Toward Understanding Japanese and US Mainstream Media in Light of the Invasion of Ukraine: Conflict Training

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Toward Understanding Japanese and US Mainstream Media in Light of the Invasion of Ukraine:

Conflict Training

by

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Abstract

In today’s society, there are various ways of watching and reading the news; however, advanced marketing and technology expose us to what best matches our beliefs. Our beliefs influence which media we choose and are shaped by what we read or watch. Because of the overload of information produced by social media, 24/7 news, podcasts, and a barrage of online news sources, it can be challenging to absorb all the information that we gather. In times of extremity, we are so consumed by the incursion of information that we forget to question and probe. When there is heightened violence and tragedy, we are affected by our own emotions and biases, however, so is our news. When we look carefully, we can analyze different values, conflict language, and partiality in the news. Furthermore, it is important to consider the ways that different cultures frame conflict in the media. This paper examines how select examples from Japanese mainstream media and United States (US) mainstream media following the Russian invasion of Ukraine compare and contrast when portraying, framing, and describing similar conflicts. A thorough examination of Japanese and US media demonstrated how each country upholds values and what they prioritize. In the Japanese media, the principles of pacifism were crucial to maintain while aiding Ukraine. The US media also spoke of peace and not provoking global conflict, but their actions seemed incongruent with those words.

Keywords: media, conflict, framing, journalism, Japan, United States
Introduction

Many people remember where they were when they first read, heard, or saw tragic news, but when we read news from the past, we are given a fresh angle. Today, people are bombarded with 24-hour news through multiple platform notifications and social media. Because of this, we learn to tune out the overload of stimulation and emotion after a certain amount of time. Rarely is news revisited from those heightened moments before disconnecting from the devastation. By revisiting the beginning moments of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it is my hope that you will be able to redirect your attention through the focus I have chosen. This paper utilizes conflict transformation literature to deconstruct the first five months of Japanese and US mainstream media following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. After the invasion, the world had many concerns. How long will the war last? Is this World War III? What are the benefits and drawbacks of supporting Ukraine? How does one help Ukraine? These questions were raised in Japanese and US media and reflected the values and priorities of how each culture responds during conflict and desperation. It is often in times of peril that the best and worst aspects of a nation manifest. Because of these nuances, I am examining US and Japanese media from February 24 through June 2022. The media data was selectively chosen from the first few months of the Russian invasion of Ukraine rather than the current news.

Historical Background and Cultural Considerations

The US and Japan have a complex and intertwined history in which each nation has very different ideas about how to achieve peace or what are justifiable acts under conditions of war, conflict, or threat of violence. A survey conducted by Dussich et al. (2001) found that out of 563 Americans and 908 Japanese respondents, “[p]eople in the United States believed the use of weapons early in the escalation process to be appropriate, whereas Japanese waited until the very
last moment before saying that they would use a weapon.” This is one example of how people in the US and Japan have different ideas of violence and resolution (Dussich et al., 2001). Because of these divergent perspectives, comparing how their conflict language and conflict strategy differ is beneficial. Due to globalization, humans are more connected and aware of things worldwide, so it is essential to build sustainable international relationships. This research paper does not aim to analyze the historical relationship between Japan and the US but to look at how early media portrayed and discussed the conflict between Ukraine and Russia. However, some historical context is necessary for framing and finding underlying causes of conflict and conflict attitudes when comparing Japan and the US.

In 1947, after World War II, Japan founded a pacifist constitution (Council on Foreign Relations, 2022). This action was influenced by the US Army General Douglas MacArthur, who wanted to weaken the hold of Japan’s aristocracy and the capacity for Japan to take up arms (Council on Foreign Relations, 2022). Though Japan’s constitution was shaped by the US, the pacifist constitution has influenced Japan’s way of managing conflicts peacefully and defensively rather than aggressively. Article 9 of Japan’s Constitution states, “land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained” (Japan Ministry of Defense, n.d.).

In 1954, Japan created the Self-Defense Force (SDF) as a part of article 9 as their new military (Constitutional Change in Japan, 2022). The purpose of the SDF is to uphold the belief that humanity deserves the right to a peaceful life removed from fear (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, n.d.). This entails a level of self-defense in which a “‘use of force’ to the minimum extent necessary to that end is permitted” (Japan Ministry of Defense, n.d.). SDF budgeting is assessed annually, and the ‘use of force’ is only allowed when Japan is under an
‘armed attack’ from a foreign country (Japan Ministry of Defense, n.d). Though the US made Japan’s military almost nonexistent, Japan reclaimed some power by creating the SDF. The SDF can bring peace to Japan and the world by trying to prevent future generations from experiencing the same devastation. In some senses, it is a promise to the world and to themselves, enshrined as foundationally as possible in the nation’s constitution.

Why History Matters

The US and Japan have contrasting ways of managing conflict and perspectives about peace. This section addresses those differences and establishes a framework for examining Japanese and US media. Despite the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941 by Japan, the US faced few homeland attacks from other countries during World War II. On the other hand, war was brought to the doorsteps of people in Japan with the carpet bombings of many Japanese cities and the concluding atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Through the lens of conflict analysis, this paper explores how the US and Japan experience historical events differently by looking at how war shapes the values and beliefs of those involved, specifically as those values and beliefs are expressed in their respective media. Even though the US imposed the dismantling of Japan’s imperial army and a new constitution, Japan’s war and death experience in their own country has made them want to prevent tragedies like that from happening again. However, the US, which saw the bombing of Japan as an end to the war and a victory (and who experienced little damage to their homeland), seem less discouraged from methods of military threat framed as deterrence or military violence, even in nations that have not attacked them.

In times of distress, the media has a way of exposing the implicit and explicit values of a nation, its priorities, and its intentions. In addition, the more we recognize how societies manage

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1 Carpet bombing is when bombs are dropped in rapid succession from aircrafts with the intention of mass destruction (Britannica, n.d.). “During World War II, both the Allies and the Nazis rained bombs on enemy cities, destroying military and industrial sites along with schools, churches, and homes” (Britannica, n.d.).
and portray conflict, the better we can work toward a more positive and peaceful narrative by creating intercultural understanding. For example, identifying conflict narratives in the media will give people the agency to form their own opinions about the media they consume.

**Methods**

The media sources for this research were selected from Japanese and US media publications, including reportage and opinion pieces. Reportage describes a way of reporting news and in this paper is used for media that are not editorials or opinion pieces (op-eds). Japanese publications included in this study are *The Japan News* by the Yomiuri Shimbun, *Nikkei Asia*, *The Mainichi*, and *The Asahi Shimbun*. These are Japanese publications written by Japanese people and translated into English. Articles with similar themes were found in US media: *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. Given the current Russia and Ukraine crisis, select content from Japan and the US covering that specific conflict is wrapped in this paper. The research focuses on one international conflict and does not look at historical conflict between the US and Japan and Ukraine and Russia. However, it aims to understand mainstream ways of framing a conflict in two different cultures through 20 hand-picked articles published between February 24 through June 2022.

