

Canadian NATO
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
canadienne de l'OTAN

Report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association

69th Annual Session

Copenhagen, Denmark

From October 6 to 9, 2023

Report

The Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (the Association or CANA) has the honour to present its report on its participation in the 69th Annual Session of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA or the Assembly), which took place from 6–9 October 2023. The following Canadian delegates participated in the Annual Session:

- Ms. Julie Dzerowicz, MP, NATO PA vice-chair (ex officio), Chair of CANA and Head of the Canadian delegation
- The Honourable Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu, Senator
- The Honourable Donna Dasko, Senator
- The Honourable Rebecca Patterson, Senator
- Ms. Rachel Blaney, MP
- Mr. Frank Caputo, MP
- Mr. Darren Fisher, MP
- Ms. Cheryl Gallant, MP and
- Ms. Kristina Michaud, MP.

The Association's secretary, Céline Ethier, accompanied the delegation.

THE NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Established in 1955, the NATO PA is a parliamentary organization that comprises more than 280 legislators from the 32 NATO member countries,¹ and around 90 additional delegates from associate or observer countries,² as well as representatives from other parliamentary assemblies.³ Although Finland and Sweden applied for NATO membership at the same time in May 2022, Finland did not become NATO's 31st member until 4 April 2023, while Sweden became the 32nd member on 7 March 2024. At the Assembly's 69th Annual Session, Sweden attended as an associate member.

While independent in an institutional sense, the NATO PA has developed close ties with NATO (or the Alliance) over the years. The NATO PA provides legislators in the transatlantic region with a forum to debate and further their knowledge of various issues pertaining to defence and security. It also helps to consolidate NATO's political dimension.⁴

¹ The 32 member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are: Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and the United States.

² The associate delegations are from: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Serbia, Switzerland and Ukraine. The regional partner and Mediterranean associate delegations are from: Algeria, Israel, Jordan and Morocco. For more information, see NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA), [Members](#).

³ Representatives from other parliamentary assemblies include representatives from the European Parliament. For more information, see *ibid*

⁴ See NATO PA, [Our Mission](#).

The NATO PA has five thematic committees, most of which have sub-committees:⁵

- the Committee on Democracy and Security (Subcommittee: Resilience and Civil Security).
- the Defence and Security Committee (Subcommittees: Future Security and Defence Capabilities, and Transatlantic Security Defence Cooperation)
- the Economics and Security Committee (Subcommittees: Transition and Development, and Transatlantic Economic Relations).
- the Political Committee (Subcommittees: NATO Partnerships and Transatlantic Relations).
- the Science and Technology Committee (Subcommittee: Technology Trends and Security).

The practices of the five thematic committees are like those of Canadian parliamentary committees. NATO PA committee members hear from experts and conduct fact-finding missions throughout the year. Moreover, certain individual committee and subcommittee members are designated as rapporteurs, who are then responsible for drafting reports and/or resolutions. Committee members consider these draft reports and resolutions during the NATO PA's spring and fall sessions; the latter is known as the "Annual Session."

THE 69TH ANNUAL SESSION

From 6–9 October 2023, Denmark hosted the NATO PA's 69th Annual Session. During this session, Michał Szczerba from Poland was elected as the new NATO PA President at the Plenary Sitting. In late September 2023, the Assembly's Bureau appointed Mr. Szczerba as Acting President of the NATO PA, succeeding former French Senator Joëlle Garriaud-Maylam.⁶

Some of the key topics discussed during the 69th Annual Session were:

- NATO's support for Ukraine and country's reconstruction efforts;
- the outcomes of the Alliance's 2023 Vilnius Summit;
- the Alliance's shared democratic values and the international rules-based order;
- NATO's deterrence and defence posture in the Baltic and Black Sea regions;
- disinformation and other acts of hybrid warfare;
- critical infrastructure and supplies;
- China's assertiveness and growing cooperation with Russia;
- the allied industrial base and defence production; and
- emerging and disruptive technologies.

⁵ For detailed information on each committee's mandate and activities, see NATO PA, [Committee on Democracy and Security \(CDS\)](#); NATO PA, [Defence and Security Committee \(DSC\)](#); NATO PA, [Economics and Security Committee \(ESC\)](#); NATO PA, [Political Committee \(PC\)](#); and NATO PA, [Science and Technology Committee \(STC\)](#)

⁶ Joëlle Garriaud-Maylam from France served as NATO PA President from November 2022 until September 2023, and did not seek re-election in France's 2023 Senate elections.

Finally, the 69th Annual Session's program included meetings of the Standing Committee and each of the thematic committees, as well as a Plenary sitting. A NATO PA coordination meeting involving members of the Bureau (President, five Vice-Presidents, and a Treasurer), Chairpersons of Committees and Sub-committees, and Rapporteurs was also held during the Annual Session.

A. Standing Committee

The Standing Committee⁷ met on Sunday, 8 October 2023, to address various administrative matters, receive updates, discuss certain defence and security issues, and plan for upcoming activities in 2023.

