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**“CANADA WILL NOT STAND IDLY BY ...”:
UKRAINE IN THE FOREIGN POLICY OF CANADA**

ABSTRACT: Ukraine has always had a special place in Canadian foreign policy. Currently, Canada is deeply engaged in supporting Ukraine to restore political and economic stability and to implement democratic reforms. The Government in Ottawa has condemned Russian aggressive policy and the illegal military occupation of Crimea and has taken a variety of steps and initiatives since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine in 2014 including imposing sanctions, economic and military assistance, and supporting of NATO measures.

KEYWORDS: Ukraine, Canada, Canada-Ukraine relations, Canada’s support for Ukraine, Canadian foreign policy, Canada-Poland relations

Introduction

The relations between Canada and Europe have always been very close due to demographic, cultural and language ties. Most events on the Old Continent had implications for Canada as Europe constituted part of Canadian political space. The conclusion of negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) by Canadian and EU leaders in 2014, made the link even better. Furthermore, the complicated situation in Eastern Europe, in regard to the Ukrainian crisis has made recent months exceptionally challenging for transatlantic relations and have deeply engaged Ottawa in European issues.

The aim of this article is to characterize and analyze the relations between Canada and Ukraine in recent years, focusing particularly on the situation in 2014. As more than 1 million people of

Ukrainian roots live in Canada, the territorial sovereignty and freedom of Ukraine is fundamental not only for international security in Ottawa's understanding, but for other reasons, including political and humanitarian, as well.

Canada and Ukraine – Historical Perspective

Ukraine has had a special place in Canadian foreign policy since it became an independent state in 1991. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Canada recognized Ukraine's independence as the first western country, the second after Poland, and the diplomatic relations between Ottawa and Kiev were established in 1992. Then, the Embassy of Canada in the capital of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Embassy in Ottawa were opened.

What makes the bilateral relations very close is the strong Ukrainian-Canadian community and historic ties forged through a few waves of Ukrainian migration to Canada. The community has its representatives formed in the Ukrainian Canadian Congress which "promotes linkages with Ukraine and identifies and addresses the needs of the Ukrainian community in Canada to ensure its continued existence and development for the enhancement of Canada's socio-cultural fabric" (*Ukrainian Canadian Congress. Web*). According to the 2011 Census of Population of Canada more than 1.25 million people of Ukrainian origins live in Canada what make them one of the largest ethnic groups there and the third largest Ukrainian community after Ukraine and Russia.¹

Political Relations

The first agreement of great importance, which named the relations as "Special Partnership," is the Joint Declaration on Special Partnership between Canada and Ukraine signed on 31st March 1994, renewed twice: in 2001 and 2008. The undersigned, among others, declared their intent to:

¹ 2011 Census. Statistics Canada. Government of Canada. Web. 20 January 2015. <<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/dt-td/Rpeng.cfm?TABID=2&LANG=E&APATH=3&DETAIL=0&DIM=0&FL=A&FREE=0&GC=0&GID=1118296&GK=0&GRP=0&PID=105396&PRID=0&PTYPE=105277&S=0&SHOWALL=0&SUB=0&Temporal=2013&THEME=95&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=&D1=0&D2=0&D3=0&D4=0&D5=0&D6=0>>.

- develop their relations as friendly states based on special partnership
- develop close bilateral relations, especially in politics, economy, security, science, culture and environmental protection, based on the principles of equality and mutual benefit
- collaborate in the area of preventive diplomacy within the context of the United Nations, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and its Cooperation Forum on Security Issues, as well as in the framework of NATO’s “Partnership for Peace” program
- favor international efforts aimed at controlling the spread of weapons of mass destruction and achieving the nuclear disarmament of Ukraine under effective international supervision and verification
- continue mutually beneficial economic cooperation, including trade, based on reciprocity, non-discrimination and mutual benefit (*Joint Declaration on Special Partnership between Canada and Ukraine*).

Canada and Ukraine have signed various agreements and declarations in such areas as trade, technical development, defence, and mutual legal assistance. On 24th September 2009, the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs and his Ukrainian counterpart signed the Road Map of Priorities for Canada-Ukraine Relations which set out the priority areas for bilateral cooperation. This document announced future cooperation based on following principles:

- The friendship between the two countries stems from mutual understanding and the shared belief that democracy is the chief guarantor of security, prosperity and freedom, and that democracy must rest upon the rule of law and be supported by good governance.
- Cooperation on defence and security is a cornerstone to respond effectively to challenges to peace and security.
- Support for each other’s sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, including the right of every country to choose freely its own destiny in domestic and foreign policies, is a foundation of our bilateral relations.
- Wide-ranging cooperation between Canada and Ukraine contributes to the prosperity, well-being and security of the Euro-Atlantic area (*Government of Canada. Ukraine.gc.ca. Web*).