Reading the articles required several successive analyses, so they were read through multiple times to identify relevant themes in the conflict transformation field. The literature review contains various peer-reviewed articles on conflict transformation, which were applied to Japanese and US media and deconstructed in the analysis and discussion section. In order to compare the political slant of the news publications in Japan and the US, I chose both reportage and op-eds from each side, five editorials and five non-editorials each.\(^2\) It was my intention to reveal biases that exist in chosen publications. A predominantly US media bias diagram is

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\(^2\) In this paper, editorial is used to refer to opinion pieces, but opinion pieces are not used in the place of editorial.
included to demonstrate partiality among the US publications. The analysis and discussion separate editorial and reportage pieces and conclude each section by comparing editorials and reportage between US and Japanese media. The discussion identifies the same or similar conflict themes among the select Japanese and US media. Lastly, new content was not added to the study as time passed—the 20 articles initially chosen for the thesis remain the only ones under analysis.
Figure 1: Primarily US media bias diagram. The New York Times and The Washington Post are depicted in the second to the left column.
Literature Review

Introduction

After reading both Japanese and US media, prevalent themes in conflict transformation were identified and used to find relevant academic literature. The literature covered in this section encompasses an abundance of peer-reviewed research publications in the field of conflict transformation, which are categorized into different themes. Articles introduced in this section are related directly to the data derived from the reportage and editorials in the analysis section.

Justifications for War

David Luban’s “Just War and Human Rights” critiques the United Nations (UN) concept of just war. International law does not use The Just War Doctrine but more commonly refers to war as legal or illegal. Luban compares legal war to the concept of just war and vice versa. The UN asserts that if war is aggressive, then it is unjust (Luban, 1980, p. 162). Aggression is described in a few contexts: “the use of armed force by a State against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations” and “waging of a war of aggression or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements, or assurances” (p. 161-162). Conversely, the UN classifies just war as a war of self-defense (Luban, 1980). However, the UN’s definitions of unjust and just war describe what Luban says is a “‘permissible war’ rather than a ‘righteous war’” (p. 163). Luban’s definition reads: “[a] just war is (i) a war in defense of socially basic human rights (subject to proportionality); or (ii) a war of self-defense against an unjust war” (Luban, 1980, p. 175). This new definition emphasizes that war is fought by people, not by states.

Adding to Luban, F. M. Kamm (2004) differentiates the moral principle behind war (jus ad bellum) and what is considered just means (jus in bello). Jus ad bellum represents the intent of
war, and *jus in bello* is the means of carrying out the intention (Kamm, 2004). So, even if the intention is just, if the means are not just, then war is unjust. Kamm states that using fear and terror-killing, especially of noncombatants, constitutes unjust war under *jus in bello*. A just *jus ad bellum* would be a state defending itself against an unjust attack or intervening in another nation’s affairs to fight against genocide perpetrated by that nation’s government (Kamm, 2004).

Zuo and Yunpeng (2007) assert that for war to be just, there needs to be a legitimate reason to engage in war, which they identify as self-defense and self-preservation. In addition, “the winner must take responsibility for the future decided by the aftereffects of the war” (p. 288). If the winner does not take responsibility for the damage caused by war, the loser’s pride is hurt, and over time resentment endures (Zuo & Yunpeng, 2007). Zuo and Yunpeng (2007) recognize the government as the party to take responsibility for winning the war. War is “organized political violence[,]” therefore, the responsibility does not fall on individuals but on the government (p. 280). If war is unpreventable, the objective should be peace, which means taking accountability after all is said and done (Zuo & Yunpeng, 2007).

**International Economic Sanctions and Efforts to Stop and Prevent War**

Sociologist and Conflict Transformation scholar, Johan Galtung interviewed Southern Rhodesian citizens and African politicians to study the local effects of international economic sanctions on Southern Rhodesia, now known as Zimbabwe. International sanctions are imposed with one of two intentions: to punish the receiving party by depriving them of some good or resource or to act in accordance with the sender’s disposition (Galtung, 1967). Galtung deduces that international sanctions are not effective. Cutting off the receiver’s economic resources may not be enough to stop a nation from remaining sufficient, even if it is a “totally effective
blockade” (Galtung, 1967, p. 411). Furthermore, one of the aims the sender has in sanctioning is to quell the receiver’s morale, but in effect, the receiver grows more defiant (Galtung, 1967).

Drawing on the Global Sanctions Database, Morgan et al. (2023) examine 1,325 sanction cases from 1950-2022 to evaluate sanctions’ “effectiveness as instruments of foreign policy” (p. 4). They describe how sanctioned countries redirect their trade and investments to developing countries to conceal their assets from the sending nations. Despite the relocation of interests, economic sanctions are shown to negatively affect target states during and after sanctions are lifted (Morgan et al., 2023). However, are the negative impacts enough to stop or prevent war? There is no simple answer, and it depends on many factors, including what sanctions are used. “For example, perhaps sanctions do cause economic harm, but often this harm may not be sufficiently strong to lead to political success” (Morgan et al., 2023, p. 21). Political success refers to when the sender achieves the political goal they set out for when applying sanctions (Morgan et al., 2023). Ongoing international economic sanctions implemented against Russia have not yet halted the Ukraine invasion. Morgan et al. (2023) state that though Russia will continue to face significant economic damage, it is unlikely that sanctions alone will persuade Russia to end the invasion. Similarly to Galtung’s point on target countries demonstrating more vigorous opposition to sender countries after being sanctioned, in 2014, following Russia's annexation of Crimea, the US, and Western Europe, imposed sanctions on Russia for annexing Crimea, and Russia responded with counter-sanctions (Morgan et al., 2023). It “led many nations in the West to either remove their own sanctions or to undermine the coalition’s sanctions through lax enforcement” (Morgan et al., 2023). Just as target states are learning how to overcome sanctions, sender states are trying to find a way around those new obstacles to having an economic impact and political success (Morgan et al., 2023). Achieving complete success by
utilizing sanctions seems to be related in part to the universality of the sanctions—when one
nation or a group of nations employs sanctions, success is more elusive; when nearly all nations
employ sanctions, chances for success logically increase.

**War Journalism**

Media advancement has complicated news coverage, especially during wartime when
“ordinary citizens” are able to document everything and share it on social media platforms (Livio
& Yechezkely, 2018). This allows the rapid spread of information and misinformation unfiltered
and uncurated by government or news corporations. Livio and Yechezkely (2018) describe how
the “military has always attempted to use its control over information during wartime to
influence media content[.]” which is growing more problematic with so much coverage from the
citizens (p. 698). Livio and Yechezkely also analyze how three Israeli newspapers from the 2014
Gaza War and “compare this coverage to posts on the Israel Defense Forces’ official social
media pages” (p. 696). They use legitimate strategies for their analysis, including the use of
reported speech, transitivity and voice, referential and predication, and modality (Livio &
Yechezkely, 2018). It is important to note that the media examined along with IDF social media
pages coincided with the content relayed on the IDF official media. They contained a similar
refrain, but how they used the strategies mentioned above varied.

occurrences of framing. Speer defines framing as, describing and defining what events are and
how events occur. An example of framing the Iraq war is when the Bush administration
“promoted the War on Terror” to justify the U.S. invasion of Iraq (Speer, 2017, p. 287). Speer’s
research focuses on the bombing of a Shi’ite shrine in Samarra, Iraq, and the five days of Shi’a

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3 See Appendix A
pushback attacks. Media framing can alter the path of war; before the bombing of Samarra, the unpopular danger of the civil war frame emerged in media coverage (Speer, 2017). Furthermore, framing is used to justify a country’s actions (usually to put one's own country’s actions in a better light), dramatize for views, control, and more.

