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Ukraine matters!

By Steve Bakke  March 2, 2022



Ukraine is the largest European country located entirely in Europe. It's approximately the size of Texas with a population approximating 40 million. Following its tragic history, Ukraine ended up as part of the Soviet Union soon after WWII. Following the USSR's demise in 1990, Ukraine gained independence.

Clearly, President Putin's ambition is to slowly reassemble the Soviet Union. In 2008, during Bush's administration, Putin seized two provinces of Georgia. During the Obama Administration in 2014, he annexed Crimea and effectively seized Luhansk and Donetsk, all part of Ukraine. And now, all of Ukraine is under siege.

Russia's attack on Ukraine puts the rest of Europe in a difficult energy dilemma. Europe, and particularly Germany, need significant fossil fuel sources to supply the energy requirements not yet met by green and nuclear energy sources. They've had to rely on Russian oil and gas to meet those shortages. Germany even certified a Russian pipeline through their country to help meet these European needs.

Immediately upon taking office, Biden cancelled U.S. pipeline development and reduced availability of drilling contracts on public lands. After discontinuing construction of an important U.S. pipeline, Biden acquiesced to the new European pipeline from Russia through Germany.

The U.S. no longer enjoys the national security and economic advantages of energy independence Trump's policies established. Incredibly, the U.S. is now buying large quantities of oil and gas from Russia because our producers are blocked from adequately expanding to meet the energy demand. These purchases are helping fund Russia's invasion.

Inspired by heroic leadership from Ukraine's President Zelensky, and the resolve of the Ukrainian people, slowly but surely international initiatives for significant Russian sanctions have been developing. These include isolating their banking system and suspending their use of the "Swift" financial messaging system. The EU is contemplating how to support Ukraine and consider it for

membership. Switzerland is stepping out of its traditional neutrality by endorsing EU's economic sanctions against Russia, stating "neutrality is not indifference."

And Germany bravely intends to decertify the much-needed Russian pipeline. The U.S. should be leading these efforts to isolate Putin and make Russia pay a high physical and economic price for its actions. We should aggressively supply whatever Ukraine needs in defensive equipment and weapons.

The most important initiative the U.S. should take is to declare a wartime energy protocol. We have the opportunity and ability to make a significant improvement to the energy emergency Russia's actions have imposed on the world. Although it wouldn't happen quickly, the U.S. had adequate energy reserves and resources to provide the necessary energy during and after this emergency.

The President should authorize an "operation warp speed" for providing oil and gas for the U.S., Europe, and eventually others dependent on Russian fossil fuels. Proclaiming that project would lift the morale of the Ukraine freedom fighters, all of Europe, and the world markets. President Biden's SOTU address was a missed opportunity for making such an announcement.



The destruction in Ukraine is senseless and sadly, very permanent. We see doctors and nurses crying while trying to revive a child dying from wounds of civilian attacks. Only a murdering thug; a selfish dictator; a brilliant, but evil, wartime terrorist could do this. We dare not diminish the ability of this cunning, evil genius based on his favorable standing with the devil, or we will pay an awful price.

We are seeing something terrible.....something awful.....yet something wonderful shines through. We see the spirit of Ukrainians who are being decimated without justification other than the evil tyrant Putin's greed for power, conquest, and control. Ukraine's President has proven himself a worthy commander-in-chief. Ukrainians are fighting for their family, friends, and country.

Compare that to Russian soldiers merely doing a job. They were sent to kill brave people against whom they hold no grievance. No wonder Ukrainians are frustrating the less motivated Russian military. Let's emulate the lesson from the Ukrainians' fight for national survival. And we should celebrate their brave President Zelensky's leadership.

We must emphatically proclaim that Ukraine and its people's lives matter. We clearly have an opportunity to ensure our European friends of a friendly source of energy. Recalling Reagan's famous speech, "Biden's time for choosing" has arrived.