



United States Mission to the OSCE

Reply to the Russian Federation regarding Ongoing Violations of OSCE Principles and Commitments by the Russian Federation and the Situation in Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 5, 2014

I'd like to make four brief points:

First, I appreciate the range of issues that our distinguished Russian colleague has raised, some of which are real issues, some of which are a continuation of fiction, and it's always hard to sort out the real issues from the fiction in these statements.

I would say that the Russian Federation has basically zero credibility on a number of the issues that were raised. I was interested to hear, for example, the Russian Federation's concern about other States being accessories to the murder of civilians. And I wonder if that is a statement of policy the Russian Federation applies to Russia's own behavior with regard to Syria?

I was interested to hear about Russia's concern about the upholding of international law and I wonder whether that applies to Russia's own illegal so-called annexation of Crimea? I was interested to hear about Russia's concern about elections and unlawful authorities, given the fact that Russia's own elections have been so deeply flawed. So there may be some real issues buried in the garbage that was spread out today. The Russian government is not a credible actor to opine on them, unfortunately.

Second, with regard to the incident in Luhansk -- because that was raised in particular -- we've also noted the conflicting reports about the June 2nd deaths at the Luhansk municipal administration building. Unfortunately, some reports indicate an accident with a separatists-fired MANPAD or other weapons may have caused the deaths. The OSCE SMM team, based on acknowledged "limited observation," which I understand was not line-of-sight, reported the explosion could have been caused by a rocket fired from an aircraft. I would note that if one saw an aircraft flying by, that would not be inconsistent with a MANPAD gone astray if one then saw an explosion.

The team's level of expertise in making such a determination is unknown, and we note that the Ukrainian government is proposing a resolution to investigate this incident.

Third, I think we should be careful: the Russian Federation continues to use the term "punitive operation." This is not a "punitive operation," this is about responding to a threat which emanates from, and is supported by, the Russian Federation.

And fourth, as I said, among the range of concerns that were raised by our distinguished Russian colleague are some legitimate concerns. Concerns about violence, certainly -- we are

all concerned about violence, we all want a reduction of violence. However, it is important for all of us to remember: this would not be happening without Russia. Russia is THE critical ingredient. A solution, a de-escalation, will not happen until Russia decides to also be THE critical ingredient in that solution. If Russia is genuinely concerned by what is happening in Ukraine, Russia can take a range of actions which would start us down the path of de-escalation.

Thank you.