

Submission to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee

Preamble

“This is a moment in history. We have seen nothing like it in our lifetime.

2022 gave us the unprovoked and unlawful invasion of a sovereign nation by a world power; More than fourteen million displaced people. The dehumanisation of forty-four million people denied their own identity by a Russian elite intent on annexation, military, economic, political, and social control over that people.

Mass acts of barbaric inhumanity by soldiers against tens of thousands of noncombatants, including children.

Yes, the world has seen much since World War II, but nothing of the scope or on the scale of unjust war, and human atrocities committed in the wake of the Russian invasion of their neighbour, Ukraine. There have been many threats to the stability of the modern world, but the “special operation” of Vladimir Putin has done more to set the world on edge and undermine the hope of global peace than any military action since the rise of the Third Reich.⁽¹⁾

(a) and (b) Enhancing Australia’s Support for Ukraine

Australia’s support for Ukraine has been criticized for lacking sufficient resources, diplomatic backing, coordination, and a clear emphasis on democracy. The debate around the decommissioned Taipan helicopters revealed transparency and coordination issues. Despite providing military aid like Javelin missiles and Bushmasters post the 2022 Russian invasion, interest has waned. Australia ranks sixth in non-NATO contributors.

The recommendation for improvement involves the government allocating more resources, enhancing diplomacy, improving coordination, and better communicating the importance of supporting Ukraine and democracy on a global scale.

(c)(1)(ii) The recent debacle of Cr. Adrian McRae in Port Hedland.⁽²⁾

Adrian McRae has been sworn in as a councillor after returning to Australia from Russia where he travelled at the invitation of the Russian Government to be an Election Observer. Moreover, the former shire president has called for his resignation ⁽³⁾ “A councillor from regional West Australia has been captured on Russian television congratulating Vladimir Putin on his election victory. Adrian McRae, who was elected to the Port Hedland Council in March, praised the Russians for their ‘transparency’ in a video published by Channel One State News. ‘Can I please pass on my most sincere congratulations to Mr Vladimir Putin,’ he said.” ⁽⁴⁾

Australia, as a democracy, faces the imperative of ensuring that fifth columnists do not infiltrate its society. Petition EN5399 – Closure of Russian Consulate in Sydney ⁽⁶⁾ brings attention to the stance that "Russia poses a security threat to Australia; additionally, a recent poll conducted by the Lowy Institute in 2023 reveals that 93% of Australians perceive Russia's foreign policy as a threat." The call is made for the Government to initiate a similar petition to rebuke individuals such as [REDACTED], as well as known pro-Russian sympathizers like Adrian McRae, and Simeon Boikov (a well-known pro-Russian Activist in Sydney, NSW).

(c)(2)(i) Curriculum and Policy

Russian ethnic schools operate in all states. It is a known fact that the Russian government subsidises the ethnic education curriculum.

One potential solution for addressing this anomaly in Australia could involve implementing regulations or policies that promote transparency and oversight regarding foreign government subsidies to ethnic schools. This could include requirements for these schools to disclose any funding received from foreign governments, such as Russia, and to ensure that educational content aligns with Australian values and standards. Additionally, promoting cultural exchange programs that emphasize Australian values and democracy could help balance out any potential influences from foreign governments on ethnic education.

(c)(2)(ii) Ethnic School Funding

The state government presents what appears to be a fair solution to ethnic school funding based on \$110 per student enrolled. However, this equation does not take into consideration a 30-student school (typically our Ukrainian School of WA) compared to a 100-student school (typically the Russian School of WA and others). The payment for a smaller school is not sufficient to rent a primary school for premises let alone pay a stipend for teaching staff. The situation is exacerbated if teachers are offered a contract. There are burdens for both the school and the teacher. In the case of the school, it needs to be fully tax registered. In the case of the teachers the added payment infringes on their normal take home pay and in the main is a massive disincentive! Whereas in the case of a large school the payment ensues that a school is paid, teachers reimbursed and even a possibility of a surplus for incidentals.

A more rational and national approach would be to allow ethnic schools to access States primary schools for free. The payment for schools could be via a federal allocated grant (vis collaboration with the national Community Languages Association)

An alternate suggestion is for state and commonwealth govt to provide access to a "multicultural building" for use by schools who don't have their own premises or where there is more than one school. It is important for Ukrainian (and other immigrants) to be able to maintain their culture and language in a fair and neutral environment untainted by local politics.

