



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

## **Standing Committee on National Defence**

---

NDDN • NUMBER 063 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

---

**EVIDENCE**

**Monday, October 23, 2017**

—  
**Chair**

**Mr. Stephen Fuhr**



## Standing Committee on National Defence

Monday, October 23, 2017

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.)):** Welcome, everybody, to the defence committee this afternoon for our continuing discussion on the crisis in Ukraine.

I'd like to welcome our two witnesses today: Paul Grod, Ukrainian Canadian Congress national president, and Chris Westdal, former Canadian ambassador to Ukraine and Russia.

Thank you, gentlemen, for appearing today.

Mr. Grod, if you're prepared and ready, I'll give you the floor for your initial comments.

**Mr. Paul Grod (National President, Ukrainian Canadian Congress):** Thank you.

Mr. Chair, it's an honour for me as the national president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress to appear today before the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence. I thank the committee for allowing me the opportunity to offer testimony today on this topic, which is very important to our community.

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress brings under one umbrella all the national, provincial, and local Ukrainian Canadian community organizations with seven provincial councils: the Atlantic region, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and B.C. There are more than 20 local branches across the country and 29 national member organizations, which bring together several hundred community organizations from coast to coast.

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress has been leading, coordinating, and representing the interests of one of Canada's largest ethnocultural communities, numbering approximately 1.3 million people, for over 75 years.

The UCC is a member and works closely with the Ukrainian World Congress as well as ethnocultural communities across Canada. Through the Canada-Ukraine Stakeholder Advisory Council, the UCC provides consultations to the Government of Canada regarding Canada-Ukraine relations. Representatives of the UCC regularly meet with Canadian government officials, politicians, stakeholders, and policy-makers.

As this committee undertakes an extremely important study on Ukraine, the security and territorial integrity of Ukraine have a direct effect on Canada's and our allies' security and on the international rules-based order. In the last decade, Russia has sought through force

to return Russian hegemony to states formerly part of the Soviet Union. This culminated in Russia's annexation of Crimea in February 2014 and shortly thereafter of the eastern Ukraine oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk. Today, Crimea is under Russian occupation, and the occupying authorities have instituted there a regime of terror against the Crimean Tatar people, ethnic Ukrainians, and anyone who opposes Russia's occupation of Crimea.

Now in its fourth year, Russia's war in Ukraine's east has cost Ukraine more than 10,000 lives; 23,000 people have been wounded or injured; 1.5 million have been internally displaced. Attacks by Russia and its proxy forces on Ukrainian positions are a daily occurrence.

This is not a frozen conflict; it is very much a hot war. Furthermore, it is critical to understand that it is not a civil war. There was never a separatist movement in modern-day Ukraine until one was engineered, financed, and executed by Vladimir Putin and his lieutenants.

In a very short time, Ukraine has reformed its military and security force from one virtually non-existent to an effective fighting force. In fact, the Russian and proxy forces present in the occupied parts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts are larger than most militaries of European states. The Ukrainian military has successfully stopped their advance, but at a very high cost. In order to bring peace to Ukraine, a greater and more strategic effort from Canada and western allies is needed. Canada needs to focus on two broad objectives: number one, strengthening Ukraine's ability to defend itself; and number two, deterring and opposing further Russian aggression.

Since 2015, Ukraine has been making a request to the United Nations to deploy a peacekeeping mission to the occupied territories in the Donbass region. This request was reiterated recently by President Poroshenko when he met President Trump in Washington and Prime Minister Trudeau in Toronto.

For such a mission to be effective and meaningful, it must be deployed to the entire territory of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. It must involve the withdrawal of all Russian troops and mercenaries and their tanks and other high-tech weaponry from Ukrainian territory. This UN peacekeeping force must be deployed to the Russia-Ukraine border in order to preclude the continuing infiltration of Russian military, weapons, and equipment into Ukrainian territory.

It goes without saying that Russia as an aggressor state cannot have its personnel on this mission. In order to increase the pressure on Russia to accept an effective and robust UN peacekeeping mission, Canada and NATO should do the following: first, provide Ukraine with defensive military equipment, particularly anti-tank and anti-artillery and radar systems, in order to increase the cost to Russia of any further aggression; and second, continue to ratchet up sanctions on Russia until they agree to such a peacekeeping plan, particularly economic sectoral sanctions and individual sanctions against Russian officials responsible for Russia's aggression and for violations of internationally recognized human rights.

Canada is uniquely placed to be a geopolitical leader for such an approach and also to lead an eventual UN peacekeeping mission. We have a long and proud history of participation in peacekeeping operations and have the international credibility to rally support for such a plan.

• (1535)

On November 14 and 15 of this year, Canada will host the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial. Over 70 countries will be participating, and this will be an excellent venue for Canada to announce its intent to take on the lead of a UN mission that will finally bring peace to eastern Ukraine.

Canada has just adopted the Magnitsky Act for which the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and the Ukrainian community have long advocated. This act provides the government with important tools to sanction international human rights abusers. Canada should move swiftly to implement sanctions against Russian officials and individuals responsible for aggression against Ukraine and for the violation of human rights of Ukrainian citizens. There are over 40 Ukrainian citizens currently illegally imprisoned by Russia.

Canada's military training mission in Ukraine, operation Unifier, together with missions of allied countries, have made a huge difference in increasing the capacity of Ukraine's military, for which we are very grateful. These efforts need to continue and be expanded.

I was very proud to be a Canadian while in Ukraine this past August 24 to watch the Independence Day parade from the steps of Independence Square in Kiev as Canada's armed forces marched alongside Ukrainian armed forces and the armed forces of eight other NATO countries. This, dear parliamentarians, sent a very strong message to the Kremlin that Canada and NATO stand shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine.

Canada's involvement on the Defence Reform Advisory Board of Ukraine is having real results in reforming Ukraine's ministry of defence and armed forces as Ukraine implements its goal of NATO interoperability by 2020. On behalf of our community, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Canada's representative to the Defence Reform Advisory Board, Jill Sinclair, for the excellent work on this file.

Several weeks ago during the Invictus Games in Toronto, I had the opportunity to speak with both Prime Minister Trudeau and Ukraine's President Poroshenko about Ukraine's request that Canada take a leadership role in spearheading a UN peacekeeping mission to Ukraine, much like Canada's Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson led

the United Nations emergency force to resolve the Suez Canal crisis for which, by the way, he was awarded a Nobel Peace prize.

Canada today has an opportunity to lead the international community in bringing peace to Ukraine and stopping the daily bloodshed. By spearheading a UN peacekeeping mission to Ukraine, Canada has the opportunity to take its rightful place and make a significant difference in returning the world to a rules-based international order.

For over three years, Russia has waged war on Ukraine and occupied sovereign Ukrainian territory. The Ukrainian people have made a historical choice to join the Euro-Atlantic community of nations while defending themselves from foreign aggression. The Ukrainian people and government have made enormous strides in reforming their country.

Canada, one of Ukraine's closest friends, has an opportunity to be a geopolitical leader and rally international support for peace. It will not be easy, but we should seize this opportunity to bring peace to eastern Europe and restore a rules-based international order.

Thank you for allowing me to appear before this committee. I will gladly answer any questions you have.

**The Chair:** Thank you for your testimony.

I'll turn the floor over to Mr. Westdal.

**Mr. Chris Westdal (Former Canadian Ambassador to Ukraine and Russia, As an Individual):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's truly an honour for me to be here.

I will talk about the global setting, the crisis in Ukraine and its origins, about the existential imperative that we in the west keep more peace with Russia, how Canada might help do so, and about what I think you should recommend.

Our world is in turmoil. Global power is shifting. The west is in palpable relative decline. The Americans are stumbling. The Europeans are in crisis. China has risen and is rising further. Russia is back on its feet. The Middle East is in flames. Jihadism is raging. Persian power is spreading. In Asia a fanatic is rattling nuclear weapons. It is a multipolar world now, and some of the poles are sharply at odds.

Crises come at us thick and fast. Everyone's list is different, but they all include Ukraine. The crisis there has lit the fuse of this new cold war we're waging, more dangerous than the last one, and the stakes in the subject you're discussing are sky high. They are existential.

When media remember Ukraine these days, there is constant talk of who's to blame. In our popular narrative, it's clearly Russia's fault. In Russia's, it's clearly ours. I think there is plenty of blame to go around. Russia is blamed for aggression in Georgia, in Ukraine, in the Baltics, and in Syria. Its President is a demon, a killer, a spoiler, a thief, a war criminal, a fixer of U.S. elections. Choose your epithet, they're all in regular use. Putin is out to restore the Soviet Union, to conquer the Balts again, to make life miserable for Ukraine, and generally to thwart the west at every turn.

That narrative is faulty. I don't think Putin is a demon. In fact, these days he strikes me as one of the more rational adults in the room, and though, as has been said, nothing is more offensive than Russia on the defensive, I don't think Moscow is an aggressive marauder. I don't think it wants war and a broken Ukraine on its western flank. I do think it won't abide a security threat there though, and that it will pay and impose very high costs, as it's doing, to avoid one.

More generally, Russia demands more respect than it's been getting, that Putin is prepared to be our partner, in his words, but never our puppet, and that he's damned if the United States is going to go on running as much of the world as it has been doing, and running it badly. Just think of the U.S. foreign policy fiascos Putin has seen in his 17 years in power, above all in the Middle East, and imagine how the charge that he's the one who's aggressive strikes him. All things are relative. There is no meaning without context.

Let me spend more time though on some of the blame for this mess we're in, which we don't hear so much about. We wrote off Russia when the Soviet Union collapsed. We decided we could ignore its interests. For a decade Boris Yeltsin played along. Vladimir Putin won't. For one thing, he will contain NATO. He made that clear in Georgia in 2008 and he's making it clear now in Ukraine. NATO, Russians know, is not a knitting club. It is a congenitally Russophobic nuclear armed military alliance, the mightiest in the history of the world, and it's been growing by leaps and bounds. Driving NATO up Russia's nose was a colossal counterproductively provocative mistake. That deed has been done though, and we have to live with it. Expanding NATO further, however, to include Georgia and Ukraine as Canada has advocated, would invite catastrophe.

When historians assess the origins of this new cold war, I expect NATO expansion will be high on the list. Independent Ukraine's political, economic, and foreign policy performance hasn't helped much either.

