



United States Mission to the OSCE

Reply to Russian Federation on Russia's Ongoing Violations of Ukraine's Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
December 15, 2016

I wanted to respond, not really directly to our distinguished Russian colleague, but rather, to point out to the rest of my distinguished colleagues around this table – just picking up on that last point that we heard from the Russian delegation this morning: that all those who are interested in dialogue need to accept the false statement that Crimea is part of Russia.

You know, this is a threat dressed up as a statement in support of dialogue – a threat that asks us to sign up to something that runs counter to international law, to a UN General Assembly Resolution, and to the reality – whether Russia wishes to accept it or not – that Crimea is Ukraine.

But to say that we have to accept an illegal ~~statement~~ [claim] by the Russian Federation before Russia is willing to have dialogue with us is a really counterproductive statement.

And I'd just like to remind everyone that last week we heard from Foreign Minister Lavrov that he was interested in dialogue, and he counseled us to soften our tone – to summarize.

And today we heard from the Russian delegation a statement that included terms such as the "Kyiv regime." Can you imagine what the Russian delegation would say if we talked about the "Moscow junta." It wouldn't be inaccurate to describe a "Kremlin clique of kleptocrats," but can you imagine what the Russian Federation would say?

We heard the Russian Federation use the term "apartheid" – a politically loaded term. It was the first time I've heard it in this forum. We've heard them offer up the diagnosis of some of us that we have a "dangerous psychiatric illness of Russophobia – an affliction that can be healed...if it's not too late."

Nobody in this room has a dangerous psychiatric illness of Russophobia. There are many people in this room who have reasonable concerns: concerns driven by Russian behavior, its actions that have had tremendous human consequences, and our commitment to building a European environment and an international rules-based system that protects the dignity of all persons. That's not a phobia. That's a genuine concern based on Russian behavior.

But I just wanted to point out, given the calls for constructive dialogue that we've heard in the last week, how unconstructive the Russian intervention was today.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

###