



United States Mission to the OSCE

Right of Reply to Russian Federation on the Border Observation Mission

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Harry Kamian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 3, 2019

I would like to respond to one of the comments made by the esteemed Russian ambassador. I would like to make a couple points.

Over the two years, we have debated this issue respectfully here, so I don't want to belabor it. Sir, you mentioned that the recent report by the observer mission cited that no weaponry was sighted. However, if our observers are barred from viewing the contents, if the international standards that are followed at border crossings around the world are not adhered to, and if the Permanent Council and the international community has no idea what the contents are, how are we to believe you and expect that the contents are only humanitarian, as you allege?

At the same time, you see this repeated evidence of Russian-made military equipment and material appearing in sovereign Ukraine. I would argue that most, if not all, participating States around this table clearly understand the origin of that equipment.

The second point I would make is that you referred to, on a couple of instances, the good will and the willingness of the Russian Federation to allow these two border checkpoints to open. It's true, without the willingness of the Russian Federation there wouldn't be this limited mission. But at the same time, if there truly is nothing to hide, if the contents that are going into sovereign Ukraine truly are humanitarian, it is unclear to me why the Russian Federation would not be willing to allow the contents to be observed by the observers as representatives of the international community. Only then would you be able to prove to everybody that the contents truly are indeed, as you cited, humanitarian.

Thank you.

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