

Statement of Michael Carpenter
Nominee for Permanent Representative 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 for this opportunity to appear before you as the President's nominee for Permanent Representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. It is a tremendous honor to be nominated for this position and I am grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me.

I would also like to thank my parents, my spouse, and our two children for their endless love and support.

My mother immigrated to this country from Poland. She was born during World War II while my grandparents, both physicians, were fighting the Nazi occupation as clandestine officers in the underground Home Army. After the war, the Communist dictatorship rewarded their heroism by confiscating their property and torturing my grandfather to divulge the names of his fellow officers. He refused, even when it cost him his job at the local hospital. Over four decades later, though, he lived to see the Solidarity movement sweep aside the oppressive Communist regime.

My family's struggles against totalitarianism instilled in me an appreciation for the democratic freedoms we enjoy as Americans and a conviction that they must never be taken for granted. I graduated from high school in 1989, the very year Communism was defeated in Central Europe. After earning a doctorate studying democratic movements, I joined the Foreign Service. I was working on the South Caucasus region when Russia invaded Georgia in 2008 and was serving as NSC Director for Russia when it invaded Ukraine in 2014. Later, at the Pentagon, I led efforts to strengthen and support the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and Euro-Atlantic aspirations of the countries between NATO and Russia.

Today, the optimism of 1989 admittedly seems distant. Democratic institutions are under assault and increasingly aggressive authoritarian regimes seek to weaken and divide democratic states against one other. A Communist dictatorship in China is trampling human rights and using economic coercion against other states. A revanchist Russia is repressing civil society and using "active measures" to disrupt and weaken democratic rivals. In many countries within the OSCE space, anti-

Semitism, racism, and intolerance are gaining ground. Judicial independence is eroding, journalists are harassed, and ruling parties with no interest in fair electoral competition are capturing state institutions.

Fortunately, the OSCE is uniquely suited to addressing these challenges. The Helsinki Final Act's linkages between security, economic relations, and human rights and its insistence that the latter are not an internal matter but a legitimate concern for all members of the international community have been transformational. Today, all participating States are held to account for their adherence to OSCE principles and commitments. If confirmed, I will continue speaking up for human dignity, freedom, and justice wherever they are challenged in the OSCE region. There are also bright spots and positive changes occurring. Though often less visible, OSCE field missions in Central Asia, the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe do highly impactful work to promote security, human rights, and rule of law at the local level.

Recognizing the enormous challenges that lie ahead, I would highlight the following three vital areas where, if confirmed, I would seek to partner with the Members of this Committee as well as the Helsinki Commission:

First, to promote comprehensive security across all three OSCE dimensions – politico-military, economic and environmental, and human rights – participating States must address not just conventional military threats but also “hybrid” threats such as election interference, energy coercion, disinformation, dark money, cyber operations, and transnational repression. We need to find ways not only to shine a light on these malign activities but also to defend ourselves and our democratic partners against them.

Second, to promote prosperity and rule of law, participating States must establish stronger anti-corruption measures both east and west of Vienna. Corruption erodes economic growth, undermines security, and enables state capture. Like-minded states must work together to fight kleptocracy, using tools like criminal statutes against bribery, Global Magnitsky-style sanctions, and collective action against offshore secrecy.

Third, our allies and partners must work together to strengthen the resilience of frontline democracies. In Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Armenia, and many Balkan countries, OSCE institutions offer a range of tools for strengthening democratic resilience. Supporting religious freedom, media pluralism, electoral reform, and

judicial independence all fall into this basket, as do efforts to bridge societal divides and resolve longstanding conflicts.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge the instrumental role that Congress plays in achieving these goals. Whenever members of this body observe an election, condemn human rights abuses, or demand pushback against foreign coercion, you serve as a force multiplier. If confirmed, it will be an honor to work with the members of this Committee, the Helsinki Commissioners, and other members of Congress to advance our shared interest in democracy, transparency, prosperity, and security for the American people.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.