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RUSSIA MUST RETURN KIDNAPPED 20,000 UKRAINIAN CHILDREN

VITALIY PORTNYKOV | MONTH OF ATTACKS AND HOPES

page 2

OLES DONIY | FROM ISTANBUL TO ISTANBUL

page 4

FR. ROMAN BEBESIUK | THE FIRST AND GREATEST COMMANDMENT OF GOD

page 6

NADIA BANCHIK | BROWNIAN MOTION AROUND THE NEGOTIATIONS AND
BEYOND

page 10

“WANDERING STARS” VISITED SACRAMENTO WITH THEIR FIRST UKRAINIAN-
LANGUAGE PLAY BASED ON IVAN FRANKO’S FAIRY TALE “THE PAINTED FOX”

page 16



EXCLUSIVE FOR HROMADA

Vitaliy Portnykov | NOTES FOR MAY

MONTH OF ATTACKS AND HOPES



Vitaliy Portnykov – leading Ukrainian political commentator, writer, and journalist.

The last days of May are marked by constant Russian missile attacks on Ukrainian cities. Drones strike residential areas, causing numerous casualties and significant destruction. All this is happening against the backdrop of expectations of Russian proposals for a possible ceasefire on the Russian-Ukrainian front. Not many people believe that such proposals are realistic. Donald Trump himself advised Putin to make a proposal that would not be rejected outright. At the same time, Western media continue to spread information that Russia is not actually preparing for negotiations, but for a new offensive and an attempt to occupy territories in other Ukrainian regions. In particular, in the Kharkiv, Sumy, and Dnipropetrovsk regions. Meanwhile, Putin talks about “buffer zones” on Ukrainian soil.

For Russian President Vladimir Putin, May was not only a month of preparation for a new offensive, but also the time of the main event of the year for Russian propaganda – the celebration of the 80th anniversary of victory in World War II. Putin was joined by the main guest of this celebration – the President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping. Talks between the two leaders showed that the Russian-Chinese partnership is not only not weakening but, on the contrary, is becoming increasingly close. Donald Trump's idea of the possibility of sep-

arating Russia from China now seems even more illusory than in previous years. During the three years of the great Russian-Ukrainian war and Western sanctions, Moscow's dependence on Beijing has only grown. In addition, the two leaders are united by common ideological goals: reducing the role of the West and ousting the United States not only from Europe but also from Asia. Both Putin and Xi Jinping may believe that Trump's policies are giving them this historic opportunity.

Western leaders have tried to seize the initiative. On May 10, immediately after the end of the parade in Moscow, the leaders of the European Union and the United Kingdom arrived in Kyiv. There, together with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, they called the US president. It was agreed that if Russia did not agree to a ceasefire by May 12, new sanctions, agreed upon by the US and the EU, would be imposed on it. But Putin made his move. The very next day, he appeared on Russian television and proposed that Ukraine resume the negotiations that had been held in Istanbul in 2022 and had ended without any results. Putin did not mention a ceasefire at all.

This was supposed to be the basis for new serious pressure on Moscow. However, Donald Trump intervened, advising the Ukrainians to go to Istanbul and convincing them that this was a real chance to negotiate peace.

The Ukrainian delegation did indeed arrive in Istanbul. And, as expected, no negotiations that could have led to any concrete results took place. Moreover, Russian representatives categorically refused to engage in dialogue in the

presence of American officials, who had also arrived in Istanbul. The Ukrainians were simply blackmailed with the occupation of new territories. After that, Trump said that he himself never believed in the effectiveness of these negotiations, which he personally insisted on. Instead, he said that ending the war depends solely on his personal conversation with Putin. Before this conversation, the US president spoke with Zelenskyy, who advised him to seek a ceasefire. But the results of Trump's negotiations with Putin shocked both the Ukrainian president and European leaders. The American president effectively sided with his Russian counterpart: he abandoned the idea of an unconditional ceasefire, which he had been advocating for several months, and even began to convince his interlocutors that he had never had such an idea and that Putin had every right to put forward his own conditions for a truce.

Clearly satisfied with the support of his American counterpart, Putin intensified rocket attacks on Ukrainian cities and drone strikes. It is now safe to say that Trump's very appearance as US president has led to a significant increase in the intensity of Russian attacks – an increase in civilian casualties and new destruction of infrastructure. After all, the Russian president is convinced that the United States is not prepared to use any real tools to stop his aggression. He feels much more immune than in previous years.

We are in a situation where both Russia and Ukraine are forced to imitate negotiation activity in order not to lose contact with the US. It is obvious

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to Kyiv that even fruitless negotiations with Moscow are necessary to maintain military aid and intelligence support from Washington. Without access to such information, Ukrainian cities will become even more vulnerable to Russian attacks. Moscow is also eager to simulate negotiations: Putin is interested in continuing his personal dialogue with Trump. The very fact of the US president's constant calls to the Russian leader has become a major diplomatic victory for Putin – evidence of the West's humiliation and a demonstration of the degradation of Euro-Atlantic solidarity.

In addition, the imitation of negotiations allows Putin to delay meeting with Trump. The Russian president clearly does not want to meet with his American counterpart in the near future because he wants to turn this meeting into a kind of trophy for Trump. Putin also understands that during personal negotiations, he will have to offer concrete solutions regarding the war. And Putin cannot offer any other solu-

tion except the destruction of Ukraine.

Thus, despite the political games in May, the positions of the parties remain unchanged. Putin hopes that the war of attrition will lead not only to the capture of new territories, but also to the final destruction of Ukrainian statehood and the annexation of its territories to Russia. This is stated explicitly by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who warns that Russia will never accept a situation in which the 'Zelenskyy regime' remains in power in Ukraine and laws continue to exist that are 'unacceptable' to Russians – laws that promote the development of the Ukrainian language and culture and restrict the expansion of the Russian Orthodox Church. Without the repeal of these laws, Russia has no intention of ending the war. Their elimination is seen by the Kremlin as a prerequisite for the complete absorption of Ukraine.

Ukraine, on the other hand, is interested in resisting the Russian occupiers and, if not in restoring its territorial integrity, then at least in preserving

its sovereignty. This is precisely what Putin and his entourage find unacceptable. European leaders realize that the collapse of Ukrainian statehood would mean a large-scale war in Europe and would allow Russia to launch new hybrid threats, at least against neighboring states.

For Trump, the obvious goal remains the restoration of economic relations with Russia. But he cannot achieve this without at least a formal settlement of the war. At the same time, he is unable to achieve such a settlement because he does not want to put serious pressure on Putin. And without such pressure, there will be no progress.

As a result, US policy in the Russian-Ukrainian war – as in many other key issues – is currently chaotic and only destabilizes the surrounding world.

May 2025 only reinforced this trend. And it did not bring peace. Only new attacks. And new illusions.

EXCLUSIVE FOR HROMADA

Oles Doniy

FROM ISTANBUL TO ISTANBUL



Oles Doniy – Ukrainian journalist, TV presenter, politician, public and cultural figure.

May passed under the auspices of Istanbul for Ukraine. And so did the “negotiations” with the aggressor in the same city in 2022. It is doubtful that Ukraine can count this round as a victory.

Let’s start with the fact that the negotiations were supposed to take place, and ultimately did take place, not on the initiative of the Ukrainian side. Our position has not changed publicly for more than three years since the full-scale aggression by Russia began: we have called for the return of all Ukrainian territories occupied since 2014 without exception and compensation for all damages caused by the destruction of our country. It is obvious that as long as the bloodthirsty Putin remains on the Kremlin throne and Russia itself has not suffered a military defeat, there is no hope that these essentially fair demands will be met. But on the other side, Russia, was not the initiator of the “negotiations” either. The negotiation track was the brainchild of the new US administration headed by its new leader, Trump. We were pushed into the negotiation process with a losing position from the outset – not only against the back-drop of the slow but steady advance of Russian troops, but also with direct or veiled threats from our biggest ally, the United States, to stop or significantly reduce financial and military aid.

The location of the “negotiations” was also not chosen by us. Although Turkey is a member of NATO, it maintains so-called “neutrality” regarding Russia’s war against Ukraine. In the Ukrainian media and social networks, one can often see abundant criticism

of our European and American allies. Although in reality, they have provided us with enormous material and military assistance. On the other hand, there is virtually no such criticism of Turkey. Paradoxically, we criticize those who help us more because the aid is slow and insufficient. It is logical that we want more and faster aid. But it is Turkey that has not imposed any sanctions on Russia, and it is through Turkish airports that Russians are able to fly from their neo-fascist homeland all over the world. In essence, “neutral” countries are helping the Russian economy to develop with their neutrality and are making a huge dent in attempts to isolate the aggressor. That is why the Russian side categorically rejects the idea of continuing negotiations, for example in Switzerland or the Vatican. For them, neither Switzerland nor even the Vatican are acceptable because they are considered to be supporting Ukraine. So, the negotiating platform is actually being imposed on us by the aggressor. If in 2022 Ukraine agreed to Istanbul while enemy tanks were still on the right bank of our country, then in March 2025 it did so under pressure from our biggest ally.

