

**Opening Statement of Chairman Ron Johnson**  
**“Russian Aggression in Eastern Europe: Where Does Putin Go Next After Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova?”**  
Wednesday, March 4, 2015

As prepared for delivery:

Good morning and welcome.

Today’s hearing — the subcommittee’s first hearing in the 114th Congress — is about documenting the history of Russian aggression in Ukraine and Eastern Europe and making sure that we, here in America, fully understand how dire the situation truly is. We need to face harsh reality and the fact that Ukraine needs our help in the form of defensive lethal military equipment, and it needs that help today.

In March 2014, with hardly any pushback from the West, Crimea was annexed by Russia. Prime Minister Yatsenyuk came to America last year asking for our help in his country’s battle to ensure its territorial integrity. We should have immediately provided a minimal level of defensive lethal aid that Ukraine so desperately wanted. We should have taken it a step further by asking, “What else do you need?” America needed to show resolve then, and it desperately needs to show leadership and strength now, not only in Ukraine but around the world.

On Dec. 5, 1994, the Budapest Memorandum was signed by Ukraine, Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom. In this agreement, Ukraine gave up the world’s third largest nuclear weapons stockpile in return for security assurances against threats or the use of force against its territorial integrity and political independence. Only 20 years later, Russia has blatantly broken its promise by brazenly violating the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

No one should be surprised by this behavior from Russian President Vladimir Putin. Under his leadership, Russian aggression against its neighbors has been building for years. The summarized timeline of Russia's destabilizing actions detailed below clearly demonstrates the threat Putin represents to neighboring democracies.

Date	Event
Nov. 9, 1989	Berlin Wall falls
June 1991	Yeltsin wins first ever Russian presidential election
March 1997	Yeltsin appoints Boris Nemtsov first deputy prime minister
July 1998	Putin is appointed head of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB)
<b>Nov. 20, 1998</b>	<b>Galina Starovoitova, a prominent liberal member of Russia's parliament, is shot to death in her St. Petersburg apartment</b>
Sept.-Oct. 1999	Putin sends Russian troops back into Chechnya in the wake of a series of bomb explosions in Russia which are blamed on Chechen extremists
Dec. 31, 1999	Yeltsin resigns, Putin becomes acting president

May 12, 2000	Igor Domnikov, a newspaper special-projects editor who reported on corruption in the Russian oil industry, is hit in the head and left lying unconscious in a pool of blood in his apartment building
July 26, 2000	Sergey Novikov, owner of an independent radio station that often criticized the provincial government, is shot four times in his apartment building in Smolensk
Sept. 21, 2000	Iskandar Khatloni, a reporter for the Tajik-language service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, is attacked in his apartment by an ax-wielding assailant
Oct. 3, 2000	Sergey Ivanov, director of an independent television company, is shot five times in the head and chest in front of his apartment building
Nov. 21, 2000	Adam Tepsurgayev, a cameraman who covered the Chechen war, is shot dead
April 29, 2002	Valery Ivanov, editor-in-chief of a newspaper that exposed government corruption, is shot eight times in the head at point-blank range outside of his home
Aug. 21, 2002	Vladimir Golovlyov, a leader of the Liberal Russia faction in the lower house of parliament, is shot dead in Moscow
April 17, 2003	Sergei Yushenkov, a member of the lower house of Russia's parliament and an outspoken critic of Putin, is shot to death outside of his Moscow apartment
June 2003	Russian government cites financial reasons for axing last remaining nationwide independent TV channel
July 3, 2003	Yuri Shchekochikhin, a vocal opposition journalist, dies after falling ill with a mysterious disease
June 19, 2004	Nikolai Girenko, a prominent human rights defender, is shot dead in his home in St. Petersburg
July 9, 2004	Paul Klebnikov, the first editor of Forbes magazine's Russian edition, is shot dead as he leaves his Moscow office
Sept. 14, 2006	Andrei Kozlov, the First Deputy Chairman of Russia's Central Bank who shut down banks accused of corruption, dies after he was shot outside of a Moscow sports arena
Oct. 7, 2006	Anna Politkovskaya, a journalist and fierce critic of the Kremlin, is shot and killed in her Moscow apartment building
Nov. 23, 2006	Alexander Litvinenko, a former KGB officer who was critical of Putin, died after being poisoned with radioactive polonium-210
March 2, 2007	Ivan Safronov, a journalist who embarrassed the country's military establishment with a series of exclusive stories, is found dead outside of his home
July 15, 2007	Marina Pisareva, deputy head of Bertelsmann AG's Russian publishing house, is found stabbed to death in her home west of Moscow

