



United States Mission to the OSCE

The Russian Federation's Ongoing Aggression Against Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Michael Carpenter
to the Special Permanent Council, Vienna
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Today, we celebrate Ukraine's Independence Day, a commemoration of the Ukrainian people's freedom, sovereignty, and liberation from Soviet totalitarianism and their long history as an independent nation, stretching back over a millennium. It's a day that should be marked by official festivities and family celebrations. Yet today also marks a year and a half of Russia's bloody and reckless war against independent Ukraine, aiming to wipe the country off the map, with obvious and ominous repercussions for every independent state that participates in this organization, and indeed all countries around the world.

Eighteen months ago, the Russian Federation again violated the UN Charter and contravened the Helsinki Final Act with its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Despite the brutality and barbarity of its military campaign, for over nine years the Kremlin has failed to achieve its goal. Though Moscow continues its unconscionable assaults, atrocities, and abuses, it is clear this war already constitutes a strategic failure. We are determined to make it so — not because, as the Kremlin propagandists would have it, anyone wants to harm the Russian state. But because the Russian state stabbed its peaceful neighbor in the back and is trying to annex its territory. This behavior cannot stand in the 21st century.

These past eighteen months have been a period of sharp contrasts between Ukraine's pursuit of a just and lasting peace and Russia's unrelenting onslaughts and utter disregard for human life in pursuit of its territorial ambitions. Ukraine continues to elaborate its peace plan, while Russia continues down the path of war, impervious to calls from world leaders to stop its murderous campaign. On August 5th and 6th, Saudi Arabia convened a broad range of international partners in Jeddah. Over 40 countries, including the United States, India, Brazil, South Africa, and the People's Republic of China joined Ukraine to discuss how to secure a just and lasting peace. Russia, on the other hand, didn't even show up.

Just yesterday, dozens of countries and international organizations joined Ukraine for the third International Summit of the Crimea Platform to discuss the devastating human rights, security, and economic consequences of Russia's illegal seizure and its ongoing occupation of Crimea. Countries across the globe see right through Russia's propaganda and disinformation. They understand what is happening and what is at stake – the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity that undergird international peace. They recognize the destabilizing effects of aggression and the barbarous consequences of war. We need to continue to build these coalitions. That is why the United States welcomes fellow endorsing countries of the Joint Declaration of Support to Ukraine, which now includes all of the G7 countries plus an additional 20 others, to help Ukraine build a force that is able to defend and deter against Russian aggression.

We need to redouble our support for Ukraine because Russia continues to launch wave after wave of attacks on the Ukrainian people, killing many civilians. On August 5th and 6th, Russia carried out its largest aerial bombardment in months, launching over 70 drones and missiles at Ukraine. On August 8th, Russia's forces attacked Ukraine's city of Pokrovsk with two missiles, with the second missile killing and maiming first responders who showed up at the scene to care for the wounded. This so-called "double tap" tactic has been employed by Russia across the front lines; and it is reprehensible. The Pokrovsk strikes killed nine people and injured 82.

On Sunday, August 13th, Russia's bombardments struck residential areas in Kherson Oblast, killing seven and wounding 13. The attack killed a family of four. Mother. Father. Their 12-year-old son. His three-week old baby sister. Last Saturday, Russia's drone and missile attacks against Ukraine's city of Chernihiv killed at least seven and injured 144 people. Among the dead was six-year-old Sofiyka. And yesterday, Russia's attack on the city of Romny destroyed a school, reportedly killing the school's director, deputy director, secretary, and librarian, and injuring four others.

We've also witnessed the contrast between Ukraine striving to deliver food to those in need while Russia weaponizes hunger, literally targeting grain storage facilities and driving up the costs of basic foodstuffs around the world. Ukraine worked with the UN and Türkiye through the Black Sea Grain Initiative, or BSGI, to deliver nearly 33 million tons of grain to global markets. That's the equivalent of 18 billion loaves of bread. While Ukraine helped feed the world, Russia decided to cut it off, preventing the developing world from accessing one of its key sources of food. Unconcerned with global calls to keep the supply of grain moving to the world's most hungry, Russia quit the BSGI. Days later, global prices rose 17 percent. We know who benefits from this – Russia, which earned record profits off these higher agricultural prices. And we know whom this will harm the most – those struggling with food insecurity in developing countries.

In fact, Russia did not stop there. Russia's forces attacked Ukraine's export infrastructure to prevent anyone from delivering this grain. Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports Russia has attacked port infrastructure facilities 26 times. After attempting to destroy Ukraine's export infrastructure in Odesa, Russia expanded its attacks. On August 2nd, Russia attacked the Danube port of Izmail, and on August 16th it struck the Danube port of Reni, damaging grain silos and export infrastructure. Photos show tons of grain spoiled by Russia's attacks spilling into the streets from ruined storage facilities. Yesterday, Russia again attacked Izmail, destroying an additional 13 tons of grain ready to be shipped to Egypt and Romania. Thus far, Russia has destroyed more than 220,000 tons of Ukraine's grain. That's enough food to feed almost 1 million people for an entire year.

President Putin ought to listen to world leaders urging Russia to rejoin the BSGI. Leaders like South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, who chastised Russia, saying "the Black Sea should be open. We are not here to plead for donations for the African continent." Or Kenya's Principal Secretary of Foreign Affairs Korir Sing'Oei who said, "the decision by Russia to exit the Black Sea Grain Initiative is a stab [in] the back [for] global food security prices and disproportionately impacts countries in the Horn of Africa already impacted by drought."

Now Russia appears to be begging fellow pariah states, like North Korea, for assistance in maintaining its war effort. The international community, however, is coalescing around shared principles and the imperative of holding Russia accountable. We will continue to stand together in support of Ukraine. To demonstrate our sustained commitment to Ukraine, President Biden requested \$24.1 billion in additional supplemental funding from the United States Congress. And, as many of you know, the United States will support a joint effort with our Allies and partners to train Ukrainian pilots on fourth generation combat aircraft, including F-16s. We will also continue to look at ways to help Ukraine push back on Russian occupation forces and liberate its territory.

Today, I'd like to congratulate Ukraine on its Independence Day and wish its people an end to this brutal war, an end to the daily images of corpses on the streets, of missiles impacting apartment buildings, and shellings of kindergartens, hospitals, and theaters. During a year and a half of incredible adversity and suffering, Ukraine's people have demonstrated extraordinary resolve. They have proudly defended not only their country, but the foundational principles of the Helsinki Final Act that all of our states signed up to nearly 50 years ago. Sovereignty. Inviolability of borders. Territorial integrity. Respect for international law. Thirty-two years ago, Ukraine's Rada declared, "the territory of Ukraine is indivisible and inviolable." That's what the people of Ukraine are fighting to defend. And the United States and our Allies and partners will continue to stand united with a free, democratic, independent Ukraine for as long as it takes.

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