

THE WAR TOUCHES EVERYONE...
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"I am Ukrainian, and this is my lifework"

Oleksii Sobolev,
President, CFA Society Ukraine



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- Oleksii, where did the war catch you?

On the 24th of February, I woke up from my friend's call. We had a plan in case of war. We packed up very fast with my wife and went to the parents who live in a village near Brovary. All our family gathered there. In the house near Brovary, we were staying the first 11 days of the war. During air alerts, we were in basements. We heard as russians were coming closer and closer. Near our village a big column of russian tanks was destroyed, they were bombarded right from the side of our village. It was dangerous to stay there, and firstly we went to Khmelnytskyi, then to Uzhhorod, and later our wives and children went to Bratislava to the sister.

During the war, we receive a lot of help from the CFA community. They helped my friends in different countries. CFA Society Slovakia ran very fast a help program, which was useful also for my family. They got money to stay in Slovakia. First of all, it gave a feeling of safety and reduced the level of anxiety. My family realized that there are people who are ready to support us whatever happens. Honestly, we are very thankful for this help.

- Did you expect that the full-scale war can start?

- Nobody expected. We thought that there might be a war for Donbas, but not all around the country. We were living in the illusion of a world, where the full-scale war is impossible. In 2019 I heard from Peter Zeihan about it at a conference of the CFA Institute in the USA. In his report, he said, that the war between Ukraine and russia is inevitable, and there are quite logical reasons for it. Now Peter comments a lot on the geopolitical dimension of this country because it has changed and continues to change the world.

- Why was this war inevitable?

- For putin to stop worrying about, as he says, the threat from the side of the West, in his opinion, the russian borders must be somewhere in Romania, through Poland, and behind Lithuania. Under no circumstances (and under no prices for petrol) would putin have enough power for it, in particular, considering that he has been building an autocracy based on lying for 20 years. If putin's plan had been successful, and we had given up in 2 days, as everybody expected, putin would have advanced his plan to Moldavia, which would have given up fast for sure. After, he would have had a desire to invade Romania, to destroy NATO, after what there would have been a war in Poland and the Baltic States. The military forces of Ukraine and we all together destroyed his plan. Now, a huge breakdown of russia is 5-10 years closer. By the way, it's already the 5th time that Ukraine ruins putin's plans, nobody in the world did it so regularly.

- According to what you say, our main task as a country consists in destroying putin's plans?

- Our main task is to save our lives. Now we are simply trying to understand how to live on. Here comes an understanding of the fact that if you choose to live in Ukraine - you choose to live in the war. The war will never finish. Whatever happens to russia, whoever is in their government - this country will always try to destroy us. We mustn't forget it and we need to do our best to ruin their plans. Maybe this is a vocation of our generation - to contribute to the breakdown of the russian empire and ensure the possibility to live free for our children. Maybe our Ukrainian people missed this final mission. Around this mission, it's very simple to

unite people when everybody understands everything in the same way. And this mission is very huge, ambitious, and long-lasting. This mission will be enough for me, my children, and, maybe, my grandchildren.

- **Do you believe, that this war with russia is not the last one for Ukraine?**

- I think that we must get ready for the next wars. We are like Japan, which lives in the earthquakes zone. We also have constant earthquakes, not because of natural factors, but because of some not indifferent neighbors. But this is this thing that will help us be more powerful. Everybody believes that we have no chance, that russia will conquer us. Everybody makes calculations, and everything is according to it. But we, as a country, are doing now unbelievable things. It is clear, that we can do it. This is the Ukrainian way. That's why I think that we will manage to build a country that will be impossible to conquer, this country will be prosperous and safe. I think that the other countries will unite around Ukraine. Nobody has so huge experience of conflict as we have with russia. But we do better. 300-400 thousand well-trained people will go through this powerful war, and they will train others. All the European countries will now spend a lot of money on war. They will be trained by USA and Ukraine. It will be milliard industry in our country.

- **Will the CFA Society continue to need charterholders in Ukraine?**

- Yes, sure! We have already lost the illusion that there will be somebody to save us besides ourselves. We learned to cooperate, to achieve goals with the help of the country and helping the country. Everybody from us is now learning to be responsible. Other countries give us weapons, but it is used by our people, and it's our people who are dying at the war.

What we don't know now – is how many people will come back to Ukraine. If it will be the overwhelming majority – we may have a situation where the third part of things that we used every day is absent, because it was simply destroyed by russia. We will have to rebuild a lot of factories. To finance all these things, we will need people who know how to count and evaluate risks.

Obviously, Ukraine will spend a lot of money on the army. If previously our politicians appealed to the retired people, promising to raise social benefits, now they will focus on the financing of the army. That's why we will have to save up for our pension by ourselves. But not many people know how to save funds for 30 years, moreover during a military conflict. What's more – how to do it in a way that your saved funds don't disappear, but multiply. It's the investment professionals who know how to do it. And we will help with that. We need to rebuild the country. So, the financial analysts will have a lot of work.