NATO PA Acting President Szczerba presided over the meeting. He began by mentioning that, on 7 October 2023, the NATO PA Bureau had issued a statement in solidarity with Israel that condemned the October 2023 Hamas terrorist attacks against civilians in Israel.⁸ He then continued his remarks, emphasizing that the Assembly had to stand with Ukraine until it was victorious. As well, President Szczerba reminded Standing Committee members of the Assembly's proposal for the establishment of a Centre for Democratic Resilience at NATO Headquarters.

Acting President Szczerba then welcomed two members of the Ukrainian delegation – Yehor Cherniev and Solomiia Bobrovska – to inform Standing Committee members about recent events concerning the war in Ukraine. Mr. Cherniev and Ms. Bobrovska discussed several issues, including the need for continued political, economic and military support for Ukraine, and Ukraine's humanitarian and military needs.

The Standing Committee also considered administrative matters, such as the summary of the last Standing Committee meeting, which was held in May 2023 and the summary of the joint meeting of the Standing Committee and the Ukraine-NATO Interparliamentary Council also held in May 2023. As well, members of Standing Committee reviewed nominated candidates for vacant positions within the Assembly's Bureau. Since there was only one candidate per vacant position, all nominated candidates would be elected or re-elected by acclamation at the plenary sitting (discussed below). Moreover, the NATO PA's Secretary General Ruxandra Popa had her mandate renewed for another two-year mandate.

Finally, the Standing Committee discussed future NATO PA sessions and other activities to be held in 2023 and 2024, as well as the planned committee and sub-committee report topics. Moreover, Standing Committee members discussed proposals to strengthen support for the Ukrainian parliament. The proposals were adopted before members received an update on the review of the Assembly's partnerships by the co-rapporteurs.

Canadian Participation:

⁷ The Standing Committee of the NATO PA comprises Heads of National Delegations, Bureau members (President, Vice Presidents and Treasurer), and the Secretary General. It has various political and administrative duties, including coordinating the overall work of the Assembly.

⁸ See NATO PA, [NATO PA Bureau Statement on today's attacks against Israel](#), 7 October 2023.

Julie Dzerowicz, MP, participated in this meeting.

During the review of upcoming sessions, Ms. Dzerowicz reported on preparations for the NATO PA's upcoming 70th Annual session in Montreal, Canada in November 2024. She also thanked the Danish delegation for hosting the 69th Annual Session.

Committee Business

From 7 to 8 October 2023, the NATO PA's five committees met simultaneously. During these meetings, the committees considered and finalized revised draft reports and resolutions for 2023. Participating delegates also heard from a wide range of speakers, including Danish government and military officials, NATO officials, as well as academic experts on issues of interest to the Alliance.

1. Committee on Democracy and Security

The Committee on Democracy and Security met on Saturday, 7 October 2023, and on Sunday, 8 October 2023.⁹

Three speakers delivered presentations to the Committee and responded to questions and comments:

- Dan Jørgensen, Denmark's Minister for Development Cooperation and Minister for Global Climate Policy;
- Charlotte Slente, Secretary General of the Danish Refugee Council; and
- Dr. Flemming Splidsboel Hansen, Senior Researcher at the Danish Institute for International Studies.

Bolstering Human Security in the Face of the Climate Change Crisis

Minister Jørgensen suggested that, because of its aggravating of pre-existing issues, climate change is a major driver of conflict. He encouraged members to adopt a more holistic approach that goes beyond existing decarbonisation efforts and supports investment in efforts that will foster more resilience and adaptability in vulnerable countries that are already being affected by climate change. Minister Jørgensen also noted that such resilience would go a long way to creating circumstances that would allow people to stay in their countries instead of migrating to other regions. Moreover, he recommended that Allies create incentives for more private investments in key sectors of their economies and mobilize funding for developmental aid as suggested by the United Nations.

In response to questions and comments, Minister Jørgensen asserted that civic empowerment was one of the best ways to counter disinformation related to climate change. He also emphasized the need to set common standards regarding disinformation and helping developing countries to meet them.

⁹ A detailed [summary](#) of the meeting of the Committee on Democracy and Security, prepared by the NATO PA secretariat, is available on the NATO PA website.

The Importance of Demining in Humanitarian and Development Assistance

Ms. Slente described the Danish Refugee Council's mandate and activities. She also underlined that eroding respect for international norms around use of explosive ordinances was costing lives, destroying livelihoods, and undermining economic recovery worldwide. Moreover, Ms. Slente urged Allied countries to be more vocal against the use of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions.

Ms. Slente noted the decline in resources allocated to critical mine clearing activities since 2018. She suggested that allied countries provide additional support global efforts in demining, risk education and victim assistance to curb the effects of mine contamination world-wide.

In response to questions and comments, Ms. Slente underlined that, although technology can be helpful in demining efforts, human intervention cannot be replaced. She recognized that women and children were often disproportionately affected by mine use and discussed the need for financial and capacity building support for victims.

