



United States Mission to the OSCE

Reply to Russia on the Occasion of the 75th Anniversary of Nazi Germany's Invasion of the Soviet Union

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

I just wanted to respond to our distinguished Russian colleague who said that he was surprised that we looked at this issue through a present perspective. I heard a number of statements that both reflected on the historical perspective and the present perspective, including the statement by the Russian Federation which went on at some length about allegations of neo-Nazism in certain societies today. I think it's right and proper that we look at history through the perspective of the present. In fact, I recall a previous Permanent Council meeting I agreed with the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation when he said that we should take lessons from the past and see how they apply and can guide us today. So I think it's not surprising at all but rather appropriate that we look at lessons of history and how they apply to the world that we live in today.

I agree with our distinguished Russian colleague: history becomes perverted by attempts to subjugate it to nationalistic ideologies. History becomes perverted when it is instrumentalized for contemporary political purposes. I think all participating States, including Russia, should be mindful of that risk.

And I think, reflecting on the losses again which the distinguished Russian Ambassador raised just now: I think we can all look forward to the day when each of our societies, each participating State, including Russia, will have made good on the sacrifices of those who died. When each of our societies will be rights-respecting, prosperous, peaceful, stable societies.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.