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February 24, 2023

Dear President Biden,

Over the past year, we have watched in horror Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine. Its missiles and bombs have indiscriminately destroyed hospitals, schools, residential buildings and energy infrastructure. Its troops have murdered, raped and tortured thousands of Ukrainians and deported over a million, including more than 250,000 children. Millions more have been displaced, forced to seek refuge abroad. The evidence is clear: Russia is a terrorist state and President Putin is a war criminal. As you yourself have said, this man cannot remain in power.

For Latvian Americans this invasion echoes our own experience during the Second World War. Many of our grandparents, our parents or we ourselves were forced to flee or fell victim to the onslaught of a brutal Soviet regime that used murder, rape, torture, deportation and false elections to subjugate Latvia, a sovereign nation. We now see Putin's regime committing the same atrocities in Ukraine.

Our empathy for Ukrainians is paired with a fear that, if Moscow's invasion is successful by any measure, history could repeat itself in Latvia and its Baltic neighbors, Estonia and Lithuania. If left unchecked, Moscow will no doubt be emboldened to commit further aggression, not only against the Baltics, but against other NATO allies or nations elsewhere in Europe. Moreover, we believe success for Russia will encourage other autocratic states, especially China, to engage in similar acts of aggression.

This is why, on the tragic one-year anniversary of Russia's invasion, we encourage you to redouble and accelerate U.S. and allied efforts to help Ukraine defend its sovereignty and regain its full territorial integrity. A Ukraine free of Russian forces is an inviolable prerequisite for any future peace between these two nations. With Russia's military now materially weakened, Ukraine has the opportunity to defeat Russia decisively and thereby strengthen Europe's long-term security. This opportunity must not be squandered.

We are grateful for your many efforts to help Ukraine thus far. Your visit to Kyiv this week was a powerful reminder to the world that the aid the U.S. provides Ukraine serves the interests not only of the U.S. but any nation that adheres to the basic international principles vital to peace and security. The three Baltic states are among those nations and we value your continued support of initiatives that also foster U.S.-Baltic security partnerships.

The defense of freedom and democratic principles has been a cornerstone of the American Latvian Association since 1951 and is a matter dear to the more than 90,000 people of Latvian descent living in the U.S. that we represent. We thank you for your consideration on this matter and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Martin Andersons'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Martin Andersons
President, American Latvian Association