



United States Mission to the OSCE

2nd Reply to the Russian Federation on the situation in Ukraine and the need to implement the Minsk agreements

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 5, 2015

Just to respond to some of the points made by our distinguished Russian colleague.

First, with reference to President Obama's comments, as I've already explained in this forum, President Obama said publicly what was already known publicly, which is that the United States, as well as a number of other countries -- including Russia, and Germany, France, Poland, the U.K., were all trying to help foster a political solution early last year. That is well known. It was not done in secret, it is not a secret now.

Second, the Russian ambassador asked for facts to be presented. We have presented facts. The facts are that Russia has passed hundreds of heavy weapons into Ukraine to separatists. The facts are that the separatist forces are now better armed and better equipped than the armies of some EU and NATO countries. The facts are that the separatist forces are a de facto extension of the Russian military at this point, and they are an instrument of Russian power. Those are the facts. The evidence for this—in addition to all of the evidence that is available in terms of reports and photographs of Russian equipment and Russian fighters in Ukraine—is the fact that the events of last August happened, and that the violation of the ceasefire in Debaltseve happened. That would not have been possible without Russia's actions. That's the evidence.

Finally on the humanitarian convoys. I appreciate the back and forth. I would just point out that, as the actor in this situation that is violating international standards, the burden is not on the rest of us to answer questions about who got what chance to look at what, and whether it was ten minutes on the inside of the truck or outside the truck. The burden is on Russia. Russia is sending repeatedly - seventeen times now - convoys of trucks. The burden is on Russia to do so consistent with international standards and international law. It's not on the rest of us. So the question for Russia is, if you're doing it so right, why is the ICRC not there? And why would you do it without the ICRC. The burden is on Russia.

Thank you.