



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **1<sup>st</sup> Reply to the Russian Federation on the situation in Ukraine and the need to implement the Minsk agreements**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
March 5, 2015

Just to respond to the statement of our distinguished Russian colleague.

I did read the report from the Observation Mission at the Russian Checkpoints of Gukovo and Donetsk yesterday. And in our statement we emphasized—accurately—that the convoy hadn't been fully inspected. We did see that the few Ukrainian border guards who were at the checkpoint were able to look at some of the trucks, but standing and watching trucks go by, and even poking your head into them does not constitute a full inspection.

More to the point, Russia agreed that humanitarian assistance should be delivered according to international mechanisms. And Russia has now failed seventeen times to deliver humanitarian aid consistent with international mechanisms. There are established procedures. The reason that the ICRC hasn't agreed to participate in these Russian white truck convoys is something for the Russian Federation and the ICRC to discuss. But I would say that the key point here is that there is a way to deliver humanitarian aid that is consistent with international standards, and Russia has repeatedly chosen to flout those international standards and to not do it that way. So we would continue to urge, consistent with Russia's own agreements, that they follow up on this and find a way to have both the delivery and the distribution of humanitarian assistance conform with international standards.

While I have the microphone: I appreciate some of the comments made by our Russian colleague today. I would say, however, that one of the pieces that was missing is the Russian Federation's own actions to comply with the Package of Measures. I wonder what has happened, and what the Russian Federation's plan is for the masses of heavy weapons that the Russian Federation had itself around Debaltseve. Whether the Russian tanks have been pulled back, and to where, and what the plan is for the Russian Federation to pull its own heavy weapons and fighters back. I suspect that our Russian colleague will say that the Russian Federation didn't have any fighters or weapons there, and in that case I wonder what his response is to the multiple journalistic pieces that have come out recently—interviews with mothers of Russian soldiers, with soldiers themselves. Does he think that these Russians are lying? Are they making this up? Is this a fantasy that they have? I just wonder what the response would be, and what he would say to these people.

Finally on the pace of implementation of the Minsk agreements of last September and the Package of Measures. I think we can agree that the pace of implementation has not been satisfactory. That's been true for many months. Our distinguished Russian colleague highlighted several elements that Foreign Minister Lavrov has also highlighted. The United States has been consistent in advocating for full implementation of the Minsk agreements of last September and now advocates similarly for the implementation of the implementation

agreement that was signed last month. I would note, however, that Russia and its proxies, in violating the Package of Measures from the first seconds of its signature, and in violating the ceasefire from the first minutes of its supposed implementation, have set back the implementation of the Minsk agreements once again. This is because much of what needs to be done in order to implement requires political work that is made more difficult when one side has so flagrantly violated the agreement. That's unfortunate.

We've heard broad support today for--and, I think, one thing that everybody who has spoken today has agreed on is— the need to work as hard as we can to implement what has been agreed. One suggestion—if the Russian Federation really does care about the implementation of many of the political measures that it highlighted— then facilitating OSCE observation of the entire international border would be a significant contribution to allowing the political process to move forward, because part of what's needed is more confidence in what is going across or not going across that border. Russia continues to supply weapons to its proxies in eastern Ukraine, and that makes the political process harder. And so, if Russia would facilitate observation on its side of the border, of the entire border, that could actually accelerate the political process that Russia claims to care so much about.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.