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Opposing evil in our world

Steve Bakke  March 21, 2022



A wonderful gift to Ukrainian refugee parents and children: strollers left at a Polish train station by Polish mothers.

It's difficult for me to step away from the humanitarian crisis on our tiny planet. My attention and creative emotions are wrapped up in little else. When I begin writing down my thoughts, my mind runs in too many different directions.

When I express horror at the senseless brutality brought down on innocent people, my religious upbringing conjures thoughts of how flawed we human beings can be when left to our own devices. I appreciate that reminder and express thanks to our Founders that our own government tried to compensate for those flaws with a myriad of separation of powers with checks and balances.

When I foolishly entertain thoughts of "the good old days" I do the best I can to slap away those ideas. Man's inhumanity to man has been everlasting, since humans emerged to occupy and attempt to control God's creation. That self-righteous analysis ends appropriately at a dead end.

History moves from one incredibly brutal episode to another, with intervening periods of limited levels of goodwill. Since the Founding of our great nation the eyes of the world have looked upon much that one can't forgive: slavery, Hitler's death camps, and the killing fields of Cambodia's Khmer Rouge, for example.

And now we constantly observe Russia brutally, and without provocation, crushing a country, a culture, and the Ukrainian people's dreams of peace and freedom. We've seen in almost "real time," the bombing and shelling of maternity hospitals, shelters, and apartment buildings.

We've witnessed Putin's Russia change in ways few will recall. As an example, I looked up something I recalled from a couple decades ago. Russia "is part of European culture," Putin stated to David Frost on BBC in 2002. He even seemed to be hinting about joining NATO. Putin continued, "I cannot imagine my own country in isolation from Europe and what we often call the civilized world." Regarding Ukraine joining NATO, along with other former Soviet countries, he said, "It's none of my business."

British politician and former NATO Secretary General George Robertson recalls that Putin did want Russia to join NATO but didn't want to go through the normal application and approval process required of "a lot of countries that don't matter." Assuming Putin wasn't totally lying in expressing his disinterest toward Ukraine joining Europe's mainstream, it's obvious, and shocking how much the Russian situation has changed since the end of the cold war.

Changes in cultures frequently reflect the rejection of established standards for opinions and actions. A true culture must possess a level of philosophical consistency, with moral and ethical absolutes. I see nothing resembling my definition of culture at the end of whatever path Putin and Russia have chosen. Historically proven standards have been progressively ignored. Old fashioned search for common sense seems lost – not just in Russia, but to varying degrees all over the globe, including America.

Nevertheless, there are some positive developments. While Russia creates a new iron curtain, many countries are uniting in a common desire to resist Russia's genocide in Ukraine. Maybe civilized societies are desperately searching for some common sense.

This new unity is represented largely by NATO. Hopefully, this stronger more committed group of U.S. allies will find a way to manage the new form of conflict that is occurring in Ukraine.



This pregnant mom and unborn baby both died after being evacuated from a maternity hospital targeted by the Russians.

Providing military armaments to Ukraine is important, and nothing should be off the table in that regard. Our response so far has been slow and smacks of indecision. And the path to success in strengthening Europe includes using American energy resources to supply their needs in the long run. This is all related. We must promptly and effectively stand up to evil in the world, otherwise we will face evil's many ugly faces again and again. If we don't take a stand, we must question how much we are willing to do to ensure our own freedom.

If either side in this conflict fails to find their way through the peril looming before them, they do so at their own serious peril. Let us pray that both sides find the path leading to peace.