

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting
its participation at the Meeting of the Sub- Committee on
Future Security and Defence Capabilities (DSC)**

Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association

**Kyiv, Ukraine
October 12, 2009**

and

**The 72nd Rose-Roth Seminar
Lviv, Ukraine
October 13–15, 2009**

Report

Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Future Security and Defence Capabilities (DSC)

Only days before the launch of a pivotal presidential election campaign in Ukraine, a delegation of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's Sub-Committee on Future Security and Defence Capabilities visited Kyiv on October 12, 2009.

The main conclusion the delegation reached was that domestic politics continued to cause significant difficulties in the execution of coherent foreign and security policies and the continuation of reform processes; however, there was some prospect of greater stability and progress after the conclusion of the election process.

The group of members of parliament from eight NATO countries was led by Sub-Committee Rapporteur Sverre Myrli of Norway. The delegation sought to better understand Ukraine's security concerns through meetings with members of the Ukrainian Parliament and representatives of the executive branch.

In addition, the delegation visited the testing facilities of the Antonov aircraft company. Antonov transport aircraft are used extensively by NATO nations to provide strategic lift capabilities in support of operations, including NATO's mission in Afghanistan.

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

According to Andriy Shkil, Head of the Ukrainian Delegation to the NATO PA, the main geopolitical orientation of Ukraine was not at issue in the election, even if there was pressure from abroad to change this orientation.

Rather, the focus of the electorate was on the economic crisis and on issues of law and order. Indeed, members of parliament related that they had not had a single question from constituents on NATO in several years; voters were more concerned about the issues such as the minimum wage, the Russian language's official status, energy policy, and education. If candidates disagreed on anything regarding NATO, it was more about whether a referendum would be required.

Shkil predicted that Yulia Tymoshenko will be Ukraine's new President, and Ukraine would be in a more stable position and better able to move forward actively in foreign policy and in cooperation with NATO in particular. No matter who wins the presidential election, there was no going back on the broad strategic outlines of Ukraine's foreign policy, according to several speakers.

SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CRISIS

The election, it was hoped, would resolve a domestic political deadlock between the President and Prime Minister that was causing significant paralysis. For example, the positions of Minister of Foreign Affairs and of Minister of Defence had been vacant for upwards of six months. The latter was especially important given that the Chief of Staff of the armed forces had resigned and the situation needed

to be stabilized. Members of Parliament suggested that these vacant posts were a result of the political struggle leading up to the Presidential elections.

Ostap Semerak, a member of the Verkhovna Rada's budget committee, explained that the budgetary situation regarding the Ukrainian military was quite complicated and only worsened because of the financial crisis, which had caused a dramatic drop in Ukrainian GDP. In the context of a major reform of the national budgetary system, characterized by increasing devolution to local authorities, the President had vetoed a parliamentary law on decentralization, and the political situation had also prevented the adoption of the government's budget, including funding for the military. He stated that less than 1% of GDP was being devoted to the armed forces in 2009-2010, a very small number by NATO standards; the lion's share of spending was on maintenance of personnel.

Financial problems were hampering the armed forces in a number of ways. First, they had caused a significant reduction in planned combat training activities. The armed forces were also prevented from participating in multinational exercises due to the failure of the Verkhovna Rada to approve necessary legislation; as a result, a great deal of potential funding allocated for this purpose had been wasted. Members of the Rada explained that this was due to the Parliament's dysfunction during the political crisis and in the run-up to the elections. According to Viktor Korendovych, Director of the Department for Military Policy and Strategic Planning of the Ministry of Defence, as a result of the budgetary problems, the defence establishment had had to find properties to sell in order to fund its budget.

DEFENCE REFORMS

Viktor Korendovych of the Ministry of Defence, briefing members on Ukraine's defence reform process, explained that the Ukrainian military was striving for full interoperability with the NATO Response Force; indeed, Ukraine is slated to become the first NATO Partner country to participate in the NATO Response Force.

While plans had called for a reduction in the size of the force from 245,000 personnel in 2005 to 143,000 in 2011, the Ukrainian armed forces had stabilized at roughly 200,000 personnel, a level that was deemed prudent regarding territorial defence needs after the August 2008 war in Georgia.

According to Mykola Tomenko, Deputy Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada, and co-chairman of the Ukraine – NATO Inter-Parliamentary Council, the armed forces were moving towards full professionalisation and other reforms; the only question between the major political groups was the pace of this change. For instance, while the Prime Minister had proposed a rapid professionalisation, the President had rejected this as impossible and instead proposed laws increasing the size of the armed forces.