**Peace Journalism**

From 1809 to 2011, the US made 250 military interventions in foreign affairs (Galtung, 2015). Galtung calls this a “domestic and global violence addiction” (2015, p. 322). The US assumes that they know the best interests of other countries when they intervene in foreign affairs (Galtung, 2015). However, this unsolicited help eliminates foreign nations' ability to decide their course of action (Galtung, 2015). Nevertheless, why does the US feel responsible for getting involved in other countries' conflicts? Galtung (2015) says that the US has two types of deep-rooted identities, “for us or against us” and distinguishing themselves “as *Chosen* by higher forces; as an exceptional carrier of a *Glory* [narcissism] from the past; to be recreated when the *Traumas* [paranoia] caused by the envious have been overcome by defeating them” (p. 323). Changing the US narrative starts with journalists asking about the underlying causes of violence and what can be done to address the underlying factors (Galtung, 2015). Galtung (2015) uses health journalism as a guideline for peace journalism, saying they both should have the following steps: prognosis, taking cautionary measures, diagnosing causes, and how to end the causes and begin healing. In general, peace journalism tends to examine the traumas that tend to produce outbreaks of violence–e.g., understanding both the root motivations driving the parties in a war–and also locates and features actors and ideas for nonviolent approaches to conflict.

Media has tremendous sway in framing war and can be used as a promotional tool for peace or abetting conflict by influencing public opinion and policy-makers (Joseph, 2014).
Joseph (2014) analyzes “mainstream international news media” coverage of modern-day conflicts to find an implicit trend in global coverage of worldwide conflicts (p. 226). Joseph states that unpopular discourse does not stir the mainstream media and public opinion when there is a “consensus in the dominant discourse,” but the non-dominant voices become heard when the majority discourse in news media dissipates (Joseph, 2014, p. 234). When these moments of mixed discourse occur, peace journalism needs to rise to match war journalism with ideas about trying to understand the interests of the conflict parties, thus humanizing them instead of labeling states as enemies (Joseph, 2014). The problem, Joseph says, is that peace media is not as marketable or profit-bearing, which makes it harder to change the tides.

**Conclusion**

The above themes emerged due to their relevance in understanding how Japan and the US frame conflict in news media. Due to Japan’s absence of an offensive military and pacifist constitution, I expected to find more peace journalism in Japanese mainstream media than in US mainstream media. Galtung (2015) elaborates on the US’s addiction to victory and involvement in violence, war, and intervention in foreign affairs. Moreover, Joseph states that the dominant discourse blurs out unpopular perspectives that oppose the war discourse that runs US mainstream media. Prior to the analysis, I believed that Japanese media would demonstrate their support for non-violent aid to Ukraine as well as discuss unjust acts of aggression. However, I predicted that the US would have a higher presence in reporting war conditions and brutalities as well as the military aspect of aid and actions of the US and the war in Ukraine. Lastly, I expected the absence of peace journalism in US reportage and editorials.
Analysis and Discussion

After collecting literature relating to conflict transformation I applied it to select Japanese and US reportage and op-eds. In this section, Japanese media and US media in both formats are compared using the conflict resolution training above, such as assessing the presence of peace journalism and their response to the invasion of Ukraine. I hypothesized that more peace journalism and language that discourages war and violence are prevalent in Japanese reportage and op-eds. For the US media, I expected more language that supports war journalism and a militarized response to aiding Ukraine. These postulations are based on Japan’s pacifist practices post WWII and the US’s history of involvement in international conflicts. In the analysis, specific phrases are dissected and analyzed by the conflict training highlighted in the literature review.

Justifications for War

In both reportage and op-eds, Japan and the US clearly state that Russia’s invasion of Ukraine was a breach of international law. This relates to the international law that a war that is aggressive is unjust (Luban, 1980). A Washington Post article argues that Putin’s actions against Ukraine qualify as war crimes due to the intentional harming of Ukrainian civilians and “population centers, among other acts, including torture and genocide” (Fisher, 2022). Similarly, an editorial from The Asahi Shimbun calls the invasion of Ukraine a “cardinal sin” (“Putin’s Victory Day Speech Was a Weak Attempt to Justify Invasion,” 2022). Japan and the US debate the best methods of how to aid Ukraine as they fight what Luban (1980) says is a just war of defense. However intentioned Japan and the US’s actions may be, in this section I will examine if the jus in bello aligns with jus ad bellum. For example, Japan and the US condemn Putin’s actions, but do they match Russia’s actions with violence or do they seek peaceful intervention?
Before the analysis, it is necessary to acknowledge that The Just War Doctrine is a Western concept that is not discussed in the Japanese media that is examined in this research, as it is present in US media. Due to the absence of The Just War Doctrine (*jus in bello* and *jus ad bellum*) in Japanese media, Japan seems to use different approaches to viewing war and framing conflict.

*Reportage*

In Davos, Switzerland during the World Economic Forum, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen weighed the factors of how NATO and the European Union (EU) should support Ukraine moving forward. The key is to prevent an international war in Europe while finding a way to end the war that allows Russia to be included in future global concerns such as climate change mitigation (Suliman & Timist, 2022). Such issues as climate change require the collaboration of many nations to see drastic improvements. Stoltenberg acknowledges that in order to prevent further strain on NATO’s relationship with Russia they need to be careful not to provoke Russia into war with NATO. Von der Leyen says that she hopes Russia “finds its way back to democracy[,]” but at this moment, it is not a tangible future (Suliman & Timist, 2022). Stoltenberg and von der Leyen talk about what NATO and the EU are doing to prevent war and support Ukraine in ways that do not compromise the EU or elicit war with more European nations, but Russia is not included in those conversations or ideas. Though it does not seem possible to change Putin’s mind, any solution without Putin or a decision made without Russia will not be fully inclusive and could lead to even more fragmented bonds in the future. The same could be said about Henry Kissinger’s belief that Ukraine should cede territory to Russia to end the war (Bella, 2022). The majority of Ukrainians would rather keep fighting than give up their territory to Russia. Decisions made for
nations that do not include the people of that nation take away the people’s agency. In addition, the absence of war does not mean peace. In fact, the absence of formal war can sometimes lead to more conflict in the future. Foreign nations’ attempts to create a future that includes Russia and help them create a democracy is well-intentioned, but their actions do not incorporate Russia or Putin in that decision-making, which is not conducive to sustainable peace. What I mean by this is that if Russia is not involved in the decisions that impact their future, the people of Russia may experience feelings of injustice, animosity, loss of dignity, and lack of control over their situation (Zuo & Yunpeng, 2007). These conditions do not truly mean peace, and are likely to brew future conflict.

Von de Leyen states that the EU provides more military aid to Ukraine than they ever have to support a country. She clarifies that the EU “would never be a military alliance…freedom must be fought for” (Suliman & Timist, 2022). While implications of what fighting entails is not elaborated upon further, the EU is also aiding Ukraine with “financial support for reconstruction, and is hosting about 6 million refugees in its member states” (Suliman & Timist, 2022). As von der Leyen said, the EU must be careful not to become over-involved with Ukraine while trying to prevent unlawful acts to promote peace (European Union, n.d.). It is possible that Ukraine joining the EU would lead to further exclusion of Russia, tipping Putin over the edge.4

Based on the select Japanese reportage media in this study, it seems that Japan does a fair amount of reframing and reporting news about the US’s actions. Japanese articles highlight which voices are called upon in the US and what they have to say about the war. Much of the reporting of the US, Russia, and Ukraine’s actions involves Foreign Ministers, President

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4 As expected, the EU did bring Ukraine into membership status, after the date range of media examined in this thesis.
Zelensky and Biden, Defense Ministers, a Pentagon spokesperson, and Defense Secretaries (“US Urges More Arms for Ukraine Amid Fears of Expanding War,” 2022; “Top Russian Diplomat Warns Ukraine Against Provoking WWIII,” 2022). Due to the nature of Japanese publications outlining recent US actions and statements about Ukraine, there are barriers to conducting a deep analysis of the reportage regarding Japan’s *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* while supporting Ukraine. However, many Japanese editorials expand on the subject. Nevertheless, there are reportage that briefly discuss the *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. Swiftly after the invasion, *The Japan News* released an article that said that Japan should follow the US’s example by sanctioning Belarus because they backed Russia’s invasion (“Japan, U.S. Foreign Ministers Condemn Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine,” 2022). Sanctions are a nonviolent method under *jus in bello*. Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi condemned Russia’s aggressive behavior and said that Japan must not match Russia in order to stop the war–Japan should set an example for other countries to also strive for long-term peace (“Japan, U.S. Foreign Ministers Condemn Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine,” 2022).

