

CEEC Reaffirms Need for Strong U.S. Leadership in Europe - August 8, 2016

The Central and East European Coalition (CEEC), representing more than 20 million Central and Eastern European Americans, strongly backs the United States' continued unconditional commitment to upholding the NATO Treaty as well as U.S. support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all Central and Eastern European nations. Our organization stands firm in its belief that America's close cooperation with all NATO allies and partners is fundamental to ensuring U.S. and European security. The CEEC urges both the current and future Administrations to continue developing allied relations with all NATO members and transatlantic partners, and to take such action as deemed necessary to maintain security of the Alliance, including the European Reassurance Initiative.

The renewed aggressive behavior and actions of Russia against Central and Eastern European nations have raised the importance of NATO's credibility and cohesiveness for regional stability. In February 2016, then-NATO Supreme Allied Commander Gen. Philip Breedlove stated at a hearing of the U.S. House Armed Services Committee that "Russia has chosen to be an adversary and poses a long-term existential threat to the United States and to our European allies and partners." Earlier this year the CEEC sponsored a policy forum on NATO's stance on Russia on Capitol Hill. A major theme of our discussion characterized Russia's increasing aggression since 2008 not only in terms of fanning regional conflicts but as a fundamental assault on the post-World War II international order.

At the Warsaw Summit in July 2016, NATO stated it was fully prepared to defend the alliance and pledged an increase in military spending, in response to Russia's unpredictable and aggressive behavior in the region. The CEEC believes the commitment by the United States to NATO countries should be based on collective defense, shared values, and democratic principles, as well as support for regional partners. We have, and continue to support the principle of NATO's Open Door policy, for all willing and qualified nations.

The Central and Eastern European region is facing a multitude of threats from Russia. It is imperative for NATO members and partners to share collective knowledge in key security areas for combating a multitude of hybrid war forms, including cyber, media and economic manipulation, and destabilization in energy security. The CEEC supports U.S. continued commitment and leadership in addressing these threats.

The security of the United States lies in the peaceful expansion of democracy, not in the appeasement of aggressor states making imperial claims. Proactive U.S. leadership is vital to NATO's continued effectiveness, to protect peace and security in Europe. The crisis driven by Russia in Central and Eastern Europe, and in Ukraine specifically, will not just go away. In an informationally interconnected and economically interdependent world, the United States must take the lead in promoting international norms and consolidating geopolitical stability.

1612 K Street, NW, Suite 1200 Washington, D.C. 20006
<http://CEECcoalition.us>