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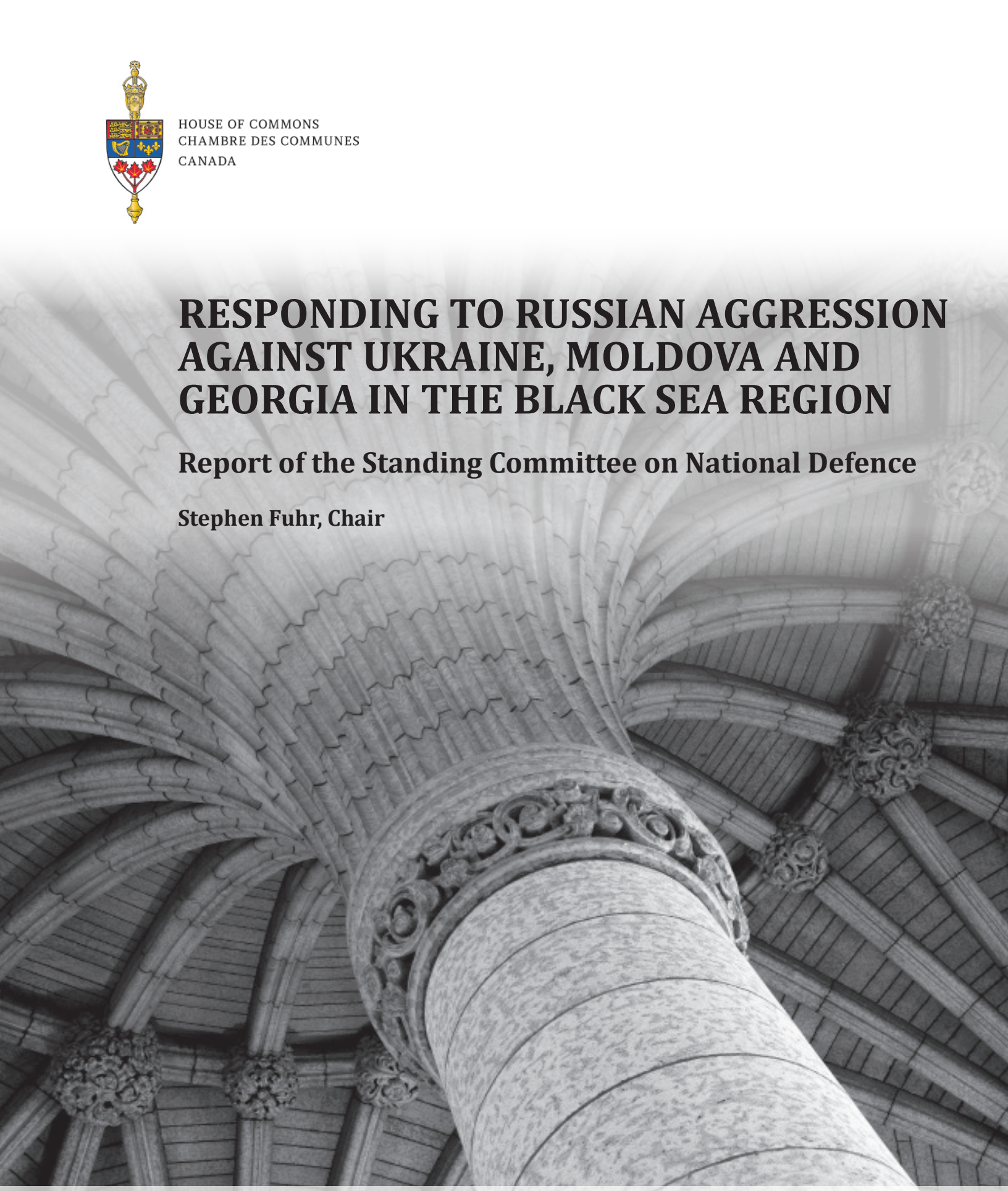
CANADA

RESPONDING TO RUSSIAN AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE, MOLDOVA AND GEORGIA IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

Report of the Standing Committee on National Defence

Stephen Fuhr, Chair



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NOTICE TO READER

Reports from committee presented to the House of Commons

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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has the honour to present its

FOURTEENTH REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the Committee has studied the Regional Geopolitical and Military Interests in the Context of Russian Hostility and Aggression and has agreed to report the following:

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LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.

Recommendation 1

That Canada facilitate and strengthen parliamentary dialogue between Canada and Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. 17

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada issue a notice of early renewal of Operation UNIFIER as a signal of continued support between Canada and Ukraine. 17

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada continue to provide effective and relevant military training to the Ukrainian Armed Forces and that it look for opportunities to expand the type of training and support provided by the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) through Operation UNIFIER beyond March 2019. 17

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada demand the immediate release of all illegally captured Ukrainian sailors, release the Ukrainian Navy ships, and restore free passage through the Kerch Strait. 17

Recommendation 5

That the Government of Canada demand the release of all Ukrainian, Moldovan and Georgian political prisoners held by Russia. 17

Recommendation 6

That the Government of Canada support Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia in their efforts to reduce corruption, and enhance accountability and transparency in government. 17