Politically, Kiev lost a fateful measure of the loyalty of its large ethnic Russian minority. One in five Ukrainians had independence, about the same proportion as francophones in Canada. Kiev also failed to wrest political control from oligarchs who run the country.

• (1540)

Economically, though, it is rich in natural resources and in human capital, with no shortage whatever of brains, and though it has received billions in aid through a quarter century now, Ukraine has fallen behind its neighbours, east and west, condemning millions of its people to poverty.

In foreign policy, with Ukraine the rope in a tug-of-war, Kiev's mistakes have been devastating. It failed to keep the peace with its giant neighbour. Three years ago, with hard-line nationalists in charge who trashed an EU-brokered agreement we'd all welcomed officially, the Maidan picked a fight Kiev can't win with the Kremlin.

Kiev can't make the west care more, and it can't make the Kremlin care less. Like them or not, theory aside, major powers' spheres of influence are real. We Canadians know that. We live in one. In the real world, Kiev has about as much freedom to undermine Moscow's security as Ottawa has to undermine Washington's, and, of course, its

effective practical sovereignty is compromised. So is the effective practical sovereignty of most of the nations on earth. Welcome to the club.

Kiev was mistaken too in taking European promises of integration, of EU membership even, far too seriously. The prospect of EU membership was always a dream. Now with the EU beset, it's pure fantasy.

Kiev erred as well in letting westerners mind so much of its own business. We've seen the Americans choose a prime minister. We've seen an American proxy finance minister. We've seen foreigners as ministers of reform and anti-corruption, and we've seen, and we're now seeing, the spectacle of Mikheil Saakashvili, fresh from picking his own fight with Russia and losing a good chunk of his country, show up in Ukraine as a regional governor, then as an exile, and now on the streets as a would-be president.

It's an old story. For a thousand years someone else has always been in charge. The buck has seldom stopped in Kiev. It should stop there now. It is clear foreigners don't know how to solve Ukraine's problems. In their independent country, Ukrainians are going to have to solve more of them, or not, themselves.

They would be having an easier time of it had they inherited a smaller, more ethnically homogeneous state, but they didn't, and they've not done well keeping the place together. There is admirable popular democratic will, but the country's political institutions confound it time and again. There have been mass movements and uprisings. There are angry protesters encamped again on the Maidan as we speak. There have been democratic elections, massively monitored, declared free and fair, but they have yet to produce any semblance of peace, order, and good government. As its evangelists should humbly take note, democracy is not an import.

Through the quarter century of Ukraine's independence, Canada has been determined to play a prominent role, driven above all by passionate diaspora sentiment. Quite out of character and far from keeping with our modest military means, we became the west's leading hawk. This aggressive posture with its highly vocal hostility to Russia is sustained to this day.

What I find striking in this record is that we've stood our values on their heads in Ukraine. We go out of our way, for example, to get along with our giant neighbour. For Ukrainians though, who also live beside a giant, we counsel confrontation. The Russian bear should be poked in the nose at every opportunity.

Consider as well that while at home we practise pluralism, inclusive accommodation, federalism, bilingualism, and significant regional autonomy, we pander in Ukraine to lethally exclusive nationalism. Yulia Tymoshenko, recall, was recorded advocating that the solution to Russian ethnicity in Ukraine was a nuclear bomb.

• (1545)

The latest example that is bound to exacerbate inter-ethnic animosity is the new education policy banning Russian language instruction after grade 4. Ethnic Russian Ukrainians, however patriotic, and Russians cannot help but take offence. Wouldn't you?

No country in the world has a more profound interest in good bilateral and western relations with Russia than does Ukraine, yet no country in the world has done less than its best, loudest friend Canada to encourage essential reconciliation.

Consider our Magnitsky sanctions. All of you voted for them. Can any of you tell me, please, what shred of due process they entail? How are those lists of the condemned determined? Who decides how long the list is? Who's guilty? Who's not? Is this done by foreign policy advisers? Is it done by journalists? Is it done by well-paid lobbyists? Who knows?

At a time of new, tense, cold war and global upheaval, and particularly in the glaring ahistorical absence of any Canadian effort whatsoever to ease tension and reduce risk, Canada's grandstanding contribution of a late, ill-timed, imitative, redundantly duplicative, and entirely due process-free set of new Russia sanctions makes no sense whatsoever. Is this all we have to offer? Is this our best shot? To everything there is a season, including moral outrage.

However we got here, though, and whoever is to blame, we are where we are, on the verge of greater disaster, and given the stakes, we really do have to keep more peace with Russia.

To respond to this imperative, my view is that we need to four-square further NATO growth and make room and arrangements for Ukraine to trade well with both Europe and Russia, while posing a security threat to neither. Also, we need to allow for Ukraine to have the space, peace and quiet it so desperately needs to reunite, to recover, to reform, and to succeed.

Far from sacrificing Ukraine as critics will claim, neutrality and détente would provide for its salvation.

Chair, I have another two pages. It will take me another two or three minutes. I'll stop now if you want or I'll continue.

• (1550)

**The Chair:** Okay. We are over the time, so to give our members time to ask questions, I appreciate your stopping and we'll go straight to questions. Thank you for your testimony.

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** Well, I have—

**The Chair:** We'll have some time to circle back to make sure that everyone has a—

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** I didn't get the chance to give you my recommendations.

**The Chair:** I'm sure that may come in the line of questioning.

For everybody at the table, and I guess the new people, this signal typically means it's time to sum up. Whether you're posing a question or giving an answer, we need to make sure everyone gets the right amount of time. It makes my job a whole lot easier, so if you see this, please, you have 30 seconds to wrap it up.

Having said that, I will go to the first person on the official questions for seven minutes. Mr. Fisher, you have the floor.

**Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much, gentlemen, for your testimony and for being here today.

Mr. Grod, we've heard that Russia is using media to spread propaganda through Ukraine. An article in *The Economist*, referring to the Donbass region, said, "absurdly despite the daily shelling, most of the locals blame Ukraine rather than Russia for their misery."

When we were in Europe, we heard and we witnessed great support for the EU, at least in Kiev and at least where we were. To what extent do the residents of Donbass region support the pro-Russian units?

If I hear numbers like 65% to 70% of Ukrainians support moving more towards Europe rather than towards Russia, yet we hear that in that region...could you maybe articulate more exactly where the support levels are? Is Donbass totally...?

We may never get to a true peaceful negotiation if we have these sectors that feel they are more aligned with Russia than Ukraine.

**Mr. Paul Grod:** This is a very important question, because the whole question about the information war is very acute. We have not only active military aggression happening in Ukraine but also economic aggression happening against Ukraine by the Russian Federation. Perhaps even more dramatic and more worrying is the information war that's being waged by the Russian Federation both in Ukraine and frankly across the world. There have been many studies, including in the U.S., around the extent of this information war. That whole region along the borderline or the contact zone is under heavy influence of the Russian propaganda war. It is troubling and it is problematic.

The disinformation war is really focused on Ukraine being a failed state. My co-presenter here, my colleague, painted Ukraine as a failed state and, therefore, we should just give up on them and let them try to figure their own way out. But the reality is that eastern Ukraine and the areas around the conflict zone are, in fact, turning and seeing that... When the war first broke out, the extent of support for Kiev was significantly lower than it is today.

I've had the privilege or the opportunity to visit the front lines, where I met brave primarily men who were largely from the east. When I was speaking with them, they would show me that their families were either on the front line or behind the occupied territories, and they are there defending their families. These are Russian-speaking, some ethnically Russian. With this whole discussion around ethnic Russian versus Russian-speaking,...at the end of the day, what Vladimir Putin has done for Ukraine is to make it a strong, unified country.

There will be challenges with reintegrating the occupied territories, absolutely. That's why it would be premature to force Ukraine to have immediate elections in that region. First of all, you have between 1.5 million and two million people who have been displaced, and it takes some time to reintegrate. That's why it's important for there to be a UN peacekeeping mission to move all the Russian troops and artillery and hundreds of tanks out of that region, and to allow time for people to resettle, to create peace and stability, and then to hold democratic elections in that region.

•(1555)

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** Is the Ukrainian government taking any steps, or do they have any chance of rebuilding any type of trust? Is there anything that they're doing, specifically speaking to the Donbass region, to re-engage those folks and kind of bring them back towards Ukraine, or are they seeing it as a lost cause in that particular region?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** Well, they have no way of accessing that region, because those are occupied territories. There are arguably 40,000 troops there in the occupied territories, controlling those territories. There is no access, whether by Ukrainian NGOs or Ukrainian government officials, to actually provide any support to the people in those regions.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** But they would have access to media or access to Internet to know that the Ukrainian government is working towards change.

**Mr. Paul Grod:** Access to Internet, yes; access to media, no. Access to Ukrainian media is almost non-existent in the occupied territories, and hence, the disinformation campaign is very intense in that region.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** There is still some trade going on. Russia was the largest trading partner of Ukraine. It's certainly dribs and drabs now, but it's still happening. How do we get to taking Russia out of the mix and their peacekeeping proposals, and taking Ukraine out with their peacekeeping? How do we get there? How do we get an actual—whatever you want to call it—Minsk III? How do you get to an actual, peaceful resolution here? In your opinion, does that happen?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** It's simple but very difficult. The simple way is to force Russia's hand to remove their military, their equipment, and their financing of the—quote, unquote—“separatists”, because at the end of the day, as I mentioned at the very beginning, there was never a separatist movement. This was completely engineered, financed, operated, and organized by the Russian Federation, by Vladimir Putin and his lieutenants. The reality is that the people who have led those movements are Russian citizens, Russian military and intelligence officers. Once those people are removed, then you can bring peace and stability to that region.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** You make it sound simple. I don't know if I have—

**The Chair:** You have 45 seconds for a question and an answer.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** Do you have a quick question that you want to go with?

**Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.):** I would like to understand, from your perspective, what it's going to take to break through the situation we're in right now. It's almost a stalemate. You've advocated for more sanctions and more defensive military weapons, yet at the same time you want us to look at UN peacekeeping. Are those two congruent or counterproductive?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** No, they're very congruent, in order to force Russia's hand to accept a peacekeeping mission to Ukraine, to accept a peacekeeping mission that doesn't freeze the conflict. Vladimir Putin several weeks ago proposed a peacekeeping mission to Ukraine on the contact line, on the conflict zone, which would essentially freeze the conflict and do nothing, when all we're asking for is implementation of the Minsk agreements. The Minsk agreements require them to stop and remove their forces and allow Ukraine to take control of its border between Russia and Ukraine.