Since 1991, Canada has made significant effort in supporting not only Ukraine’s democratic transformation and political and economic reforms, but also its integration into international

institutions and structures (including Euro-Atlantic ones). It has been exceptionally noticeable since the Orange Revolution of December 2004 as Canadian election observers were sent to Ukraine to monitor and ensure free presidential elections in 2004 and 2010, and parliamentary elections in 2006 and 2007. The Canadian observation missions were sponsored by the Government in Ottawa through the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development and mounted by CANADEM, non-profit agency working with the United Nations and other international partners due to advancing international peace and security (*CANADEM. Canada's Civilian Reserve. Web*). Last missions to observe Ukrainian parliamentary elections were named Mission Canada 2012 and Mission Canada 2013 and were reported in detail on the official website (*Ukraine Election. Mission Canada. Web*). In 2014, the Canadian experts of CANADEM joined the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Observation Mission of 26th October 2014 parliamentary elections in Ukraine.

Both countries work together in international organizations, such as the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and La Francophonie. Ukraine's accession to the World Trade Organization in May 2008 was warmly welcomed by Canada. Ottawa strongly supports the Ukrainians on their way to NATO membership and has provided language, staff officers, and peacekeeping training for Ukrainian military and civilian personnel within the NATO-Ukraine Distinctive Partnership.²

Commercial Relations

On the map of Priority Markets prepared within Canada's Global Markets Action Plan, Ukraine is marked as an emerging market with specific opportunities for Canadian business. Following statistics data, in 2013, the value of bilateral trade between Canada and Ukraine was over \$322 million. Canadian exports to Ukraine totalled \$210 million and among exported goods are mineral fuels and oils, fish and seafood, pharmaceuticals, meat, and machinery. In the same year, Canada's merchandise imports from Ukraine totalled \$112 million and included mineral fuels and oils, iron and

² See more: Embassy of Ukraine to Canada. Web. 22 January 2015. <<http://canada.mfa.gov.ua/en/about-ukraine/euroatlantic-cooperation/ukraine-nato>>.

steel products, fertilizers, and woven apparel (Government of Canada. Ukraine.gc.ca. Web).

According to the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada official website, the value of Canadian investment in Ukraine is “commercially sensitive information” and the information on the value of Ukrainian investment in Canada is “not available” (*Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development. Government of Canada. Web*). Ukraine is still a promising market and there is hope to expand bilateral commercial relations. In 1994, Canada and Ukraine signed the Agreement for the Promotion and Protection of Investments, the Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation in 1996 and the Agreement on Air Transport in 1999, renewed in 2014.

Furthermore, on 22nd September 2009, the launch of talks between Canada and Ukraine on free trade agreement was announced, which would benefit some Canadian economy sectors, and would provide the Eastern partner with better access to the Canadian market as a way to support Ukraine’s economic reforms. After five rounds of negotiations held between 2010 and 2012, on 26th January 2015, in Kiev, the Minister of International Trade of Canada Ed Fast and his Ukrainian counterpart, Aivaras Abromavičius, announced that the talks were renewed and both parties are “actively engaged in negotiations toward concluding a free trade agreement as soon as possible” (qtd. in: *Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development. Government of Canada. Web*).

Canada’s Support for Ukraine in the Face of Crisis of 2014

It is a difficult task to analyze in detail all the steps and initiatives which Ottawa has taken since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine. Canada is deeply engaged in supporting Ukraine to restore political and economic stability and to implement democratic reforms. The Canadian government condemned Russian aggressive policy and the illegal military occupation of Crimea.

