

1000 DAYS OF RUSSIA'S WAR ON UKRAINE

HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE
U.S. HELSINKI COMMISSION
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

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1000 DAYS OF RUSSIA'S WAR ON UKRAINE

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE,
U.S. HELSINKI COMMISSION,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Tuesday, November 19, 2024.

The hearing was held from 2:34 p.m. to 4:06 p.m., Room 2358-A, Rayburn House Office Building, Representative Joe Wilson [R-SC], Chairman, Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe, presiding.

Committee Members Present: Representative Joe Wilson [R-SC], Chairman; Representative Steve Cohen [D-TN], Ranking Member; Don Graves, Department of Commerce; Representative Robert B. Aderholt [R-AL].

Other Members Present: Representative Nancy Pelosi [D-CA]; Representative Jim Costa [D-CA]; Representative Mike Quigley [D-IL]; Representative Brad Schneider [D-IL]; Representative Deborah Ross [D-NC].

Witnesses: Volodymyr Zelensky, President of Ukraine [via recorded video]; Andrii Sybiha, Foreign Minister of Ukraine; Hanna Hopko, Former Chairwoman of Ukrainian Rada Foreign Affairs Committee; Co-Founder, International Center for Ukrainian Victory; Mariia Kucherenko, Head of Russia Studies, Come Back Alive; Andrew Michta, Director and Senior Fellow, Scowcroft GeoStrategy Initiative, Atlantic Council.

OPENING STATEMENT OF JOE WILSON, CHAIRMAN, U.S. HOUSE, FROM SOUTH CAROLINA

Chairman WILSON: [Sounds gavel.] Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to welcome everyone to this meeting of the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. It is a hearing on "1000 Days of Russia's War on Ukraine."

With that in mind, I would also like to remind everyone that audience members may not interrupt the hearing or block the door or entryway. Violators will be removed by the Capitol Police.

At this time, I will be offering a[n] opening statement, and then we will proceed to Ranking Member Steve Cohen, and then we will also proceed to Department of Commerce Representative Mr. Don Graves.

This Commission will come to order. [Sounds gavel.] Good afternoon to all who have joined us today. Today, we mark a somber anniversary: 1,000 days since the invasion of war criminal Putin's full-scale entry into the country of Ukraine. Every Ukrainian remembers that night very clearly. War criminal Putin told his troops the Ukrainians would welcome them. The West underesti-

mated the resolve of the courageous people of Ukraine, estimating that Kyiv would fall in days. Kyiv stands today and will stand until the end of history because Ukraine is strong.

Let us be clear: Support for Ukraine will always be bipartisan. I am grateful to stand with my friends and colleagues across the aisle in support of freedom, life, and liberty for the people of Ukraine. It is not just bipartisan; when members of the Senate arrive, you are going to find out it is bicameral, too, which is truly remarkable.

The invasion did not begin on February 24, 2022, or even March 2014. On December 5, 1994, with the signing of the Budapest Memorandum, independent Ukraine denuclearized, removing its number-one deterrent voluntarily in exchange for guarantees by Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom of sovereign borders and independence. Ukraine lived up to its commitments. The guarantors have shamefully failed to defend territorial integrity.

When Russia invaded for the first time under the Obama administration in 2014, the Western response was insufficient in condemning the illegal occupation of Transnistria, Moldova, just as in 2008 when Russia invaded the Nation of Georgia and when war criminal Putin propped up mass murderer Bashar al-Assad in a still-ongoing slaughter of millions of Syrians. We have crossed so many red lines at this point we can no longer see them, but dictators with rule of gun are playing the long game.

Following the Biden-Harris surrender from Afghanistan, war criminal Putin saw an opportunity to do what he had prepared through his massacres in Syria with the backing of Tehran, Beijing, Damascus, and Pyongyang. He put in motion the full-scale invasion of Ukraine to reassemble the failed Soviet Union, directly threatening NATO members of Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. His fake claims of blocking borders with NATO countries were an excuse to invade Ukraine and fake news; it has nothing to do with NATO bordering the Russian Federation.

Sadly, unfounded escalation fears have thus prevented victory from becoming a reality. Unprecedented restrictions that should have never been applied to an ally have led, tragically, to countless Ukrainian deaths and have put the world in greater danger than ever before. I look forward to working with President Donald Trump to rebuild the deterrence that the Biden-Harris regime has squandered and to end this one-sided war—one with Ukrainian sovereign borders, recognizing that it was President Trump who put the Javelin missiles in Ukraine to block an invasion. It was Donald Trump who put American troops in Poland for the first time in history to block war criminal Putin. It was Donald Trump that stopped Nord Stream 2 to stop the financing by war criminal Putin.

As we have seen repeatedly, war criminal Putin adheres to no international standards, agreements, or treaties. Putin will always lie, and he has already lied to President-elect Donald Trump, who in good faith and a genuine concern for peace asked him to not further escalate the war. War criminal Putin followed this request with the largest salvo of attacks on Ukrainian civilian targets of homes and utility infrastructure in many months, with 200 mis-

siles and drones. The only way to deter Putin is with strength. When the United States hesitates, Russia escalates, with the addition of commanding additional North Korean mercenaries, thousands of mercenaries into the region.

Today's grim milestone represents a threat to all American families. Putin has made clear he has no intention of stopping at Ukraine. In fact, Putin's army of thugs are wearing patches depicting the hammer and sickle over Alaska, the State of Alaska. Putin has his eyes on all former Soviet republics, including Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania of NATO membership.

Ukrainians are defending their country with incredible bravery in spite of limited resources and arbitrary constraints. Peace through strength is ensuring that Ukraine can strike legitimate military targets within Russia, which are the launch sites, to protect the people from further attack, providing real, meaningful security guarantees not only for Ukraine's benefit but to protect the rest of the world from the advance of dictatorial aggression.

These are challenging times for Ukraine on the battlefield. I know that the witnesses today will highlight the urgency of giving Ukraine what it needs to defeat war criminal Putin, not just freeze the war in place. Ultimately, we cannot ask Ukraine to weather another thousand days without using all the tools at its disposal.

First, we are honored to welcome His Excellency Andrii Sybiha, the foreign minister of Ukraine. Then, we will hear from Dr. Hanna Hopko, former chairwoman of the Ukrainian Rada's Foreign Affairs Committee and co-founder of the International Center for Ukrainian Victory. Next, we hear from Mariia Kucherenko, the head of the Russia studies at the Come Back Alive Foundation. Then we are grateful to have Dr. Andrew Michta, the director and senior fellow at Atlantic Council's Scowcroft GeoStrategy Initiative.

With this, I turn to immediately, my co-chair, Steve Cohen, for any remarks, after which we will also be hearing a prerecorded video from President Volodymyr Zelensky before returning to the foreign minister.

Representative COHEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have brief remarks, but I would like to recognize Speaker Emerita Pelosi, who has joined us. If you would like to make any remarks, I would be glad to yield you some time.

STATEMENT OF NANCY PELOSI, U.S. HOUSE, FROM CALIFORNIA

Representative PELOSI: Thank you so much, Congressman Cohen, for your leadership on the Helsinki Commission, and to you, Chairman Wilson. We have worked together on this. How many times have we shared the pen, one version or another?

We have learned so much from the people of Ukraine about courage about respect for democracy, and their protection of their democracy is the protection of democracy everywhere. I have been particularly interested in what has happened to women and children in Ukraine, acts of horror that the first lady of Ukraine has come and spoken to us about here. In terms of what it means to the people, what it means to the principle of democracy, I am very eager to hear the status of things today but also to sing the praises

of the people of Ukraine and the leadership of Ukraine for your courage and the example to the world.

I yield back. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF STEVE COHEN, U.S. HOUSE, FROM TENNESSEE

Representative COHEN: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Speaker Emerita.

It has been my honor to work on this Commission for a while, and Joe Wilson and I get along very, very well. I have to commend him for his strong stance on Ukraine and his support for Ukraine. At this time, he is seeking a higher position on the Foreign Affairs Committee, which I hope he gets, but some of his support for Ukraine may be used against him because of the change of administrations. I think Chairman Wilson shows honor and integrity and is to be commended.

