



United States Mission to the OSCE

**Reply to the Russian Federation on the
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
December 17, 2015

I wanted to make a couple of points in response to our distinguished Russian colleague.

On the substantive point with respect to the Russian Federation's professed concern for the implementation of the Minsk agreements, and particularly what our distinguished Russian colleague refers to as a "comprehensive political agreement," I just want to make two points.

First, I think we heard today from our distinguished Ukrainian colleague, and we've heard in recent weeks several times from our distinguished Ukrainian colleague, concrete details about the kinds of proposals Ukraine that has brought to the table, including in the political working group, as an attempt to jump start and have a real conversation with Russia and its proxies in that working group, to move forward on those political issues. We've heard suggestions in terms of an approach to amnesty; we've heard suggestions in terms of an approach to how local elections could be held consistent with international standards, with ODIHR observation and under Ukrainian law. The problem has been that Russia has decided not to engage on those proposals and, instead, only to make political statements here. And the United States would simply urge the Russian Federation to roll up its sleeves and engage in good faith. That doesn't mean that everything the Ukrainian delegation brings to the political working group is something you will agree with. But, engage in good faith in those discussions, because we've heard concrete elements of that here, and it is for the Russian Federation, given its role as a member of the Trilateral Contact Group, to engage in that political working group and take the political agreement --that it cares so much about-- forward.

The second point is related to that. I think it is important to recognize that we've heard, now, for a year-and-a-half from Ukraine about the priority that President Poroshenko and members of the government put on achieving a lasting peace, including restoration of control of the international border. It is clear that Ukraine sees this as a priority, and that, in part, motivates the deep engagement in terms of implementing the Minsk Protocol, Memorandum, and Package of Measures. I just want to recall again the fact that when there is a spike in fighting on the ground, that sets the process back. So when Russia and its proxies mount a series of provocations that turn into a degradation of the ceasefire – which we've seen now happen multiple times over the last 18 months – that actually retards the political process that Russian claims to care about. So one of the things that Russia, (and Ukraine,) can do to jump

start the process, is to take all steps to deescalate the kinetic activity – the fighting that is going on – and have the ceasefire in place and stable, because that will make possible a productive political process, as long as the players are also ready to engage in that.

The Second thing I wanted to comment on was the opening of our distinguished Russian colleague's statement, where he lamented the absence of what he termed "mutually respectful diplomatic dialogue". And, to pick up on something that our Canadian colleague mentioned earlier, this morning President has done his annual presser – 1400 journalists there – and I also saw the report that our distinguished Canadian colleague mentioned, that President Putin has now admitted that Russia has been engaged, including in the military sphere, on the territory in eastern Ukraine. And, I guess, the question for my distinguished Russian colleague is: given the number of times we have heard from the Russian delegation in this forum that Russia is not engaged in the military sphere in eastern Ukraine, is President Putin telling the truth, or has the Russian delegation here in Vienna been telling the truth? Because part of a "mutually respectable dialogue" is telling the truth to each other. So, that's important to know, so that we can all be working together to build the kind of dialogue that our distinguished Russian colleague would like to have.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.