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United States Mission to the OSCE



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

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 23, 2016

I've appreciated listening to the discussion this morning, and in particular the exchange we just heard between our distinguished Russian colleague and our distinguished Ukrainian colleague – and the rest of us, because we're all part of this conversation.

I agree with our distinguished Russian colleague that, ideally, what we should aim for is that this political forum should give political impetus to work on the ground being done by the instruments of this forum, as well as the overall objectives that are reflected in the Helsinki Final Act and our OSCE principles and commitments. I also agree with our distinguished Ukrainian colleague that the political discourse that we have in this forum is, and must be, rooted in those principles and commitments. That is our foundation. And any matter that relates to those principles and commitments, or any concern that is genuinely held about the upholding of those principles and commitments, is not only a reasonable but a responsible thing to raise in this room.

I want to say also that, while I agree with our distinguished Russian colleague that the ideal is for this forum to give a political boost to the work being done on the ground, one of the challenges that my delegation finds with achieving that objective – I mean, in the first instance, it seems like there is broad consensus in this room that the full implementation of the Minsk agreements is what is needed on the ground. Russia says that in this room, Ukraine says that in this room, and everyone else who speaks in this room says that, so we have full agreement. But how do we get to the next level? And one of the challenges with getting to the next level is indeed, as our distinguished Russian colleague points out, the injection of a kind of rhetoric, of phrases like: "internal Ukrainian conflict." Or the claim, against all evidence, that Russia is not a party to this. The denial of having been committed to certain things – to the Minsk Protocol and Minsk Package of Measures, that makes it harder for us to have a genuine back and forth conversation about how to see those agreements implemented.

And so I think, if we want to take it to the next political level, we need to see more good faith and more matching of actions to the words that are spoken in this forum. And that is something that we lack right now.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.