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Michael P. Hrycak,
LTC, USA, Ret.

US Ukraine Security Dialogue VIII

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By: Michael P. Hrycak, LTC, USA, Ret.

Securing Ukraine's Sovereignty: The Road Ahead

Introduction by Steering Committee Program Coordinator Dr. Walter Zaryckyj
(Exec. Dir. Center for US-Ukrainian Relations)

After Words of Welcome from Congressmen Brian Fitzpatrick (R) – PA, and Sander Levin (D) – MI. Pavlo Klimkin, Ukraine's Minister of Foreign Affairs lauded the performance two weeks before the 1st Battalion of the 72nd Brigade, one of the first units trained by the U.S. Army. He believes Ukraine will prevail in this war by Russia against Europe by Ukrainian spirit and professionalism through training.

The first panel – Divining Ways to Strengthen Ukraine Militarily, Panel: John Herbst (EAC Director/Atlantic Council of the United States-former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine), Colonel General Ihor Smershko (Advisor to President Poroshenko), Dr. Phillip Karber (President, Potomac Foundation), and James Sherr (Senior Fellow, Royal Institute of International Affairs).

DISCUSSION

General Smershko: Explained that Ukraine's Army of 120,000 had no concept of a European strategic approach in 1991, but by 1996 had proclaimed a strategic partnership, although Europe is still without a strategy. The Ukrainian army needs:

1. A Strategic plan – identify who is the enemy, what structure and armament are needed; and
2. Support from our Western Allies, currently 50,000 Soldiers in Dobas and Luhansk, and if Russia employs their air force, we'll need Western assistance for air defense.

Dr. Karber:

1. It is hard to think that 2014-15 is now a frozen conflict, but counter that it is a bleeding conflict. When he first visited Ukraine three years ago, only 10 battalions were combat ready at 70% manpower, no one expected that after 20 years, they'd be able to get out to the East.;
2. The new Ukrainian army is made up of a new generation of combat trained leaders that have seen how their troops have suffered;
3. Reality: NATO needs Ukraine more than Ukraine needs NATO. The Ukrainian lessons learned are reminding the United States of lessons they have forgotten. Russia has deployed 40,000 troops, of which about 10,000 are Russian, and about 700 Main Battle Tanks, which is more than the United Kingdom, Germany, and France combined. Currently, in Adviiivka the Russians achieved a double echelon penetration, but the Ukrainian Army has counterattacked successfully. Russian military options (after initial successes, has now stalled/failed):

1. A Crimean land bridge is needed because Crimea is a loser economically for Russia, it depends upon mainland Ukraine; (Long Campaign)
2. The Novorossiya Project – planned up to Odessa, as seen in the Kavkaz Exercise in September, 2016;
3. A Full Scale Invasion – followed by extended pacification. Ukraine – now has 22 active brigades, with a goal of 30 combat brigades; vs. Russian weakness, who don't want to commit conscripts to combat, they are undergoing massive modernization, but that will take several years. In the meantime, Colonel (now Lieutenant General) Zabrovsky's Raid behind Russia's front lines in July, 2014, was the largest of its kind in the last century, and now he is commanding the 80th Brigade, who had defended Luhansk Airport under the command of Major General Kovalchuk. General Zabrovsky has spoken at Fort Benning and the United States Military Academy. Ukraine needs to know it won't be abandoned and needs to mount a major attack as well as continued sanctions.

Professor Sherr:

Since the departure of former president Victor Yanukovich, there has been a great military burden. Russians are fighting in Donbass for specific economic objectives and their aim is not a frozen conflict, but to undermine confidence in and fragment Ukraine. So far the West has responded with economic sanctions to diminish Russian capacity to wage war, but within this timeframe it won't deter their behavior. Russian forces are not occupation forces, but strike forces, as we saw in August, 2014, and again in January, 2015. The Minsk Accords are not just a military result, but a product of Information Warfare, therefore there is no silver bullet.