UKRAINE, NATO, AND REGIONAL SECURITY

Ihor Arguchinskyi, Head of the Department of International Security within the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, focused on Russia's role in

regional security. The Russian political elite continues to seek influence in Ukraine, and has grown more confident given the 'success' of the Georgia conflict, according to Arguchinskyi. Russia's influence on Ukraine – and its view that Ukraine belongs in its sphere of influence -- will be greatest when NATO considers this to be a bilateral issue and none of the Alliance's concern. He suggested that the NATO-Russia dialogue continually reinforce principles of the inviolability of the territorial integrity of states and underline the inevitability of Ukraine's NATO membership.

Ukraine is in the process of implementing its first Annual National Program with NATO. Its prospects for joining the Alliance in the medium term are good, according to Arguchinskyi, who further stated that by and large, Ukraine already meets the standards and criteria for a Membership Action Plan (MAP), and contributes to NATO operations. Ukraine's membership will, in the end, be a purely political decision resting with NATO member states, he said. Ukrainian officials called for a voice in the ongoing discussion on a New Strategic Concept for NATO. Arguchinskyi praised NATO's Liaison Office in Ukraine as having provided extremely valuable assistance in raising the profile of NATO in Ukraine.

ANTONOV AIRCRAFT TESTING FACILITY

The delegation had the opportunity to visit the ANTONOV aircraft-testing facility outside of Kyiv. Marcin Koziel, Head of NATO Liaison Office in Kyiv, briefed members on the technical arrangements in place which allow NATO to lease Antonov aircraft to support various missions, and on the Ukrainian contributions through these arrangements to NATO operations. Aleksandr Kiva, Deputy Director of the Antonov facility, briefed members on the range of aircraft Antonov produces and their use throughout the world, characterizing his company's products as providing reliable and rough airlifter that can operate in extremely challenging conditions and carrying more cargo than its competitors. The delegation learned that even in deepest crisis, the Ukrainian government has remained a confirmed supporter of the Antonov company.

The 72nd Rose-Roth Seminar

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 72nd Rose-Roth Seminar held in Lviv, Ukraine from 13-15 October demonstrated that NATO member countries and their partners in Ukraine and Georgia are working to balance between two competing principles: building a cooperative relationship with Russia and protecting the right of sovereign states to chart their own foreign policy course. The meetings focused on Ukraine but also included sessions on Georgia, Moldova, and Belarus and energy security.

It became apparent that many states of the former Soviet Union feel that they are under increasing pressure from Russia. Ukrainians pointed to the dismissive statements from Moscow that question the independence of the country, the

troubling Russian practice of issuing passports to ethnic Russians in the Crimean region and the use of energy supplies as tool to gain influence over Ukrainian politics. Moldovans spoke to the continued presence of Russian forces in the Transdnistrian region that prop up an internationally unrecognized regime on their national territory. Georgians underlined the ongoing efforts by Russia to create separate states of Abkhazia and South Ossetia out of what is recognized as the sovereign territory of Georgia. In all of those cases, the message was that Russia's ambition is to maintain weak states on its borders that it can exercise significant influence over, particularly in terms of their foreign policy. The main goal of this is to prevent those states from becoming part of Euro-Atlantic structures, which is why the two NATO aspirants of Georgia and Ukraine receive the bulk of this pressure.

There was broad agreement among the participants that it is necessary to build a better relationship with Russia based on mutual interests. The underlying concern, however, was that Russia's perceived strategic interests made it difficult to do this without sacrificing core strategic interests of Ukraine, Georgia and other states in the region. As Borys Tarasyuk, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on European Integration and Founder and Director of the Institute of Euro-Atlantic cooperation said, "Yes, we should have cooperation with Russia, but at what price?"

The session focused on Ukraine showed that it is making substantial progress on reaching NATO standards and the goals set out in the Annual National Plan. At the same time, however, there needs to be a national consensus on joining NATO and that is still lacking. As Simon Lunn from the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces noted, "the whole country joins NATO, not just the military." Although there is a consensus among the major political parties about eventual NATO membership that has not yet translated into broad popular support. However, Andrey Shkil, head of the Ukrainian delegation to the NATO PA, underlined that popular support has increased and that many current members of the Alliance had similar issues with raising public awareness during their drive for accession.

The meetings centred on Moldova and Belarus showed that Russian pressure on its neighbours is not limited to those states seeking NATO membership. Belarus, and until recently Moldova, were both very sympathetic toward Moscow. Yet, according to Vlad Lupan, independent expert, this did not prevent Russian actions in the separatist region of Transdnistria, which ironically has pushed Moldova to adopt an increasingly pro-western posture. Belarus is also adjusting its policies in an effort to engage with the European Union. Taken together, these two cases may show that Moscow's treatment of its neighbours may be pushing them closer to Western institutions.