(c)(3) Russian Victory Day on May 9th

The Russian community has for many years, upheld the tradition of celebrating Russian Victory Day, but over the past 3 years instead of in a community Hall in the suburbs it has involved the laying of wreaths at the Anzac Monument located in Kings Park, Western Australia. The significance of this event highlights the Russian community's arrogance to observe the Russian Victory Day in lieu of the Australian VP day (August 15) or VJ Day which also marks the end of WW2 when USA President Harry Truman announced on August 14, 1945 Japan's unconditional surrender ending the global conflict. Concerns have been raised about the implications of this commemoration, particularly regarding the Russian community's alleged lack of respect for the Anzac Monument and the current war Russia is waging on Ukraine.

While acknowledging Russia's historical role as part of the Allies in combating Germany, it is worth noting the warnings of historical figures like Winston Churchill, who had cautioned against the expansionist tendencies of the Soviet Union and spoke of the threat posed by communist fifth columns in Europe. His foresight regarding the intentions of the Russian leader to establish communist dominance across Eastern

Europe resonates in today's context, with comparisons drawn between Putin's goals and Stalin's historical ambitions.

One potential solution to address the concerns raised about the commemoration of Russian Victory Day and the alleged lack of respect for the Anzac Monument by the Russian community could involve implementing stricter regulations on public commemorations that involve foreign political messages. This could include introducing guidelines that discourage the promotion of divisive or politically contentious activities during public events like Victory Day celebrations. Additionally, actively censuring overtly pro-Russian activities that may undermine the values or sentiments of Australia could help maintain diplomatic harmony and respect within the community. Encouraging open dialogue, promoting cultural understanding, and fostering inclusivity while respecting the memorial's significance may also help mitigate any tensions arising from conflicting commemorations.

(d)(1) Immigration Policy

Australia has always been benevolent to immigration of refugees and DP's, PM Ben Chifley and Immigration Minister Arthur Caldwell, vis the "Populate or Perish" Program of 1947 ⁽⁵⁾

Between 1947 and 1951 about 170,000 immigrants came to settle in Australia under this program. Of these the number of Ukrainians by 1954 were 17,239. ⁽⁸⁾

The number of Ukrainian DP's who arrived up to June 30, 2022 under Minister of Immigration Alexander Hawke was 4,648. This number is disproportionately low compared to the immigration offered in 1947.

With the election of the Labour Government and the new Minister of Immigration Andrew Giles, by the end of July 2022 the immigration (DP) program initiated by the previous government was abolished. Once the 786 visa was stopped, DPs were forced to seek alternate visas to be able to migrate. It is noted that migration became more difficult.

(d)(2) Housing and Rental for DPs in WA

The housing for DP's has been a continual problem. In WA the Ukrainian Association of Western Australia (UAWA), of which I was President of at the time, continually assisted the Red Cross in finding housing. The Red Cross had grants for this workload whereas the committee of the UAWA worked in a voluntary capacity and were forced to bear the costs individually. An attempt was made to then premier Mark McGowan for a grant for a social worker and subsidy for office space to carry out the above functions. The submission was unsuccessful. Other states were successful in securing financial support.

The vast expanse of Western Australia presented an additional challenge. Our Displaced Persons (DPs) arrived in locations as far north as Karratha and Port Hedland, and as south as Esperance, Narrogin, and Albany. Creating a comprehensive database of arrivals became nearly impossible. During a flag-raising ceremony for Ukrainian Independence Day on August 20, 2023, in Albany, it was a delightful surprise to have approximately 60 DPs from surrounding southwestern towns in attendance at this memorable event. The UAWA was previously unaware of many of these DPs.

(d)(3) Continued Financial Support

In the realm of existential consideration lies a poignant dilemma: our commitment to democratic values, rooted in Western principles, propels us into an inherent responsibility to continue supplying aid to Ukraine.

Reflecting on the recent act of benevolence seen in the Czech Republic - a crowdfunding initiative that amassed nearly 4 million euros within a mere 12 days, aided by approximately 60,000 compassionate individuals - one is struck by the potential. With Australia's vast population exceeding 25 million, a mere 10 million people, envisioned through a similar framework, could translate into an awe-inspiring contribution of \$1,000 million. Alas, Australia's current total donations have yet to ascend to such a formidable figure.