1. Ukraine needs not just lethal aid, but the West needs to learn as much as teaching hybrid war by stealth, and high technology combined with arms battle;
2. In a military sphere, Ukraine needs to work on middle and upper leadership, without corruption or uncooperative personnel. As Dr. Karber pointed out the Ministry of Defense has to develop expertise at a higher operational level, because mistakes at a higher operational level can lead to disaster, making weapons being lethal or non-lethal is not as fundamental as secure communications and countermeasures. US-Ukraine hold all the cards, but they're afraid to play them.

During the Question & Answer session Dr. Karber explained that Ukraine's Yavrov Training Area is only a Brigade Maneuver capable training area in Europe, where the US Army is training at lower echelons, but the US is constrained from going into combat with trained troops, while the Canadian Army is allowing their trainers to go with units. The United States is out of Electronic Warfare currently, but needs to assess Russian capability. Together with Dr. Karber, all opined that the Minsk Accords don't address naval power, where the occupation of Crimea deprived Ukraine of a naval defense capability, which now needs to modernize along with their Air Force. They also need to rely on current experienced operational level commanders, not civil leaders.

The next panel, Assessing Ways to Secure Ukraine on the Diplomatic/Political Front. Panel: William Taylor (Executive Vice President of US Institute of Peace); Andriy Levus (Chair of State Subcommittee on State Security in Ukrainian Rada); Vlad Socor (Senior Fellow of Jamestown Foundation); Luke Coffey (Director of Allison Center for Foreign Policy of the Heritage Foundation).

DISCUSSION

William Taylor introduced Andrij Levus, who was in charge of defense at the Euromaidan and, after the Revolution of Dignity, gained combat experience in Eastern Ukraine as Deputy Head of the Volunteer Battalion, and also in 2014 became a Member of Parliament and headed the of Subcommittee on State Security. He explained that to answer why Putin started the war, one would have to answer what we have to do further. Without Ukraine, Russia, in the concept of the Russian Empire, would cease to exist:

Andrij Levus:

1. Have the strongest active Army in Europe;
2. Offer attractive investment options;
3. Develop high technology agriculture.

Seizing Ukraine would protect Putin's system. Russia regularly has 5,000-9,000 Russian regular troops in the Donbass territory, and without them, Ukraine would be able to retake Donbass. The threat posed by Russia, in this real and active war with artillery barrages and attacks every day, is for all of Europe, and Ukraine to fight to its last drop of blood. Vlad Socor explained that the Minks Accords are conditional and dependent upon sovereign territorial integrity and constitutional changes and would require empowering political opponents and override western democratic principles. He feels that there was little legitimacy to the Normandy format, that Germany adopted because of France, but France was not qualified to participate. Therefore, it turned into a bilateral process between Germany and Russia. He feels this will be no Yalta and Ukraine needs to be more mature than its media. The goal for Ukraine is to develop economically, stop corruption and be able to absorb Donbass/Luhansk.

Luke Coffey Ukraine needs:

1. Establish a baseline – how to deal with Russia, as long as Putin is in charge, they can't be credible partners
2. Have a Grand strategy that determines how to deal with not just Russia
3. Gain defensive weapons and other lethal assistance, if modern weapons are given to the Middle East, why not Ukraine?
4. Ukraine trying to reform democracy, economy and fighting a war, needs realistic progress reports and timelines
5. Have a renewed focus on Crimea, apply some pressure on the Muslim world in regards to Crimean Tartars
6. Continuation of sanctions, with a unified front, will continue to turn the screws economically against Russia

He concluded by referring to a Russian policy during the 1853 Crimean War, where they pushed forward encroachment, but would stop and wait when resisted.

The next panel Ukrainian Security and the Incoming Administration. Panel: Glen Howard (President, Jamestown Foundation); John Falk (Pincipal, Vigilent, Inc.); Herman Pirchner (President, American Foreign Policy Council).