Energy security and its role in the region sparked considerable discussion among the participants. As Ferdinand Pavel of the German Institute for Economic Research noted, the EU imports 35% of its gas and 45% of its oil from Russia, much of it through pipelines that cross Ukraine. This gives Russia significant leverage that it uses for political as well as economic gain. Several Ukrainian participants

noted that, for example, much of Ukraine's oil refining capacity has been bought by Russian investors who let it sit dormant. Although this would not appear to make economic sense, it has clear political advantages in that it forces Ukraine to remain dependent on Russia.

The final session of the programme focused on Georgia. Giorgi Baramidze, Vice Prime Minister of Georgia, spoke about how Georgia is adopting "strategic patience" in its approach to Russia following the 2008 war. He welcomed the report of the European Commission on the events leading to the war and stressed that Georgia is more determined than ever to make the necessary reforms to integrate into the European Union and NATO. Georgia is making progress, both politically and economically according to Ghia Nodia, Director of the Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development. Economically the country is doing relatively well in global downturn and its free-market approach to foreign investment will remain in place. Georgia, however, is still going through a period of political maturation. The government has learned how to work better with the opposition, but the real test of Georgian democracy will be when it has its first constitutional transfer of power. One point that was clear from the discussion is that the Georgian government and the general public is more determined now to enter NATO and the EU than before the 2008 war.

INTRODUCTION

The 72nd Rose-Roth Seminar held in Lviv, Ukraine from 13-15 October brought together 34 members of parliament from 19 countries for three days of intensive discussion on Ukraine, as well as sessions on Georgia, Moldova, Belarus and energy security. The seminar, jointly organised with the Supreme Rada of Ukraine, gathered delegations from NATO member states as well as Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, the Assembly of Kosovo, Moldova and Georgia, together with representatives from research institutes, non-governmental organizations and NATO.

The principal theme emerging from the discussions was that NATO member countries and their partners in Ukraine and Georgia are working to balance between two competing principles: building a cooperative relationship with Russia and protecting the right of sovereign states to chart their own foreign policy course.

UKRAINE AND NATO

Ukraine's view

The Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine remains one of the major priorities of Ukrainian foreign policy, according to Mykhailo Osnach, Director, NATO Department, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. In his keynote address, Mr.. Osnach suggested that the euphoria of the first years after independence has calmed down, and the Ukrainian state has recognized new challenges and threats; it gave up nuclear weapons and maintained a huge military that it had inherited from the USSR. Its movement towards NATO has included major reforms focused

on modernizing the armed forces, reforming the security sector, continuing its democratic development, as well as building an efficient civil society and a modern market economy. Ukraine's achievements in these regards have been widely recognized.

Reviewing Ukraine's official relations with NATO, Mr.. Osnach pointed to a major step in the past year, when NATO at the political level for the first time said it wished to see Ukraine as a member state. In December last year, Ukraine was invited to engage in an Annual National Programme (ANP) with NATO, which was approved in Ukraine in August. The development of the 2010 ANP was underway, and included chapters on the security sector, economy, judiciary, law and order and other areas. The standards the ANP aims to meet are mostly non-military, according to Mr.. Osnach, and reforms to meet them should continue, despite the difficulties posed by the economic crisis.

Ukraine's ongoing co-operation with NATO includes contributions to operations through peacekeeping forces and strategic lift. The decision has also been taken to include Ukraine in the NATO Response Force, and Ukraine is seeking to co-operate in such diverse areas as the new threats of cyberdefence and piracy, as well as contributing to the Franco-British helicopter initiative. Mr.. Osnach suggested giving new impetus to traditional forms of co-operation such as joint exercises, resettlement of ex-military and disposal of obsolete weapons and munitions. Mr.. Osnach further called for NATO to invite Ukraine to play a more active role in the ongoing transformation of the Alliance, specifically through discussion of NATO's new strategic concept.

Mr. Osnach also underlined that the membership action plan (MAP) remains the only official channel to prepare nations for membership. Therefore, the next stage for Ukraine should still be MAP, even if at a later date, the ANP may be recognized as sufficient preparation for membership.

Regarding Russia, Mr.. Osnach suggested that it is in Ukraine's interest for NATO and Russia to develop a partnership and that Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations in no way endanger any third country, including Russia. On the contrary, NATO membership for Ukraine would be in Russia's interest, as it would insure the stability of Ukraine and the inclusion of another NATO member interested in close co-operation with Russia.

