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GOA STANDS WITH STATE DEPARTMENT AGAINST RUSSIAN CHURCH, ARCHBISHOP TELLS UKRAINIAN AMBASSADOR



Archbishop Elpidophoros and the Greek Archdiocese stand together with the U.S. State Department against the Russian Orthodox Church, which he and the State Department consider but a tool of the Russian state.

On the same day that he offered controversial remarks at the March for Life, Abp. Elpidophoros, the head of the Patriarchate of Constantinople's Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, also visited Oksana Markarova, Ukrainian ambassador to the U.S.

The Archbishop, a Turkish citizen who described his election to the post of Archbishop as "a great opportunity for Turkey," took the opportunity to condemn the Russian state and the Moscow Patriarchate, which, according to him, "obediently follows the Kremlin's commands."

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese's report quotes the Archbishop:

I visited the Embassy of Ukraine to express to Ambassador Oksana Markarova our support, as Christians, as Greeks, and as Americans, for the people of Ukraine, who are suffering from a Russian imperialism that is manifesting itself at every level: military, economy, energy resources, and the Church as well.

It is an injustice to the history and tradition of Orthodoxy, that instead of supporting the sisters and brothers of Ukraine, the Moscow Patriarchate obediently follows the Kremlin's commands and toes its line, dividing Orthodoxy world over and scandalizing the People of God from Ukraine to Africa, and even as far away as Korea.

We welcome the US government's stance and the recent statement by a State Department spokesman condemning the Kremlin's "malign efforts to instrumentalize Orthodox identity."

Earlier this month, a State Department representative stated: "Russia is engaged in covert and overt malign efforts to instrumentalize Orthodox identity to advance its own geopolitical interests, supporting some Orthodox churches and their leaders while undermining others."

Interestingly, in the view of one Greek hierarch of the Church of Cyprus, it is Constantinople that is weaponized against the Russian Church.

"The Moscow Patriarchate is largely victimized today, since Westerners believe that President Putin is using his Orthodox faith, through the Moscow Patriarchate, to rival them in Orthodox countries. It is, then, and also today, a purely political issue of the West's basic geostrategic objectives, in the face of a Russia that is antagonistic to them," His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah of Tamassos said in an interview in last February.

He continued:

Regardless of how the Phanar handles this situation from an ecclesiastical point of view, the West, according to its recent statements, is heavily invested in strengthening and imposing the primacy of the Ecumenical Patriarch on all Local Churches. Russia's rivals, having good relations with the Phanar, seek to achieve their political goals on a global scale. To do this, they advance the Western concept of the existence of one spiritual leader for all Christians in the West, and, accordingly, one in the East.

Furthermore, both state and church figures have admitted that the Patriarchate of Constantinople worked together with the U.S. to attack the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church because of its connection with the Russian Church and to create the schismatic "Orthodox Church of Ukraine."

"Metropolitan" Makary Maletich, the head of the former "Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church," which joined Constantinople's OCU in December 2018, has spoken publicly several times about the role of Western governments in the creation of the OCU.

In December 2018, he said that the provision of autocephaly to the OCU by Constantinople was possible because of the work of foreign diplomats, including U.S. ambassadors and others.

He addressed the issue again the following June, stating: "It's not only the merit of Poroshenko, but also the Verkhovna Rada, Ukrainians themselves, and the diplomats of the U.S.A., Great Britain, France, and Germany, who were interested in the church."

Maletich is certain "that if the Ecumenical Patriarch had not seen the support in the leading states of the world, he wouldn't have done this. Then neither Poroshenko, nor the Rada, nor Philaret, nor I would have done anything."

Last January, former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo tweeted about the U.S.'s work in getting Orthodox Churches to recognize the schismatics.

In May, Valeriy Chaly, the Ukrainian ambassador to the U.S. from 2015 to 2019, said the U.S. can consider the creation of the OCU its own achievement. He stated on air:

For the American side—by the way, this might not be known in the President's Office—the key foreign policy topic has been freedom of religion recently. And the issue of an autonomous Church was promoted by Ukraine with the support of our

partners.

The United States did—I can say this now—a great deal to make this issue a reality for Ukraine. This is a huge achievement that they consider their own as well. Maybe it’s exaggerated, but there are such sentiments.

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