DISCUSSION

John Falk felt that recent remarks to the United Nations Security Council by Nikki Haley, US representative to the United Nations that the United States stands with people of Ukraine who are suffering Russian occupation was very important. He feels it is more supportive of the Trump Administration than ever, and Congress has strong bi-partisan support for Ukraine, which was prevented by the prior administration. Haley demanded an end to the Crimean occupation, and suggested that President Trump needs to build up US support for Ukraine. The Ukrainian military has been quite spectacular, standing up to Russian Army. However, it needs:

- A. A Grand Strategy for the government of Ukraine and for its allies, such as the US;
- B. Ukraine needs to unite behind that strategy.

Herman Pirchner sees that we are in transition at the Department of State, and many positions were not filled for those that would play a role in US policy, also there were no publicly available remarks. The position of Secretary Mattis, Secretary Tillerson, and others will develop through interagency processes. Still a lot of bad facts exist because of Russian propaganda.

Glen Howard pointed out that KT MacFarland from the Jamestown Foundation as the Deputy Advisor to the National Security Council, will pursue peace through strength as in the Ronald Reagan administration. He had a conversation with General Mattis about Ukraine, who understands the situation well and with departure of Lt. General Flynn, he is even more influential. Additional suggestions were to support the Ukraine Act of 2014, authorize lethal aid, wait for the Congressional supplemental budget, see if more military aid will be given to Ukraine, be patient, keep rearming and developing arguments and coordinate this message.

John Falk feels that after Brexit, Ukraine can develop trade with the United Kingdom, and should deepen relationships and pursue bilateral trade relations.

Next panel Examining Ways to Bolster Ukraine Economy/Energy Matters. Panel: Roman Popadiuk (Chair, World Affairs Council of America); Ariel Cohen (Senior Fellow, Institute for the Analysis of Global Security); Morgan Williams (US-Ukraine Business Council); Anders Aslund (Senior Fellow, Atlantic Council of the United States).

DISCUSSION

Ariel Cohen explained that after the war with Russia started, Ukraine's GDP declined by 0.7% after 2014, and 2015 it fell below the 2004 level, 2nd from the bottom of Europe. Restructuring debt proceeded well, but we still expect a decline in 2016, also all energy and commodities declined. The country was next to the EU in declining because Iraq/Kazakhstan/UAE were tied in. 53% of electricity is from nuclear sources, which is a success, but corruption and low levels of control are unacceptable. Ukraine needs to deregulate. She was in 162nd place and now 73rd place. Georgia is good example of where deregulation was successful. Also Information Technology, 15-20%, could increase from 2 to 3 billion. There is a need to stress the formation of a National Anti-Corruption Bureau, and better reporting to the U.S.

Anders Aslund explained that

1. Yanukovich stole \$40 billion;
2. 2016-17 was the key to grow 17%; 10% of GDP from occupied Donbass is now .3% of GDP also, 20% of trade with Russia disappeared;
3. Ukraine used to get 4% of GDP from foreign investment, GDP should be growing 6-8%.

1. In 2015 Ukrainian the government deficit was 10% GDP to 2% GDP should be about 5%;
2. Unified Energy Sector, today only imports 1/3 of gas, produce 2/3 and trading on market
3. Banking – ½ of banks closed, bring anti-corruption policies to restore them
4. Float exchange rate, now 2/3 of what was
5. February 2015 5 billion to 50 billion
6. Transparent procurement, needs de-corruption

1. Judicial system needs reform
2. State administration – need decent salaries and problem will be solved
3. Stop selling off 20% of public lands, then get market price to start off at that level
4. Privatization – nothing done last year
5. IMF financial stabilization – West providing \$5 billion/year, Ukraine has paid off foreign debt \$73 to \$71 billion, expand import quotas 2% to open marketplace

Morgan Williams explained that America First, put Ukraine into that formula.

