



## United States Mission to the OSCE

# The Russian Federation's Ongoing Aggression Against Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Michael R. Carpenter  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
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At last week's Ministerial Council in Skopje, we saw the Russian Federation completely isolated with its false narrative on Ukraine. I dare say no one who was in that room believed a single iota of these preposterous untruths. Let us recall that Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov took the floor as the 17<sup>th</sup> speaker – engaging in what some here might dubiously consider to be “dialogue” but in fact is the purest definition of monologue. In case you missed it, and I suspect that many of you did, the speech contained the usual litany of ritualistic lies about Ukraine and Russia's justifications for invading it, perpetrating war crimes against its population, and seeking to erase its identity. Almost no foreign ministers were in the room at the time of the minister's address, and his ritual statements on alleged neo-Nazis landed like stray missiles falling miles from their intended targets. By the way, I suspect that these proverbial propagandistic missiles may have found their targets somewhere else, namely in the Russian Federation, but that's a topic for another day.

The rote repetition of this propaganda no doubt proceeded from the presumption, attributed to previous propagandists of the last century, that constant repetition of a lie will so mentally exhaust the audience that they will eventually consider it to be true. However, this is clearly not the case in this Council, or indeed the Ministerial Council, where Russia's Big Lie has been repeated ad nauseam -- hundreds if not thousands of times -- and yet remains no more believable today than it was on the eve of Russia's full-scale invasion.

So today, I would like to remind all of us of what Russian Federation representatives have said here, in this room, since February of 2022. Consider it a short highlight reel of the “greatest hits” of Russian disinformation. Again, I will only use a few illustrative examples because this list goes on and on.

On February 17th of 2022, Russia's representative had a lot to say about the invasion that “never happened.” He said, “let us recall how, at the instigation of the U.S. government, the *myth* about Russia's alleged “imminent invasion” has been hyped up recently.” He went on to argue that warnings about Russia's imminent invasion were “akin to irresponsible information terrorism.” He also questioned, “whether a group of countries engaged in warmongering should be perceived as reliable partners when it comes to carrying out jointly agreed international tasks.” It is a very good question, by the way, and I encourage us all to mull it over.

Oddly enough, Russia continued with this line of reasoning even after launching its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. On February 24th of 2022, the Russian representative said, “this is, of course, not a war, as many participants in today's discussion are trying to portray it. No missile, air or artillery strikes are being carried out on the cities of Ukraine, or on the civilian population.”

Let's now fast forward a few months to the spring. On April 28th of 2022, the distinguished Russian ambassador referred to the Russian-occupied territories, saying "a peaceful life is being established in these territories, critical public infrastructure facilities, social infrastructure, housing and communal services are being rapidly restored." Colleagues, recall just for a minute the images that you all have seen of Mariupol or Bakhmut, Bucha or Hostomel.

When confronted with evidence of large-scale death and destruction, Russia's representatives here only complain about bias and emotion, castigating us all for failing to discuss the substance of the matter. As the ambassador, the distinguished ambassador, said on May 19th of 2022, "at the OSCE it has so far not been possible to have a substantive conversation on verified facts in relation to what is happening in Ukraine. This room reverberates with lots of emotions that are not backed up by real evidence."

Mr. Chair, I raise these quotes today because we all want to restore peace and security and resume a substantive dialogue among OSCE participating States. But imagine what that dialogue would look like if it were to be "unbiased" and "substantive" in the Russian ambassador's words. Would we discuss how the bound corpses on Bucha's Jablonka street were evidence of a "peaceful life being established"? What exactly would we discuss in a so-called "unbiased" and "unemotional" terms: the banality of children being taken from their families and sent to foster institutions in Russia and Belarus? Colleagues, we know what "business as usual" means for Russia. It means discussions that bypass all of these topics. Discussions that draw attention away from where it needs to be. There is only one participating State that has shown no interest in peace, and an endless desire to occupy and subjugate and abuse. We cannot forget this, as tempting as it may be for some to resume our discussions as they used to be. And this is also why we will continue to speak out and help sovereign, democratic Ukraine defend itself so it can secure its future as an independent, sovereign, and democratic state.

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