Thank you.

Chairman WILSON: Thank you.

Representative COHEN: It is sad that we have to recognize these thousand days. It should not have been a thousand days; it should have been zero days. There should be no concept in anybody's mind, let alone a person who has recommended to be the head of intelligence in this country, that this war was caused by Putin and not by the United States and not by Ukraine. Putin invaded Ukraine and thought it was going to be a 2-day walk in the park, and it was not. The Ukrainian people, the Ukrainian military have been heroic and strong and shown great fortitude and love for their country. I have been proud to support Ukraine, visit with President Zelensky and others in Ukraine, and pledge my continued support, and I hope that Congress will do the same.

If Putin wants to be known as Putin the Great—Peter the Great, next in line; he wants to be Putin the Great. He has made Russia a country to where it is not even safe for a ballet dancer to go on a balcony. Going on a balcony is a dangerous activity in Russia. It has become a just horrific situation. What Putin has done to people who just write letters—I think the ballet dancer had written in 2022 against the war, about peace, and about his family—grandfather, maybe, and grandmother, who were Ukraine military and maybe Ukrainian artists. While that tweet has been deleted, it was not deleted from—probably, from Putin's mind. Unfortunately, the ballet dancer is no longer with us.

I do not have much hope for the continued American support which Ukraine needs, but they will have mine, and I think they will have most of the Democrats. Hopefully, they will have Republicans like Joe Wilson, too. There are not a lot of Joe Wilsons, but there is one of them, and that is a good one for me.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman WILSON: Thank you very much, Ranking Member Steve Cohen of Tennessee.

We now proceed to Mr. Don Graves of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

**STATEMENT OF DON GRAVES, OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE**

Mr. GRAVES: Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, Speaker Emerita. Thank you for convening this important hearing.

It is an honor to represent the Department of Commerce and the Biden-Harris administration here on the Helsinki Commission and to have this important dialog with you today about the importance of maintaining our support and our resolve in countering Russian aggression, supporting Ukraine's security and prosperity on an ongoing basis. I would agree that it is a sobering reality that after 1,000 days, Russia's full-scale illegal war of aggression against Ukraine is still ongoing. It is an utter shame for the world. I see this as a testament, Mr. Chairman, as you suggested, to the courage, the grit, the determination of the Ukrainian people and their leadership, and to the steadfast support of the United States and other democracies around the world for standing up for what is right.

Our efforts at the Department of Commerce and across the administration to hold Russia accountable and support Ukraine are spearheaded by our efforts to focus on enforcing export controls. It is a prime example of our work to strategically address threats to our national security and our foreign policy, as well as to regional stability. When malign actors like Putin act abroad and use military force that threatens our friends, our shared values, and our collective security, the Commerce Department and the entire Biden-Harris administration have stepped up.

I will not go into details, Mr. Chairman, about it. Suffice it to say that our export controls have been used effectively to impose comprehensive restrictions that have effectively prevented Putin's military machine of aggression from doing much more destruction than it has already done against the Ukrainian people and Ukraine's infrastructure.

Importantly, we have built and maintained a coalition of 39 export control partners across the globe who are substantially aligned with us against Russia and have imposed similar measures on both Russia and Belarus. We are also working closely with dozens of other nations to cutoff the transshipment of controlled items to Russia. We are collaborating with our sister agencies across the Federal Government. These export controls and sanctions have restricted Russia's access to items, including the technology, that are needed for its weapons, but it can only be as effective as our partnership and our leadership as a country around the world getting other countries to align with us, with our partners in Ukraine to prevent Putin's war machine from being restocked and restored.

The United States and our allies have a duty not only to support Ukraine but also to show that democracies will stand up to aggressors for as long as it takes. Today I am proud to say that the Commerce Department and the entire U.S. Government, bicamerally, bipartisan, here and in the executive branch, we stand with Ukraine, that we will stand with Ukraine going forward. We are inspired by Ukraine's courage, by its strength. In the remaining time that I have left as a deputy secretary at the Commerce Department, I will remain committed to using our tools strategically

to impose additional costs on Putin and Russia and its enablers and to support Ukraine and its people as they confront this existential threat to its survival.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for convening this hearing, and to our witnesses for their knowledge and expertise.

I yield back.

Chairman WILSON: Thank you very much, Deputy Secretary.

We now will be having a video that will be presented by President Volodymyr Zelensky. Then we would proceed with other members of the panel to make opening statements, beginning with Congressman Jim Costa from California. Then we will proceed with all members who would like to make an opening statement before we proceed to the foreign minister. Mr. President.

[A VIDEO PRESENTATION STARTED.]

**VIDEO PRESENTATION OF VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY,
PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE**

Mr. ZELENSKY: Dear Chairmen Wilson and Cardin, dear members of the Helsinki Commission, ladies and gentlemen, first of all, I am deeply grateful to you for the support throughout these 1,000 days of full-scale war.

When the war began on February 24 nearly 3 years ago, many doubted if Ukraine could withstand the attacks. Most people around the world believed or at least hoped that Russia's evil would not succeed. There was an overwhelming sense of how unjust Russia's aggression was—an attempt to destroy our country and occupy our land and force Ukrainians out of their homes.

We all remember those days. Our soldiers destroyed Russian paratroopers, and ordinary people in towns and villages stopped Russian tanks with their bare hands. Long convoys of Russian troops moved through Ukraine while the world slowly overcame their initial shock and began uniting to support us.

Like every nation, Ukraine deserves freedom. Now, a thousand days and countless battles later, Ukraine remains strong. We have a fully functioning State. We control most of our land. Every day and night, we shoot down Russian missiles and Iranian drones. Putin has not achieved a single major goal. Ukrainian children are still learning in Ukrainian schools. In most cities and towns, life goes on despite the war. For the second year in a row, our economy is growing, and we are rebuilding.

Even now, the arrival of thousands of North Korean troops to support Russia will not break us, if you, if the United States, finds a way to make such strong, decisive choices. Our strength now and the strength of the entire free world for decades to come is possible thanks to the incredible support of the United States, millions of Americans united against evil. Thank you for this.

I thank the entire U.S. Congress for standing with us. These 1,000 days of war have been a path we have walked together. Now, we must keep going until we reach the day we all dream of, a day of true and lasting peace, lasting—the kind of peace that anyone would wish for themselves.

Dear friends, the idea of the Helsinki Commission is inseparable from the idea of truth, and none of us should be deceived. We cannot call a pause in the war peace. We cannot say that justice has

been served while Russian war criminals are still smiling. We cannot claim that the war is over if Russia is allowed to use again the skills it gained from this war, but this is happening right now.

Russia is teaching North Korea the methods of modern warfare. It is helping Iran. It has already been caught supporting the Houthis. Russia is fueling chaos in Africa. All of this is a global threat, and Russia is stoking its flames through the fire of this war—this war in Europe, this war of aggression against Ukraine.

That is why it is here in Ukraine truth must prevail. This war must end in accordance with international law, with peace built through strength so that Russian forces can never again shatter peace anywhere—anywhere in the world. We do need the tribunal for Putin and buddies. We cannot silence the issue. Time is going. People die, and there is no outcome in sight.

We should stop financing Russia's war machine at the expense of oil revenues. All the frozen Russian assets must be put to use for weapons and recovery to protect us from Putin. It is fair. I am sure we can achieve this together—and only together Ukraine, the United States, Europe, and all our allies and partners.

The day must come when Putin's smile is going to falter. The day must come when Putin's smile is gone forever. God bless America. Slava Ukraini [GLORY TO UKRAINE].

[VIDEO PRESENTATION ENDS.] [APPLAUSE.]

Chairman WILSON: Again, it is so humbling and inspiring to see President Zelensky in his presentation. I have had a remarkable year to be with him at the Munich Security Conference in Germany, and then at the Shangri-La conference in Singapore and the Villa d'Este conference in Italy, and then last month to be here in Washington as he appeared. What a leader.

