



United States Mission to the OSCE

Reply to the Russian Federation on Russia's Ongoing Violations of International Law and Defiance of OSCE Principles and Commitments in Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 18, 2015

In response to two short things:

One, I'm sorry if I wasn't clear-- I wasn't trying to suggest that we had a different view than our distinguished Ukrainian colleague, or that Secretary Kerry has a different view, I think we've made it clear that Russian obstructionism had damaged the previous efforts to have a successful Trilateral Contact Group meeting and successful working group meetings. The early news that we have is that there was some constructive conversation this time, but there is clearly not enough progress. So there is much work left to do, I think it is as simple as that.

In terms of the humanitarian situation, I'm sorry that the distinguished Russian colleague didn't hear me reiterate again this week--as I have for many weeks--our concern for the humanitarian situation on the ground. I would point out, though, that the repetition – and I would point out to my distinguished Swiss colleague as well – that the repetition of the exclusive emphasis on the line of contact overlooks the connection between the line of contact and the international border. If you really care about the humanitarian situation in the parts of the Donbas that are under separatist control, you should support international monitoring of the border. Because part of what makes a challenging situation on the line of contact is that Russian thugs, and weapons, and drugs, and all kinds of garbage, are coming across the international border without suitable checks. Which causes the government of Ukraine to have to make checks along the line of contact. That's regrettable.

The Russian Federation says they don't want the line of contact to look like a frontier, they say they worry about passage of goods and persons, etc. – well, the Russian Federation has in its power the ability to make the humanitarian situation in the Donbas better, by supporting international monitoring along the international border. And those around this table who emphasize the importance of paying attention to the humanitarian situation – which should include all of us, because there is a great deal of human cost being paid – should spend time talking about how the humanitarian situation needs to be solved, and what the steps are that can be taken to solve it, and among the first steps is international monitoring along the international border.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.