Recommendation 7

That the Government of Canada increase sanctions under the *Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law)* against those connected to the ongoing aggression against Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia, and that it specifically list the Russian agents involved in the attacks against Alexander Valterovich Litvinenko and Sergei Viktorovich Skripal. 18

Recommendation 8

That the Government of Canada consider sanctions against Russia in the financial and energy sectors in response to its escalation of hostilities against Ukraine. 18

Recommendation 9

That the Government of Canada negotiate defence cooperation agreements with Moldova and Georgia. 18

Recommendation 10

That the Government of Canada establish Canadian election observations missions in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. 18

Recommendation 11

That the Government of Canada advocate for an increased NATO presence to respond to Russian escalation in the Black Sea. 18

Recommendation 12

That the Government of Canada support the aspirations of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia to join the NATO alliance in due course. 18

Recommendation 13

That the Government of Canada commit to supporting Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia in their resistance to hybrid warfare attacks, specifically with regard to cyber attacks on government systems and critical infrastructure, and resistance to the dissemination of foreign propaganda and disinformation through the media. 18

RESPONDING TO RUSSIAN AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE, MOLDOVA AND GEORGIA IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

The conflict in Ukraine, and Canada's military relations with that country, are of continuing interest to the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence (the Committee). About a year ago, the Committee studied this subject and, in December 2017, released *Canada's Support to Ukraine in Crisis and Armed Conflict*. The report examined the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and the various ways in which Canada supports that country.[1] As well, in June 2018, the Committee released *An Interim Report on Russia's Interference in Moldova*, which examined the security situation in Moldova and issues relating to Russian aggression in the region.[2]

As a follow-up to those reports, on 12 June 2018, the Committee met with a delegation of Ukrainian parliamentarians in Ottawa. As well, a meeting with experts from the Atlantic Council was held on 6 November 2018, and with the Ambassadors of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine on 4 December 2018. During those meetings, the Committee received an update about the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and issues relating to Russian aggression against both that country and neighbouring states in the Black Sea region, such as Georgia and Moldova.

RUSSIAN AGGRESSION

The Committee was told that Russian aggression against Ukraine has escalated in recent months. Mr. Artur Gerasimov, Chair of the Verkhovna Rada's (Parliament of Ukraine's) Subcommittee on Military-Industrial and Military-Technical Cooperation, spoke about Russia's "huge militarization" of Russian-occupied Crimea, which includes not only an increase in the number of Russian forces serving in the region, but also the construction of additional fortifications, airfields and military installations, as well as the deployment of modern high-tech weapon systems capable of reaching southern Europe from

1 House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence [NDDN], *Canada's Support to Ukraine in Crisis and Armed Conflict*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, December 2017.

2 NDDN, *Interim Report on Russia's Interference in Moldova*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, June 2018.

Crimea.[3] According to him, the "full restoration of nuclear weapons facilities" on the Crimean Peninsula is of grave concern to Ukraine.[4] This nuclearization of Crimea includes the re-activation of land-based nuclear weapons facilities, such as the one at Balaklava, and the transfer of nuclear-armed warships and submarines to the naval base at Sevastopol. It also includes the deployment of nuclear-armed combat aircraft at several modernized and refurbished airfields in Crimea.[5]

Mr. Gerasimov also expressed concern about the ongoing conflict in the Donbas region (the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts) of eastern Ukraine and the recent deterioration in the situation on the ground. He noted that at least 70% of the 40,000 pro-Russian forces fighting in the Donbas region are "regular Russians and foreign terrorist fighters from the Russian Federation." He added that, "on the occupied territory, Russia now has around 500 tanks, around 800 artillery systems, [and] more than 200 multiple rocket launch systems," which exceeds the number of tanks, artillery systems and multiple rocket launchers than "France and Germany have together."[6]

Most of the weapons and supplies in the Donbas region are of Russian origin, and have been brought into Ukraine through the portions of the Ukraine–Russia border that currently are controlled by pro-Russian forces and are uncontrolled by Ukraine's government. The Committee was told that Russia regularly moves troops, equipment, ammunition and supplies across those parts of the border, often covertly under the guise of humanitarian convoys. These weapons and supplies are helping to strengthen pro-Russian forces in the region, and are being used against Ukraine's civilians and military personnel.[7]

In their discussions with the Committee, the Ukrainian parliamentarians repeatedly referred to the armed conflict in the Donbas region as an actual "war." Mr. Yurii

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3 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 June 2018 (Artur Gerasimov). According to Ukrainian government sources, the number of Russian troops stationed in Crimea had risen from 12,500 in 2014 to 31,500 by 2018. Russia also increased the quantity of military hardware it based in Crimea during that same period of time. Between 2014 and 2018, the number of Russian main battle tanks in Crimea rose from 0 to 40, armoured vehicles from 92 to 583, artillery systems from 24 to 162, combat aircraft from 22 to 122, attack helicopters from 37 to 62, ground-based mobile missile systems from 0 to 16, warships from 26 to 71, and submarines from 2 to 7. See: Andriy Shevchenko, Ambassador of Ukraine to Canada, "Canada, Ukraine and Russian Hostilities in the Black Sea Region," document distributed to NDDN on 4 December 2018.