Addressing the issue of the Ukrainian public's view of NATO, Mr.. Osnach affirmed that when the political elites reach consensus on NATO accession, public opinion will follow, as it has in other countries. He suggested opinion had become more favourable towards NATO since the Bucharest Summit declaration. Andrey Shkil, Head of the Ukrainian delegation to the NATO PA, warned that while support for NATO is growing (particularly among younger generations), if NATO countries keep Ukraine in a waiting room, this process could come to a halt; there was urgency to fulfill Ukraine's aspirations before the Ukrainian public and political elite became indifferent.

Professor Oleksiy Haran of the National University "Kyiv Mohyla Academy", underlined the Ukrainian responsibility to conduct reforms, and lamented the

political leadership's inability to move decisively since the Orange Revolution. He also identified three events that have forced Ukraine to reconsider its reliance on NATO assurances. First was the Georgia war, and the participation of the Russian Black Sea Fleet based in Sebastopol. Second was the Russian-Ukrainian gas war in January, and the European position that this was a bilateral issue between Ukraine and Russia. Third is the policy 'reset' declared by the Obama administration towards Russia; without detailed information on the bilateral US-Russia discussions, Ukrainians were left to wonder at whose expense such a reset would come.

Looking forward, Mr. Haran warned of two potential flashpoints in the Russia/Ukraine relationship: the Crimea, and the presence of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, which remained unresolved due to Russia's refusal to begin negotiations on the terms of its withdrawal.

A NATO Perspective

The NATO perspective on co-operation with Ukraine was provided by Marcin Koziel, Head of the NATO Liaison Office in Kyiv. Mr. Koziel stated that Ukraine's security and democratic development remain crucial to the Allies. The strategic decision made by NATO in Bucharest – that Ukraine and Georgia would one day be NATO members - was reiterated at the Strasbourg/Kehl Summit and the recent meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers. Within the Alliance there is no debate about whether Ukraine will become a member; rather it's about the pace of the process.

Mr. Koziel further asserted that the implementation of the Bucharest decisions is between NATO and Ukraine and up to no other nation. The door of NATO remains open to any democracy ready to share the benefits and burdens of membership, any democracy who wishes to become a member and wishes to meet the criteria.

According to Mr. Koziel, there is no other partner nation with whom NATO's co-operation on security sector reform is more vibrant and extensive, offering a range of unique, well funded and expert advice and assistance by Allies to Ukraine. Ukraine's current collaboration with NATO includes an Annual National Program (ANP), which Marcin Koziel characterized as essentially the same as the document that members of Membership Action Plan agree with the Alliance. Ukraine also has the ability to request a meeting of its joint Commission with NATO anytime it feels threatened.

Mr. Koziel considered Ukraine's progress in reforms as mixed. While much had been accomplished by a number of different ministries, Mr. Koziel expressed concern about the underfunding of reforms, particularly in the security sector. He also underlined, on a personal basis, the importance of Ukraine establishing a national consensus on the most important issues on the national agenda, national security first and foremost. He also advised doing everything possible to address corruption, which invites external influence, and the putting in place on an urgent basis of a well-functioning system of interagency co-operation and co-ordination to implement ongoing reforms.

An Independent Assessment

In the second keynote address, a stark view was expressed by James Sherr, the Head of the Russia and Eurasia Programme at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House). Mr. Sherr described Ukraine as entering an especially dangerous period in which it found itself again between the east, west, and itself. For the first time since the end of the cold war, all three factors are unfavourable.

Referencing Ukraine's internal paralysis, Mr. Sherr questioned whether Ukrainian leaders could pull together at a critical moment and overcome the self-interests standing in the way of urgent national tasks. In Ukraine, he asserted, it is easier to obstruct governance than to govern. Ukraine needs not new elections but a new constitution, he asserted.

Looking eastwards, Mr. Sherr saw a dangerous Russia which does not believe in Ukraine's independence to decide its own fate. Mr. Sherr suggested Russian elites may seek to protect their economic interests by the historically proven method of blocking reform of the structural flaws in the Russian economy through the creation of international turbulence.

And looking westwards, Mr. Sherr asserted that the benefits of NATO membership are not as clearly available to Ukraine as they have been in the past. The enlargement issue has moved lower on NATO's agenda; the Georgia war has had important ramifications; and there is a growing perception in this part of the world that NATO members have become less vigilant about their own standards.

As a result, Ukraine's national security establishment has come to four conclusions: in this part of this world, borders are no longer sacrosanct; issues that appeared settled, like Crimea, could be reopened at any time; war is possible here; and without the Article 5 guarantee that comes with membership, there will be no Allied defence of Ukraine.

