

Walsh University
Ukraine: Prayer Service & Panel Discussion

Dr. Tim Collins
Thursday, March 17, 2022

SPECIAL MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

DR. BRITT COOPER & WALSH CHORALE

WELCOME REMARKS

GOOD EVENING ... I AM TIM COLLINS AND HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF SERVING OUR COMMUNITY AS THE SEVENTH PRESIDENT OF WALSH UNIVERSITY.

I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME EACH OF YOU TO THIS EVENING'S PRAYER SERVICE AND PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE UNPROVOKED ATTACK AND INVASION BY PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN'S RUSSIAN FEDERATION INTO UKRAINE, A SELF-GOVERNING NATION UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF PRESIDENT VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY.

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT GOD IS ALWAYS IN OUR PRESENCE, LET US BEGIN THE EVENING IN PRAYER.

PRAYER SERVICE

HERE WITH US TONIGHT AS WE INVOKE GOD'S MERCY, I WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE FATHER SAL, THE PASTOR OF HOLY GHOST UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AKRON.

FATHER CAME TO THE UNITED STATES FROM HIS NATIVE UKRAINE WHEN HE WAS 17 YEARS OLD. HIS PARISH WAS FOUNDED IN 1915 BY UKRAINIAN IMMIGRANTS AND SERVES NEARLY 70 FAMILIES, MANY OF WHOM ARE SECOND- AND THIRD-GENERATION UKRAINIAN. HE HAS MANY RELATIVES WHO STILL LIVE IN THE UKRAINE.

[FR SAL]

ALSO, TO OFFER PRAYER THIS EVENING IS OUR UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN, A PRIEST OF THE DIOCESE OF YOUNGSTOWN, FATHER TOM CEBULA.

[FR CEBULA]

FRAMEWORK

THE ISSUES BEFORE US THIS EVENING ARE DIFFICULT, COMPLEX, AND EMOTIONALLY CHARGED.

AS WE ALWAYS STRIVE TO TEACH AND PRACTICE AT WALSH UNIVERSITY ... LET US APPROACH THE CONVERSATION WITH CHARITY AS WE “SQUINT WITH OUR EARS” ... LISTENING TO EACH OTHER THROUGHOUT THE EVENING.

WALSH UNIVERSITY STANDS IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE UKRAINIAN PEOPLE, AND ALL OTHERS AROUND THE WORLD, THAT RECOGNIZE WE ARE RESPONDING TO A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS UNJUSTLY CAUSED BY THE AGGRESSION OF A FOREIGN POWER TAKEN AGAINST AN INDEPENDENT NATION.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 80 YEARS – IN LIKELY ANYONE’S LIFETIME HERE THIS EVENING – WAR RAGES IN EUROPE.

THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION HAS CHOSEN TO INVAD E A SOVEREIGN NATION, UNPROVOKED, AND WE HAVE ALL JUST BEEN GIVEN A “WAKE UP” CALL ...

- THAT THE WORLD IS A DANGEROUS PLACE
- THAT EVIL DOES EXISTS
- AND THAT THE TALK ON “GLOBALIZATION” WHEREBY PEOPLE AND GOODS CAN MOVE ACROSS BOARDERS EASILY, PERHAPS, HAS COME TO AN END

THE CHALLENGES THE WORLD FACES ARE MANY, AND IT IS IMPORTANT AT A MOMENT LIKE THIS TO “TAKE STOCK” OF THAT SITUATION – AND OUR OWN RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS AS GLOBAL CITIZENS.

AND AS CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES OR ANY OF THE NATIONS REPRESENTED HERE TONIGHT ...

- WHAT ARE OUR INTERESTS?
- HOW DO WE RESPOND TO UNPROVOKED AGGRESSION IN EUROPE?
- WHAT ARE THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH TAKING – OR NOT TAKING – ACTION?

IT IS AT MOMENTS LIKE THESE THAT WE ARE CALLED TO USE ALL THE TOOLS OF STATECRAFT ...

