**Russia’s War with Ukraine**

**Civilians have “laughed in the face of death” by banding into militias and greeting Russian tanks with AK-47s and Molotov cocktails. These are the same Ukrainians who, just a week ago, were “disappointed with the government” and complaining about low salaries. That all seems like ancient history now. Russians thought we’d cower before their artillery. Instead, they awakened the force “that makes us Ukrainians.” *(The Week magazine, March 11, 2022)***

**Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine has left many of his own people “outraged,” said Eva Hartog in Politics.eu (Belgium). Since the shelling began, thousands of Russians have flooded the streets of Moscow, St. Petersburg, and dozens of other cities to demand an end to the aggression. Demonstrators shouted “No to war!” and waved Ukrainian flags in defiance of riot police; some 6,000 were arrested. *(The Week magazine, March 11, 2022)***

**Dictators promising national “greatness” inevitably inflict misery on their own people, and it will be no different with Vladimir Putin. As he escalates his barbaric bombardment of Ukraineian civilians, the West’s censure of Russia is blurring into the condemnation of Russians. Russian artists, performers, and athletes – whose family members are entirely at Putin’s mercy – are facing demands that they publicly condemn the regime. *(Mark Gimein, in The Week magazine, March 18, 2022)***

**Ukrainian officials have been using facial recognition software to identify dead Russian soldiers seen in photos and sending the photos to the dead soldiers’ family and friends. The goal, said Mykhailo Fedorov, head of Ukraine’s Digital Transformation Ministry, is to “dispel the myth of a ‘special operation’ in which there are ‘no conscripts’ and ‘no one dies.’” *(Forbes, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 8, 2022)***

**How war will make prices high: The economic fallout from Russia’s invasion of Ukraine reaches far beyond oil, said Patrick Thomas ans Alistair MacDonald. Already, “the mayhem of war” is a stressing strained global supply chain and threatening to raise prices at “supermarkets, retailers, and the gas pump.” Ukrainian farmers are supposed to plant their spring crops soon, and the acdcount fore 8 percent to 13 percent of the world’s wheat and corn, respectively. The expectation of diminished yields has driven the price of wheat futures up by 40 percent, with corn prices up roughly 21 percent. “Even if the fighting were to stop,” Russia is one of the world’s largest fertilizer suppliers. Farmers in Iowa, thousands of miles from the conflict, “are wringing their hands” in worry over the possibility of shortages. They’re not alone. Supply chains that were just recovering from the pandemic are now getting tangled again. For instance, Russia is a major supplier of the aluminum used in soda cans and the nickel used in lithium-ion batteries for electric vehicles. The invasion has also slowed trade as Western shipping companies and Russian ports and cargo flights detour Russian airspace. It is too early to know what the long-terms effect of the war will be. But it already has eliminated “some of the hope that inflation could plateau in the second half of the year.” *(The Week magazine, March 18, 2022)***

**In a perverse and terrible way, Vladimir Putin has done the world a great service. As he ruthlessly tries to brutalize Ukrainians into submission, Russia’s mad czar has reminded Europeans and Americans of the fragility of the liberal international order. History is not over. Authoritarians are ascendant. Democracy and freedom are in peril. Even the unthinkable – nuclear war is back in our nightmares. (*The Week magazine, March 11, 2022)***

**Isolating Russia will mean tremendous pain for ordinary Russians, who will be hurled back into the economic chaos and deprivation of the 1990s. Thousands of outrageous Russians who have taken to the streets to protest the invasion are being dragged off to jail. With this war, Putin is not just reducing Ukraine to rubble, he is also turning Russia back into the prison-state my parents fled, and I grieve for that. *(Mark Gimein, in The Week magazine, March 18, 2022)***

**Russia: Keeping $10 billion in leased planes: “Foreign leasing firms have succeeded in repossessing only about two dozen of more than 500 aircraft rented to Russian carriers,” said Julie Johnsson and Danny Lee in Bloomberg. Efforts by AerCap, Carlyle Aviation, and others to retrieve their planes under European Union sanctions have been rebuffed by Russian airlines, which have moved them “out of reach” inside the country. Russia appears to be “flouting decades-old international treaties” that guarantee lessors “the right to cross borders to claim aircraft.” The market value of the missing jets was estimated this week at $10.3 billion, but they may be “gone forever.” *(The Week magazine, March 18, 2022)***