I like to point out to people to me he is the ultimate symbol of non-corruption. That is on the very day that there was a Russian invasion convoy 30 miles long 10 miles from his office. President Biden did—correctly he offered him a ride out of town, out of the country. He turned it down and said that, indeed, we need arms, not a ride. To me, that is the definition of someone who is not corrupt, somebody who is standing for his people.

With that, I now refer to Congressman Jim Costa of California.

STATEMENT OF JIM COSTA, U.S. HOUSE, FROM CALIFORNIA

Representative COSTA: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Cohen. The bipartisanship you have demonstrated in our efforts to support our allies with Ukraine I think is to be highlighted, along with the bipartisan support we have received from Congress and the Biden administration and Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi.

I think that it is fitting and appropriate after 1,000 days of war that we hear from this distinguished panel as to the challenges that we face. I want to ask the panel members in your comments to address whether or not it would be beneficial to pass a supplemental Ukraine security package before the end of the year. Would that be beneficial? Is it needed right now?

I would like your comments to also respond to what you need right now to help you with Ukraine on the battlefield. President Biden's lifting of the use of ATACMS and other military equipment

on the battlefield I think is a good sign. I wished it had taken place, frankly, months ago.

Let me just say that I think the Biden administration has, in the 1,000 days, done a good job in rallying NATO and our allies to the support of Ukraine. I think our collective efforts on sanctions and the freezing of assets, again, are important. Those assets, not just the interest rates on those assets but ultimately the entire assets that have been withheld, should be, when a cease-fire and a peace ultimately is achieved, used for the reconstruction of Ukraine. That would be the right thing to do with these Russian assets that are currently being frozen.

Let me close by saying the following. Today, modern-day Russia is a syndicate masquerading as a country with a mob boss called Putin. Let me repeat that: Today, modern Russia is a syndicate masquerading as a country. The mob boss Putin is a war criminal. He is a war criminal for the things that he has done to the people of Ukraine: Bombing of hospitals, bombing schools, and kidnapping over 50,000 Ukrainian children. The list goes on and on and on for the atrocities that President Putin has pursued for his dream of whatever in attacking—an unprovoked attack on a peaceful neighbor that has created devastation for the people of Ukraine.

Therefore, I think we need to tell the truth. Speaker Emerita Pelosi knew my mother, and she told me a long time ago: Jim, the truth is the truth. The truth is that President Putin is a war criminal, and those are the facts. He ultimately must pay for the atrocities that he has committed upon the people of Ukraine, but even beyond that.

I look forward to the testimony of this distinguished panel. I thank the leadership that Chairman Wilson and Ranking Member Cohen have provided with the Helsinki Commission. It is fitting and appropriate that after 1,000 days, we hold this hearing today.

Thank you.

Chairman WILSON: One change—and thank you very much, Congressman Costa—due to scheduling, we are going to call on the foreign minister, Andrii Sybiha, to give testimony because he has a scheduling conflict. Then we will come back to any opening statements of other members, who, obviously, are passionate in their support of the people of Ukraine. Foreign Minister?

TESTIMONY OF ANDRII SYBIHA, FOREIGN MINISTER OF UKRAINE

Mr. SYBIHA: Dear Chairman Wilson, Ranking Member Cohen, Speaker Emerita Pelosi, and dear members of the Helsinki Commission, it is a great pleasure and honor for me to be at the Helsinki Commission today. I appreciate all of your support for Ukraine throughout the 1,000 days of Russia's full-scale aggression. I would like to thank you from the bottom of the hearts of all Ukrainians. Really appreciative.

Thank you for drawing the attention of Members of Congress to the need to bring the aggressor to justice. When I departed from Kyiv on November 17, Russia launched one of its largest air attacks against Ukraine. Together with my wife and children, we spent a sleepless night under loud explosions, just like thousands of other Ukrainian families. Like thousands of other parents, we

have to reply to our kids who are asking us why this terror still continues. Two hundred and ten drones and missiles, including hypersonic and ballistic, Russians once again targeted civilians, critical infrastructure, the energy grid, and even nuclear energy systems. Many people were left without power and heating. Ten people were killed in Odesa and 12 in Sumy, including two children. Overall, Russia has killed 659 Ukrainian children since the start of its full-scale invasion. Fortunately, most of the targets were intercepted this time, and we are grateful to the United States for its constant support in strengthening our air shield.

This attack once again underscores the need to put an end to Russian terror and aggression through strong and decisive action. There can be no alternative to a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace. The Helsinki Commission has always had a historic mission to defend freedom, human rights, and international law. This mission is especially relevant now, when we see a new axis of rogue regimes challenging global order. Russia, Iran, and North Korea work together to challenge the existing international order. All three regimes support each other, including with military assistance. Together, they destabilize three regions: Europe, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific. All three regimes violate human rights on an industrial scale. This is what they want to impose on the world. They pretend to be fighting against the United States and the West, but in fact, the only thing that unites them is lawlessness.

This axis is an existential challenge for the West. We need peace through strength. The United States cannot afford to look weak. Russia, Iran, and North Korea will perceive any sign of weakness as an invitation to directly harm American interests and security. Right now, we see new attempts by the Kremlin to use nuclear saber-rattling to scare the West. Their updated nuclear doctrine and public rhetoric on the use of nuclear weapons are nothing more than blackmail. They have used it many times before when strong decisions were made. We must remain cool-headed, clear-eyed, and not give in to fear.

We in Ukraine know that in a situation of existential fight for life, there is no half-solution, no half-measures; only will bring half results. In life-or-death situations, a half-solution is death, not life. The situation in Ukraine is not just a conflict between two states; it is an aggression of one State against another. There can be no alternative to the peace formula and the restoration of a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in Ukraine and the world. There can be no alternative to justice. Russia must be held accountable for the crime of aggression against Ukraine and all the atrocities that followed, including the crime of genocide. We call on the U.S. Congress to adopt legislation recognizing Russian actions in Ukraine as genocide of the Ukrainian people. The legal grounds are sufficient. The deportation of at least 20,000 Ukrainian children, genocidal propaganda on television, murder with an intent to destroy the Ukrainian national group, sexual violence, and attempts to create unbearable conditions of life—all these elements classified by the Convention on Genocide are present in Russian aggression against Ukraine. Moscow's attempts to destroy the Ukrainian nation are not new. Ninety years ago, they already tried and killed

millions of Ukrainians by hunger during the Holodomor genocide. We must ensure accountability for all past and present crimes of the Kremlin.

Today, Russia systematically violates the Geneva Conventions as well as the laws and customs of war. Some of the most horrible crimes against humanity it commits are the executions of our prisoners of war. Their numbers have grown significantly this year.

We are currently investigating the murder of 124 prisoners of war. According to the U.N. data, 95 percent of Ukrainian prisoners of war suffered various forms of torture in Russian captivity. Many of them returned with severe physical and mental damage.

Thousands of Ukrainian prisoners of war, as well as thousands of civilian hostages and political prisoners, remain in Russian captivity. We need joint efforts to pressure Russia and ensure humane treatment as well as proper access to international monitors and medics.

Most importantly, we must work to free all of our people and return all of our kidnapped children. In this sense, I underscore the importance of the recent Montreal Pledge and urge everyone to join these humanitarian efforts. Millions of Ukrainians face torture, repression, and violations of their human rights in the occupied territories. This includes persecution of minorities, religious leaders, and communities.

Ukraine's largest Muslim community, the Crimean Tatars, have been deprived of their homes for the second time in one century. These indigenous people have no other homeland than Crimea, but the Russian regime bans the Mejlis and pushes Crimean Tatar leaders and communities out of the peninsula.

When facing such a brutal and lawless regime as Putin's Russia, there can be no alternative to peace through strength. Ukraine will not accept any initiative that suggests compromises on our sovereignty or territorial integrity.

We will not accept any initiatives developed without our participation. Nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine. We will not accept any land for peace deals. Such ideas will only mean leaving millions of people in the hands of the aggressor and subject to genocide, torture, and oppression.