Ukraine and our European allies attempted to counterbalance the pressure exerted by the US side regarding negotiations without any prior commitments. The initiative, which was intended to somehow balance the unfavorable negotiation process, was the idea of a 30-day truce as a sign of readiness for at least some compromise solutions in the future, which was repeatedly voiced by the Ukrainian leadership and EU politicians. Nevertheless, Russia had no intention of stopping its creeping advance on the front lines and constant bombing of Ukrainian territory. In the end, the Ukrainian delegation arrived in Istanbul without a ceasefire and thus backed down from its previous demand.

In response to Russian dictator Putin’s May 11 statement on the Istanbul talks, there was another Ukrainian initiative, but it was purely emotional and doomed to failure from the outset. On the same day, Volodymyr Zelenskyy tried to hijack the agenda. In his usual style, he said he would personally wait for Putin in Istanbul. In 2019, such a

“boyish” challenge was thrown at Poroshenko, and he, accustomed to public politics, accepted it, responding with “Stadium, yes stadium,” and subsequently lost these “stadium debates” completely, only strengthening the position of his opponent, Zelenskyy. But in politics, the same tactics are rarely repeated successfully twice. It was naive to expect Putin to repeat Poroshenko’s mistake. Not to mention that Putin’s personality type is not prone to improvisation; he dislikes and fears it, being more accustomed to long-term planning.

Therefore, on May 16, the Istanbul “negotiations” were conducted not by presidents, but by delegations. Ukrainian politicians and media gloated after the fact about the unrepresentative, “sham” composition of the Russian negotiating team, as Zelenskyy put it. But these accusations only emphasized that the Ukrainian delegation had fallen into a trap at these negotiations. Firstly, in 2022, in the same Istanbul, the Russian delegation was headed by the same Medinsky, who has been Putin’s formal assistant since 2020, but at that time no one called him “sham.” And secondly, if the composition of the enemy delegation is fake, then why negotiate with them, because negotiating with “fakes” is demeaning.

The content of the negotiations could have been predicted in advance: the parties had to come up with inflated demands, which, in theory, could be adjusted at later stages. The Russian delegation issued a series of arrogant and aggressive “demands” to hand over to occupation what they have been unable to take by force for years: the free territories of the Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk, and Luhansk regions, which a priori could not be accepted by the Ukrainian side. Therefore, there was no meaningful discussion about a “ceasefire.”

The Ukrainian delegation, which was much more representative in terms of its composition, proposed the idea of a direct meeting between the two presidents: Zelenskyy and Putin. It is not certain that this idea is a good one. First, it emphasizes that the Ukrainian delegation, despite its supposedly representative composition, is not actually authorized to make independent

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decisions, and that all decisions of a fundamental nature are made solely by the president. Even if this is the reality, it is hardly advisable to emphasize it publicly. Secondly, calls for public dialogue with Putin legitimize this Russian scoundrel.

So what positive outcome can be expected from these failed “negotiations” in Istanbul, into which Ukraine was driven by its “senior ally”? One positive aspect is the agreement to exchange 1,000 prisoners for 1,000. Even if it is possible to get one person out of Russian torture chambers, it is worth negotiating for that, and here we have a record number – a thousand of our defenders who have returned to their families! However, despite all the positives, this turned out to be the bait that our delegation could not refuse. In other words, they actually calculated us in

advance and lured us into the trap with an irresistible bait. In reality, however, negotiations on prisoner exchanges are ongoing, and the exchanges themselves are ongoing. And in Istanbul, the agreement on such an exchange was, again, based on the Russian algorithm. Unfortunately, the enemy has several times more of our prisoners, so Ukraine is interested in an exchange based on the “all for all” formula, while the Russians, on the other hand, seem to be engaged in slave trade and exchange “head for head” in equal numbers. So even this positive “thousand for a thousand” exchange actually took place on Russia’s initiative and according to Russian rules.

As a result, we ended up legitimizing the enemy, legitimizing Putin personally, and getting no respite, with Russian missiles flying at our cities with even

greater intensity.

Putin, now legitimized after Istanbul, was allowed to have a two-hour telephone conversation with Trump, where he allowed himself to discuss Melania, the wife of the American president. We do not discuss our wives and loved ones with our enemies, and this looked a bit like friendly chatter to the outside world. Therefore, such “humanization” of an aggressor, whose hands are covered in blood, weakens Ukraine’s position in the world. This significant weakening of Ukraine’s position is a consequence of the “May Istanbul” that we were pushed into. It is not yet catastrophic, and it is still possible to turn things around in our favor, but to do so, we must learn to draw conclusions from our own mistakes and blunders. The war will continue for a long time.

EXCLUSIVE FOR HROMADA

FR. ROMAN BEBESIUK | SPIRITUAL TREASURY

THE FIRST AND GREATEST COMMANDMENT OF GOD



Fr. lic. Roman Bebesiuk –
priest of the Ukrainian Greek
Catholic Church at the
Church of the Immaculate
Conception in San Francisco
and the Church of St.
Volodymyr in Santa Clara

Dear readers!

We continue our journey along spiritual paths, where every turn reveals something deeper, truer, and eternal. Today we have before us the first and most important commandment of God. It resounds both solemnly and gentle like the voice of a loving Father:

"I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods before Me!"
(Exodus 20:2-3)

This is not merely a law. It is an invitation – an invitation to a deep, living, personal encounter with God. It is His knock on our hearts, His desire to be not just the Creator somewhere up there, but our closest Friend, Father, Savior, and only Treasure.

"The Lord God reveals Himself as the One who loves man and desires his salvation... In the first commandment, the Lord reveals His Name and His nature so that man may learn to trust Him completely" (Catechism of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, 'Christ is our Passover,' 840)

I invite you to open this holy word not only with your mind, but with all your heart – and to find the source of life, peace, and true freedom.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT OF GOD: "I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD. YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME!"

Why should we worship God?

1. God is our Creator and Sustainer

We are obliged to honor and love God first and foremost because He created us. He is the beginning of all existence. *"For in Him we live and move and have our being"* (Acts 17:28). St. Irenaeus of Lyons writes: *"The glory of God is man fully alive, and the life of man is to see God."*

Every cell in our body, every breath we take, is a gift of His love. Without Him, we would not exist, we would not be able to see, think, or love.

2. God is the source of our salvation

We must give honor to God because He redeemed us – not with gold or silver, but with the precious Blood of His Only Begotten Son (cf. 1 Pet. 1:18-19). Christ died and rose again for us, opening the way to eternal life. St. Gregory of Nazianzus says: *"God became man so that man might become God."*

"Redemption is the work of the Holy Trinity: God the Father sends His Son to free man from the bondage of sin. The Son of God, becoming man, voluntarily offers Himself as a sacrifice..." (Catechism 'Christ Our Passover,' 130).

3. God is the highest Perfection

God is the source of all truth, goodness, and beauty. *"No one is good except God alone"* (Mk 10:18). We are called to honor Him not only out of duty, but also because His holiness and His love are incomparable. St. Augustine wrote: *"Our heart is restless until it rests in You."*

"Worship is man's response to God's revelation and an expression of faith in the One who is the source of life and eternity" (Catechism, "Christ Our Passover," 844).

How should we honor God?

1. Internally: faith, hope, and love

Faith is a response to God's truth; hope is trust in His promises; love is unity with Him in everything. *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart..."* (Mt. 22:37). St. Basil the Great teaches: *"Knowing God is the life of the soul; not having God in your heart is death."*

"Christian faith is not only knowledge about God, but above all a personal

relationship with Him, an expression of love for Him" (Catechism "Christ is our Passover," 40).

2. Externally: prayer, Liturgy, Sacraments

We show our reverence for God in prayer, through participation in the Holy Liturgy, in the Sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, and in worship of the Holy Mysteries. *"Let us come, let us worship and bow down before Christ,"* we sing at the beginning of every service. Worship is our act of recognition: You are God, and we are Your children.

"The Church, in her liturgical life, recognizes and glorifies God as the only Lord... therefore, the Liturgy is the highest act of worship" (Catechism "Christ is our Passover," 845).

St. John Chrysostom encourages us: *"Do you not see that His love for you is greater than the love of parents for their children? So do not forget Him, but keep Him in your heart always."*

What does "you shall have no other gods before me" mean?

It is a prohibition of idolatry. An idol is not just a statue. An idol is anything that takes the place of God in our hearts. It can be wealth, power, the body, technology, or even our own "self."

"Idolatry is a sin when a person puts some creature or thing in the place of God..." (Catechism, "Christ Our Passover," 846).

St. Paul warns: *"Greed is idolatry"* (Col. 3:5). When a person puts something else before God, they fall into the sin of idolatry, even if they are not aware of it.