(d)(4) Future Supply Chain for Ukraine

The donation of essential equipment, including helmets, inflatable boats, boots, fire masks, and electricity generators to Ukraine is commendable.⁽⁷⁾⁽⁹⁾ Furthermore, a recommendation is made to develop a comprehensive, long-term plan to supply Ukraine with surplus military and civilian equipment. The feedback from front lines on the effectiveness of the Bushmasters has been exemplary and further aid for these and other equipment would be most appreciative. Recent challenges faced by the disposed Taipan helicopters highlight the importance of ensuring transparency. Further immediate support is deemed necessary to ensure the defence of Ukrainian cities. The consideration of providing Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS) like the Patriot system, along with the necessary munitions for effective defence, is strongly suggested, alternative systems such as LTADMS, RS28 SARMAS, and Iron Dome should also be evaluated for their potential effectiveness in safeguarding Ukraine.

(d)(5) Utilization of Frozen Russian Assets

As part of the global effort to support Ukraine, the investigation of utilizing frozen Russian assets to further aid the country is proposed. Australia could potentially play a significant role in this initiative by facilitating the transfer of such assets to Ukraine.

(d)(6) Australian Embassy in Ukraine

Finally, the critical importance of re-establishing the Australian Embassy in Ukraine to strengthen diplomatic ties is emphasized. The current lack of a nearby embassy in Ukraine creates a gap in diplomatic relations that could be addressed by reinstating the Australian Embassy in Kyiv.

Summary

In 1994, as part of the Budapest Memorandum Ukraine relinquished her soviet nuclear arsenal (the world's third largest) enabling her to join the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a non-nuclear state. The Budapest Memorandum consists of a series of political assurances whereby the signatory states commit to "respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine". With Russia's disregard of the Budapest Memorandum and annexation of Crimea in 2014 and subsequent war in Ukraine this treaty is broken. With the continuation of the war Russia has subsequently placed the entire world on notice, and neighbouring countries are threatened. Considering Ukraine's continuing plight, the rhetoric of nuclear non-proliferation amongst other countries has dangerous ramifications for global peace.

Considering Deputy Prime Minister of Australia Richard Marles statement in Ukraine in April 2024⁽⁹⁾

Quote

"When Russia first crossed the Ukrainian border more than two years ago, in its appalling act of aggression, most commentators thought this conflict would last just three weeks. And now, more than two years on, the whole world has been inspired by Ukraine brave resistance. Australia is a country which is deeply invested in the global rules-based order- our security and our prosperity is dependent on it. And so while Australia may be a long way from here, we see that a challenge to the global rules based order in Eastern Europe is a challenge to the global rules based order everywhere. It is profoundly important for the world that Ukraine prevails in this war. And so, we understand that principally, those in the Ukrainian Armed Forces are fighting on behalf of their nation, but there is a sense in which we feel that the Ukrainian Armed Forces are fighting on behalf of all of us. And for that Australia and Australians are deeply grateful. Today, we have been fortunate to witness Ukrainian Armed Forces who were training on manoeuvrable fire groups. We have seen examples of the best of Ukrainian innovation in defence industry, particularly in drones. And we feel very honoured to be hosted at the National Army Academy during the course of the day. And there we were able to witness the creation of the next generation of leadership of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. And Prime Minister, I very much thank you for the meeting that we've been able to enjoy prior to this. Australia will remain with Ukraine for as long as it

takes for Ukraine to prevail in this war on its terms. And so, to that end, today we are announcing the next package of support for Ukraine, totalling \$100 million. \$50 million of that is dedicated to short range air defence systems. \$30 million, as the Prime Minister said to the purchase of drones as part of Australia being a part of the drone coalition being led by the United Kingdom and Latvia. And the remainder will be spent on various products from rigid hull inflatable boats to helmets and boots. We're also able to announce today that we have been able to provide to Ukraine air to ground precision munitions. But this tranche is just the next tranche. We understand this we will be an enduring conflict, and we will be contributing more in the future because we are determined to stand side-by-side with Ukraine for as long as it takes for Ukraine to prevail. Ukraine must prevail for the future Ukraine but Ukraine must prevail for the future of global peace and security. Prime Minister, thank you for having us here."

END of Quote

This proposal is put forth for your consideration not only to enhance military support for Ukraine to preserve the integrity of this sovereign states desire for peace, but to also to avert global disaster.

The proposal also requests strengthened diplomatic relations with Ukraine and Ukrainians residing in Australia.

References

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