Furthermore, rewarding Russia with territorial gains will not restore peace but instead provoke further aggression. This is appeasement, not peace. Appeasement has never worked in the past, and it will not work now.

There can be no alternative to the victory plan proposed by President Zelensky. Russia shows no intention to restore peace. Instead, it continues to speak the language of ultimatums and attack Ukraine every day and night. Only strong and decisive steps will force the aggressor to accept a just peace.

We need to raise the price for this war for Putin to the level where he understands that he cannot continue his aggression. The Ukrainian people are paying the highest price for this war, but the price of appeasement will be even higher for the entire world.

This is why we need real peace, not peace at any cost. Let us stand united and strong. Let us act together to protect our shared values enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and other fundamental documents.

Let me wish you a fruitful hearing today. Slava Ukraini, and God bless America. [APPLAUSE.]

Chairman WILSON: Foreign Minister Sybiha, thank you so much for your clarity and the courage, again, of the people of Ukraine. How inspiring.

We understand you have scheduling. At this time, we will proceed again with any opening statement that anyone would like to make, and in the interest of bipartisanship, we will call on Congressman Robert Aderholt of Alabama.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT B. ADERHOLT, U.S. HOUSE, FROM ALABAMA

Representative ADERHOLT: Thank you. I just want to say it is great to be here, and I know we are short for time and I know so I am going to defer and look forward to this hearing. I thank you, Chairman, for having this hearing today so we can find out the impact of what is going on with Russia.

Chairman WILSON: Thank you so much.

We now proceed to Congressman Mike Quigley of Illinois.

STATEMENT OF MIKE QUIGLEY, U.S. HOUSE, FROM ILLINOIS

Representative QUIGLEY: Again, in the interest of time, very briefly.

I just returned from Ukraine, the fourth time since the thousand-day war—Putin's war—and I think it is fair to say, at least to stake out what we consider victory. Victory must mean victory on the battlefield and a lasting peace through security assurances, which must include, in the final analysis, membership in NATO, restoring the country to its original borders, rebuilding this country to its full potential, and holding those accountable.

As I stood on the mass graves in Bucha, we owe it to them, and for all the reasons we fought the Second World War, to move forward to a just peace.

Thank you.

Chairman WILSON: I am grateful to use chairman's privilege and recognize former Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Representative PELOSI: Thank you. I had the privilege of saying some remarks earlier about the urgency of our support for Ukraine to continue—not only to continue but even to accelerate. I was pleased that Madam Ambassador was here as well. We have all worked with her for a long period of time.

Really, this distinguished panel is what we came to hear, so—associating myself with the remarks that others have made about our role, the courage of the Ukrainian people, and the need for the decisions to be made by the Ukrainian people about how we go forward.

I yield back.

Chairman WILSON: Thank you very much, Speaker.

We now proceed to the co-chair of the Bulgaria Caucus, Brad Schneider of Illinois.

STATEMENT OF BRAD SCHNEIDER, U.S. HOUSE, FROM ILLINOIS

Representative SCHNEIDER: Thank you, all. I thank my friend. I want to thank all of you for being here.

I, too, will associate myself with all the remarks, and I think what the foreign minister said succinctly is a thousand days of war, a thousand days of atrocity, but a thousand days of courage and strength from the Ukrainian people, and it is imperative that we are successful.

Success will not come without sacrifice and will not come without great cost, but failure, as the foreign minister said, will carry far greater cost, and we have to make sure that Ukraine is successful and the United States stands with Ukraine.

Chairman WILSON: Thank you very much, Congressman.

We now conclude with the opening statements by Congresswoman Deborah Ross of North Carolina.

STATEMENT OF DEBORAH ROSS, U.S. HOUSE, FROM NORTH CAROLINA

Representative ROSS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I, too, want to hear from the panel. Just to let you know, I am co-chair of the Moldova Caucus, and I want people to also know Moldova has done everything that it can to help Ukraine and, of course, it has fought back against the Russians in their most recent election.

I stand fully with Ukraine and also understand that if Ukraine falls, so will other countries.

I yield back.

Chairman WILSON: Thank you very much, Congresswoman.

We now proceed to our panel, and we are so grateful to have Dr. Hanna Hopko, again, a former chairwoman of the Rada's foreign affairs committee and the co-founder of the International Center for Ukrainian Victory, and we are grateful to have you here.

What we will be doing is we are—try to be 5 minutes for each individual and then restrain Members of Congress very much that they stick to 5 minutes so that as many people can participate as possible.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY OF HANNA HOPKO, FORMER CHAIRWOMAN OF UKRAINIAN RADA FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE; CO-FOUNDER, INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR UKRAINIAN VICTORY

Dr. HOPKO: Chairman Wilson—Speaker Emerita Pelosi and distinguished members of the Helsinki Commission, let me express my profound appreciation to the Helsinki Commission for championing an ambitious international agenda to support Ukraine. Moreover, I would like to extend my deep gratitude to the American people for your continuous support for our fight for life, dignity, and freedom.

Our minister just mentioned the devastating cost of Russian war and genocide, so 10 years of Russian ongoing aggression. Ukrainians have been fighting the Russian war for 3,926 days until today. Even after the horror of the last 1,000 days, Ukrainians are not

giving up. I am here today to testify and just to say that this war is a winnable one. Actually, I would like to say that 1,000 days of war, a decade since the Russian Federation decided Ukrainian pursuit of democracy deserved the seizure of Ukrainian Crimea in February 2014.

Sadly, I need to talk about the lack of full commitment of Western democracies to safeguard the rules-based international order. Russia's destruction of Ukraine continues because Ukraine is under-supported while Russia is overprotected by red lines, self-restrictions, and escalation management.

One thousand days ago, we were expected to die as a nation in three days. Russian soldiers packed parade uniforms for their triumph over Kyiv. There was a hit list circulating of Ukrainian intelligentsia to be liquidated. I was on the list, as were many others.

Ukrainians, one and all, choose to resist. 1,000 days of indecision by Western leaders have allowed Moscow to wreak havoc on Ukraine—devastating human losses, depopulated cities, destroyed infrastructure, ruined economy, and health care. No other war today threatens the future of free world more than the Russian war.

At the same time, Russia gets protected by Western red lines. Ukraine pays with life for every single second of illusion of control over the trajectory of the outcome of the war. Since 2014, Russia has been seeking the destruction of both the Ukrainian State and the Ukrainian nation—and I am supporting Chairman Wilson saying that after the Soviet Union collapsed, this was the end of communist ideology but not the end of Russian imperialism.

This is why I am also very thankful to the Helsinki Commission for organizing hearings on decolonization, de-imperialization of Russia because, as our minister just said, genocidal war of Russian imperialists we faced for centuries, and not just Ukrainians. Also, Chechens and other nations. This is why decolonization, de-imperialization are key.

Moscow's criminal actions have one main objective: To destroy the viability of the existence of Ukrainians as a separate national and ethnic group. Ten years ago, I was here on the Hill in my capacity as a chair of the committee on foreign affairs of the Ukrainian parliament, asking for support for the Ukraine Freedom Support Act. Ten years ago.

I could not imagine that 10 years after the adoption of this Ukraine Freedom Support Act, I will come here and ask to adopt the Ukraine Victory Support Act. It is not just Russia alone. Its axis of evil states which are supplying Russia with ballistic missiles, North Korean troops.

It is high time to adopt the axis of evil defeat act and support Ukrainian victory. Let me say that this war is winnable because Ukrainians and Ukraine have defied expectations—sinking the Russian Black fleet without a Ukrainian navy, defending Kyiv, Odesa, and Kharkiv, liberating Kherson, fighting North Korean soldiers in Kursk.

I support the recognition of Russian aggression as a genocide. Also, all sovereign assets of Russia must be confiscated and support Ukrainian military defense. Ukraine must be offered NATO mem-

bership, which is important for all of us because Ukraine could contribute a lot to the alliance and the Europeans' security.

As a mother of a 13-years-old daughter, Sophia, when I was staying in Kyiv in that night of the full-scale war began so my daughter was crossing the border and I was in Kyiv with my husband, and I was not knowing what happened, and I am very thankful to God that I am alive and speaking today.