**Putin may eventually win this battle, but his larger war is already lost, said Kori Schake, in The Atlantic. He wanted to crush Ukraine’s democratic dreams while “demonstrating NATO’s fecklessless,” and dividing the West. Instead, he’s done the opposite. Ukrainians have made it clear they’ll never submit to his rule, and free societies inspired by their pluck and bravery have united to “resist Putin’s evil.” The Russian dictator set out to “destroy the liberal international order” – instead,, he’s proved “the architect of its revitalization.” (*The Week magazine, March 11, 2022)***

**McDonald’s said it would temporarily close all 850 of its Russian restaurants this week. When the first McDonald’s opened in Moscow in January 1990, over 30,000 people lined up to buy a burger. *(Financial Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 18, 2022)***

**Groups of U.S. military veterans are traveling to Ukraine to join the battle against the Russian invasion. So far, about 16,000 foreign volunteers from multiple countries have joined Ukrainian forces, Volodymyr Zelensky said. “We have a calling to serve, and we trained our whole career for this kind of war,” said a departing U.S. Marine veteran who served in Iraq. *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 18, 2022)***

**The British Ministry of Defense released footage of a Russian mobile crematorium and said Russia had brought it to Ukraine to incinerate evidence of their own casualties. “It’s a chilling side effect of how the Russians view their forces,” said British Defense Secretary Ben Wallace. *(The Telegraph (U.K.), as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 11, 2022)***

**Old Joe can be a lousy communicator and “his priorities are often wrong,” said Mona Charen in The Bulwark, but in this crisis he’s shown that experience and competence matter. Consider where we’d be if we were led by Trump, a “useful idiot” who demeaned and alienated NATO and treated Putin with fawning “hero worship.” Biden “hasn’t been perfect – but he’s a godsend given the alternative.” *(The Week magazine, March 25, 2022)***

**Good week for: Payback, after a Ukrainian mechanic opened valves and partially sunk the $7.7 million luxury superyacht owned by his boss, Alexander Mikhee, the CEO of a Russian weapons company. “My boss is a criminal who sells weapons that kill the Ukrainian people,” Taras Ostapchuk, 55, told police in Mallorca, Spain. After being arrested and released, he left to fight in Ukraine. *(The Week magazine, March 11, 2022)***

**Russian precision-guided missiles aimed at Ukraine are failing at a rate as high as 50 to 60 percent, according to three U.S. officials. The Pentagon estimates that Russia has launched more than 1,100 missiles at Ukraine, but such a high failure rate could be a major reason why the Russian military hasn’t achieved such basic goals as destroying Ukraine’s air force. *(Reuters, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 8, 2022)***

**Putin’s aggression “has set off a geopolitical earthquake,” said The Boston Globe. Formerly neutral nations like Sweden have offered arms support and united around “unheard of” sanctions. President Biden has shown strong leadership in rallying NATO and holding the alliance together. But the true hero is Zelensky, whose courage and defiance have inspired the world “to stand against Putin and for the democratic freedoms too many in the West have taken for granted.” *(The Week magazine, March 11, 2022)***

**The reputation of Russia’s vaulted military “has been shattered,” said Helene Cooper in The New York Times. The logistical planning for the invasion was faulty, leaving tanks without fuel or sufficient protection and leaving columns of armored vehicles and gas trucks open to attack. Elite Russian airborne units have been destroyed, high-ranking officers killed, planes and helicopters shot down, while under-trained and under-supplied soldiers have “surrendered and sabotaged their own vehicles to avoid fighting.” *(The Week magazine, March 18, 2022)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**A huge gray market for Russian oil: An expanding and mysterious “shadow” infrastructure is helping Russia evade sanctions and sell its crude, said The Economist. Russia’s “alternative supply chain” has grown since European imports of its seaborne crude were banned last December and a $60-a-barrel price cap was imposed for any Russian oil shipped with Western logistics and insurance. China and India are still the biggest destinations for Russian oil, but they are far from the only buyers, and the volume going to “unknown destinations” has jumped. Some is transported on “battered tankers” sailing to “clandestine customers with their transponders off.” But most Russian crude is moved “through ‘gray’ networks” that do not recognize the price cap “but are not illegal,” because they use non-Western logistics and deliver to countries that are not part of the blockade. More than 30 new Russian trading outfits have set up in Dubai to orchestrate a fleet of 360-odd ships supplying this market, “equivalent to 16 percent” of global crude tanker capacity. Most are thought to be “fronts for Russian state firms.” The gray trade dramatically increases the chance of catastrophic accidents, as a “growing chunk” of the world’s petroleum, is being ferried by firms “with no reputation,” on aging ships making riskier journeys than ever. *(The Week magazine, February 10, 2023)***