Superstition is another form of idolatry

Dreams, talismans, horoscopes, fortune-telling, "energies," witchcraft, "cosmic forces" – these are all manifestations of superstitious beliefs that contradict the Gospel. *"Do not turn to sorcerers... I am the Lord your God"* (Lev. 19:31).

"Superstition, divination, spiritism, occult practices are forms of turning away from faith in God. A Christian must avoid any participation in such practices" (Catechism 'Christ is our Passover,' 848).

St. Cyprian of Carthage says: *"He who seeks advice from the devil turns away from God."* Therefore, any recourse to the occult is a sin against faith and a violation of God's first commandment.

Conclusion

The first commandment is an invitation to a deep friendship with God. It teaches us that without God, our lives lose meaning, direction, and eternal purpose. Let us ask ourselves: Is God truly the center of my life? Or has someone else taken His place?

St. John Cassian emphasized: *"Pure prayer is possible only when the soul has rid itself of all idols."* So let us purify our hearts of everything that separates us from God and put Him back in first place.

"Worshiping the one God means recognizing His absolute dominion in my life, trusting Him, serving Him in everything" (Catechism 'Christ is our Passover,' 843).

ABOUT THE VENERATION OF SAINTS

Some people ask: if only God is worthy of worship, why does the Church honor the saints? It is important to understand that **veneration of the saints is not worship**, which belongs only to God, but rather **honor for God's action in people** who responded to His love with the holiness of their lives.

Who are the saints?

They are those who lived according to God's commandments, served their neighbors with love, and, having died in God's grace, now dwell in God's glory. They are **our friends in heaven** who intercede for us in prayer, help us grow in faith, and support us in our struggles.

"Saints are those who faithfully followed Christ... The Church proclaims the saints blessed in order to show us the way to sanctification" (Catechism of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, 'Christ is our Passover,' §811, 887-889).

Why do we venerate the saints?

1. Because **God Himself glorified them** – through their lives, virtues, and sometimes miracles.
2. Because they **show us an example** of how, with God's help, we can live a holy life in everyday circumstances.
3. Because they are **our good friends and benefactors** who sincerely desire our salvation and help us in prayer.

"The veneration of the saints does not obscure the unique mediation of Christ, but rather reveals its power, for the saints are members of Christ" (CCC §956; Christ Our Passover §887).



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Can we pray to the saints?

Yes, because we turn to them with **requests for intercession**, just as we ask for prayers from our friends on earth. The saints, already in God's glory, **are closer to God**, and the Church teaches that their prayers have great power.

"When the faithful pray to the saints, this expresses the communion of sa-

ints, the unity of the heavenly and earthly Church" (Catechism of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Christ Our Passover, §889).

Our Ukrainian saints are a special heritage

Saints from our people, such as St. Vladimir the Great, Saints Cyril and Methodius, St. Josaphat, Blessed Martyr Omelyan Kovch, and the new mar-

tyrs of the 20th century, are **shining examples of holiness among the Ukrainian people**, who have become a sign of God's presence in the history of Ukraine.

"The cult of our saints supports and sanctifies Christian love for the homeland" (Words of Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky, 'On the Veneration of Saints').

To follow the saints is to walk the path of holiness

The saints were ordinary people — they had difficulties, sufferings, and temptations. But with God's grace, they triumphed. Their lives are the **living Gospel**, an example for everyone: for children and parents, for monks and lay people, for scholars and ordinary people.

"Holiness is not an exception, but a calling for everyone. The Lord wants everyone to be holy" (cf. Christ is our Passover, §881-883).

Those who love God above all else are:

- do not seek substitutes for God's love in the idols of the modern world;
- place all their hope in the Lord;
- lovingly follow the example of His saints;
- live in a constant desire for unity with Him through prayer, the sacraments, and the observance of the commandments.

"Belief in the one God includes the recognition that only He is to be worshipped. The veneration of the saints does not diminish God's glory, but is a manifestation of His action in human history" (cf. Christ Our Passover, §888).

ABOUT THE VENERATION OF HOLY ANGELS

Like saints, God's angels are our spiritual friends, guardians, and benefactors. The Catechism of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church teaches:

"Angels are spiritual beings created by God who, remaining faithful to Him, serve His will and accompany man in his earthly pilgrimage" ("Christ is our Passover," §91).

1. The existence of angels

Holy angels are invisible, immortal spirits created by God before the creation of the world, endowed with reason and will. The Catechism explains:

"God created angels as personal, incorporeal spirits who freely serve Him" ("Christ Our Passover," §90).

Their number is immense:

"Thousands upon thousands served Him, and countless multitudes stood before Him" (Dan. 7:10);

"...and their number was countless multitudes and thousands upon thousands" (Rev. 5:11).

St. John of Damascus teaches:

"An angel is a rational, free, incorporeal being, always in motion, who serves God and is sent to help us at His command" (On the Orthodox Faith, II,3).

The Holy Fathers speak of nine angelic orders: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Powers, Virtues, Principalities, Archangels, and Angels (cf. St. Gregory the Great, "Homiliae in Evangelia").

However, not all angels remained faithful to God. Some, rebelling against their Creator out of pride, were cast down and became demons:

"...the angels who did not keep their dignity but abandoned their dwelling place, He bound forever in darkness with chains" (Jude 1:6).

2. The task of the holy angels

The task of angels is to glorify God, carry out His will, and serve man:

"Angels, though invisible, are real messengers of God, His servants, who bring people the news of salvation and accompany them" ("Christ Our Passover," §91).

Isaiah saw the Seraphim singing:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory!" (Isaiah 6:3).

The psalmist exclaims:

"Praise Him, all His angels!" (Psalm 148:2).

In Scripture, angels appear as God's messengers. They preach to Abraham, Moses, Zechariah, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and St. Joseph. An angel announces Christmas to the shepherds and appears at Christ's Resurrection and Ascension.

St. Basil the Great writes:

"Every believer has an angel as a teacher and shepherd who guides his life" (On the Holy Spirit, 16:39).

Guardian angels deserve special attention. They protect a person from birth to death.

"For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways" (Ps. 91:11).

"Their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven" (Mt. 18:10).

The Catechism of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church explains:

"God gives each person a guardian angel, who is a sign of God's closeness and guidance" ("Christ is our Passover," §92).

3. Our attitude toward angels

We must be grateful to our guardian angels and honor them through prayer, trust, and imitation in faithfulness to God. St. Bernard of Clairvaux exhorts:

"Respect his presence, love his devotion, trust his care, live piously so as not to sadden your companion" (Sermon on the Guardian Angel).

Prayer to the guardian angel is not only a pious tradition, but a manifestation of our faith in God's care. The Catechism teaches:

"Christians place their hope in the help of angels, especially in difficult moments of life, in temptations, and at the hour of death" (Christ is Our Passover, §92).

4. Testimony from life

Once, a missionary in the Philippines was called three times by an unknown voice at night to a dying man. Although the villagers did not know about the sick man, he did not lose heart. On the third time, taking a different route, he came across a lonely hut where he found a terminally ill man who said joyfully: "Every day for 50 years, I prayed to my guardian angel for a happy death. I knew you would come."

Such testimonies reveal the living presence of God's angels in our lives.

Prayer to the guardian angel

*Angel of God, my guardian,
Stay at my side always!
Morning, evening, day, and night –
Be there to help me!*

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UNWLA ACCEPTS APPLICATIONS FOR TWO SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDENTS OF UKRAINIAN HERITAGE

May 28, 2025 – New York, NY –

As the Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA) celebrates its centennial year, the organization reaffirms its longstanding commitment to education by continuing to support scholarship programs for students of Ukrainian descent and those advancing Ukrainian arts, sciences, and cultural studies.

Since its founding in 1925, UNWLA has made educational initiatives a cornerstone of its mission to support Ukraine and empower Ukrainian women. In the late 1950s, UNWLA launched its own scholarship fund, sustained over the decades by the generosity of donors and members.

All UNWLA programs fall under four pillars: Advocate. Educate. Cultivate. Care. Through these pillars, the organization continues to provide financial support and mentorship to future leaders.

"For a century, UNWLA has believed that education is one of the most pow-

erful ways to uplift individuals and communities," said UNWLA President Natalie Pawlenko. "These scholarships continue our legacy and invest in the next generation of proud, capable, and engaged Ukrainian-American women."

UNWLA is currently accepting applications for two scholarship programs:

- **The Vovk Foundation Scholarship** honors Ivan Vovchuk, a noted scholar and leader of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), and his son Andrew, a pioneering engineer. In partnership with UNWLA, the Vovk Foundation offers an endowed annual scholarship for students of Ukrainian heritage studying technology, engineering, arts, or the humanities. Apply at: <https://bit.ly/Vovk24>

- **The Eva Staszkiw Scholarship Fund** supports students advancing Ukrainian science and the arts. A devoted UNWLA member, Eva Staszkiw began contributing to the scholarship

fund in the 1950s and later bequeathed her life savings to expand it. Apply at: <https://bit.ly/StaszkiwFund>

Applications for both scholarship programs are open until June 30, 2025.