- DIPLOMATIC
- INFORMATION
- MILITARY
- AND, ECONOMIC

... GROUNDED IN MORAL CLARITY WITH A SENSE OF PURPOSE.

HERE AT WALSH UNIVERSITY, WE ARE BLESSED WITH A VIBRANT INTERNATIONAL POPULATION. THIS DIVERSITY ENHANCES OUR CAMPUS CULTURE AND OFFERS OUR COMMUNITY THE CHANCE TO LEARN AND GROW.

IN FACT, OUR MISSION STATEMENT READS IN PART:

- ... WALSH UNIVERSITY IS DEDICATED TO EDUCATING ITS STUDENTS TO BECOME LEADERS IN SERVICE TO OTHERS THROUGH A VALES-BASED EDUCATION WITH AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE...

SO, WITH OUR INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE IN MIND, TONIGHT, WE WILL STEP BACK AND DO WHAT AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION DOES BEST ...

- ASK QUESTIONS
- PROBE
- BE SKEPTICAL

AS WE SHARPEN OUR MINDS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO SIMPLY “ASSUME” ALL OF US THINK IN SIMILAR WAYS.

WE DO NOT.

FORGING A PATH TO SOLUTIONS, PARTICULARLY IN THE DOMAIN OF NATIONAL SECURITY, WE MUST DO EXACTLY WHAT WALSH UNIVERSITY PRIDES ITSELF IN TEACHING: EXAMINE THE ISSUE FROM EVERY ASPECT, FROM EVERY ANGLE, AND REFLECT ON MOTIVES AND INTENTIONS NOT JUST OUTCOMES.

IN A VERY SIMPLISTIC WAY, IT IS TEMPTING ONLY TO CONSIDER, “WHY” ...

- WHY IS RUSSIA DOING THIS?
- WHY DISRUPT INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AT A GLOBAL SCALE?
- WHY INFLICT SO MUCH PAIN ON OTHERS?
- WHY NOW?

FOR ME, THAT IS ACTUALLY THE WRONG QUESTION.

RATHER ... WE MUST ALSO INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT FOCUSED WHAT DRIVES SUCH REPREHENSIBLE BEHAVIOR ... AND THAT STARTS WITH ASKING, FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE AGGRESSOR, “WHY NOT?”

- WHY NOT ... CREATE A BUFFER STATE?
- WHY NOT ... PROTECT THE RUSSIAN BLACK SEA FLEET BY PERMANENTLY SECURING OUR PRIMARY HEADQUARTERS SINCE 1783 IN THE PORT CITY OF SEVASTOPOL – THE LARGEST CITY IN CRIMEA?
- WHY NOT ... TAKE THE NEXT STEP IN THE INCREMENTAL RUSSIAN REUNIFICATION?

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY IS ALL ABOUT CHOICES

- THIS ... OR ... THAT?

TONIGHT, IS AN EDUCATIONAL PANEL AND WE ENCOURAGE ASKING QUESTIONS ON THIS ISSUE ... ANY QUESTIONS ... SUCH AS,

- HOW DID THE WORLD GET TO THIS POINT, AND
- HOW DO WE RECOVER FROM THE DEVASTATING IMPACT IT IS HAVING ON SO MANY?

INCLUDED IN OUR INQUIRY OUGHT TO BE AN OBJECTIVE EXAMINATION CONSIDERING PREVIOUS STRATEGIC DECISIONS AND STRATEGIC CHOICES AS WE GATHER A LARGER AND DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF WORLD AFFAIRS ... WE CAN'T CONTROL THE EVENTS BUT WE CAN CONTROL OUR RESPONSE.

WE ALSO FIND OURSELVES IN A POLARIZED WORLD AND A FRACTURED CULTURE THAT HAS GREAT DIFFICULTY MAINTAINING CIVILITY IN THE FACE OF DIFFERING OPINIONS.