*Opinions and Editorials*

Zuo and Yunpeng (2007) articulate that the qualifications for just war are that, to engage in war, the nation must have a legitimate reason. In “Putin’s Victory Day Speech Was a Weak Attempt to Justify Invasion,” *The Asahi Shimbun* editorial writers convey that all of Putin’s reasons for invading Ukraine were unfounded. Continuing with a UN statement and Japanese value, “peaceful means” should be taken to end the war ( “Putin’s Victory Day Speech Was a Weak Attempt to Justify Invasion,” 2022). Japan’s means include sanctions and self-defense equipment that they supplied to Ukraine (“Japan’s Aid to Ukraine Cannot Lead to Broader Arms Exports,” 2022). As a part of the annual review of Japan's SDF equipment, Former Prime
Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, approved “noncombat camera-equipped drones” to be a resource used by the SDF. However, once given to Ukraine, Japan was alerted that the drones were being used to track Russian army movements, not for the intended “intelligence, surveillance-gathering and reconnaissance” (“Japan’s Aid to Ukraine Cannot Lead to Broader Arms Exports,” 2022).

An Asahi Shimbun article discusses the morality of noncombat drones and how it compromises Japan’s pacifist values. Japan is taking its peaceful approach to ending the war very seriously and backing up its statements with efforts to uphold pacifist values.

An opinion piece from The Washington Post seems to have a higher regard for Ukrainian lives over Russian ones as well as less of a regard for peaceful means besides sanctions. A quote from The Atlantic said that NATO “could sweep the skies over Ukraine clear of Russian aircraft, and after a week or two of smashing Russian air defenses, devastated its ground forces” (Willick, 2022). Though the article says this would be the case if the US were forced into conflict by Russia using chemical warfare against Ukraine, engaging in nuclear war with Russia would not be justified or peaceful. The deterrence of NATO has not stopped Russia yet, and time has shown, other methods must be pursued to change the game and end the war.

Lastly, “As Russia Escalates its Aggression on Ukraine, Evidence of War Crimes, Mounts” states that both the reasons behind the invasion and the invasion of Ukraine go against jus ad bellum and jus in bello (2022). The aggressive and persistent attacks against civilians, schools, and hospitals, are crimes that cannot be defended under jus in bello. Though Japan does not use The Just War Doctrine in their media or as a concept in society, it was applied to this section. It can be seen that both the US and Japan deplore Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, but Japan holds strongly to peace where the US and its involvement with NATO lean toward military measures, which are not always justifiable under jus in bello. The US rides this fine line.
International Economic Sanctions and Efforts to Stop and Prevent War

A collective effort from countries worldwide, such as Japan and the US, imposed economic sanctions against Russia. Russia has experienced a decrease in income now that the US banned the consumption of natural gas and oil from Russia, as well as the sanctions from Europe and Japan. However, the truth is that Japan and the US realized that their efforts were insufficient to stop Putin as long as other countries continued importing resources from Russia. Therefore, they have separately been brainstorming ways in which they can be more creative with sanctions. Galtung (1967) confirms that cutting off the receiver’s (Russia) economic resources could even institute a stronger will to continue war. In the case of sanctions imposed on Russia, by themselves they are not an effective tool to end war. Both Japanese op-eds and reportage are adamant that taking up arms and using any non peaceful methods to stop Putin are not an option. However, the US gives thought to the possibility of war with Russia because of President Zelensky’s desperate pleas for US or NATO intervention, even though engaging in war with Russia would “‘lead to WWIII’” said President Biden (Phillips, 2022). A war against Russia started by the US would involve all 31 countries of NATO. Additionally, US media examines their hostile relationship with Russia and how their not so discreet military aid transferred through Poland to Ukraine could trigger Russia to attack the US and provoke worldwide nuclear warfare (Willick, 2022).

Reportage

With the goal of creating a “democratic, independent, sovereign and prosperous Ukraine[,]” Biden increased military equipment sent to Ukraine and tightened economic sanctions against Russia (Phillips, 2022). It is unclear whether political success, that is Ukraine’s independence, ownership of Crimea, and ending the Russian invasion, is possible with economic
sanctions and military aid alone. Morgan et al. (2023) says the conditions of the war determine the effectiveness of sanctions. In “How far will Biden go in Helping Ukraine and Where Would you Draw the Line,” Phillips contemplates the advantages and disadvantages of how to support Ukraine in the war from the stance of the US. Morgan et al.’s article, published in 2023, has a very recent grasp on the likelihood of success sanctions are to have to create political success, especially since the data for this research dates from February 24 to June 2022. Though Morgan et al.’s research should not be discarded, this analysis will examine some of the methods the US weighs in order to help Ukraine. Looking at the ways the US versus Japan are willing to support Ukraine is important when understanding their different approaches to conflict resolution.

Phillips includes eight approaches to sanctions and nine military approaches to help Ukraine. It is a concern that Russia may outlast the effects of sanctions by using cryptocurrencies, however, it does not seem feasible due to “the limited size of the digital asset market” (Phillips, 2022). Therefore, such a sanction to restrict cryptocurrencies would not be useful. Furthermore, Morgan et al. reminds us that sanctioned countries can redirect their trade and investments to developing countries demonstrating the limitations of sanctions. Another sanction discussed was to “[d]esignate Russa as a state sponsor of terrorism” (Phillips, 2022). President Zelensky made this request to President Biden without much traction. Though calling Russia’s actions terrorism would be a powerful retribution, it would lead to significant economic loss to the US as well as the possibility of having an amicable relationship with Russia. In history, we have seen what blaming and subjecting a leader and all of its people to shame can do, such as the The Treaty of Versilles assigning Germany to take accountability for WWI (National Geographic, n.d.). Military tactics such as “send[ing] Ukraine more powerful air defense” and
“send[ing] U.S. combat troops to Ukraine” would be effective tools in strengthening Ukraine’s forces, but at the cost of threatening WWII (Phillips, 2022).

Conversely, in an article published two days after the invasion of Ukraine, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi asserts that Japan will not sacrifice their “status quo,” meaning they will not compromise their mores of non-violent intervention when aiding Ukraine (“Japan, U.S. Foreign Ministers Condemn Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine,” 2022). Japan understands that supporting Ukraine through military or aggressive means could create backlash from Russia and prevent any future relationship and reconciliation between Russia and much of the world. However, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi states that Japan would follow the US with “sanctions against Belarus for supporting Russia’s invasion of Ukraine” (“Japan, U.S. Foreign Ministers Condemn Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine,” 2022). Japan expresses the danger of starting nuclear war as the US and NATO supplys Ukraine with weapons, which is a sure way to provoke Putin (“Top Russian Diplomat Warns Ukraine Against Provoking WWII,” 2022).

