

Canadian NATO  
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire  
canadienne de l'OTAN

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation  
respecting its participation at the 2015 Spring Session**

**Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)**

**Budapest, Hungary  
May 15 to 18, 2015**

# Report

## INTRODUCTION

The Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association has the honour to present its report on participation in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's (NATO PA) Spring Session in Budapest, Hungary, 15 – 18 May 2015. The delegation was led by Association Chair Mrs. Cheryl Gallant, M.P., and included, from the Senate, the Hon. Raynell Andreychuk, the Hon. Jane Cordy, the Hon. Joseph Day, and the Hon. Donald Neil Plett, and from the House of Commons, Mr. Tarik Brahmi, M.P., and Mrs. Joyce Murray, M.P. The delegation was accompanied by Katherine Simonds, the Association's acting Advisor. The Spring Session was hosted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Hungary and chaired by the NATO PA President, Mr. Michael Turner, Member of the House of Representatives from the United States (U.S.). The session brought together close to 300 parliamentarians from NATO member countries, as well as delegates representing associate countries from North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia.

## THE NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

The NATO PA is an inter-parliamentary organization of legislators from the national parliaments of the 28 member countries of the North Atlantic Alliance, as well as 14 associate member countries. It is institutionally separate and independent from the official NATO structure but serves as a liaison for NATO and member parliaments.<sup>1</sup> The Assembly strengthens parliamentary awareness and understanding of key security issues and provides greater transparency of NATO policies. Crucially, it also helps to deepen the transatlantic relationship which underpins the Alliance. Canadian parliamentarians draw significant benefit from their participation in NATO PA events. In addition to gaining a better understanding of strategic issues facing both the Alliance and Canada, Canadian delegates are presented with the opportunity to promote Canadian interests and values in the course of discussions throughout the NATO PA, its committees and during informal meetings with counterparts from NATO member and non-member states.

## MAIN ISSUES

The agenda of the 2015 Spring Session of the NATO PA included a number of topics of interest to the NATO PA and of importance to Canada, such as:

- 1) The Crisis in Ukraine;
- 2) NATO-Russia relations;
- 3) NATO Operations, including lessons from Libya, Mali, and the Afghanistan (ISAF) mission;

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<sup>1</sup> See NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA), "[About the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.](#)"

- 4) Strengthening transatlantic defence and security;
- 5) Home-grown terrorism and related challenges;
- 6) Hybrid warfare;
- 7) Terrorism financing;
- 8) Russia's military modernization;
- 9) Climate change and international security;
- 10) NATO expansion and partnerships.

## **MEETING WITH CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVES IN Hungary**

Members of the Canadian delegation had the opportunity to meet with Ms. Lisa Helfand, Canada's Ambassador to Hungary, Slovenia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, in order to gain a better understanding of the political context in Hungary. Ms. Helfand provided delegates with an overview of current Canadian priorities in Europe, Canada-Hungary relations, issues related to the Hungarian Roma population, Hungary's early response to the migration crisis, its defence and security responsibilities under NATO, and the human rights situation in Hungary.

## **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

The NATO PA includes five general Committees, each tasked with specific policy areas. These committees include the Defence and Security Committee, the Science and Technology Committee, the Economics and Security Committee, the Committee on Civil Dimensions of Security and the Political Committee. During the NATO PA Spring Sessions, these committees hold meetings to consider draft reports and hear presentations from senior military and government officials, policy experts, and academics. Prior to the Committee<sup>2</sup> meetings, delegates had the opportunity to meet with their counterparts from their respective political groups: Conservative, Christian Democrat and Associates; Alliance of Liberals and Democrats; and, Socialist. This allowed NATO PA delegates from similar political parties to discuss issues of mutual interest to their own parties and constituents, further solidifying the nature of the democratic debate and parliamentary diplomacy that takes place within the NATO PA.

NATO PA Committees then met simultaneously over the next two days. During these meetings, Committees debated reports drafted by their respective Rapporteurs. Final drafts of these reports were brought forward, discussed and adopted at the Annual Session in Stavanger, Norway in October 2015. Consideration of draft reports during the Spring Session allows delegates to comment and provide input prior to adoption at the Fall Session.