**The Chair:** Mr. Hoback.

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

I thank both witnesses for being here this afternoon as we go through this study about Ukraine.

Mr. Westdal, I'm looking for a bit of background on you. I see you were an ambassador. You served in Ukraine and you served in Russia, along with other areas of the world.

By the way, sir, thank you for your service. We appreciate that for sure.

Your current resumé says you're a member of the Canada Eurasia Russia Business Association. What is that association, and how is it funded?

•(1600)

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** Canada Eurasia Russia Business Association, or CERBA, is a business promotion association funded by its members. I'm a member of the national board and the Ottawa board. It promotes trade and investment between Canada and Russia, between Canada and Ukraine, between Canada and Kazakhstan, between Canada and Armenia, and between Canada and Eurasia, hence the name.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** I'm just curious. You're the chairman of Silver Bear Resources. What is Silver Bear Resources? Where is the majority of your mining or exploration taking place?

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** Silver Bear Resources is a public company listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange that is building a silver mine in Yakutia in Russian Siberia.

I've been on the board of Silver Bear for eight years, since a year after I retired, and I now chair the board of Silver Bear.

As well, I have been on the board of a company called Black Iron. I'm no longer on that board, but it was a company that was trying to build an iron ore mine in Ukraine.

I've sustained those board memberships and one or two others, and I've remained active in CERBA.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Okay, thank you.

You heard there were 13 Canadians sanctioned, basically banned by Putin from going to Russia. Were you outraged at that point in time when that came about?

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** I think that was a tit-for-tat sanction. I wasn't particularly outraged any more than being skeptical about the impact of these sanctions. The impact of sanctions on Russia—

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** You criticize us for the Magnitsky Act, which you say has no legitimacy and has no due process. Mr. Bezan had no due process when his name was put on that list, yet it was on that list.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** And Paul too.

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** That's what I'm objecting to in these sanctions. They haven't changed our policy and they haven't changed Russia's policy. There are countless sanctions now against Russia. They've been going on from the United States for decades.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Yes, but I think it comes back—

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** I don't think sanctions are effective policy. If you look at what our sanctions against Russia were supposed to achieve, if we just stop and remember that, first of all—

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Just a second, Mr. Westdal. I have only seven minutes, and I'd like to get on with all my questions, if you don't mind.

I asked you about the 13 Canadians. You made your comments, and I said that's why you've seen the Magnitsky Act come forward, because we feel that it's important that you hit the oligarchs in Russia that feel the pain, that just can't go on and plunder the resources in Russia and then travel about the world as freely as who cares. I think that applies here and has a tremendous political impact on Putin and what he does and how he does things.

Now I'm going to move to Mr. Grod.

You talked about the stage being set. There was no civil war. The stage was set. This was hybrid war. What were some of the things that Russia did that made you believe it was Russia that created the stage for hybrid war?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** First of all, the whole Maidan revolution was, to Mr. Westdal's point, poking the Russian bear, so to speak. The Ukrainian people won't live in a world where they are part of somebody else's sphere of influence. The Ukrainian people are very independent-minded and have fought for independence against Russia for over 300 years.

When you look at Ukraine today, it is one of the only beacons in the former Soviet Union of democracy and rule of law. Yes, it has had its challenges, absolutely, and that's what a fledgling economy or democracy is going through.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** All right, but back to my question, how did they set the stage? What did they do that upset people in Ukraine, or are these foreigners coming in and undermining the people who were there? Give me some appreciation of what happened to make this boil.

**Mr. Paul Grod:** Do you mean leading up to the Maidan or the Revolution of Dignity?

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Go right from the start.

You've said that they set the stage for a civil war, but there wasn't a civil war. What did you mean by that?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** When the president of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, fled the country after the killing of 100 peaceful protesters on the Maidan in Kiev, Ukraine, he realized he had overstepped the bounds, and he had nowhere else to go but to flee to Russia.

At that point, Russia implemented their plan because they knew a new western-focused power would take over in Ukraine. They realized they couldn't control the political movements and the leadership any longer, and that's why they decided to destabilize the country.

At that point, when Ukraine was at its weakest—they didn't have a president, but had an acting president; they had no military—it essentially allowed the Russian-led operatives, because these were all—and this is public information, who these people were. They were Russian citizens, former Russian intelligence and army officers—they were the ones who led these so-called Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic. They led those aggressive, forceful, military takeovers of those parliaments.

• (1605)

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** It had to be coordinated by somebody to make this happen. They didn't just have one here and one there.

**Mr. Paul Grod:** When you look at how these bands of supposed separatists were able to take over a Buk missile system, were able to get their hands on the most sophisticated Russian military equipment to shoot down flight MH17 because they had mistaken it for a Ukrainian military plane, and you have hundreds of high-tech tanks in Ukraine, it's very clear that this is financed and organized by the Russian Federation.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Can you take us through the whole process? You have Ukraine moving forward. You talked about having a strong resistance to defend yourself. You talked about peacekeepers.

What can we do? I know we had RADARSAT, for example. Do you think that should be re-established? Are there any other things we should do? Is there anything on the cyber side of things we should be doing? I'm just looking for ideas, not just the conventional guns and armaments, but other things.

**Mr. Paul Grod:** I see my time is up, but essentially I think Canada's moving in the right direction.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Just ignore him.

**Mr. Paul Grod:** I'd like to get invited back one day so I'll...

**The Chair:** There might be more time. I have a sneaking suspicion we'll be able to go to other questions and we might be able to circle back on that one.

In the meantime, I'm going to give the floor to Mr. Garrison.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP):** Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to both our witnesses for being here today.



I'm one of those who believes that if we're going to contribute to Ukraine's security, then we need to strengthen Canada's relationship based on shared values.

Mr. Grod, what kind of work, if any, has the Ukrainian Canadian Congress been doing to help strengthen civil society in Ukraine?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** We have been working together with our member organizations on various levels.

Number one is to strengthen the whole infrastructure, because things like health care reform and support for humanitarian initiatives have been a key priority for us to help the Ukrainian people get through this time of crisis. Number one has been humanitarian.

Number two, we're working with many reform-focused NGOs in Ukraine, and helping them improve their sophistication, their knowledge, and their ability to help promote change and reforms in Ukraine. It can't be just one person, the president of Ukraine, doing everything and reforming everything. It's a process; it's politics, just as it is in Canada or anywhere else in the world. You have various interests so we're trying to help those reform NGOs to move those agenda items forward.

We were very active in helping to promote the new health care reforms that were just passed in parliament a day or two ago. We're making a constant effort.

The other thing is also encouraging and working with those NGOs which currently have projects in Ukraine on judicial reform, on reform of the judiciary, police reform, and encouraging decentralization of government, which is very beneficial for Ukraine.

What's troubling, Mr. Garrison, is we've been given an indication from the Minister of International Development that no more funding is foreseeable for Ukraine in international technical assistance. The programs that have been funded, which expire in 2018-19, see no sign of further funding. That's very troubling because for a paltry \$50 million a year, Canada has been doing tremendous work in supporting Ukraine's reforms, and that's really important because we want to see Ukraine be a success.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** I think you've seen everybody around the table take note of that one, and we'll see what we can do to get some more discussion of it.

I'm looking for other ways in which the Canadian government could facilitate the work you've been doing. One thing that member of Parliament for Edmonton—Strathcona Linda Duncan suggested today to the government was to implement visa-free access to Canada for Ukrainians, given that we have a free trade agreement and that Ukrainians already have visa-free access to Europe.

Would that kind of easy access facilitate these people-to-people relationships that you're working on?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** Absolutely. Unfortunately, there are still many in Ukraine who have not travelled abroad and have not travelled to either Europe or Canada. We'd like to see much more happen by way of youth exchanges, opportunities for students to study here, and opportunities for young professionals to gain experience.

A visa-free regime is something we strongly advocate for. As many know, Ukraine has recently been given visa-free status to the entire EU, and it has not opened a floodgate. I think it would be a very positive sign for Canada to give visa-free access to Ukrainians

● (1610)

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** We'll have a look at the answer from the minister today, which was a bit of a complicated answer, to see whether we can move things along on that front.

I was very interested to hear you say that you thought Canada should seek a leadership role in the proposed peacekeeping mission in Ukraine. Ms. Alleslev started to ask the question and I'm going to ask it again. Do you see any contradiction in asking Canada to provide lethal weapons to Ukraine and then trying to assume a leadership role in the peacekeeping mission? I believe you said you did not, but I'd like you to expand on it a bit more, because it seems contradictory to me.

**Mr. Paul Grod:** A peacekeeping mission is not going to happen any time soon. As we know, these things take a long time to broker and a long time to get off the ground. We would love to see it happen soon, but in reality they're just starting to talk about it. If there are suggestions on how we can make it happen more quickly, then by all means. It is ultimately because of the degree of capacity of the Ukrainians to defend themselves that we are calling on Canada to provide defensive military equipment to Ukraine. There are many different ways of looking at what "defensive" means. It includes radar imagery; it includes other technology that allows them to monitor the front lines.

It's also putting pressure on Russia to allow the OSCE to actually monitor the border. They made a commitment that they would allow the OSCE to monitor the Russia-Ukraine border. Right now there are only two checkpoints. In fact, I just read a report today from the OSCE that there are only two checkpoints, involving several hundred metres of territory on the front line on the Russia-Ukraine border, that the OSCE is allowed to monitor. There are about 2,300 kilometres of line not being monitored, and Russia is not allowing the OSCE to monitor those. They're allowing free flow of military equipment. Those are the kinds of things we should be constantly pushing for.

Speaking with Minister Sajjan just a week ago, we learned that they're looking at the ways in which they help professionalize the Ukrainian military with logistics training and other things of that type.