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About UNWLA

The Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA), established in 1925, is the longest-standing Ukrainian women's organization in the United States. With a mission grounded in advocacy, education, cultural preservation, and humanitarian aid, UNWLA has supported generations of Ukrainian-Americans and provided critical assistance to Ukraine for 100 years.

BROWNIAN MOTION AROUND AND BEYOND NEGOTIATIONS

Nadia Banchik –
a journalist and political columnist for American publications who has covered the crimes of Putin's Russia, from the destruction of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria to the modern attack on Ukraine. In 1998, in her native Lviv, together with her mother, Candidate of Philology Iryna Kvitko, she co-founded the first Jewish newspaper in the then USSR, "Shofar".

The first direct contact between the Ukrainian and Russian delegations led to nothing. The top officials did not show up at the meeting place and then awkwardly tried to explain why they did so. Since then, there has been a constant exchange of contradictory statements and chaotic movements both around the Russian-Ukrainian war and far beyond its borders.

Negotiations have begun

Since the 80th anniversary of the anti-Hitler coalition's victory over Nazi Germany, there has been a flurry of activity surrounding the Russian-Ukrainian war. On May 10, a landmark meeting between British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, French President Emmanuel Macron, and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk in Kyiv showed that Europe (at least the aforementioned states, the "coalition of the willing") has awakened and intends to act decisively to defend Ukraine and lead US President Donald Trump, who is trying to resist and distance himself from European affairs. Thus, an actual ultimatum was issued to Russian dictator Putin in Kyiv: if he does not announce a 30-day ceasefire "starting Monday," Europeans, together with the US, will impose severe sanctions against Russia. It seemed that European colleagues had managed to persuade Trump to join them.

However, Putin suddenly made an unexpected proposal: to "meet in Istanbul" with either Trump or the Ukrainian delegation – he was vague on this point. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy picked up on this

proposal: "I will come to Turkey and wait for you, Putin, and you will not be able to find a reason to avoid the meeting"... It would seem that the Russian dictator was trapped? Of course! He got out of it in the only way he could: he simply did not come, spitting in the face not only of his Ukrainian opponent, but also of his supposed American friend. Instead, he sent a delegation to Istanbul, headed by... his cultural advisor V. Medinsky, not even a second-tier but a third-tier official, a bitter enemy of Ukraine; it included second and third deputies of the heads of the Russian intelligence services. Medinsky embodied Putin's view of these negotiations: they were supposedly a "continuation" of the negotiations that also took place in Istanbul at the end of April 2022. Medinsky also headed the Russian delegation at that time. At that time, the delegations did not decide anything, nor could they, because the Russian side was imposing capitulation on Ukraine, even though it had suffered a humiliating defeat near Kyiv. The Ukrainian delegation was headed, then as now, by the Minister of Defense (then Reznikov, now Umerov) and the Minister of Foreign Affairs (then Kuleba, now Sybga), because Ukraine took the negotiations seriously.

So, on May 16 in Istanbul, the Ukrainian and Russian delegations looked each other in the eye for the first time since their only meeting at the beginning of the full-scale war. Three years have passed, many different events have taken place, and only the demands of the Russian Federation have remained almost unchanged. Only now, in addition to their previous demands, they demanded that four Ukrainian regions be handed over to them, otherwise, according to Medinsky, they would demand "six or seven." The delegation did not explain where they would get the resources for this, given that they have been attempting to occupy Pokrovsk for a year now.

It is clear that such negotiations could not end in anything (this was evident even before they began). Only through the mediation of Turkey was it possible to agree on a large-scale exchange of prisoners – 1,000 for 1,000.

So what about Trump? If he had imposed hellish sanctions, as agreed with the Europeans, he would have

admitted to the whole world and his voters that Mr. Putin had "subtly" thrown him under the bus, in true KGB style. But Trump had large-scale business deals with Russia in mind. Therefore, imposing sanctions on Russia is completely impractical for him. So, he resorted to his usual tactic – "playing dumb." Like, "Why would he, Putin, come to Istanbul if I wasn't there? Why would I go if he wasn't there?" (I'm quoting almost verbatim; this statement by the 47th US president will probably go down in history). And in general, "no one there will be able to decide anything until Putin and I meet face to face." The 47th president's cherished dream – to repeat his meeting with the Russian dictator after their one and only meeting in Helsinki in 2017 – seemed close... (However, every US president has marked the beginning of his term with a meeting with his Russian counterpart and sooner or later has learned from his own experience that it is impossible to do business with him – why should Trump be an exception? Everyone wants to get their own bumps from this interaction).

Trump announced a telephone conversation with Putin, which took place on May 19. The US president and the Russian dictator spoke for two hours. Of course, no one reported what they agreed on (except for general phrases in official press releases).

War amid talks of negotiations

Of course, there has been no ceasefire. It seems that this "unconditional" condition has been removed from the agenda of the US president's mediation efforts. Russian officials are coming up with new "conditions" every day, which are basically just old claims that make it pretty clear they want to destroy Ukraine as an independent country.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration has said something totally new that he didn't mention during his campaign. First, Trump himself has clearly hinted that he may recognize Crimea as Russian de jure (the special declaration made by his administration during his first term in 2018, that the US "will never recognize the occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation," which was announced by the State Department, has been completely forgotten). After the uproar that followed



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this statement, he allegedly reiterated that Crimea is Ukrainian.

Second, if, as they say, no effective steps are taken to achieve a cease-fire, his administration will completely abandon mediation in this "conflict" and switch to "more pressing" issues.

Meanwhile, the war has become even more intense – hundreds of drones and dozens of ballistic missiles are destroying Ukrainian cities, taking dozens of civilian lives and turning more and more Ukrainians into invalids. During Biden's time, the Russians at least refrained from striking Kyiv; now, strikes on the capital are almost daily.

All records were broken on May 24–26, when the US commemorates Memorial Day for those who died in all wars. For three nights in a row, Russian missiles and drones struck almost all Ukrainian cities. Videos of completely destroyed peaceful houses in a village near Kyiv spread around the world,

bringing the Russian-Ukrainian war back to the front pages. Deep dissatisfaction with Trump's policy of appeasing Putin broke out even among his fellow party members.

It seems that Trump himself has lost his patience. "I've known him [Putin] for a long time, but something has happened to him. He's gone completely mad!" Trump wrote after these diabolical raids. Even more eloquent was Trump's second post, which some commentators called a "confession": "What is he doing? He knows that if it weren't for me, Russia would be in big trouble!"

On the same day, Russian stock exchanges reacted to Trump's posts by crashing, as if as a result of Trump's trade wars.

After these posts, German Chancellor Merz officially announced that his country, as well as the US, Britain, and France, were lifting all restrictions on

Ukraine's ability to strike military targets in Russia. On May 28, in Berlin, Zelenskyy and Merz signed an agreement under which Germany will invest in the production of long-range weapons in Ukraine and purchase its products in order to materially encourage Ukraine to produce its own weapons that can be used without restrictions. Merz stated that further deliveries of German weapons to Ukraine will be kept secret, thus not revealing whether Germany will supply Taurus missiles. In fact, with these demonstratively brutal strikes on civilian targets, Russia has outplayed itself, causing the war to move to a new stage that is even more dangerous for itself.

Coming to his senses, Putin asked Trump for a "second round" of negotiations between the Russian and Ukrainian delegations. Trump again postponed the introduction of "hellish" sanctions: "I will understand whether

he is leading me by the nose in a week or two," said the 47th US president.

Trump has the same tactic (or complete lack thereof) when it comes to the Russian dictator and the trade war with the EU: one day, threats of sky-high sanctions (or tariffs) and stock market crashes, and the next day, postponement of these steps as if nothing had happened.

It seems that neither he nor his entourage are not only unable to calculate the consequences of such behavior, but are also not opposed to throwing Europe at the feet of the Russian dictator. "Make America great again"?!

Is distrust of European allies rooted in history?

Trump and his officials have repeatedly hinted at their intention to withdraw from European affairs during the election campaign. The biggest complaint against their European colleagues is that they are "using the US" and are not doing anything for their own security. At the same time, neither Trump nor any of his close associates have mentioned the only time in history when Article 5 of the Washington Treaty of NATO was officially invoked – after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York. Then all NATO members came to the aid of the US in the "war on international terrorism" it had declared (how it was waged is a completely different question).

However, Trump is a "master of deals" (whether he really is, as we can see, is debatable), not a geopolitician and, even less, a "politician of values." And the EU, Britain, and the Scandinavian countries remain ardent supporters of preserving the international system of values, which was built on the experience of their unprecedented suffering in the 20th century. and ensured the prosperity of the entire Euro-Atlantic civilization for almost 80 years. This system has undergone crisis and changes, but is far from destroyed and, as current European leaders believe, is still able to regulate international relations.