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<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed account of the Spring Session's Committee meetings and presentations, please see <http://www.nato-pa.int/default.asp?SHORTCUT=3871>

## DEFENCE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE

The Committee heard from four speakers. First, Lieutenant General John W. Nicholson, Commander, NATO Allied Land Command (LANDCOM) (LTG Nicholson), and Stephen R. Covington, Strategic and International Affairs Adviser to Supreme Allied Command Europe (SACEUR), presented their thoughts on NATO's Evolving Strategy towards the South. LTG Nicholson began by thanking Turkey for its support of LANDCOM in Izmir, Turkey. During peacetime, LANDCOM assists members of the Alliance, as well as partners, with interoperability, capability, and readiness; whereas in times of conflict, NATO's land forces are led by the LANDCOM commander.

Given the fluid nature of the security threats facing NATO on both its Southern and Eastern flanks, LTG Nicholson emphasized that the strength, speed, and readiness of Allied forces are key factors in determining appropriate responses to these challenges, and should be taken into account when examining how to allocate NATO resources. As such, LTG Nicholson told delegates that the Very High Readiness Task Force (VJTF), established following the Wales Summit in 2014, is an important capability for the Alliance – but also one that will require significant resources. While NATO readiness is at an all-time high, LTG Nicholson argued that future planning should also extend beyond the military dimension, particularly as complex humanitarian emergencies such as those emanating from the Middle East and North Africa continue to destabilize the larger security environment.

Speaking on the same panel, Stephen Covington explained that NATO is facing two very different threats. In the East, NATO is confronting a state-to-state conflict characterized by traditional military approaches, whereas the multidimensional threats posed by terrorism, civil war, and mass migration in the South are non-traditional in nature. In order to address the dynamics of both types of threats, Mr. Covington urged members of the Alliance to continue to focus on NATO's situational awareness capabilities. He stressed the importance of cooperation amongst member states in order to avoid duplication in this area. During the panel discussion that followed, delegates highlighted recent improvements in the field of Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR), expressed concern with advances made by Daesh<sup>3</sup> in Iraq, and identified climate change and cyber security as potential sources of instability.

Delegates also reiterated that Russia's aggression in Ukraine constituted a violation of international law, and noted that since the suspension of the NATO-Russia Council, NATO no longer has any official cooperation with Russia.

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<sup>3</sup> Daesh is the Arabic term that refers to the Sunni jihadist group also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Islamic State (IS) – is a Sunni jihadist group. For the purposes of consistency, unless part of a direct quotation, this report uses the term Daesh throughout.

The Committee then heard from His Excellency Mr. Csaba Hende, Hungary's Minister of Defence, as well as General Tibor Benko, Chief of Defence and Head of the Hungarian Armed Forces. Mr. Hende began by applauding the work of the NATO PA and highlighting the vital role played by parliamentarians in ensuring continued support of the NATO forces. Mr. Hende also provided a brief overview of the key security challenges facing NATO, reminding delegates that due to its geography, Hungary is at the forefront of threats from both the East and the South. He argued that issues stemming from climate change, such as extreme weather and droughts in the Middle East and North Africa, along with rising sea levels, may indirectly affect European security, and strain available resources. In accordance with agreements made at the NATO Summit in Wales, Mr. Hende stated that Hungary had increased its defence spending by 8%, and that his country would continue to annually increase this amount by 0.1% through 2022 – a demonstration of Hungary's commitment to collective security.

General Tibor Benko was the Committee's final speaker. He opened his presentation by outlining the contributions of the Hungarian Defence Forces to the NATO exercises and the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) more generally. Regarding the conflict in Ukraine, General Benko put forward that stability in the Balkans must remain a priority, despite the emergence of new security challenges, and that a comprehensive political agreement is the only way to bring lasting peace to the region.