There's a plethora of things we can do, but I think it's important, if only symbolically, for Canada to commit to providing defensive military equipment in order to allow the Ukrainian people to defend themselves. Russia understands one thing, that is, a strong deterrent to them that will extract a significant cost to their making any further advances. They won't do it. It's really meant to preclude Russia from continuing to make advances into Ukrainian territories. That's the whole purpose of defensive equipment: to defend.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** I want to go back to the peacekeeping mission itself. You said that the peacekeeping mission should be present in all of the occupied territory, including along the Russian border. Russia has its own peacekeeping proposal—I guess that's hopeful, in that if both people are talking about peacekeeping missions, at least you have a common topic—but it's quite different in its proposal.

When you talk about Canada providing a leadership role in peacekeeping, are you talking about Canada's trying to get talks going on what a mission would look like, or are you talking about Canada's just assuming a leadership role in the actual mission itself?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** Well, it's both. I think you need to start off with Canada spearheading the dialogue, both at the United Nations and when it takes over the G7 presidency in January, to make this a key topic: how the G7 countries can come together and do something different. If we continue doing the same thing over and over again, we shouldn't expect different results. It's about time that we take something that is more strategic and will provide peace and security in that region.

At the end of the day, you have a chaotic situation, with very little rule of law in the occupied territories right now. That's why it's important, if you want to bring peace and stability to the region, that there be UN peacekeepers in the region and on the border of Russia and Ukraine, to prevent further troops and further military equipment infiltrating that region.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** The last seven-minute question period goes to Mark Gerretsen.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Westdal, I wasn't aware of your background before Mr. Hoback asked some of the questions that he did, so I want to clarify. You're before this committee advocating for reduced sanctions. Do you stand to financially gain from a reduction of sanctions?

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** No.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Okay. That's fine. I just want to put on the record that that's not the case.

You did say in reference to Canada's relationship with the U.S. that we go out of our way to get along with our neighbours. That was in the context of saying that Ukraine should try to get along with its neighbour, but I can't think of a time that would be more appropriate for a western country to get involved than when trying to help another nation truly claim its independence and rid itself of corruption, in particular corruption that's heavily influenced by its neighbour.

Do you not think, if there's any time for a western country to get involved in helping another nation build itself up, that Ukraine would be a shining example of that?

•(1615)

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** It's useful to focus on what happened in February 2014. When I speak about Ukraine getting along with its neighbour, I think that the Maidan picked a fight with the Kremlin. You remember that—

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** I'm sorry, I'm really limited in time, and I apologize for cutting you off, but I'm not talking about picking a

fight with the Kremlin. I'm talking about our country getting involved in Ukraine. Is this not a great example?

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** We have been helping Ukraine for 25 years, and we will continue helping Ukraine, but it's clear that we don't know how to solve its problems. If we knew how to solve its problems, we would have made more progress than we're making. It's also clear that our aid programs, which have gone on now for 25 years—and I didn't know there were now proposals for that budget to be cut—are not going to change the direction of a nation of 40 million people.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Philosophically speaking, do you think there's any time that is appropriate to get involved in a situation like this?

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** As I said, we've been involved for 25 years. We're involved in supporting Ukraine—

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** But you clearly stated that you didn't think we should be involved, because you think we should let them, as you said, "solve their own problems".

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** I said they need to solve more of their own problems. It's perfectly clear that Ukraine's problems cannot be divorced from the larger context. Those two things are closely related.

Yes, we all together, the west and Russia, in the NATO Russia-Council and in the OSCE, in my view, need to give priority to trying to make room for Ukraine to trade with both sides and pose a security threat to neither side. So we will—

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Our role there right now, at least diplomatically and militarily, is to help train the Ukrainian troops, help their judicial processes, and help their elected officials and their bureaucracy figure out how to rid themselves of corruption. We're there in an advisory way.

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** Is it working?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** But that's.... My question for you, philosophically speaking, is do you think it's appropriate for another nation to get involved, generally speaking? Can you give an example of another—

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** Yes, indeed. Now, windows for foreign influence in countries open and close. Sometimes foreign intervention is welcomed and sometimes it isn't. Usually after a while, people get tired of foreigners intervening in their affairs and telling them what to do, because they don't think foreigners understand the depth of their problems. Usually that's the case, but certainly I—

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** To answer your question, yes, I think it's working. We were there. We saw, and we heard from a lot of individuals, especially those who were trying to move and advance the revolution. They were very clear that Canada's involvement helps, even if it's just to prevent the oligarchs or the corruption from re-infiltrating. There was a clear signal that it was working.

I have to switch because I only have about two minutes left.

Mr. Grod, I understand that you're part of an elite group of 13 Canadians, as is Mr. Bezan, in that you're—

**Mr. Paul Grod:** He's not elite.

**Mr. James Bezan:** I'm not elite.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** —well, the elite group of 13 who are not allowed into Russia. Can you explain the context behind your being sanctioned like that?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** I was put on that list immediately after I visited Ukraine with Prime Minister Harper when he went to show support for Ukraine right after the Maidan revolution and the fleeing of President Yanukovich. At that point, Prime Minister Harper was advocating for Russia to be excluded from the G8, and was successful. After that decision was made, out of spite, President Putin then created that list of 13 people to put on the sanctions list.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** How did you come to be asked by Mr. Harper to participate? It was touted as a very partisan delegation. The *National Post* did a story on it after the fact, stating that it was a partisan delegation. I'm curious how you got to be involved in it.

• (1620)

**Mr. Paul Grod:** As president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress. We are a major stakeholder in supporting Ukraine in its struggle for democracy. That's the reason we were asked to be part of that. I've been on virtually every trip with prime ministers and ministers. I was just in Ukraine a year ago with Prime Minister Trudeau. I went to Ukraine with Stéphane Dion when he was minister. It's a regular—

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Okay. I just want to put that on the record too. You would consider yourself to be non-partisan.

**Mr. Paul Grod:** Absolutely non-partisan.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Thank you.

I think that's all my time.

**The Chair:** We're going to move to five-minute questions.

Mr. Spengemann.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Thank you very much, gentlemen, for being here.

Thanks for your leadership in the community, Mr. Grod, and for your expertise, Ambassador Westdal.

I have five minutes. I want to explore three themes with you. One is Putin's endgame, if that's the right term. The second is the economics of Donbass and the broader area around Ukraine, and that border with Russia. Last is the commitment to the Minsk agreement.

If you were to speculate on where Putin wants to be in 2017 or in 2020 as a global leader, what kind of picture comes to mind? How do you see him, as objectively as you can, in terms of security and also economic and cultural leadership? Does he want partnerships? Is he isolationist? Is he expansionist?

Please, just briefly state each of your personal characterizations of him as a leader.

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** I don't think he's expansionist. I think that he wants respect for Russia. I think that he wants to contain NATO. As I mentioned in my remarks, I don't think, as he's accused, that he has

any interest in having war or a broken Ukraine on his western flank. What he will not tolerate on his western flank is NATO, and he wouldn't tolerate that in the Caucasus either. I think that he wants to play a role with Russia as a great power. There are only a handful on earth and Russia is one of them.

I think that we need to accept that Russia is an age-old civilization. It's a thousand years old. It's a civilization unto itself. It's been written off fatefully before. As I said, I think we wrote it off and thought that we didn't have to pay attention to its interests 25 years ago. We do have to pay attention to its interests. It does want to be our partner in the Arctic. It does want to be our partner against terrorism. It has a very deep interest in the accommodation of Islam. A sixth of Russians are Muslim. I think that it wants to be a great power. It wants to be respected, and it doesn't want NATO in either the Caucasus or Ukraine, among other things.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Thank you.

Mr. Grod, how would you characterize Putin?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** First of all, I think we all believe in a people's and a nation's right to self-determination. That underlies why that whole premise of spheres of influence is fundamentally flawed.

Putin's endgame is to restore something like the old Soviet Union. At the end of the day, it's spheres of influence. He has stated very publicly that one of the biggest tragedies in history was the fall of the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, it's not just Vladimir Putin. It's also the Russian people who have trouble recognizing the Ukrainian nation as its own nation. The whole concept of one big Slavic people is something that is very much front and centre for Putin and Russians. I think Putin's endgame is to restore, more or less, a model of the Soviet Union where he can control, either directly or indirectly, those countries that were formerly part of the Soviet Union. He's doing that by destabilizing them.

When you look at the trends, he's been successful in destabilizing the regions around Azerbaijan and Armenia with the frozen conflict there. He's been able to destabilize the Transnistria region with a frozen conflict there. He's done it in Ossetia in Georgia, and he's now doing it in eastern Ukraine.

He has recognized that by destabilizing, he's able to exert control over those countries. He's also starting to destabilize the international rules-based order. We're seeing that in terms of supporting various right-wing initiatives in Europe. We have to be cognizant that by breaking down the rules-based international order, Putin is able to exert control over the world, quite frankly.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** In terms of the costs for Mr. Putin to continue to fight over the Donbass, what is your assessment of that? Is that attractive land? Is that a region that yields continued value for him to fight over, or are we approaching a threshold where he says it's too expensive for him and he's going to bow out?

Ambassador Waschuk was speaking to the committee a couple of weeks ago and sort of suggested that maybe the costs are becoming too high for Putin to continue to fight over this area.

• (1625)

**Mr. Paul Grod:** It's difficult to say. Number one, that region was the industrial heartland of Ukraine. Since the war broke out, that economy has been decimated, so to say that it is extracting high costs, absolutely.

The question is, is Russian President Putin looking for an off-ramp? I'm not sure. I can't read his mind. However, I think we have to be prepared always to allow him an off-ramp.

The peacekeeping mission could, in fact, offer him an off-ramp. If he thinks it's too expensive for him to continue, whether it's just the region or the sanctions that are being imposed on him and his supporters, if he feels those costs are too high, he might be forced. That's the important thing. We're trying to force his hand to bring peacekeepers into that region.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Thanks very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you both.

Mr. Yurdiga.

**Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to welcome our witnesses here today.

It is a very troubling time as we see how it unfolds as time goes on. What I'm really concerned about is that I see sanction after sanction levied against Russia and it doesn't seem to be working. I'm not sure if the world players are all following the sanctions, because obviously, that's a lot of pressure on Russia.

What are the major drawbacks with sanctions? I don't see Russia actually moving an inch. Is there movement? I'd like to get a feel for how the sanctions are working.

**Mr. Paul Grod:** Number one, the sanctions are extracting financial penalties against Russia and those who are supportive of Putin's aggression around the world. I think there is a significant economic impact on Russia with these sanctions. That's why you're always hearing Vladimir Putin calling on the world to stop these sanctions, because it is a very important lever.

