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A Pivotal Point for a Strategic Partner

The United States Senate is currently engaged in a vigorous debate on amendments to the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which is considered “must-pass” legislation every year. Previous NDAA bills have included the stipulation that the United States “remains a steadfast partner of Ukraine and it is in the United States national security interest [to] assist the Government of Ukraine in countering Russian military aggression.” To that end, the United States has increased military assistance to Ukraine in each of the past 7 years, and authorized sanctions on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project. Those measures previously passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, reflecting the United States’ commitment to Ukraine.

The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), the representative organization of nearly 2 million Americans of Ukrainian descent, agrees with the United States Congress and the Administration in their assessments of the inherent value of Ukraine as a strategic partner and that the Nord Stream 2 pipeline is a geopolitical scheme designed to provide Russia with additional malign influence on our European allies and partners.

Fundamentally, the cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy is to meet the challenges and confront threats of tomorrow by enacting resolute decisions today. It is in this context that UCCA supports enacting immediate sanctions that would impede the completion of the NordStream2 pipeline, as stipulated in Senator Risch’s Amendment ([S.Amdt.4859](#)) and the strengthening of the strategic partnership between Ukraine and the United States as outlined in amendments by Senator Menendez ([S.Amdt.4832](#)) and that of Senators Portman and Shaheen ([S.Amdt.4540](#)). Such proposed amendments can thwart Russian aggression in its various forms and are consistent with Secretary of State Antony Blinken’s assertion that the goal of U.S. policy should be to “ensure that Russia cannot use energy as a coercive tool as a weapon against Ukraine, or anyone else in Europe.”

Since 2014, Russia’s continuing and currently escalating aggressive behavior towards Ukraine and other sovereign countries are rightfully viewed with alarm by our NATO allies, most notably the states neighboring Ukraine. This is understood to be a threat to the stable trans-Atlantic security framework. In fact, Ukraine’s accession to NATO would prove to be indispensable to the security alliance’s objective of securing peace in Europe.

These three initiatives to invoke sanctions against Russia’s egregious actions in Ukraine as well, as to provide support for Ukraine in the NDAA, need to be lauded and supported. Thus, UCCA calls upon senators to support the above-mentioned amendments and maintain their commitments made to our allies and partners in Eastern Europe. The Ukrainian American community is grateful for the unwavering bipartisan support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence of its strategic partner – Ukraine.

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