

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

We can all help Ukraine

In 2010, the deteriorating Keim Street bridge connecting Pottstown and North Coventry was closed because it had become a safety hazard.

Later this year, a \$17 million replacement bridge is scheduled to be constructed.

If it takes 12 years for one of the wealthiest counties in America to replace a bridge, imagine how long it will take to replace the buildings, bridges, roads, water and sewer lines, power plants, and other infrastructure the Russians are currently destroying in Ukraine.



Commentary by
Tom Hylton

Next to Russia, Ukraine is the largest country in Europe. It's equal to all of New England, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware and Virginia combined.

It has three cities with more than 1 million people. Kyiv, the capital, is nearly twice as large as Philadelphia. And they are all being bombed and shelled.

Ukraine is easy to see from our own homes. Google Earth covers the entire country. Thousands of miles of city streets and country roads are on Street View. You can see the country at ground level as well as from above, most of the photography having taken place within the last few years.

It's heartbreaking to see Google images capturing beautiful buildings

lining the streets, bustling with people going about their lives, children playing, none aware of the death and destruction that will soon be their fate.

As of Sunday, the United Nations estimated 1.5 million Ukrainians, nearly all women, children, and elderly, have fled the country. Many millions more are expected to follow.

The European Union has already accepted hundreds of thousands of refugees annually since numerous conflicts broke out in the Mideast. This new wave of traumatized human beings is beyond even that in scope.

In 1948, with post-war Europe in ruins, the U.S Congress passed the Marshall Plan, named after Secretary of State George Marshall, which provided \$13 billion (\$155 billion in today's dollars) to Western European countries to rebuild.

If Russia succeeds in swallowing up Ukraine, it will have no way of rebuilding the country, especially as its own economy is in tatters. But that's in the future.

At present, western governments are supplying Ukraine with arms.

Ordinary citizens must pitch in to provide humanitarian assistance. The Mercury and other newspapers have listed organizations providing relief to the victims of this war.

Anyone can Google "Ukraine relief" to find the websites of numerous creditable non-profits providing help. They all take credit cards. You can do your part at home with just a few computer clicks.



ROTTERDAM IN 1930. Ten years later, on May 14, 1940, the German Luftwaffe turned central Rotterdam into rubble, destroying 85,000 buildings with incendiary bombs. The Russians are now destroying Ukrainian cities. Rotterdam was rebuilt thanks to the Marshall Plan. Who will rebuild Ukraine?