How could we live with ourselves by trading with a country that is currently responsible for an active war that has taken the lives of at least 10,000 innocent people, for invading another country, for taking over a territory illegally? Should we be rewarding that kind of behaviour? In fact, we should be increasing sanctions until that behaviour stops. That is the value of the sanctions policy.

**Mr. David Yurdiga:** Chris, would you like to comment?

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** If you ask what those sanctions were imagined to achieve, one, they were going to change Russia's mind. Well, they haven't.

Two, they were going to isolate Putin, remember? They were aimed at his oligarch friends and supporters. They were going to weaken Putin's power base and separate them from the leader. They haven't done that at all. If anything, they have consolidated his

standing both with powerful people in the country and with the public. It seems quite clear to me that those sanctions don't work.

Furthermore, even while they impose economic costs, they have some effects that are surely counterproductive in the view of those who want sanctions. For example, they have in fact encouraged some revival in Russian agriculture, because agricultural products that were being imported, including pork from Canada in substantive amounts, no longer are arriving imported. That has now been an encouragement to Russian agriculture. It has in fact contributed to the diversification of the Russian economy, which everyone has always called for, thinking that it's too dependent entirely on the petrochemical sector.

**Mr. David Yurdiga:** Thank you. I know my time is limited.

I'm really concerned that maybe we're not doing enough. We have to push for a diplomatic solution to this, because obviously Russia is not freely going to give up Crimea and we, as western civilization, are not going to allow it to expand.

How far do we need to go to have this diplomatic solution?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** First of all, before you have a diplomatic solution, you need to have willing parties that are looking for a diplomatic solution. Right now, Vladimir Putin is not looking for a diplomatic solution in Ukraine. He has not reached out for one, and that's why we need to continue to, first, provide Ukraine with the ability to defend itself, and second, help it become a successful economy and a successful society, which I think Canada has been doing an amazing job of.

Although 25 years might seem a long time, you're reforming a post-Soviet country, and quite frankly, other than the Baltic states, there is no other post-Soviet country that has as strong a democracy as Ukraine.

Ukraine has weak democratic institutions, but they're building and they're working on them. That is a sign that, over 25 years, there has been a lot of progress made, so we need to continue to do that, and again, put enough pressure on Russia to actually entertain and be brought to the table in order to allow for a peacekeeping mission to Ukraine. That's what needs to happen for a diplomatic solution.

• (1630)

**Mr. David Yurdiga:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** Just briefly, I think Russia is open to diplomatic solutions. Russia is prepared to implement the Minsk agreement, but it needs to be implemented by both parties. I think Russia is prepared to imagine a United Nations role. Of course there is disagreement about where United Nations peacekeepers might be based, but those could be worked out.

With respect to the United Nations force, we should be promoting that, but we should not imagine we're in a position to lead it, because by key parties, including Russians and the rebels in the Donbass, we are not regarded as non-partisan. We just aren't. I don't think we would be acceptable leaders in that group. We might be able to participate in it, and we should promote it, but I don't think the notion that we will lead a UN peacekeeping mission in the Donbass is realistic.

**The Chair:** Ms. Alleslev.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Thank you very much.

Recognizing I only have five minutes, I would like to hear what your recommendations are, Mr. Westdal, please.

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** That's kind of you. Thank you.

I won't complete my remarks. I will, though, go straight to the recommendations.

Here's what I would have you recommend.

First, Canada should devote intellectual and diplomatic talent to the conception and promotion, bilaterally and multilaterally, of a coherent, realistic vision of Eurasian security.

Second, we should recognize, comprehend, and restore rational relations with Russia such as by a committee like yours, or your sister committee on foreign policy, visiting Russia and hearing from Russians.

Third, we should reconsider our advocacy of further NATO expansion.

Fourth, we should promote essential Ukrainian-Russian reconciliation.

Fifth, we should meantime sustain our necessarily modest contribution to NATO in Europe and enhance our armed forces at home. That's a tall order, but along with three oceans to sail, we have promises to keep.

Those are my recommendations.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Thank you.

I got a brief perspective on the UN peacekeeper role versus our current role and whether those would be counterproductive, but could you give us a little more? If we were to slightly change course, would that give us the opportunity to perhaps be a leader in a UN peacekeeping mission, or in your mind is that not on the table?

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** I don't think it's on the table. We are not regarded in Moscow or by the rebels in the Donbass as non-partisan. Canadian ministers have demonstrated in the Maidan; even at a time when we were telling others to butt out of our politics, we were demonstrating in the Maidan.

Some of the Canadian election observers—and we sent 500 to one election, even over the objections of the OSCE, which opposes bilateral electoral missions upon principle—were wearing orange sashes. One only needs to read regular Canadian press releases to know that we are on the side of the Kiev government, however unpopular it might be in Ukraine, and it's currently very unpopular. We cannot credibly present ourselves as non-partisan. We will not be regarded by key players as non-partisan.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Right. You gave us a clear perspective on how our approach in this region may not be congruent with our approach in general, in how we've behaved in other circumstances. You made reference, of course, to us being in our own sphere of influence.

Could you give us a perspective on how much flexibility you believe Canada has within our own sphere of influence to really

define our own foreign policy in this perspective, and whether that is in any way having an influence on the course of action we're pursuing?

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** As I said, theory aside, like them or not, zones of influence and spheres of influence are real. The Ukrainians live in one, and we live in one. As I said, the Ukrainians have about as much freedom—of course, they are free to do it, but there are consequences—to undermine Russia's security as we do to undermine Washington's, and we would not dream of undermining Washington's.

Remember how quickly we sprang to the need to make sure that the border of the entire continent was secure in order not to ever give anyone in Washington the notion that Canada was in some way going to undermine its security? Well, seen from Moscow, the notion that Ukraine is going to undermine their security by joining NATO, which, as I said, is not a knitting club, is simply unacceptable.

• (1635)

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Would you say that our Ukraine approach is influenced by our sphere of influence?

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** That was what I said I found so striking: that whereas we understand that we need to get along with our big neighbour, with whom we sometimes disagree, we poke our finger in Russia's eye and counsel that the Ukrainians should do so at every opportunity. That seems to me to be a contradiction.

Further, though we practise federal accommodation and pluralism, the Ukrainians don't. I pointed to this new education policy. I don't understand how it's imagined that there is going to be reconciliation and reintegration at a time when the insult of banning instruction in your language after grade 4 is visited upon Russian ethnic Ukrainians.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bezan.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank our witnesses for appearing.

Mr. Westdal, I don't have a lot of time, so I want to go through some stuff fast.

Have you ever read Bill S-226, yes or no?

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** The Magnitsky bill?

**Mr. James Bezan:** Yes.

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** I've read the preamble to it, and that preamble—

**Mr. James Bezan:** That's not reading the bill. If you read the bill, the bill itself clearly states that an order in council decides who goes on the list to be sanctioned, and Parliament has oversight, both in the Senate and in the House and the foreign affairs committee. Also, there's fairness in that people put on the list can actually appeal to get off the list. There is fairness; there is a way to deal with this, and I think it's been done in a reasonable way.

Also, it's not just targeted at the kleptocrats in the Kremlin. It's also targeted at gross human rights violators and those who are abusing their positions of authority around the world. You have Maduro down in Venezuela right now, who has starved out a pile of his citizens and who should be on this list, now that we have it—a way to use food as a weapon that I'm sure he learned from Lenin and Stalin. This is reality, in trying to make sure that Canada will not be used as a safe haven for money garnered through illicit means from corrupt foreign officials, which includes Russian and Ukrainian ones. If those who are committing gross human rights violations can be held to account, Canada can then project its values.

You wrote, back in March 2014 in *The Globe and Mail* that “Ukrainians should ignore all the legal advice and be prepared to let Crimea go”. Do you still see Crimea as Ukrainian, or do you see it as Russian territory?

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** I don't recall writing that—

**Mr. James Bezan:** It's in *The Globe and Mail*, March 10, 2014.

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** —Ukrainians should ignore all legal advice, but I think that, short of war, Crimea is not going to revert to Ukraine. I think it's as simple as that.

**Mr. James Bezan:** But that was a complete violation of international rules and norms by the Russian Federation, wasn't it? Yes or no?

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** Yes, I think it was illegal. I think that—

**Mr. James Bezan:** I'm surprised—

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** —quite a few foreign policy acts are illegal. I think that occasionally security trumps the law. I don't think that what you described is a just judicial process. I don't know what it presumes about innocence. I don't know what opportunity it gives to those who are put on these lists.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Well, I'm going to move on, because I've been put on a list myself, as Mr. Grod has been—

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** Understood.

**Mr. James Bezan:** —and there is no judicial process involved at all.

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** Let me just add, though, that I think we cannot—

**Mr. James Bezan:** I'd like to move on, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Let's let Mr. Bezan manage his time.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Now, going to Crimea—and I want to ask this of Mr. Grod, who is familiar with the region and with the human rights violations that are taking place right now—can you outline for the committee the treatment by the Russian government in Crimea of journalists and the indigenous people, the Tatars?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** I'll start with the indigenous people, the Tatars. The Mejlis, which represents the Crimean Tatar people, has been outlawed in Crimea. The organization and the group that represents the indigenous peoples of Crimea have been outlawed. Their leaders have been either imprisoned or banned from entering Crimea. There has been constant repression of anyone, whether Ukrainian or others, who opposes the illegal occupation of Crimea, who demonstrates any semblance of gatherings, and there are strict laws around

gatherings. Journalists have been put in jail; 40 of them are sitting in Russian prisons today. The human rights violations in Russia, not to mention even the churches.... Particularly the Ukrainian Catholic church is essentially outlawed in Crimea. There's a laundry list of human rights violations being committed in Crimea.

• (1640)

**Mr. James Bezan:** There's no freedom of the press, no freedom for indigenous peoples, and no freedom of religion, you're saying.

**Mr. Paul Grod:** That's correct.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Then, counter to the Geneva Convention, these people are moved from that territory and imprisoned and tried in Moscow, I would presume.