Among the implications of these conclusions is that Ukraine's defence forces no longer need to be modeled after NATO standards; small, highly motivated and equipped, well-financed forces are fine for the Alliance context, but Ukrainian leaders increasingly see a large, unprofessional force (that will be poorly equipped and un-financeable), coupled with a short and medium-range missile system, as in their national interest.

Mr. Sherr called for the west to maintain its interests and influence by being present and active in Ukraine, committing political and moral resources as well as financial and demonstrating expertise and leadership. He suggested talking less about membership and more about integration, and re-centring the NATO-Ukraine relationship on delivering real security to Ukraine.

UKRAINE AND ENERGY SECURITY

A panel chaired by Vahit Erdem, Head of the Turkish delegation to the NATO PA, discussed Ukraine's energy dependence on Russia and its implications for the European Union. Andriy Chubyk from Ukraine's NOMOS Centre, outlined Ukraine's

current situation: domestic production produces 1/5 of needs in oil and 1/3 in natural gas, ensuring dependence on Russian supplies.

While Ukraine has put in place a number of programs to address this problem (a national energy program for 1997-2010 envisioned a 50% reduction in imports of Russian gas), Mr. Chubyk stated that the goal has never been achieved due to a lack of political will. For instance, Ukraine failed to build strategic gas reserves, leading to increased vulnerability to disruption. Another hurdle has been the privatization of Ukrainian oil facilities into Russian hands, making them tools of Russian pressure.

Ferdinand Pavel from the Berlin-based German Institute for Economic Research brought a broader perspective on the EU's energy situation vis-à-vis the region. The gas conflicts involving Ukraine have been a 'wakeup call' for policy makers. The EU should be negotiating as a whole with Russia rather than on a country by country basis. Mr. Pavel suggested mitigating risks by moving towards a global, fully integrated market where flows are not 'earmarked'; in such a system, if there is a major supply disruption, the impact will be felt everywhere. He also suggested that Russia itself faced problems in the energy sector, including increasing competition from the Middle East, North Africa, and Liquefied Natural Gas terminals, all eating into its market share in the EU. In addition, Russia is losing domestic production capability (oil and gas fields) due to its excessive focus on pipeline politics.

NATO, UKRAINE AND RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA

Andrei Ryabov, an independent analyst from the Carnegie Moscow Centre, described the official Russian position on NATO-Ukraine relations. Outlining what he called the position of decision makers in Russia, he suggested that they believe that without close and exclusive relations with Ukraine (both political and economic), it will be very difficult to implement Russian strategic goals in the post-Soviet space. Ukraine joining NATO would be a very important threat to these interests; the whole system of European security would be deeply imbalanced in favour of the European community and Russia will lose its place, being pushed to the Asian continent and losing its status as a European actor.

On the other hand, Russian decision-makers also recognize that Russian resources to influence Ukrainian domestic and foreign policy are ultimately limited. They have concluded therefore that the best outcome regarding Ukrainian foreign policy is a constant vacillation between Russia and the west.

Mr. Ryabov suggested that the new dialogue advanced by NATO's new Secretary General has opened possibilities in its relations with Russia, but the problem is on what issues this dialogue will be focused – whether on concrete issues like NATO enlargement, or generally on a new security architecture for the continent based on the proposals made by Russian President Medvedev. Nevertheless, he advocated seizing opportunities for a renewed dialogue in order to establish an agenda for the future of this interrelated set of relationships.

James Greene, Senior Advisor with the Baltic - Black - Caspian Seas Region Initiative (and former Head of the NATO Liaison Office in Kyiv) suggested that the west has lost the majority of its influence with Russia, and is in danger of losing it completely with Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The more the west chases the sliver of influence it has with Russia, the more it will lose CEE. Instead, he recommended a strategy of engaging CEE and bringing it into the west's collective efforts to engage Russia.

Most of the west's post-cold war assumptions about Russia have proven false, according to Mr. Greene, including the idea that Russian values would converge with the west's as a natural result of reforms and economic ties. Indeed, Russia's movement towards the west has been limited; on the economic level, western business advantages have been limited by a merger of business and intelligence sectors in Russia: the "Coca-Cola effect" was countered by factors such as state control of the media.

Mr. Greene warned that the Russian elite has achieved one of its strategic goals being able to 'hurt' the west geopolitically. He therefore recommended taking real actions to protect against Russian efforts to undermine security in the region, while maintaining contact in the hope of eventual convergence. He suggested NATO policy had not caught up to this changing paradigm.

