

- Comunicado
- Discurso

- Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores -MINEX-



11 Mayo, 2023

Antigua Guatemala, 11 de mayo de 2023. Discurso pronunciado el pasado 11 de mayo por el canciller de Ucrania, Dmytro Kuleba, durante la reunión preparatoria a la XXVIII Reunión Ordinaria del Consejo de Ministros de la AEC, Antigua Guatemala, actividad a la cual fue invitado por el Gobierno de Guatemala.

A continuación, el discurso (íntegro) en inglés.

DESCARGAR ARCHIVOS (XLS y/o CSV)
DISCURSO

Dear Mr. President, Mario,

Excellencies,

My trip here took more than 40 hours, including a train, a car, three flights, including one missed connection. But it is worth it because only here can I meet all my Caribbean counterparts and other friends and colleagues together.

This is the first-ever participation of Ukraine in the meeting of the Association of Caribbean States. I take your invitation with gratitude as a friendly gesture not only toward myself but toward all Ukrainians.

I would also like to commend Guatemala's leadership in the Association and its proactive stance as a responsible international player.

Dear friends,

Our countries might be thousands of miles apart, but there are many things that connect us and even more things that we can achieve together.

There is a war in Europe with global consequences. The largest since the Second World War. Ukraine was attacked by Russia, a far bigger neighbor who believes he can dictate us and the rest of Europe how to live our lives and claims to have historical rights over us. Needless to say, they themselves are telling an opposite story. But invaders always pretend they were "provoked", using it as an excuse for their invasion.

This is not true. We never planned to attack anyone, and focused on diplomacy instead. Today, we exercise our right to self-defense. We defend our independence and freedom.

I guess this idea sounds familiar to you. Your proud states have emerged out of your nations' struggle for freedom. The will for freedom is in our and your DNA.

However, we also know that freedom needs to be backed by security, governance, and economic growth. People need to feel safe and have opportunities in order to be truly free. This is where international cooperation can make a difference, even for countries divided by an ocean and thousands of miles. And this is why I am here today.

Colleagues,

This meeting's slogan is "Innovative integration through sustainable development of the Greater Caribbean." I find this topic very relevant. Ukraine has a lot to offer in this regard.

We are interested in boosting trade and economic relations, expanding our business and people-to-people ties, tech partnerships, and the exchange of technologies and best practices in areas of mutual interest.

Our agricultural exports are important for global food stability. Ukraine is one of the main suppliers of wheat, sunflower oil, and corn to the markets of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as well as one of the

main European producers of fertilizers. I know that many of you rely on agricultural imports. We stand ready to be your reliable partner in this area. Before the beginning of the full-scale war, there had never been any problems with our foodstuffs reaching foreign customers. Problems began only when our ports were blocked by Russian warships in February last year. This has shown that a war far across the ocean can become everyone's problem. And this is the best argument against those saying that the war in Europe does not concern them.

However, there is so much more than agricultural exports that we can offer.

We are also ready to facilitate joint scientific research and projects in tech, aerospace, innovation, and education. For instance, we have noted the growing interest of some of your countries in scientific research in the Antarctic. For those of you who do not have Antarctic stations, Ukraine is ready to offer research opportunities at our Vernadsky station as well as on board our ice-class research vessel "Noosfera."

The Caribbean is one of the world's most attractive tourist destinations. Being the largest country in Europe, Ukraine is interested in deepening cooperation in this area. Ukrainians will travel a lot again after Ukraine's victory in the war. Tourists will also be visiting Ukraine. We can set the ground already today by signing bilateral visa-free agreements which will facilitate the mutual travel of our citizens tomorrow.

One other area where we can help is cybersecurity. I know that the majority of your countries are suffering from cyberattacks. Trust me, Ukraine knows how to counter those. We will be happy to share our best experience with you and stand ready to discuss professional assistance and consultations.

Ukraine is also one of Europe's most advanced digital nations. We have digitalized almost all of our state services, and they now fit into the palm of our citizens' smartphones. ID, driving license, starting one's own business, paying taxes, holding popular votes, education, and receiving any state service are possible with a few clicks on a smartphone. We will gladly share this experience with you as well.

Another major challenge is climate change. A historic challenge for the world, and a real threat for the Caribbean. We may not feel it so acutely in Ukraine, but we do know what it means to lose a home. In our case, a war destroys it; in your case, a hurricane might wreak havoc on it. We wish to share the experience of building resilient communities and recovering from disasters. We have been sending our qualified teams to fight fires and the consequences of earthquakes across our region and can expand it to the Caribbean.