The Committee then considered several draft reports that would be further examined and adopted at the Annual Session.<sup>4</sup> Senator Cordy, Senator Day, Mrs. Gallant, Ms. Murray, and Senator Plett were the Canadian delegates who participated in these discussions. Ms. Murray made two interventions during the Committee's proceedings. The first question was to LTG Nicholson, asking whether the geo-political consequences of climate change were being factored into NATO plans, as they have been in other Allied countries. LTG Nicholson replied that while climate change is considered a threat-multiplier within security communities, this is not his area of responsibility. Ms. Murray's second question was posed to Mr. Hende, Hungary's Minister of Defence, regarding lessons learned from "strength and readiness investments" during conflict compared to investments made in diplomatic and political efforts. Minister Hende responded by saying that he believed the world learned its lesson from the huge investments in strength and readiness in the lead up to World War I, and acknowledged that they can spur conflict, rather than diffusing it, in certain cases. Senator Day took the opportunity to thank Sir Menzies "Ming" Campbell and Sir John Stanley – two long standing members of the Defence and Security Committee who did not run in the most recent British election – for their contributions to the NATO PA over the years and wished them well.

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<sup>4</sup> The draft reports considered during the Spring Session's Defence and Security Committee meeting included: "Hybrid Warfare: NATO's New Strategic Challenge?" "The Readiness Action Plan: Assurance and Deterrence for the post-2014 Security Environment," "Realizing the Goals of the Summit: Strengthening the Transatlantic Link," and "Afghanistan – Post-ISAF."

## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE**

During the meeting of the Science and Technology Committee, delegates heard from two speakers. Dr. Tibor Faragó, Honorary Professor at St. Istvan University, Budapest, and former Hungarian Chief Negotiator for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) spoke first, and presented his view on the prospects for a global climate change agreement in 2015. Dr. Faragó began with a brief overview of the historical interaction between science and policy, and described the influence of this relationship on climate agreements throughout the 1990s to the present day. Dr. Faragó also analysed the failure of states to successfully negotiate a new legally binding instrument in Copenhagen in 2009, and remarked that in order to move forward, the international community must finally face the challenge of greenhouse gas emissions reductions head-on. Dr. Faragó reminded delegates that the Montreal Protocol dealing with the issue of ozone depletion is widely viewed as an environmental success story, but also explained that climate change is a more multi-dimensional challenge than the ozone issue, as it requires both adaptation and mitigation strategies, as well as specific sector-by-sector action plans. Looking ahead to Paris, he differentiated between what ought to be achieved and what may realistically be achieved. Ideally, he suggested that global emissions should be reduced by about 15% by 2030, and 40–70% by 2050 compared to 2010 levels. Furthermore, Dr. Faragó called for emission restrictions to keep global warming to below 2°C, targets for adaptation, and policies to provide for flexibility, compliance, and financial mechanisms. Dr. Faragó concluded by recognizing that these goals can only be achieved if industrialized countries commit to a bottom-up approach based on national plans.

Following the presentation, Philippe Vitel (Special Rapporteur, France) reminded the Science and Technology Committee that it was the former Canadian Senator Pierre Claude Nolin who was the first Science and Technology Rapporteur to address climate change issues when he held the position in 2007.

The next speaker was Mark Fitzpatrick, Director of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Programme at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), whose presentation addressed prospects for the negotiations on the Iranian nuclear program. Mr. Fitzpatrick described the terms of the April 2015 framework positively, stating that it contained many compromises and was more detail than he initially expected. He explained that under the terms of the negotiated framework, Iran's "break out time" (the length of time it would need to produce enough highly enriched uranium to make a nuclear weapon) would be kept to one year at the Natanz fuel enrichment plant. He also clarified that enrichment activities at the Fordow facility would cease, plutonium production at the Arak nuclear research reactor would be denied, and clandestine activities would be blocked by the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) monitoring efforts. During the discussion, Mrs. Gallant asked Mr. Fitzpatrick to expand on Iran's justification for continued enrichment. Mr. Fitzpatrick responded by reassuring delegates that the agreement was a diplomatic achievement,

and struck a balance between addressing Western countries' concerns and preserving Iran's dignity.

The Committee's rapporteurs then presented three reports to which amendments were proposed following a brief debate.<sup>5</sup> Canadian delegates participating in these discussions included Senator Andreychuk, Senator Cordy, Senator Day, and Mrs. Gallant.

