



Return to Independence Square

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT



PETER GOLDRING

In 2004 Peter Goldring spoke to a crowd estimated at half a million people gathered in Kyiv's Independence Square, the only Canadian Member of Parliament in Ukraine, for the Orange Revolution. In November 2013 crowds again returned to Independence Square, now dubbed the Euromaidan, once again calling for democracy for Ukraine. Peter Goldring was there.

Arriving in Kyiv I was met by Andrii Sorohan, a former intern in my office and was introduced to many of those participating. The barricades were massive, the weather was cold, there were tents everywhere, and barrels cut open to make bonfires for heat. There were elderly and many others coming in carrying containers of foods, soups, coffee, etc. to share with those in the square.

This was a déjà-vu. Once again I was asked to address on stage the some 400-500,000 people assembled at Euro Maidan. I said:

People of Ukraine, you are citizens of a great and independent country with a fantastic future! A future achieved if unfettered by external (uncontrolled) influences.

You have many friends around the world who stand together with you. In Ottawa. In Edmonton. And here in Independence Square. We stand with you for what is right, in the face of what is wrong. We support you this day and always, to democratically and peacefully put forth your demands that your true destiny be fulfilled.

We stand with you for wholesome economic and civil trade engagement. Not just with the East. Not just with the West. But with the world as truly a nation of the world.

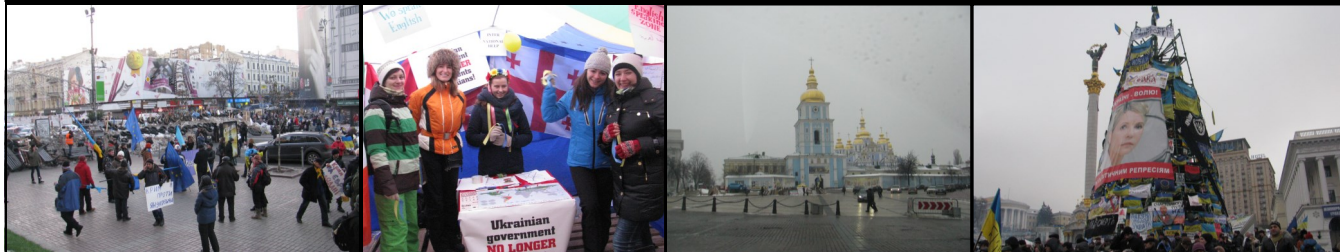
Slava Ukraine!

The response from the crowd once again was incredible. It made me proud that I took the time to come to Ukraine because they very much appreciated the

encouragement. When I was leaving the stage they chanted over and over again, many times, the words that I was told were:



Mr. Goldring spoke on the stage to 400,000 people with a message of support "this day and always" to democratically and peacefully put forth your demands that your desired destiny be fulfilled.



“Thank you Canada, Thank you Canada, Thank you Canada...”

For President Yanukovich to say that protestors were young radical terrorists could not be further from the truth. The real terrorist, the ruthless despot was soon shown to be the President himself. He did the unthinkable. He authorized live gun fire, not simply from police or soldiers but by elite military snipers who pinpointed and executed 80 demonstrators.

That was it – the international community was outraged, the President was a pariah. Even his party’s MP’s were shocked, What evil person in authority would order sniper fire to execute unarmed protestors? A vote in the Rada was held that returned the constitution to 2004 and that removed him from power. He fled the country, turning to Vladimir Putin and Russia for assistance, and in the process turning what had been an internal Ukrainian matter into a full-blown international crisis, as Russian troops then invaded Crimea, ostensibly to “protect” the Russian-speaking majority of that region.

As someone who was there, I can say this protest was not simply students or radicals. It was hundreds of thousands of very ordinary, committed, Ukrainian-speaking and

Russian-speaking nationalists, young and old, who were present, including young families with children, elderly persons. There was no distinguishable age predominance. All ages assembled, in unison, in protest. Naturally, for safety, the people thinned out to protect the very young and elderly during the more recent bloody armed assaults by government agents. I met and talked to many, many, young and old. I noted no radicals;

only determined Ukrainians standing up for their God-given rights.

The patriots that faced President Yanukovich’s ruthless thugs stood their ground at tremendous cost, facing death and injuries. They are the “heroes” of the Euro-Maidan. They have inspired many thousands to join them to continue their citizen protest until their demands for democracy,

freedom of government, and freedom of world trade engagement is achieved as an independent nation.

