

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation  
regarding its participation in the  
Standing Committee Meeting**

**Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association**

**Vilnius, Lithuania  
March 23-24, 2018**

# REPORT

## Introduction

The Canadian delegation that attended the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) is honoured to present its report on the meeting of the Standing Committee, which was held in Vilnius, Lithuania, on March 23 and 24, 2018. The Parliament of Canada was represented by Ms. Leona Alleslev, M.P., head of the Canadian delegation; the Hon. Joseph A. Day, Senator; and Mr. Larry Miller, M.P. The delegation was accompanied by Mr. Jean-François Pagé, Association Secretary.

## **Address by the Lithuanian minister of national defence, Raimundas Karoblis, entitled “Lithuanian priorities and expectations for the next NATO summit,” followed by a question-and-answer period**

Mr. Karoblis welcomed the members of the Standing Committee to Lithuania. He noted that the Alliance would mark its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019. NATO remains the key defence organization for Europe and for the world and is of vital importance to Lithuania. Its primary focus is collective defence, of course, but the security environment has become more complex since the end of the Cold War. In that regard, he said he was saddened by the attacks committed in France the previous day. The fight against terrorism is a complicated problem that requires the Allies to work with a wide variety of actors and leverage both military and non-military assets.

On the subject of security in the Baltic region, Mr. Karoblis observed that, under the leadership of President Vladimir Putin, Russia has chosen antagonism and confrontation over cooperation. He outlined the political reasons that make Russia a security concern for Lithuania. (1) The current Russian government looks back nostalgically to the time of the Soviet Union and would like the country to regain its superpower status. (2) It has flouted international law by redrawing internationally recognized borders unilaterally and by force, both in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine in 2014. (3) It shows absolutely no interest in putting an end to the conflicts in the Caucasus and Ukraine; on the contrary, it is attempting to escalate them or start new conflicts. (4) Russia has expanded its military footprint around the world, notably by maintaining a significant presence in Syria, shipping arms to Central Africa and employing private military companies; thus, the serious threat that it presents is not confined to Eastern Europe but extends to the northern and southern flanks of the transatlantic community. (5) Mr. Putin is attempting to draw Russian society’s attention away from genuine domestic problems by inventing external perils, as was the case for the Ukrainian conflict. (6) The Russia problem is not associated with one specific individual and has become systematic.

NATO’s enhanced forward presence in the Baltic region has greatly helped reassure the region’s countries and preserve the region’s stability. Mr. Karoblis expressed gratitude to Germany for heading the operations and thanked the Allies that also deployed forces to Lithuania.

Mr. Karoblis’s main goal is to provide strong national defence and contribute to collective defence. Lithuania has raised its military spending to 2% of its gross domestic product

(GDP) and intends to increase it further. It is also planning to acquire infantry combat vehicles, self-propelled artillery weapons, and air defence systems.

In the last part of his address, Mr. Karoblis spoke mostly about Lithuania's priorities leading up to the NATO summit in Brussels. First, the command structure must be able to adapt to all of the basic missions. While its focus in the past was on out-of-area operations, the Alliance must now be prepared to cope with cyberattacks, instability and direct threats in both the north and the south. It must also prepare for a high-intensity, broad-scale conflict in Europe and be able to respond quickly to highly mobile Russian troops, which have shown substantial capability in recent exercises. To that end, the ability of political and military authorities to react promptly and resolutely must be improved. The Lithuanian authorities favour the deployment of a new ground command in Poland, which they believe would help to restore the geographic balance within the NATO command structure.

Second, the Allies must reinforce their deterrent and defensive postures. Forward-deployed forces need air and sea assets. The Lithuanian authorities also favour transforming the Baltic air policing mission into air defence missions. Most importantly, reinforcement strategies and capabilities need to be developed, in view of the increased assets that the Russians have for denying access to the region.

Third, the decision made at the Wales Summit that all of the Allies should spend at least 2% of their GDP on defence by 2024 remains critically important. Mr. Karoblis was the first Allied defence minister to state that the President of the United States was right to speak out on burden sharing. At the moment, eight members of NATO have reached the 2% threshold. Whatever their size, the Allies have made substantial progress, added Mr. Karoblis, citing the example of France.