Disinformation and Emerging Technologies

Dr. Hansen spoke about Russia's use of cyber space to spread disinformation and shape political opinions around the world. He noted that maintaining a technological edge was critical to the Alliance's ability to defend against the increasingly sophisticated disinformation tools and software being used by authoritarian actors. He also emphasized the need to strengthen cognitive resilience in Allied societies.

During the question-and-answer period, Dr. Hansen discussed the role that the European Union (EU) and national governments could play in regulating social media platforms and requiring greater transparency from social media companies. He added that the banning of state-sponsored media should be considered on a case-by-case basis and that freedom of expression should be protected when contemplating such measures. Dr. Hansen also underscored the need to use media literacy and establish cognitive resilience to prevent people from spreading disinformation unintentionally.

Reports, resolutions and elections of committee and sub-committee members

During the Committee's meetings, its rapporteurs also presented draft reports and a resolution for consideration and amendment. Three reports and one resolution were adopted during the meetings.¹⁰ Lastly, the Committee discussed its future studies and activities and elected committee and sub-committee officers.

Canadian Participation:

¹⁰ The reports adopted by the Committee on Democracy and Security were the following: [Food Security and Conflict: Harvesting Resilience in the Face of a Global Crisis](#); [Fighting Impunity for Violations of International Law in Russia's Renewed Invasion of Ukraine](#) and [The Russian War on Truth: Defending Allied and Partner Democracies Against the Kremlin's Disinformation Campaigns](#). The resolution adopted was entitled [Protecting Allied and Partner Democracies Against Disinformation](#).

Canadians who participated in the Committee's deliberations included: Julie Dzerowicz, MP; Frank Caputo, MP and Cheryl Gallant, MP.

As the committee's special rapporteur, Ms. Dzerowicz presented her report on food security. She noted that war is often the main cause of food insecurity around the world. Ms. Dzerowicz referenced Russia's deliberate attack on critical food infrastructure and weaponization of food exports in. She called on NATO member countries to increase the resilience of their own food systems and supply chains to help stabilize the situation. She also urged them to mobilize more resources to support Ukraine's food security needs, as well as humanitarian and development efforts in countries most affected by the food crisis.

During the question-and-answer period, Ms. Dzerowicz noted the importance of more direct communication with international audiences in response to Russian disinformation in Africa on the topic of food insecurity.

Ms. Dzerowicz also chaired a portion of the meeting on 8 October and was re-elected by acclamation to a second term as the special rapporteur for this committee.

2. Defence and Security Committee

The Defence and Security Committee met on Saturday, 7 October 2023, and on Sunday, 8 October 2023.¹¹

Five speakers addressed the Committee and responded to questions and comments:

- Troels Lund Poulsen, the Minister of Defence of Denmark;
- Gustav Gressel, a Senior Policy Fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations;
- Douglas Barrie, a Senior Fellow for Military Aerospace at the International Institute for Strategic Studies;
- Kristian Sørby Kristensen, the Head of Centre and a Senior Researcher in the Department of Political Science at the University of Copenhagen; and
- Marina Vulović, Associate Researcher at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs.

Denmark's Contribution to NATO's Revised Deterrence and Defence Posture

Minister Poulsen discussed Denmark's role in Euro-Atlantic security, the country's support of Ukraine, and its increased contributions to NATO. He also highlighted the country's refocused efforts to secure the Baltic Sea Region and the European High North in response to the evolving security environments in these areas. He highlighted his country's role in NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in Latvia and Denmark's commitment to reaching NATO's 2% target before stressing the important role that parliamentarians play.

During the question-and-answer period, Minister Poulsen remarked that strengthening naval capabilities was a clear focus of their recent investments. He also contended that

¹¹ A detailed [summary](#) of the meeting of the Defence and Security Committee, prepared by the NATO PA secretariat, is available on the NATO PA website.

NATO should strengthen and increase its capabilities and presence in the European High North.

The Trajectory of Russia's War of Aggression Against Ukraine

Dr. Gressel's presentation focused on Russia's grinding war of attrition in Ukraine. He said that in favoring this type of long-war strategy, Russia hopes to outlast Ukraine militarily and undermine the foreign external military and financial assistance that form its principal defensive lifelines. He noted that Russia has transitioned to a war economy to underwrite its strategy and had also received increased assistance from China and North Korea.

Moreover, Dr. Gressel said that the West continues to face challenges in ramping up defence industrial production to the levels required to support Ukrainian efforts and to restock and resupply the capabilities necessary to meet NATO's new deterrence and defence posture pledges. Dr. Gressel also told delegates that Ukraine's counteroffensive strategy has focused on seeking the shortest breakthrough pathway to the Sea of Azov and cutting Russia's land and sea lanes of communication to Crimea. Losing this area would, in his opinion, bring Russia to the negotiating table.

During the question-and-answer period, Dr. Gressel noted that Russia had managed to adapt its combat tactics in Ukraine recently. He added that Russia has learned from its battlefield mistakes and managed to stall Ukraine's counteroffensive efforts. He also contended that it would take a long time for Ukraine to develop the capabilities required to gain air superiority over Russia.