Sanctions

After Russia was isolated politically by its expulsion from the G-8 (the G-7 Summit took place in Brussels in June 2014 instead of the G-8 Summit in Sochi), other reactions to the situation in

Ukraine have included the imposition of economic sanctions and travel bans against Russian and Ukrainian individuals responsible for the ongoing crisis. In the spring and summer 2014, Canada, in close coordination with partners in the United States and Europe, introduced economic sanctions against a broad range of entities of various Russian sectors such as arms, energy, and finance (Russian banks). New export restrictions on technologies used in Russia's oil exploration and extractive sector were announced on December 19, 2014 ("Gazeta Wyborcza", 19th December 2014). All those measures caused economic instability in Russia, including high interest rates and a sharp drop in the value of the ruble, giving Western leaders hope that the Russians soon would demand a shift in foreign policy of the Kremlin. As Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, John Baird said:

Russians are paying for their leader's reckless aggression...The ruble's dive should be enough to give President Putin and his backers pause. If he wants to turn his economy around, he must pull out of Ukraine and he must return Crimea, and he must respect the international order that makes us a family of nations. (qtd. in: "The Globe and Mail," December 19, 2014)

Canada`s Commitment to NATO

Canada has played an important role in the Alliance since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine. Ottawa is providing reassurance to NATO members in Central and Eastern Europe by deploying Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) units and staff to promote security and stability in that region. After Russia's aggression against Ukraine Canada suspended all planned actions together with the Russian military. Twenty Canadian operational planners have been sent to NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in Belgium to plan functions and monitor events in Eastern Europe. In May 2014, Canada deployed six CF-18 Hornet fighter aircrafts together with 200 support staff to Campia Turzii, Romania to conduct multinational training exercises as part of Canada's commitment to its NATO Allies (*NATO. Allied Command Operations.Web*).

In the same month, 50 Canadian soldiers were sent to Poland to conduct training together with the American and Polish allies and, in June, 125 Canadian soldiers participated in Saber Strike 2014, an exercise led by the USA in Poland and the Baltic Republics. In October 2014, HMCS *Toronto* joined Reassurance NATO

Operation to conduct training exercises and force integration activities in the Eastern Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea region. Of great importance is the fact that Canada is providing \$1 million to the NATO Trust Funds to support Ukraine in modernizing its armed forces. What is more, the NATO Centers of Excellence: Cyber Security, Energy Security, and Strategic Communications were provided with \$3 million (\$1 million for each) from Canada to help deter Russian operations in Eastern Europe (*Prime Minister of Canada. Stephen Harper. Web*).

Canada’s Direct Support for Ukraine

Ottawa strongly supports Ukraine’s efforts to stabilize its economy and promote economic and social development. During the first official visit to Canada of Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, on 17th September 2014, the agreement on the provision of Canada’s \$200 million loan to Ukraine to promote economic and financial reforms was reached. Additionally, Prime Minister Harper declared \$3 million to support international partners in providing medical attention, food, safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter, emergency child protection, and emergency response and preparedness to help the Ukrainians living in areas affected by violence (*Prime Minister of Canada. Stephen Harper. Web*). It is also worth mentioning that in July 2014, the Minister of International Trade Ed Fast announced \$19.6 million of Canadian support for a seven year project Horticultural Business Development to train horticultural farmers to improve agricultural practices and help to develop Ukraine’s agricultural sector (*Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development. Government of Canada. Web*).

Beyond its actions within NATO, Canada provides military assistance to support the Ukrainian Armed Forces. In August 2014, non-lethal military supplies were sent to Ukraine, such as: helmets, ballistic eyewear, protective vests, first aid kits, tents, and sleeping bags (“The Globe and Mail,” August 7, 2014). In November 2014, Canada donated further military gear which included tactical communications systems, ordnance-disposal equipment, tactical medical kits as well as winter coats and boots. On 8th December 2014, during his official visit in Kiev, the Canadian Minister of National

Defense Rob Nicholson, announced that Canada would send soldiers to Ukraine to train the military police there (“National Post”, December 8, 2014).

Canada’s cooperation with Poland

Due to the country’s geopolitical location, the situation in Ukraine is very important for Poland and its security. Facing the crisis in Ukraine, Canada and Poland began to cooperate closely and the good bilateral relations became even better. In 2014, the highest Canadian officials visited Poland: Prime Minister Stephen Harper in June, Governor General David Lloyd Johnston in October, the Minister of Foreign Affairs John Baird in April and the Minister of National Defense Rob Nicholson in December. Most of the official statements during those visits concerned the situation in Ukraine and the perspectives of Polish-Canadian cooperation towards the events in the region. In this context, the fact of great importance is the Canada-Poland Statement of Principles for Coordinated Engagement on Ukraine, signed by John Baird and his Polish counterpart, Radosław Sikorski. This agreement is to guide cooperation in Canadian and Polish efforts to support democracy, human rights, economic growth, and the rule of law in Ukraine. Moreover, Baird declared that Canada would contribute \$9.2 million to joint Canadian and Polish projects that strengthen democratic development in Ukraine such as the Poland-Canada Democracy Support Program for Ukraine for the years 2014–2017 which will work with Solidarity Fund, and Support for Grassroots Democracy project of the European Endowment for Democracy for the years 2014–2019 (*Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development. Government of Canada. Web*). Baird stressed that “Canada and Poland stand shoulder to shoulder in the face of Russia’s cynical aggression” and emphasized the importance of the partnership with Poland “on a coordinated approach in support of Ukraine’s future as a sovereign, unified and prosperous European state, free of Russian interference and threats” (qtd. in: “Gazeta Wyborcza”, April 24, 2014). After a call for NATO to establish a greater presence in Eastern Europe by the Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk during the meeting with Stephen Harper on 4th June 2014, the Canadian Prime Minister announced “the increased military cooperation between Poland and Canada”