**Mr. Paul Grod:** In Russia, yes.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Mr. Westdal has commented on the expansion of NATO membership. What about the right of self-determination? He says he doesn't want to see the western flank of Russia in NATO, and already all of the Baltic states have joined NATO by their own free will. Poland is a member of NATO by its own free will. Romania is a member by its own free will. Shouldn't Ukrainians be given that same consideration to join NATO?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** If the Ukrainian people so desire, I believe they should be given that opportunity. I believe that we are no longer living in a world of big power politics and that we should always listen to the big powers. I think we now have a much more...

I think we share the same values that the Ukrainian people do, like the right to self-determination and the right to choose your own destiny and not be told by another bigger power. Therefore, I believe, Mr. Bezan, that it's really important right now for us to support Ukraine's right to self-determination and not allow that to be trumped because a bigger power wants to control that region.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Now—

**The Chair:** Actually, you're right at five minutes, but we're going to have time to circle back. We have lots of time left. I'm going to wrap up the last couple of questions and then, like last time, I'll divide it up evenly among the parties.

Mr. Bezan, you will get more time; however, I'm going to give the floor to Mr. Robillard.

**Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My three questions will be addressed in French to both Mr. Grod and Mr. Westdal.

[Translation]

What is the likelihood that Ukraine will be able to reform its ministry of defence by the end of 2018 and achieve full military interoperability with NATO members by 2020?

Is it likely that Ukraine could become a NATO member by 2020?

How is Russia reacting to NATO's help and contribution to the reforms in Ukraine?

[English]

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** I don't think it's likely that Ukraine will join NATO. I think there are European members of NATO who will make sure that doesn't happen.

As I said, Russia is not prepared to abide Ukraine in NATO. Ukraine is not comparable, from Russia's point of view, to Poland or the Baltic states. Sebastopol and Crimea are not in Poland or the Baltic states. They are part of Ukraine. Ukraine and Russia have a shared history of a thousand years. It's chalk and cheese between Poland and the Baltic states, on the one hand, and Ukraine, on the other.

I don't think that Ukraine would be ready to join NATO, given NATO's qualifications and conditions that there not be disputes on the territory of its members. I think there are members of NATO who do understand that it's a provocation that would be counter-productive.

**Mr. Paul Grod:** Thank you for the question.

First of all, we have to understand the value that the Baltic countries—Poland, Romania, and others—see in NATO membership. They see it as security because they are all afraid of Russia's increasing aggression.

In terms of Ukraine's readiness, they've set out a road map, and 2020 is a very aggressive road map, but they need to set aggressive road maps if they're going to accomplish things because they don't have the time. They had to essentially rebuild an army from scratch and they need ambitious objectives. That's why it's important for NATO countries to be supporting Ukraine as they become interoperable.

In terms of membership, that's really up to the Ukrainian people. There has been an increasing rise in the popularity of the idea of Ukraine joining NATO. Of course, there are lots of sensitivities and I think we have to be sensitive to the current situation in Ukraine and the conflict. Although many may want Ukraine to join NATO, the reality is that they need to, first, start by solving the conflict and ending the Russian aggression in the east.

In terms of the Russian reaction, we think we know what the Russian reaction is going to be. The question is, what are the deterrents? What are the consequences of Russia's continuing aggression in Ukraine? That's really the important question that NATO has to ask itself.

• (1645)

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** What is the situation at the border between Ukraine and Russia? Is the border porous? If so, in what way?

[English]

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** Mr. Grod has been to that frontier between Russia and Ukraine much more recently than I have, so I can't answer that question on the current status there.

To relate back to the notion of UN intervention, though, my own view is that there would need to be UN people both on that frontier and also on the line where the fighting is taking place.

**Mr. Paul Grod:** There are 2,300 kilometres on the Russian-Ukrainian border that Ukraine does not control. It is extremely porous. The OSCE just issued a report yesterday which says the OSCE is only able to monitor two checkpoints, only a few hundred metres is what they're able to monitor of that Russian-Ukrainian border, so it is extremely porous and uncontrolled.

**The Chair:** That's your time. We will have time to circle back, though.

I'm going to go to Mr. Garrison for the last formal question, and then we'll go to round two.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

As the chair likes to say, we get to circle back, so I am actually going to do that and talk to Mr. Grod a bit more about the peacekeeping proposal.

One of the things we noticed as part of our visit to Ukraine was that Canada was underfilling its commitments to OSCE in terms of providing monitors. Have you any comments at this point?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** I was not aware that Canada is underfilling its commitments to the OSCE mission. I thought it was robust. That's one thing we should look at, but quite frankly, the OSCE mission in Ukraine is handcuffed in the sense that they don't have access to areas that they've asked for, such as the border of Russia and Ukraine. Their drones have been continuously shot down. The OSCE monitors don't even have drones, because they've been shot down by the Russian occupiers.

The OSCE mission, quite frankly, is not effective. Number one, that has to be fixed, but we need to find a different solution. Trying to fix something that isn't working is not going to help, and Russia does not want to see a full-fledged monitoring mission happening in the occupied territories.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** The vision of the peacekeeping mission that you're talking about is the one that was put forward of using peacekeepers to give the monitoring mission the ability to actually work in monitoring those Minsk agreements.

**Mr. Paul Grod:** It's in monitoring the border. Russia's proposal is to monitor the conflict zone, not actually to create peace and stability in the occupied territories or to monitor and control the border between Russia and Ukraine, which is frankly one of the important points in the Minsk agreement, that Ukraine will have control of its border between Russia and Ukraine, which it does not have today.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Would your vision of the peacekeeping mission that Canada would seek to lead be one that would support the OSCE monitoring mission in fulfilling its mandate under the Minsk agreements?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** There's no need for further OSCE monitoring when you have peacekeepers on the ground in Ukraine. You're essentially requiring all the forces to lay their arms down and you have a peacekeeping force that is keeping the peace and allowing those territories to rebuild themselves and rebuild the institutions that any sovereign country should have.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** I believe that's a bit different vision of the peacekeeping mission than we've heard from others at this time.

You made reference earlier to being told that the technical assistance might be ending in 2018. I want to go back and make sure we've understood who said that and which programs in terms of technical assistance. Are these the programs where the Canadian government offers assistance to the NGOs in doing those things, or are we also talking about bilateral assistance programs?

• (1650)

**Mr. Paul Grod:** Essentially they're meant to support various reforms in Ukraine. Examples of that, again, are training of judges or training of the new police force in Ukraine.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** So it's both the bilateral assistance and others.

**Mr. Paul Grod:** Correct.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Who gave you this warning about there being no more money available?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** When we met this summer with Minister Bibeau, she advised us that there was no commitment for any further funding past the 2018-19 expiry date of the existing programs.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Thanks.

**The Chair:** We have about 40 minutes left, so we'll go around table again with five-minute questions: Liberal, Conservative, NDP, and there are more, but we'll start with that.

The first question will go to Mr. Spengemann.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Mr. Chair, thank you very much. I didn't get a chance to ask my third question in the previous round, so I'm grateful to have the opportunity.

What is the current status of the Minsk agreement? What is its normative pull? Perhaps as an add-on to that question, how united is the European Union in its views on Ukraine and Russia?

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** There have been two iterations of the Minsk agreement. It remains what's on the table in terms of the way forward, but both parties are saying, "After you." The Russians are saying, "We won't act until you have the elections and the decentralization that were part of the Minsk agreement," and Kiev is saying, "We won't do that until you pull forces back from the border." I don't know how many Minsk agreements it's going to take, but I expect there will be more.

The Minsk agreement is criticized often in the Rada, and this talk of roles the UN might play working with the OSCE is really an indication that, so far at least, it looks like Minsk is not implementable, or at least it's not being implemented.

If you ask what the Europeans think of it, Angela Merkel regularly recites her belief that there is no military solution. Time and again she has said that, and that we have Minsk to work with. However many Minsk agreements it takes, that's a path we have to follow.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Mr. Grod.

**Mr. Paul Grod:** It is important to understand the context in which both Minsk agreements were signed, the second one in particular. That was a time when there was an active taking of territory, and significant casualties and losses being suffered by the Ukrainian soldiers, or the Ukrainian army, as they tried to defend themselves in Debaltsevo and other areas. Essentially Ukraine's hand was forced into accepting a pretty bad deal.

That being said, when you look at the Minsk agreement, I find it quite insincere to say both sides are not implementing. You can't have elections in a territory that is controlled by foreign agents. You can't have any kind of resolution or any kind of democratic process. It would be similar to the democratic process when they voted during the referendum in Crimea, when you had essentially Russian armed forces under other non-insignia, trying to allow for that.

The reality is that until that war ends and Ukraine is able to take control of its border and its territory, you can't ask Ukraine to hold elections. The Minsk agreements are essentially stale-dated, and when Russia wants to have a resolution and stop the ongoing conflict and military aggression, that's when you can start talking about implementation.

But Russia is not prepared. We have had an increased escalation of violence over the last week, and that is directly controlled and manipulated by Russia, so let's not get into games about elections or other things like that. Russia has to stop the war in Ukraine.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** We talked about incentives or disincentives for behaviour change, and it seems a lot of us are familiar with the sticks that are on the table, which are sanctions and ratcheting up military capacity in Ukraine to deter or make it costly for Russia to continue. Are there any carrots on the table, outside of removing sanctions? Is there anything we could offer to bring Russia into an agreement that is sustainable in the longer term and doesn't involve sanctions, or sticks?

• (1655)

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** Well, if the sanctions are going to remain and you take off the carrot of removing them, because they are costly, we could respond to Russia's invitations to co-operate more in the Arctic. We could respond to Russia's invitations to co-operate more against terrorism. There is an agenda we could address with Russia that pays it respect. That kind of respectful engagement, I suppose, could be described as a carrot.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Mr. Grod, would that lead to a behaviour change on Russia's part in your view? Could it?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** We've seen what the reaction of resets by previous U.S. presidents has brought, and it hasn't brought a more co-operative Russia. Unfortunately, we've seen through the past that Russia only understands when there is equal strength on the other side and not necessarily this strategy of trying to engage. Unfortunately an engagement strategy without deterrents is ineffectual. Unless there are costs for a certain activity, essentially that is the strategy that needs to be implemented—a strong deterrence strategy with Russia.

**Mr. Sven Spengemann:** Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** The next questioner will be either Mr. Bezan or Ms. Gallant.