Opinions and Editorials

Though sanctions have made some of the most visible dents on Russia’s war efforts, “Can Sanctions Really Stop Putin” also concurs that as long as countries in Europe and in the world rely on Russia for oil and gas, Putin will not stop (2022). Additionally, an Asahi Shimbun article states that even with Japan, the US, and parts of Europe withstanding from Russian energy, Russia can still earn money from other countries (“Biden Points the Way on Sanctions and Japan Should Follow,” 2022). This aligns with the aforementioned research done by Morgan et al. about redirecting trade. Moreover, before imposing sanctions the sender must develop a plan to remove the sanctions because it is common for sanctions to be left untouched long after they
were originally imposed (“Can Sanctions Really Stop Putin,” 2022). For serious restrictions to remain in place “without evaluation of whether or not they are achieving what they were put in place to do” could eventually put strain on the international relations (“Can Sanctions Really Stop Putin,” 2022). Due to the limitations of economic sanctions, the US seems to consider military measures as a certain end to the war.

A survey following the annexation of Crimea in 2014 found that “71 percent of Russians saw them as an attempt to ‘weaken and humiliate Russia’” (“Can Sanctions Really Stop Putin,” 2022). These responses demonstrate how sanctions can increase the receiver’s resistance to the sender’s disposition (Galtung, 1967; “Can Sanctions Really Stop Putin,” 2022).

While the US ponders increasing military involvement in Ukraine, Japan is adamant about sticking to nonviolent intervention. To compare the military aid Japan is providing Ukraine are “bulletproof vests, helmets, tents and field rations…gas masks as well as protective clothing for defense against chemical agents” (“Japan’s Aid to Ukraine Cannot Lead to Broader Arms Exports,” 2022). What do you notice about these materials? They are protective gear and not weapons or tools for aggression. On the other hand, a recurring narrative seen in the select Japanese and US op-ed’s for this research shows the US walking a tightrope while providing billions of dollars of military aid to Ukraine. In a New York Times article, it is said that the US and NATO “will support the Ukrainian fight with ample firepower and other means” (“The War in Ukraine is Getting Complicated, and America isn’t Ready,” 2022).

Japan is fierce about not compromising their pacifist values to aid Ukraine, and the US and NATO wish to create the least amount of damage for its allies when supporting Ukraine while also finding effective means to end the war (“Finding Tougher Russia Sanctions Requires Some Creativity,” 2022). President Biden says that some sacrifices have to be made in times of
war. What the implications of that statement mean is up for interpretation. However, it can be inferred that Japan seems less willing to make those same compromising decisions.

**War Journalism**

Livio and Yechezkely (2018) state that the military works hard to keep a handle on influencing media during wartime, but Japan has no formal military, only the SDF. The SDF is equipped with non-lethal military defense that is reviewed yearly to ensure it does not go against Article 9 in Japan’s Constitution (Military of Denese, n.d.). Japan maintains pacifist values in its government and for the people. In other words, because Japan does not have a military, Japan’s style of reporting and framing war differs from the US which has a military and military influence over the media. In this section, legitimation strategies, the use of reported speech, transitivity and voice, referential and predication, and modality will be applied to Japanese and US media to note the differences in framing war journalism. As there are many factors listed in the literature review, transitivity and voice, the use of reported speech, and referential and predication will be the main focus in the analysis.

**Reportage**

After closely examining articles from *The Mainichi* and *The Asahi Shimbun* there was no overt evidence that active and passive voices were used intentionally. Articles switched between active and passive voice when referring to Ukraine officials as well as Russia. For example, both active (first quote) and passive (second quote) are used when quoting Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. “Lavrov accused Ukrainian leaders… and he said…” and “[b]y providing weapons, NATO forces are ‘pouring oil on the fire,’ Lavrov said” (“Top Russian Diplomat Warns Ukraine Against Provoking WWIII,” 2022).
In addition, neutral words “said,” “stated,” and “saying,” are most commonly used when reporting what is said in the articles no matter who says it. For instance, “Austin, the U.S. defense secretary, said…” and “Putin said Ukrainian troops…” (“US Urges More Arms for Ukraine Amid Fears of Expanding War,” 2022). In contrast, the words “accused,” “claimed” were used when describing actions or statements made by Russia or Russian officials. These words can invalidate the person who is “accusing” or “claiming.”

Regarding referential and predication, first person plural words were used occasionally when reinforcing Japanese values of pacifism and rallying the people (“Japan, U.S. Foreign Ministers Condemn Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine,” 2022). However, the use of third person plural was not employed. The purpose of using “we” is to create a sense of unity with the reader. Possibly due to Japan’s desire to create peaceful and lasting international relationships, Japan excludes third person plurality from their media. Furthermore, when “representing social actors[,]” neutrality is applied. Examples include, but are not limited to “Ukrainian forces,” “Ukrainian fighters,” “Russian forces,” and “Russian troops” (Livio & Yechezkely, 2018, p. 700; “Ukraine Fights to Hold off Russian Advances in South, East,” 2022; “US Urges More Arms for Ukraine Amid Fears of Expanding War,” 2022). Less neutral vocabulary would have a negative connotation such as Russian attackers or armed Russians.

The transitivity and voice of the US articles from The New York Times and The Washington Post did not have a visible pattern related to the usage of active and passive voice, much like the Japanese media. Additionally, “said” was the most common verb preceding and following quotations (Bella, 2022; Troianovski et al., 2022; Fisher, 2022). However, in an article with an unpopular discourse regarding former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s position on how Ukraine should cede territory to Russia, the verb “comments” and “suggestion” are used
to describe Kissinger’s views (Bella, 2022). For example, “[c]ritics described Kissinger’s comments…” (Bella, 2022). In this context “comments” seems to be a trivial word compared to “Kissinger’s statements.” To my surprise, there was an absence of a third person plural in the articles. However, the first personal plural was present when quoting civilians from Ukraine and government officials. A report from a survivor of the Invasion of Ukraine said “[w]e have heard about the I.C.C.” (Fisher, 2022). Along with a quote from President Biden that says “[w]e will not fight the third world war in Ukraine” (Phillips, 2022). “We” creates a sense of comradery–used together with the word “told” also creates familiarity and sense of storytelling (Livio and Yechezkely, 2018).

**Opinions and Editorials**

In comparison to the Japanese reportage, Japanese editorials are less neutral with transitivity and voice, and the use of reported speech, and referential and predication. The use of active voice seems intent to undermine Putin’s actions. An Asahi Shimbun article says things like, “He [Putin] made an unfounded claim that…” and “but the war waged by Putin, who apparently wants…” (“Putin’s Victory Day Speech Was a Weak Attempt to Justify Invasion,” 2022). The use of active voice combined with verbs that discredit the source.

The utilization of “claim” and “apparently,” “remarks” and “blaming” are used to describe Putin and Russia’s actions and words (“Putin’s Victory Day Speech Was a Weak Attempt to Justify Invasion,” 2022; “Asia Needs Unity on Russia, and Japan Should Take the Lead,” 2022). The Nikkei View states “blaming Japan for the change in status quo is preposterous” (“Asia Needs Unity on Russia, and Japan Should Take the Lead,” 2022).

