

New York, NY (UCCA) – The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), the nation's largest representation of over 1,000,000 Ukrainians in America, continually monitors positions and statements made throughout every election cycle concerning U.S. foreign policy and the continuing war being waged against Ukraine by Putin's Russia. Over the past several months, UCCA representatives have reached out as in years past to both the Republican and the Democratic National Committees in advance of an historic election this November. Additionally, since August of 2015, members of the UCCA Executive Board have communicated directly with the campaigns of several presidential candidates from both major parties, on behalf of the Ukrainian American community and its desire to aid the Ukrainian nation, in accordance with the stated mission of the UCCA.

In early June, members of the UCCA Executive Board met with the co-chair and policy advisor for Donald Trump's presidential campaign, Sam Clovis, for an extended discussion about stated and unstated policy goals of a Trump administration. Later that month, UCCA delegates, together with fellow representatives of the Central and East European Coalition - representing over 20 million Americans – met with former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, a foreign policy advisor to, and surrogate for Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign, for a frank discussion about the concerns our communities harbor regarding the conviction of American foreign policy.

The UCCA also met with those party representatives tasked with drafting their respective party platforms, and submitted testimony for consideration by platform committees on both sides of the political aisle. The UCCA's proposals specifically touched upon:

- Stipulating an explicit commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

- Maintaining and strengthening economic sanctions against the Russian Federation;

- Rejecting any form of recognition of Russian rule over Crimea in the form of a statutory

doctrine of non-recognition (à la the 1940 Welles Doctrine);

- Demanding the immediate withdrawal of covert and overt Russian forces and equipment from Ukraine;

- Expanding direct military assistance to Ukraine, including defensive arms and additional military training programs;

- Continuing NATO's "Open Door" policy for membership, and strengthening America's commitment to its allies;

- Maintaining funding for educational, professional and democracy-building programs to aid Ukraine's civil society's in rooting out corruption;

- Expanding the Visa Waiver Program and reforming Immigration Regulation;

- And additional points regarding US trade and investment in Ukraine, as well as programs promoting energy independence from Russia.

As the Republican Party gathers in Cleveland this week (surrounded by nearly 100,000 Americans of Ukrainian descent living in Northeast Ohio), followed by the Democratic Party gathering later this month in Philadelphia (home to generations of Ukrainian immigrants for over a century), the UCCA commends the inclusion of Ukraine in both party platforms for the first time in over a decade. Demonstrating the level of bipartisan support for Ukraine in this country, both party platforms now include specific commitments to seeing Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity restored, as well as explicitly adopting the UCCA's stated policy of maintaining and strengthening economic sanctions against a revanchist Russia.

The UCCA, a non-partisan organization, has always maintained neutrality in politics, leaving it up to its members to choose whichever party they prefer to support. As a united voice for our

community, however, we have consistently taken a unanimous stand in advocating for Ukraine's freedom and independence. The Ukrainian American community looks to the United States to not only live up to its public and binding security guarantees to Ukraine, but to further develop a shared 20-year military relationship as a buffer against rogue nations threatening the shared post-WWII collective security order. We therefore stress that both parties should have taken a stronger position of supporting military assistance to Ukraine in their platforms. Ukraine stands as the only non-NATO partner nation to have contributed actively to all NATO-led operations and missions for the past 20 years, and deserves at minimum, the same defensive support given to other strategic allies by the United States. In light of reports from the Republican convention which revealed an aversion by Donald Trump's campaign to explicitly include military assistance in the Republican platform, we urge delegates at the Democratic National Convention to reconsider adding this plank when they gather in Philadelphia to officially confirm their party platform.

Furthermore, as Russia's military occupation of Ukrainian today stands as the greatest threat to European security since the Cold War, the omission of any mention of the Crimean peninsula belies the significance of the largest attempted territorial expansion on the continent of Europe since the end of World War II.

The UCCA strongly believes that the security of the U.S. lies in the expansion of democracy and mutual security guarantees, not the appeasement of imperial states. U.S. support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, ensuring the non-use of force by other nuclear states, and mitigating the use of propaganda and economic coercion as hybrid weapons, can lead to the emergence of an ascendant Ukraine as a potential stabilizing partner for the United States in the area, alongside other frontline nations such as Poland, Georgia, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

The UCCA appeals to all of its members to be active participants in American political life, regardless of their political affiliation. In an increasingly interconnected and economically interdependent world, American political parties should be prevailed upon to always endorse political planks which take the lead in promoting international norms, defending basic human rights and freedoms, deterring foreign aggression, supporting the territorial integrity of our allies, and charting a course of geopolitical stability in the best interests of the United States.