4 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 June 2018 (Artur Gerasimov).

5 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 June 2018 (Artur Gerasimov and Yurii Levchenko). Also see: Andriy Shevchenko, Ambassador of Ukraine to Canada, "Canada, Ukraine and Russian Hostilities in the Black Sea Region," document distributed to NDDN on 4 December 2018.

6 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 June 2018 (Artur Gerasimov).

7 Ibid.

Levchenko, Chair of the Verkhovna Rada's Subcommittee on Assessment of Bills, emphasized that it is "not some sort of frozen conflict," but rather "a war." Fighting in the region is continuing, and the number of civilian and military casualties is rising. The Committee was informed that, every month, an average of more than 10 members of the Ukrainian Armed Forces are killed by pro-Russian forces in the region. Altogether, more than 3,000 Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel have been killed since the beginning of the conflict in 2014, and another 300 are missing in action.[8]

These statistics do not include civilian losses. According to the United Nations (UN), more than 3,000 civilians have been killed, and more than 9,000 have been injured, in eastern Ukraine since 2014.[9] In addition, many Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars are held under pro-Russian control in prisons in Russia, Crimea and the Donbas region. The Committee heard that the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international humanitarian organizations have been denied access to these prisons, which makes it difficult to verify the exact number of people detained by pro-Russian forces. Mr. Levchenko said that those who are returned under prisoner swaps are usually in "terrible condition," having been beaten and tortured. He noted that some have missing teeth, while others have broken bones, and many have suffered from sexual violence. In his view, "[i]t shows clearly … the way that the Russian troops and the Russian occupation administration treat our prisoners."[10]

Pro-Russian forces continue to perpetrate violence and acts of aggression on a regular basis, and the Committee was told that these forces repeatedly violate ceasefire arrangements. Mr. Levchenko pointed out that Ukraine has announced ceasefires on 13 occasions since the beginning of the war in 2014, and all of them have been broken. According to him, the latest ceasefire – which was announced in March 2018 – lasted for only 10 minutes.[11]

As well, Mr. Levchenko commented that pro-Russian forces "constantly shell critically important infrastructure" that "provides fresh water" and other "relevant services for the people," causing a great deal of hardship among the local civilian population.[12] He also noted that pro-Russian forces are using Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel and civilians as "target practice" for their troops. He said that "[i]t's not just unprovoked

8 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 June 2018 (Yurii Levchenko).

9 United Nations, "On World Humanitarian Day, United Nations Calls for the Protection of Civilians in Eastern Ukraine," 19 August 2018.

10 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 June 2018 (Yurii Levchenko).

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

shelling, but constant sniper fire on our positions, also unprovoked," and added that – over the last few months – Ukraine sustained "a marked escalation in sniper deaths."[13]

Land mines are also a problem. The Ukrainian parliamentarians informed the Committee that approximately 7,000 square kilometres of Ukraine have been mined, which is an area that continues to grow.[14] According to the UN, more than 1,600 civilians have been killed or injured by mines since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine in 2014.[15] Mr. Levchenko believed that Russia is mining large parts of Ukraine "to make it as hard as possible for this territory to go back under Ukrainian control."[16]

The ecological situation in the Ukrainian territories that are occupied by pro-Russian forces is another challenge. The main issue is the flooding of old coal mines, many of which were previously used as nuclear waste storage facilities. Mr. Levchenko explained that, "[w]hen we were in control of our territory, we spent quite a lot of money and resources to pump this water out of the coal mines," but pro-Russian "occupying forces have simply decided not to use any resources for this," and have instead chosen to ignore the problem. Approximately 30 coal mines, including the Yuncom coal mine that was used to store radioactive nuclear waste, are currently flooded. He characterized the situation as "a huge problem that can cause huge swaths of our territory in the Donbas region to become uninhabitable," and pointed out that large towns with hundreds of thousands of people are located near those mines and could be affected. In his view, this situation will only complicate "any return to normalcy" once Ukraine eventually retains control of its territory, and said that this problem could result in a major humanitarian crisis and environmental catastrophe in the coming years.[17]

According to Anders Aslund, Senior Fellow with the Atlantic Council's Eurasia Center, the Russian-occupied Donbas region has become a "real hellhole" as a result of the armed conflict. He explained that one half of the region's population of almost 5 million people has fled, and that all business activity is "standing still." In providing an example, Mr. Aslund noted that the Donetsk oblast has an "elementary food industry and shops," but "hardly anything more," and added that all of the banks have been robbed.[18]

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13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 United Nations, "2 Million Ukrainians Are Affected by Landmines in Ukraine's Eastern Conflict Regions," 4 April 2018.

16 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 June 2018 (Yurii Levchenko).

17 Ibid.

18 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 6 November 2018 (Anders Aslund).

