



United States Mission to the OSCE

Right of Reply (2) to Russia on its Ongoing Violations in Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 21, 2016

In response to our distinguished Russian colleague's statement, I just want to reiterate that, when the United States raises concerns, raises factual information on what is happening on the ground, we are doing so because we think that is relevant to finding a solution. We're doing that in the spirit of dialogue because we think that we have to start from the facts in order to be able to find solutions.

I agree with our distinguished Russian colleague that we should be looking for ideas for how progress can be made. And in our statement today we called for several immediate steps, including renewed efforts to forge an agreement and disengagement on the line of contact. We called for enhanced SMM monitoring of the hotspots. So, we are matching facts with ideas for how progress can happen.

But I just want to be clear: what I heard from our distinguished Russian colleague is that a condition for dialogue from the Russian side is that we begin with a fiction, that we begin with a denial of what's happened. And the fact is that Russia did invade Ukraine, that Russia is occupying part of Ukraine. It is not unreasonable to call that Russian aggression.

We don't have to talk only about that. We can talk about positive solutions, ways to deescalate the crisis. But the condition of talking can't be that we deny what is true.

So we should engage in dialogue starting from where we are today with the knowledge of what has happened up until today, and with an eye toward making tomorrow better. And that is what we try to do every week.

Thank you.