**Mr. James Bezan:** Ms. Gallant.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and through you to the witnesses, would you compare and contrast the Russian peacekeeping mission with Ukraine versus what Canada would do? Russia has its version of what the peacekeeping mission in Ukraine should be. How does that differ from what Canada's view would be?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** In 2015, Ukraine put on the table a proposal for a UN peacekeeping mission, and it has always been on the table since 2015. I believe, frankly, that because there was a threat of the U.S. providing Ukraine with defensive military equipment, which the White House is very seriously contemplating right now, it's only very recently that Russia has tried to come up with their own version of a peacekeeping mission. It would essentially provide UN peacekeepers. They would be part of that UN peacekeeping mission. It is a little bit strange to have the aggressor as part of the peacekeeping mission on the border where the conflict is happening. Essentially, they would ensure a frozen conflict.

What Ukraine has asked for, and other European and allied countries have supported, is essentially having UN peacekeepers on the Russian-Ukrainian border to stop the flow of arms. There are hundreds of tanks in Ukraine that weren't built in the Donbass. Stop the flow of arms and soldiers into Ukraine. That would be step number one.

Step number two would be to have a UN peacekeeping force in that region, which it is hoped would essentially demilitarize that situation and allow for a return of those internally displaced peoples, a return to normality, and a stop to the bloodshed in Ukraine.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Grod, you mentioned that the peacekeeping mission would be very much a hot war. Right now, we're in a hot war in that area. Taking that into consideration, and the fact that Ukraine wants to be interoperable by 2020, would it make more sense to have NATO-led nation troops be there doing the peacekeeping mission as opposed to Russia?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** I think that would, frankly, further instigate the tension. I believe that, again, a UN peacekeeping force would have to be endorsed by the Security Council, and of course Russia has a veto on the Security Council. I think that if there's a threat of further NATO support for Ukraine, then that could be the potential stick that will force Russia's hand to accept that peacekeeping mission.

Again, we don't want to instigate Russia. We want to create peace in that region, and quite frankly, the best way to do that today, in this environment, is to have a peacekeeping mission that Russia will accept. By accepting that, they will have to stop the continued military aggression. There are daily artillery attacks coming from the occupied territories into Ukrainian territory, so that needs to stop first. We need to get an agreement from Russia that they're going to stop the aggression in that region and then allow peacekeepers to come to Ukraine in order to demilitarize that zone.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** But really, what good is an agreement? We've had the Budapest memorandum which has been flouted. The Minsk agreements are not being upheld. UN conventions are continually overturned. Why are we even trying to have them involved? They go back on their word every time.

● (1700)

**Mr. Paul Grod:** That's why we need to return to rules-based international order, and that's why there have to be consequences for Russia's flouting of the rules-based international order. We've talked about various ways to do that. Those include excluding them and isolating them from various international institutions. Those include sanctions. Those include helping to support various missions around the world, including what Canada has done in supporting the NATO mission in the Baltic states, in Poland, in Romania, and even in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** On that question of going back on one's word and the usefulness of agreements, let me just say that from a Russian point of view, there was a promise made at the reunification of Germany that NATO would not move one inch east. That promise has been broken, with serious security implications.

To the question of where a UN mission—if there is going to be one—would be in the Donbass, whether it would be on the border between Russia and Ukraine or along the line of conflict, I should think that can be sorted out. It can be both.

It's important to note that the Russians don't object to and aren't trying to change that border between Russia and Ukraine. You remember that the rebels asked the Russians, "Please, take us in as you did Crimea," and the Kremlin and Putin said no. Why? Because their internal interest in the geopolitical orientation of Ukraine is related to all of Ukraine. Ukraine wasn't invaded twice through the Black Sea and Crimea, so the Russians don't want to change the border between the Donbass and Russia.

**The Chair:** Mr. Garrison.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** One thing I think we have learned about peace and security missions is that when women are involved in them, particularly at high levels, they have greater levels of success.

Mr. Grod, my question for you is, are you aware of programs to further encourage the involvement of women in Ukraine in all levels of government, and if so, do you see the success these are having? We became aware of the quota of 30% in local elections, but are there other things we should be looking at there?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** In terms of gender politics, when you look at the composition of today's Ukrainian government, you see many senior women in places of influence, whether it's the first deputy prime minister of Ukraine, Ivanna Klymush-Tsintsadze, who will be reporting tomorrow to this committee and who is responsible for Euro-Atlantic integration, or the minister of health, a prominent woman—who, by the way, is Ukrainian-American—who is involved in helping reform the health care system and who is married to a Ukrainian-Canadian, Marko Suprun. The chair of the foreign affairs committee is Hanna Hopko. The deputy speaker of Ukraine's parliament is Oksana Syroyid. You have many prominent women in those places.

The military, unfortunately, still needs some work, but, in fact, I met with some of the Ukrainian officers who are training in Quebec, and among them are two women who are a part of the contingent of eight who are there. There are, then, efforts being made. There could absolutely be more, but it is an open society.

It's also important to note that it's not just the gender politics, but also ethnic politics. When you look at the composition of the leadership of the country, you note that the Prime Minister of Ukraine is a well-known Jew. There is a level of tolerance there. It is a multicultural society and is moving in that direction.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** We always take advantage of being able to circle back with our questions. Ms. Alleslev gave Mr. Westdal a chance to add on, so I'm going to give the chance to Mr. Grod.

Is there anything, now that you've heard the kind of questioning that's going on, that you would like to add to the presentation you made today?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** Thank you.

I think the simple discussion is that the Ukrainian people want to live in a society that shares values similar to Canada's. That's why the "Maidan of human dignity", as they call it, was successful: because the people were going to stand there until they were able to have a society that they could live freely in.

The country is undergoing significant strain. It's trying to go through reforms. It is moving forward, not as quickly as we all want it to, but it is moving forward, while it's also fighting a war.

To be clear, this is war. Ukraine has been invaded by Russia and its proxies. To call it anything different is, I think, to obfuscate the truth. The reality is that Ukraine wants the right to self-determination and to live in a society that shares values similar to Canada's. That, I think, is why Canada and Canadians have been so supportive of Ukraine: they share those similar values and want to support Ukraine, maintain its territorial integrity, and not be part of a game of spheres of influence. Quite frankly, we as Canadians should be appalled by the discussion about "spheres of influence" and other countries having the right to dictate to others.

Canada, I think, is moving in the right direction, but there's more we can do. We have to think strategically and boldly and to move forward with new visions and new concepts, such as peacekeeping, because I think we can play a real, prominent role there.

To speak about partisanship, when you are supporting a country that is defending its territorial integrity and this is considered partisanship, we should be proud to be partisan, because Canada is standing up for people who want to defend their own territorial integrity and their families.

• (1705)

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Given the time remaining, we'll have enough time to go through another five-minute round of questions. There are still a few more people who have indicated they want to speak after that, which we will have time for.

I will start off with Ms. Alleslev. You get the next five minutes.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Thank you very much.

We've talked about what success might look like on both sides and about progress, and they're somewhat contradictory. I'd like to circle back and ask you how we should measure progress and what the performance metrics are to determine critical success factors and evaluate progress and move forward in this conflict.

This question is for both of you.

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** To take measures of progress with respect to the violence is simply to try to reduce the violence and the war going on. No one wants a frozen conflict, but a frozen conflict, as Paul Grod mentioned, is better than one that's hot and raging, as this one is now. A frozen conflict may be the best we can hope for, but I'd hope for much more than that.

In terms of the metrics by which you measure progress against corruption, I'm not sure exactly what the statistics are, but clearly there hasn't been much progress on that front. As to the way you measure economic progress, that's not hard. One can measure per capita income, one can look at the distribution of that income, one can look at the roles being played by oligarchs in the economy and in the Rada. Those are some of the metrics one would look at.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** We measure, then, violence and corruption and economic measures and oligarch influence. Thank you.

Mr. Grod.

**Mr. Paul Grod:** I think one key element is to understand that Russia wants to see Ukraine as a failed state and is doing everything internationally and internally to undermine Ukraine's viability to make it a failed state and to turn the west against Ukraine. We see this through economic pressure. We see it through strong foreign intelligence that's happening there.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** We're making investments, though. How do we know we're being successful, and how should we measure that success?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** You asked how, in terms of the conflict, we measure success there. Number one, very simply, is that you measure how many artillery shells are flying across from the occupied territories into Ukraine. You measure the number on a daily basis. The OSCE does so, and they issue a daily report. You can see where the artillery shells are coming from. Let's not say, then, that both sides have to agree. It's very clear where the artillery shells are coming from and bombing villages. That's number one: we need to see that come to an end.

We also need to see an end to human rights abuses. We should be monitoring the number of human rights abuses in the occupied territories, in Crimea, and frankly in Russia itself. We see political opponents being executed. We're seeing journalists in Crimea being basically subjected to investigation and shutdown. That's another metric: what is Russia doing in terms of being an honest citizen and not abusing human rights of its own citizens or in the occupied territories?

It's important for us to call things by their actual names and not continue to turn it into some sort of "this is a conflict". This is not a conflict. It's a war by Russia against Ukraine.

In terms of Ukraine, I think we can see a lot of progress. You could say...and in fact the last U.S. ambassador as he was leaving Ukraine said that he had seen more reforms in the country in the last two and a half years than he had in 25 years, and that Ukraine is going in that right direction.

We don't have to monitor elections anymore—

• (1710)

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Now can you look at it from the reverse? Heaven forbid, we wouldn't want it to happen, but what types of indicators or metrics would indicate escalation, deterioration, or worsening of the situation? What should we be watching for to ensure that the situation isn't getting worse?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** Number one, we should be watching troop movements. The most recent Russian troop movements, with their latest military exercise called Zapad this past summer, were very troubling. The escalating number of Russian troops in Belarus on the Ukrainian border and the border with the Baltics was very troubling. We should be watching for those kinds of metrics and raising red flags right away, because we can't sit back and say that we need to engage with Russia but then allow them to amass hundreds of thousands of troops on the borders of these sovereign countries in efforts to destabilize the situation.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Mr. Westdal.

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** I'd only add that in terms of the economy, one thing to look at is whether Ukraine can win any confidence of essential foreign investors, because there's certainly investment required to make progress in the economy.

One thing to look at very closely right this week, right these days, is whether there's going to be another spasm of instability in the capital. As I said, there are protesters now gathering again on the Maidan, and the current government is very unpopular. You can imagine what this kind of political stability means for trying to raise capital for Ukraine, for trying to find investment in our market or in Europe to invest in Ukraine. It's urgently required, but that kind of political stability isn't going to help. That is one of the indicators of a problem.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bezan.

