



United States Mission to the OSCE

**Replies to Russia on Ongoing Violations of
International Law and Defiance of OSCE
Principles and Commitments by the Russian
Federation in Ukraine**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 26, 2016

Reply 1:

I appreciate the question from our distinguished Russian colleague and I think it gets right to the heart of Russia's fundamental misunderstanding of the situation. Our distinguished Russian colleague has the unfortunate responsibility to represent a regime, an authoritarian regime, that has invaded a neighboring state. That is totally different from invited assistance by the sovereign government of Ukraine on self-defense. I will also point out that it is totally different to have a covert military action that is denied in the face of overwhelming evidence, and to have the overt transparent kind of military assistance that the United States and others have provided to Ukraine in the face of a foreign invasion.

I understand today that our distinguished Russian colleague doesn't see a difference between those two things, but I think that is part of the problem. There is a huge difference between a sovereign government inviting assistance and a neighboring state invading.

Going back to the question of definitions and how to understand this. I think we should all recognize, Mr. Chair, that the statement that the distinguished Ukrainian Ambassador has made today reinforces the need for combined Russian-Separatists forces to allow the Special Monitoring Mission full access to Eastern Ukraine, including up to Ukraine's international border with Russia, as Moscow committed when it signed the Minsk Agreements. OSCE reports confirm that the separatists are consistently responsible for almost 90% of the SMM's access restrictions. Such constraints on the SMM's activities prevent the international community from knowing the full extent of Russia's military activity in Ukraine.

The United States also reiterates its call to expand the OSCE Observer Mission on Russia's border with Ukraine, consistent with Russia's commitments in the Minsk Protocol of September 2014. Currently, as the Ukrainian Ambassador recapped, the mission only covers Gukovo and Donetsk. Two border checkpoints that cover only several hundred meters of almost 2300 km of Ukraine's international border with Russia. Russia's restrictions on the observer mission prevent us from learning the full extent of arms, funding and personnel flowing from Russia into Eastern Ukraine.

Reply 2:

I just want to answer the question from our Russian colleague: no, you have not correctly understood me; the training that the United States, along with several others, conducts, is done in Yavoriv which is in the far west of the country, far from the current Russian-fueled conflict. But if you'd like to get more information about that: as I said, we've been transparent about it, we have announced it in several OSCE fora, and there is also plenty of information online, on, I believe, the US Army of Europe, or on the 173rd Airborne Brigade [website](#), about the nature of that training, how much it costs and how many people are involved.

So I reiterate the point I have made before, that we have approached this with full transparency, and that this is training that was of a defensive nature, and invited by the sovereign government of Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.