TONIGHT ... WE SHOULD FOLLOW THE ADVICE FRANCIS CARDINAL GEORGE, A MISSIONARY OBLATE OF MARY IMMACULATE AND THE 8TH ARCHBISHOP OF CHICAGO WHO DIED IN 2015

- AVOID THE LABELS CONSERVATIVE OR LIBERAL, LEFT OR RIGHT, HAWK OR DOVE, FASCIST OR CAPITALIST,
- LET'S USE TRUE AND FALSE

FOCUSING ON THE UNDERLYING ISSUES, RATHER THAN THE LABELS, WE WILL BE ABLE TO SEE HOW THESE ACTIONS TAKEN BY RUSSIAN LEADERSHIP – DIPLOMATIC, MILITARY, AND POLITICAL – ARE REPREHENSIBLE AND MORALLY WRONG.

IT IS JUST PLAIN EVIL.

OUR PROGRAM TONIGHT AFFORDS US THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN A CONVERSATION THAT SEEKS A PEACE-FILLED PATH TO ENDING THIS HUMAN TRAGEDY.

BEFORE I INTRODUCE OUR PANELISTS, I WOULD LIKE TO PROVIDE A LITTLE CONTEXT.

FORMERLY A PART OF THE SOVIET UNION, UKRAINE BECAME A SOVEREIGN STATE IN 1991 AFTER AN OVERWHELMING VOTE BY ITS CITIZENS.

TENSIONS HAVE BEEN BUILDING BETWEEN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE FOR DECADES, AND SEVERAL ISSUES HAVE LED TO TODAY'S CRISIS,

- NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH IS THE 2014 SEIZING BY RUSSIA OF CRIMEA, A UKRAINIAN PENINSULA WITH A LARGE RUSSIAN POPULATION AND THE LOCATION OF THE PORT OF SEVASTOPOL, WHICH IS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO THE RUSSIAN BLACK SEA NAVAL FLEET.

MORE RECENTLY, IN DECEMBER 2021, CLAIMING UKRAINE IS A THREAT, RUSSIA'S PRESIDENT INCREASED THE NUMBER OF TROOPS STATIONED ALONG THE UKRAINIAN BORDER WHILE DEMANDING THAT UKRAINE NEVER BE ADMITTED INTO THE NATO ALLIANCE.

TODAY, UKRAINE IS A DEMOCRACY

- WITH A POPULATION OF 44 MILLION PEOPLE
- SECOND LARGEST COUNTRY IN EUROPE, NEXT TO ITS BORDERING NEIGHBOR, RUSSIA.

TODAY, UKRAINE IS RICH IN MINERALS

- #1 IN EUROPE IN RESERVES OF URANIUM ORES
- SECOND LARGEST IRON ORE RESERVES IN THE WORLD,
- AND 7TH IN THE WORLD IN COAL RESERVES

TODAY, UKRAINE IS AN AGRICULTURAL COUNTRY:

- 1ST IN WORLD IN EXPORTS OF SUNFLOWER AND SUNFLOWER OIL
- #2 IN THE WORLD FOR BARLEY PRODUCTION
- 3RD LARGEST PRODUCER AND 4TH LARGEST EXPORTER OF CORN IN THE WORLD
- 8TH IN THE WORLD FOR WHEAT EXPORTS.

TODAY, UKRAINE IS AN INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRY

- LARGEST IN EUROPE FOR AMMONIA PRODUCTION
- 4TH LARGEST NATURAL GAS PIPELINE IN THE WORLD
- 3RD LARGEST IRON EXPORTER AND 4TH LARGEST TITANIUM EXPORTER IN THE WORLD
- 4TH WORLD'S LARGEST MANUFACTURER OF ROCKET MOTORS
- 10TH LARGEST STEEL PRODUCER IN THE WORLD

ON FEBRUARY 24, WITHOUT PROVOCATION, PUTIN DIRECTED THE MOVEMENT OF COMBAT FORCES INTO UKRAINE, OSTENSIBLY ONLY INTO THE TWO EASTERN REGIONS IN A “SPECIAL MILITARY OPERATION,” AS HE CALLED IT, BUT IT QUICKLY TRANSITIONED TO AN ALL-OUT ATTACK ACROSS THE COUNTRY, IN WHICH RUSSIA BEGAN TO USE MILITARY WEAPONS TO SEIZE LAND, DESTROY INFRASTRUCTURE, AND TERRORIZE THE POPULATION.