Russia and the Evolving Missile Threat to Allied Security

Mr. Barrie mentioned that Russia has overcome struggles with insufficient intelligence and gaps in geospatial coverage by increasing its use of drones and missile capabilities to achieve its military goals in Ukraine. For instance, he observed that Russia has continued to launch missile attacks against Ukrainian critical infrastructure and added that the country has sought to increase its industrial capacity for land-attack cruise missile production.

Moreover, Mr. Barrie suggested that Allies should focus on offensive and defensive capabilities by investing in modern integrated air and missile defence capabilities, as well as increased intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities.

During the question-and-answer session, Mr. Barrie emphasized that European countries must improve their defence capabilities and that establishing multiple defence production centres would boost their resilience in supply chains.

Arctic Security and the Role of Denmark

Mr. Kristensen maintained that Russia's invasion of Ukraine had changed the geopolitics of the Arctic region. He drew attention to Russia's and China's growing interests in the Arctic, adding that Russia perceives the region as vital for the country's economy and security.

With a focus on the Kingdom of Denmark – which comprises Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands – Mr. Kristensen claimed that Kingdom of Denmark has a significant role in three Arctic subregions: northern Finland and Sweden, the northern Atlantic Ocean and the North American Arctic. He also noted that the Danish government has had to balance geographic priorities while seeking ways to increase its presence in the Arctic.

During the discussion that followed, Mr. Kristensen agreed that Allies need to focus more on the Arctic region and that there should be more surveillance and cooperation to secure infrastructure in this region. He also stated that Alaska and the Aleutian Islands could be considered a fourth Arctic subregion.

Political and Security Challenges in the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue

Ms. Vulovic spoke about the recent developments in Kosovo, as well as the political and security challenges that are hampering stability in this region. She believed that the path forward was with the Brussels and Ohrid Agreements. In the short term, she recommended that Allies strengthen NATO-led international peacekeeping forces in northern Kosovo; assist with re-establishing Serbian participation in local police forces; and work to set up Association/Community of the Seb-Majority Municipalities.

Ms. Vulovic also believed that Allies should seek ways to stop Serbian obstruction of Kosovo. She concluded by saying that Pristina needed to reach out politically to the Kosovo Serb community and give it incentives for integration.

During the discussion that followed, Ms. Vulovic recommended that Allies provide Kosovo and Serbia with clear roadmaps and timelines and be unified and consistent in their communications with the parties.

Reports and resolutions and elections of committee and sub-committee members

The Committee adopted three draft reports, and two draft resolutions before discussing future activities and studies.¹² As well, Committee members elected committee and sub-committee officers.

Canadian Participation:

Canadians who participated in the Committee's deliberations included: Senators Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu and Rebecca Patterson, and MPs Darren Fisher, Cheryl Gallant and Kristina Michaud.

3. Economics and Security Committee

¹² The reports adopted by the Defence and Security Committee were the following: [Ukraine's Fight for Freedom & Allied and Global Response to Russia's War](#); [Ensuring an Allied Defence Industrial Base for NATO's New Deterrence and Defence Baseline](#), [Troubled Waters: How Russia's War in Ukraine Changes Black Sea Security](#) and [Sea Change: The Rapid Evolution of Baltic Sea Security After Russia's Invasion of Ukraine](#). The two resolutions adopted were entitled [Implementing NATO's New Deterrence and Defence Baseline](#); and [Strengthening Stability and Security in the Black Sea Region Following Russia's Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine](#).

The Economics and Security Committee met on Sunday, 8 October 2023.¹³

Two speakers addressed the Committee and responded to questions and comments:

- Janis Kluge, Deputy Head of Research Division, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP); and
- Maksym Suprun, Commander of Ukrainian Armed Forces' 66th Mechanised Brigade (2022-2023).

The State of Russia's Wartime Economy and the Impact of Sanctions

Mr. Kluge began by citing how challenging it was for academics and other experts to study the Russian economy, including because of the country's economic turbulence, restrictions on economic data and unreliable statistics. He noted that after a significant decline during the pandemic, Russia's economy was set to experience a 2% GDP growth in 2023, potentially offsetting the losses driven by sanctions last year. Mr. Kluge told the members present that without sanctions the Russian economy would have grown at a rate 5% higher than it did. While sanctions were not airtight, they had nonetheless inflicted significant economic damage. He concluded by saying that though Russia's economic fundamentals were still intact, the country was facing increasing risks and that pressures from the population could rise if economic conditions worsen.

In response to questions and comments, Mr. Kluge noted that sanctions imposed on Russia before the war may have provided Russia with an opportunity to build a resilient payment system that strengthened its capacity to counter the impact of sanctions. He distinguished between financial sanctions that create disruptions and have immediate psychological effects and export control measures that have a stronger impact in slowing production and growth. Mr. Kluge noted that international cooperation is essential in countering Russia's capacity to circumvent sanctions. When asked about the EU's dependence on Russian agricultural products, Mr. Kluge suggested that for reputational and food security reasons food and agricultural products should not be sanctioned.

