

28 April 2024

Committee Secretary - Inquiry into Australian support for Ukraine
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: Australian Support for Ukraine

We are concerned Australians who see the war in Ukraine as symptomatic of a world trend where institutions are under threat by populist leaders and autocrats. Putin is possibly the worst of these based on his total power, his cruelty to those who dare to oppose him and his corruption of the Russian economy, history and religion. His actions provide a road-map for other tyrants and wannabes.

The terms of reference essentially ask whether Australia is doing enough, whether it is doing it efficiently, and whether there is anything else we could be doing.

We are fortunate in that we are remote geographically from the conflict. However, the implications of the conflict are definitely important to us. Many Australians have come from countries affected by Russian irredentism or similar movements by other nationalist regimes. We should all be worried about the situation in Ukraine.

We could do more and, we believe, would do more if we had better information about the conflict. The things that we should consider as a medium world power include:

1. re-establishing our embassy in Kyiv

2. ensure that our defence procurement activities work closely with Ukrainian defence forces to understand what works in contemporary war and what under-utilised materiel we possess that could be used in any way by the desperate Ukrainian forces. The announcement today by Minister Marles of additional support for Ukraine is welcome.
3. put pressure on Russian diplomats locally to express our concerns about the governance of Russia, its fundamentally flawed policies and aggressive stance. This should refer to the Global Magnitsky Sanctions programs
4. highlighting false information spread by Russian cyber-disinformation activities and contrarian commentators locally, as well as accurate information about how Putin and his regime have obtained power, how they manipulate that power and how they seek to extend that power through unprincipled actors outside Russia.

Sincerely yours,

Rod Katz and Vida Viliunas