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## United States Mission to the OSCE

# Response to the Russian Federation on Russia's Foreign Agents Law

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
November 19, 2015

Colleagues, I wanted to make one general point since the United States was mentioned again this week, which is I commend to you an article in today's *Washington Post* that includes an interview of sorts with Natalia Taubina, who is the head of the Public Verdict Foundation, which is a foundation that was targeting corruption in Russia, and who will receive the annual Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award today in Washington, which is awarded by the independent RFK Foundation. It's an interesting article and it connects to the topic that we're discussing today.

Second, in response to our distinguished Russian colleague, I made the point before that the comparisons that you've drawn to other laws, in my view, do not hold up. In fact, they're nonsensical comparisons when you look at the intent and the effect of the laws that you are trying to draw comparisons between. But you don't have to take my view, or that of my delegation, or of any of the delegations around this table. I would encourage the Russian Federation, if the Russian Federation is so confident that the Russian Federation's Foreign Agents Law is fully consistent with Russia's human rights obligations and with international standards, to submit that law for an opinion to the Venice Commission, to the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Association Maina Kiai, to ODIHR, which is the OSCE's own tool that can help support participating States in ensuring that their laws are consistent with OSCE commitments, to the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the U.N. system, or Assistant Secretary-General Šimonović. These are all credible international human rights experts who would be able to, perhaps more persuasively than I can, deliver to the Russian Federation an assessment of whether and how the Russian Federation's law is consistent with the Russian Federation's international human rights obligations.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.