

This morning as I prepare to leave Odesa and return to Washington for a few months, I'm awash with thoughts and worries, too many to adequately express (bullet dodged, folks!). There's the likelihood that 'you know who' will regain the White House and promptly sell Ukraine, the United States, NATO, grandma's silver, and our remaining collective decency down the river. There's the sad foot-dragging and timidity that has generally characterized ongoing Western efforts to militarily support Ukraine. The brutal toll of death and disability visited upon tens of thousands of men, women and children. The psychological, emotional and financial strain on my Ukrainian friends after almost 2 1/2 years of war. The glide bombs, cruise missiles and suicide drones that regularly slam into shopping malls and apartment buildings. And the spawning of a new axis of evil (nexus of nefariousness? orbit of odiousness?) comprising Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea. Still, as I have zero control over any of those things, let me focus instead on what we've done through In The Trenches - Ukraine <www.inthetrenchesukraine.org>.

Thanks to you, we've raised almost **\$30,000** and used it to provide Ukrainian soldiers with combat medical supplies, food, tires, drones, walkie-talkies, binoculars, night vision equipment, charging stations, and more — all without a single penny going to overhead or management costs. This is a real and tangible contribution in a clear-cut fight between darkness and light. And perhaps equally significantly, when I visit isolated little frontline units, ordinary troops tell me how touched they are that people far from Ukraine care enough to donate. One day this conflict will be over, and you and I can hold our heads up and say "we helped", not just with money but with morale too. Personally I've made a pledge to see this war through to its end, whenever that may be, and I hope that some of you will too. Provided I can raise sufficient funds to justify another trip in November, I'll be back.



The military outcome of this struggle is unpredictable, which in and of itself is a credit to Ukraine, David to Putin's Goliath. But an important moral victory has already been won. Here's how Wall Street Journal war correspondent Yaroslav Trofimov, put it in his excellent new book "Our Enemies Will Vanish":

"A year into the full-fledged invasion, it was also clear that Ukraine had won the war for its independence. It wasn't certain in what borders the country would remain...Bloody battles lay ahead. But Ukraine wasn't going to disappear from the

map once again. It wasn't going to be swallowed and digested by Russia. That, by itself, was worth celebrating."

To my American supporters "Happy Independence Day" and to all of us "Slava Ukraini"!