An increased use of first and third person plurals was found in Japan media editorials. In the case of first person plural an Asahi Shimbun article says “The United State[s] can afford to
take this step because it is a leading oil producer. We wholeheartedly support this decision” (“Biden Points the Way on Sanctions and Japan Should Follow,” 2022). The we in this context implies a sense of shared opinion while also showing approval and authority. A similar context to the reportage, “we” is used to reaffirm Japan’s collective values. The article discusses Japan’s new policy that allows Japan to send non combat drones to Ukraine, however the drones are being used to keep track of Russia’s movements. The Asahi Shimbun’s editorial staff says “[w]e cannot just accept such a serious policy shift that concerns the nation’s core pacifist values” (“Japan’s Aid to Ukraine Cannot Lead to Broader Arms Exports,” 2022). “They” is used when referring to the US and other countries who Japan believes are not upholding their responsibility to manage international conflict peacefully. Within this frame of reference, because Japan strives for nonviolence, countries that do not follow the same values and practices seem to be considered “other.”

Even in op-eds, US media does not appear to aim to invalidate Russian sources or actions through passive voice. This is evident through the relatively equal use of active and passive voice when quoting Russian officials. On the contrary, stronger verbs such as “claims” and “suggested,” have an increased frequency in the US editorials (“Biden’s Three Rules for the War in Ukraine Are Working. He Should Stick to Them,” 2022). One article showed a significant increase in first and third person plural language. Washington Post’s “Let’s Think About the Russians We are Canceling. Not All Deserve it” discusses Russian celebrities who are getting canceled in the US, what their stances are, and how the US feels about it. Specifically, after writing that Russian athletes have been prohibited to compete in international competitions, the Post responds with “[w]e applaud those steps” (“Let’s Think About the Russians We are Canceling. Not All Deserve it,” 2022). Furthermore, The Washington Post says that Russian
celebrities who publicly support Putin “deserve to be shunned” (“Let’s Think About the Russians We are Canceling. Not All Deserve it,” 2022). The article uses the “us” versus “them” narrative and shames the actions of the celebrities who support Putin and lifts the ones who have less connection with Putin. There is irony that a country that embodies freedom of speech cancels people who have unpopular opinions.

Peace Journalism

We have learned that unpopular discourse has less draw when compared to the dominant discourse, but what is unpopular and what is dominant? From what has been gathered, the US and Japan have different ways of reporting media. Why is that? Can we attribute these differences to Japan’s pacifist constitution and the US’s saviorism mindset? After examining select articles, it appears that Japan’s dominant discourse media in the context of the Ukraine war is to maintain the “status quo” by not compromising their pacifst values. On the other hand, peace journalism gets lost in US dominant discourse media.

Reportage

Every year, Japan hosts a peace memorial ceremony on August 6th to commemorate the bombing of Hiroshima in 1945. The Hiroshima local government announced that they were removing Putin from their guest list for 2022. “Hiroshima Municipal Government” officials felt that Putin’s presence would mean compromising the “spirit of ‘commemoration’” (“Hiroshima to Drop Russia’s Putin from Peace Memorial Ceremony Invitee List,” 2022). Putin’s acts of aggression go against Japan’s values of maintaining international peace. Therefore, it would not be right for a leader who does not demonstrate those qualities to come to a ceremony that is held to remember how certain events should be prevented from happening ever again.
In a *Washington Post* article, Henry Kissinger, once US secretary of state, devises a plan for Ukraine to cede territory to Russia despite 82% opposition according to Kyiv International Institute of Technology (Bella, 2022). Kissinger says that he is thinking of the future—Russia’s potential “embarrassing defeat,” damaging relationships (and exchange of resources with the West), and stopping the fighting (Bella, 2022). Kissinger is embodying the US image of the “chosen” one who believes they have the right and ability to help those who seem in need (Galtung, 2015, p. 323). This is yet another example of the US trying to intervene in international conflicts as seen fit instead of following the words of the Ukrainians who are adamant about winning back their land even if that means the war goes on (Bella, 2022). Though Kissinger’s intentions seem to be concerning the preservation of Europe’s international relationships, the US needs to remember that sometimes it is better to listen and inquire before deciding to act.

*Opinions and Editorials*

During a period of mixed discourse, *The Washington Post* discussed the morality of canceling Russians in the US because Russia invaded Ukraine. The title in itself demonstrates a dissonance in perspective. The first part, “Let’s Think About the Russians We Are Canceling” hints toward an acknowledgment that the US should not be canceling people because of their nationality. However the second part of the title says, “Not all Deserve it” (“Let’s Think About the Russians We are Canceling. Not All Deserve it,” 2022). This implies as is stated in the article that public figures who openly support Putin deserve to be treated poorly, but those who do not support Putin should not be canceled (“Let’s Think About the Russians We are Canceling. Not All Deserve it,” 2022). Later, it is clarified that individual Russians should not be “singled out and ostracized” (“Let’s Think About the Russians We are Canceling. Not All Deserve it,” 2022). Although it is not so clear at the beginning of the article because of statements that support the
exclusion of Russians. It seems the canceling of Russian products and Russian celebrities is a way to demonstrate that the US does not condone Putin’s actions. These mixed messages make it challenging for readers to understand the true message of the article. Such a piece reveals how the framing of media can influence public opinion by making the readers feel empathy for the Russian athletes and celebrities who are being canceled.

We have seen similar examples of associating an entire population with a bad leader during World War II when Germans were collectively associated with the Nazis party and Adolf Hitler. Something similar is happening in Russia where people are experiencing discrimination in Japan because they are Russian. “State Leader, not the People, Proper Target of Criticism Against Ukraine Invasion” acknowledges instances of discrimination Russians are experiencing in Japan and how prefectural governments are working to end prejudiced actions (2022). The shunning of Russian people in Japan is compared to the “discriminatory behavior and acts of violence against Asian people in Western nations over the novel coronavirus, based on the prejudice that ‘it is highly likely that Asians have spread the virus’” (“State Leader, not the People, Proper Target of Criticism Against Ukraine Invasion,” 2022). Such an example makes it easier for the Japanese people to empathize with what Russians in Japan may be experiencing. In peace journalism, it is important to humanize all parties involved and The Japan News does this through relatability and by reminding the Japanese people to uphold the integrity of the nation by being well-informed and not discriminating against Russians living in Japan.

**Reflexive Disclaimers**

While there is an art and science of analyzing media, this essay does so through a conflict resolution and peace studies lens to analyze select media. Thus, I make no claims to dispositive or universally applicable findings, only to what can be executed in this bounded study from a
more general set of Conflict Transformation scholarship lenses. This study examines specific examples of conflict in Japanese and US media. However, Group Intercultural Competence and conflict resolution and storytelling are transformative conflict resolution processes that are worth looking into. Additionally, in 1948, the United Nations adopted a policy that safeguard people’s freedom of speech called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, n.d.). Though the US and Japan both uphold the freedom of press, it is important to note that each nation faces unique pressures that may limit expression including but not limited to political pressure, race, gender, and social standing.

