



Dear Praying Friends in Europe,

What just happened in Russia?

As I write this edition of the Canopy of Prayer we are seeing some worrying, if not dangerous, things happening in Russia. As we awoke last Saturday, we began to hear of the Wagner mercenary group taking control of Russian cities and marching towards Moscow. To say that there was confusion amongst western leaders and the press would be an understatement. Whatever our personal views of the Ukraine/Russia situation we need to be praying for Russia at this time. It is difficult for us to say that we know how we should pray, but the truth is that we should be praying because we have a God who is neither surprised nor shocked by these developments.

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.” Daniel 2:20-22

We have drawn together some information to help us to pray.

What we know so far.

On Friday 23rd June the mutiny started when Yevgeny Prigozhin accused Sergei Shoigu the Russian Defence Minister of attacking the Prigozhin’s Wagner group. Prigozhin order his mercenary to move towards Moscow on what he called a March of Justice. The Wagner group proceeded to disarm Russian soldiers as they moved to and took control of military facilities in Rostov and Voronezh they also shot down several Russian helicopters and one airplane killing over a dozen of Russian military personnel. This mutiny ended the following day when Prigozhin agreed with Russia’s leadership to end the hostilities in return for Prigozhin’s safe passage to Belarus and the dropping of all criminal charges against him and also an amnesty for the Wagner group soldiers.

The immediate danger of fighting in Moscow was averted but this remains the most serious challenge to Putin’s authority in all his 23 years of power.

What does the West make of all this?

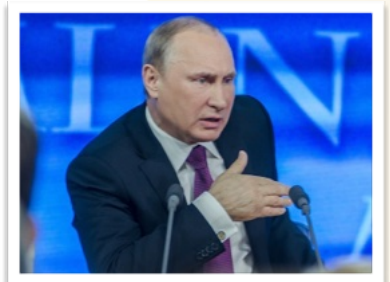
The EU’s Foreign Ministers met on Monday and described the events as “an internal Russian matter” and one which showed fragilities and cracks in Russia’s military power. However, the EU’s Chief Diplomat, Josep Borrell, said “It’s not a good thing to see that a nuclear power like Russia can go into a phase of political instability.” But he added that the EU’s focus would continue to be on supporting Ukraine. There was hope in Ukraine that this infighting might mean the end of Russia’s invasion, or even the end of Putin.

Putin’s hold on power is widely seen to have been weakened and the notion of stability in Russia has been shaken. The rebellion against the government has shown the unpredictability of Russia, backing up what many nations in Eastern Europe have been saying for years.

It is reported that US spy agencies had gleaned information of a possible plot some time ago, but the concern of the US government was what might happen if Russia’s nuclear arsenal fell into the wrong hands.

What we also need to remember as we pray is the wider reach of Yevgeny Prigozhin’s Wagner mercenaries. This group is active in a number of other countries, ostensibly as security forces, but in reality as an influence for wider Russian objectives. It has now become apparent by Putin’s recent statement that the group has been receiving funding from Russia. These influences are particularly of concern in countries across Africa and concern not simply military and security but also political and economic influence.

Although Prigozhin has been pardoned, some analysts say that it seems unlikely that he and Putin can co-exist for long even if he is not in Russia. He will be seen as a rival and possible post-Putin candidate for president.



Let us pray that these events in Russia would hasten the end of the war in Ukraine and that the Wagner group would not be able to pose a further threat from Belarus.

Pray for our political leaders to have wisdom as they deal with the consequences of these events.

Pray that the Lord would “reveal the deep and hidden things” (v.22) as we seek Him in prayer so that His light can shine in the darkness.

Additional Prayer Points:-

1. Pray for the new government in Greece, that this country would know a time of increased stability.
2. Pray for a more rapid and humanitarian response to refugees in distress at sea off the coasts of Europe so that lives are not lost unnecessarily.

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