## **ECONOMICS AND SECURITY COMMITTEE**

Following Committee business, delegates heard from three speakers. The first presentation was offered by Dr. Zoltán Pogatsa, Professor of Economics at the University of Western Hungary on the topic of Hungary's future in the European and world economy. Dr. Pogatsa provided an overview of the ways in which small states are vulnerable to economic shocks. He explained that while larger countries such as Spain and Italy are not immune to sudden shifts, they benefit from the global reserve currency. In 2008 and 2009, Hungary acted to lower its debt burden, which, in turn, improved its economic climate. He explained that the Hungarian example is different from the case of Greece, where insufficient revenue generation meant that Greece was unable to meet its debt obligations. Following the presentation, delegates argued that in order to confront global economic challenges, structural issues in Greece and other European countries must be addressed. Greater scrutiny of the economic system of the Eurozone was also called for. When asked if Hungary would be prepared to join the Eurozone, Dr. Pogatsa encouraged Hungarian parliamentarians to continue aiming to meet the convergence criteria, whether it chose to adopt the Euro currency or not, as steps toward this goal would improve its overall economic position.

The Committee then heard from Diego A. Ruiz Palmer, Special Advisor to the NATO Secretary General for Economics and Security. Discussing current defence spending trends in the Alliance, he cautioned that NATO members were still recovering from the worst international financial crisis since World War II, whose widespread effects exposed the interconnectedness of economies across the transatlantic community. As a result, NATO must pay more attention to the economic dimensions of security. When combined with strategic considerations, such as Russia's military modernization and the rise of the Chinese military, the Alliance must ensure that funds are spent smartly. Mr. Ruiz Palmer also stressed the importance of a shared responsibility in terms of cost sharing across the Alliance, as well as the significant role played by medium-sized allies to overall capabilities. He concluded by outlining four pillars of future allied security: investment, education, innovation, and social responsibility.

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<sup>5</sup> These reports included: "Russian Military Modernization," "The High North: Emerging Challenges and Opportunities," and "Climate Change, International Security and the Way to Paris 2015."

The final speaker was Dr. Alena Ledeneva, Professor of Politics and Society from University College, London. Dr. Ledeneva began by detailing the impact of falling oil prices and sanctions on Russia's economy, and told delegates that Russia's complex political system consists of high levels of corruption, poor governance structures, limited property rights, and a strong affiliation with organized crime. Given Russia's reliance on propaganda, Dr. Ledeneva argued that as tensions escalate, the West can expect an increase in propaganda construing the U.S. and NATO as aggressors. In her opinion, the annexation of Crimea is likely to be expensive, though President Putin has managed to control the message that the situation has not caused any great instability for Russia. She expressed doubt in the validity of Putin's 88% approval rating, suggesting that polling data is skewed. In her view, there is little genuine interest in political reform in Russia and she anticipates that Putin will remain in power until 2018.

The Committee's rapporteurs presented their respective draft reports.<sup>6</sup> Canadian delegates participating these discussions included Senator Andreychuk, Mr. Brahmi, Senator Day, and Mrs. Gallant.

## **COMMITTEE ON THE CIVIL DIMENSIONS OF SECURITY**

During the meeting, delegates heard from three speakers. First, Ambassador István Gyarmati, President of the International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT) in Hungary, provided an overview of the current political and security challenges facing Western Balkan states. He argued that the Western Balkans have historically been characterized by war and violent transitions, which has led to the emergence of new states, but has not created real stability for citizens. According to Ambassador Gyarmati, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, while the first to be associated with the EU, has seen little progress since its creation. He described Serbia as a "hesitant regional actor" though he noted that the country has made strides in terms of reforms to join the EU. For its part, Kosovo struggles with systemic corruption. On the other hand, the development of Montenegro's Euro-Atlantic structures has been remarkable, according to the Ambassador. As such, he suggested that Montenegro become a member of the Alliance within the year so that NATO could benefit from its strategic advantages, and at the same time demonstrate to other Western Balkan states that positive reforms will be rewarded. He also urged delegates to not neglect this region despite NATO's growing list of priorities and pre-occupations.