Conclusion

After examining US mainstream media and Japanese mainstream media, I was able to analyze how both nations compare and contrast when portraying, framing, and describing the first five months of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. What I found is that Japan has different approaches to peace and resolving conflicts such as the Ukraine war, than the US. A thorough examination of Japanese and US media demonstrated how each country upholds values, what they prioritize, and who the publications turn to for credible knowledge to inform the people. In the select Japanese media, the principles of pacifism were crucial to maintaining while aiding Ukraine. The select US media also spoke of peace and not provoking global conflict, but their actions seemed to be incongruent with those words. Furthermore, there appear to be significant differences between the US and Japanese governments that influence how conflict is framed and portrayed in their respective nations. Structural differences include pacifist values, military versus SDF, rules pertaining to armed intervention and involvement in foreign conflicts, and the concept of compromising a country’s moral code. The select Japanese media I looked at stressed the importance of maintaining the “status quo” of pacifism and making sure actions supporting
Ukraine reflected the integrity and values of the Japanese people. The US media and Japanese media were similar concerning transitivity and voice and referential and predication. In addition, the US dominant discourse seemed to be focused on acting rather than questioning how their actions would impact the future. Japan’s dominant discourse appeared to act with intention and making sure that their intentions matched their goal of international sustainable peace. It seems that though the US and Japan have an intertwined history regarding conflict and peace, it is not often discussed in US classrooms, nor seen in academic literature, specifically comparing how each nation frames and addresses conflicts. With the influx of 24/7 news, social media, and online news sources we have today, it is more important than ever to question what influences the reporting and framing of the media we consume. By looking at the ways other nations such as Japan portray conflict in the media, we can broaden our perspective and see how a nation that has different values may have different solutions and approaches to creating a more peaceful world.
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US Data


Appendix A

Glossary

Legitimation strategies: Legitimation, defined by Merriam-Webster (n.d.), is “(1) to give legal status or authorization to, (2) to show or affirm to be justified.” In the context of Livio and Yechezkely’s research, legitimation is “the ways in which military actions were justified” (Livio & Yechezkely, 2018, p. 700).

- **Authorization:** “legitimation through appeals to institutional authority, tradition, custom, or law” (Livio & Yechezkely, 2018, p. 700)

- **Moral evaluation:** “legitimation through (customarily implicit) reference to value judgments” (Livio & Yechezkely, 2018, p. 700), in other words, assessing if policies or practices are good or bad.

  *Example:* Describing Palestinians as “terrorists” and that Israelis had to counter violence instigated by Palestinians (Livio & Yechezkely, 2018, p. 701).

- **Rationalization:** “legitimation through reference to instrumental goals or uses, or to seemingly natural social knowledge” (Livio & Yechezkely, 2018, p. 700).

  *Example:* The actions of the Israeli army were to defend themselves from Palestinian violence (Livio & Yechezkely, 2018).

- **Mythopoesis:** “legitimation through the deployment of narratives in which ‘good’ actions are rewarded and ‘bad’ deeds are punished” (Livio & Yechezkely, 2018, p. 700).

  *The use of reported speech:* “[W]ho is offered the opportunity to speak within texts, and how; the use of direct, indirect, or mixed speech…” (Livio & Yechezkely, 2018, p. 700).

  *Example:* The use of “said” versus “claimed” and other verbs when prefacing or following a quotation have different implications, “said” being the more neutral of the two (Livio &

**Transitivity and voice:** “the ways in which the actions of different social actors are constructed. This includes the use of grammatical active and passive voice to highlight or obscure power and responsibility, the presence and absence of agents and objects or actions, and reference to different types of actions engaged in by different social actors” (Livio & Yechezkely, 2018, p. 700).

*Example:* The IDF uses passive voice when describing its actions on its official media pages, which comes off as more formal and authoritative (Livio & Yechezkely, 2018). The use of active voice invokes a sense of drama (Livio & Yechezkely, 2018). The IDF and media discourse used active voice when reporting Palestinian actions (Livio & Yechezkely, 2018).

**Referential and predication:** “ways of representing social actors and events, including lexical naming and the assigning of positive or negative characteristics” (Livio & Yechezkely, 2018, p. 700).

*Example:* The IDF used first-person plural to describe their soldiers and military and used harsh language to describe Palestinians, such as “‘masked militants,’ ‘armed militants,’ [and] ‘terrorists’” (Livio & Yechezkely, 2018, p. 707).

**Modality:** “the degree to which different levels of certainty are implicitly or explicitly assigned to events or to the claims of different sides…denoting certainty or doubt, or through various strategies for emphasizing or qualifying assertions” (Livio & Yechezkely, 2018, p. 700).

*Example:* Using direct quotes and from high-ranking officials to depict IDF posts, but not directly quoting Palestinian sources, and using words like “claimed” to describe their telling of events (Livio & Yechezkely, 2018, p. 707).
Appendix B

Japanese Media Articles

Reportage
Top Russian diplomat warns Ukraine against provoking WWII

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
April 26, 2022 at 13:40 JST

In this image from video provided by the Ukrainian Presidential Press Office and posted on Facebook, on April 23, 2022, U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, third from left, and Secretary of State Antony Blinken, forth from left, attend their meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, fourth from right, in Kyiv, Ukraine. (Ukrainian Presidential Press Office via AP)

KYIV, Ukraine—Russia's top diplomat warned Ukraine against provoking World War III and said the threat of a nuclear conflict "should not be underestimated" as his country unleashed attacks against rail and fuel installations far from the front lines of Moscow's new eastern offensive.

The U.S., meanwhile, moved Monday to rush more weaponry to Ukraine and said the assistance from Western allies is making a difference in the 2-month-old war.

"Russia is failing, Ukraine is succeeding," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken declared, a day after he and the U.S. secretary of defense made a bold visit to Kyiv to meet with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Blinken said Washington approved a $165 million sale of ammunition—non-U.S. ammo, mainly if not entirely for Ukraine's Soviet-era weapons—and will also provide more than $300 million in financing to buy more supplies.

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin took his comments further, saying that while the U.S. wants to see Ukraine remain a sovereign, democratic country, it also wants "to see Russia weakened to the point where it can't do things like invade Ukraine."
Austin’s remarks appeared to represent a shift in broader U.S. strategic goals. Previously, the U.S. position had been that the goal of American military aid was to help Ukraine win and to defend Ukraine’s NATO neighbors against Russian threats.

In an apparent response to Austin, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Russia has “a feeling that the West wants Ukraine to continue to fight and, as it seems to them, wear out, exhaust the Russian army and the Russian military industrial war complex. This is an illusion.”

He said weapons supplied by Western countries “will be a legitimate target,” adding that Russian forces had already targeted weapons warehouses in western Ukraine.

Lavrov accused Ukrainian leaders of provoking Russia by asking NATO to become involved in the conflict, and he said NATO has effectively “entered into a war with Russia through proxies and is arming those proxies.”

“Everyone is reciting incantations that in no case can we allow World War III,” he said in a wide-ranging interview on Russian television.

By providing weapons, NATO forces are “pouring oil on the fire,” Lavrov said, according to a transcript on the Russian Foreign Ministry’s website.

Regarding the possibility of a nuclear confrontation, Lavrov said: “I would not want to see these risks artificially inflated now, when the risks are rather significant.”

“The danger is serious,” he said. “It is real. It should not be underestimated.”

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said on Twitter that Lavrov’s comments underscore Ukraine’s need for Western help: “Russia loses last hope to scare the world off supporting Ukraine. Thus the talk of a ‘real’ danger of WWIII. This only means Moscow senses defeat in Ukraine.”

When Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, its apparent goal was the lightning capture of Kyiv, the capital. But the Ukrainians, with the help of Western weapons, thwarted the push and forced President Vladimir Putin’s troops to retreat.

Moscow now says its goal is to take the Donbas, the mostly Russian-speaking industrial region in eastern Ukraine. While both sides say the campaign in the east is underway, Russia has yet to mount an all-out ground offensive and has not achieved any major breakthroughs.

On Monday, Russia focused its firepower elsewhere, with missiles and warplanes striking far behind the front lines in a bid to thwart Ukrainian efforts to marshal supplies for the fight.

Five railroad stations in central and western Ukraine were hit, and one worker was killed, said Oleksandr Kamyshin, head of Ukraine’s state railway. The bombardment included a missile attack near Lviv, the western city close to the Polish border that has been swelled by Ukrainians fleeing the fighting elsewhere around the country.

Ukrainian authorities said at least five people were killed by Russian strikes in the central Vinnitsia region.

