

Dears Friends,

I informed the organizers of the rally on behalf of Ukraine that I will not be one of the speakers this afternoon. I have tremendous respect for Indivisible, the main organizing group, but then I read statements from two of the co-sponsors (Code Pink and Peace House) featuring slogans like “No to War...No to Nato. Yes to Peace with Russia.” I was taken aback and confused by the “No to Nato...” statement, and to Code Pink’s opposition to sanctions against Russia which is the most non-violent means of ending the fighting available.

My goal was to come to the rally and offer the story of my own Ukrainian Jewish ancestors who had lived in the Ukraine for hundreds of years, and yet because of antisemitism and the programs were forced to flee for their lives to America in the early twentieth-century. I had planned to bless the Ukrainian citizens and soldiers in their resistance to the Russian invasion, and to ask G-d to guide them to peace after the Russian armies had withdrawn.

I still cannot comprehend what “No to Nato” means in the middle of an invasion where Nato is the one entity trying their best to prevent war without joining the fighting themselves. Nato’s role has been to support the Ukrainian people in their resistance and struggle. I did not want my speech at the rally to turn into a debate with the other speakers who I suspect might be unfairly criticizing the Nato alliance that I would be asking G-d to bless.

In that spirit please chant with me “May the one who is the Source of peace above let descend the sprit of Shalom here below for the Ukrainians, the Jewish people, for the whole world. And let us say, Amayn.”

L’shalom, Rabbi David Zaslow