



United States Mission to the OSCE

Reply to the Russian Federation on Russia's Ongoing Failure to Meet its Obligations and Commitments in Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 22, 2015

I want to respond to a few of the points made by our distinguished Russian colleague:

First, it's fine for the petty statement that the American ambassador hasn't read the Minsk agreements to be made. I leave that for him to decide if that is constructive. I would note that our distinguished Russian colleague claimed falsely that the Minsk agreements were signed by representatives of the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the separatists. That's not true: they were signed by representatives of the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the OSCE, as well as by two proxies of the RF who have no title or legitimate status as a representative of anything but who signed because of their engagement in the conflict, on all three agreements.

Second, the Russian Federation called today not only for focus on cataloguing the weapons in storage areas etc, but also to monitor the physical absence of weapons in the so-called security zone. Obviously, monitoring the absence of something is very difficult and it requires as a pre-condition full access and the cessation of the jamming that is being done with Russian military equipment of UAVs. We know from the briefings that we have received, as well as the reporting of the SMM, that the vast majority of the restrictions on SMM access and visibility continue to be in Russian-led separatist-controlled areas.

Third, with respect to the border: the Minsk Protocol makes perfectly clear that there is supposed to be international monitoring of the international border and a security zone on both sides. Episodic visits to the border are not adequate to provide monitoring of the border and the access to the border remains restricted – so the rosy picture painted by the Russian colleague is an incomplete one and an inadequate one.

Fourth, I understand why the Russian Federation doesn't wish to talk about how we got to today – because the story of how we got to today is one that is a very uncomfortable one for the Russian Federation. But it is important for us to remember how we got to today because if it hadn't been for the violations of the Russian Federation, we wouldn't be trying to address the conflict in front of us. Because the Russian Federation has responsibility for fomenting the conflict that is in front of us, so it is important that we keep the perspective on how we got to today.

Two final points: our distinguished Russian colleague engaged in a sort of name-calling, accusing me of demagoguery, and I thought about what a demagogue does. Demagoguery is a kind of political manipulation that trades on the most base instincts, fears, and prejudices of

people. And for a moment I thought – given the centrality of demagoguery to the domestic political strategy of the Russian regime – perhaps this was intended as a compliment. I recognize that it wasn't intended as a compliment, it was meant as a personal insult, and I regret and reject that.

In terms of dialogue my delegation remains committed to dialogue and to encouraging a constructive way forward. Dialogue does not mean accepting falsehoods and distortions. President Obama, Secretary Kerry and others have called out Russian distortions and falsehoods many times, and my delegation will continue to hold the Russian Federation accountable for falsehoods and press for full implementation of Minsk in this forum and in others. In my weekly private meetings with the Russian ambassador I remain committed to engaging in dialogue in good faith. I have never canceled one of those meetings when I have been in Vienna, and I remain open to a straightforward discussion at any time with the representative of the Russian Federation.

Finally, in closing, the distinguished Russian representative closed his remarks by stating that “Russia doesn't owe anything to anyone.” And in the spirit of dialogue I would humbly suggest that, as a signatory of the Minsk agreements, Russia owes full implementation of the commitments it has made to the other signatories. Furthermore, as Russia often reminds the Permanent Council, the Security Council endorsed the Package of Measures – which was a Package of Measure for the full implementation of all Minsk agreements – so perhaps Russia owes the fulfillment of the commitments it made in these agreements to the countries of the Security Council as well, and the international community. Finally, I would suggest that Russia owes fulfillment of its OSCE commitments to the other 56 participating States present here. And certainly, Russia owes fulfillment of its commitments to the Russian people.

Thank you, Madam Chair.