The Russian War Against Ukraine: A View from the Frontline

Commander Suprun shared his personal military experience and provided a frontline perspective of Russia's war against Ukraine. He also discussed the nature of frontline challenges facing Ukraine's military personnel, including the shortage of ammunition, the need for more modern anti-tank weapons, Russia's wide use of drones for surveillance and its superior electronic warfare capabilities. The head of the Ukrainian delegation, Yehor Cherniev, noted that Ukrainians have adapted well to changing battlefield conditions and that their morale is high, but that they are still facing ongoing challenges in equipment and artillery production and require help from partner countries.

During the question-and-answer period, Commander Suprun argued that Ukraine's Armed Forces have adapted well to using equipment and systems provided by the

¹³ A detailed [summary](#) of the meeting of the Economics and Security Committee, prepared by the NATO PA secretariat, is available on the NATO PA website.

international community. He also stressed how essential the use of the Starlink satellite system has been to Ukraine's counteroffensive efforts against Russian military forces.

Reports and resolutions and elections of committee and sub-committee members

The Committee's rapporteurs presented draft reports and a resolution for consideration and amendment. Three reports and one resolution were adopted during the meeting.¹⁴

Lastly, the Committee discussed its future studies and activities and elected committee and sub-committee officers.

Canadian participation:

Senator Donna Dasko, Senator Rebecca Patterson, Rachel Blaney, MP, and Cheryl Gallant, MP participated in the committee's deliberations.

4. Political Committee

The Political Committee met on Saturday, 7 October 2023, and on Sunday, 8 October 2023.¹⁵

Five speakers addressed the Committee and responded to questions and comments:

- Lisbet Zilmer-Johns, State Secretary for Foreign Policy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark;
- Ruben-Erik Diaz-Plaja, Senior Policy Adviser at the NATO Office of the Secretary General's Policy Planning Unit;
- Maksym Suprun, Commander of the Ukrainian Armed Forces' 66th Mechanised Brigade (2022-2023);
- Gustav Gressel, Senior Policy Fellow, European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR); and
- Rachel Rizzo, Non-resident Senior Fellow, Europe Center, Atlantic Council.

The Danish Perspective on Key Security Challenges in the Euro-Atlantic Area and Beyond

Ms. Zilmer-Johns discussed Denmark's commitment to supporting Ukraine and deterring Russia in neighbouring countries. She also underscored NATO's important role in maintaining peace in the Euro-Atlantic area. Moreover, Ms. Zilmer-Johns referenced the evolving Baltic Sea security landscape, the need for cooperation within NATO and the EU, and China's increased role in global affairs.

During the question-and-answer session that followed, Ms. Zilmer-Johns spoke of the increasing influence of Russia and China in the Balkans; global strategic competition in

¹⁴ The reports adopted by the Economics and Security Committee were the following: [Russia's War on Ukraine and Transatlantic Energy Security Challenges](#); [Towards the Reconstruction of Ukraine](#); and [Rebuilding Transatlantic Economic Relations and Resilience](#). The resolution adopted was entitled [Towards the Reconstruction of Ukraine](#).

¹⁵ A detailed [summary](#) of the meeting of the Political Committee, prepared by the NATO PA secretariat, is available on the NATO PA website.

the Arctic region; the need to engage the Global South in discussions to assist in stabilizing their regions the importance of staying informed about developments in the Pacific Region; and the current situation in Israel concerning the country's conflict with Hamas.

NATO Priorities post-Vilnius Summit

Mr. Diaz-Plaja said that NATO's recent summits guide the Alliance's future security posture, which is evolving to keep pace with the changing global security landscape. He emphasized NATO's continuing support for Ukraine and the multi-year program that aims to help Ukraine transition to NATO standards. Mr. Diaz-Plaja also discussed NATO's new Defence Production Action Plan, which aims to boost capacity and interoperability. As well, he also spoke of the importance of a robust defence industry. Finally, he mentioned the establishment of an expert group that will conduct a review of NATO's southern neighbourhood, including with regards to the Alliance's approach to partnerships in the region.

During the discussion following his remarks, Mr. Diaz-Plaja highlighted the importance of increased NATO–EU cooperation in the Sahel region. He also underlined the need to enhance democratic resilience worldwide, including in Ukraine. Moreover, Mr. Diaz-Plaja discusses other such issues as terrorism, and NATO's partnerships in in the Middle East, Africa and Sahel regions

The Russian War Against Ukraine: A View from the Frontline

Commander Suprun outlined the security situation in Ukraine and highlighted Russia's readiness for conflict and continued mobilisation efforts. He shared some personal experiences and elaborated on the challenges faced by troops on the ground, which include electronic warfare interference and the lack of secure communication tools. Commander Suprun then concluded his presentation by emphasizing the critical need for international assistance in these areas.

