



Report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association

Joint visit of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations (PCTR) and the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Economic Relations (ESCTER)

**New York, New York and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United
States of America**

From April 22 to 26, 2024

Report

The Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (CANA or the association) has the honour to present this report on its participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA or the Assembly) joint visit of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations (PCTR) and the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Economic Relations (ESCTER)¹ to New York, New York and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States (U.S.), which was held from 22 to 26 April 2024. The association was represented by Cheryl Gallant, MP, Chair of the PCTR and one of CANA's vice-chairs.

THE NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Established in 1955, the NATO PA is an interparliamentary organization that brings together legislators from the national parliaments of NATO's 32 member countries.² In addition to this membership, delegates from 11 associate countries, four Mediterranean associate countries, and seven parliamentary observer delegations take part in the NATO PA's activities. It is institutionally separate and independent from the official NATO structure but serves as a liaison for NATO and member parliaments. The NATO PA aims to strengthen parliamentary awareness, understanding and oversight of defence and security issues, while also enhancing the transparency of NATO policies. The Assembly also plays a significant role in deepening the transatlantic relationship that underpins the NATO Alliance.³

The Political Committee (PC) and Economics and Security Committee (ESC) are two of the NATO PA's five thematic committees whose members hear from defence and security experts, and conduct fact-finding missions throughout the year, which culminate in the drafting of reports and resolutions. The draft reports are considered during the NATO PA's spring and fall sessions; the fall session is often referred to as the annual session.

The PC focuses on all political questions concerning the security of NATO and its member and partner countries. The areas covered by this committee include all political and diplomatic aspects of NATO's adaptation to a changing international security environment; NATO's relationships with international organizations like the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN); and the continuing enlargement of the Alliance and the respective programs that prepare applicant countries for possible membership.

¹ The North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly's (NATO PA's or the Assembly's) Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations (PCTR) is a sub-committee of the Assembly's Political Committee. Moreover, the NATO PA's Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Economic Relations (ESCTER) is a sub-committee of the Assembly's Economics and Security Committee. See NATO PA, [Economics and Security Committee](#); and NATO PA, [Political Committee](#).

² The 32 member countries of 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. See NATO, [NATO member countries](#).

³ For more information, see NATO PA, [Our Mission – Dialogue, Transparency, Partnership](#).

The PC has two sub-committees: the PCTR and the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations.⁴

The ESC studies economic issues, which have been judged by parliamentarians to be of critical importance to the NATO members. The topics include energy security; economic development and post-conflict reconstruction; and the economic consequences of terrorism. The ESC has two sub-committees: the ESCTER and the Sub-Committee on Transition and Development.⁵

INTRODUCTION

From 22 to 26 April 2024, Ms. Gallant, Chair of the PCTR, and Derk Boswijk of the Netherlands and Annick Ponthier of Belgium, vice-chairs of the ESCTER, led a multinational NATO PA delegation of 43 legislators from 21 NATO member countries to New York, New York and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.⁶

The main purpose of the visit was to strengthen NATO Parliamentary understanding of the cooperative efforts between NATO member countries through briefings by North American military and diplomatic representatives.

Topics of focus during the visits were:

- Fostering the transatlantic bond and expectations from the NATO Washington Summit.
- The role of the United Nations in the era of renewed strategic competition.
- Russia's War against Ukraine: future scenarios and options for the U.S. policymakers.
- The uneven rise of countries with developing economies.
- The security crisis in the Middle East: implications for global security and the U.S. foreign policy.
- U.S. economic relations with Asian allies and partners.
- Managing the Chinese challenge to the rules-based international order.
- The evolution of modern warfare and the challenges posed by emerging disruptive technologies.
- U.S. approaches to export controls on dual-use technologies and cooperation with US allies and partners in Europe and Asia.
- U.S. views of the impact of sanctions on the Russian economy: what more can be done?
- U.S. perspectives of the health and resilience of the Russian economy.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

⁴ For more information, see NATO PA, [Political Committee](#).

⁵ For more information, see NATO PA, [Economics and Security Committee](#).

⁶ For more information, see NATO PA, [Delegation visit to New York, Princeton and Philadelphia highlights priorities for Ukraine support, NATO Washington Summit and US and international security](#), News release, 30 April 2024; and NATO PA, [2024 – Mission Report – ESCTER PCTR Visit to the United States – April](#), 30 April 2024.

MONDAY, APRIL 22 TO WEDNESDAY APRIL 24, 2024

On 22 April 2024, the NATO PA delegation met with Ambassador Robert Rae, the Permanent Representative of Canada to the UN, who hosted the opening sessions of the delegation's visit to UN in New York. With a focus on the UN's role, he stressed that UN member countries are ultimately responsible for its successes and failures. He also drew attention to the three pillars of the UN – peace and security, sustainable development and human rights, and humanitarian issues – warning that those pillars “are being undermined.”