1. Give visibility for US companies in Ukraine
2. Includes ports, rivers, etc. The U.S. not helping with the coal industry and we need an export bank

We need to double Ukraine's agricultural production, and make land marketable and we need credit for Ukraine exports. Ariel Cohen finds it mind boggling that oligarchs are still buying from the Russian regime.

Next panel, Information Hybrid Warfare in Ukraine. Panel: William Courtney (Executive Director, RAND Corporation); Oeksandr Skrypnyk (Deputy Chair Rada Committee on Science and Education); Stephen Blank (Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy Council); Janusz Bugajski (Senior Fellow, Center for European Policy Analysis).

DISCUSSION

Oleksander Skrypnyk explained what is not funny or serious – but fake. He referred to an article written by then Lt. General Mattis about hybrid Information Warfare, seen as the 4th block of war, 1st local, then very global. Russia uses private business for protection, so it is a hybrid government/business. For example Vesti.ru – is Russia's main state news, but the 1st page shows almost nothing about Russia.

Professor Stephen Blank, formerly teaching Information Warfare (IW) at US Army War College, explained that Moscow feels it is at war with the U.S. First, tell the truth – a systematic expansion of tools to dismantle the Russian campaign goes from a source of strength to a new weakness for Putin. NATO has new funding to fight this.

Janusz Bugajski discussed his recent book (Jamestown Foundation) regarding Russian Information Warfare objectives:

1. Russia depicts Ukraine as a failed state and a fake nation, or most recently through a failed coup in February, 2014;

2. Russia depicts the war with Russia as a family matter, Moscow's brotherly love to bring her younger brother in line;

3. Ukraine's alleged failure as a state, the Kremlin attempts to leverage the west over Ukraine's policy to bring within their objectives, specifically to obstruct/prevent Ukraine from moving into Western institutions. They have a long list of historical deceptions:

1. The Russian elite claim much of Ukraine's history as their own, e.g. Christianity, Kozak

2. Russia deflects the mass murders of Ukrainians over several centuries by denying Ukraine its historical narrative. They attempt to wipe out the very idea of a separate Ukrainian identity and culture. What can Kyiv do? Focus on number of strategies:

1. Turn the tables on Russian state propaganda, much of its history was pilfered from Ukraine, Belarus, etc... Ukraine's mass media should focus on busting the biggest myths about Ukraine

2. Ukrainian writers and officials – debunk Russia's historical facts cultivated about itself, e.g. USSR great country in 20th Century. Speak and write about the mass murders of Russians by the KGB. Focus on Russia's economic decline because of government corruption and mistakes

3. No need to rebut every Russian commentary, but every official Russian government statement should be dissected analyzed and corrected by the Ukrainian government. Russia's fake federalism contrasted with Ukraine's moves for general decentralization.

4. Politicians and media heads try to repeat fake news, even in Parliament, they want to enact a law to prevent the EU twitter feed "Mythbusters", Ukraine needs to add to anti-fact offensive, e.g. The Czech Republic is counteracting Russia's war of words and has a special website to counteract Moscow. Czech officials believe Russia is behind 40 internet sites trying to peddle propaganda, part of the Czech Interior Ministry is checking and countering with social media.

5. Russia's capture of Crimea and Donbas is actually strengthening Ukraine's ethnic identity, should be the message broadcasted into Russia saying "We are the victors, you are the losers".

6. Regarding unofficial trolls, establish enough Ukrainian counterparts to spread information and disinformation within Russia to cause rifts within the Russian elite, etc.

During the Question and Answer: "The purpose of an information war is to undermine a society or state and make the opposing state a "protivnik" of post". When visiting the U.S. Strategic Center of Excellence, I asked how many here are experts in Russia and speak Russian and the answer was none. They were not set up to combat Russia.

Oleksandr Skrypnyk – I know people that clean sources, find trolls, and send correct information – more like in the beginning of the Donbas war. They were mostly volunteers, not supported by government, but by the private sector and they recognized that this fight is for the minds and souls of Western Europe and United States. The big war is where we need more money and tools. It is hard to find the way Cyber or Info attacks that Russia directly orders from government structures, e.g. in Iran, a special virus by the West to stop their nuclear equipment.