what meant his country’s plans to send more soldiers to that region what would be executed e.g. in Saber Strike 2014 joint exercise in June (*Prime Minister of Canada. Stephen Harper. Web*).

Symbolic Gestures and Demonstrations of Support

In spite of all political, military, and economic measures mentioned above, of great importance are diplomatic and moral manifestations of support for Ukraine. The high-level meetings, which have taken place on a regular basis since 1992, in 2014 had an exceptional meaning. The first western official who visited Kiev in February 2014 and met with Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk and his new government was the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada John Baird. The Canadian Minister of International Trade Ed Fast, who had led a trade and development mission to Ukraine in July 2014, came back to Kiev in January 2015 to discuss the progress of negotiations on a free trade agreement. In December 2014, Rob Nicholson the Minister of National Defense travelled to Ukraine to declare the intentions of the Government in Ottawa to continue bilateral cooperation to strengthen Ukrainian security and defense forces (*Ministry of Defense of Ukraine. Web*).

In March 2014, Stephen Harper was the first G-7 leader who visited Ukraine after the annexation of Crimea. On 7th June 2014 Prime Minister of Canada, as the first foreign leader, met bilaterally with Petro Poroshenko, the new President of Ukraine and attended his swearing-in ceremony (*Prime Minister of Canada. Stephen Harper. Web*). It was a symbolic moment which demonstrated Canada’s ongoing support for the Eastern partner. It reminds the inauguration of President Victor Yushchenko in 2005, when Governor General Adrienne Clarkson represented Canada at the ceremony sitting next to the President’s wife and wearing an orange scarf – the symbol of the Orange Revolution (“The Ukrainian Weekly” Archive. Web). On 17th September 2014 President Poroshenko visited Ottawa as his first non-European official trip where he discussed economic and social development promotion and a future cooperation with the members of Canadian government and gave a speech for both Houses of Canadian Parliament (*Parliament of Canada. Web*). Afterwards, he travelled to Washington, DC.

Furthermore, at 15th November 2014, at the G-20 Summit in Brisbane, Australia, Prime Minister Stephen Harper spoke his

famous words to Russian President Vladimir Putin: "Well I guess I'll shake your hand, but I only have one thing to say to you: you need to get out of Ukraine" (qtd. in: "The Guardian," November 15, 2014). Putin was to say that it was not possible as "we are not there" (qtd. in: PAP. Polska Agencja Prasowa, November 16, 2014; "Polska. The Times," November 17, 2014). Harper's "get out of Ukraine" was reported by most press agencies and news networks and gave him a label of a politician who was brave enough to express the aversion toward Putin shared by many leaders.

Conclusions

It is clear that Canada is going to intensify its actions if the Kremlin would not change its aggressive policy. As Stephen Harper stated in an opinion-editorial, entitled "Our duty is to stand firm in the face of Russian aggression," published in "The Globe and Mail" on July 25, 2014: "Russia's aggressive militarism and expansionism are a threat to more than just Ukraine; they are a threat to Europe, to the rule of law and to the values that bind Western nations. Canada will not stand idly by in the face of this threat" ("The Globe and Mail," July 25, 2014). Canada is the leader among the international supporters of Ukraine in its efforts to restore stability and implement necessary democratic and economic reforms. In the face of Russian aggressive policy, Ottawa has taken several steps to support the Ukrainian nation including imposing sanctions, and economic and military assistance. Supporting NATO measures regarding the crisis in Ukraine seems to be a kind of continuation of Canada's traditional peace keeping policy. In recent months, the foreign policy run by the Government in Ottawa has been more determined than it used to be some years ago. Currently, the situation in Eastern Europe is extremely important for Canada and Prime Minister Stephen Harper declares even deeper engagement of his country to restore stability and security in the region.

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