



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Replies to the Russian Federation**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
April 16, 2015

I want to respond to a few points made by our distinguished Russian colleague.

Before I do that, though, I just want to say that I was really disappointed to hear the Russian statement today because, in its totality, it reflected a deeply disappointing lack of seriousness about diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis. Drudging up old Russian lies about how these were just farmers and miners, and not Russian-instigated and equipped operatives in the east, etcetera, that's not helpful, everybody in here knows that's a lie, and retelling it doesn't evidence seriousness.

And there was a whole heap of stuff that didn't evidence seriousness in the statement – which we could go through point by point – but that's not useful.

What we can all say, and what we should all say, is that we want to be serious about resolving the crisis. The way that we can be serious is by implementing what has been agreed in Minsk last September and the effort to re-launch what has been agreed in Minsk through the Package of Measures of February.

To that end, Russia could report on its implementation of the first three items, including the withdrawal of its forces and its equipment from Ukraine, which it has, to my knowledge, never done.

The SMM access points made by our Russian colleague – you know, I addressed this in my first statement. It is true there have been a number of incidents that have been reported by the SMM, where Ukrainian forces have stopped SMM patrols at checkpoints. If you look at the reports of these instances, the vast majority of them are delays. These should stop. But they don't compare at all to having massive amounts of many, many hundreds of square kilometers where the SMM has no access at all, and where Russian weapons and fighters and coordination continues to go on unabated in a manner that does not reflect any seriousness about de-escalating the conflict.

There is no comparison; it is apples to oranges.

If Russia is serious about wanting a de-escalation, it should allow international observation of the border so there can be some confidence that a genuine political process can take place without the continued flow of Russian fighters and weapons, and it should support the work of the working groups, and the work of ODIHR, to help move as quickly as is

technically and practically possible to establish the conditions for free and fair elections so that the people in those areas of Donetsk and Luhansk can, in a free and fair way, identify local political leaders who can engage not only politically with other leaders from around Ukraine, but also who can engage in providing-- reestablishing and rebuilding-- and providing services in the way that local governments do when they're doing their job anywhere.

Ukraine has identified the names of the people that will represent Ukraine in these working groups. I don't often cite Sputnik, but I would in this case note that Sputnik reports that those names have been received by the Russian Federation and by the "LPR" and "DPR". I haven't seen public reports yet that Russia has identified its names, so the ball is in the Russian court, I assume. As soon as those representatives are identified, then those working groups should move forward as quickly as possible so that the political process that Russia claims to care about but evidences no seriousness about can move forward.

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I didn't mean to touch a nerve with our distinguished Russian colleague. I'm very grateful for the public confirmation that Russia has identified and has passed along the representatives that it wishes to have in the working groups of the Tri-lateral Contact Group. It was my intention to see whether we could get public confirmation from everyone from around this table. Russia has identified, Ukraine has identified, Heidi Tagliavini has laid out the plan. So, given that we have this public confirmation now, there is no reason that we shouldn't expect-- all of us-- to see the work of the working groups move forward immediately. I look forward to hearing about that.

Thank you.