Aug. 2008	Russia invades Georgia; Medvedev signs an order recognizing the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the two breakaway regions in Georgia
Aug. 31, 2008	Magomed Yevloyev, owner of a popular news site that reported on human rights, dies from a gunshot wound to the head sustained while in police custody
Nov. 2008	Russian parliament votes overwhelmingly in favor of a bill that would extend the next president's term of office from four to six years
Jan. 19, 2009	Stanslav Markelov, a human rights lawyer, and Anastasia Barburowa, a young journalism student, are shot dead midday on a busy Moscow street
April 2009	Vyacheslav Yaroshenko, an editor at the newspaper Corruption and Crime, is beaten outside of his home; he passed away from his injuries weeks later
July 15, 2009	Natalia Estemirova, a prominent human rights journalist, is abducted from her home in Chechnya and shot dead
Nov. 16, 2009	Sergei Magnitsky, a lawyer who was jailed in revenge for his uncovering of massive tax fraud, dies in prison; Olga Kotovskaya, a TV journalist who critically reported on government leaders, dies after falling from a window
Dec. 15, 2011	Gadzhimurad Kamalov, founder and publisher of a Dagestani newspaper known for its editorial independence, is gunned down outside of his office
March 23, 2013	Boris Berezovsky, once the richest of the so-called oligarchs who dominated post-Soviet Russia and a close ally of Yeltsin who helped install Putin as president, is mysteriously found dead in his home outside of London
July 9, 2013	Akhmednabi Akhmednabiev, deputy chief editor of a Dagestani newspaper, dies after sustaining multiple gunshot wounds
Dec. 2013-Feb 2014	Amidst large pro-reform protests in Ukraine, Putin offers to purchase \$15 billion of Ukraine's debt and to reduce the price of Russian gas supplies to Ukraine. Violent protests flare, and by 2/22/2014 Yanukovich had fled Kyiv
March 2014	President Putin signs a law formalizing Russia's takeover of Crimea from Ukraine
May 11, 2014	Pro-Russian separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk declare independence after unrecognized referendums
July 17, 2014	Malaysian flight MH17 is shot down and crashes near the town of Torez in Ukraine's Donetsk region; 298 people die
July 31, 2014	Timur Kuashev, a journalist critical of Russian policy in Ukraine, goes missing and is later found dead
Sept. 5, 2014	Ukraine and pro-Russian rebels sign a truce in Minsk
Nov. 5, 2014	Alexei Devotchenko, a popular Russian actor and opposition activist, dies in unclear circumstances

Jan. 24, 2015	Russian-backed rebels launch an offensive in Mariupol, Ukraine, killing 30 people and wounding 102 others
Feb. 11-12, 2015	Germany and France broker Minsk II ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine
Feb. 19, 2015	Ukrainian soldiers retreat from Debaltseve after 13 are killed and 157 wounded
Feb. 27, 2015	<b>Boris Nemtsov, a prominent critic of Putin's war in Ukraine and a former Deputy Prime Minister under Yeltsin, is shot in the back four times by an unidentified attacker in a car as he crossed a bridge near the Kremlin</b>

Providing military equipment to Ukraine is not the only answer, but it is a necessary part of the answer. Ukraine needs economic and governance reforms, but those can succeed only in a peaceful and independent nation.

We all heard President Poroshenko address a joint session of Congress on Sept. 18, 2014 and plainly state that his country needs more military equipment. "Blankets and night-vision goggles are important," he said, "but one cannot win a war with blankets." He went on to say, "Just like Israel, Ukraine has the right to defend her territory — and it will do so, with all the courage of her heart and dedication of her soul!" The Ukrainian people are willing to fight for their country. They just need a little help from their allies in America.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today on Russian aggression in Eastern Europe and learning how we can best support our allies in confronting this regional destabilization.

Thank you. I look forward to your testimony.