This is not a divided nation, with most wanting to turn their back on Russia and split their country, but it is a very serious and broadly supported concern by those, Russian-speaking and Ukrainian-speaking, from all regions who expect their government and their President to respect all Ukrainians and to honour his election prom-



Mr. Goldring believes that the people of Ukraine wish that they engage as an independent country economically and civilly, not just with the east, not just with the West, but with the world as a nation of the world.



ises to develop trade relations with the entire world with Ukraine as an independent nation. Nor is the issue for long-term cheap Russian natural gas supply for essential heating. I was told by oil exploration management experts that, within seven years, Ukraine is expected to be a net exporter, self-sufficient in natural gas and will not need Russian gas; hence there is no reason to join with Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan in an economic union to ensure a gas supply.

Thankfully the pressure from the protest demonstrations, European Union countries and others all helped to bring sanity to Yanukovich's supporters as they realized the Soviet-era mentality of the Russian-supported President of Ukraine was not to be trusted. The backing off of the government and the troops, riot police and snipers was most certainly not voluntarily but due to external pressures. Their disengagement from their brutal efforts was welcomed, as the killing stopped.

The crowds have grown again, first gathering to mourn the dead and reflect on the injuries of the hundreds of patriots. At EuroMaidan, in greater and greater numbers, they show respect for the price those patriots paid. They are committed to honouring their memory and ensuring that the

promises they fought for are kept and that Ukraine's democratic rights are returned. The message from EuroMaidan is clear. Ukrainians distrusted the sincerity of the President because he broke his political promises. The movement for real democracy will continue until:

1. The criminals are brought to justice and Russia's Putin questioned for his complicity.

2. The Constitution is re-examined such that it protects linguistic diversity and inclusiveness of all Ukrainians with safeguards mandated against future abuse by totalitarians. The action of this past week, to return to the 2004 Constitution, is a good start.

3. There is a free election as soon as possible to provide Ukrainians with

the opportunity to elect a president who will respect the country's laws.

4. Democracy and freedom returns to Ukraine

Many lives have been lost with much blood has been spilled to attain this fragile respite from government Soviet-style storm troopers and snipers. Some 80-90 were reportedly murdered by snipers, and many more seriously wounded. We all hold our breath and pray for a peaceful return to democratic advancement.



Mr. Goldring believes that as citizens of a great country, Ukrainians have a fantastic future, if unfettered by external influences, and have many friends around the world standing with them on this journey.

However, Russian troops more recently have invaded Crimea and taken over public buildings, firing warning blasts of gunfire, warning any who approach. I have had many meetings and discussions with the Embassy of Ukraine and the Embassy of Russia to seek resolution. The Embassy of Russia has been told categorically by me that there is no reason that warrants their troops out of their bases in Crimea, that there are absolutely no risks to Russians or Russian-speaking persons to be protected and they must return immediately. Also, that Putin should distance himself from former president Yanukovich, after he ordered the murder of 80-90 of his own citizens by sniper fire on unarmed persons, as he has no legitimacy as leader and

will taint as complicit those that harbour him as a wanted man.

Russia's invasive posturing increased even more when it was reported that Russia's navy had sunk one of their own derelict ships to block the Ukraine Navy from leaving their moorage through the channel to the bay known as Donuzlav Lake. The Russian ship is approximately 170 meters long and even as sunk to the bottom protrudes out of the water by nine meters! Clearly an act of all-out aggression intended only to provoke Ukraine to shoot once, then all-out invasion. Where is the United Nations? Should Canada not withdraw from the United Nations in protest?

Update: Canada is expected to send at least 500 observers for the scheduled May 25 Presidential election. Meanwhile, the Crimean Parliament, while occupied by Russia, has voted to hold a referendum on separation for March 16.

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This brochure series is intended to highlight special issues that Member of Parliament, Peter Goldring, has been involved in. If you wish to comment, please take a moment to fill out the survey below, write or call to the address above.

Your Opinion Matters...

Q1: Do you think that the United Nations should act immediately with peace keepers in the Crimea?

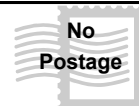
Yes No

Q2: Should elected members of Canada's Parliament help in the process of monitoring elections abroad?

Yes No

Comments: _____

Name: _____
Address: _____
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