Professor Blank – It is hard to get our private sector to help. We have to set up Information agencies that establish unimpeachable sources of information and proof. As Ukraine becomes wealthier, it will be able to create and set up organizations with unimpeachable credibility. We don't think its possible in the West to set up private media. It needs to be done as part of a National Security Strategy, which will be incorruptible. With the current VoA (Voice of America) it took a while to get Congress to support broadcasting into Russia. Cyberwarfare is the taking down of networks and until last year, taking down information, as seen in the last election, there is more Russian definition where they don't distinguish between Cyber warfare and Info Warfare. An attack on power grids using Cyber Warfare is an attack against the entire structure of society. Until we understand the difference, we must start using all available tools and not just the U.S. definition of taking down networks.

William Courtney – this is in part, why the Department of Homeland Security set up protections for cybersecurity. Only when President Obama sanctioned election interference, did the election system get included in it.

Oleksandr Skrypnyk – A big part of war is getting information. The part of cyber war, worst example, is we don't know if information is right or wrong. In the returning of friendship when vulnerabilities are found, hackers try to keep it open. In some situations or some cases that are more serious, it is not always hacker attacks but sometimes stupidity or Russian cyber-attacks.

Rep. Brendon Boyle – PA (D) (Philadelphia and suburban Philadelphia), stepped in (about to be called back to the floor for votes)-importance of Ukraine, Foreign Policy Committee, worked a lot on it. Wish we could take for granted that the U.S. is standing up for freedom and independence for every country for Europe. For example, the War of 1812 our second war for independence – like what Putin is doing in Ukraine – as an aggressor. Whether U.S., Georgia or Ukraine, we have seen that the playbook is to subvert western democracies. Now, more than ever we need to see the passage of the Stand with Ukraine Act and other important legislation – important to Europe and U.S. – with strong bipartisan support. First and foremost, sanctions on Russia are to remain in place and only changed with a change in Russia's behavior.

Next panel, Ukrainian Security and The Next Congress. Panel: William Miller (Senior Scholar, Woodrow Wilson International Center), Darrel Owens (National Security Advisor for Senator Patrick Toomey (R) PA), Tyler Brace, National Security Advisor for Senator Portman (R) OH.

DISCUSSION

Ambassador William Miller – We have military, economic, and political coercion exercised by a neighboring state – Russia vs. Ukraine, including attacks against Europe, and against the United States, and the international peace that we constructed after conclusion of Cold War and Second World War. We

are at war, and must take steps to combat that war, in our interest and interest of all nations. Call it what it is, in all of its terrible aspects. Propaganda, distortion of reality, distortion of history, perversion of the press, necessity to act in a positive, decided way against warfare of this kind. We are instructing our children to read 1984 again. Goebbels, that wasn't so long ago. How much history do we have to forget, how much history do we have to remember to have a world of peace, prosperity for the benefit of all mankind.

Darrell Owens - There isn't one unified voice in Congress on Ukraine, or many issues. Keep that in mind. Senator Toomey, a big supporter of Ukraine, recognizes the enormous threat from Russia. We're working hard on the Russia issue, Iran issue, and Ukraine issue and are looking for additional sanctions vs. Russia. How does the U.S. respond? The War College has some good information. The U.S. is still adapting: \$290 million for support, \$445 million support for Ukraine in 2016, Congress is active in supporting lethal and nonlethal aid for Ukraine. We were hamstrung by the former administration, but in Congress itself we were restricted until some defense institutional reforms were implemented in Ukraine. What is Congress looking at now? A lot remains to be seen. What is this White House going to do?

