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The role of the Ukrainian Diaspora in shaping the future of Ukraine

I believe that Ukraine's defense of its independence against Russian imperialism presents a great opportunity for the nation's growth into a future economic power.

Ukraine has proved that the values of the 21st century can withstand the forces of colonialism in the last throes of the "Russkiy mir".

Unlike the Putin regime, Ukraine has a future of prosperity, freedom, and growth to look forward to with an orientation to the West.

I hope that the Ukrainian diaspora worldwide will assist and travel to the country, so I will be teaching in Lviv this June.

A strong commitment to investing in higher education and research will pay dividends for Ukraine's future and young people – many will need to re-enter schooling and the workforce after serving on the frontlines.

As easy as it is to be upset over the wavering support in America, I do not believe in seething inaction, but that individuals now can lead by example.

My family came to America from Ukraine before World War One from the village of Wydrne in what was known as Galicia under the Habsburg Empire. The village I have learned from researching was ethnically cleansed of Ukrainians by the Soviets after World War Two and is now part of Poland, so it has proved difficult to locate relations over there.

I am told that my great-grandfather John Misura (Mysiura) was patriotic for Ukraine and hoped to see it become independent, which unfortunately did not occur in his lifetime.

Like many Americans, my initial reaction to the outbreak of the war in Ukraine was a deep engagement with the day-to-day developments and donating to causes. However, as time passed and the situation in Ukraine stabilized, my interest drifted away admittedly. There have been three recent factors leading to my re-engagement with Ukraine:

- ✓ In September of 2023, I traveled to Poland and had the chance opportunity to meet refugees in Krakow.
- ✓ The setbacks on both the frontlines and wavering support in the United States for supporting the war effort.

✓ In March of 2024, representatives from Ukrainian Catholic University spoke at Seton Hall University about the current and future state of higher education in Ukraine, including support for veterans.

I had been interested in finding volunteer opportunities related to supply chain management for donated goods but in connecting with Ukrainian Catholic University, I have learned there are opportunities to volunteer in educating students. I will teach English in the Summer of 2024 to students at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv. Visiting Ukraine is something no one in my family has done since arriving in America over one hundred years ago.

This personal reflection is intended to take a positive viewpoint of Ukraine, and not focus on the negatives such as the lack of support in the United States Congress and the potential change in Presidential administration in November. As Ukraine continues to navigate the challenges of war and the aspirations for European Union accession, making a strong commitment to education and academia is an investment that will be dividends many times over for the future.

Even in the face of setbacks and continued struggle, Ukraine has already secured a future for itself of independence, freedom, growth, and peaceful coexistence with like-minded states. That I believe is something worth fighting for and striving towards.