

## **From 1776 to Maidan: Reflections on Revolution and Liberty**

*Delivered at America House in Kyiv to Commemorate America's 250th Anniversary*

*A Freedom250 Event Hosted by AUSP, Art Shield, Dom Master Klass, and Paradox Public Relations*



## Remarks Delivered by Compatriot Davis Richardson



I'd like to begin this evening with a moment of silence, for all the loved ones who have perished, and the memory for which it was for.

(Moment of silence)

Thank you.

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone for coming this evening. It turns out tonight, and this slot in particular, was a very competitive one. Not only are there a few defense industry receptions, but more importantly, there is a talk from legendary Ukrainian artist Oleksandr Dubovyk at Ukrainian House on Khreshchatyk Street. Dubovyk was first introduced to me by our partners at Dom Master Klass, who are here tonight. His work explores the themes of a Ukrainian-led global cultural renaissance, and the philosophy of "[Bouquet](#)" where all of humanity comes together during a time of rapid technological upheaval and the Age of Aquarius.

This philosophy inspired the Dom Master Klass team's Bouquet festival, which will be held next month, in August, at the iconic Saint Sophia Cathedral, with over forty events made free to the public. I encourage everyone here to attend Bouquet festival, and to also stop by Dubovyk's retroactive exhibit for the next month at Ukrainian House.

We have a few special guests this evening.

I would like to welcome the newly appointed Cultural Attaché, Erik Pugner, here this evening. Many U.S. Embassies right now do not have Cultural Attaché positions designated, so the arrival of a dedicated Cultural Attaché in Kyiv is an encouraging sign of the continued importance the United States places on cultural diplomacy and the U.S.-Ukraine partnership.

I would also like to welcome Iraq Ambassador Tarek Kazem, whom I have gotten to know over the past month. Ambassador Kazem reminded me several weeks ago that war is often not the hardest part of a conflict, but what comes afterward. Those words resonated deeply with me. My late father served in the Pentagon during the Iraq War, and like many American families, ours later reflected deeply on that conflict. Seeing Iraq today entering a new chapter of investment and development is a reminder that even after tremendous hardship, nations can rebuild. Congratulations on your government's recent delegation to Washington, Ambassador.

This evening is part of the commemoration of America's 250th anniversary. In just a month, the United States will mark the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Brooklyn, the largest battle of the American Revolution. It was not an American victory. In fact, General George Washington's army was outnumbered, outflanked, and forced into retreat. Yet what might have been remembered as the end of the Revolution instead became one of its defining moments. Through remarkable leadership, discipline, and the courage of ordinary soldiers, Washington preserved the Continental Army in a daring nighttime evacuation across the East River. The Revolution survived because the army survived.

Although I am not Ukrainian, my journey with my American heritage began in Kyiv. After spending several years studying Ukraine's history during wartime and learning about great patriots like Dubovyk from our partners, I decided it was time to finally seek out my own history. Last year, I joined the Sons of the American Revolution, an organization whose members trace their family lineage in America back to 1776 and the country's founding. My Revolutionary ancestor, William Guy, served in the Virginia regiment under Colonel Gustavus Wallace.

When my SAR membership pin, which I am wearing tonight, arrived, I was struck by something. Its colors are Blue and Gold. They were the colors of George Washington's Continental Army. Today, they are the colors of Ukraine's flag.

History rhymes, it seems.

Taking this journey into one's family history is sacred. It is also a rare privilege from the perspective of history. In Ukraine under the Soviet Union, state authorities confiscated property and murdered entire bloodlines. Many Ukrainians today can trace only one or two generations of their family history. Their archives were destroyed, their stories interrupted, and in many cases their ancestors deliberately erased from the historical record.

My friend Marina, who came to America from Kharkiv, and who was with me at Fraunces Tavern in New York as I accepted my SAR certificate, has a photo of several Ukrainian Army Generals set as her phone screensaver. She tells me that she views these Generals as Ukraine's founding fathers, and that one day they will inspire institutions like George Washington.

Every century, the notion of Western civilization reinvents itself to survive to modern times. The Magna Carta gave way to the American Revolution. The American Revolution gave way to World War II and the formation of NATO and the Marshall Plan. Today, Western Civilization's reorientation is happening here in Kyiv, with both a global cultural renaissance envisioned by Dubovyk, but also technological innovation and the weapons needed to defend it.

In this room tonight, we have many examples of this.

Just as the Marquis de Lafayette crossed the Atlantic nearly 250 years ago to stand beside George Washington and the cause of American independence, today a new generation is crossing the Atlantic once again—not with muskets, but with ideas, technology, and innovation. The partnership between the United States and Ukraine is no longer defined solely by diplomacy or military assistance. It is increasingly being shaped by engineers, entrepreneurs, artists, and innovators working together to build the institutions and technologies that will define the twenty-first century.

And just as was the case with America, the end result will be a World Superpower; economically, militarily, and culturally.

Thank you.



## Remarks Delivered by Evgeni Utkin



I remember how America celebrated two hundred years.

I was a young man then, living in the Soviet Union.

In Sokolniki Park, in Moscow, they opened an exhibition about America — “The USA: Two Hundred Years.”

A friend of mine went. He stood in line the whole night. And what did he carry home, like a trophy?

A plastic bag. We had never seen such a thing before. Today we would not give it a second look — a simple empty bag. But back then, it meant a lot. It was a huge message in the three letters printed on it: USA.

In those grey years, America was our far-off reminder of one simple thing — freedom. We listened to jazz in secret. We dreamed of a pair of blue jeans. Small things that keep a fire alive.

And now, here I am — half a century later, celebrating America’s two hundred and fiftieth.

What I have learned in all that time — is that freedom is not a statue standing still. It is not something you win once and set in stone. It has to be kept alive, every day, or it goes out.

Freedom is a flame that burns in people — and it must pass from heart to heart, so it never stops.

Today that flame burns brightest right here. In Kyiv. In Ukraine.

Under Russia's attacks and terror. We are protecting the greatest values we have. We are clear about where it is going, while the rest of the world is full of noise — the noise of fear and money.

This country knows something very simple, and very old. It is written in the DNA of our nation. Every generation here has its own Maidan.

A thousand years ago, it was the Viche.

In 2014, it was the Revolution of Dignity.

Now, in the middle of a great war, it is a rally with simple cardboard signs — in city squares across the country.

Ukrainians speak their mind — standing for the basic principles that keep freedom alive — under a daily threat of death.

This is democracy in its highest form: alive, and in action. Today, it is Ukraine that shows the way.

So tonight, to my American friends, I say this.

Look at Ukraine. Listen to her carefully. And remember who you are. Remember where you came from. And remember where you are heading.

Just as we once looked up to you, and remembered ourselves.

Enjoy this day — and let that flame into your hearts again.



*Iraq Ambassador Tarek Kazem Views America House's 250 Exhibit Sponsored by Prager University*





