



United States Mission to the OSCE

Reply to Russia on the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Harry Kamian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 31, 2018

I would like to make a couple comments in response to the statement delivered by my esteemed Russian colleague.

The Russian Federation presents the observer mission as some sort of goodwill gesture almost as if it was a humanitarian effort on behalf of a benevolent participating State to contribute to regional peace and security in Ukraine.

At the end of the day, had Russian forces not invaded Ukraine, had Russian forces not continued to occupy Ukraine or tried to annex Crimea, we would not actually be talking about this mission. Ambassador Varga would not have a job.

Secondly, in my 25 years of diplomatic experience, I have never met a country, other than the Russian Federation, that does not want to openly tout, promote, and show off humanitarian contributions to the world that it makes to establishing peace and stability. If the Russian Federation is so convinced that its role is benevolent, that it is genuinely contributing humanitarian aid to alleviate the suffering of the Ukrainian people to which it directly contributed, it is very difficult for me to understand why the Russian Federation refuses to comply with the same internationally recognized procedures and mechanisms for delivering humanitarian aid and allowing humanitarian aid to enter into countries that every participating State around the table routinely accepts, recognizes, and contributes to. That is a question that will continue to appear on our minds.

Finally, I very much appreciate the question that the Russian Ambassador raised with regards to U.S. assistance. As a representative of the United States, I am very proud of the assistance that we provide to not just to the government of Ukraine but to the Ukrainian people, particularly over the last four years. And while the Council does not need to necessarily dwell on it, I would be more than happy to provide any member of this Council a detailed briefing, including dollar figures, of the amount of assistance that we provide to the Ukrainian people.

One final comment on that. If the Russian Federation would allow internationally recognized humanitarian aid organizations to do their job, I think the humanitarian situation for individuals on both sides of the conflict would be better off.

Thank you.