The head of the Ukrainian delegation joined the panel for the Q&A session. The panellists were clear in saying that peace negotiations with Russia were nearly impossible at this point due to the brutality of the war and the history of Russian aggression towards neighbours. They highlighted the need for anti-tank defences, air defence systems, drones, electronic warfare and artillery. The panellists also recommended that countries that border with Russia strengthen their border defences and collaborate with one another to counter any threats. Finally, they ended by emphasizing the importance of sharing accurate information among NATO allies and partners to address and counter Russian disinformation and propaganda.

The Return of the War between Industrial Nations and its Lessons

Mr. Gressel focused on the ongoing Ukrainian-Russian conflict and the need for continued long-term support for Ukraine. He drew attention to the current challenges that Ukraine faces in training and equipping its forces with regards to the use of new technology in modern warfare. Moreover, Mr. Gressel urged delegates to view what was

happening in Ukraine within the broader context of a shifting international system, using China's role in supplying crucial materials to Russia to illustrate the geopolitical implications of the conflict.

During the question-and-answer period, Mr. Gressel spoke of the need to be proactive in addressing growing divisions within Western countries to counter Russia's ability to sow discord and disrupt unity. He also stressed that Russia's ultimate theory of victory was about challenging the West so negotiating an end to the conflict might not be possible. In his view, Russia's strategy was to play the long game and to count on Western fatigue in its support for Ukraine. Mr. Gressel also contended that further radicalisation of the Russian domestic political system could lead to a new level of military threat.

Russia, China and the Global South

With a focus on India and China, Ms. Rachel Rizzo mentioned the evolving dynamics of the Global South. She urged Western nations to collaborate with countries in this region on issues like climate change, migration and decarbonization.

During the discussion following her presentation, Ms. Rizzo noted the differences in historical context between Global South and the West. She also called on NATO member countries to establish partnerships in such areas as connectivity and food security, trust, and long-term relationships with countries in the Global South. She also suggested the need for collaboration to improving governance and business environments in the region.

Reports, resolutions and elections of committee and sub-committee members

During the Committee meetings, the rapporteurs presented draft reports and resolutions for debate, amendment, and adoption.¹⁶ Three reports and one resolution were adopted. Finally, the Committee elected committee and sub-committee officers, and discussed upcoming activities and studies.

Canadian participation:

Canadians who participated in the Committee's deliberations included: Senator Donna Dasko, and MPs Julie Dzerowicz and Cheryl Gallant.

MP Cheryl Gallant was elected chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations by acclamation.

5. Science and Technology Committee

The Science and Technology Committee met on Saturday, 7 October 2023. ¹⁷

¹⁶ The reports adopted by the Political Committee were the following: [The Future of NATO's Open Door Policy](#); [China's Global Role in the Wake of Russia's War against Ukraine](#) and [Russia's War against Ukraine: Strategic Imperatives for NATO](#). The resolution, adopted as amended, was entitled [Delivering on the Vilnius Summit Decisions: Accelerating NATO Adaptation, and Supporting Ukraine](#).

¹⁷ A detailed [summary](#) of the meeting of the Science and Technology Committee, prepared by the NATO PA secretariat, is available on the NATO PA website.

The following speakers addressed Committee members and responded to questions and comments:

- Steen Søndergaard, Director of Defence Research Centre at the Danish Ministry of Defence Acquisition and Logistics Organization;
- Iben Yde, Assistant Professor and Head of Centre for International and Operational Law at the Royal Danish Defence College;
- Jan Westenkær Thomsen, Chief Operation Officer of the NNF Quantum Computing Programme (NQCP), and Quantum Coordinator at the University of Copenhagen's Niels Bohr Institute;
- Andreas Graae, Professor at the Royal Danish Defence College's FAK institute for Military Technology; and
- Rune Pilgaard Nielsen, a military analyst from the Royal Danish Defence College's Department of Military Technology.

Military Technology and Innovation

Mr. Søndergaard spoke of how quickly military equipment can become obsolete and the need for allies to focus on interoperability and an off-the-shelf strategy when choosing replacement equipment. He noted that there are benefits in failing and learning quickly from those experiences.

Moreover, Mr. Søndergaard outlined Danish contributions to NATO. He also referenced the Danish Defense Co-Funding Scheme, underlining the importance of developing a public-military roadmap and innovation platforms, of identifying alternative funding systems, of expanding co-funding schemes and on increasing international technological cooperation with allies and friends. In relation to this last point, Mr. Søndergaard spoke of the Danish National Defence Technology Centre, which fosters cooperation between universities and government-approved research and technology organisations.

When answering questions from committee members, Mr. Søndergaard stressed the benefits of cooperation in NATO's Science and Technology Organisation and on leveraging the strengths of partner nations. He noted, for example, that Denmark had expertise in integrating technologies and in quantum research. On key learnings regarding cyber warfare, Mr. Søndergaard spoke of the necessity to cooperate with private entities and to expand co-funding schemes so as not to duplicate efforts.

Harnessing the Military AI Genie: The Challenge of Balancing Risks and Opportunities of Military AI-Systems in National Governance Frameworks

Dr. Yde noted that innovation in Artificial Intelligence (AI) was driven by the civilian sector and that external actors may not adhere to blanket bans. He was of the view that governance should adopt a life-cycle approach, differentiating AI-systems according to their risk, and tailoring regulation to the national context to promote safe and responsible development and use of AI. To do this properly, he argued that the benefits and risks of different AI-systems must be fully comprehended.