ESCALATING RUSSIAN AGGRESSION

Ukraine is determined to counter Russian aggression and to continue to fight pro-Russian forces on its territory. As Mr. Gerasimov told the Committee, Ukraine is not just fighting to protect its territory and population against Russia, but also to protect the rest of Europe. He emphasized that "[Ukraine is] on the front line of the whole free world's battle" with "very bad guys."[19]

In echoing Mr. Gerasimov's view, John Herbst – Director with the Atlantic Council's Eurasia Center – informed the Committee that "Moscow's war on Ukraine is not simply a matter of vital concern to [Kyiv]; it is critical to the west, because Ukraine is the front line of our defence against Kremlin aggression."[20] Mr. Herbst emphasized that Russia is a revisionist power, and suggested that its objectives include weakening the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU).

In Mr. Herbst's view, the Russians have been relying on hybrid warfare tactics, which focus on "subterfuge, the use of disinformation, hard to trace cyber-operations, subversion, covert military operations, and when advantageous, conventional military strikes."[21] He indicated that Russia is not only using those methods against Ukraine since 2014, but also against other countries in the west. As cases in point, he noted the cyber-attack on Estonia in 2007, the war in Georgia in 2008, interference in American, French, German and other elections, as well as in the British vote on Brexit, in recent years, the chemical poisoning of Sergei Skripal in the United Kingdom in 2018, and ongoing provocations against the Baltic states.

Mr. Herbst also commented that Russian aggression is not limited to hybrid warfare tactics, highlighting that – over the last four years – Russia has violated the *Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty*, has strengthened its military capabilities along NATO's eastern flank, and has flown military aircraft dangerously close to NATO warships and aircraft in the Black Sea, the Baltic Sea and elsewhere.[22]

Mr. Herbst told the Committee that "[t]he greatest immediate danger to the west comes now from a revisionist Kremlin and that "we need to take the necessary measures to defend ourselves and protect our interests." In his view, this defence includes supporting Ukraine in its fight against Russian aggression. He said that, "[i]f Moscow loses in

19 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 June 2018 (Artur Gerasimov).

20 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 6 November 2018 (John Herbst).

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

[Donbas], its appetite for adventurism in the Baltics and elsewhere will disappear. Increasing our support for Ukraine, therefore, is a smart way to protect NATO allies and the post-Cold War security structure, which has provided security and prosperity over the past 25 years."[23]

At present, Ukraine is no longer just concerned about occupied Crimea and the eastern front lines of the Donbas region, but also about the growing possibility that Russia might conduct a military offensive through Ukraine's sea boundaries. Mr. Gerasimov noted that Ukraine has "sea boundaries all around Crimea, starting from the Donetsk region and finishing in the Odessa region near Transnistria," and added that Russia has been building up its naval capabilities in the Black Sea. Ukraine is concerned about a Russian naval attack, and about the possibility of attack from Russia in the north and from Transnistria in the west.[24]

The escalation of Russian naval activities in the Sea of Azov since April 2018 is of great concern to Ukraine. His Excellency Andriy Shevchenko, Ambassador of Ukraine to Canada, told the Committee that Russia has "dramatically escalated" tensions with Ukraine by launching – in spring 2018 – a blockade of the Sea of Azov. In particular, Russia has been intercepting and inspecting commercial ships in the Sea of Azov, and is now practically blocking the Kerch Strait, a narrow strait between Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and Russia that separates the Black Sea from the Sea of Azov. According to Mr. Shevchenko, Russia's goal is twofold: to cut off the Ukrainian ports of Berdyansk and Mariupol; and to prevent Ukraine from exporting steel, grain and other products through the Sea of Azov, thereby affecting Ukraine's economy.[25]

Mr. Herbst stated that more than 150 Ukrainian ships have been stopped by the Russians in the Sea of Azov, as well as "other ships … calling on the ports of Berdyansk and Mariupol." According to him, the Russian threat to Ukrainian shipping in the Sea of Azov "has been choking the Ukrainian economy in [the Donbas region]." He also mentioned that Russia has been conducting naval operations near Ukraine's Azov shore, "suggesting they might launch amphibious operations" at some point.[26]

According to Mr. Shevchenko, Russia has deployed major military forces to the Sea of Azov, allowing the country to control the sea and its airspace effectively.[27] Ukrainian

23 Ibid.

24 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 June 2018 (Artur Gerasimov).

25 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 4 December 2018 (H.E. Andriy Shevchenko).

26 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 6 November 2018 (John Herbst).

27 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 4 December 2018 (H.E. Andriy Shevchenko).

government sources note that Russia's strike capabilities in the Sea of Azov include about 30 warships, 150 combat aircraft and 62 attack helicopters, as well as ground-based missile systems and other military assets. Russia has also intensified its aerial reconnaissance activities over both the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. According to Mr. Shevchenko, there have been almost 100 Russian reconnaissance flights over those two seas between June and November 2018.[28]

The latest example of Russian aggression at sea occurred on 25 November 2018, when the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) opened fire on three Ukrainian Navy ships – the warships *Berdyansk* and *Nikopol* and the tug boat *Yana Kapu* – near the Kerch Strait in international waters, and then boarded and seized those vessels. Russian Air Force attack helicopters and fighter aircraft patrolled the skies to intimidate. Several Ukrainian sailors were wounded in the incident, which further raised tensions between Russia and Ukraine.[29]

