

**OPENING STATEMENT**  
**By Senator Jeanne Shaheen**  
**Europe Subcommittee**  
**March 4, 2015**

Thank you, Chairman Johnson. I want to commend you for your focus and leadership on this critical foreign policy issue and for your work to bring this hearing together today before the Subcommittee on Europe. I also want to echo your comments about the tragic killing of Boris Nemtsov, who was a tireless voice for all Russians and a firm believer in a bright future for that country. Even as we focus here today on the Russia Federation's outward aggression, clearly, we cannot ignore the repression inside Russian today under President Putin. The Russian people and the world demand a transparent investigation into Mr. Nemtsov's murder and I sincerely hope we will see that. Russia's refusal to allow some foreign officials to attend his funeral was not a promising sign.

As the Chairman noted, we have five impressive witnesses here to help us better understand Russia's pattern of interference and aggression in Eastern Europe and think through appropriate responses. I join the chairman in thanking you for appearing here today.

Today, we see a Russian foreign policy that flouts international norms and responsibilities, a foreign policy that is based on political, economic, and even military intimidation and aggression. Airspace violations, disinformation and propaganda campaigns, energy corruption and trade restrictions are just a few of the tools used by Moscow.

Through Operation Atlantic Resolve and, the European Reassurance Initiative, the U.S. is already providing substantial support to our European partners, including Ukraine. That support should continue. In fact, it should be increased. We should consistently look for opportunities to assist our friends in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, including helping them strengthen their political systems and economies through reform not for our benefit, but for the benefit of the people of those sovereign nations.

Congress, and particularly this committee, has played a critical role in this effort. Just last December, Congress passed the Ukraine Freedom Support Act, which authorized the President to provide defensive military assistance to Ukraine and tighten economic sanctions on Russia. I hope the Administration will make use of these authorities.

I welcome your suggestions for what more we should be looking to do in Congress. Once again, thank you all for being here, and we look forward to hearing from each of you.