When answering questions, Dr. Yde noted that, although international humanitarian law provided suitable rules, the law was often violated by legacy systems. He then argued for

the use of broader and ethical principles on the legislative level and noted that technology can benefit humans by providing more situational awareness during the targeting processes.

The Impact of Quantum Technology on Security

Mr. Thomsen remarked that quantum technology could enable significant breakthroughs in defence and security. He noted that major Western players in research and technology in this field included the US, Germany and Spain. Mr. Thomsen also noted that China accounted for about half of the global investment in this area. In his view, the second generation of quantum technologies would yield advances in sensors, cryptography, and computing. Moreover, Mr. Thomsen provided several practical examples of quantum technology can be used in the civilian and military realms.

During the question-and-answer session, Mr. Thomsen noted that NATO would soon be publishing a strategy on quantum technologies. He recommended identifying focus areas and close collaboration with leading scientists. As well, Mr. Thomsen emphasized the importance of continuing dialogue on how to regulate this technology and the role of governmentally driven research centres, while underlining the importance of educating the public on what these technologies can and cannot do.

Sanitising the Battlefield? The Mirage of Robotic Warfare

Dr. Graae mentioned how AI is currently being operationalized in the battlefield. He contended that despite the importance of drones, they would not make conventional systems obsolete.

Furthermore, Dr. Graae argued that legacy systems and novel systems should be combined and integrated and that countering unmanned aerial systems remained a challenge. Moreover, he underlined that drone operators still face physical dangers and risks of psychological trauma. As well, Dr. Graae mentioned the need to address human-machine teaming and on establishing trust in such systems as drones.

A Practitioner's Viewpoint on Technological Innovation and Adaptability

Mr. Nielsen spoke of how to manage complexity and innovation. He maintained that direction from Mission Command should be limited to the overall intent, with implementation being left to subordinate organisational levels. This required mutual understanding, trust, competence, and tolerance for failure. He advocated for less restrictive regulations for the military and for the development of trust through dialogue.

Reports, resolutions and elections of committee and sub-committee members

During the meeting, the Committee's rapporteurs presented draft reports and a resolution for consideration and amendment. Three reports and one resolution were adopted during

the meeting.¹⁸ The Committee also discussed its future studies and activities and elected committee and sub-committee officers before closing the meeting.

Canadian participation:

Canadians who participated in the Committee's deliberations included: Senator Rebecca Patterson and MPs Rachel Blaney and Cheryl Gallant.

B. Plenary Sitting

The Plenary Sitting of the 69th Annual Session was held on Monday, 9 October 2023. NATO PA President Szczerba presided.¹⁹

The Plenary Sitting began with an address by President Szczerba. He noted that it had been almost 600 days since Russia had launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. He urged all 141 countries who had condemned Russia at the United Nations to reaffirm their support of Ukraine and its right to self-defence and self-determination and to continue to apply pressure on Russia through expanded and sustained sanctions.

With respect to terrorism, President Szczerba emphasized that this issue must be countered with strength, as well as through the provision of assistance to partners who are confronting it. He mentioned that terrorists targeted the Ministry of Interior in Türkiye just before the country's parliament opened for its fall session and how Israel had suffered a horrific attack from Hamas and its terrorist affiliates. He condemned those acts. These types of attacks on the world's democracies, values and institutions led him to reiterate the importance of NATO establishing a Democratic Resilience Centre at NATO headquarters. He concluded his remarks by recalling why the NATO Parliamentary Assembly was founded nearly 70 years ago: to help safeguard democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.

The Speaker of the Folketing of Denmark – Søren Gade – then took the floor to condemn the attacks against Israel and to reiterate Israel's right to self-defence. He also spoke of Ukraine's valiant fight against Russia and the importance of NATO in safeguarding democracy and common values. Finally, Speaker Gade welcomed Finland to the Alliance and expressed hope that Sweden would soon follow.

The Prime Minister of Denmark, Mette Frederiksen, was next to speak. She spoke of the October 2023 terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel. She then addressed the war in Ukraine, noting that it was a threat against freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. She contended that the war in Ukraine has tested the strength of NATO's Alliance and its commitment to Ukraine. Finally, she suggested that the EU take responsibility for its collective defence and build partnerships with partner nations.

¹⁸ The reports adopted by the Science and Technology Committee were the following: [Protecting Critical Marine Infrastructure – the role of technology](#); [Novel Materials and Additive Manufacturing](#); and [Developing Future Capabilities: Robotics and Autonomous Systems](#). The resolution adopted was entitled [Enhancing the Protection of Allied Critical Maritime Infrastructure](#).

¹⁹ The [minutes](#) of the meeting of the NATO PA Plenary Sitting, prepared by the NATO PA secretariat, is available on the NATO PA website.

