



United States Mission to the OSCE

1st Reply to the Russian Federation on Ongoing Violations of International Law and Defiance of OSCE Principles and Commitments by the Russian Federation in Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 29, 2015

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Allow me to respond to some of the points made by our distinguished Russian colleague, especially as he several times referred to Washington.

First, on his observation that we've had so many meetings, so many debates in this council about the Russia crisis that is playing out on the territory of Ukraine. The reason we have had so many meetings is that each one of those meetings represents a failure, a missed opportunity, of Russia to de-escalate this crisis. There have been so many off-ramps, there have been so many opportunities to take a constructive course, and at every turn those opportunities have not been taken. So all of us should recognize that each of these meetings is a reflection of a missed opportunity.

Our distinguished Russian colleague said that no constructive offers have been made. Everyone in this room knows that that is not true. Everyone in this room knows that that is not true. Again today we heard our distinguished Ukrainian colleague reiterate his president's recommitment—as if reiteration was needed—in recent days to fully implement Minsk. That is a repeated commitment that we have heard time and time again from the Ukrainian side.

This fall, as Ukraine strived to implement Minsk, ceasefire violations gradually escalated through September, October, November, mainly around four strategic areas - four strategic areas that were held by the Ukrainian government, where separatists pushed, attacked, to expand—in violation of the ceasefire. At the beginning of December, President Poroshenko again sued for peace, used his political capital, put his political standing - domestically, internationally - on the line, and made a unilateral declaration of a day of silence on December 9. That act of leadership again generated a decrease in violence, which was welcome. To say that Ukraine instrumentalized the December 9 ceasefire is preposterous - it was a unilateral declaration, a risk that Ukraine took. Unfortunately the slowdown in violence was reversed, because of Russia's massive resupply of heavy weaponry to the separatists that it has backed for months.

On Minsk, our Russian colleague once again raised that the Ukrainian government seems to be not committed to Minsk. I have never heard, in this chamber or anywhere else, anything other than a complete commitment to complete implementation of Minsk by representatives of the Ukrainian government. And that commitment has been echoed and supported by all of the countries around this table. As I said last week, it is very difficult—while economic reconstruction is crucial, while a long term plan for economic development is crucial, while

dialogue is crucial— it is very difficult if not impossible to make any progress on those fronts while Russia continues to fuel the fighting...So yes, complete implementation of all twelve points of Minsk remains important, and in order to facilitate real progress on that, Russia must get its fighters and weapons out, must seal the border, and the ceasefire, as agreed on September 19th, must be observed.

Finally I'd like to finish by agreeing with our Russian colleague on a point he made towards the end of his presentation. He said that those who come to negotiations must have authority and be able to take responsibility for the decisions and agreements made. Representatives of the Russian Federation and the separatists it backs must take responsibility for the agreements they have made. They must take responsibility for Minsk. They must not attempt to renegotiate, or dissemble, or confuse. They must take responsibility for the agreements they have made. When Russia is prepared to take responsibility for the agreements it has made, the Russian crisis that is playing out in eastern Ukraine and in Crimea will de-escalate.

Thank you.