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19/06/2018

The Honorable Congressman Ro Khanna
513 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
USA

Via Fax: 408 436 27 21 and Post

Dear Congressman Khanna:

I am a historian and archival specialist, and am wholly taken aback to read – and reread – your April 28, 2018, letter to Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan, particularly of course as it pertains to Ukraine.

While you touch upon several issues, I will at this point address only one – the repeated assertion of Ukraine's record in that war as being one of collaboration. (As to anti-Semitism today in Ukraine, I suggest you speak with the Jewish community here.) Your assertions were roundly discredited two generations ago by American, British and German archives, as well as the archives of those organizations – the OUN and UPA – that you malign.

Why would Ukraine today "glorify Nazi collaborators" if the Nazis condemned to death the very persons who you self-assuredly condemn as "collaborators"? Of the many documents that are extant, you will want to read the attached from the Nuremberg Tribunal, being a Nazi order from November 25, 1941, demanding the arrest, interrogation and then peremptory execution of Stepan Bandera's followers. The crime was defying Hitler and declaring an independent Ukrainian state. Did anyone in Europe at the time dare to do the same? What about Vichy France, or Quisling Norway? What of Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and other nations? Holland? Denmark? Italy?

Why would Ukraine today "glorify Nazi collaborators" when Hitler's entire purpose for WWII in Europe was to conquer, occupy and colonize Ukraine? For Hitler then, as for Putin now, Ukrainians simply didn't exist. Heinrich Himmler, the Reichsführer-SS, in his directive of June 30, 1943, commanded: "The word 'Ukrainian' is forbidden, now and for all time." His order of July 14, 1943 expressly forbade any mention of "Ukrainian nationhood," Are you aware of this? In the Nazi concentration camps, Ukrainians weren't even identified as Ukrainians, but only as "Russians" or "Poles." Are you aware of this?

Why would Ukraine today "glorify Nazi collaborators" if Ukraine suffered more human "losses" than any other nation in Europe? More than 5 million civilians were killed, more than 2 million were killed serving in the Red Army, and more than 2 million were deported for slave labor in Germany. You may want to consult with Professor Davies at Oxford, or Professor Timothy Snyder at Yale. An American journalist at the time [1945] wrote:

“A good place to study that [the Eastern Front WWII] was the [*sic*]Ukraine, the scene of Hitler’s greatest attempt at ‘colonization’ and of his greatest defeat. Yet it was not till I went on a sobering journey into this twilight of war that I fully realized the price which 40,000,000 Ukrainians paid for Soviet and Allied victory. The whole titanic struggle, which some are so apt to dismiss as the Russian glory, was first of all a Ukrainian war. . . . A relatively small part of the Russian Soviet Republic itself was actually invaded, but the whole Ukraine, whose people were economically the most advanced and numerically the second largest in the Soviet Union, was devastated from the Carpathian frontier to the Donets and Don rivers, where Russia proper begins. No single European country suffered deeper wounds to its cities, its industry, its farmlands and its humanity. ... ***Because of that, if for no other reason, we should become more familiar with the Ukrainian people...***”

Edgar Snow, **The Patterns of Soviet Power**, Random House, NY 1945

For an esteemed member of Congress to make the accusations that you do is such a breathtaking revision of history that, quite frankly, words fail me. Are you aware that you repeat the siren song of Russian *dezinform* that, unfortunately, still holds sway in some quarters? It was Moscow, you will remember (or perhaps not) that was not only Hitler's premier collaborator, but partner, in triggering WWII? Most Ukrainians especially those who fought in the ranks of OUN and UPA, did not choose between two tyrants and two totalitarian systems. America and the Western Democracies did. Are you aware of this? Ukrainians rejected both tyrants, fought both and were slaughtered by both. America and the Western Democracies did not and were not. Are you aware of this? I hope that, rather to your credit, you were not aware of the matters that I raise, and that your letter was not the product of conscientious consideration or knowledge.

“All my life, I have been intrigued by the gap between appearances and reality. Things are never quite as they seem.” (Norman Davies, Oxford University)

A reading of OUN documents related to insurgent units under the leadership of Stepan Bandera, fails to find any level of loyalty to the Third Reich. In fact, as soon as Operation Barbarossa (the invasion of the Soviet Union) launched, rather than supporting the drive against the Soviets, the OUN, looking into the teeth of Germanys vaunted Sixth Army, declared Ukraine’s sovereignty. (You may appreciate the enormity of courage and principle to do that. Barbarossa was constituted of well over 3 million Wehrmacht and Axis troops. The Allied invasion of Normandy on D Day amounted to some 150,000 men.)

The Gestapo rounded up the leading figures of the OUN along with Stepan Bandera and committed them to Sachsenhausen and other death camps. Not only did the OUN and its military arm rescue and saved from the ovens many Jews, but others who were on the executioner's agenda. The much maligned leader of the OUN, Stepan Bandera, issued orders to his followers not to fall for the calls of the Gestapo to turn in Jews claiming “we have no issues with Jews and members should not take the bait of the advancing Nazi forces.” Taras Chuprynka (Roman Shukhevych) Commander of the UPA issued orders to shelter Jews. Chuprynka’s wife, at risk to her own life, sheltered Iryna Riechenburg 1942–1943, a Jewish child, while her husband the aforementioned Taras Chuprynka, arranged transit documents for her under the name of Iryna Ryzhko, disguising her Jewish identity. These historic figures, maligned in the letter you penned, appear in their true and noble light in the archives Western lobbyists continue to ignore.

Ukraine has implemented laws that will keep primary records of the past accessible to the public, Ukrainian and foreign. We here in the academic community are puzzled by the dearth of interest from the West, in the primary source materials provided by law and opened to students, scholars and media. In 2016 there were approximately eighty eight visitors to the KGB Archives and all but a few were locals. In 2017 that figure was ninety one and again virtually all were

domestic students and scholars. Therein lays the answer to your fears of re-naming cities, streets and institutions to honor our resurrected heroes.

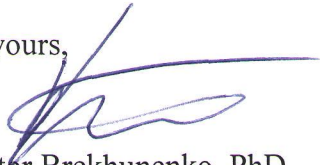
I hope this letter does not come across as a harsh rebuke. I offer it as well-meaning and friendly advice.

I wish you well in fulfilling your responsibilities as an elected leader in the free world. I leave you with a thought to pass on to your staff, advisors and lobbyists:

*“Launch not beyond your depth, but be discreet
And mark that point where sense and dullness meet...
A little learning is a dangerous thing.”*

Alexander Pope

Respectfully yours,



Professor Viktor Brekhunenko, PhD.
Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences

cc: Deputy Secretary of State Sullivan
U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch
Secretary of State Mike Pompeo
all recipients of original letter
Ukrainian Congress Committee of America