



The Central and East European Coalition (CEEC) represents more than 20 million American voters whose heritage lies in this region. This is a coordinated statement reflecting the position of our 18 member organizations.

January 6, 2022

UPCOMING MEETINGS ON UKRAINE SHOULD COUNTER KREMLIN REVANCHISM

The discussions scheduled in the coming week regarding Ukraine will be pivotal to the future of European and transatlantic security. The bilateral United States-Russia Strategic Stability Dialog meeting on January 10 in Geneva, the NATO-Russia Council talks on January 12 in Brussels, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe dialog on January 13 in Vienna may set a new tone for relations between the West and Russia and determine the standing of democratic values as a priority worthy of defense by the U.S. and its allies and partners. The CEEC is very concerned about the potential outcomes of these meetings and their implications for security in our region of interest. Our membership organizations represent the diaspora communities of the region, including those from Ukraine, Georgia, and Belarus. Together we will closely monitor the progress of these diplomatic efforts.

We are alarmed by the draft treaties issued on December 17 by the Russian Foreign Ministry. Their terms read like wish lists of security guarantees the Kremlin wants the West to abide by and amount to an attempt by the Kremlin to take control of the talks. We find the documents' proposals to be in complete violation of the democratic principles held by the U.S., NATO, and OSCE nations, and in denial of the reality that NATO is a defensive alliance open by self-determined choice to sovereign nations that meet the terms of membership. American voters in the communities we represent very much value NATO membership and the presence of U.S. and NATO forces in the CEE region. They would not accept a withdrawal of those troops, or of CEE NATO members from the alliance, as alluded to in the documents.

We appreciate the Administration's pledge to decide nothing about European security without the presence of the nations concerned. All nations in our region of interest are on the front lines of Putin's revanchism and they should all be included in discussions relevant to their security. It follows that security and territorial integrity of the nations along Russia's western borders are integral to the defense of U.S. national interests. Preservation of democracy in all countries bordering Russia is essential to protecting our American values here at home. Therefore, the Kremlin needs to honor its commitment to the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, signed by the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. to guarantee Ukraine's territorial integrity, independence, and sovereignty. The memorandum, along with the OSCE's founding principles as defined in the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 and the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997, should provide the foundation for these discussions, as well as any follow-on talks.

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe are seriously threatened by the Kremlin's recent and ongoing actions and need unyielding measures by NATO and the international community to deter the Kremlin's efforts to bring the region back under its control. The U.S., NATO, and the OSCE must promptly reassure Ukraine by sending a strong message to the Putin regime. Now is the time to take forceful action to stop the Kremlin's serial violations of international law.

To that end, member organizations of the CEEC support the following measures as a part of next week's talks:

- Increased military assistance to Ukraine by utilizing measures already authorized by the fiscal year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act, to include immediate provision of surface-to-air capabilities;
- Coordinated information campaigns to counter the Kremlin's continuing barrage of narratives that falsely characterize Ukraine's history, the nature of NATO, and other relevant issues;
- The denial of certification for the Nord Stream 2 pipeline as a key element to the negotiations.

The CEEC calls on the U.S. government to go beyond condemning the Kremlin's bad behavior by implementing policies that will effect changes in that behavior. We also continue to urge our communities to act on the local level in support of Ukraine and encourage our constituents to visit ceecadvocacy.org or contact us at ceecoalition@gmail.com for more information and to share their efforts.

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