

ERA OF UNITY: VICTORY IN UKRAINE

By Peter Van Praagh, President, HFX

Judging from today's reports in a variety of traditional and social media outlets, any well-intentioned casual observer might be forgiven for believing that Ukraine can no longer win the war against Russian aggression.

However, this widespread forecast is not true. It was not true when many so-called experts said the same thing on February 24, 2022, the date Putin invaded. And it is not true now.

But there is nothing new about this type of doom and gloom defeatism. The dustbin of history is filled with leaders who have been afraid to lead, preferring to avoid conflict than to stand firm and fight for what is right. At the birth of the United States in 1776, loyalists to the British crown deemed it impossible for a new nation to successfully declare its independence from the most powerful empire on earth.

Thankfully, being outgunned, outmanned, outnumbered and outplanned, the phrase made famous by the Broadway musical, Hamilton, did not stop American patriots from taking a stand and fighting for liberty. If George Washington had been swayed by the cowards of the time, and had France equivocated and stopped supplying weapons and supplies to the American colonies at the very moment when the situation looked most dire, there very well might not be an independent United States of America today.

Similarly, in World War Two, a more recent but no less consequential war, many observers—including some American leaders at the time—believed that Europe should simply surrender to Hitler and avoid the death and destruction that standing against his armies might bring. In addition to admiring many of Nazi Germany's policies, including inhuman antisemitism, these cowards argued against

supporting European democracies, including the United Kingdom during the 1940-41 Battle of Britain, because German forces were larger and stronger and the smaller European countries could not possibly win.

The defeatists were wrong in World War Two. The defeatists were wrong during the American Revolution. And those defeatists who say that Ukraine cannot win today's war against Russia are also wrong.

Going as far back as David's slingshot, history is filled with the underdog winning battles that the experts said were impossible to win. In addition to ammunition and supplies, the needed ingredients are cause, courage and commitment. In short, the will to win.

"Ukraine's democracy fulfills every broken promise that Putin has made to his own people."

The cause that Ukrainians are fighting for is clear for all to see, including all Russians. Ukraine's democracy fulfills every broken promise that Putin has made to his own people. Ukrainians are proud, but they are not fighting for patriotism alone. Ukrainians are fighting to protect their democracy. Russian victory in Ukraine would not only mean a new ruler. It would mean the death of freedom.

Ukrainian courage is in full supply. The courage of Ukraine's citizen-soldiers and its defiant leader has shown the world what is at stake. If Ukraine accepts a Russian victory, it accepts the end of freedom; if Putin subdues Ukraine, he kills the very idea of freedom. President Zelenskyy, the unmovable hero of Ukraine, needs the continued supply of lethal and non-lethal aid not simply to save his nation, but to preserve the idea of freedom that the United States,

Cont' d . . .

Canada, Europe and other great democracies uphold.

Just as there is no shortage of Ukrainian courage, there is a surplus of commitment among Ukrainians for fighting on until victory. Ukraine's defiance and sacrifice have been an inspiration for freedom-loving people everywhere because they taught us all over again that our democracies are worth fighting for. Authoritarians, on the other hand, suffer severe discomfort at the very thought of this conviction.

As the third anniversary of the beginning of the Ukraine War approaches in February, it is easy to forget in this era of instant gratification that other wars last much, much longer. The American War of Independence lasted eight long years, 1775-1783. And World War Two was fought for six brutal years, 1939-1945, before victory was achieved.

There is no doubt that war is hell. Tragically, however, some evils are solved only by war. Successful war against the British was the only mechanism for giving birth to the United States. And successful war against Hitler was the only means to end Nazi tyranny in Europe. Both victories set the world on a better course.

Ukraine has the cause, courage and commitment to win this war. The United States and its democratic allies must stand together with Ukraine until its victory that will, in turn, give birth to an era of peace and prosperity and new optimism in the world's democratic future.

The logo for HFx, consisting of the letters 'HF' followed by 'x' in a bold, sans-serif font, is positioned inside a light blue circular graphic in the bottom right corner of the page.