



United States Mission to the OSCE

Reply to Russia on the Incident at the 2015 HDIM

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 8, 2015

I just wanted to respond to the statement by our distinguished Russian colleague. I am surprised that the Russian Federation raised this issue today, although for a different reason than my Polish colleague. I am surprised that the Russian Federation raised this today because it only accentuates the embarrassment of the theater that the Russian Federation attempted to perpetrate at HDIM last week.

The distinguished Russian colleague said: "Provocations are unacceptable". What happened at HDIM last week was a continuation of a trend that we see from the Russian Federation, where they try to send somebody who they claimed represented Crimea in the Federation Council to a meeting here in Vienna earlier this year; they tried to send sanctioned members of the Duma to the Parliamentary Assembly meeting in Helsinki; and then they tried to send somebody purporting to be the deputy head of the Council in Crimea to the HDIM.

Whether these people come or they don't come, each of these is just a provocation, and none of these changes the fact that Crimea is and will be Ukraine.

It stands to reason that Russian representatives from the occupying authorities could only ever be non-governmental, since Crimea is Ukraine. So I don't know why the Russian Federation wants to revisit the episode here, because all it does is remind everyone around the table of this kind of pathetic perpetuation of a kind of theater that only causes us to reiterate the fact that we do not recognize Russia's attempted annexation.

With respect to the specific incident where the United States was referenced in terms of Mr. Polonsky's intervention at the HDIM last week, I would just recall that Mr. Polonsky began speaking, the Ukrainian ambassador exercised his right to call a point of order, and the moderator of the session asked Mr. Polonsky to cede the floor in order to deal with the point of order. Whatever the Russian Federation may think of the merits of the point of order, the fact is that the guy who they toted in to pretend to be representing Crimea didn't follow the rules of procedure for our forum: he did not cede the floor when a point of order was called. And because he did not cede the floor, and because the point of order could not be attended to, a number of us found that to be disruptive to the meeting.

So I would call on the Russian Federation to cease its practice of attempting to stage provocations by bringing people that purport to represent the legitimate authorities of Crimea, which are in Kyiv, and to think twice about raising this issue anew, so that it doesn't further embarrass the Russian Federation.

Thank you, Madam Chair.