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United States Mission to the OSCE

Reply to Russia on Russia's Ongoing Violations in Ukraine

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Kate Byrnes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 1, 2017

My Russian colleague said that other participating States had failed to call for an observation of the ceasefire or for de-mining by all sides, and I would say that is simply not the case. We did so in our statement and I heard other participating States do so as well.

He also further noted that we did not talk about the importance of the implementation of the Minsk agreements, and again, I would make very clear here that the United States supports the Minsk agreements as the most viable path toward peace.

Security must come first with regard to implementation of the Minsk Agreements. Ukraine has already moved toward implementing political aspects of the Minsk Agreements, including passing amnesty and special status laws. Russia and the separatists it backs have not similarly moved forward. Russia continues to arm, train, and lead the so-called separatist forces in the Donbas. Russia's denial — despite all information to the contrary — that it is not party to the conflict in eastern Ukraine, or that Russian aggression is mythical, is simply not credible.

Russia signed the Minsk agreements, and like all signatories, it committed itself to full implementation.

Now, as Secretary Tillerson has said, Russia must take the first step to improve the security situation. That means adherence by Russian-led separatist forces to a real, durable ceasefire, pullback of all heavy weapons, disengagement of forces along the line of contact, and full, safe, unfettered access to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.