My daughter asked me a question: "Mom, you know all these Western leaders. Why are you in Kyiv under bombs, and I have to leave my country? Why, after 8 years of your advocacy you have not succeeded, not stopping and preventing Russia?" I could not answer my daughter. I was crying.

Here today I am asking the American people, asking the American Congress, to give Ukraine everything needed to defeat Russian imperialism, that my grandkids and Ukrainians who lost their beloved ones will know that justice prevails and American leadership, American credibility. Russia will never achieve that the end of America means the end of American power.

Thank you for having me today. God bless America. God bless your wisdom to help us to achieve such sustainable peace that never again Russia or China or other axis of evil states attack a sovereign nation.

Chairman WILSON: Dr. Hopko, thank you so much for your insight and testimony.

We now proceed to Mariia Kucherenko, and we are so grateful for your heading the Russian studies at the Come Back Alive Foundation.

TESTIMONY OF MARIIA KUCHERENKO, HEAD OF RUSSIA STUDIES, COME BACK ALIVE

Ms. KUCHERENKO: Thank you.

Dear Chairman Wilson, Speaker Pelosi, distinguished members of the Helsinki Commission, and honorable participants of today's hearing, first of all, thank you for the opportunity to be here and for all the American support provided to my country.

The very formulation of the topic of our hearings leads us to the answer to what kind of reaction was necessary to Russian threat and then actually reaction was needed. Russia's war against Ukraine began with the annexation of Crimea and aggression in the eastern part of Ukraine in 2014, and the fact that only from 2022 the world began to talk about Russia's war against Ukraine and not the "Ukrainian crisis" as it was in the previous 8 years created the prerequisites for today's scale of war.

Russia's war against Ukraine cannot be considered a problem affecting only Ukraine and Russia or even only Europe. There are no isolated wars in the 21st century. The brutal attack on February 24 of 2022 proved that Russia will not stop.

Where Russia does not resort to the physical occupation, it undermines world security in one way or another. Russia will use all occupied territories as a bridgehead, and this applies not only to Ukraine but also to Georgia and Moldova.

Developments with Georgian elections prove that persons related to the general directorate of the armed forces of the Russian Federation, more widely known as the spin doctors of the Wagner

Group, are actively interfering in what is happening in this country.

We are talking about Alexander Malkevich, who was not only involved in the interference of the 2020 American elections but is also currently working in the newly occupied territories of Ukraine and in the internationally recognized territory of Georgia. During these elections, he worked for the Georgian Dream.

The situation is not better in Moldova, where Russia used Transnistria as one of the tools of electoral pressure and additional pressure on the security situation in the region. One of the most vivid examples of the Russian threat demonstrated by this phase of hostilities is the food crisis. The world learned that a number of developing countries are critically dependent on Ukrainian grain when this grain became very difficult to transport due to the scale of hostilities started by Russia. The world learned that Russia steals Ukrainian grain from the occupied territories and tries to trade it as its own.

The world learned that Russia was purposefully burning and shelling Ukrainian agricultural lands to blackmail a large part of the world population with their artificially created famine. This is far from the only instrument of destabilization that Russia shamelessly used with the beginning of this stage of war. The presence of the Russian special services under the guise of so-called private military companies helps it support dictatorial regimes, additionally invest in the blurring of the rules as a concept.

During the research of the Wagner Group, we at the Come Back Alive Foundation counted the presence of the representatives of this group affiliated with the general directorate of the armed forces of the Russian Federation in more than 70 countries. We are talking not only about militants but also about spin doctors, military advisors, and media specialists, which means about the entire spectrum of the military and nonmilitary influence.

It does not matter what this group is called at the moment—Wagner, Africa Corps, or anything else. It is about the work of the Russian special services to create entire logistic networks to destabilize the security situation around the world.

The arms traffic between the Russian Federation, Iran, Hezbollah, and Syria, organized by Russian special services, and the latest tragic events in the Middle East are directly connected. Moscow is confidently building not only an axis of evil—Russia, China, Iran and its proxy, and North Korea—but also shedding blood on individual nodes of this network.

Although the focus of the Russian Federation effort is the subjugation of Ukraine, it does not mean that the situation of October 2023 in the Middle East will not be repeated elsewhere. Taiwan, the Middle East, and Africa are all on the menu of the axis of evil, and that is why we must react in a consolidated manner to this complex challenge.

Russia cannot be allowed to systematically break the rules and occupy more and more territories, resulting in greater and greater casualties. Russia cannot be bought off by some individual territories or countries hoping that this is where it will stop. It was actually the bitter lesson of 2022 for Ukraine and the world. This approach does not work.

Russia cannot be allowed to conduct asymmetrical operations to increase its influence around the world and organize and support arms traffic between dictatorial regimes. Only together, based on the principle of territorial integrity as one of the main principles of the international law, on the readiness to affirm the force of law and not the law of force, we will be able to repel the axis of evil and this is the main lesson that should be learned from this thousand days and the previous 2,926 days of the war from the beginning of annexation of Crimea to the beginning of this stage of hostilities.

Thank you so much.

Chairman WILSON: Thank you very much, Ms. Kucherenko, and we appreciate your insight and dedication.

We are so grateful to have with us Dr. Andrew Michta, who is a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council Scowcroft Geostrategy Initiative. Dr. Michta?

TESTIMONY OF ANDREW MICHTA, DIRECTOR AND SENIOR FELLOW, SCOWCROFT GEOSTRATEGY INITIATIVE, ATLANTIC COUNCIL

Dr. MICHTA: Thank you very much, Chairman Wilson, Speaker Pelosi, and honorable ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for inviting me to speak on lessons learned from almost three years of Russia's war on Ukraine.

Please allow me to enter these initial comments into the record. Russia's war on Ukraine is a system-transforming conflict, marking unequivocally the end of three post-cold war decades of relative peace. To understand the sources and potential end states of this war, we need to understand the systemic nature of Vladimir Putin's Russia.

Russia is a quintessentially revisionist State aligned with China, Iran, and North Korea, what I call four states that together form an axis of dictatorships intent on overthrowing the international system established by the United States and its democratic allies after World War II.

For over two decades now, Russia has been relitigating the post-cold war settlement, driven by its determination to rebuild the inner core of its former empire and establish a sphere of influence in Central and Eastern Europe and beyond.

The war in Ukraine is not a one-off event. It is a manifestation of Vladimir Putin's drive to restore what he calls *velikiy russkiy mir*—Pax Russica—that is rooted in the fundamentals of Russian thinking about geopolitics and strategy that it formed—its formative experience as an empire.

This strategic culture sees its empire as rooted in the eastern Slavic core of three nations: The great Russians, the little Russians or Ukrainians, and the white Russians, Belarusians. Russian imperialism perceives itself to be in fundamental civilizational opposition to the West. Putin's insistence that quote "There is no such thing as a Ukrainian nation" and his focus on Eurasianism as a pathway to de-Westernize Russia align with the core tenets of Russian imperialism.

At a risk of over rationalizing history, I submit that there are striking parallels between the trajectory followed by Germany after

its defeat in World War I and the road Russia has traveled since the end of the cold war.

The dominant narrative produced for domestic consumption during both the Weimar Republic in Germany and the Yeltsin era in Russia was one of betrayal rather than defeat. In Germany, the *Dolchstoßlegende*, or stab in the back myth, claims that Germany was never defeated but, rather, betrayed.

In Russia, Putin has offered the population a similar narrative, blaming the West for the alleged treachery that brought down the Soviet Union. I bring this up because this imperial narrative, much as it led to the rise of Hitler in Germany, continues to sustain Putin's revisionism in Central and Eastern Europe.

According to this view, the great Russian nation was robbed of its greatness by the United States and the West and, hence, any action to remedy this perceived injustice is justified in the eyes of Russian imperialists.

Consequently—and this is key—the threat Russia poses to Central and Eastern Europe and to peace and stability worldwide will not abate so long as the Russian revisionist narrative holds. Until then, Russia will remain not an acute but a chronic threat to the United States and its allies.