On the Ukraine-NATO partnership, Mr. Greene suggested that NATO is losing influence and interest, given that many in the west are convinced Ukraine is unable to solve its internal weaknesses. He recommended focusing away from issues of membership and Article 5 and instead on real security challenges through honest and open consultations on the threats Ukraine faces. Mr. Greene praised the ANP as an excellent framework, deserving of more investment and intellectual resources.

Discussion covered several points, including the problem of Russian non-reconciliation with its own Soviet history; Mr. Ryabov confirmed that a dialogue on historical issues would remain extremely difficult and no challenge to legitimacy of the government will be entertained. Assen Agov, Assembly Vice President, related the Bulgarian experience and suggested there were no 'new architects' in Moscow with whom to dialogue on a changed relationship. Mr. Greene confirmed that he saw no real common ground; Russian and western interests are incompatible and we need to face that, he stated. Mr. Ryabov warned, however, against a policy that would lead to an isolation of Russia, which would have dangerous consequences not just for Russia but for the region as a whole.

Responding to questions on possible Russian co-operation to address Iran's nuclear program, Mr. Greene stated that Russia may have made the decision to allow proliferation to gain tactical advantage (through higher energy prices, involving the US in another conflict); Russian behaviour on this issue called into question some of our most basic assumptions, according to James Greene. Mr. Ryabov warned against overestimating the links between the Russian security sector and Iran.

MOLDOVA

A panel moderated by, Ostap Semerak, a Ukrainian member of parliament reviewed political developments in Moldova. Panelists agreed that Russia is using its influence in Transdnistria to assert its role in the region.

Ukrainian national Oleksandr Sushko, Scientific Director of the Institute for Euro-Atlantic Co-operation, explained that Moldova has the second longest state border with Ukraine, about 1400 km. About 450 km of this is the border with Transdnistria. Mr. Sushko lamented that there is no legitimate partner with which to co-operate on border issues along this section, resulting in a vulnerability to problems such as cross border crime and smuggling.

Mr. Sushko put the border in the context of the bigger picture of the separatist regions which for a long time have been referred to as the 'frozen conflicts.' He suggested that western institutions, including NATO, were playing only very limited roles in the resolution of these situations because of their increased focus on remote areas of the world like Afghanistan. Russia, on the other hand, has monopolized all peacekeeping efforts in the region, impacting efforts to resolve the conflicts.

Looking forward, Mr. Sushko suggested that there are no signs that Russia will change its position on Transdnistria. Russia might accept that Moldova drifts towards Europe, but without Transdnistria, which would in this case remain a semi-sovereign area fully aligned with Russia. This would be a 'Kaliningrad-like' tool for Moscow to pressure Ukraine.

Ukraine and NATO have aligning interests, according to Mr. Sushko: they should seek Moldova's territorial integrity, but not at the price of Moldova's western aspirations. He advocated a greater role for the EU over the medium term.

Independent Moldovan analyst Vlad Lupan reviewed the history of the Transdnistrian conflict and suggested the influence of Russia means that this conflict will remain frozen for at least another 10 years. While the Moldovan side has had several changes of position due to changing political circumstances, the Russian interest in Moldova has remained constant, with Moscow asserting its belief that this is its sphere of influence. Mr. Lupan argued that Russia has no interest in solving this issue; for Moscow, Transdnistria is an 'aircraft carrier with spikes in both Moldova and Ukraine,' he stated. Mr. Lupan also pointed to increased EU involvement as potentially helping to resolve the situation, specifically calling for an expanded mandate for the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) to Moldova and Ukraine.

A Moldovan member of parliament suggested that the way forward lay in making efforts to have Russian troops and munitions withdrawn; demonstrating to Transdnitrians that life in Moldova was getting better and better; and ensuring that promises made by European partners (such as a visa-free regime) during the election campaign will be fulfilled.

BELARUS

A session on Belarus moderated by Leon Benoit, Head of the Canadian delegation to the NATO PA, began with Mr. Benoit's recollection that Belarus became an associate member of Assembly after the collapse of the USSR, but its membership was suspended in 1997 as result of President Lukaschenko's antidemocratic measures.

Belarusian national Pavel Daneyko, Director of Belarusian Economic Research and Outreach Centre, reported that Belarus is divided between those who support European integration and those who support integration with Russia. He saw little prospect of this divide being overcome; as a result, Belarus will have to pursue a policy of national independence and balancing of its foreign policy between Europe and Russia.

Even so, Mr. Daneyko suggested that a number of factors suggested a possible movement towards a European perspective. These included the fact that 50% of exports are aimed at the EU; that European values are gradually being implemented and promulgated in Belarusian legislation; and that relations with the EU are improving generally, both politically and economically.

