



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 6, 2014

And thank you again to the Ambassador of Ukraine for continuing to provide sober updates of the situation and ideas about a way forward.

The United States' position on the situation in Ukraine is clear, including that the Russian actions have been neither legitimate nor lawful, and that we all must work quickly to de-escalate the crisis. We remain committed to the Ukrainian people and to a strong future for Ukraine, which is in the interest not only of Ukraine, but also the Russian Federation and the rest of us.

Rather than go at length into a refutation of the various assertions that have been offered by President Putin and others in the Russian government as a justification, I have left outside and will distribute later today a point-by-point examination of these assertions and why they do not hold up. Instead I would like to talk briefly today about where we go from here.

As others have said, it is clear that there must be diplomatic engagement, and several ministers met yesterday in Paris, including with Foreign Minister Lavrov. It's unfortunate that he didn't seize the opportunity to meet with acting Foreign Minister Deshchytsia there, but we continue to urge the Russian Federation to reach out and start diplomatic engagement with the Ukrainian government.

In addition, there needs to be a solution on the ground. And the solution is clear: military forces and paramilitary forces should go back to bases or back to their home territories, and international monitors should come in. In that respect, we commend current efforts already underway, including the voluntary Vienna Document monitoring mission, but also the work of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the Personal Representative of the Chairmanship on Ukraine. We certainly urge that all those who are going in right now should be looking at facts, and reporting on facts as they see them. We are also glad that Dunja Mijatovic, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, was able to travel to Crimea this week and, with her team, assess facts.

But that is not enough. There will need to be more work going forward.

In that respect, we urge all those around this table to move quickly toward the moment where we would be able to adopt the special monitoring mission that has been invited by the Ukrainian delegation and that the Chairmanship will present a draft mandate for later today.

We know that the instructions to finalize such negotiations will have to come from capitals, including from Moscow, and we urge our Russian colleagues to make every effort to ensure that they can get instructions to finalize those negotiations as soon as possible.

In the meanwhile, we commend and urge the Secretary General to move full steam ahead with his creative proposal for something that is not a monitoring mission, but nonetheless addresses many of the concerns that have been raised -- including by the Russian Federation - in facilitating dialogue on the ground. This proposal for an extra-budgetary project is fully within his mandate and consistent with the existing mandate of the OSCE Project Coordinator in Kyiv, and he has our full support. I would also point out that I heard that some people have questioned this, and they are welcome to their questions, but not to question the mandates of the Secretary General or the Project Coordinator's Office, which have been agreed by consensus.

I also welcome the news that ODIHR has begun its deployment in response to the invitation for a human rights assessment mission, and thank the Ukrainian government for issuing that invitation.

Thank you very much..