The second speaker was Mathieu Guidere, Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès in France. Professor Guidere outlined the findings from a recent study conducted by the Radicalisation Watch Project – an academic research program seeking to understand why young people engage in jihadism. Analyzing blogs, internet websites, and other social media tools, researchers looked for key words being used by

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<sup>6</sup> These reports included: "The State of the Ukrainian Economy and Prospects for its Future Development," and "Sanctioning the Russian Economy: Costs and Impacts."



young people in French, English, Spanish, and Arabic (also known as “predictive linguistics”) to identify intentions to travel to Syria, Iraq, and Yemen or intentions to use violence in the name of jihadism. Professor Guidere explained the three stages in the process of jihadism: engagement (changing attitudes toward jihadism), indoctrination (legitimization of violent acts), and violent action itself (carrying out or talking about carrying out violent actions).

The study found that most leaders of jihadism were converts to Islam. The results also demonstrated that the factors motivating extremism differentiated between men and women, and converts versus people born into Islam.

During the discussion that followed the presentation, Mr. Brahmi asked the speaker how certain policies, such as those involving religious dress, may influence the feelings of alienation and discrimination among young Muslims. Professor Guidere suggested that political messaging is important, particularly when a young person is “tipping” towards radicalization. Some delegates also debated terminology surrounding the use of “violent extremism” versus “jihadism.”

The Committee’s final presentation was given by Mustafa Dzhemilev, Commissioner of the Ukrainian President for Affairs of Crimean Tatars. Mr. Dzhemilev provided an overview of the situation in Crimea with a focus on the condition of the Tatars. He described the conditions within Crimea following Russian annexation as absent of political, press, economic, and democratic freedoms, and inferred that the results of the referendum had been falsified. About 35,000 Tatars had left Crimea as of May 2015. In closing, Mr. Dzhemilev called for the strengthening of Ukraine’s defence capabilities as a deterrent against further Russian aggression encouraged Western countries to maintain their sanctions against Russia.

The Committee’s rapporteurs presented three reports.<sup>7</sup> Following a discussion, amendments were proposed and the Committee then discussed its remaining activities for 2015. Senator Andreychuk, Mr. Brahmi, Senator Cordy, Mrs. Gallant, and Ms. Murray were the Canadian delegates who participated in these discussions.

## **POLITICAL COMMITTEE**

The Political Committee invited three speakers to address delegates. First, István Mikola, State Secretary for Security Policy and International Cooperation with the Hungarian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade, presented his thoughts on Hungary’s role in the “EU-U.S.-Russia triangle.” Underscoring Hungary’s commitment to the transatlantic community, Mr. Mikola reiterated that Russia’s provocative actions contested the post-

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<sup>7</sup> These reports included: “Transition in Afghanistan: Implications for Central Asia,” “Challenges in Addressing home-grown Terrorism,” and “The Battle for the Hearts and Minds: Countering Propaganda Attacks Against the Euro-Atlantic Community.”

Cold War order. Following frequent Russian violations of the Minsk 2 ceasefire agreement, Mr. Mikola indicated that it will take time for NATO and Russia to rebuild its relationship. However, he told delegates that a diplomatic solution would help foster a “business as usual” environment. Mr. Mikola informed Committee members that Hungary has provided assistance to Ukraine by helping it develop its cyber capabilities, providing medical assistance, facilitating energy exports, and promoting other reforms, among other things. He argued that NATO and the EU should coordinate their activities in order to better address the instability in the South, and to convey strength and unity ahead of the 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw.

The Committee then heard from Ambassador István Gyarmati. His presentation before the Political Committee focused on transatlantic solidarity. He remarked that the tendency for NATO to view its relationship with Ukraine through the “prism of Russia” meant that it was making decisions on Russian terms. He further argued that insufficient investments in military infrastructure during a period of NATO enlargement left new Alliance members vulnerable. While Ambassador Gyarmati maintained that the idea of Russia as a strategic partner was “an illusion,” he outlined several principles that should govern NATO’s relationship with Russia that focused mainly on supporting Ukrainian independence and taking a realistic approach to dealings with Russia.

Dr. Florence Gaub, Senior Analyst with the EU Institute for Security Studies, was the final speaker to address the Committee. Dr. Gaub provided a comprehensive overview of the challenges facing Libya since the end of the Gaddafi regime, and began by identifying three factors that led to its current situation of institutional failure: 1) Libya’s inefficient institutions and governance structures were inherited from the previous regime; 2) the inherently disruptive nature of regime change; and 3) several decisions taken after Gaddafi’s rule that worsened security institutions and left the political process to crumble. As a result, the new Libyan political system was fractured by competing national and local interests and inefficient decision-making structures. A “guilty by association” sentiment took hold. Police and military forces from the previous regime virtually disappeared, creating a significant vacuum in the security sector. Dr. Gaub argued that in an effort to fill these positions quickly, people who fought for the militias during the civil war became authorized enforcement officials and acted aggressively against suspected Gaddafi sympathizers without impunity, forcing many to flee their homes.