Domestically, Mr. Daneyko saw reforms as irreversible. President Lukashenko will have to continue economic reforms because he remains an electoral leader and seeks the support of his society; he has achieved popular acquiescence in the past by providing stable incomes.

Balazs Jarabik, of the Kyiv-based Foundation for International Relations and External Dialogue, provided an international perspective on the situation in Belarus. While acknowledging the view of Belarus as 'the last dictatorship in Europe,' he offered a different perspective: Belarus as the only conflict-free country in the region, with great cohesion, a growing national sense of identity, a growing civil society, and the only country in the region that could take up the EU acquis and implement it.

Russia should see Belarus in a positive light, according to Mr. Jarabik: it is guaranteed to remain "NATO-free", and a very reliable political partner for Russia. Belarus' complete energy dependence on Russia also represents a big threat for Lukaschenko and allows Russia to focus less on Belarus than on Ukraine or Georgia.

Next year's presidential elections offer a means for the west to influence political developments in Belarus: Mr. Jarabik recommended that the EU should offer full engagement on the condition of free and fair elections. He also suggested increased contacts at all levels between the EU and Belarus. These policies could potentially result in the beginning of Belarus' technical integration with the EU within a year or two.

During a lively exchange, speakers discussed the extent to which current political changes are a result of economic dynamics and/or of Lukashenko's negotiations with the EU. The speakers confirmed that the idea of a Belarus-Russia union is now only an empty shell. Mr. Jarabik also related that Russian pressure had resulted in military exercises on Belarusian territory this summer, exercises that had not been

held for four years. Interestingly, according to Jarabik, some of the Russian troops have yet to return to Russia. Mr. Danyeko suggested Mr. Lukashenko would seek the highest possible concessions from Russia for any possible recognition of South Ossetian and Abkhazian independence.

GEORGIA

Giorgi Baramidze, Vice Prime Minister and State Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Georgia, stated that Russia currently occupies more than 20% of Georgian territory, and continues to violate the cease-fire agreement, most notably not withdrawing its forces to the status quo ante. Four military bases are being constructed. Russia has deployed almost 10,000 soldiers in the occupied regions, and these forces occupy positions only 40 km from Tbilisi. Most importantly, military operations were conducted well after the ceasefire was agreed.

The war and its aftermath have been the culmination of decades of Russian policy aiming at preventing the democratic development and the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of Georgia, according to the Vice Prime Minister. Mr. Baramidze cited the EU-mandated Tagliavini report as showing a well-planned, well-executed Russian operation beginning well before August 7, and rejecting Russia's justification of 'humanitarian grounds' for the invasion. He stated that the report confirms that Russia broke the UN charter by aggressing a sovereign state and that Russia's recognition of the regions is unlawful interference in Georgia's internal affairs.

Mr. Baramidze called for a unanimous, firm position by the whole international community, to include continuing the non-recognition policy; and the establishment of a strong presence by the European Union Monitoring mission, especially after Russia blocked OSCE and UN presence in Georgia. Russia must be convinced to abide by the six-point ceasefire. Georgia, for its part, has devised a strategy to alleviate the difficult living conditions of the populations on the occupied territories, with initiatives in areas such as socio-economic and trade relations, health care, heritage, and civil society development.

This conflict will not have a short-term solution, according to Mr. Baramidze, and the future of these populations should not become hostage to the political situation. Georgia must exercise strategic patience; Mr. Baramidze hoped that friendly nations will support Georgia's efforts in this regard, at a minimum through the creation of new mechanisms for Georgia's security prospects and economic and democratic developments.

Addressing Georgia's internal political turbulences, Mr. Baramidze stated that during these situations, the Georgian government exercised constructive engagement, dialogue, and restraint. The government offered a comprehensive set of proposals, a so-called second wave of democratic initiatives, and invited the opposition to discuss a new electoral code. The government had also offered those who refused their parliamentary seats the opportunity to take up their mandates to participate within the system constructively.

In response to questions, Baramidze elaborated on what was offered regarding domestic political reforms, stating that the government had suggested the establishment of a new constitutional commission that is drafting a new constitution based on a more balanced power structure (to be delivered at the end of next spring or earlier), strengthening the parliament and making the system more transparent. New rules on the state media are also under discussion, as well as the direct election of the mayor of Tbilisi. All of these and other measures should lead to a more harmonious political debate in the capital and help stability in Georgia, also leading to more support from the west and hopefully therefore progress on the problem of the occupied territories.