Ukraine has strongly protested Russia's "armed attack and capture" of the Ukrainian Navy ships and their crew members, comprising 24 sailors. In an official statement, Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicated that "Russia has *de facto* expanded its military aggression against Ukraine to the sea," and urged Ukraine's allies and partners "to take all necessary measures to deter the aggressor by applying new and strengthening existing sanctions, as well as by providing Ukraine with military assistance to protect its territorial integrity and sovereignty within the internationally recognized borders."[30] Ukraine is making three specific demands: release the ships' crew members, who are currently being detained in Moscow; release the three Ukrainian Navy ships, which are currently being held in Kerch; and fully restore free passage though the Kerch Strait.[31]

SUPPORTING UKRAINE

Ukraine is looking to Canada, and to other allies and partner countries around the world, for support in its fight against Russia, especially in the form of lethal weapons. In highlighting that Ukraine is currently spending more than 5% of its gross domestic product on defence and security, and is "ready to buy" lethal weapons from its friends and allies

28 Andriy Shevchenko, Ambassador of Ukraine to Canada, "Canada, Ukraine and Russian Hostilities in the Black Sea Region," document distributed to NDDN on 4 December 2018.

29 See: "Russia Seizes, Fires Upon Ukrainian Ships Near Crimea," *CBC News*, 25 November 2018; and "Ukraine Demands Russia Release Seized Ships as Tensions Build," *CBC News*, 26 November 2018.

30 "Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine in Connection with Another Act of Aggression against Ukraine," distributed to NDDN by the Embassy of Ukraine to Canada on 29 November 2018.

31 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 4 December 2018 (H.E. Andriy Shevchenko).

around the world,[32] Mr. Gerasimov stated that "[i]t's very important for [Ukraine] to be able to get as many lethal weapons as possible from the West, and not just small arms … but also anti-tank weaponry" and other sophisticated weapon systems.

In acknowledging the positive value of international sanctions against Russia, Mr. Gerasimov commented that "sanctions aren't really a strategic deterrent." In his view, sanctions "have shown that they can stop Russia from going forward, but they can't stop Russia from shelling every day.… I don't think sanctions will really stop them. Serious weaponry will likely stop them, or at least will make them think about it."[33] He suggested that access to Canadian lethal weapons would be of great help to Ukraine, and – in expressing the hope that Ukraine's allies will support the country with weapons – reiterated that Ukraine is "ready to buy."[34]

According to Mr. Herbst, Ukraine needs "weapons that will raise the cost to Moscow of its ongoing aggression." The Javelin anti-tank missiles that the United States recently provided to Ukraine, for example, have made the hundreds of tanks deployed by pro-Russian forces in the Donbas region highly vulnerable. He explained that "[t]he Russian soldiers operating those tanks [have] become sitting ducks, and this is a vulnerability to the Kremlin."[35] Regarding the types of lethal weapons most needed by Ukraine to defend itself against Russian aggression, Mr. Herbst identified "weapons that would help deal with possible amphibious and air attacks." He emphasized the need for surface-to-ship missiles that would make Russian amphibious operations vulnerable, for surface-to-air missiles that would make Ukraine less exposed to the threat of Russian air power, and for counter-battery radar systems for missiles. In his view, most Ukrainian casualties have been the result of Russian missile fire, and counter-battery radar systems would make "the firing and targeting of the Russian missiles much less accurate."[36]

In addition to Ukraine's need for lethal weapons, the Committee was told about the need for western countries to maintain – if not strengthen – sanctions against Russia. While sanctions were never meant to result in an immediate Russian withdrawal from Crimea and the Donbas region, these measures have imposed a cost on Russia's economy. Mr. Herbst pointed out that sanctions cost Russia an estimated 1.0% to 1.25% of its gross national product in 2016.[37] Mr. Herbst suggested that sanctions are "weakening the economy" of

32 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 June 2018 (Artur Gerasimov).

33 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 June 2018 (Yurii Levchenko).

34 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 June 2018 (Artur Gerasimov).

35 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 6 November 2018 (John Herbst).

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

Russia, a country that has nuclear weapons and one of the world's largest and most powerful militaries, and are therefore weakening the country's "ability over the long term to wage war, and that is very much in [western countries'] interests."[38]

In Mr. Herbst's opinion, sanctions should be more robust. In his view, greater proactivity is needed so that the Russians know – in advance – that, "if they continue to do bad things," like seize additional territory in Ukraine or violate ceasefire agreements and cause Ukrainian casualties, "sanctions are going to get worse."[39]

Mr. Shevchenko also agreed that additional sanctions should be more punishing. He suggested that sectoral sanctions target specific sectors of Russia's economy, such as major banks. He also proposed sanctions aimed at Russian commercial activities in the Black Sea region. In his view, there should be specific sanctions against the corporate owners and oligarchs who own and control major Russian ports in the Black Sea region, such as the port of Novorossiysk or ports in Crimea. As well, in his opinion, European, North American and other international ports should be closed to Russian ships that operate from Crimean ports and/or that conduct illegal business in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.[40]