Dr. Gaub expressed uncertainty about Libya’s future, and told delegates that while Libya’s oil output had provided sufficient resources until that point, ongoing violence had prevented further industrial activity. She predicted that the country would soon run out of money. As Libya is heavily reliant on imports, it may soon also run out of food. Should that occur, a humanitarian crisis would ensue. In her view, instability in Libya also creates greater opportunities for Daesh, as 95% of its finances originate from oil smuggling and ransom. Dr. Gaub concluded the presentation by arguing that in order for Libya to recover, a targeted transitional justice process must be implemented.

The Committee's rapporteurs then presented their respective reports and opened the floor to discussion and amendments from other members.<sup>8</sup> Finally, the Committee discussed its remaining activities for the year. The Canadian delegates who participated in these discussed were Senator Andreychuk, Senator Day, Mrs. Gallant, and Senator Plett.

## **Plenary sitting**

On the last day of the NATO PA Spring Session, the Assembly typically holds a plenary sitting to conduct Assembly business, debate key issues and hear from key national and international leaders. On 18 May 2015, Michael Turner (U.S.), President of the NATO PA opened the Plenary Session with a tribute to the late Canadian Senator Pierre Claude Nolin. Senator Nolin was a long-time member of the Canadian delegation to the NATO PA. Having joined the Assembly in 1994, he served as Vice-President of the NATO PA from 2004–2006, and held the position of Treasurer from 2008–2014. Senator Nolin was recognized for his leadership within the Assembly, which earned him much respect and admiration from his colleagues. The President told the Plenary Session that he would fondly remember Senator Nolin as a “wise counsellor and friend.” Plenary participants then stood for one minute of silence in memory of Senator Pierre Claude Nolin and to honour his many achievements.

Following the tribute to Senator Nolin, János Latorcai, Vice-President of the National Assembly of Hungary, addressed the Assembly. His remarks centred on NATO's efforts to counter the Daesh threat as well as other challenges to the Alliance, including refugee and migrant issues. Mr. Latorcai called for NATO members to develop and implement a cohesive refugee policy while at the same time address the sources of the migration problem. Delegates then heard from Zsolt Semjén, Vice-Prime Minister of Hungary. He expressed concern regarding the deteriorating situation in Macedonia and, similar to previous speakers, suggested that NATO has not paid enough attention to the Western Balkan states. He maintained, however, that NATO enlargement is important and referred to Montenegro as an example of meaningful reform. He concluded by reaffirming that the twelve new Alliance members who had joined NATO since 1990 also set excellent examples for aspiring members.

Next, Mr. Turner invited His Excellency, Ambassador Alexandre Vershbow, NATO Assistant Secretary General to address the Assembly. In Ambassador Vershbow's opinion, NATO's common vision for peace and security is being undermined by Russia's hybrid attacks, particularly in the form of propaganda and disinformation. Ambassador Vershbow underscored the need for collective defence and the implementation of best practices for emergency management. He described the importance of agility within the Alliance's decision-making structures so that NATO forces could quickly move from one theatre to another. Regarding NATO enlargement, the Ambassador stressed that security

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<sup>8</sup> These reports included: “Russia and Euro-Atlantic Security,” “NATO's Partners Across the Globe,” and “Instability in the Levant – Challenges to NATO's Security.”

sector reforms should take priority. Following his presentation, the Assembly heard from representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro, and Macedonia.

The President presented certificates to four national winners of the essay competition organized in honour of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NATO PA. The Assembly recognized their achievement with a round of applause. The NATO PA then debated and adopted a Declaration on NATO Enlargement.