Fourth, cooperation between NATO and the European Union has improved considerably, and the next summit will provide further opportunities to take advantage of that development, said Mr. Karoblis, citing military mobility as one of the critical areas where improvements are sorely needed. Lithuania is playing a prominent role in assembling mutual cyber assistance teams within NATO, with the aim of forming a cyber rapid reaction team by the beginning of 2019.

Fifth, Lithuania intends to pursue dialogue and cooperation with Russia under the conditions set by NATO and to collaborate further with Ukraine and Georgia.

Sixth, Lithuania recognizes that, to assure its security, it also needs to look south; it is prepared to strengthen its commitment to stabilizing the region. It is participating in operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali, the Central African Republic, off the coast of Somalia, and in the western Mediterranean.

### **Presidency of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly**

In the wake of the defeat of President Paolo Alli in the Italian elections, the Bureau of the NATO PA made the following recommendations:

-the Bureau recommended unanimously that Mr. Alli continue exercising his presidential functions for as long as permitted under Article 1.4;

-the Bureau recommended unanimously that Rasa Jukneviene be designated for appointment to the post of acting president, in accordance with Article 13.1, when the current president is no longer able to continue exercising his functions;

- the Bureau agreed that Article 13.1 applied in this instance, but observed that its wording – designed to ensure that the article would apply to cases where the president unexpectedly becomes unable to exercise his functions – could be clarified to cover situations where it is known in advance that the president will cease to be able to exercise his functions; it therefore recommended that the International Secretariat consider clarifying the Rules of Procedure and advise the Bureau of the outcome of its deliberations at the Warsaw Session.

Vice-President Joseph Day pointed out that clearly, the presidency would become vacant before the annual session; as a result, the Bureau wanted to decide right away who would replace Mr. Alli and complete his term.

### **Motion on the Salisbury attack**

Richard Benyon, head of the United Kingdom delegation, moved that an emergency debate be held to discuss the March 4 attack in Salisbury. Subsequently, the Committee unanimously adopted the following resolution:

The Standing Committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, meeting at Vilnius, was informed today by the United Kingdom delegation about the attack committed with military-grade nerve agents in Salisbury on March 4.

Richard Benyon, head of the United Kingdom delegation, provided a detailed description of the facts and the measures taken by the British government, on the basis of its analysis that the attack was very likely perpetrated or sponsored by the Russian Federation.

Following these revelations, the Standing Committee expressed solidarity with the United Kingdom and condemned that heinous and gratuitous act; it is the first use of nerve agents for offensive purposes on Alliance territory and a flagrant violation of international laws and regulations.

The Standing Committee also expressed support for the multilateral measures undertaken by British authorities, inter alia through the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), to respond to the attack; it also called on the Russian Federation to cooperate fully with the OPCW's investigators.

### **Financial report**

A report on the audit of the NATO PA's financial statements and the NATO PA contingency fund for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2017, was presented by Hervé-Adrien Metzger, **Chair of the International Board of Auditors for NATO**. In his presentation, he stated that the NATO PA's financial statements and its contingency fund for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2017, were consistent in every respect with the fiscal framework adopted by the NATO PA and the accounting principles outlined in the NATO PA's financial procedures and the contingency fund's procedures.

Marc Angel, Member of Parliament (Luxembourg) and NATO PA Treasurer, summarized the Assembly's financial situation. He listed the Assembly's sources of income and its expenses, and said there was a surplus of €94,021.61 for the 2017 fiscal year.

It was agreed that the surplus would be allocated as follows:

- €34,689.61 would be allocated to the Assembly's Emergency Fund, which had not been updated since 2012 and would thus attain the maximum level provided for in the financial procedures, which is 25% of the national contributions for the current fiscal year;
- €19,332 would be allocated to Chapter 2 (Operational Costs), which would make it possible to replace the Assembly's automobile, which is nearly 20 years old, and carry out some renovations in the Assembly's offices, which were last updated in 2008;
- the remaining €40,000 would be allocated to Chapter 3 (Sessions), which seems prudent since this year's annual session will take place in Canada, resulting in additional expenses for the International Secretariat.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj, M.P.  
Chair of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association

## **Travel Costs**

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Standing Committee Meeting
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Vilnius, Lithuania
<b>DATES</b>	March 23-24, 2018
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Joseph Day
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Leona Alleslev, Larry Miller
STAFF	Jean-François Pagé
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	26,133.26\$
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	2,631.00\$
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	0\$
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	1,432.96\$
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	0\$
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	0\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30,197.22\$</b>