Alex Rougande, a graduate student at Columbia University, shows in [Newsweek](#), deeply analyzing relations between the United States and Europe, that the cracks in the transatlantic alliance are not new. In addition to well-known facts about the periods of the First and Second World Wars, the researcher cites a very eloquent historical episode – 1956, the events around the Suez Canal.

"In 1956, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, which had previously been con-

trolled by the Suez Canal Company, which was in turn controlled by France and Great Britain. Fearing that the Red Sea shipping lanes would be cut off, Great Britain and France secretly planned military action in alliance with Israel against Egypt. But President Eisenhower, fearing that Egypt would shift to the side of the Soviet Union, supported Nasser and pressured his allies to back down, which allowed Egypt to retain control of the canal and reduce British and French influence in the Middle East."

This episode became the starting point, since when the paths not only of Europe and the United States, but also within Europe, have diverged somewhat: Britain began to coordinate its policies more closely with the States, while France, on the contrary, distanced itself somewhat and "increased its independence," according to Rougande.

Under Trump, the cracks have deepened. This is due to disagreements not only regarding the "unevenness" in defense spending, but also systemic differences.

"The idea that Western Europe is riding free on the US defense machine has spread in the Republican Party since Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Reagan-era conservatives like former Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell have staunchly defended America's \$183 billion investment in Ukraine's defense. But other members of the party like Vance have urged Western Europe to take the lead so America can shift its focus elsewhere. While this issue has been at the center of America's relations with Europe for much of the past three years, other ideological, cultural and historical trends have played a role in shifting that relationship from the cozy Reagan days to the icy atmosphere under Trump. It remains to be seen to what extent these changes in relations reflect a new defense strategy rather than a response to growing cultural divides between the Republican Party and Western Europe," the researcher writes.

The claims about "free use" are somewhat exaggerated, and most importantly, they have a shifted emphasis. Europe did not "use" the United States intentionally; reducing defense spending was a general trend of Euro-Atlantic civilization, including the United States, after, as it seemed for a long time, the end of the Cold War.

Moreover, the tendency to "trade rather than fight" in general and with

the Russian Federation in particular was the essence of this civilization until Putin's brazen violation of its foundations in 2014 (in fact, since 1999, but then no one preferred to notice it, and the "war on international terrorism" also contributed to the Russian ghoul).

Rougande cites statistical data:

"According to the World Bank, the military spending of the European Union as a percentage of GDP has been decreasing since the early 1960s. However, the greatest drop – from 2.6% to 1.3% – occurred between 1987 and 2014, and this figure only began to increase in 2019. America also began to spend less between 1986 and 2001, but after the terrorist attacks of September 11, this figure increased from 3.1% to 4.9% in 2010, and then decreased to 3.4%.

"Given the Trump administration's perception of the EU and its leaders as an integral part of the 'liberal order' [*in the world* – N.B.], it is possible that hostility towards this region may intensify," concludes Rougande.

As if to confirm this, Trump suddenly "right off the bridge" on May 23 announced the introduction of 50% tariffs on imported goods with the EU from June 1 (although the 3 months for which he postponed the tariffs end on July 9 – despite the fact that on May 16 the US credit index was lowered, and after the announcement of these additional tariffs the American stock markets collapsed again). I have suspicions: is this not a reaction of the "deal maker" to the results of the elections in Romania, where voters "rolled out" an ultra-right supporter of Trumpism, electing a supporter of European values and support for Ukraine? Because the result of the Romanian elections may indicate (at least in the eyes of American Trumpists) that voters in the EU are already rejecting Trumpism, which, it would seem, has loomed on the horizon.

Added to these circumstances are the illusions of some part of Trump's entourage (and perhaps even his own) that Putin's Russia can be brought closer to the US and torn away from China. Although numerous political scientists clearly show that these illusions are futile, they have not yet been completely dispelled.

America's greatness vs. "America First"?

However, even among Republicans, there are growing concerns about the dangers of the US withdrawing from Europe.

This is the opinion of Clifford May, founder of the non-governmental Fo-

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undation for Defense of Democracies, a conservative think tank founded after the September 11, 2001, attacks (interview with Radio Liberty correspondent [Todd Prince](#)).

Although, according to Prince, it is good that as a result of Trump's actions and the war unleashed by Putin in Europe, there is already, in his words, a "redistribution of responsibility for common defense towards greater balance" between the US and its European allies, if the US withdraws from Europe, it will lose its status as a great power.

"There is a certain tension, at least it seems to me, between the slogans of "America First" and "Make America Great Again." To be "great again," America must be a leader. But it cannot be a leader if it gives in to adversaries like communist China, which [President] Xi Jinping clearly seeks to do," Prince quotes May as saying.

The interview emphasizes the danger of not recognizing that NATO, and therefore the United States, is not just confronting Russia, but also an "axis of evil."

"Despite ideological differences – Chinese and North Korean types of communism, Islamic theocracy in Iran, and neo-imperialism in Russia – [May] rejects the idea that their cooperation is purely opportunistic.

China, North Korea, and Iran are materially supporting Russia's war against Ukraine with missiles, drones, and other weapons systems. Pyongyang has even sent more than 11,000 troops to help, while Russia could offer sensitive submarine technology to China and North Korea in response, according to Admiral Samuel Paparo, commander of the US Indo-Pacific Command.

Meanwhile, all four countries are accelerating their military buildup, par-

ticularly in missile production, and as a result, the United States is no longer safe from attack. May argues that unless Washington and its European allies increase defense spending, they risk strategic decline.

Selling US-made weapons to Ukraine would benefit the United States, May says. "It would support our factories, strengthen our defense-industrial base, and ensure that Putin cannot simply regroup and attack again in a few years."

May warns that the danger of a Russian attack on the Suwalki Corridor is real.

Putin "could try to create a land bridge to Kaliningrad, a Russian exclave divided by NATO members Poland and Lithuania, just as he did with Crimea."

According to May, this scenario poses an existential test for NATO.

"Are we fighting for a road through

southern Lithuania? If not, NATO will fall apart," he said.

How much this worries Trump and his supporters is currently unknown, since most Americans are still inclined to the system of values and loyal to their allies. This is evidenced, in particular, by the growing disagreements within the Republican Party over Trump's personal attitude towards the Russian dictator. Currently, 81 out of 100 senators, from both parties, are ready to support the bill on tougher sanctions against the Russian Federation. For now, they are waiting to see whether the owner of the White House will mature enough to realize the need for them.

Trump's Middle East tour – abandoning Israel?

In addition to the complete uncertainty over Ukraine, political analysts noted with surprise another sharp turn in Trump's foreign policy: his visits to three Gulf countries and the striking absence of a visit to Israel.

In addition to the almost openly demonstrative disrespect for its closest strategic ally, this tour sharply shifted the emphasis from US geopolitical influence in the Middle East to openly businesslike, economic deals with Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar, without regard to Israel's security interests and even to a large extent to US security.

In Riyadh, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Donald Trump signed an agreement on the sale of \$142 billion in arms to Saudi Arabia on May 13. "The White House statement called the deal "the largest defense cooperation agreement ever concluded by Washington." The administration of former US President Joe Biden tried unsuccessfully to conclude a similar defense pact with Riyadh as part of a broader agreement that would have normalized the Saudi kingdom's relations with Israel. However, both sides have now apparently forgotten about Israel's interests. Donald Trump has now called Prince Mohammed bin Salman "an incredible person," adding that the connection between their two countries is now "stronger than ever," [notes](#) Alexander Dubrovsky on Radio Liberty (Russian edition).

In addition, Trump has agreed with the Saudis to increase oil production, which, of course, will reduce oil prices. Whether this will affect Putin enough remains to be seen. Equally significant mutual investments are specified in agreements with Qatar and the UAE. In the Emirates, in particular, the par-

ties signed an agreement to create a large international center for artificial intelligence. In contrast to the icy relations with the leaders of Europe, here Trump bathed in Eastern hospitality. Undoubtedly, he achieved mutually beneficial economic relations between the mentioned countries and the United States, but how?

In Qatar, in particular, Trump agreed only on the release of one of the 21 still alive hostages captured by Hamas in Israel on the infamous day of October 7, 2023, – a US and Israeli citizen Idan Alexander. What awaits the rest of the hostages, how the war between Israel and Hamas will end – all this was left out of the question. And more! In Qatar, Trump received a luxurious palace plane worth \$400 million as a gift. It was issued as an official gift to the US government, it will be used as the official presidential plane – and this is no longer considered a bribe.

Trump also held a very controversial meeting in Saudi Arabia with the acting president of Syria, Ahmed al-Sharaa. In the recent past, he belonged to Al-Qaeda, but later his group allegedly severed ties with it, but is he really building a pro-Western state in Syria, albeit not a democratic one (the East is after all)? It seems that he is oriented towards Turkey, but to what extent, what kind of internal structure is being built in modern Syria, there is great uncertainty. According to many reports, the country is again on the verge of a new outbreak of civil war.

