

February 24, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Baltic Americans support Ukraine on the third anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion; reaffirm Russia as the aggressor in Ukraine

Los Angeles: Today Ukrainians mark the third anniversary of Russia's February 24, 2022 unjust and brutal war of aggression and honor all who lost their lives in defense of Ukraine's sovereignty.

As Americans who are friends of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, including many who witnessed the price paid in their homelands during Russian and Soviet rule, we stand unequivocally in support of the Ukrainian people and their leadership.

Ukraine's future as a free and secure nation is essential to the long-term security of Europe and the United States. While separated by an ocean from Europe, what happens in Ukraine is important to our national security interests and our standing in the world.

We therefore ask our leaders to implement policies towards Ukraine that are guided by American principles of freedom and liberty. China, Iran and North Korea are gauging our willingness to stand up to aggression.

For this reason, BAFL President Conrad Mazeika stated, "we are concerned that the United States did not support language in a United Nations resolution today naming Russia as the aggressor in Ukraine and supporting Ukraine's sovereignty. Russia's aggression started in 2014 when it occupied Crimea and three years ago, Russian troops surrounded Kyiv with tanks expecting a quick victory, but instead the Ukrainians valiantly defended their country. An end to the conflict can only be achieved through a peace respecting the people of Ukraine."

Ukraine has paid a heavy price -- innocent civilians have been killed, children separated from their families and civilian infrastructure destroyed. Vladimir Putin is a war criminal. Negotiations for peace in Ukraine must hold Putin accountable for his crimes and include security guarantees for Ukraine.

We will never forget how the independent states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were relegated to the Soviet "sphere of influence" under the secret protocols of the Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939. This year will mark 35 years since March 11, 1990 when the Lithuanian parliament declared the restoration of Lithuania's independence, followed on May 4, 1990 by Latvia and on August 20, 1991 by Estonia. By December 1991, the Soviet Union had dissolved, and the Baltic states reclaimed their rightful place in Europe, leading to NATO membership in 2004.

Today, similarly Putin wants the United States to surrender neighboring countries to a Russian "sphere of influence", weaken NATO and to end the defensive deployment of NATO troops in Europe. NATO troops keep guard in Europe responding to the hybrid threats by Russia in the Baltic Sea and in the skies above.

As an organization based in California, we are reminded of President Ronald Reagan whose presidential library is located in Simi Valley. Following the BAFL banquet last year, our honored speakers, the chairs of the foreign affairs committees -- Marko Mihkelson of Estonia, Rihards Kols of Latvia and Zygimantas Pavilionis of Lithuania -- toured the library. They recounted how Reagan's principled leadership in the 1980s was an inspiration for those in the Baltic states who bravely fought for freedom from the Soviet Union.

Reagan's prescient 1964 speech "[A Time for Choosing](#)" outlines how appeasement will not lead to peace, but instead to surrender and slavery. President Reagan's message rings true today.

As we pay tribute to the people of Ukraine and their lost heroes, we urge strong and principled leadership from the US government towards Ukraine that does not cater to Russia's imperialism and authoritarianism. A lack of US resolve on Ukraine emboldens adversaries like China and Iran, escalating global instability and threatening U.S. interests in the Indo-Pacific and the Middle East.

The Baltic American Freedom League is a Los Angeles, CA based nonprofit organization with grassroots members across the U.S. engaged in educational campaigns promoting Baltic history/culture and broad economic, diplomatic and security ties between the U.S. and the Baltic countries; founded in 1981 (www.bafl.com).