

# Dr. Tymofiy Mylovanov warns of Ukraine War and its global consequences during talk at UMass

At UMass, former Zelensky cabinet member discusses Ukraine's resilience, the role of Western support, and the war's far-reaching impact

By Audrey Falkner, Collegian Staff

On March 7, Ukrainian economist, Dr. Tymofiy Mylovanov, visited the University of Massachusetts Amherst, giving a talk titled "The Future of Europe if Ukraine loses the war," hosted by the UMass Office of Global Affairs. Over 20 people attended the event.

The talk began with Mylovanov acknowledging the likelihood of Ukraine's collapse remains low, as he stated, "I personally believe, my current estimate is that the probability of Ukraine collapse is about five, 10 percent."

He noted this resilience is largely dependent on continued support from the United States and Europe. Despite facing overwhelming odds at the beginning of the conflict, Ukraine has successfully resisted Russia's invasion.

Mylovanov was Ukraine's minister of economic development, trade and agriculture from 2019 to 2020.

"When Russia had an overwhelming, overwhelming advantage, when Ukraine was not ready militarily, technologically, in terms of command and control, in terms of intelligence, Russia still could not take much, except some areas ... couldn't take any large city. Which means one simple thing, that Russia is not a superpower anymore," Mylovanov said.

Anna Nagurney, the Eugene M. Isenberg chair in Integrative Studies and co-chair on the Board of directors at Kyiv School of Economics (KSE) helped co-host the event.

She is the daughter of refugees who fled Ukraine during World War II and has played a pivotal role in fostering the partnership between UMass Amherst and KSE. As part of this collaboration, Nagurney emphasized the critical role Western support has played in Ukraine's survival.

"Actually, amazingly, economically, Ukraine has done pretty well, but obviously with Western support. They were expected to collapse, you know, three days after the full-scale invasion of [Feb.] 24 2022," Nagurney said. "It's now going on into the fourth year, and they're still standing okay, but the Western support has been absolutely critical."



Kalina Kornacki

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Nagurney also highlighted the impressive growth and humanitarian efforts of KSE during the war. “KSE has tripled its enrollment in three years, which is incredible. And they’ve gotten a lot of donations, a lot of money, which is really, really good. But also, for humanitarian relief, they collect money for that and rebuilding hospitals, building shelters, and schools and things like that.”

Asta Motrenko, a junior at UMass, shared her experience as a Ukrainian exchange student from KSE. She arrived in August 2023 for a two-year program, initially as a sophomore.

“I came here to share my experience, to say the war is still going on. A lot of people are dying and people are fighting, and kids are dying, innocent people are dying,” Motrenko said. “I just came here, first of all, to learn some stuff, and then to return to Ukraine to show the world that we actually have support.”

The war has evolved into a slow and painful conflict, with neither side able to make significant territorial advances.

“It is impossible for either side, no matter what their advantage is, to conduct large scale, fast pace operations ... They will be decimated by drones,” Mylovanov explained, highlighting the shifting dynamics of modern warfare.

Modern warfare has proven to be heavily reliant on drone and artillery technology, with both sides using these tools to devastating effect.

Nagurney stated, “This is definitely a hybrid war, and that’s the way it’s going to be in the future. I can see, you know, with drones operating and using artificial intelligence, fighting each other.”

“In a year, Ukraine built plans which produce more artillery systems than all of the NATO combined, all right, during the war time, and more than Russia produces artillery systems. These capabilities have helped level the playing field, allowing Ukraine to bolster its defenses despite initial disadvantages,” Mylovanov said.

“They’re hoping, once this horrific war is over with, they can use drones for disaster management, more humanitarian operations, emergency management,” Nagurney said.

Mylovanov mentioned another disability the Ukrainian forces are facing: limited manpower. He discussed the difficulty of relying solely on conscription, stating, “Ukraine refuses to drop the draft age to 18, and that’s what makes some of the European and US allies ... don’t take Ukraine seriously, because Ukraine is unwilling to send young kids to die.”

He further explained the surprising economic resilience, pointing out that the GDP gap per capita “shrunk over the time of the war, and the salaries, real wages, have increased, at least, to the qualified labor force.”

Mylovanov pointed out that while the country has faced significant economic hardship during the ongoing conflict, Ukraine has endured and even improved in some areas.

Mylovanov warned, “The only scenario under which Ukraine collapses is if there’s a continuation, actually abandonment of Ukraine support, both by the United States and by Europeans.”

“There are quite a few countries, even since the incident in the Oval Office took place, that are announcing additional financial donations to Ukraine,” Nagurney said, noting that Scandinavian countries, Germany, Macron and Australia have mentioned giving more support to Ukraine.

“[The Oval Office discussion] was actually a huge wake up call, I think, to Europe. It’s also terrifying. It’s destabilizing the global world order,” Nagurney said.

The long-term outlook suggests Ukraine has the capacity to maintain its defense efforts as long as international support remains consistent.

“There is a lot of uncertainty now, a lot of pressure from the U.S. administration, and it seems like there’s essentially no pressure on Russia to stop. They could stop instantaneously, no, and stop the killing, the ecological damage, the, you know, cultural genocide and so on,” Nagurney said.

“When the war started, you just realize what your values in life are. Like, just in one morning, you’re waking up and you have nothing,” Motrenko shared. “You first of all realize yourself and your family and all the things that you have, just like water or just like electricity.”

“You don’t know what’s going to happen tomorrow,” she said. Her experience of the war has also fueled her desire to contribute to Ukraine’s recovery, especially through her studies in economics.

Motrenko’s focus on economics reflects a desire to contribute to rebuilding Ukraine’s war-torn economy and shape its future once the conflict subsides.

Oleksandra Horusieva, a sophomore economic major, is also from Ukraine and shared a similar sentiment at the talk.

“When I started studying here, I understood what it is, how it is to study in a peaceful environment when you don’t have to stress, when you are certain about your near future, when you just live your life without these rockets, shelters, and so on,” Horusieva said, reflecting on the stark difference between her current situation and the trauma of living through a war.

Horusieva also pointed out the larger geopolitical consequences of the conflict, stating, “If Ukraine falls, Russia will say, ‘Aha, Ukraine is weak. Then we have more tortures. Now we can work with broader Europe.’”

As the war continues, the young generation’s resolve to rebuild their homeland remains strong. Horusieva’s father had the foresight to recognize the impending danger early on, advising the family to leave Kyiv before Russia’s military training could begin.

“I’m really proud of my generation,” Motrenko said, “because most of my friends, even though they go to Europe or other countries to study, they want to come back and like, rebuild.”

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