Allow me to turn to Ukraine. Today, the country is locked in an existential struggle for survival as a free and sovereign nation while Russia systematically obliterates the country's infrastructure, industry, and cultural heritage and, most of all, kills its people, military and civilian.

Because the United States and its NATO allies, while providing vital support, have prioritized controlling escalation and Putin has effectively played the nuclear card, Ukraine has been forced to fight on Russia's terms, i.e., a war of attrition. It should be stated plainly that unless the West changes its approach to aiding Ukraine, the current strategy will likely lead to its defeat.

A case in point. When Ukraine became independent, it had some 51 million people. In 2022, when Russia invaded for the second time, it had about 40 million people. Today, by my estimate, somewhere between 27 [million] and 30 million citizens are left in the country.

Simply put, ladies and gentlemen, it is not just that Ukraine is running out of weapons and munitions. It is running out of people, with Russia now enjoying a four-to-one population advantage. Russia's victory over Ukraine would have devastating consequences for the United States' global position and for NATO and the West as a whole. It would demonstrate to our adversaries that we have neither the staying power nor the determination to confront them.

Putin's Russia is not fighting Ukraine. Rather, according to Moscow's narrative, Russia is fighting the United States, NATO, and what they call the collective West. Putin has framed this war as a civilizational war, and should Russia prevail, he will score a civilizational win that will embolden other members of the axis of dictatorships to push even more vigorously against the United States and our allies.

Ukraine's defeat will increase the risk that as regional power balances unravel in Europe, the Middle East, and in Asia, America

is pulled into a global war. The stakes could not be higher. We need to stand by Ukraine, but we also need a change in strategy.

If Ukraine is to have a chance at an equitable peace settlement, it needs to get the weapons and munitions it needs in the quantities it needs, but most of all, we need to lift the restrictions on their use to allow Ukraine to impose real costs on Russia. Only if Putin realizes that he cannot win this war at an acceptable cost will there be a chance for a negotiated end to this conflict.

Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to your questions on the discussion.

Chairman WILSON: Thank you very much, Dr. Michta.

As we proceed, each person on the panel will be provided 5 minutes, and it will be strictly enforced because politicians sometimes can go beyond 5 minutes. We will proceed, and I will be the first in at this.

Again, I want to thank each of you for being here. I want to thank the staff that have been so helpful in getting this together and the persons in the audience. It is wonderful to have the interest that there is.

One point that I want to really reiterate to the American people and that is there is really only one reason why war criminal Putin invaded Ukraine and it is because he wants to reinstitute and recreate the failed Soviet Union and he wants to create that empire, and there was previously the Soviet empire with nomenklatura, and being beneficial to the elite, not to the people of Russia or the Russian or the Soviet republics.

Congressman Costa is right. It is a mafia with oligarchs who are being benefited and the people of Russia who are being taken advantage of, and it is particularly sad to me because I have had wonderful visits to Russia, from Saint Petersburg to Novosibirsk.

One time, I was there to see a billboard that said, "Welcome to Novosibirsk." Times have changed. It said in English, "The Chicago of Siberia." Chelyabinsk is the sister city of my home community of Columbia, South Carolina. Wonderful visits to Saint Petersburg. It is really disappointing to me about the people of Russia.

Another point is that it has been stated that Putin acted out of self-defense because of the threat of NATO. NATO is a defensive organization. He is had a border with NATO since 1949. It is called Norway. To claim that he was trying to avoid a border with NATO and Ukraine actually failed.

As we know, Finland has an 830-mile border with the Russian Federation and is now a member of NATO, and how extraordinary the unintended consequence of Finland and Sweden giving up 200 years of neutrality.

Indeed, to me, it is clear that war criminal Putin is on a path to self-destruction but it was purely made up with his concerns about NATO.

With that in mind, and Dr. Hopko and everyone, sanctions are so important to me, and I want to congratulate the Department of Commerce for truly enforcing these. It needs to be enforced so that, indeed, the oligarchs are affected. That is who the sanctions will be against.

With that in mind, beginning with each one of you, what more can be done by the United States, our NATO allies, the European

Union, and the 39 countries that have been identified as supporting a free and vibrant Ukraine?

Dr. HOPKO: Thank you, Chairman Wilson. Thank you for these important questions.

Actually we expected after the Russian invasion back in 2014 that sanction policy will become a diplomatic leverage to prevent the full-scale war, and actually now we are here in D.C. also advocating for the continuation of the sanctions against Nord Stream 2 which is really important to continue, and also an international humanitarian military mission must be deployed to provide air defense for Ukraine's nuclear infrastructure because what Russia did for the first time this year in August during the massive missile attack in combination of ballistic cruise missiles, kamikaze drones—for the first time they used nuclear warheads just to destroy different substations near the nuclear power plants in different regions of Ukraine.

I think it is really important to avoid the nuclear accident in Ukraine, this international humanitarian military mission, and we are very thankful for Biden giving permission for ATACMS even if there are still some restrictions on the use of Western-made weapons against Russia by the U.K. and other nations.

Winter will be very tough but we have this resilience, and we know that Russia wants to freeze Ukrainians, weaponize winter, and we need America to green light the decision for Poland and Romania because we are now advocating for the air defense shield over western Ukraine, Odesa, which is critically important because we are exporting grain, and let us not allow Russia to weaponize food as weaponization of hunger.

Key main issues—sanctions. Besides Nord Stream 2 there are a list of sanctions especially on oil and Russian gas and I think this is a great opportunity for America to export more LNG to European market instead of Russian LNG and it is crucially important, and Western components which are being found in ballistic missiles produced by North Korea which they give to Russia and they used against us in 2024.

Can you imagine that we found components from the U.K. and the U.S. manufactured in 2023 in North Korean missiles that were used against us this year? This is another issue, and I know that the Helsinki Commission focused on this sanctions policy as well. This is the main area, and let us not allow Russia to produce more Kinzhals, more drones with the usage of Western components, which are critical for their military industry.

Of course, what Russia is really afraid of, Chairman Wilson, I have some gift for you. Maybe I will give it to you because you mentioned that what Putin is—the biggest fear of Mr. Putin, the war criminal, that Russia will repeat the destiny of the Soviet Union.

This is what he is afraid of, and I think we do not have this fear because we—together with Helsinki Commission we—for many years we are advocating this make Russia small again, and in this picture you will see Moscovia—the size of Moscovia and how Russia is now.

The attacks from Russia in the Baltic Sea and the statement that they want to redraw the maritime borders in the Baltic Sea

it is another way of imperialism. I think they are afraid of Russia becoming a size of Moscovia, and this is what Putin publicly said.

De-imperialization is the key, and this T-shirt is a gift from our Ukraine Victory Center and for other honorable members.

Chairman WILSON: Again, thank you for your passion, and we are so grateful.

We now proceed to Ranking Member Steve Cohen of Tennessee.

Representative COHEN: Mr. Costa has requested some time, and I will yield to him.

Representative COSTA: Thank you very much, my friend.

Hopefully, President Biden's actions that he took yesterday will soon be followed by the U.K. and France on weapon systems that Ukraine now has to attack interests in Russia. My question is, President-elect Trump has talked about his ability to negotiate his influence with President Putin.

I would like to get your take because earlier this year President Putin established the conditions for a cease-fire as, one, Ukraine agreeing not to become a member of the EU; two, not ever becoming a member of NATO; three, demilitarizing the Ukrainian forces, and then we begin to discuss, or Putin said, negotiating territory.

I think those terms are unacceptable to President Zelensky or any Ukrainian leader. I would like your comment and what additional support we need to provide and what you would be looking for with President-elect Trump when he takes office after January 20.

Ms. KUCHERENKO: Thank you for this question.

Yes, you mentioned these conditions provided by Putin. It is actually the repetition of the so-called Istanbul document in which he actually made an ultimatum for us not based on any logic or any common sense. It was only based on his wish to subjugate Ukraine.