But maybe American investments will keep the numerous groups in Syria from the temptation to sort out relations with weapons?

"White House Press Secretary Caroline Leavitt said that Trump, during a meeting with al-Sharaa, urged him to establish diplomatic relations with Israel and continue the fight against terrorism. Al-Sharaa, in turn, told Trump that he would welcome American investments in Syria's oil and gas industry," Dubrovsky notes.

Will these purely business relations with the US finally tear Syria away from the Russian Federation? And from China? Again, uncertainty.

Trump attempted to apply an old principle to relations with the Middle East – "where there is trade, there is no war." It is already clear that Putin does not go along with it. Whether this principle will work in relations with the Arab world remains to be seen. Whether this will harm Israel and push Netanyahu into Putin's arms remains to be seen.

Historical examples must also be taken into account. The principle of trade and business benefits as opposed to militant ideologies – but without clearly formulated demands to build a societal system compatible with the West – was already attempted by the US in the 1990s with regard to Russia and also China. The consequences are plain to see. Having taken advantage of the benefits of trade and business relations, both countries returned to aggressiveness towards their well-wishers. Won't the same thing happen with Arab monarchies?

Challenges and opportunities for Ukraine

Not only domestic, but also foreign policy of the United States under Trump increasingly resembles the Brownian movement with the ultimate goal of destroying the system of international law and laws and replacing it with a chaotic system of individual trade and business agreements. This policy, especially with regard to Europe, poses significant challenges for Ukraine.

It is becoming increasingly clear that Trump may withdraw from the self-proclaimed mediation in the Russian-Ukrainian war, which Putin is pushing him to do. Whether the United States will abandon Ukraine, and therefore Europe, by stopping arms supplies, is an open question. Perhaps Trump will sell American weapons to Ukraine, for which European allies will pay – this is still unclear. Trump's relations with his fellow party members in Congress and the mood among his voters may play a decisive role here.

However, Trump's Middle East tour has led me to a somewhat unusual idea – I will express it as a guess. Ukraine already has certain relations with the Arab monarchies, particularly in humanitarian matters. Shouldn't we conclude business agreements with them? Of course, not on the scale of the United States, but more modest ones wouldn't hurt either. In particular, in the field of weapons?

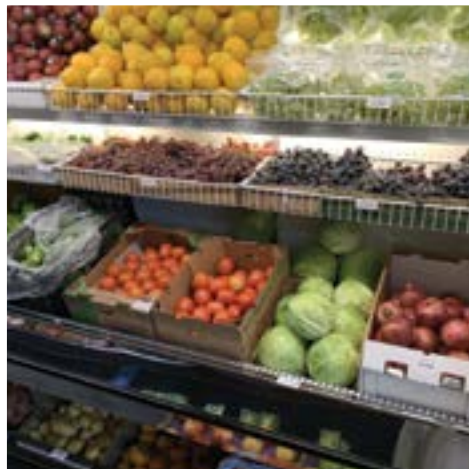
Such agreements against the backdrop of the new Trump world could open up additional opportunities for Ukraine to supplement its cooperation with Europe and the United States itself.

After all, in today's world, Ukraine absolutely needs to master the art that the founder of the modern independent Ukrainian state, Leonid Kravchuk, brought to perfection: maneuvering between raindrops, even when the rain is pouring down in a continuous downpour.

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“Wandering Stars” continue their tour through Northern California! At the invitation of the Ukrainian community of Sacramento, and to the delight of children, “**The Painted Fox**” arrived with all the animals of the magical forest. This is the fourth theatrical event organized in collaboration with the nonprofit organization “**Hromada**” in support of the “**Anhelyk**” Foundation and its initiatives in Ukraine.

Children and adults enjoyed the wonderful performances of the actors, who managed to transport the audience into the fairy-tale forest and the adventures of its inhabitants. Viewers took away many valuable lessons and returned home in great spirits, with cherished souvenirs won during the auction.

On behalf of the nonprofit organization “Hromada,” we extend our sincere thanks to all the guests of the performance, our wonderful actors, and artistic director **Yelena Bilyak**; to **Natalie Kokhanny** for assistance with renting the venue; to **Andriy Shegera** and **Podiysound** for kindly and generously providing the sound equipment free of charge; and to **Ihor Butkovskyi** and **Veronika Buliuk** for the beautiful paintings donated for the auction.

A heartfelt thank-you to all the active participants of the auction with their valuable lots – thanks to our combined efforts, we raised \$2,025, with expenses totaling \$440, resulting in a fundraising outcome of **\$1,585**.

Thank you, and see you next time, friends!





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UKRAINIAN NEWS

Total enemy combat losses



According to the General Staff, the total combat losses of the enemy from February 24, 2022 to May 31, 2025 are approximately as follows:

Personnel – 987,330 people were eliminated,
Tanks – 10,867 units,
Armored personnel carriers – 22,652 units,
Artillery systems – 28,475 units,
MLRS – 1,400 units,
Air defense systems – 1,173 units,
Aircraft – 372 units,
Helicopters – 336 units,
Operational and tactical level UAVs – 38,215 units,
Cruise missiles – 3,265 units,
Ships and boats – 28 units,
Submarines – 1 unit,
Vehicles and tankers – 50,198 units,
Special equipment – 3,902 units.

Parliament ratifies agreement with US on mineral resources



On May 8, the Verkhovna Rada ratified an agreement with the US on cooperation in the extraction of mine-

ral resources. The bill was supported by 338 MPs, with no one voting against it or abstaining. The document was signed by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

During the presentation of the document, Economy Minister Yulia Svyrydenko noted that the agreement is “equal,” with Ukraine retaining ownership and control over subsoil resources, which also belong to the state.

“The agreement is in the interests of Ukraine and will ensure a reliable partnership, economic growth, investment, and modernization,” she added.

The agreement provides for the creation of an American-Ukrainian investment fund for recovery. Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal named five key principles of the document:

- The fund is created on a 50/50 basis, and both parties have equal voting rights;
- Ukraine retains full control over subsoil, infrastructure, and natural resources;
- The agreement does not provide for any debt obligations;
- The fund will invest in projects and guarantee commercial purchases of products on a “take or pay” basis;
- The agreement will not hinder Ukraine’s membership in the EU.

Ratification of the document by the US Congress is not required, as the investment fund’s main work will be carried out within the legal framework of Ukraine.

Ukraine will receive nearly €1.9 billion from the EU for weapons at the expense of Russian assets



The European Union has confirmed its historic decision to provide Ukraine with nearly €1.9 billion for the purchase of weapons. The money will be provided from frozen Russian assets.

This was announced by Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal on Friday, May 9.

According to Shmyhal, the money will be distributed as follows:

- €1 billion will be allocated for the purchase of weapons according to the so-called "Danish model" – directly from Ukrainian manufacturers.
- Over €600 million will be allocated for artillery and ammunition.
- Over €200 million will be allocated to strengthen Ukraine's air defense.

"In this way, we are not only strengthening our defense capabilities, but also stimulating the economy and innovation in our defense-industrial complex," Shmyhal added.

At the same time, in April, the EU promised to transfer more than €2 billion in revenue from Russian assets.

The Council of Europe has officially launched the creation of a special tribunal for Russia



The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has launched the process of creating a Special Tribunal for crimes of aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. The decision was taken at a meeting in Luxembourg on May 14.

"The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe today reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to Ukraine on its path to justice and reconstruction by launching the process of establishing a special tribunal for the crime of aggression by the Russian Federation," the statement said.

It is reported that the ministers instructed the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Elena Berse, to lead the process of establishing a special tribunal for the crime of aggression within the Council of Europe by concluding an agreement with Ukraine.

The ministers also welcomed ongoing efforts to reach an agreement on the establishment of a claims commission for Ukraine, possibly under the auspices of the Council of Europe,

and reaffirmed their determination to ensure the return of Ukrainian children illegally deported or forcibly displaced by Russia.

The special tribunal will deal exclusively with Russia's crime of aggression against Ukraine. War crimes and crimes against humanity will be investigated by national courts or the International Criminal Court.

The tribunal will consider only the actions of those who planned the invasion of Ukraine – the country's top military and political leadership: Vladimir Putin, Sergey Lavrov, Mikhail Mishustin and others. In addition, the tribunal may consider the actions of Alexander Lukashenko. In total, there will be 20-30 people on the list of defendants, according to DW.

The investigation will be initiated by the Prosecutor General of Ukraine. The investigation will be conducted and the indictment will be prepared by the tribunal's prosecutor.

The investigating judge of the tribunal approves or rejects the arrest warrant. Next comes the tribunal itself and the verdict.

As for Putin, Lavrov, and Mishustin, after charges are brought against them, the consideration of their cases will be suspended until they leave their posts.

The tribunal will be able to try all other defendants in absentia.

The defendants could face up to 30 years in prison or life imprisonment.