Mr. Aslund also suggested that future sanctions should also be directed at the approximately $800 billion that Russian individuals and companies have "hidden abroad." In his view, most of this money can probably be found in such countries as the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada.[41] Daniel Fried, Distinguished Fellow with the Atlantic Council, proposed the imposition of escalating sanctions against selected sectors of Russia's economy, such as finance, cyber and energy.[42]

Mr. Gerasimov thanked Canada for its continued solidarity with – and support for – Ukraine, particularly through Operation UNIFIER, which is the ongoing Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) military training and capacity-building mission in that country. In describing Canadian training as "very good," he said that Ukraine is "receiving great knowledge from Canadian officers and soldiers." He also noted that, at the same time, CAF personnel are learning a lot from their Ukrainian Armed Forces counterparts. The Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel have combat experience against Russian forces and their hybrid warfare methods, and have – over the years – amassed tremendous

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 4 December 2018 (H.E. Andriy Shevchenko).

41 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 6 November 2018 (Anders Aslund).

42 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 6 November 2018 (Daniel Fried).

experience in dealing with Russian cyber threats and disinformation campaigns. CAF personnel benefit from that experience through their contacts with the Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel in Operation UNIFIER.

Moreover, Mr. Gerasimov suggested that Canada should send not only troops to Ukraine to train the Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel, but also specialists who could collect and analyze data and information about Russian hybrid warfare methods that are used in Ukraine, which could then be shared with NATO allies and partner countries.[43] As of 1 December 2018, more than 10,300 Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel had been trained through Operation UNIFIER, and – since the beginning of the mission in 2015 – the CAF had offered 230 military training courses in Ukraine.[44]

In echoing Mr. Gerasimov's thanks to Canada for its continued support in Operation UNIFIER, Mr. Levchenko told the Committee that the training provided through Operation UNIFIER is important to Ukraine and should continue in the future. He emphasized that this training is imperative, not only to help the Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel defend their country against foreign aggression, but also to assist Ukraine in achieving its strategic goal of eventually joining NATO. According to him, if Ukraine wants to join NATO, the country needs "to continue this training to get closer to NATO standards."[45] Mr. Shevchenko encouraged Canada to renew Operation UNIFIER, which is currently scheduled to end in March 2019. In his view, renewal of the mission would send Ukraine a strong message of Canadian support.[46]

While Mr. Herbst agreed that "Canada has been a leader in training" and "should continue the training," he added that Ukraine could also benefit from "additional weapons" from Canada, as well as "support in the areas of intelligence sharing [and] communications equipment."[47] This point was reiterated by Mr. Shevchenko, who praised Canada's decision to include Ukraine on the Automatic Firearms Country Control List and highlighted the ways in which Canadian companies are benefitting from that decision. He also emphasized that a deal is about to be made for Canadian sniper rifles, but suggested that more could be done. In particular, he urged Canada to follow the United States' example, and consider supplying lethal weapons and military equipment to Ukraine.[48]

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43 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 June 2018 (Artur Gerasimov).

44 Department of National Defence [DND], "Operation UNIFIER."

45 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 June 2018 (Yurii Levchenko).

46 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 4 December 2018 (H.E. Andriy Shevchenko).

47 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 6 November 2018 (John Herbst).

48 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 4 December 2018 (H.E. Andriy Shevchenko).

A COMMON FRONT AGAINST RUSSIA IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

Russian aggression in Ukraine is of serious concern to neighbouring countries in the Black Sea region. Georgia and Moldova, in particular, face challenges that are similar to Ukraine regarding Russian interference and the territorial integrity of their territories. His Excellency Konstantin Kavtaradze, Ambassador of Georgia to Canada, reminded the Committee that the conflict in Ukraine is not an isolated case. In his opinion, it points to "a pattern of Russian behaviour" that has existed since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.[49]

Over the last 30 years, Russia has instigated a series of wars and conflicts in the Black Sea region in attempts to maintain regional spheres of influences, and to destabilize and deter countries like Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine from forging closer ties and integrating with the EU and NATO. For example, Russia has been arming and supporting pro-Russian rebel forces in the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia and Transnistria in Moldova since the early 1990s. As well, it has stationed Russian troops and military equipment on those separatist territories. Moreover, Russia fought a war against Georgia in 2008, occupied Abkhazia and South Ossetia in 2008, annexed Crimea in 2014, and has participated in conflict in eastern Ukraine since 2014.[50]

Today, pro-Russian forces control about 20% of Georgia's territory (Abkhazia and South Ossetia) and approximately 11% of Moldova's territory (Transnistria), as well as large portions of Ukraine's territory (Crimea and parts of the Donbas region).[51] Mr. Kavtaradze told the Committee that Russian troops continue to occupy the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and that there are reports of grave violations of human rights by the Russian occupation regime, including the kidnapping, torture and killing of civilians.[52] Likewise, there are approximately 1,700 Russian troops still stationed on the Moldovan territory of Transnistria, ostensibly to protect stockpiles of more than 20,000 tons of Russian arms and ammunition. Of serious concern to Moldova's government is Russia's continuous militarization of Transnistria, and its provision of modern weapons and military equipment to its pro-Russian forces.[53]

Mr. Kavtaradze explained that "[c]onflicts are instruments in the hands of Russia.... Russia tries to destabilize Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine" because these countries

49 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 4 December 2018 (H.E. Konstantine Kavtaradze).

