

New Year's Message for 2026

As we enter the New Year, we must remember a simple truth: history does not move by accident. It is shaped by human choices—courage or complacency, principle or expediency.

Ukraine has been at war with Russia since 2014. That is nearly twelve years or almost twice as long as it took the Allies to defeat Nazi Germany in the Second World War. The human cost has been staggering. Western estimates put Russia's casualties at more than one million. Ukraine has lost tens of thousands of soldiers, with hundreds of thousands more wounded. These are not just statistics. They represent shattered lives, grieving families, and a nation fighting for its right to exist.

President Trump says he opposes the killing. On this, all people of conscience agree. But the reality is clear: the killing ends when Russia leaves Ukraine. If Ukraine stops fighting, it ceases to exist. There is no moral or strategic equivalence between aggressor and victim. Only one outcome is both just and durable.

This message is for everyday Americans as they approach the 250th anniversary of a Republic born of resistance to an empire. It is for those who remember the sacrifices made for freedom—on the beaches of Normandy, in the hills of Korea, and in other places where liberty was defended at terrible cost.

I am not speaking to those compromised by scandal, corruption, or foreign influence—or to those who profit from illicit funds or from authoritarian favour. They are not my audience.

I speak instead to Americans who understand that a nation is more than power or profit. To those who believe in America as President Reagan's "shining city on a hill." To those who remember President Kennedy's words:

"Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and the success of liberty."

To them, it must be said plainly: Vladimir Putin is no friend of America. He is an indicted war criminal under the authority of the International Criminal Court, charged with his role in the kidnapping of more than 35,000 Ukrainian children, according to a recent study from Yale University. Evidence of Russia's war crimes is visible daily. A steady stream of pictures and videos of Russian war crimes is shared with us on computer monitors and television screens, reminding us of the torment of people in Ukraine.

A United States president cannot be a true friend of freedom while aligning with such a man. Nor can America condemn Ukraine at the United Nations while siding with Russia without forfeiting its moral authority.

To the leaders of NATO, the European Union, and all democratic allies: continue standing firmly with Ukraine. Frozen Russian state assets held abroad should be transferred to Ukraine to secure victory and rebuild what aggression has destroyed. Ukraine's victory is essential not only for its survival but also for the security of Europe, North America, and the democratic world. A clear Ukrainian victory is the strongest deterrent against future authoritarian aggression—whether by Communist China against Taiwan, by North Korea against the South, or by other regimes tempted to redraw borders by force.

We call on all people of goodwill to continue supporting Ukraine and the nations of Eastern Europe in their struggle for independence, democracy, and freedom.

Let 2026 be remembered as the year democracy prevailed—when aggression was defeated, imperial ambition was denied, and autocracy began its retreat.

Join us in this cause. Share this message. Speak out. Stand firm for freedom.

On behalf of the Centre for Eastern European Democracy, I wish you a resolute, hopeful, and principled New Year.

Ann Semotiuk



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