THE NEWS COVERAGE OF THIS HAS BEEN HEARTBREAKING, AND NATIONS EVERYWHERE ARE CURRENTLY WEIGHING WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD TAKE IN SUPPORT OF UKRAINE.

YESTERDAY, PRESIDENT ZELENSKYY MADE AN IMPASSIONED PLEA TO CONGRESS AND THE WHITE HOUSE ... SEEKING AID ... ASKING FOR HELP.

EVEN AS WE READ REPORTS, SEE PICTURES, AND HEAR STORIES OF THIS TRAGIC TURN OF EVENTS, WE MUST BE ABLE TO BALANCE OUR EMOTIONS WITH CLEAR STRATEGIC THINKING AS WE SEEK OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE SUPPORT IN THE FACE OF THIS EVIL.

WE CANNOT BE OF HELP, THOUGH, IF WE ARE NOT EDUCATED ON THE SITUATION AND ALL OF ITS COMPLEXITIES, AND THAT REQUIRES US TO:

- LISTEN AND TO DISCERN,
- EVALUATE THE SOURCES FROM WHICH WE GET OUR INFORMATION,
- AND ALLOW DIFFERING OPINIONS TO BE HEARD AND DISCUSSED WITH CIVILITY.

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS AND SENSATIONAL SOUNDBITES ARE RARELY SUITABLE SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND LEAD ONLY TO VITRIOLIC EXCHANGES THAT ARE NOT HELPFUL IN HIGH-RISK DECISION-MAKING.

TONIGHT, WE ARE COMING TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY OF DISCERNMENT, LEARNING, AND PRAYER.

FROM A CATHOLIC WORLDVIEW, WE KNOW THAT THERE ARE, INDEED, TIMES WHEN “WAR” IS THE PROPER MORAL AND POLITICAL RESPONSE.

ST THOMAS AQUINAS FIRST DEVELOPED THE “JUST WAR THEORY” AND FOR OVER 1000 YEARS THIS HAS HAD CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT AND UNDERPINS MUCH OF OUR DIPLOMATIC COMMITMENTS TODAY.

WHAT PUTIN IS DOING TODAY IN UKRAINE FAILS TO MEET THE HIGH THRESHOLD FOR A “JUST WAR” – BOTH IN THE NEED FOR WAR AND MANNER IN WHICH IT IS BEING WAGED – AND THE UKRAINIAN PEOPLE HAVE THE STEADFAST RIGHT TO SELF-DEFENSE.

OUR OBLIGATION TONIGHT IS TO REFLECT ON OUR ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS AND AMERICA’S REACTION TO THIS INVASION ... THIS WILL MAKE US MORE INFORMED CITIZENS.

AND SO, WE MIGHT ASK OURSELVES TONIGHT QUESTIONS LIKE ...

- HOW DID WE GET TO THIS POINT?
- WHERE DID THE ART OF STATECRAFT FAIL US?
- WHAT ARE THE LESSONS LEARNED THAT ENABLED PUTIN TO ASSESS IT WAS “WORTH THE RISK” TO REPEAT WHAT HE DID IN 2014 WITH THE SEIZURE OF CRIMEA?

TO HELP US ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS, AND OFFER US THOUGHTS ON “HOW” WE SHOULD THINK ABOUT THIS MILITARY ACTION IN UKRAINE, SOME EXPERTS WITH A VARIETY OF PERSPECTIVES ARE HERE WITH US TONIGHT.

PANEL DISCUSSION

WITH THAT AS OUR FRAMEWORK FOR THE DISCUSSION, LET US BEGIN.

OUR DISCUSSION WILL FEATURE FOUR PANELISTS, EACH WITH A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE ON THE SITUATION IN UKRAINE.