The tribunal's statute also provides for the possibility of confiscation of property and fines. According to DW, the seized funds will be transferred to a special fund to compensate victims of Russian aggression in Ukraine.

In March 2023, the International Criminal Court in The Hague issued an international arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin. He is suspected of illegally deporting Ukrainian children.

Ukraine and Russia exchanged prisoners in a "1,000 for 1,000" format

On May 25, Ukraine returned another 303 defenders from Russian captivity. This was the last exchange under the "1,000 for 1,000" agreement.

It is known that the freed defenders defended Ukraine in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, in Zaporizhzhia and



Kharkiv regions, and in Kherson, Sumy, and Chernihiv regions.

The three-day "1,000 for 1,000" exchange was the sixth exchange in 2025, 65 since the start of the full-scale invasion. A total of 5,757 Ukrainian citizens have been freed during this time. Another 536 Ukrainians were returned outside of the exchanges.

The freed defenders will now receive all necessary medical care and rehabilitation, as well as all payments for the time spent in captivity and one-time financial assistance.

On May 23, Ukraine and Russia carried out the first part of a large-scale prisoner exchange in a "1,000 for 1,000" format. On that day, 390 Ukrainians, including 120 civilians, returned home.

On May 24, during the second stage of the prisoner exchange, 307 military personnel were returned home.

On May 6, Ukraine and Russia also carried out a large prisoner exchange. 205 Ukrainian soldiers returned home.

The EU imposed sanctions against Russia for the use of chemical weapons in Ukraine



The Council of the European Union imposed sanctions against three Russian organizations involved in the development and use of chemical weapons in Ukraine.

The restrictions apply to:

- Russia's radiation, chemical, and biological protection troops;
- the 27th Scientific Center of the Russian Armed Forces;
- the 33rd Central Research and Test-

ing Institute of the Russian Ministry of Defense.

The decision was made based on reports released by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons confirming the presence of chemical substances in samples collected on the front lines in Ukraine.

"The EU's restrictive measures against the use and proliferation of chemical weapons now apply to a total of 25 individuals and 6 organizations," the statement said.

The European Union has approved the 17th package of sanctions against Russia



The Council of the European Union has approved the 17th package of sanctions against Russia. It targets nearly 200 ships in Russia's shadow fleet.

This was announced on X by the bloc's chief diplomat, Kaja Kallas.

"The new measures also target hybrid threats and human rights. New sanctions against Russia are being developed. The longer Russia wages war, the tougher our response will be," she added.

According to media reports, in addition to shadow fleet vessels, trade restrictions have been imposed on companies from Turkey, Serbia, Uzbekistan, and the UAE that helped Russians circumvent sanctions. In addition, the list of individuals and legal entities associated with the Russian military-industrial complex has been expanded: they are prohibited from entering the bloc's territory, and their assets will be frozen.

The EU leadership is also considering imposing sanctions against banks in countries that support the Russian defense industry and army.

Ukraine has

returned another group of children from the occupied territories



Three more Ukrainian children aged 12 to 16 have been returned from the temporarily occupied territory of the Kherson region.

According to the regional administration, 46 children who lived in the Kherson region have been returned from temporary occupation since the beginning of the year.

"Three more children have been returned from the temporarily occupied Kherson region. These are boys aged 12 to 16," the statement said.

Among those rescued is a boy who was only 9 years old when his hometown was occupied.

On May 9, Ukraine managed to return nine more children from Russian occupation as part of the Bring Kids Back UA initiative.

Recently, Ukraine launched a nationwide campaign to create a unified DNA database of relatives of missing children.

Earlier it was reported that since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion, the occupying forces have taken at least 744,000 Ukrainian children to their territory.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs will create a DNA database of relatives of abducted children

A nationwide campaign has been launched in Ukraine to create a unified DNA database of relatives of missing children.

The purpose of such a database is to return Ukrainian children who have been deported or illegally taken from temporarily occupied territories.

"This is important because even

when a child receives new documents and their personal data is changed, genetic information remains the only unchanging basis for establishing family ties and true identity," the ministry explained.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs emphasized that the tool will be effective not only today but also many years from now. Every child has the right to return home and restore their identity.

The bodies of more than 900 fallen defenders have been returned to Ukraine



On May 16, Ukraine and Russia conducted a new exchange of the bodies of fallen soldiers. Ukraine returned the bodies of 909 defenders who died on the front lines.

The fallen soldiers fought in:

- Kurakhiv direction;
- Pokrovsk direction;
- Bakhmut direction;
- Vuhledar direction;
- Luhansk direction;
- Zaporizhzhia direction;
- Sumy direction;
- Kharkiv direction.

The bodies that were in Russian morgues were also returned.

The deceased defenders were returned as a result of joint efforts by the Coordination Headquarters, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the Security Service of Ukraine, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Office of the Ombudsman for Human Rights, the Secretariat of the Commissioner for Persons Missing under Special Circumstances, the State Emergency Service, and other agencies.

The International Committee of the Red Cross also contributed to the return of the deceased defenders.

"Investigators from law enforcement agencies, together with expert institutions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, will establish the identities of the deceased as soon as possible," the state-

ment said.

American company to manufacture Ukrainian Magura V7 drones



American company Red Cat Holdings has announced the start of production of Ukrainian Magura V7 marine drones in the United States.

This is the first documented export breakthrough for Ukrainian marine drones, and their entry into the extremely closed US defense technology market is evidence of their recognized combat effectiveness.

Red Cat plans to start production of the Magura V7 in the third quarter of 2025. The company emphasized that all stages of drone manufacturing will take place in the US, which will be in line with the country's economic priorities – industrial revival and job creation.

In December 2024, a Magura V5 naval drone equipped with R-73 Sea-Dragon missiles destroyed a Russian Mi-8 helicopter near Cape Tarkhankut. A second enemy helicopter was damaged but managed to reach the airfield.

And in May 2025, the Ukrainian military shot down a Russian Su-30 with a Magura naval drone for the first time in the world. The cost of the aircraft is about \$50 million.

France allocates funds to repair Chernobyl shelter after Russian drone strike

The French government has allocated €10 million to repair the protective shelter over the fourth power unit of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, which was damaged by a Russian drone attack.



On February 14, a Russian strike drone with a high-explosive warhead hit the protective shelter at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant. The damage to the shelter was assessed as significant. The enemy drone flew at low altitudes and was not detected by radar.

Earlier, the Cabinet of Ministers allocated UAH 1.5 billion to maintain the shelter at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in a safe condition.

Taiwan has joined the Coalition for Demining Ukraine and allocated funds to the relevant fund



Taiwan has decided to join the international Coalition for Demining Ukraine, led by Lithuania and Iceland. The country will also allocate US\$2 million to clear Russian mines from Ukrainian territory.

In February, it was announced that Ukraine would receive hundreds of millions of euros for a long-term demining program.

International Register of Damage Caused by Russian Aggression Against Ukraine

To date, the register has received 27,500 applications from Ukrainians who have suffered damage as a result of the Russian invasion.

Launched in April 2024, the register



became the first element of an international compensation mechanism designed to provide compensation to victims of Russian aggression.

A year ago, a register was created in The Hague to compensate citizens who suffered from Russian aggression.

In May this year, a category for non-residential real estate affected by the war became available in the Register of Damage. This applies to offices, warehouses, shops, and industrial premises.

Occupiers shot three captured Ukrainian soldiers in Donetsk region

On May 3, Russian troops shot three Ukrainian Armed Forces soldiers who had surrendered in Donetsk region.

It is known that the Ukrainian soldiers were carrying out combat missions at a position near the village of Novopil in Volnovakha district. During one of the assaults, they were surrounded by the occupiers, who then forced the soldiers to lay down their arms and surrender.

"Realizing that the Defense Forces soldiers could not resist, representatives of the Russian Armed Forces shot them with automatic weapons," the statement said.

The prosecutor's office emphasized that the deliberate killing of prisoners of war is a gross violation of the Geneva Conventions and qualifies as a serious international crime.

Law enforcement agencies are already conducting urgent investigative actions aimed at establishing all the circumstances of the incident and searching for the killers.

This is not the first time that Russian forces have shot Ukrainian prisoners of war. In February, Russian troops shot Ukrainian prisoners in the Kursk region. In January, it became known that Russians had shot six Ukrainian prisoners of war in the Donetsk region.

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Фонд Лесі та Петра Ковалевих при Союзі українців Америки оголошує літературний конкурс 2025 року.

Заявки на конкурс прийматимуться від дня публікації оголошення до 30 червня 2025 року. Переможців визначатиме журі, склад якого буде оголошено після проголошення лауреатів.