The President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, was then invited to provide remarks virtually. His message centered around the need for international unity in the face of aggression and terrorism. President Zelenskyy stated that this was the only way to guarantee peace and respect for the rule of law. He also urged NATO member countries and partners to impose sanctions against terrorists and those who support them.

Mr. Ruslan Stefanchuk, the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine then took the floor via videoconference to express Ukraine's solidarity with Israel and to update those in attendance on the situation in Ukraine.

The Deputy Secretary General of NATO, Mircea Geoana followed. He spoke of the steps being taken to enhance NATO's deterrence and defence posture. Such steps include the ramping up of the production of weapons and ammunition, investment in new technologies, and increased defence spending. He then answered questions from the floor, including one from MP Julie Dzerowicz about what was being done to negotiate a new Black Sea grain initiative.

The final speaker was General Philippe Lavigne, NATO Supreme Commander Transformation. He spoke about the challenging security environment and urgent need for NATO to adapt and to transform itself to meet these new challenges. General Lavigne also described how NATO was returning to the basics of collective defence and focusing on strengthening its defence and deterrence across all domains and against all threats and challenges.

Delegates then elected the NATO PA Assembly Officers. President Michal Sczerba of Poland and five vice-presidents – Theo Francken of Belgium, Marcos Perestrello of Portugal, Nicu Falcoi from Romania, Kevan Jones from the United Kingdom and Linda Sanchez from the United States were all re-elected by acclamation. The treasurer, Wolfgang Hellmich from Germany was also re-elected by acclamation.

NATO PA delegates also voted to adopt several financial documents presented by the Assembly's Treasurer, including a draft budget for the financial year 2024.

Participating delegates then adopted the following six resolutions:

- *Protecting Allied Democracies and Partners from Disinformation* that, among other matters, urges NATO governments and parliaments to strengthen their efforts to address and counter disinformation, while "guaranteeing respect for freedom of expression."
- *Implementing NATO's New Deterrence and Defence Baseline* that, among other matters, acknowledges NATO member countries' commitment to spend at least 2% of their national gross domestic product on defence.
- *Strengthening Stability and Security in the Black Sea Region* that, among other matters, calls on NATO governments and parliaments to implement "fully and effectively" the decisions taken by Allied leaders at the 2022 Madrid and 2023 Vilnius Summits to "establish a new baseline for NATO's enhanced deterrence and defence posture" along the Alliance's Eastern Flank.
- *Towards the Reconstruction of Ukraine* that, among other matters, refers to Russian attacks and other acts of violence against civilians and critical

infrastructure in Ukraine as “war crimes,” urging NATO governments and parliaments to ensure that Russia is held accountable for those crimes, as well as for crimes against humanity and “reported acts of genocide.”

- *Delivering on the Vilnius Summit Decisions: Accelerating NATO’s Adaptation, Supporting Ukraine* that, among other matters, reaffirms the Assembly’s support for Ukraine, and the Alliance’s “360-degree approach” to address a wide a range of defence and security issues This resolution also calls on NATO governments and parliaments to support the work of the NATO Centre of Excellence for Climate Change and Security, which will be located in Montreal, Canada.
- *Enhancing the Protection of Allied Critical Maritime Infrastructure* that, among other matters, urges NATO governments and parliaments to continue enhancing their efforts to protect critical maritime infrastructure.

President Szczerba then announced that Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, National Leader of Belarus and Head of the United Transition Cabinet was the recipient of the NATO PA’s 2023 Women for Peace and Security Award. In her acceptance speech, Ms. Tsikhanouskaya spoke of the thousands of imprisoned and oppressed women around the world and of how women can bring about political change.

Finally, in closing the Plenary Sitting, NATO PA President Szczerba thanked the Danish Parliament, the NATO PA secretariat, the police and security staff, the interpreters and all those who supported the 2023 Annual Session.

OTHER MEETINGS

Prior to the start of the Annual Session, the chair of the association, MP Julie Dzerowicz, was briefed by Canada’s Permanent Representative at NATO, Ambassador David Angell.

On 6 October 2023, the delegation completed its preparations for the Annual Session by meeting with Denis Robert, Canada’s ambassador to Denmark. Discussions focused on economic and regional developments, immigration, and avenues for bilateral cooperation.

Finally, on the sidelines of the Annual Session, delegates met with the Finnish, Swedish, and Latvian delegations to discuss support for Ukraine, countering disinformation, and the need to strengthen collaboration and harmonization within the transatlantic community, among other matters.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Dzerowicz, MP
Chair, Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association
ACTIVITY	69 th Annual Session
DESTINATION	Copenhagen, Denmark
DATES	From October 6 to 9, 2023
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu Hon. Donna Dasko Hon. Rebecca Patterson
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Julie Dzerowicz Rachel Blaney Frank Caputo Darren Fisher Cheryl Gallant Kristina Michaud
STAFF	Céline Ethier
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 33,338.15
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 12,008.09
HOSPITALITY	\$ 2,323.97
PER DIEMS	\$ 7,710.13
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0.00
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 11.02
TOTAL	\$ 55,391.36