First of all, I need to say that this experience of so-called cease-fire was already in our history when it was that period of war from 2014 until 2022. Actually, we made a lot of attempts to establish a cease-fire. It was a so-called summer cease-fire, autumn cease-fire, or other different cease-fires related to some celebrations or some other occasions.

In the case of absence of real, practical mechanism on the ground to prevent this violation of cease-fire, we only got the OSCE mission, which was only monitoring mission, not some military mission or not some mission of peacekeeping. It was only more and more attempts to negotiate the Russian conditions, not the conditions of settlement of this conflict or not all the conditions of Ukrainian victory.

When it turns to additional aid to the Ukrainian side, first of all, yes, actually, I need to mention this. Air defense systems, missiles, and so on and so on, but what is really crucial for us is things related to the secondary sanctions—first of all, following the secondary sanctions, which really can put the Russian Federation in an inconvenient State.

Also we would like to underline the importance of transferring of frozen assets of the Russian Federation to support of Ukraine, and also I think that we should think in a common way about some asymmetrical actions against Russian Federation and, first of all,

against of some actions of Russian Federation under the false flags, for instance, the flag of criminal groups or so-called PMCs.

I think that in this dimension we, Ukraine, and U.S. and our European partners can work together and we as Ukrainian experts who is dealing with this topic, like, on the daily basis I think that in this case we can be not only a receiver of your aid but we also can be a contributor to our common security and in this way I think that we can cooperate with our main partner U.S. and we can do our best in this dimension.

Thank you so much.

Chairman WILSON: Thank you very much.

We now proceed to Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Representative PELOSI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the distinguished panel for their very informative and current, up-to-date presentation.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cohen, for being true to the purpose and the mission of the Helsinki Commission and how relevant it is to our discussion today.

We have votes coming up soon, but I wanted to stay here for the full presentation because this is the most important thing that we could be doing is taking us to this next step. The beautiful presentation of President Zelensky, beautiful in terms of its strength, in terms of its courage, in terms of its purpose, and the presentations that you have made have been very important.

My question—we have talked about weapons and use in that—is about person power. We saw at the beginning of the war the Russians were using poor people and minorities and the rest, not going into the more sophisticated areas where—Saint Petersburg—and the rest where it might turn public opinion against the purpose of the war because of deaths to families there.

Now I would like you to tell us where you see it because is not it a sign of weakness on the part of Putin that he has to go outside the country and get North Koreans to come in and fight his war? What is the attitude that you see from the Russian people?

We read about the bonus that families get if their child dies in war. They get money, and they are poor, and so it is compensation, as sad as that might seem to all of us. Who is fighting this war? What impact does it have on the support in Russia for the continuation of the war? Again, how can Putin talk about being a strong Russia if he has to go to North Korea to get his troops there?

One more thing is that—well, I will not go into it. I will just go there.

Thank you.

Dr. MICHTA: Thank you, Speaker Pelosi, and let me say that you have addressed one of the most important aspects of this war.

So far, Putin believes that he can win at an acceptable cost because the people he brings into the battlefield are either people from impoverished areas of the Russian Federation, the Buryats, or other minorities.

He is avoiding recruiting in the major cities because the minute he goes to Moscow, Petersburg, and other areas, the dynamic changes. He is no longer pulling poor people from faraway places. He is now pulling what we might call the Russian middle class,

and then the families of those men and women would respond very differently.

I think the Korean presence is both an outrage and a challenge to us because he is brought Asian troops into the European theater. You are right, I would argue that he also does not want to go in the second mobilization round or third mobilization round to people that we have in those major cities because he remembers very well what can happen when Russian women go into the streets, when young men and women try to escape.

Representative PELOSI: Moms.

Dr. MICHTA: Mothers in particular. If you will remember the coup attempts when Yeltsin climbed on top of the tank, it was the Russian women who came in and changed the dynamic of the whole situation.

I think as long as he believes he can continue at an acceptable cost, relying either on people from impoverished areas, criminals, or foreign troops like we have done this with the North—we have seen this with the North Koreans, which, by the way, should be absolutely unacceptable to us to have him bring in foreign troops from a country that is not a declared combatant in to affect a combatant situation—that requires the strongest response from our side.

Mr. Chairman, to your question and the question of Mr. Costa, I will actually say the most important thing to assist Ukraine is probably not directly connected to Ukraine. First of all, it is allied solidarity. If he believes that he can fracture us, that he can break our consensus on supporting Ukraine, he is winning.

Second, for the European allies, rearmament is the way to assist Ukraine indirectly. Why? Because that man understands only hard power, and if he can blackmail and threaten the disarmed Europeans, then he thinks he has got the room to maneuver.

What we have been trying to convince our European allies—and this should be a message not to the allies on the flank who are doing their job—the Finns, the Scandinavians, the Poles are arming—but that should be the message to the allies farther west. They need to do their part.

Finally, he has to believe he cannot cut a deal that would take him to his, in effect, pre-1999 situation. What he is trying to get is he is trying to offer terms of surrender. He wants a sphere of influence in Europe, and he wants the United States out of Europe.

Much is riding on Ukraine. If Ukraine emerges from this crisis as a vibrant, successful democracy, the whole region will change. There are no one-country solutions to the security dilemmas of the region. If Ukraine thrives, the dictatorship in Belarus will implode. It will be a matter of time.

If you look at the young men and women who stood in the streets in Minsk when the election was stolen, that is where Ukraine was in 1991. That is an emerging national identity. That is the drive for democracy and freedom.

We are looking at the last imperial power in Europe, and if you look at the number of nations—the Russians like to call them nationalities—that are within the frame of the Russian Federation, that is what we are looking at.

Finally, to our European allies, the best way to communicate to the Russians that there is no going back, seize their assets that are currently in the West, and No. 2, convince our allies that if we start really physically dismantling the Nord Stream pipelines, he will get the message.

Representative PELOSI: One thing that we have been trying to do without success was to declare Russia a terrorist State so that the effect of the sanctions would be more forceful. I do not know if it is too late for that. Could you speak to that?

Dr. MICHTA: It is never too late, Madam Speaker, but I would also add to this in light of everything that Russia has done. Why are we still maintaining the Russia-NATO Founding Act? Why are we still pretending that what he has done has not effectively undone the entire framework post-cold war?

He has suffered no consequences. In 2008, he invaded Georgia. He got a slap on the wrist. Nord Stream 1 was completed. He invaded Crimea in 2014. Nord Stream 2 was started. Again, a slap on the wrist.

He butchered Syrians at Aleppo. He went into the Middle East as a great, you know, dealmaker in the region controlling migration flows. He expected the same thing in Ukraine, and Madam Speaker, I tell you, had the Ukrainians not fought, we would probably have been in a horrible situation today.

They are fighting for the stability and security of Europe, the entire balance of power in the region. They are the best NATO allies that we do not have in the alliance, and I think that is something we should address.

Representative PELOSI: Mr. Chairman, just say in closing that when Svetlana's here, and we talk about Belarus, and you addressed that thrilling excitement in the streets about Belarus, that gives us hope that there is some there there. In other words, we should be doing more because it is not in a vacuum. It is with opportunity, shall we say, in Belarus. Then also, in terms of what the foreign minister said, the price of appeasement is just too great.

Thank you all so much. Thank you.

Chairman WILSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you, Dr. Michta.

We now proceed to Don Graves of the Department of Commerce.

Mr. GRAVES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member.

Distinguished speakers, thank you for your compelling testimony. I would just remind us that in his National Security Strategy, President Biden assessed that the most significant strategic challenge we face as we pursue a free, open, prosperous, and secure world is from powers like Russia that apply authoritarian governance with a revisionist foreign policy.

Dr. Michta, you talked about this in your testimony, Putin's drive to restore Pax Russica, and all of you talked about the imperialistic vision of Russia trying to create this former empire that dominates a sphere of influence in a region or a significant chunk of the world.

Dr. Hopko, I hear you on the issues of U.S. and Western technologies falling into the hands of this authoritarian leader. While our export controls have restricted Russia's access to items like

micro technology that are needed for its weapons to continue to prosecute the war, more needs to be done.