The Plenary then heard from Andriy Parubiy, First Deputy Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. He provided a brief update on the situation in Ukraine. In Mr. Parubiy's view, Russia seeks to annihilate Ukrainian statehood, as demonstrated by Russia's violations of Minsk 2 ceasefire agreements, the deployment of Russian Special Operations on Ukrainian territory, and the build-up of Russian forces along the border. He stressed that Ukraine's goal is to reach full interoperability with NATO forces by 2020. He concluded by noting that since the onset of Russia's aggressive actions, support for Ukraine's full NATO membership has risen significantly amongst its citizens.

Finally, Marc Angel (Luxembourg), Treasurer of the NATO PA, presented the following reports to the Assembly: the "Secretary General's Report on the Financial Statements for 2014"; the "Treasurer's Report and Proposal for the Allocation of the 2014 Surplus and the Current Financial Year"; the "Audited Financial Statements for the year ending 31st December 2014"; and the "NATO PA Provident Fund Annual Report 2014." Each report was discussed and adopted by the Assembly. The Chair of the Canadian delegation to the NATO PA, Cheryl Gallant, thanked the Assembly for honouring the memory of Senator Pierre Claude Nolin and congratulated the Treasurer on the 2014 budget surplus.

The President then closed the Plenary sitting by thanking the Hungarian delegation and volunteers for their contributions to a successful 2015 Spring Session of the NATO PA.

## **SUMMARY**

The NATO PA provides Canadian parliamentarians with an opportunity to learn about the broader strategic issues facing the Alliance, which have an impact on Canada's national security and defence. It also offers them with an attentive international forum in which to promote Canadian interests and values in the course of discussions and debates about future Alliance policy and strategy. As this report indicates, the 2015 Spring Session was no exception, offering Canadian delegates many opportunities to shape the outcome of discussions, convey a Canadian perspective on key issues of concern, and gain a better understanding of strategic issues facing Canada, the Alliance and Canada's partner countries. First and foremost at this spring session, NATO PA members had the opportunity to learn more about Hungary's commitment to international peace and security. As was noted throughout the session, the Alliance continues to grapple with the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, and as a result, the future of NATO-Russia relations. It is also concerned with the way in which Russia uses misinformation to influence Russian-speaking populations across Eastern Europe and its general pattern of intimidation. Throughout the session, Canadian delegates learned about the security implications arising from Hungary's geographic position at the intersection of conflicts to the East and South, and associated challenges. Hungary reiterated its support for NATO Operations

assisting Ukraine and highlighted its important contributions towards developing Ukraine's cyber capabilities. Hungarian officials also provided several examples demonstrating its commitment to collective security. As a result of these meetings, Canadian delegates gained a deeper appreciation for its European ally.

Overall, the NATO PA appreciates the opportunity to participate in the process of monitoring the implementation of the NATO's new strategic concept, particularly with respect to Smart Defence and multinational cooperation where necessary and appropriate.

The 2015 Spring Session of the NATO PA in Budapest was also an opportunity for Canadian delegates to learn more about the implementation of the Readiness Action Plan, agreed to at the Wales Summit in 2014, while at the same time share experiences with regards to Canada's contribution to NATO Assurance Measures, including the Baltic Air Policing Mission.

All members of the NATO PA continue to be concerned about the emerging instability to NATO's southern flank and how it will affect its members, as well as security dynamics of partners in the region. In light of the fluid operating environment stemming from these challenges, NATO readiness and future security and defence capabilities remained a priority topic throughout the Session's meetings, and delegates were eager to participate in these discussions. Canada continues to have strategic interests in all these issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Jean Rioux, M.P.  
Chair of the Canadian NATO  
Parliamentary Association  
(NATO PA)

## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Spring Session
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Budapest, Hungary
<b>DATES</b>	May 15 to 18, 2015
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
<b>SENATE</b>	The Hon. Raynell Andreychuk, Senator The Hon. Jane Cordy, Senator The Hon. Joseph A. Day, Senator The Hon. Donald Neil Plett, Senator
<b>HOUSE OF COMMONS</b>	Mr. Tarik Brahmi, M.P. Mrs. Cheryl Gallant, M.P. Mrs. Joyce Murray, M.P.
<b>STAFF</b>	Ms. Katherine Simonds, Analyst
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>\$ 44,368.77</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$ 15,028.94</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	<b>\$ 250</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$ 4,184.97</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES</b>	<b>\$ 70.39</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 63,903.07</b>