

CEEC Advocacy Day, April 18, 2013, Washington, DC

I was very fortunate to be allowed to participate in CEEC's Advocacy Day. This is an incredible organization which was able to mastermind the passage of the Magnitsky Act, through a congress that for several years has been in grid lock. This was no small feat, especially when one realizes that, in addition, the presidential administration was against the act.

The only country in the world that can stand up to resurgent totalitarianism and Stalinism in Russia, is the USA. In that regard, the Magnitsky Act is a remarkable achievement.

To wander the halls of the Senate and House of Representative, the halls of political power, was very impressive. Seeing the large numbers of different groups lobbying at the congressional offices was most interesting.

In none of the meetings did we have a chance to speak with the congressmen directly, rather to their assistants, who were, for the most part, very knowledgeable of the purposes of the visit. In my own presentations, I discussed my concerns for the worsening plight of human rights in the previous Soviet Union.

After completing our presentations, I would ask the final question: "Now that we have explained our concerns, which you share, how can we help you achieve these goals?" The answer was uniformly the same: "keep us informed". It is most important for all Eastern European ethnic communities to keep raising the issues discussed in the CEEC Policy Brief to our congressmen, over, and over, and over again.

There are two well-worn expressions of wisdom that are applicable: "only the squeaky wheel gets greased" and "out of sight—out of mind". The CEEC Policy Brief needs to squeak in order to get attention, and needs to remain firmly in congressional minds.

Having completed the two-year Hope and Spirit project and program, which was a commemoration of the 20 million casualties of Stalin's atrocities, I am very fearful of the resurgence of Stalinistic ideology and tactics in Russia, which pose not only serious internal threats, but more so to all of Europe. That is why I was so satisfied, and honored, to have been able to participate in CEEC's Advocacy Day.

The first of the attached photographs show the entire CEEC Advocacy Day group at the end of the day. Many group members had left before this picture was taken. The second photograph was at Illinois Senator Dick Durbin's office, with his assistant, Ms. Erum Ibrahim.

Audrius V. Plioplys MD, FRCPC, May 1, 2013



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