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UCCA RESPONDS: RUSSIA DOES NOT BELONG IN THE G7

New York (UCCA) — In responding to a question raised by the media, President Donald Trump gave the wrong answer when asked if Russia should be reinstated into the group of the world's largest advanced economies, the G7. Speaking in the Oval Office while seated alongside President Klaus Iohannis of Romania, President Trump announced that "it's much more appropriate to have Russia in [the G7].... I could certainly see it being the G8 again. And if somebody would make that motion, I would certainly be disposed to think about it very favorably."

The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), the representative organization for over 1.5 million Americans of Ukrainian descent, once again strongly denounces the suggestion that Russia be allowed back into the G7. UCCA denounced similar proposals made by President Trump in 2018, which were met with rejection by the leaders of Germany, Canada, the United Kingdom, and France at the 2018 G7 summit, as well as Senators John McCain, Ben Sasse, and Chuck Schumer among other leaders in Congress.

In proposing this change in United States policy, President Trump either disregarded, or was unaware that in 2014, the G7 canceled their planned summit in the Russian city of Sochi, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula – the first forced annexation Europe had seen since the Second World War. Along with canceling the planned summit, the G7 countries issued the Hague Declaration, which unequivocally tied Russia's expulsion from the G7 to its actions in Ukraine: "We condemn the illegal referendum held in Crimea in violation of Ukraine's constitution. We also strongly condemn Russia's illegal attempt to annex Crimea in contravention of international law and specific international obligations. We do not recognize either... Today, we reaffirm that Russia's actions will have significant consequences." Since that declaration, Russia has only increased there transgressions, while continuing to undermine democracy in Europe.

"To be clear, it would not be 'more appropriate to have Russia in' the G7," stated UCCA President Andriy Futey. "Until the Russian Federation ceases its actions in Ukraine, and removes itself from all internationally recognized Ukrainian territory, Russia must remain suspended from membership in the group of the world's largest advanced economies, as its actions in Ukraine contravene the principles and values on which the G7 operate," Futey concluded.

The United States, as the bastion of democracy in the free world, and the President, as its Executive, must take the lead in promoting international norms, defending basic human rights and freedoms, and charting a course of geopolitical stability. The President could start by visiting Ukraine in the coming months, and see first-hand why Russia does not belong in the G7.