



**Statement of Ranking Member Kinzinger (R-IL)
Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, Energy, and the Environment
House Committee on Foreign Affairs**

“The Future of NATO: New Challenges and Opportunities”
April 2, 2019

Remarks as Prepared

Thank you, Chairman Keating, and thank you to the panel for joining us today. NATO is not just an ally, they are our most important ally. We all understand that strong alliances protect us from aggressors and guard our shared values.

However, this is the third hearing we have had that focuses on our friendship with NATO and Europe. Tomorrow morning, we will have NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg address our Congress in advance of the 70th anniversary of our security cooperation.

70 years of working together to face down oppression. It is sufficient to say that our alliance is strong. That being said, I don't believe another hearing on this topic is the best use of this committee's time.

In the past week, we saw the first round of elections in Ukraine, Brexit's status changing on a near hourly basis, and Russia landed soldiers in our own backyard to prop up the corrupt Maduro regime.

In Ukraine, exit polls show that political newcomer and comedian Vladimir Zelensky won about 30% of the vote, while current President Petro Poroshenko won about 18%. These two candidates will now face off on April 21st in a runoff election.



By all accounts, it is likely that both candidates will support Ukraine's move towards NATO and EU ascension. A good thing for our alliance and the United States. We could be having a hearing on what we saw from the first round of elections, and what we can expect from the run off.

In the UK, Prime Minister Theresa May has indicated that she will resign following a successful Brexit. However, we are now seeing a coalition form to push for a "soft Brexit", where the UK retains its membership of the European Economic Area.

We could be having a hearing on how this would affect transatlantic trade and security with Great Britain—with whom we have the "most special" of bilateral relationships. Russia, the largest focus of this subcommittee, is not only responsible for the death of thousands of Syrians, but has now entrenched themselves to protect Venezuelan dictator Maduro as he starves his own people.

There was once a time when this committee cared about Russia's activity in our backyard, but now all we care to do is try and handcuff the Trump administration from having a military option on the table during diplomatic negotiations.

Had Congress threatened to block President Kennedy's strategy to militarily quarantine Cuba from receiving Soviet ICBMs during the Cuban Missile Crisis—and use military force, if necessary, to protect our nation—I doubt our negotiations with Khrushchev would have been as successful.

I believe that some on this committee are being blinded by their opposition of the current administration, resulting in the same hearing three weeks running. The only reason? Because the administration is telling our NATO allies one hard truth – you can do more.



I reiterate my support, this committee's support, and the Congress' support for NATO and Europe. I simply wish we could move on to the other pressing issues that are facing our world.

With that Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

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