Tyler Brace, National Security Advisor for Senator Portman (R) OH, Current environment in Congress – themes:

1. The new administration is learning how to govern; there's a process that takes time, every administration goes through it
2. Intense partisanship in Congress, luckily there isn't one for support for Ukraine – preserving bipartisanship should be a primary goal. The Senate is going to be the center for a lot of these discussions and most outspoken on a lot of these issues but this is not taking away from leaders of the House.
3. Legislation on Ukraine; Sen. Portman security legislation, this year we conditioned on key military reforms, budget procurement, accountability, force employment (some NATO goals) sending message on importance to continue structural reforms as well as maintaining a strong level of support for Ukraine fighting aggression.
4. Information War, Senator Portman – NDAA for first time since the U.S. Information Agency, Information Security Act to protect- acute national security threats.
5. What can friends of Ukraine do, to get US government support? Most important, form alliances with like-minded individuals from Eastern Europe. Many countries facing similar threats, info war, economic war, fighting corruption, etc. Other countries facing similar challenges, when you have more voices magnifying key points, the more attention you can get. Not just Diaspora, but all of you, Georgians, Poles, Baltics, etc. Pick your battles, some battles are more important than others. Everyone wants something in a new bill, but from a strategy viewpoint, better to consolidate instead of a little in each bill.

Question for Foreign Relations Committee, which one to move. Darrell Owens - S.94 – countering Russian aggression bill. Sen. Toomey is looking at it, and some others may move in another direction.

Tyler Brace – Senator Portman has the only bill regarding the Info War. The media has handled Russian interference in the election by portraying it as hacking. The problem is part of a larger Info operation, we should be saying/responding to the Russian Information Campaign against the United States. Should we

be investigating? Absolutely, the only problem is to what extent others will politicize this issue, we're warning you not to do this. We must maintain bipartisan approach to dealing with this.

Darryl Owens – There is the potential to have blowback if it becomes a partisan issue. If this changes into influencing the election of our president, what Russia was originally intending, we need to be very careful where this goes.

Dr. Zaryckyj question – Do you have enough to say sanctions will remain? Russians haven't done enough to lift sanctions. Any consensus how Democrats and Republicans think? Possibility that weaponry enters the equation in next six months?

Tyler - When asked of Tillerson during confirmation – support weapons? Yes. I think we have to be careful any effort to use lethal assistance for consolation for anything bigger, like lifting sanctions. Some aren't kinetic, look at EW (Electronic Warfare) threat. A lot we could be doing, but can't allow the conversation to distract us from what bigger issue is at stake. What is happening in Ukraine, U.S. rules based order is being tested. Yes, we will continue to wholeheartedly support lethal assistance, authorized several times and even spelled out, kind of a bright shining object filler for actual strategy. Sanctions should be maintained – yes, absolutely.

Darryl Owens – Some questions were to take away some presidential waiver authority. Go back to EW and Cyber, we've been looking at it a lot. The US still does not have a clear strategic Cyber Policy, whether incrementally or larger intrusions.

Tyler – how does NATO do it with 28 nations, other nations don't make distinctions between Info and Cyber, and we do. Not only do we need a more coherent and complete policy, but how do the different tools intersect.

John Falk question – everyone in this room deeply appreciate your tireless efforts on behalf of Ukraine. To issues of having working with Ukraine, having worked with Ministry of Defense, having to navigate tough for Ukraine, would your senators authorize accelerating authorizations for gear authorized and approved to give as quickly and efficiently as possible?

Tyler – part of the problem, long timelines for delivery and security assistance, source of frustration, the problem so far is Ukraine has to rely on the FMS (Foreign Military Sales) process, not designed to move quickly, but for oversight, to move quickly we need to use Executive Branch authority, which President Obama declined to do, so had to rely on the slower process. Two reasons:

1. Executive Branch authorities apply very differently
2. Try to build a legislative framework to make policies more effective, with Iraq have had 15 years, with Ukraine we are starting at the beginning.

We were forced, because Congress has driven all assistance for Ukraine to be funneled through this longer process, another area is where Senator Portman tried to assist license process. The previous administration funneled it through the National Security apparatus. Given the changing administration, we should have new opportunities to define those processes.