



United States Mission to the OSCE

Ongoing Violations of OSCE Principles and Commitments by the Russian Federation and the Situation in Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
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It has been 41 days since the Russian Federation began its illegal military actions in Crimea; 24 days since the Russian Federation acknowledged a so-called referendum that was both illegal and illegitimate; and 20 days since Russia's lawmakers voted to annex Crimea—an unlawful attempt to violate Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Yet, these dates mark only a handful of the numerous, destabilizing actions that the Russian Federation has carried out in recent months, thus undermining Ukraine's stability and threatening Ukrainian citizens' unity, peace, and prosperity. Russia's ongoing actions are a caustic chemical, eroding the pillars that have underpinned security in Europe for a generation.

Since the Russian delegation chose not to join us at the joint FSC/PC meeting on Monday, the United States reiterates its statement made at that meeting. The continued buildup of forces along Russia's border with Ukraine risks a significant destabilization of European security. It is in and of itself a menacing act. We reject the Russian claim that the use of Vienna Document Chapter III measures by the United States in this instance is "unfounded." Our concerns are serious and genuine. This unusual Russian military activity has given rise to specific concerns about the security of at least one OSCE participating State, Ukraine, and has generated questions and concerns among many other neighbors as well.

Furthermore, the Vienna Document is this Organization's signature confidence- and security-building tool. Russia has refused to engage in the confidence building measures enshrined in the Document, which were designed to address security concerns participating States have about the unusual and unscheduled military activities of another State, and which we all took such great pains to agree to by consensus. This blatant disregard for, and disrespect of, this Organization erodes a key component of the entire European security structure.

In addition to its unusual military activity along Ukraine's borders, Russia is also supporting a carefully orchestrated campaign of destabilization of eastern Ukraine. Events this week in Kharkiv, Donetsk, Luhansk, and Mariupol were not spontaneous expressions of local discontent with the government in Kyiv. There is strong evidence that some of the armed separatists that took over government buildings in these areas were paid to do so, and were not local residents.

This combination of military build-up and efforts to destabilize public life in eastern Ukraine is deeply troubling, and it isn't fooling anyone. Russia is clearly attempting to create a pretext for further intervention in Ukraine. In the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act, we call upon Russia to:

1. Reverse the illegal purported “annexation” of Crimea and permit the OSCE special monitoring mission to visit the Crimean region;
2. Draw down the military forces massed on Ukraine’s border;
3. Cease all efforts to destabilize Ukraine;
4. Publicly disavow the activities of separatists, saboteurs, and provocateurs;
5. Return Russian forces operating on Ukrainian territory in Crimea to their pre-crisis garrisons and numbers in accordance with existing bilateral agreements between Ukraine and the Russian Federation;
6. Invite additional Vienna Document visits to allow impartial observation by members of the international community of Russia’s current military activities in the region of the Ukrainian border; and
7. Engage in bilateral dialogue with the government of Ukraine to address any legitimate concerns.

In short, Russia must start respecting its OSCE commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.