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United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Events in Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
December 12, 2013

The United States calls for a peaceful solution to the political crisis in Ukraine and is deeply concerned by events at Kyiv's Independence Square on December 11. The Ukrainian government's choice to again confront its citizens with force has not gone unnoticed. As Secretary Kerry stated yesterday, "respect for democratic principles, including freedom of assembly, is fundamental to the United States' approach to Ukraine. This is a universal value not just an American one. We have called on President Yanukovich and his government to listen to the voices of his people who want peace, justice and a European future. We call for utmost restraint. Human life must be protected. Ukrainian authorities bear full responsibility for the security of the Ukrainian people."

Last week, as our ministers met in Kyiv, many expressed concern at the political standoff, urged non-violence and the respect for human rights, and supported a political process that addresses the aspirations of the Ukrainian people. The eyes of the world continue to watch Ukraine. And all the principles and values on which this Organization was founded hang in the balance: freedom of association and alliance, freedom of assembly and expression, democracy, peace and stability. This remains Ukraine's moment to meet the aspirations of its people or to disappoint them. What happens there matters to all of us and to this Organization.

There has been a chorus of voices—including from the Ukrainian government—in support of a peaceful, political solution. But recent events have further eroded trust and increased the threat of instability and violence. We call on the government of Ukraine to fulfill its commitment to dialogue to resolve the political standoff. Continued engagement with the international community, including the OSCE, can help secure credible steps which will inspire trust. We encourage Ukraine to demonstrate its continuing leadership as the Chairman-in-Office by making use of the OSCE and its resources and mechanisms that can contribute to a constructive way forward. There are available ways to engage in consultations with government, opposition, and civil society, and provide facts that would help enhance trust on the ground and the confidence of the international community. We and other participating States will continue to consider the best constructive approach.

We will continue to closely follow the events in Ukraine. We understand parliamentary elections in the five disputed areas are scheduled for this Sunday and we hope those elections proceed without incident. We look forward to sharing our latest observations at next week's PC.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.