- I WILL ASK THEM EACH TO SPEAK FOR A FEW MINUTES TO OFFER US THE “LENS” THROUGH WHICH THEY ARE VIEWING THIS GLOBAL CRISIS FOR OUR CONSIDERATION.
- NEXT, WE WILL SHIFT TO A CONVERSATION THAT I WOULD LIKE TO ASK EACH OF YOU HERE TONIGHT TO JOIN.
 - ON YOUR SEATS YOU WILL FIND NOTECARDS. PLEASE WRITE YOUR QUESTIONS ON THOSE CARDS AND HAND THEM INTO THE WALSH STAFF MEMBERS WHO WILL BE COLLECTING THEM THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM. I WILL GUIDE THE PANELISTS THROUGH YOUR QUESTIONS.
 - DUE TO TIME LIMITS, WE MAY NOT GET TO EVERY QUESTION, BUT WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO ANSWER AS MANY AS POSSIBLE.

THANK YOU, PANELISTS, FOR JOINING US TONIGHT.

- FIRST, WE HAVE DR. RACHEL CONSTANCE WHO IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY HERE AT WALSH UNIVERSITY SPECIALIZING IN MODERN EUROPEAN AND WORLD HISTORY, WITH A PERSONAL INTEREST IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND GLOBAL POLITICS.
- DR. BILL DAVIS IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GOVERNMENT & FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ALSO HERE AT WALSH UNIVERSITY, WHOSE RESEARCH INTERESTS INCLUDE THE INFLUENCE OF SECURITY THREATS AND DOMESTIC POLITICS ON FOREIGN AND ECONOMIC POLICY-MAKING.
- PHILIP KOPATZ IS A WALSH UNIVERSITY ALUMNUS, CLASS OF 2019, AND WORKING ON HIS MASTER’S DEGREE IN SLAVIC AND EASTERN EUROPEAN STUDIES AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY. PHILIP HAS VISITED UKRAINE OFTEN AND HAS A NETWORK OF FRIENDS IN THAT COUNTRY.

- AND, LASTLY, ELIZABETH KAPLAN WAS BORN IN ODESSA, UKRAINE, AND EARNED HER MASTER'S IN FASHION DESIGN BEFORE COMING TO THE UNITED STATES IN 1993 AS A REFUGEE WITH HER HUSBAND AND THEN 6-YEAR OLD DAUGHTER. ELIZABETH HAS BEEN THE COSTUME DESIGNER FOR THE CANTON BALLET SINCE 1994.

AS OUR STAFF MEMBERS COLLECT QUESTIONS FROM OUR AUDIENCE, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ADD TO YOUR QUESTIONS AS THE DISCUSSION UNFOLDS. I'D LIKE TO START WITH A QUESTION I HAVE FOR ALL OF YOU:

- WHAT DO YOU THINK THE IMPACT OF THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE WILL BE ON GLOBALIZATION?

CLOSING REMARKS

THE TIME IS UPON US TO BRING THIS DISCUSSION TO A CLOSE.

I WANT TO THANK OUR PANELISTS – DR. CONSTANCE, DR. DAVIS, MR. KOPATZ, AND MS. KAPLAN – FOR TAKING THE TIME TO SHARE YOUR INSIGHTS WITH US.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK ALL OF YOU, OUR AUDIENCE, FOR JOINING US.

AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY IS A POWERFUL COMMUNITY.

WE ANTICIPATE CONTINUING THIS DISCUSSION WITH 4-STAR GENERAL PHIL BREEDLOVE ... HE RETIRED IN 2016 SERVING AS THE SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER IN EUROPE – THE SENIOR MILITARY COMMANDER IN NATO.

HE HAS GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTED OUR INVITATION TO COME TO WALSH UNIVERSITY AND SHARE WITH US HIS THOUGHTS AND THE IMPLICATIONS ON THE UKRAINIAN SITUATION AS WE NOW SEEK TO FIND A DATE THAT WORKS ON HIS COMMITTED CALENDAR.

I HOPE YOU WILL CONTINUE TO JOIN US FOR GENERAL BREEDLOVE'S TALK, AND OTHER SIMILAR EVENTS, WHICH YOU CAN FIND ON OUR WEBSITE: WWW.WALSH.EDU.

CLOSING PRAYER

[OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP ... THANK YOU ... GOODNIGHT.]