

Statement

Issued By

The Presidents of the North American member organizations of the International Conference in Support of Ukraine

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Chicago, Illinois

The Conference “**Assessing Ukraine/NATO Relations on the Eve of the Chicago NATO Summit**”, held in Chicago on May 19, 2012 represents a concerted effort by the organized Ukrainian Diaspora to draw the attention of the Chicago NATO Summit and Ukraine’s President Viktor Yanukovich to the dangers confronting Ukraine’s democratic future and national security. The deteriorating political situation in Ukraine, together with the Russian regime’s efforts to undermine Ukraine’s Euro-Atlantic integration, pose a direct and immediate threat to Ukraine’s security and vital national interests, as well as to Europe’s security, peace and stability.

We acknowledge and support the international community’s efforts for the Ukrainian government to reverse its authoritarian course and policies. These policies include, inter alia: subordinating of the judiciary to the control and manipulation by the national, provincial and local levels of the administration, including politically motivated prosecutions of political opponents, in particular but not limited to, the former Prime Minister of Ukraine, Yulia Tymoshenko; obstructing democratic reforms including the manipulation, intimidation and harassment of the free press and advocates of human rights and civil society; conducting illegitimate provincial and local elections in 2011 that have been deemed not to meet international standards; undermining the development of a market oriented economy by consolidating oligarchic control including rampant corruption and stifling the development of small and medium business enterprises; and, not least, harassing and intimidating historians and researchers, especially those engaged in restoring Ukraine's historical memory.

These policies are seriously undermining Ukraine’s capacity to maintain its relationship with Euro -Atlantic institutions and to enhance its security against Russia’s aggressive policies. They also underscore the importance of continued engagement with Ukraine by the member states of Euro-Atlantic institutions and the institutions themselves. The European Union, NATO and the Euro-Atlantic partnership would be best served by a Ukraine that is democratic, secure within its borders, and in the process of integrating into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions. A Ukraine destabilized by authoritarian policies and practices, economic dislocation, rampant corruption, and international isolation can only thwart NATO’s stated goal of strengthened security in the Euro-Atlantic area and a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace.

In addition, the role of Russian interference in Ukraine’s internal affairs, to destabilize and isolate Ukraine, cannot be underestimated. These policies are gaining further momentum by Russia’s use of energy and other economic resources as political weapons against Ukraine. As evidenced in Georgia, Russia has demonstrated that it is willing to use every means at its disposal to establish and enforce its sphere of influence. No less alarming are Russia’s disinformation campaigns, such as questioning Ukraine’s very existence as a European nation and by portraying Ukraine and other post-Soviet independent countries as failed states. Such overt and covert methods threaten to return Europe to the destructive balance of power and confrontation politics of its past.

Yet, member states of the Euro-Atlantic community have been lax in addressing systematic and systemic human rights violations in Russia that have now become institutionalized. Compromises and accommodations made in the name of economic and geopolitical interests have resulted in an emboldened Russian policy toward Ukraine. And, an undeterred Russia is undermining the European economic system through corrupt methods and

practices, including covert inducements for EU members to stand-down on supporting Ukraine's European aspirations.

We, on the other hand, believe in a Euro-Atlantic policy that would promote peace in the region based on the fundamental principle of national sovereignty and self-determination, sustained by the central tenet of freedom of the individual and freedom of nations. Euro-Atlantic engagement with Ukraine is essential for the full realization of the Ukrainian nation's aspirations of freedom and independence in the aftermath of Czarist and Soviet ruthless colonial oppression that claimed tens of millions of lives, including 10 million in the Great Famine/Genocide of 1932-1933 alone, also known as the Holodomor, and the Great Terror that followed; massive exile and incarceration in the Soviet gulag; the continuous persecution of political, religious, and national advocates throughout the last centuries. Ukraine's full membership in Euro-Atlantic institutions is indispensable for safeguarding its independence and sovereignty that are, themselves, the only guarantors of its national survival.

To these ends, it is imperative for EU and NATO members, individually and collectively, to implement three mutually supporting policies: first – support the consolidation of Ukraine's independence, its sovereignty, territorial integrity and national security through integration into Euro-Atlantic structures; second - facilitate fundamental change in Ukrainian government policy towards one based on democratic governance, rule of law, and human rights; third – resist Russia's overt and covert policies and operations to re-impose its hegemony on Ukraine.

The initialing of the EU/Ukraine Association Agreement, including Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, and the agreement concerning the Annual National Program of Ukraine-NATO Cooperation for 2012, are important measures to maintain engagement and a path to integration.

Engagement with President Yanukovich and other key regime officials responsible for the current anti-democratic policies should be focused on affecting a fundamental change in direction, away from authoritarian rule. Boycotts and sanctions should be targeted at specific officials and not at the Ukrainian people.

The people of Ukraine should be supported in the promotion of human rights, in efforts to build a civil society and independent media organizations. Small and medium size businesses should be supported and encouraged. NGOs and independent civic groups also should be supported in their work to raise national consciousness, restore Ukraine's historical memory, and to promote democracy, European values and standards.

The EU, NATO, OSCE, the United States and Canada, should put forth maximum effort to assure that the Parliamentary elections in Ukraine on October 28, 2012, including the pre-election political campaign period, are conducted in a fair and transparent manner. Former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko and all other political prisoners, as well as civil society and human rights activists should be released from prison or detention and allowed to participate in the political campaign process and to run for office.

The Russian Federation, its current rulers and high ranking officials should be held to account, through targeted sanctions and boycotts, for violations of human and civil rights in Russia itself. It is imperative that Russia's incessant subversive operations in Ukraine and against Ukraine's integration into Euro Atlantic institutions cease. Business as usual should not be continued until and unless Moscow demonstrates – both in word and deed – its commitment to abide by international norms of conduct at home and abroad.

In closing, the Presidents of the North American member organizations of the International Conference in Support of Ukraine reaffirm:

We share with our Ukrainian brethren in our ancestral homeland an unshakeable faith in God and Ukraine, a conviction that has sustained the Ukrainian nation throughout its long and torturous march to independence. We believe that in the place of the current regime will come a government worthy of the Ukrainian people that will defend Ukraine's Constitution and democracy, civil society and the rule of law, territorial integrity, and

national independence. We further believe that in place of Russia's hegemonic threat will come membership for Ukraine in the European Union and in NATO, leading to a new era of strengthened security in the Euro-Atlantic area and a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace. Historical justice will not be denied to the people of Ukraine.

In this, we believe!

**Presidents of the North American member organizations
of the International Conference in Support of Ukraine**

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Note: The Conference “**Assessing Ukraine/NATO Relations on the Eve of the Chicago NATO Summit**”, May 19, 2012 at the St. Volodymyr and Olha Conference Center in Chicago, Illinois, was a forum convened under the auspices of the Ukrainian World Congress (UWC), International Conference in Support of Ukraine (ICSU), Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), and Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC). It was co-organized by the U.S. and Canada Divisions of the ICSU, in cooperation with the Center for US-Ukrainian Relations, and hosted by the Illinois Division of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America.

The Steering Committee expresses its deep appreciation to the distinguished speakers at the Conference “**Assessing Ukraine/NATO Relations on the Eve of the Chicago NATO Summit**” for their important observations, conclusions and proposals.

This Statement reflects the policies and views of the U.S. and Canada Divisions of the ICSU. It does not necessarily imply endorsement by the speakers or sponsors of the Conference “**Assessing Ukraine/NATO Relations on the Eve of the Chicago NATO Summit**”.

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