Mr. Baramidze concluded by stating that NATO's Bucharest decisions had given Georgia a good way forward. Georgia in 2009 completed the first cycle of its Annual National Plan, continuing its reform processes despite the political crises. The NATO Georgia Commission was also positive step. These are adequate measures to technically meet NATO's membership criteria within two or three years, according to Mr. Baramidze; NATO members will then have to make a political decision on when the Alliance will take Georgia in. Certainly there should be no Russian veto and no condition placed by NATO members that Russian forces would have to be withdrawn: this would give Russia a de facto veto and would give them incentive to keep the forces in Georgia.

A panel moderated by NATO PA Vice-President and member of the Georgia-NATO Inter-parliamentary Council Assen Agov further debated the political position of Georgia roughly one year after the 2008 war.

Ghia Nodia, the Director of the Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development in Tbilisi suggested that even if the period of November 2007-June 2009 has been the most difficult in the recent Georgian history since the early 1990s, the damage from the crises has not been as bad as one might expect under the circumstances. The main achievement has been that the country has stayed the course on the main issues. He used the analogy of a tough test drive for a new car model; while not all systems worked, the model proved viable even if it needs lots of work.

Professor Hryhorii Perepylytsya of the Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine suggested that because of the geopolitical transformation of the international system, the Georgian conflict won't be the last of its type. Russia has seen a window of opportunity to restore its great power status. It believes some of the post-Soviet states are not sustainable, and saw Georgia as a link in an energy chain it wanted to disrupt. As a result of what the Professor called its military victory and political victory over the west, its belief in the benefits of military force has grown. Russia will demand, for co-operation on Afghanistan and Iran, an end to support for the sovereignty of post-Soviet states and refuse their European integration.

Finally, Georgian MP David Darchiashvili, suggested that a compromise between anti-Western Russia and modernizing Georgia is impossible. Going forward, the west will have to make co-operation with Russia conditional; make progress on the occupied territories; and speed Georgian reforms, including in the security sector,

based on a thorough analysis of the spectrum of threats it faces. In sum, the international community must follow through with its declarations.

CLOSING KEYNOTE

Simon Lunn, former NATO Parliamentary Assembly Secretary General and now Senior Fellow at Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF), drew some personal conclusions from the seminar's exchanges.

The issues raised throughout the seminar had been a useful reminder that even if the Alliance has become aware of global challenges, symbolized by Afghanistan, NATO must still tend to its own backyard. The inherent instability in this region – the 'belt of conflicts' – points to the simple overarching theme of the discussions: what do we do about Russia?

It was clear that Ukraine had made great progress since 1991, in areas of democratic institutions and freedoms, as well as strong contributions to NATO. Speakers had recommended three areas to focus on going forward, including corruption, coordination, and developing a national consensus. This last area was especially important in that it's not just the government that joins NATO but whole societies. He recalled an important point made on Georgia, which was to ensure that the withdrawal of Russian forces does not become a condition for NATO membership, causing the enlargement process to become hostage to Russian choices.

Mr. Lunn further summarized the "Russia factor", which featured two competing pressures: the recognition that long term security and stability in Europe was impossible without co-operation with Russia, versus the principle of the right of countries to choose their own destinies. In other words, 'Yes, co-operation, but at what cost?'

NATO itself had been affected by enlargement and partnerships, which have left grey areas of security in Europe. Mr. Lunn feared that Allies have dangerously allowed Article 5 to become somehow less clear. He called for reinforcement of the clear treaty statement of Article 5, which is not about capabilities but rather about solidarity and commitment. Crucially, it should not be assumed to extend to countries other than full members. Of course, measures that will have to be taken to reassure threatened Allies could be thought by some to be provocative; this will have to be balanced.

Mr. Lunn finally suggested that the issue of co-operation and partnership with Russia will have to be a central element of the debate NATO's new strategic concept. While this subject is not yet a schism in the Alliance, it does pose serious problems. Russia does not make life easier for those nations advocating co-operation, through numerous examples of unacceptable behaviour. We can have no illusions that, with the current Russian attitude, future justified enlargements of the Alliance will be without challenges. Even so, Mr. Lunn commented, for Ukraine and Georgia, the messages of the seminar have been threefold: 'patience;' 'stay the course, keep knocking on the door;' and 'help us by being a part of the solution

on relations with Russia, which will help facilitate a consensus on a common future.'

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Leon Benoit, M.P.,
Chair, Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)
ACTIVITY	Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Future Security and Defence Capabilities (DSC) and the 72 nd Rose-Roth Seminar
DESTINATION	Kyiv & Lviv, Ukraine
DATES	October 12-15, 2009
DELEGATION	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Leon Benoit, M.P.
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$6,437.29
ACCOMMODATION	\$1,217.64
HOSPITALITY	\$0.00
PER DIEMS	\$392.11
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$8,047.04