

international law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Our Secretary of State has called upon the Government of Ukraine to respect the rights of all people and expressed the disgust of the United States with the use of force against peaceful protesters as unbecoming a democracy.

As Secretary Kerry noted, the right to free assembly is “a universal value, not just an American one.”

The House Ukrainian Caucus, which I cochair with Mr. LEVIN and Mr. GERLACH, has expressed its support for the rights of the Ukrainian people to exercise their rights to political speech and free assembly.

Yes, these are difficult, yet hopeful, times for Ukraine, which is trying to find its rightful place among the community of nations despite daunting domestic challenges. The country is gripped by uncertainty, which is exacerbating an already difficult economic situation.

The current crisis was triggered by the decision of the current political leadership to pursue free trade with Ukraine’s eastern neighbor, Russia, rather than neighbors to the west, the European Union.

Regardless of the political discord in Ukraine, this Congress should urge all parties to settle their internal disagreements peacefully and without violence.

Ukraine’s soils historically have been showered with the precious blood of their country men and women at a higher rate than most human beings could even imagine. The brilliantly recounted “Bloodlands,” written by Yale scholar Dr. Timothy Snyder, tells their story. Yes, though Ukraine’s very name means borderland, she too often has been a bloodland. May this not happen now.

Ukraine must adapt to embrace a world in which her own independence from interference surpasses any other priority. She should be free to engage all directions, east, west, south, and north, without fear of retaliation. She is a bridge to all nations, and therein will lie her prosperity.

As Zbigniew Brzezinski, national security adviser to President Carter writes in today’s *Financial Times*:

Two decades of independence, of growing pride in rediscovering Ukrainian history, and of observing the country’s western neighbors economically benefiting from their European connections is creating a new mindset. That mindset is not embracing anti-Russianism, but it is asserting Ukraine’s own historic identity as culturally an authentic part of a larger Europe.

Mr. Brzezinski believes the current political change in Ukraine is part of an historically significant, yet inevitable, political transformation. He believes Ukraine and Russia, too, will eventually orient to the west. I have ultimate respect in his opinion and pray he is correct.

Those of us who love Ukraine have longed for the day when it is no longer a prisoner of geography, hemmed in between Germany and Russia, but a free

and willing member of the community of democratic nations.

Perhaps one day Ukraine will break free of the shackles of domination of the past. Perhaps one day Ukraine’s geographic location will be an asset, not a liability, a day when Ukraine looks both east and west and, in fact, in all four directions.

But as we can see from the images coming to us from Kiev, the road will not be smooth. We know the future lies with freedom and with democracy and with opportunity, not repression in isolation; but that is cold comfort in the streets of Ukraine today.

The United States Congress must stand forthrightly with the liberty-loving people of Ukraine during this difficult hour. At this time of testing, the people of Ukraine and the people of the United States should be inspired by the words of Ukraine’s most famous poet, Taras Shevchenko:

Then in your own house you will see true justice, strength and liberty. There is no other such Ukraine.”

[From the *Financial Times*, Dec. 10, 2013]

RUSSIA, LIKE UKRAINE, WILL BECOME A REAL DEMOCRACY

(By Zbigniew Brzezinski)

Come what may, the events in Ukraine are historically irreversible and geopolitically transformatory. Sooner rather than later, Ukraine will be truly a part of democratic Europe; later rather than sooner, Russia will follow unless it isolates itself and becomes a semi-stagnant imperialistic relic.

The spontaneous outburst of distinctive Ukrainian patriotism—sparked by the mendacity of a corrupt and self-enriching leadership ready to seek Moscow’s protection—signals that commitment to national independence is becoming the dominant political reality. This is especially the case among the younger Ukrainians who no longer feel that they are linguistically or historically just a slightly deviant part of “Mother Russia”.

Yes, linguistic divisions persist and some parts of Ukraine still feel closer to Russia. But it is striking that even some of the most outspoken espousers of a European vocation have only recently embraced the Ukrainian language as their own. Two decades of independence, of growing pride in rediscovering Ukrainian history, and of observing the country’s western neighbours economically benefiting from their European connections is creating a new mindset. That mindset is not embracing anti-Russianism but it is asserting Ukraine’s own historic identity as culturally an authentic part of a larger Europe.

That is why, one way or another, Ukraine will unavoidably come closer to Europe. It is striking that even in neighbouring Belarus, ruled by the authoritarian Lukashenko regime, a similar western orientation is beginning to surface. Neither country is motivated by hostility towards Russia, but each senses that its independence as well as its cultural identity points increasingly in a westward direction.

In the next months some sort of a deal between the EU and Ukraine can still be contrived. To facilitate it, the EU must be more receptive to Kiev’s need for economic and financial support. Ukrainians have to realise that European taxpayers are not enchanted by the prospect of paying for the misdeeds and corruption of the current Kiev elite. Belt-tightening will be the necessary precondition for an agreement as well as a test

of Ukraine’s resolve in asserting its European aspirations. Kiev will also need to show that the outcome of elections is not determined by the imprisonment of political rivals.

The impact of this on Russia will be felt over the longer run. Moscow’s current geopolitical goal, shaped by President Vladimir Putin’s nostalgic obsession with the country’s imperial past, is to recreate in a new guise something akin to the old Russian empire or the more recent Soviet “union”.

Mr. Putin seems to harbour the naive notion that the leaders of the post-Soviet states will genuinely accept a subordinate role in a Kremlin-led entity. Some of the leaders do pay occasional lip service to that formula—but out of necessity, not conviction. All prefer independence: it is more pleasant to be presidents, prime ministers, generals, ambassadors and economic money-makers at home rather than to be the provincial equivalents thereof in a larger Russian empire. The historically proven fact is that national statehood, once attained, is infectious and almost impossible to undo except through massive external force.

Today’s Russia is in no position to assert a violent restoration of its old empire. It is too weak, too backward and too poor. Its demographic crisis makes matters worse. The fact that the newly independent Central Asian states favour increasingly comprehensive arrangements with China is another concern for Russia, reawakening long lingering territorial nightmares.

It is only a question of time before it becomes evident to Russia’s social elites that Mr. Putin’s heavy-handed efforts have very limited prospects of success. Sooner or later, he will no longer be president. And not long thereafter Russia—and especially its emerging new middle class—will conclude that the only path that makes sense is to become also a truly modern, democratic, and maybe even a leading European state.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o’clock and 43 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

You have blessed us with all good gifts, and with thankful hearts, we express our gratitude. You have created us with opportunities to serve other people in their need, to share together in respect and affection, and to be faithful in the responsibilities we have been given.

In this moment of prayer, please grant to the Members of this people’s House the gifts of wisdom and discernment that in their words and actions