50 Ibid.

51 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 4 December 2018 (H.E. Ala Beleavschi).

52 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 4 December 2018 (H.E. Konstantine Kavtaradze).

53 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 4 December 2018 (H.E. Ala Beleavschi).

adhere to the "values of democracy, rule of law, open societies, free trade" and, as such, constitute a direct challenge to the "Russian ideological narrative." He explained that these countries' success in building open and prosperous societies undermines Russian influences in other states of the region by "proving that there is a viable alternative."[54]

According to Her Excellency Ala Beleavschi, Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to Canada, it is in Russia's interest to keep countries in the region weak and under its control. She reminded the Committee that "[t]o interfere into the course of development of a state, no war is needed today. It is enough to have the ability to influence its politics by using various means of persuasion, misinformation and manipulation, cyber-attacks, by corrupting officials and using all sorts of sophisticated schemes of money-laundering, by imposing economic embargoes and meddling in the election processes."[55] She explained that Russia's hybrid methods are not just a serious threat to Ukraine, but also to Georgia, Moldova and other countries in the Black Sea region. As a case in point, she noted that more than 1,000 cyber-attacks take place daily in Moldova.[56]

The Russian threat prompted senior representatives of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine to form the Interparliamentary Assembly of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine in October 2018 in an effort to enhance cooperation among the three countries and to address common security concerns. According to Ms. Beleavschi, this new interparliamentary forum will help Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine to "speak with one voice" when dealing with security threats in the Black Sea region, and when promoting their common objectives of integration into EU and Euro-Atlantic structures.[57] Mr. Shevchenko stated that this new level of cooperation in the Black Sea region will enable Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine to do much more together, and added that this level of defence cooperation is needed to deter Russia from further aggression in the region. In his view, by standing together, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are contributing to each other's security and safety.[58]

In noting that Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are geopolitically and geographically proximate, Ms. Beleavschi encouraged Canada and other western countries to give serious consideration to a "common approach" in supporting these three countries. She

54 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 4 December 2018 (H.E. Konstantine Kavtaradze).

55 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 4 December 2018 (H.E. Ala Beleavschi).

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

58 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 4 December 2018 (H.E. Andriy Shevchenko).

explained that they "can't be treated separately from each other – only together."[59] In agreeing with Ms. Beleavshci, Mr. Kavtaradze told the Committee that:

> Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are interconnected and bound by shared history, mutual respect and common challenges. We are immediate neighbours of [the] EU and NATO. What happens in our countries directly affects the security environment, not just in Europe, but … in North America … too. That is why it is so important to provide help to Ukraine today…. By helping Ukraine, you're assisting Georgia and Moldova too. By supporting Georgia and Moldova, you are making Ukraine's case stronger.[60]

A similar view was expressed by Mr. Shevchenko, who said that Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine should be "a major priority for the free world and for NATO."[61]

The Committee was told that an important way of supporting Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine would be to deepen their integration into western structures, and to give serious consideration to having them join the EU and NATO.[62] Mr. Shevchenko, in particular, would like Canada to use its global influence to consolidate international support for the three countries, and – more specifically – to promote their aspirations of becoming NATO member states.[63]

Growing tensions with Russia in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov are also of serious concern to the three countries, which would like NATO to have a greater naval and aerial presence in the region to counter the Russian threat at sea. According to Mr. Shevchenko, the time has come to upgrade NATO's presence in the Black Sea. In his opinion, a greater NATO presence in the region would ensure that the Black Sea remains open to shipping and other commercial activities.[64]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Since 2014, Russia has prosecuted a brutal and complex armed conflict against Ukraine. As witnesses emphasized to the Committee, Ukraine is on the frontline of the fight against

59 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 4 December 2018 (H.E. Ala Beleavschi).

60 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 4 December 2018 (H.E. Konstantine Kavtaradze).

61 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 4 December 2018 (H.E. Andriy Shevchenko).

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

Russian aggression.[65] That said, that aggression is not limited to Ukraine. For more than a decade, Russia has been an aggressive and revisionist military power focused on changing the existing international order, and its actions and interference in the affairs of sovereign states is of grave concern to Canada and the international community.