**Many Russians feel “shame,” said novelist Ludmila Ulitskaya in Novaya Gazeta (Russian). It is our leaders who have visited a “great disaster” on Ukraine, but the responsibility “will be shared by all of us” who failed to stop them. Our duty now is to resist the relentless state propaganda demonizing the Ukrainian government – and resist the war. The brutality is a crime against the Ukrainian people, said film director Vladimir Mirzoev, also in Novaya Gazeta, but also “against Russia and the people of Russia.” Putin knew it would lead to devastating sanctions that “hit every citizen of Russia,” and already, people have thronged banks to withdraw cash as the ruble plunges in value. Overnight, Russia has become a “pariah,” its people impoverished. Mad with dictatorship, Putin thinks he can control us with a war, by labeling us traitors if we protest. Instead, more of us now realize we “cannot afford to remain silent.” *(The Week magazine, March 11, 2022)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**An estimated 3,500 sailors have been stuck on some 200 ships at Ukrainian ports, according to London-based shipping tracker Windward Ltd. More ships are stranded around the globe than at any other point since World War II. *(The Wall Street Journal, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 18, 2022)***

**Sanctions evaded: Russia is still getting its hands on Western goods despite U.S. and European sanctions meant to punish it for its war in Ukraine, data released this week shows. Russian consumers did see shortages early last year, soon after the Feb. 24 invasion, as companies like Apple and Samsung pulled out of the Russian market. But within months other countries had begun exporting to it record quantities of goods, from washing machines to cellphones – including Apple and Samsung products. “There’s a lot coming through central western Asia, Turkey, and the former Soviet republics,” analyst Andrew S. David told The New York Times. The International Monetary Fund, which had predicted Russia’s economy would shrink dramatically in 2023, now projects growth of 0.3 percent. *(The Week magazine, February 10, 2023)***

**Satellite imagery examined by British military analysts indicated nearly 1,000 Russian military vehicles, or 10 percent of their forces, had been destroyed or damaged. *(The Week magazine, March 18, 2022)***

**Marine traffic data shows at least four Russian-owned superyachts are being relocated to Montenegro and the Maldives as Western nations plan sanctions aimed at Russian oligarchs, which include property seizure. The fleeing yachts include Galactica Super Nova, a 230-foot superyacht owned by Lukoil president Vagit Alekperov, which features a helipad, an elevator, and a glass-bottomed swimming pool with a waterfall. *(CNBC.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 11, 2022)***

**U.N. is hostage to a Russia that scorns it: The U.N. Security Council is making a mockery of its own name, said Volodymyr Fessenko. It can’t ensure our security or any other country’s. President Volodymyr Zelensky said as much last week, addressing the body as it was trying to grapple with the atrocities Russian troops wrought on our civilians in Bucha. Either kick out Russia, he told the council, or “dissolve yourself altogether.” As one of the five permanent members of the council, Russia wields veto power over all decisions, and that has hamstrung the institution for decades. Out of 263 resolutions vetoed since the U.N. was established, 120 were struck down by Russia. Whenever Moscow “grossly violates international law,” as it did by invading Georgia in 2008 and by invading and occupying Crimea in 2014, it waves the veto like a magic wand to silence international condemnation. Given these latest – and ongoing – war crimes, it is past time to address the “crisis of U.N. effectiveness,” or the U.N. could become the next League of Nations. That intergovernmental body, established to promote peace in the wake of World War I, did nothing to stop bellicose member states, and they drove the world into an even larger conflagration. We need radical reform of the U.N., including “the imposition of real sanctions against any aggressor country..” If nothing is done, the U.N. will remain “a pointless talk show.” *(The Week magazine, April 22, 2022)***

**When Putin invaded Georgia in 2008, domestic protest was mild, but the 2014 Crimea annexation sparked a large rally in Moscow. If his own allies are now beginning to jump ship, it could be “the beginning of the end for Putin.” *(The Week magazine, March 11, 2022)***

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