It is a global challenge that all of our partners and allies across the world need to engage in. It demands creative thinking from all of us. That is why we are constantly working with U.S. industry and the industries of our partners and allies to enhance the due diligence that they provide to detect evasion efforts that are going on sometimes in third-party countries, transshipment in countries that do not subscribe to our values or world view.

It also requires commitment by all those who value this free and open and prosperous world to stick together to further restrict Russia's access to these technologies. I will say that one of the other things that is often missed—I know we talk a fair amount about the value to the American public for sticking with our partners and allies.

In addition to having good partners and allies around the world there is an economic benefit to the United States on this issue in particular. The knockoff technology that shows up on the battlefield using our intellectual property or parts and weapons that use our brands but are not actually produced by the United States has an impact on our economy as well. It is important for us to continue to prosecute these efforts with our partners and allies.

Let me just say, with an imminent change in the administration, I think we all are concerned, rightly or wrongly, the consequences of a potentially sudden erosion of U.S. support for Ukraine could be deadly and could resonate beyond the region.

It is not an issue of the party or politics but of humanity and our commitment to a lasting peace. In the time remaining, if any of you would like to give an answer as to your belief as to what would happen should the U.S. support for Ukraine have an expiration date.

Dr. HOPKO: If you ask me what are the success stories of the U.S. foreign policy in last decades, so I think if you need success story Ukraine is the place to get it and actually this success story will restore the American credibility after Afghanistan and what is happening now in the Middle East because we do connect the dots between the weak reaction on the Crimea annexation in 2014 when we expected to see the Sixth Fleet of the U.S. because U.S. is a security guarantor to Ukraine. What is happening now in the Red Sea in the Middle East, and what could happen in the Indo-Pacific with the attack on Taiwan, also your partner?

Ukraine wants to become and will become—God will bless this—we will become a part of NATO, the EU, not just because we deserve, because it is also in your interest. Actually as a part of Ukraine's geopolitical integration, Ukraine will become a defense hub located in Ukraine—the defense hub of Europe because we have the critical in raw minerals. We are already in the battlefield used other innovations. This is the war of drones. I am jet-lagged a little bit—sorry. Then also radio electronic technologies and others.

Many countries which are sending their instructors they are learning from Ukraine. I think Ukraine is an asset of strategic partnership where we will benefit both nations and people. This is why I think we have to think from the perspective of what is the

strategic value of Ukraine for American people and also why when we are mentioning—there was the question from Congressman Costa asking about what happens if Trump.

We do believe that it is in Trump's interest to restore peace by restoring the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and Crimea is Ukraine, and Crimea also is an attractive place for investment, gas industry. Why? One of the reasons why Russia invaded Ukraine was because Putin had this fear that Ukraine, from importer of gas one day will become an exporter using ExxonMobil and other technologies.

There are many arguments. I could tell, like, for hours why it is in the interest of the U.S. to make Ukraine successful, America great, and actually how to make world safe and I am really very thankful and I think this is the time—the higher time to, as I call, to adopt the Victory Support Act in Congress and actually to start the new page. Not as long as it takes. As fast Russian imperialist will be defeated, as Dr. Michta mentioned.

No more Russian imperialist and genocidal war with Chinese expansionism and others. It is in your interest.

Mr. GRAVES: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I yield back.

Chairman WILSON: Thank you very much, Secretary Don Graves.

We now proceed for our last questioner and that is the ranking member, Steve Cohen of Tennessee.

Representative COHEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am going to be fairly quick.

Dr. Hopko, we provided Ukraine with some F-16s, I believe, and some other countries did. How have they been? I know one was shot down. Have you been using the F-16s, and have they proved to be important?

Dr. HOPKO: I am very thankful for F-16 because there are our colleagues, very famous pilots, Juice and Moonfish. They were here in D.C. back in June 2022. Unfortunately, both of them are now in the heaven. The armed forces of Ukraine and Moonfish paid a price when this massive missile attack happened on August 26. He was killed during the special operations defending Ukraine.

We need more F-16s, and since I am here so I would kindly ask you to provide more F-16s, and actually, we are now adopting our legislation to have retired pilots in Ukraine with their experience. Also, we need F-16s with radars and Link 16s because, unfortunately, F-16s without proper equipment are not competitive with Russian fighter jets. This is what we need.

Representative COHEN: Let me—we have got votes. I understand, and I appreciate it. I have read something about some lines, cables, being cut in the Baltics between Germany, maybe in Finland, and maybe Sweden and another country.

Are you familiar—any of you all familiar with that? You are Dr. Michta? Do you believe that is Russia?

Dr. MICHTA: I always ask, *qui bono*? Who does it serve? I think in terms of how this war has unfolded, the Russians have tried to intrude into our economic space. They have tried to intrude into our information space. They have violated NATO countries' airspace, trying to test where the limits are.

Of course, I do not have any certainty as to who actually did that, and that requires access to intel assessments going forward. I would like to add one more point here about how we go forward with this because I think it concerns our economic policy.

There was a mention here of components that originate in the West making their way to Russian weapon systems. I would submit to everyone on this panel that we need to bring national security priorities back into economic policymaking.

For three decades since the end of the cold war, we have basically removed them. We operated on the assumption that globalization—export-driven modernization—would somehow transform authoritarian, communist, dictatorial regimes, and I remember one important political figure saying that China would become a responsible stakeholder in the international system.

During the cold war, we had COCOM restrictions in NATO. You could not export dual-use technology to the Soviet Union. We took jewels in the crown of Western technology, handed it over to a 1.4 billion communist State on the assumption that something different would happen.

I would urge you to bring the conversation back to how we decouple our critical supply chains from China. We cannot depend on them for supply chains that are critical in the national emergency in the event of a war.

To the question about what failure in Ukraine would mean, it would be another case of deterrence failing and the loss of American credibility, and we have seen this repeatedly when—not only attack on Ukraine in 2022, Hamas attacking the closest ally of the United States in 2023, Iran launching a direct attack on Israel.

If we do not restore deterrence, we are going to be risking a wider conflict because, in the final analysis, general war in the Second World War did not start because Germany and the Soviet Union invaded Poland. It started because regional balance in Asia, Manchuria, then in Europe, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and then finally Poland were unraveling. We should not allow that to happen.

Representative COHEN: Dr. Michta, did you see the reported statement by one of the leaders in Russia that Russia had helped Mr. Trump be successful and that they expected that Mr. Trump would reciprocate because that is the way they do business? Did you see that?

Dr. MICHTA: I have seen all sorts of Russian propaganda. I do not put any weight in it. I think the Russians are trying to shape the narrative, if you will. I think what is going to happen is actually going to be a very tough negotiation going forward.

Putin's terms are, in my view, unacceptable. What he is asking of Ukraine is surrender. That is, in effect, what he has been arguing for since the very beginning. I always believed that the incoming administration, whether Democrat or Republican, has the right to shape its own position, and I do not put any stake in any credibility in what the Russians are saying, especially in the open media.

Representative COHEN: Thank you, and thank you for your testimony, and I appreciate the foreign minister here as well.

I yield back.

Chairman WILSON: Thank you, Ranking Member.

As we conclude, I would like to thank the witnesses. Each of you are special on behalf of the people of Ukraine but, more importantly, to avoid a greater war because that is what Putin is really proposing.

With that, I want to also thank the staff who have been so helpful and the commissioners. This is tremendous to have the Speaker here, and additionally, I want to thank—this is unique.

This Commission we also have the executive branch, a very rare occasion that we have the executive branch, and then a—I am treading on ice but this is bipartisan, Republican and Democrat, in the House but also the Senate members, and I regret that with all that is going on in the Senate that so many of our leaders including Ben Cardin of Maryland, a good Democrat, Roger Wicker, a good Republican of Mississippi—if they were here—I should not speak for them except for one thing—I know they would say amen and that is support for the people of Ukraine. It is bipartisan, bicameral. I am not sure I can say anything else about that.

Anyway, thank you, and we are adjourned. [SOUNDS GAVEL.] [APPLAUSE.]

[Whereupon, at 4:06 p.m., the hearing ended.]





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