

Remarks of Ukrainian World Congress President
before the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security
on the report “Ukraine’s two wars: protecting independence and implementing real reforms”
on 28 May 2016 in Tirana, Albania

Honourable Chairman:

Distinguished Members of the Committee:

It is an honour for me, as President of the Ukrainian World Congress, to address this Committee.

The Ukrainian World Congress is an independent, international coordinating body for Ukrainian communities in the Diaspora representing the interests of over 20 million Ukrainians throughout a global network of member organizations and contacts in 49 countries, including in 26 of the 28 NATO member countries.

The Ukrainian World Congress fully supports the following key statement in the conclusion of Lord Jopling’s report, namely that:

The Euro-Atlantic community [...] should reaffirm its commitment to support Ukraine and to take additional meaningful steps to help it in its struggle for independence and territorial integrity.

I also wish to take this opportunity to emphasize a geopolitical reality that underpins this report and that underscores how imperative this statement of Lord Jopling ought to be for every NATO member country.

This reality is that the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine is part of a broader imperialistic agenda that threatens stability in the world and that an independent, territorially integral and reformed Ukraine is one of the best safeguards of peace and security in Europe and beyond.

The end game of the President of the Russian Federation is not Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Crimea, Luhansk nor Donetsk.

It is the reconstruction of the old Soviet Union, whose collapse he described as “*a major geopolitical disaster*” of the previous century.

For President Putin, it is essential that Ukraine be part of such union because he shares at least one point with the well-known adviser to U.S. Presidents, Zbigniew Brzezinski, namely that:

Without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be an empire, but with Ukraine suborned and then subordinated, Russia automatically becomes an empire.

That is why, as Lord Jopling pointed out in the introduction of his report, once “*the Euro-Maidan made it clear that the people of Ukraine are determined to make a radical break with the post-Soviet past*”, the Russian Federation considered this to be a threat to its “*national interests*” and proceeded to illegally occupy Crimea and launch a hybrid war in Eastern Ukraine.

On 3 May 2016, in Stuttgart, Germany, during the change of the U.S. European Command, U.S. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter gave the following disturbing description on how the Russian Federation is currently destabilizing the Western world with its expansionist mission:

Russia continues to violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, and actively seeks to intimidate its Baltic neighbors. At sea, in the air and space and cyberspace, Russian actors have engaged in challenging international norms. And most disturbing, Moscow's nuclear saber-rattling raises troubling questions about Russia's leader's commitments to strategic stability [...].

In view of this, the Ukrainian World Congress encourages this Committee, in considering Lord Jopling's report, to keep in mind that in defending its Eastern borders, Ukraine is actually defending the shared democratic values of the Euro-Atlantic community and stopping the expansionist ambitions of the Russian Federation from moving further West.

It is, therefore, unquestionably in NATO's best interests for Ukraine to succeed on that front.

The Ukrainian World Congress also urges this Committee to be keenly aware of the powerful Russian disinformation campaign that is designed to convince the world that Ukraine is a failed state in order to bring it into the fold of the Russian Federation without much objection from the Euro-Atlantic community.

Therefore, the Ukrainian World Congress recommends that NATO take the following “*additional meaningful steps*” to help Ukraine in its struggle to defend the common values of the Euro-Atlantic community, namely for NATO and its member countries to:

- 1) deliver a clear, strong and united message to the Russian Federation that the Euro-Atlantic community will never compromise or tolerate any violations of the independence and territorial integrity of any country, including Ukraine, and that there cannot be any “*business as usual*” relationship with the Russian Federation, including in NATO's Parliamentary Assembly, until the Russian Federation fully complies with its international obligations, including the *Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances* and the *Minsk Agreements*;
- 2) increase sectoral economic sanctions against the Russian Federation for its daily blatant violations of the *Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances* and the *Minsk Agreements* and its illegal occupation of Crimea;
- 3) strengthen NATO-Ukraine cooperation and initiate talks on Ukraine's membership in NATO; and
- 4) adopt a comprehensive assistance package in support of Ukraine's reforms and its defense against Russian aggression.

History has already shown how an appeasement policy toward an aggressor state defying international order led to the Second World War. In view of this, it is our collective duty to ensure that such a costly political mistake not be repeated and that the Russian Federation not be emboldened to openly challenge article 5 of the *North Atlantic Treaty*.

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly can make a very valuable contribution to that end by sending a clear message of its unwavering support for Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity and by encouraging all NATO member states to endorse such message with concrete actions.

Eugene Czolij
Ukrainian World Congress President