



United States Mission to the OSCE

Reply to the Russian Federation on Montenegro and NATO Membership

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 3, 2016

I just wanted to respond to the allusions made by our distinguished Russian colleague to my delegation and several others, that we are “dragging” Montenegro into NATO.

I feel the need to follow up, not with respect to Montenegro as such, but rather more generally, because this echoes language offered by Mr. Naryshkin of the Russian Duma last week at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly meeting, in which he referred to a number of NATO members as “vassals”.

It is unfortunate, by the way, that he made his diatribe and then left the room, and so wasn’t able to hear responses to his diatribe, including by the delegation of Lithuania.

This use of “dragging,” or referring to countries as “vassals” is, I think, another case of Russian projection, for while it is a common tool of Russian diplomacy to use coercion and corruption, that’s not the way that NATO has worked, does work, or will ever work. It’s not the way the EU accession process has worked, does work, will ever work, in my view.

The U.S. along with others in NATO as well as EU countries have made clear and have demonstrated through action, the longstanding position that sovereign and independent States are responsible for making their own choices about security arrangements. And it would be good if Russia could demonstrate both in word and action the same respect for the sovereignty of other countries.

Thank you Mr. Chair.