connection between human rights, accountable and responsive government, and economic prosperity. We will continue to promote good governance and prioritize the organization’s work to improve trade and transport connections, notably at border crossings, where good governance practices and efficient customs procedures are helping to increase trade volumes between participating States and improve income generation for small business entrepreneurs.

If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues across the Administration, as well as in Congress, to advance a vision that preserves what we value most about the OSCE, including its comprehensive approach to security, while developing a strategic framework that addresses 21st century challenges, leveraging U.S. resources together with those of our partners to achieve results. And even as we aim to rebuild an environment at the OSCE where military transparency

is the norm, the OSCE can leverage its security cooperation experience and knowledge, reaching out to other regions on measures for non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and confidence- and security-building regimes.

Challenges to security, human rights and rule of law are prevalent across the OSCE space including intolerance and xenophobia, state-sponsored corruption, flawed elections, declining military transparency, and unresolved conflicts. Some participating States are failing to uphold and implement their commitments, including as they relate to fundamental issues such as media freedom, investigative journalism and the role of civil society. This is troubling. But it cannot and does not change the fundamental truth on which the OSCE is based: that the three dimensions of security are interconnected and must be advanced together. Shortcomings reinforce the fact that the work goes on, and that we need the OSCE to continue to address challenges in a practical, principled manner, in order to achieve true, comprehensive security for all citizens throughout the OSCE space.

I know that some experts and some OSCE states have expressed doubts about the Organization's efficiency and effectiveness. We need to make a clear-eyed assessment of the OSCE and address these concerns. We should deal with challenges in a practical way that reaffirms our shared values and principles. The OSCE remains the only regional organization that includes all of Europe and Eurasia as well as Canada, the United States, and most recently Mongolia. Though its scope can make consensus difficult, it also makes the organization that much more powerful when we find ways to address challenges together.

And we should remember that when shared political will exists, the results are impressive. The OSCE's role in facilitating the peaceful participation in Serbian elections for dual nationals in Kosovo last year is a case in point. Based on the OSCE's success in that challenging mission, the EU has called on the organization to help administer local elections in northern Kosovo this fall, a key aspect of the recent normalization agreement between Serbia and Kosovo.

Looking to the decade ahead, the OSCE has the potential to play a pivotal role in advancing interests we share with OSCE participating States, including support for democratic development, economic integration, and security in Central Asia, as well as contributing to ongoing transitions on the periphery of the OSCE space among our Mediterranean Partners and in Afghanistan. The OSCE has expertise and experience that is directly relevant to our Partners' aspirations.

In all of my efforts, if confirmed, my priority will be to strengthen the OSCE as an institution that efficiently and effectively advances American and European interests in maintaining and deepening comprehensive security. The sustained commitment of the United States and other like-minded democracies is essential to the establishment of rights-respecting and sustainable institutions, military transparency and cooperative security, increased engagement with civil society, and greater adherence to rule of law and respect for human rights across the OSCE

space. No state can achieve this outcome alone; we need strong partners and organizations such as the OSCE.

Ambassador Nuland and Ambassador-designate Lute have laid out the enduring and unquestionable U.S. interest in a strong, democratic, prosperous and secure Europe as a central component of maintaining our own national security in the 21st century. By supporting robust and deep transatlantic ties through our bilateral diplomacy; maintaining the strength and agility of our NATO alliance; and continuing to advance trans-Atlantic cooperation through a comprehensive approach to security issues like those at the center of the OSCE's work, the U.S.-European relationship will remain a foundation for progress toward a more peaceful and democratic world.

Thank you again for having me and I welcome your questions.