For example, Russia's war in Georgia, as well as its illegal occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in 2008, its illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, its involvement in the conflict in eastern Ukraine since 2014 and its continued military activities along NATO's eastern flank have given rise to concerns about its intentions in Central and Eastern Europe, but also elsewhere around the world. As Mr. Shevchenko told the Committee, Russia is currently trying to create disorder and instability throughout much of the world, and certainly from Syria in the south to the Arctic Ocean in the north.[66]

Mr. Kavtaradze underscored that the Russian leadership considers the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union to be a humiliating defeat for Russia. In speaking to the Committee, he quoted Russian President Vladimir Putin, who characterized the collapse of the Soviet Union as the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century.[67] In that context, it perhaps is not surprising that Russia is attempting to re-establish spheres of influences in regions that once constituted part of the Soviet Union, such as Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and other countries in the Black Sea region.[68]

Canada has been contributing to NATO's assurance and deterrence measures in Central and Eastern Europe, and has been providing support to Ukraine since 2014 because Russian aggression is of concern to our country. While most of the Committee's witnesses applauded Canada for its actions against Russia and for its continued support to Ukraine, some held the view that more could be done. They encouraged Canada to renew, and perhaps enhance, military training of the Ukrainian Armed Forces through Operation UNIFIER, which is currently set to end in March 2019. Some witnesses also held the view that Canada should export lethal weapons and defensive military equipment to Ukraine, and should impose more sanctions against Russia.

The Committee also heard about progress being made regarding reforms in Ukraine, and the ways in which Canada could further assist Ukraine in that regard. In particular, witnesses urged Canada to give Ukrainians visa-free access to Canada, and encouraged

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65 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 12 June 2018 (Artur Gerasimov); NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 6 November 2018 (John Herbst).

66 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 4 December 2018 (H.E. Andriy Shevchenko).

67 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 4 December 2018 (H.E. Konstantine Kavtaradze).

68 NDDN, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 6 November 2018 (John Herbst).

the country both to have a more "common approach" to Russian aggression in the Black Sea region and to provide support to Georgia and Moldova as well as Ukraine because all three countries face similar challenges and threats.

In light of the foregoing, the Committee encourages the Government of Canada to reconsider the recommendations, which were originally proposed in December 2017 in *Canada's Support to Ukraine in Crisis and Armed Conflict*. In addition, the Committee would like to propose the following recommendations.

The Committee recommends:

Recommendation 1

That Canada facilitate and strengthen parliamentary dialogue between Canada and Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada issue a notice of early renewal of Operation UNIFIER as a signal of continued support between Canada and Ukraine.

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada continue to provide effective and relevant military training to the Ukrainian Armed Forces and that it look for opportunities to expand the type of training and support provided by the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) through Operation UNIFIER beyond March 2019.

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada demand the immediate release of all illegally captured Ukrainian sailors, release the Ukrainian Navy ships, and restore free passage through the Kerch Strait.

Recommendation 5

That the Government of Canada demand the release of all Ukrainian, Moldovan and Georgian political prisoners held by Russia.

Recommendation 6

That the Government of Canada support Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia in their efforts to reduce corruption, and enhance accountability and transparency in government.

Recommendation 7

That the Government of Canada increase sanctions under the *Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law)* against those connected to the ongoing aggression against Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia, and that it specifically list the Russian agents involved in the attacks against Alexander Valterovich Litvinenko and Sergei Viktorovich Skripal.

Recommendation 8

That the Government of Canada consider sanctions against Russia in the financial and energy sectors in response to its escalation of hostilities against Ukraine.

Recommendation 9

That the Government of Canada negotiate defence cooperation agreements with Moldova and Georgia.

Recommendation 10

That the Government of Canada establish Canadian election observations missions in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

Recommendation 11

That the Government of Canada advocate for an increased NATO presence to respond to Russian escalation in the Black Sea.

Recommendation 12

That the Government of Canada support the aspirations of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia to join the NATO alliance in due course.

Recommendation 13

That the Government of Canada commit to supporting Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia in their resistance to hybrid warfare attacks, specifically with regard to cyber attacks on government systems and critical infrastructure, and resistance to the dissemination of foreign propaganda and disinformation through the media.

APPENDIX A
LIST OF WITNESSES

The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the Committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the Committee's webpage for this study.

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Embassy of the Republic of Moldova	2018/06/14	103
Ala Beleavschi, Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to Canada		
Embassy of Georgia	2018/12/04	121
Konstantine Kavtaradze, Ambassador of the Republic of Georgia to Canada		
Embassy of the Republic of Moldova	2018/12/04	121
Ala Beleavschi, Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to Canada		
Embassy of Ukraine	2018/12/04	121
Andriy Shevchenko, Ambassador of Ukraine to Canada		

APPENDIX B
LIST OF WITNESSES

The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the Committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the Committee's webpage for the study of Canada and the Ukraine Crisis.

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Embassy of Ukraine	2018/06/12	102
Viktor Siromakha, Defence, Naval and Air Attaché		
Parliament of Ukraine (Verkhovna Rada)	2018/06/12	102
Artur Gerasimov, Chair of the Subcommittee on Military-Industrial and Military-Technical Cooperation		
Yurii Levchenko, Chair of the Subcommittee on Assessment of Bills		
Atlantic Council	2018/11/06	115
Anders Aslund, Senior Fellow Eurasia Center		
Daniel Fried, Distinguished Fellow		
John Herbst, Director Eurasia Center		
Adrian Karatnycky, Senior Fellow		

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* (Meetings Nos. 102 and 115) in relation to the study on Canada and the Ukraine Crisis and (Meetings Nos. 103, 104, 121 and 123) in relation to the study on Regional Geopolitical and Military Interests in the Context of Russian Hostility and Aggression is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Fuhr
Chair