

TWO YEARS AFTER RUSSIA INVADED ITS NEIGHBOR...

February 24th marks the second anniversary of the brutal Russian invasion of Ukraine. After many initial successes, Ukraine's struggle against violent occupation has more recently been reported in the media as a stalemate, an inaccurate depiction of reality. In fact, Ukraine has:

- Destroyed 11 Russian warships, opening up large swaths of the Black Sea
- Liberated 28,000 square miles of its occupied lands
- Launched attacks on Russian-occupied areas and even on Russia itself
- Remained very much in the fight



But Russia continues to:

- Occupy 18% of Ukrainian territory
- Attack cities on a daily basis, killing and wounding civilians
- Pound Ukrainian forces with endless artillery barrages
- Use its much larger military to bleed Ukrainian forces

Ukraine's people and soldiers are tough and resilient, but in dire need of more military assistance from the United States, including artillery shells, rocket systems, fighter jets, and helicopters, weapons that generate jobs and revenue inside the United States, as reported by the Washington Post. Furthermore, according to an analysis by the Center for European Policy Analysis, "congressionally approved funds to support Ukraine this year amount to about 5.6 percent of U.S. defense spending, while resulting in a significant degrading of Russia's military."



Providing this help will show that the United States is squarely on the right side of history, standing up for our own values. Failing to provide it will show us to be a spineless and unreliable ally, not to be taken seriously by the despots of this world. I know this personally because I have worked in Ukraine since the war's start. With my Ukrainian friends, I've hunkered down as

Russian drones and missiles hit Odesa, and flinched at the whine of mortars landing in Kherson.



Through it all, Ukrainians have assumed that America would stand with them, although that optimism is starting to fade as they watch with dismay as our contentious domestic politics play out, and further aid to Ukraine is bottled up in the House. I cannot ask you to ignore your ideology or conscience, but I would ask this: Does America still stand for freedom? **If your answer is yes, what are you doing as a Representative of the American people to keep a peaceful, friendly nation from being overrun by Putin's dogs of war?**

Chris Hennemeyer is a long-time humanitarian professional and friend of Ukraine, having worked there in 2015, following the first Russian invasion and, more recently, having volunteered in Odesa, Ukraine, for six months. He can be reached at crshtrep@aol.com or (301) 775-1392.