

Under Secretary Victoria Nuland's Testimony on the
U.S. and International Response to Russia's War on Ukraine
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
March 8, 2022

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss Russia's premeditated, unprovoked, and brutal attack on Ukraine and what the United States and Allied partners are doing in response.

To start, let me thank the members of this committee and the vast majority of Members of Congress for your strong bipartisan support for the brave and resilient people of Ukraine and their government over many years but especially now, in the face of Russia's bloody aggression. The United States, together with our Allies and partners around the world, stand united in condemning Russia's war on Ukraine – a war that offends human decency, violates international law, and the core principles of democracy and international peace and security, and has created a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. As we speak, Ukrainian men and women fight for their lives, their country, and their freedoms in

the face of Russian President Putin's imperial ambitions. We honor their sacrifice and bravery. Slava Ukrayini; Heroyam Slava [Honor to Ukraine; to its Heroes, Honor].

Our immediate focus has been to provide Ukraine the help it needs to defend its sovereignty, protect its democratic government, and support Ukrainians seeking aid and refuge.

First, we continue to provide security assistance to Ukraine, including equipment needed to defend against threats from the air, from armored assault, as well as to ensure the people standing up to defend Ukraine have the body armor and medical support they need. On February 25, President Biden and Secretary Blinken authorized the immediate delivery of an additional \$350 million in military support, and two-thirds of that has already gotten into Ukraine. In total, the Administration has provided more than \$1 billion in security assistance in the last year and more than \$3 billion since 2014.

We continue to urge Allies and partners to contribute security assistance to Ukraine as swiftly as possible. With Congress's bipartisan

support we are facilitating third party transfers of weapons and have seen unprecedented international assistance to Ukraine. Some of our closest allies and partners have made dramatic policy shifts and are providing lethal assistance for the first time.

Second, we are providing urgently needed humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and its neighbors, led by a forward-based team of dedicated humanitarian response experts from USAID and the Department of State. Partnering closely with the Government of Ukraine, as well as UN agencies, humanitarian organizations, and European partners, the U.S. is providing food, medicine, hygiene supplies, health care and protection services, shelter support, and other assistance, including an emergency announcement last week of an additional \$54 million in assistance to those affected by Russia's invasion. As with other forms of assistance, we are encouraged by the contributions of Allies and partners who continue to receive and support all those who are fleeing Ukraine, and who together have pledged nearly \$1.5 billion in support of the UN's humanitarian appeal.

Third, we have imposed severe sanctions on Russian financial institutions, oligarchs, and political leaders – including President Putin and his cronies – and levied export controls on key industries and the Russian military. We have taken these actions in close coordination with almost 40 countries – representing over half the world’s economy – and they have had immediate impact. We are seeing a continued flight of capital, a tumbling ruble, rising inflation, higher borrowing costs, and evaporating access to global financial markets. Additionally, with Allies and partners, we are launching a joint task force to hunt down and freeze the assets – including mega yachts and mansions – owned by sanctioned Russian companies, oligarchs, and government officials. And we’re not done. There is more on the way from the G7 and our EU partners as early as this week if President Putin does not end his vicious war.

We are also coordinating closely with our Allies and partners to limit disruption to global energy supplies and to prevent Russia from weaponizing its global energy exports while also accelerating diversification of energy supplies. And as President Biden promised, we

sanctioned the parent company of Nord Stream 2, Nord Stream AG and its CEO, and the German government has also cancelled its support for the pipeline, which will not become operational.

We are using all multilateral fora to rally the world in condemning Russia and Belarus. As you know, last week 141 countries voted in favor of the UN General Assembly resolution calling for Russia to end its war and withdraw from Ukraine, a historic outpouring of support for and international solidarity with the Ukrainian people. Days later, the Human Rights Council overwhelmingly passed a resolution establishing a Commission of Inquiry to investigate and call out Russia's human rights abuses in Ukraine.

At the Organization for Security and Co-operation (OSCE), we are resolved to hold Russia and its forces accountable for any and all human rights abuses, violations of international humanitarian law, and war crimes they commit in Ukraine – including sexual and gender-based violence, as we are seeing reports of this and other potential abuses.

And in close cooperation with NATO Allies, we are adjusting our force posture to strengthen the defense and deterrence of the Alliance's eastern flank. Allies agreed for the first time in history to give Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) authority to deploy the NATO Response Force (NRF), including its spearhead component, the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF).

In recent weeks, we have significantly increased U.S. military personnel positioned in Europe and its waters, which now total approximately 100,000. We have more than doubled our forces in Poland and sent thousands of troops to the Baltics, Romania, and elsewhere on NATO's eastern flank – along with advanced combat aviation. Several Allies including France, Germany, and the UK, have also bolstered their troop presence. The message to Russia is clear: NATO is united, and our commitment to Article 5 is ironclad.

President Putin has not only attacked Ukraine, he has trashed the UN principle of the self-determination of states and questioned Ukraine's right to exist. He is testing the foundations of international

law and he is testing all of us. He is testing the resolve of NATO, the EU, the G7, and democracies around the world. As President Biden said, we are in a battle between democracy and autocracy, and free people, free nations, a free Ukraine must prevail.

As Putin tries to reduce Ukraine to rubble, he is also turning Russia into a prison. Credit cards and ATMs have stopped working; capital controls are biting deeply; imported food, technology, and other goods are drying up; international travel is getting difficult and expensive; the last of a free press plus Twitter, Facebook, and other social media outlets are strangled, all while the government hemorrhages state funds on the war effort and to prop up the ruble. And last week President Putin criminalized anti-war protests and all sympathy with Ukraine – so called “consultancy” with Kyiv can result in 20 years in a penal colony. Thirty years of progress in Russia has been wiped out in 10 days.

This is a war launched by one man for his own twisted reasons. It is a war built on the lies he has told the world, his own people, and his military. And now it is a war built on the suffering and grief of so many

Ukrainians – and Russians too – parents, spouses, partners, children – who will never see their loved ones again, all because of one man’s evil choices.

Ukrainians are fighting for their nation’s survival. But they are also fighting for all of us and for the principles of freedom and democracy that are foundational for our nation and our allies and partners. Together, we must do all that we can to ensure Ukraine not only survives but thrives again. We in the administration are proud to work with all of you toward that difficult but righteous goal.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.