My Reasons for Hope

March 9, 2022

I began this article just over a week ago on the same day that Russia invaded the Ukraine.

As I write, there are two pianists stationed at the checkpoints for refugees arriving in Poland. They are playing music. They are playing classical music, so that when refugees from the train station arrive, they can hear music.

And now, the scriptures have it: Without a vision the people perish.

1. And so, here is my first reason for hope. Look at what is now taking place in democracy.

The entire world is focused on events in Ukraine, where a sovereign people who love freedom are resisting the whole of the Russian military might, now coming down on them all. They are vowing to fight to the death rather than becoming a slave in the Russian Empire.

No one, least of all the Russians, anticipated the tremendous defiance of the Ukrainian people. Their courage, their bravery and standing up to the threat of annihilation by the Russian government.

Ukraine has been under the yoke of Russia before, but they have learned in the last 30 years or so the wonderful truth of freedom self-determination, self-government.

They remind us of all we once cared about in freedom. Remember Tom Payne in the revolution: Give me liberty or give me death.

But look what democracy in the West, and in America, has now become.

There is a story told about a small town in Greece, surrounded by its enemies. They were told if you do not surrender to us, then we will completely destroy you. And the little town said no thanks, we will die before we will surrender to you. And they did.

The courage of the Ukrainian people in the face of the full brunt of the Russian military is a call to all of us to reaffirm what it is that we have loved so much about freedom and democracy. That love transcends any political parties’ interest whatsoever, and it belongs to all of us.

2. What is really taking place on the planet at this point is a great shift. We are struggling to leave behind a long Winter run and ruled by fear: Conquer and subdue, fear lies and control, death and destruction everywhere.

And we are emerging into a new civilization based on love and truth. Love, life and light.

What is remarkable about the response of the West and the whole world in fact, to the great Ukrainian people and the invasion by Russia, is the incredible unity, and agreement, that has precipitated an almost universal condemnation of what Russia is now doing.

This universal condemnation is a sign of just how far we have in fact emerged out of the past and into this new civilization based on love and based on truth.

In fact, it has unified so many people in their determination to help the Ukrainian people.

Putin counted on splintering NATO. In fact, under Biden’s leadership, NATO is now unified in opposition to what is happening in the Ukraine on the part of the Russians.

And then, many other countries of the world, including Switzerland that has always been neutral in previous conflicts, have also united behind Biden’s leadership in opposition to the Russian invasion.

And then, even at home, Republicans and Democrats are now united in their own opposition to the Russian invasion.

Republicans have been trying to paint Biden as a weak president and a weak leader.

In fact, this is a tremendous attribute to his skills as a leader. And so, this is a tribute to Biden’s skills in leadership. Diverse countries and political parties are now united behind him.

3. We have all forgotten the truth of democracy, and what it means to value freedom over tyranny.

We have also forgotten the true meaning of dictatorship and how they function. Putin is a striking example of how dictators’ work. They care nothing about other people, they do not value for human life whatsoever, what matters to them is position and power.

Despite efforts now to achieve some kind of a humanitarian cease-fire, civilians are being shot in the street by Russian soldiers.

And so, we have also forgotten the horrors of war. We have had a very abstract idea about both dictators and warfare.

Now look at what we are seeing. Cities shelled and bombed every night, buildings and high-rises destroyed, people fleeing for their lives, seeking shelter in subways. Thousands attempting to get on trains to Poland and other countries of refuge. The horrific horror stories kept before us every night by the free media. Husbands and brothers separated from their wives and their sisters, women and children attempting to get out.

Zelenskyy promising to fight to the death to preserve the Ukrainian freedom.

Every night we hear more tragic stories of people wounded and shot, families separated, children from parents, people losing their lives everywhere.

What is most tragic of all in a certain sense that there is a zoo in the Ukraine. The animals are completely traumatized at this point, the elephants, the zebras, the monkeys, traumatized by daily sirens and nights of bombing.

Putin’s strategy seems clear. Bomb the cities, and then shoot people attempting to escape, destroying the infrastructure, the water,the electricity the heat, surrounding cities and starving the people in them.

We had all forgotten the horror of war.

And even in World War II, whereas all of the NATO allies know what it is to suffer under an invading army, America was free of all of this.

The British people warned the whole of the free world, if you do not help us, you too will go down under the yoke of the German dictator.

Let us remember ourselves, let us remember freedom and democracy, let us remember the horrors of war.

4. Now, what is truly remarkable in the modern world is that a coalition of countries led by America is placing financial sanctions on the Russian economy, the banks, the oligarchy that rules Russia, and Putin himself. They are standing up to a country which has an enormous arsenal of nuclear weapons, and a strong army. It is one of the achievements of capitalism that the whole world could now isolate Putin from the financial economy of the planet.

But it’s not all that simple.

We are all interconnected. Nature is interconnected with Russia economically, as is almost every other country on the planet.

The modern world and civilization have evolved a financial system in which we are all deeply connected, interrelated and interdependent. Goods from China are everywhere our shelves, and the most significant of all, the whole of the European economy is based on importing gas and oil from Russia.

Many leaders are now considering terminating Russian supplies of oil and gas to Europe and elsewhere. Russia earns about $700 million a day from exporting gas and oil into Europe. European economies depend heavily on that supply of gas and oil.

And so, the world must find some way of ensuring oil and gas from countries other than Russia. This would probably take some time, given that all supply lines are now down. Every country is connected economically with every other country, which makes war seem absolutely ridiculous, unhealthy, and against everyone’s interest. All our economies are tightly bound together, we are one world. If the virus has taught us anything, it is how deeply interconnected and interdependent we all are with one another. It is just not in anyone’s best interest to be at war with one another.

Putin is making the mistake of his life. He has absolutely nothing to gain from this invasion of the Ukraine. If he his desire is to annex Ukraine back into the Russian Empire, it hardly helps him to destroy the entire physical structure of the country with guns and bombs, and to murder the population. He needs to get beyond any desire to return the Soviet Union to what it once was, but to consider instead a new role for himself as the key player in renouncing war, to become a valuable and honored member of the modern world’s economy.

All he is earning is a country destroyed, and a condemnation of the whole world.

Up until now, he has been acting from a place of rage. It will only end by destroying the whole of the Russian economy itself. His advisors are telling him this is not the way to go, you will not only destroy the Ukraine, but the Russian economy itself, weakened daily by the sanctions.

What needs to happen is that Putin pull back his army and allow some kind of neutral status for the Ukraine, such as Finland and Sweden.

If Russia puts an end to this war now, then the light of clear thinking, then whole world would start rejoicing and welcome a new ideal for Russia in the modern world.