Лауреатів 2025 року буде визначено в категоріях:

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Фонд Ковалевих засновано у 1967 році при Союзі українців Америки для підтримки творців української науки та літератури. СУА – найстарша українська організація Америки, утворена 1925 року, котра протягом тривалого часу займається доброчинністю, зокрема у галузі культури. У своєму заповіті фундатори нагородили відзначили: «*Ми хотіли б заохотити до змалювання минулого чи сучасного України...*»

Подружжя Ковалевих походило з центральних українських земель, Петро Ковалів до 1919 року працював аташе дипломатичної місії Української Народної Республіки в Голландії та Бельгії,

згодом подружжя Ковалевих мешкало у Швейцарії. Створення Фонду було виявом їхнього патріотизму та усвідомлення значення літератури та науки для національного розвитку.

Після здобуття Україною незалежності лауреатами цієї нагороди у різні роки були Леонід Плющ, Тамара Гундорова, Юрій Андрухович, Софія Майданська, Оксана Забужко, Марта Тарнавська, Віра Вовк, Василь Габор, Михайлина Коцюбинська, Олександр Ірванець, Василь Махно, Лариса Онишкевич, Оксана Луцишина, Богдана Матіяш, Раїса Лиша, Марія Ревакович, Остап Сливинський, Дзвінка Матіяш, Софія Андрухович, Мирослав Лаук, Богдан Задура (Польща), Василь Герасим'юк, Василь Голобородько, Андрій Любка, Любов Якимчук, Зеня Томпкінс, Наталка Бельченко, Катерина Калитко, Алі Кінсела, Ірина Вікирчак, Олег Коцарев та Галина Крук.

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Outside of real estate, I'm passionate about nutrition, maintaining a vegan and gluten-free lifestyle, and exploring water fasting. I've held a Series 7 license and have a keen interest in trading and financial planning. Supporting local businesses and traveling the world bring me joy and inspiration.

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JUNE

| Дд/Су | Пн/Мо | Вт/Ту | Ср/Ве | Чт/Th | Пт/Fr | Сб/Са |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | | | | | |

12 JUN

UKRAINE FLAG RAISING & CELEBRATION | SAN JOSE

**Supervisor Otto Lee, Ukraine
Citizen Diplomacy Sister
Commission**

Where: Santa Clara County District
Attorney's Office, 70 W Hedding St,
San Jose, CA 95110

When: Thursday, 6 PM

Please join us on June 12th for a
special flag raising event to honor
our 3rd Open World delegation from
Ukraine with beginning at 6 pm at the
County's McEntee Plaza. Co-hosted
by the Country's .

[https://www.facebook.com/
events/s/ukraine-flag-raising-
celebrati/682418681243560/](https://www.facebook.com/events/s/ukraine-flag-raising-celebrati/682418681243560/)

14 JUN

"RUN FOR UKRAINE!" | SAN FRANCISCO

Hromada & Sharvarok

Where: 1053 John F Kennedy Dr,
San Francisco, CA 94121

When: Saturday, 5 PM – 7 PM

We are excited to invite you to our
annual fundraising event, "RUN FOR
UKRAINE!" in support of Hromada's
initiatives in Ukraine! It promises to be
a meaningful day filled with community
spirit and a shared commitment to
making a difference.

After the run/walk, we warmly
invite you to join us for a community
barbecue – a chance to enjoy freshly
made burgers and hot dogs, connect
with fellow participants, and celebrate
our collective efforts.

This year, all funds raised will
support the "You Angel" Children's
Center in Ukraine, helping us create
an unforgettable summer experience
for the kids.

To register, please email us at info@hromada.us and let us know whether
you'll be participating in the 5K or 10K
distance. This information will help us
coordinate the event more smoothly.

We suggest a donation of **\$30** per
adult participant.

[https://www.sharvarok.com/en/
listing/run-for-ukraine/436](https://www.sharvarok.com/en/listing/run-for-ukraine/436)

28 JUN

"VESELKA" UKRAINIAN- AMERICAN FILM NIGHT + Q&A WITH DIRECTOR | SAN FRANCISCO

Volunteer Movement Ua-Usa

Where: The Polish Club, 3040 22nd
Street San Francisco, CA 94110

When: Sunday, 5 AM – 9 PM

Join us for a screening of "Veselka"
followed by a virtual Q&A with the
director!

Documentary Film: "Veselka: The
Rainbow on the Corner at the Center
of the World" (2024) - 1hr 46 min

Veselka is a documentary film about
the beloved Ukrainian restaurant
"Veselka", founded in 1954 in the East
Village of New York City. It shares the
story of the 3 generations of families
who founded and grew the restaurant
and the efforts of Veselka and the local
community to support Ukraine after
Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022.

Admission: We kindly encourage
a donation of **\$20** (or whatever you
are comfortable with) for admission
at the door (cash/Venmo/PayPal/
Zelle). Half of your donation can be tax
deductible, we are happy to provide
a receipt if you are interested e-mail:
volunteermovement.ua.usa@gmail.com

100% of the donations collected
will be shared between two reputable
organizations that help Ukraine:

[https://www.facebook.com/
events/1488766589232905/](https://www.facebook.com/events/1488766589232905/)

29 JUN

VOPLI VIDOPLIASSOVA | MENLO PARK

Hearts for Ukraine

Where: The Guild Theater, 949 El
Camino Real, Menlo Park, CA 94025,
USA

When: Sunday, 6 PM

Ukraine's legendary punk-folk-rock
pioneers Vopli Vidoptyassova (VV)
bring their explosive 40th Anniversary
Tour to the heart of Silicon Valley for
one powerful night of music, culture,
and solidarity.

With hits like Vesna, Tantsi, Krayina
Mriy, and Lyubov, VV's fierce fusion
of punk, rock, and Ukrainian folk
has inspired generations – from
underground Kyiv to stages like
WOMAD and Montreux.

The night includes an exclusive
Meet & Greet with the VV band and a
charity auction benefiting Misto Dobra
(The City of Goodness) – a Ukrainian
nonprofit providing emergency
support for women and children
displaced by war.

<https://heartsforukraine.us/donate/>

Tickets: **\$75 – \$120**

[https://www.sharvarok.com/en/
listing/vopli-vidopliassova-band-is-
coming-to-the-bay-area/420](https://www.sharvarok.com/en/listing/vopli-vidopliassova-band-is-coming-to-the-bay-area/420)

14 SEP

UKRAINIAN FASHION SHOW | LOS ANGELES

Ukrainian Cultural Center

Where: Ukrainian Cultural Center,
4315 Melrose Ave, Los Angeles, CA
90029

When: Sunday, 1 PM – 5 PM

Join us for an unforgettable cultural
experience!

We are honored to welcome special
guests from Ukraine:

Bogutska – a famous Ukrainian
fashion designer and founder of the



Roksolana Bogutska brand, known for her masterful fusion of heritage and contemporary fashion.

Mariya Mulyava, a distinguished collector of authentic Ukrainian traditional clothing, whose curated pieces offer a deep connection to Ukraine's cultural roots.

Elegant Ukrainian Fashion Show, a charity fundraiser dedicated to supporting humanitarian aid efforts for the people of Ukraine affected by war. This unique event brings the heart of Ukraine to the United States through fashion, history, art and traditions.

This showcase will present a breathtaking blend of traditional Ukrainian style and modern design, celebrating the beauty and resilience of Ukrainian culture.

Enjoy symbolic patterns, timeless silhouettes, wine, appetizers, and warm conversation in a welcoming cultural atmosphere.

All proceeds go directly towards aid in Ukraine.

Tickets: From **\$118.04** (Early bird discount)

<https://www.sharvarok.com/en/>

[listing/ukrainian-fashion-show-los-angeles/427](https://www.sharvarok.com/en/listing/ukrainian-fashion-show-los-angeles/427)

20 SEP UKRAINIAN FASHION SHOW | FREMONT

Ukraine Support Foundation - USF

Where: Fremont Downtown Event Center, 3500 Capitol Ave, Fremont, CA 94538

When: Saturday, 5 PM – 9 PM

Join us for a powerful and elegant Ukrainian Fashion Show, a charity fundraiser dedicated to supporting humanitarian aid efforts for the people of Ukraine affected by war.

This unique event brings the heart of Ukraine to the USA through fashion history, art, and traditions. The showcase will present a breathtaking blend of traditional Ukrainian style and modern design, celebrating the

beauty and resilience of Ukrainian culture.

We are honored to welcome two esteemed guests:

– Roksolana Bogutska, a famous Ukrainian fashion designer and founder of the Roksolana Bogutska clothing brand, known for her masterful fusion of heritage and contemporary fashion

– Mariya Mulyava, a distinguished collector of authentic Ukrainian traditional clothing, whose curated pieces offer a deep connection to Ukraine's cultural roots

Enjoy symbolic patterns, timeless silhouettes, wine, appetizers, and warm conversation in a welcoming cultural atmosphere.

All proceeds go directly toward humanitarian aid in Ukraine.

Stand with Ukraine – celebrate its legacy through compassion, unity and style.

Dress code: Black tie.

Tickets: From **\$118.04 – \$150**

<https://www.sharvarok.com/en/listing/ukrainian-fashion-show-sf-bay-area/425>

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