During their visit to the UN, the NATO PA delegates also met with Miroslav Jenča, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas. He drew attention to the UN Secretary-General's acknowledgement that Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine is a clear violation of the UN Charter. UN Assistant Secretary-General Jenča also said that the UN has taken steps to “mitigate” the global impacts of the war in Ukraine, including through UN's role in negotiating the Black Sea Grain Initiative with Ukraine, Türkiye and Russia, the provision of support to displaced Ukrainians, and aiding the Ukraine's reconstruction efforts.

On 23 April 2024, the NATO PA delegation met with U.S. military officials at the U.S. Military Academy West Point, including U.S. Lieutenant Colonel Jordan Becker, Associate Professor of International Relations. Lieutenant Colonel Becker stated that, although NATO member countries have made efforts to increase their defence spending to meet, exceed or move towards NATO's 2% defence spending of gross domestic product (GDP) commitment, he underscored that Europe needs to shoulder greater security responsibilities as the U.S. seeks to strengthen its forces in Asia and other regions. Concerning the war in Ukraine, he noted that Russian President Vladimir Putin made a major miscalculation by conducting a poorly planned invasion of Ukraine that gave Ukraine and the West time to generate an effective response.

On 24 April 2024, the NATO PA delegates travelled to Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey. During that visit, they attended an event marking NATO's 75th anniversary, and heard from a wide range of individuals, including academics, experts and U.S. Representative Brendan Boyle, Chair of the NATO PA's PC. U.S. Representative Boyle noted that the relevance of NATO is unquestionable. He also acknowledged that a number of NATO's member countries “have considerably stepped up their defence spending in recent years.” However, he called on NATO member countries that are not currently meeting NATO's 2% defence spending commitment to meet that commitment, stressing that failure to do so “plays into the arguments of those in the U.S. with pro-isolationist views.”

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

THURSDAY, APRIL 25 AND FRIDAY, APRIL 26, 2024

On 25 and 26 April 2024, the NATO PA delegates travelled to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. During that visit, they attended panel discussions on several issues, including one on the implications for NATO of China's and Russia's involvement in Africa. That panel included participation from Colonel (Ret.) Robert E. Hamilton, Head of Research in the Eurasia

Program at the Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI), and Jacques DeLisle, Chair of the Asia Program at FPRI.

Colonel (Ret.) Hamilton mentioned that Chinese–Russian interaction in Africa is neither cooperative nor competitive, although the two countries are aware of each other's actions in the region. Concerning Russia, he noted that Russia has focused on increasing its presence in the Sahel, including through the use and deployment of mercenary groups, which are the primary agents of Russian policy. He also observed that Russia's goals in the region also include gaining access to raw materials and energy while unwinding Western influence. Furthermore, Colonel (Ret.) Hamilton stated that Russian President Putin has sought diplomatic support from a number of African countries at a time when European countries along its border have strongly opposed its full-scale war on Ukraine.

In relation to China, Colonel (Ret.) Hamilton argued that the country's approach to Africa is primarily focused on economic development, and less explicitly anti-Western in orientation. China is Africa's leading trade partner and is an important investor on the continent. He stated that China leverages its economic clout to garner support from African countries for its Taiwan policy. Colonel (Ret.) Hamilton also highlighted that, in recent years, China has drawn on its economic and political history and offered it as a model for African development. Moreover, he indicated that China's approach towards Africa includes a security dimension because China has provided certain African governments with surveillance technologies that are used to exercise control over civil societies. However, Colonel (Ret.) Hamilton also remarked that there is growing resentment in Africa that stems from the environmental consequences of some of China's mining investments on the continent.

Jacques DeLisle noted that to improve its relationship and influence in Africa, western countries should not only provide capacity building assistance to African countries, but also concentrate on developing more visible and tangible projects. However, he also indicated that the West will hardly be in a position to overcome China in infrastructure investments in Africa.

Finally, while in Philadelphia, the NATO PA delegation met with Pennsylvania-based business leaders who presented their perspectives on supply chain security and green transition. NATO delegates also visited Leonardo Helicopters U.S. to learn about the company's production of military and commercial rotorcraft, including helicopters.

CONCLUSION

The visit of the joint visit of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations and the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Economic Relations to the United States was an informative visit. The visit allowed NATO PA delegates to gain further knowledge about U.S. policies and priorities on a wide range of defence and security issues that also pose a challenge to Euro-Atlantic security. Furthermore, considering the importance of Canada's defence, security, economic and people-to-people ties with the United States, the joint visit offered opportunities to discuss issues of Canadian interest with a number of individuals, such as government and military officials, academics and other experts, and private-sector representatives.

Travel Expenses

Travel expenses associated with this activity can be found in the delegation's financial report. This report is available in the [Financial Disclosure](#) section of the Parliamentary Diplomacy website.

Respectfully submitted,

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Chair, Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association