We can join efforts to fight both the consequences of natural disasters and their cause—climate change. Ukraine is ready for cooperation. You can count on our support for your initiatives aimed at overcoming disasters caused by climate change, in particular as co-authors and promoters of relevant resolutions within international organizations.

We currently face our own environmental challenges stemming from the war which has caused grave damage to Ukraine's wildlife. Invading forces have harmed agricultural lands, forests, and steppes. One figure shows the scale. By various estimates, up to 50 thousand dolphins died in the Black Sea because of warfare. Almost 500 thousand hectares of land, including 10 national natural parks, 8 natural reserves, and 2 biosphere reserves, remain under temporary occupation. Environmental damages are estimated at over 46 billion dollars. We consider that the effects of the war on our wildlife amount to an ecocide.

Ukraine has initiated a global platform to assess the damage to the climate and environment from

military actions. I invite you to become its participants.

Freedom of navigation is a cornerstone for the economy, trade, and sustainable development. Both for the Caribbean states and for Ukraine. Since the beginning of the full-scale war, we have faced challenges to our maritime trade, including the blockade of our seaports. This has caused turmoil on the world food market and disrupted logistical chains. The Black Sea Grain Deal brokered by Türkiye and the UN last summer is under threat. We need your authoritative voices to defend it and restore freedom of navigation in the Black Sea.

Freedom is indivisible. Its violation in one place is a threat to it elsewhere.

Excellencies,

No other country in the world wants the war to end more than Ukraine. Believe me, if there was a single chance to restore just and lasting peace at the negotiating table now, we would utilize it. Unfortunately, we currently don't see the will for peace on the Russian side. They make statements claiming they want to end this war, but their commanders on the ground order units to attack our cities and villages.

As for peace proposals put forward by various leaders around the world, we are ready to discuss any initiative that respects two principles. First, it should not suggest territorial concessions. Second, it should not lead to a frozen conflict instead of peace.

If you were invaded, which I sincerely wish never happens, would you agree to cede a square meter of your internationally recognized territory? I don't think so. Why should anyone expect us to accept such offers? We don't claim anyone's land. We only want to return the land that belongs to us under international law.

Freezing the conflict is not a solution either. It will only postpone the war instead of putting an end to it. We did try. We engaged in ceasefire and negotiation exercises with Russia in 2015 in the hope of finding a long-term solution. Russia only used this time to prepare for another attack, and the war exploded on a larger scale in 2022.

Some people still say that Russia was forced to attack Ukraine for whatever reason, such as the enlargement of NATO or other excuses. This does not match the facts. When Russia launched this war in 2014, Ukraine was officially a non-aligned country and had declared no aspiration to join NATO. Ukraine's neutrality did not prevent the attack.

We know our history too well, and it forces us to keep defending ourselves. We feel with our own skin that modern Russia is very different from the one you and we cooperated with in the past. What is at stake for us today is not only our land but also our freedom. If we give our freedom away, we will cease to exist as a nation.

Ukraine has a very clear vision for a just and lasting peace. President Zelenskyy outlined it in his ten-point Peace Formula. Its items cover all areas where peace needs to be restored, from nuclear safety to environmental protection and food security. We invite you to choose the specific items where you feel your contribution can make a difference. Be it fighting environmental hazards or bringing Russia to account, you will find a role for yourself if you want to make a valuable contribution to peace.

By choosing one item, you don't commit yourself to the other ones. But working on even one item can

make a difference. It can also show your country's leadership aimed at restoring peace with concrete actions, not just abstract calls for peace.

Friends,

International law is there to protect you, just like it is for us. We must protect it in return. The law will fail if we do not bring those who violate it to account. I call on your countries to support investigations by the International Criminal Court, cases at the International Court of Justice and to join the Core Group on the Special Tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine. Guatemala, Costa-Rica, and the Secretariat of the Organization of American States have already done so, and I sincerely appreciate their stance.

I would also like to thank you for your support within international organizations. We appreciate the clear position of your governments when voting for relevant resolutions in the UN General Assembly. Including the latest one on the principles of a just and lasting peace in Ukraine. You vote for us, but you also vote for yourself. With these votes, you ensure that international law is strong enough to protect you from following our fate.

Neutrality is not an answer to today's challenges. It only creates strategic problems by encouraging those who seek to violate borders and rules. The truth is that we are all responsible for protecting our principles and values. One sacred value that Ukraine fights for is the value we all hold dear. Freedom.

In essence, we all want one thing: to give our people the opportunity to develop freely, to prosper, and to live in safety. Therefore, I invite you to cooperate more in order to find answers to shared challenges and ensure freedom for our and your people.

Thank you!

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