**Mr. James Bezan:** I just want to point out to the committee that there were 13 Canadians who were put on that first list, who were banned from Russia. Twelve of us were parliamentarians who were very involved, from all parties, in denouncing Russia's aggression in Ukraine. I want to point out that Mr. Grod was put on the list just because he represents the Ukrainian community here in Canada. He was put on the list based on his ethnicity. That to me is deplorable, and that is exactly what Vladimir Putin and the Kremlin did.

Mr. Grod, would you agree—it's been said a number of times—that Putin is provoked by weakness? Do you agree with that statement?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** I absolutely agree with that statement. He takes advantage of there being weaknesses. The time right after the president of Ukraine, Yanukovich, fled and the parliament was looking for a democratic resolution to the prevailing vacuum, was

the particular time when Vladimir Putin struck, both in Crimea and in the Donbass.

Let's also not forget, Mr. Bezan, that Russia has not declared war against Ukraine. Vladimir Putin denies to his own people that he is financing and operating a war in Ukraine, because that has the potential to be very unpopular. It is well documented by such NGOs as the Atlantic Council, Freedom House, and others that Russian soldiers who are dying in the Donbass area are not even being given proper burials, because they're trying to avoid this becoming another Afghanistan for them. There are also Russian soldiers dying in the Donbass as they've been sent to take more territory.

**Mr. James Bezan:** We keep hearing from Mr. Westdal.... You talked about this protest going on at the Maidan.

These protests are taking place right now in front of the Rada, in front of their parliament buildings. The protesters are protesting that they want to see more anti-corruption measures taken. The protests have heated up a few times. Often, however, in front of Parliament Hill here we'll have thousands of people out protesting and supporting different causes, and it doesn't mean that our democracy is falling apart or that we're a failed state. I would hope you would allow citizens.... We have youth here who are part of the Canada-Ukraine parliamentary internship program who were on the Maidan. These aren't soldiers who were carrying out a coup against Yanukovich; these are the faces of the future. They're the present in Ukraine, wanting to change and be more integrated with Europe.

You and I both grew up in the Parkland region in Manitoba. We have the saying, "you drank the Kool-Aid." Have you spent enough time in Russia, now that you have your business interests in Russia, that you have drunk the Kool-Aid?

• (1715)

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** No, not at all. I don't think there have ever been demonstrations on Parliament Hill that compare with the months of demonstrations that took place prior to the last overthrow, and I—

**Mr. James Bezan:** I was in Ukraine for parliamentary elections back in 2010 when Yanukovich won. I tell you, the thugs who were dominating the streets back then were nothing compared with what we saw on the Maidan, all the people who were brought in from—

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** What I was saying is that nothing on our Parliament Hill has been anything like comparable to those demonstrations, not in all of our history. The point I was making was simply that in terms of economic prospects for Ukraine, this kind of political instability obviously isn't helpful.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Ukrainian leaders themselves would tell you that they have to have parliamentary and government reform. They're working towards such measures, and people are becoming frustrated and want to see it happen more quickly.

I'll say this, that whereas Yushchenko squandered the opportunity that was given to him after the Orange Revolution, Poroshenko is at least taking the steps to move forward. That's why Canada continues to support Ukraine, in the hope of seeing those democratic reforms and anti-corruption measures put in place.

I want to come back to the issue of what else we can do for Ukraine.

Mr. Grod, you mentioned that certain measures are coming to an expiration. There are things that President Poroshenko asked for, such as more RADARSAT imagery, to help with the intel sharing concerning what's happening in Donbass.

Could you elaborate further on some of the things that need to be extended sooner rather than later in the current programs that we have in place with Ukraine?

**Mr. Paul Grod:** We've had time to chat quite a bit about the defensive measures, so I won't spend too much time on that topic. I think really what we need to focus on is reforming the country.

It is making some great progress. I think we are on the cusp of really solidifying and institutionalizing these democratic initiatives we've been working on, whether for judicial reform and how to get rid of corrupt judges, whether by supporting the anti-corruption bureau, or whether by supporting decentralization and putting in further elements that will reduce or prevent some of the corrupt practices that unfortunately were inherited from the Soviet Union. Those are the kinds of things Canada can continue to do.

That's why I was very troubled, when we see that we've made such great progress....

By the way, Canada is not the largest donor to Ukraine, but is, we've been told over and over again, a leading donor, in the sense that we'll take the amount of money we have—that paltry \$15 million—and will be the leader on a project, and others will follow because Canada is behind it. It's very sad to see that such a small amount, which was very effective, may completely disappear. Our big call is for our foreign policy, our defence policy, and our international development policy to be fully aligned, with all the levers being pulled to help make sure that Ukraine is a successful stay.

**The Chair:** I believe Mark Gerretsen and Yves Robillard will split some time, but I'll leave that to you.

Mark, you have the floor.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Westdal, I want to understand the comments you were making a few minutes ago about Russia's interest in not going past the conflict line in the Donbass region where they currently are.

That's correct, isn't it, that you don't think they have an interest in going any further?

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** I don't think they have an interest in changing that border. The point is that Russia has an enduring, eternal interest in the geopolitical orientation of all of Ukraine. That's my point.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** You also said, didn't you, that the primary inhabitants of the region they are currently occupying wanted them there?

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** I think Kiev lost the loyalty of a critical measure of the Crimea and the Donbass. Yes, there was an invasion—those little green men were Russian—but there was also that loss of loyalty.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Does that justify it?

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** Crimea was taken without a shot. Too many in the Donbass, and certainly in Crimea—

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Does that justify it? You were the one who proposed that they should be sorting out their own problems, but how can you justify that because the people there wanted the Russians to be there, essentially, and that the Russians won't go any further, how does that justify their invading another country and occupying it, even though it's just a territory of it? It's like if Quebec suddenly said, "We want to be part of the United States." Should the rest of us just say, "Okay, that's fine"?

I know I'm really oversimplifying with a really dumb example, but I'm just trying to understand your logic. How does that justify their actions?

• (1720)

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** If you want to imagine analogous situations, I think you should think back to when there was a Warsaw Pact and imagine how the United States would react were the Warsaw Pact suddenly to be in Prince Edward Island.

From a Russian point of view, this is strategic territory and always will be. When the Maidan trashed that EU-brokered agreement—those were the most fateful few hours in the history of modern Ukraine—and announced that there would be a downgrading of the Russian language and appointed well-known Russophobes to security posts and announced that it was going to join NATO, any sensible leader of the Kremlin would have reacted.

Now, you can argue that he overreacted—

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** I'm sorry, I'm running out of time.

Don't you think it would have been the right thing to do for the Ukrainians to sort it out amongst themselves as to whether or not they should join NATO, and whether or not they should...? Let them sort out that problem themselves, rather than having another nation coming in and occupying them just because a certain part of the region was empathetic to what they were proposing.

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** It wasn't Ukraine that threw out the EU agreement. It was literally the crowd in the Maidan. Ukraine had agreed to a 10-month extension.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** That's not the way we heard it. But, anyway—

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** Read what happened on February 21 in Kiev.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** The last minute and a half has to go to Mr. Robillard.

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** I have 30 seconds, I think.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** My question is for Mr. Grod and Mr. Westdal.

What communications strategies has Russia used with regard to its activities in Eastern Europe and Ukraine? Have these strategies been effective? Conversely, what communications strategies has NATO used with regard to its operations in Central Europe and Eastern Europe? How could they be improved?

[English]

**Mr. Chris Westdal:** Well, information and propaganda wars are raging on both sides. When I said that this cold war we're back in is more dangerous than the last one, one of the reasons is we're now in a quite frightening age of cyberwarfare and cyber-weapons, and hearts and minds are more targets than they have ever been, and social media and information manipulation is now a part of the struggle. That game is on and we're going to have to play. The Russians are feeding as much information into the news there and elsewhere with their slant as is NATO and our side too.

I don't think that's going to stop. I think that's part of what's been called hybrid warfare. There's nothing new in information and propaganda being a part of a war effort. It's now new technology, though.

**Mr. Paul Grod:** I don't think NATO is doing enough to battle the information war. I think you were caught flat-footed because that really was not in NATO's mandate, and as a result, they're playing catch-up in a major way.

I wanted to say the important thing to remember is that we're a middle power. Canada's a middle power. Ukraine is a middle power. How would we feel if the United States didn't like our foreign policy? We decide not to support a mission of theirs or take even another route and say we're going to change our direction. We don't want to be part of a particular alliance. Does that then justify the United States invading Windsor and maybe the industrial heartland of Canada in order to extract a pound of flesh to say, "We're not going to allow Canada to choose its own foreign policy? We're going to militarily take over a region of Canada and destabilize Canada?" That's exactly what is happening in Ukraine.

**Mr. James Bezan:** The last time that happened was the War of 1812. We won't let it happen again.

**Mr. Yves Robillard:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** I'm going to take one quick one, because we didn't get to it today and I did hear this when I went on the trip with the committee.

If you fast forward to a place where we actually get a UN presence in that region, and it's complex to even get there, but assuming we get there, if that UN presence is put on the contact line, because nothing's changed between now and that point, I want to know, Mr. Grod, your feeling on whether or not that might inadvertently legitimize Russia's occupation of Ukrainian territory.

• (1725)

**Mr. Paul Grod:** If the mission is simply on the line of contact, then it will essentially freeze that conflict. We don't want either a hot conflict or a frozen conflict, because essentially those people are going to be put under the same level of human rights abuses as they're experiencing today and experiencing in Crimea.

Why would we punish the Ukrainian people for choosing their own destiny?

**The Chair:** I tend to agree with you. But we would have to wind that right back to the border, and Russia would have to agree to that in order to get UN peacekeepers there in the future to make sure that it stays the way it should be.

**Mr. Paul Grod:** Well, they've agreed to that essentially under the Minsk agreements. We just want them to implement that and allow for the Ukrainians or, quite frankly, the UN peacekeepers to allow the control of that border again.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Gentlemen, thank you both for coming today. Your testimony was interesting and informative and the committee will consider it as we move forward.

Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

---





Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

---

### SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

---

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

---

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <http://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

---

### PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

---

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

---

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.noscommunes.ca>