

United States Mission to the OSCE



Statement for the Special Meeting on Ukraine

As delivered by Victoria Nuland, Assistant Secretary of State for
European and Eurasian Affairs
at the OSCE Special Permanent Council
Vienna March 3, 2014

Thank you Madam Chair.

My thanks to Ambassador Guldemann for being here, to the Ambassador for Ukraine, and to all the chairs of the OSCE institutions.

There should be no question where the United States stands on this matter. The President has been clear; we have also joined a statement at NATO of the 28 allies, we've also joined a G7 statement. We consider Russia's actions in Ukraine to be a violation of international law and a violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the independent nation of Ukraine, and a breach of Russia's Helsinki Commitments and its UN obligations.

When President Obama and President Putin spoke by phone two days ago our President made his position clear. President Putin spoke of a number of concerns from Russia's side many of which we reject flatly.

That said, if in fact Russia had legitimate concerns about the security of its space or the security of the Russian minority in Ukraine, the answer was **not** to deploy military force – the answer was to enter immediately into negotiations with the transitional government in Kyiv and to invite international organization such as this one to help address any concerns they may have had.

So the President made clear to President Putin that while we reject Russia's version of reality in this instance there is still a way out of the current complex if Russia chooses to make the right choices. And that very much involves this institution: the OSCE has the tools to address any legitimate concerns with regard to security on the ground, with regard to minority rights, and with regard to preparations for this democratic transition to lead to free and fair elections.

I am here today, at President Obama's request, to urge this organization to take immediate action to help de-escalate the situation, to address legitimate concerns and to urge the Russian Federation to take advantage of this tool, this institution of which Russia has been a member for all of these years, to bring your policy into the 21st century, to address concerns peacefully and through mediation and through observation rather than through military force.

So with that in mind the United States urges the OSCE to move immediately, to begin to augment its field office in Kyiv, to begin to deploy monitors to Crimea and to flash points in Ukraine's east where we may have concerns that violence is being stirred up. We urge the OSCE to take advantage of the draft that Canada put forward yesterday; we thank our Canadian allies for that initiative. We applaud an OSCE monitor mission. We would like see that mission approved today, if possible, and if not, certainly within the coming days, and to immediately deploy to Ukraine and to provide an opportunity for Russian forces to pull back to their bases and for the situation in Ukraine to normalize.

Over the medium term we also see the OSCE as the primary vehicle for supporting Ukraine as it moves forward towards free and fair democratic elections in May. There will need to be support in the area of election reform, in the area of reform to the election commission, and there'll obviously have to be broad and deep monitoring of the pre-election and the election period.

We commend the Ukrainian government for coming here to the OSCE and asking for the deployment of all of those tools of support. And we urge the Russian Federation to pull back to bases immediately and accept the international support, UN support and OSCE support, that is on offer and join the rest of the international community in supporting the sovereignty, the territorial integrity and the democratic free choice of the Ukrainian people to make their own future.

Thank you.