



United States Mission to the OSCE

Reply to the Russian Federation on Ongoing Violations of International Law and Defiance of OSCE Principles and Commitments by the Russian Federation in Ukraine

As delivered by U.S. Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 8, 2016

I'd just like to take the opportunity to respond to a couple of the statements made by our distinguished Russian colleague.

First, there is no parallel reality. Many of us – I didn't have the pleasure of seeing our distinguished Russian colleague there last week in Potsdam – but many of us were present in Potsdam. And when ministers, and deputy ministers, gathered from almost all of the participating States the discussion was much the same as what we hear in the PC, namely the top issue was deep concern over the security implications for all of us of Russia's contravention of its OSCE commitments and its ongoing aggression against Ukraine. And so I'd like to reassure our Russian colleague that if he heard the statements of fact made by my delegation and a number of others as aggressive – they are not statements of aggression, these are statements of regret. Nobody wants the situation to be as it is on the ground.

The reason the situation is as it is on the ground is because of the failure of the Russian Federation to follow through on the commitments it has made. The Russian Federation has consistently talked the big game and failed to follow up with action. So, rather than attempting to shame the people in this room into modifying our statements of fact and our statements of genuine concern with Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine – if it makes our distinguished Russian colleague uncomfortable to feel the nearly universal condemnation of Russia's actions in this hall, I suggest that he take it up with Moscow because it is his colleagues in Moscow who are responsible for his discomfort. Not his colleagues in this room.

Second, I want to bring up the point that our distinguished Russian colleague made about direct contact between the commanders of forces of both sides. The JCCC has Russian officers and Ukrainian officers in it. The Russian military provides command and control for the Russian-led separatist forces – so the real question is why does that not work. They

don't need a phone line, they are supposed to be talking to each other all the time. And why does that not work? The United States supports a more productive JCCC, as we said in our statement today, and particularly follow-up by the Russian officers represented there.

In terms of political steps in the Minsk agreements, I agree with our distinguished Russian colleague: the political steps are an important component of the Minsk agreements. But it is undeniable that the first step in the Minsk agreements is a complete and sustained ceasefire that is not just an accident. It is because in order to achieve the political steps there has to be stability and security on the ground. So if Russia cares about the political steps the most constructive thing it can do is give orders on the ground for a complete and sustained ceasefire to be observed.

Finally, I'd also like to agree with our distinguished Russian colleague that the SMM's mandate also covers other parts of Ukraine where there are desperate human rights conditions, and point out that this includes the autonomous Republic of Crimea where there are desperate human rights conditions because of Russia's ongoing occupation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.