Russia also destroyed an oil refinery in Kremenchuk, in central Ukraine, along with fuel depots there, Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said. In all, Russian warplanes destroyed 56 Ukrainian targets, he said.

Philip Breedlove, a retired U.S. general who was NATO’s top commander from 2013 to 2016, said the latest strikes against fuel depots are part of a strategy to deplete key Ukrainian war resources. The strikes against rail targets, on the other hand, are a newer tactic, he said.

“I think they’re doing it for the legitimate reason of trying to interdict the flow of supplies to the front,” he said. “The illegitimate reason is they know people are trying to leave the country, and this is just another intimidation, terrorist tactic to make them not have faith and confidence in traveling on the rails.”

Part of crashed GSDF helicopter retrieved from sea in Okinawa
May 2, 2023

Work to start to extract ‘fortress’ rock face from Gunma tunnel
May 1, 2023

Slain journalist’s camera offers clips of Yangon demonstration
April 28, 2023

Recommended

COVID-19 Update
Visit this page for the latest news on Japan’s battle with the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Taste of Life
Cooking experts, chefs and others involved in the field of food introduce their special recipes intertwined with their paths in life.

Memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
Here is a collection of first-hand accounts by “hibakusha” atomic bomb survivors.

Gender Equality Declaration
The Asahi Shimbun aims “to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” through its Gender Equality Declaration.

Inclusive Tokyo
Let’s explore the Japanese capital from the viewpoint of wheelchair users and people with disabilities by Barry Joshua Grisdale.
Phillips P. O'Brien, professor of strategic studies at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, said the war is, for now, settling into a campaign of incremental battlefield losses and gains.

"The two sides are sort of every day weakening each other," he said. "So it's a question of what can you bring in that's new" and "what can you destroy on the other side."

In Transnistria, a breakaway region of Moldova that sits along the Ukrainian border, several explosions believed caused by rocket-propelled grenades hit the territory's Ministry of State Security. There was no immediate claim of responsibility or reports of injuries. Transnistria is a strip of land with about 470,000 people and about 1,500 Russian troops based there.

Moldova's Foreign Ministry said "the aim of today's incident is to create pretexts for straining the security situation in the Transnistrian region." The U.S. warned previously that Russia may launch "false-flag" attacks against its own side to create a pretext for invading other nations.

Last week, Rustam Minnekev, a Russian military commander, said the Kremlin wants full control of southern Ukraine, which he said would open the way to Transnistria.

An estimated 2,000 Ukrainian troops hunkered down in a steel plant in the strategic southern port city of Mariupol are tying down Russian forces and apparently keeping them from being added to the offensive elsewhere in the Donbas. Over the weekend, Russian forces launched new airstrikes on the Azovstal plant to try to dislodge the holdouts.

Some 1,000 civilians were also said to be taking shelter at the steelworks.

The city council and mayor of Mariupol said a new mass grave has been identified about 10 kilometers north of the city. Mayor Vadym Boychenko said authorities were trying to estimate the number of victims. It was at least the third new mass grave discovered in Russian-controlled areas near Mariupol in the last week.

Mariupol has been gutted by bombardment and fierce street fighting over the past two months. In addition to freeing up Russian troops, the capture of the city would deprive Ukraine of a vital port and allow Moscow to establish a land corridor to the Crimean Peninsula, which it seized from Ukraine in 2014.

In his nightly video address, Zelenskyy said his country's goal is to maintain resistance and "make the occupiers' stay in our land even more intolerable," while Russia drains its resources.

Britain said it believes 15,000 Russian troops have been killed in Ukraine since Moscow began its invasion. Defense Secretary Ben Wallace said 25 percent of the Russian combat units sent to Ukraine "have been rendered not combat effective."

Ukrainian officials have said about 2,500 to 3,000 Ukrainian troops had been killed as of mid-April.

Related News

- Zelenskiy says Russia wages 'terror', Mariupol says thousands deported
  - March 20, 2022

- Zelensky: Russian offensive in eastern Ukraine has begun
  - April 19, 2022

- Putin vows to press invasion until Russia's goals are met
  - April 13, 2022

- Russians leave Chernobyl site as fighting rages elsewhere
  - April 1, 2022

- Ukraine official: Zelenskyy meets top-level U.S. delegation
  - April 25, 2022

- Ukraine braces for Russian assault in eastern Donbas region
  - April 12, 2022
Hiroshima to drop Russia's Putin from peace memorial ceremony invitee list

May 21, 2022 (Mainichi Japan)

HIROSHIMA -- Hiroshima Municipal Government officials revealed on May 20 that the city will not invite Russian President Vladimir Putin to its annual peace memorial ceremony this year over his country's invasion of Ukraine.

Putin had consistently been invited to the yearly ceremony at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park on Aug. 6, the day the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the city in 1945.

"We are concerned that the ceremony would stray from its original spirit of 'commemoration,'" a municipal government statement said. The city intends to send invitation letters to about 90 overseas dignitaries including the United Nations' secretary-general and national leaders.

Some 3,550 seats will be prepared for ceremony attendees this year, about four times the number in 2020 and 2021. The event was drastically scaled down in those two years to prevent the spread of coronavirus infections. Seats for the public will also be set up for the first time in three years.

(Japanese original by Kiyomasa Nakamura, Hiroshima Bureau)
Ukraine fights to hold off Russian advances in south, east

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
April 30, 2022 at 13:45 JST

KYIV—Ukrainian forces fought to hold off Russian attempts to advance in the south and east, where the Kremlin is seeking to capture the country's industrial Donbas region, and a senior U.S. defense official said Moscow's offensive is going much slower than planned.

While artillery fire, sirens and explosions were heard Friday in some cities, the United Nations sought to broker an evacuation of civilians from the increasingly hellish ruins of Mariupol, where the mayor said the situation inside the steel plant that has become the southern port city's last stronghold is dire.

Citizens are "begging to get saved," Mayor Vadym Boichenko said. "There, it's not a matter of days. It's a matter of hours."

In other developments:

— A former U.S. Marine was killed while fighting alongside Ukrainian forces, his family said in what would be the war's first known death of an American in combat. The U.S. has not confirmed the report.

— Ukrainian forces are cracking down on people accused of helping Russian troops. In the Kharkiv region alone, nearly 400 have been detained under anti-collaboration laws enacted after Moscow's Feb. 24 invasion.

— The international sanctions imposed on the Kremlin over the war are squeezing the country. The Russian Central Bank said Russia's economy is expected to contract by up to 10% this year, and the outlook is "extremely uncertain."
Getting a full picture of the unfolding battle in the east has been difficult because airstrikes and artillery barrages have made it extremely dangerous for reporters to move around. Both Ukraine and the Moscow-backed rebels fighting in the east also have introduced tight restrictions on reporting from the combat zone.

But so far, Russia’s troops and the separatist forces appear to have made only minor gains.

In part because of the strength of Ukrainian resistance, the U.S. believes the Russians are “at least several days behind where they wanted to be” as they try to encircle Ukrainian troops in the east, said the senior U.S. defense official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the American military’s assessment.

As Russian troops try to move north out of Mariupol so they can advance on Ukrainian forces from the south, their progress has been “slow and uneven and certainly not decisive,” the official said.

In the bombed-out city of Mariupol, around 100,000 people were believed trapped with little food, water or medicine. An estimated 2,000 Ukrainian defenders and 1,000 civilians were holed up at the Azovstal steel plant.

The Soviet-era steel plant has a vast underground network of bunkers able to withstand airstrikes. But the situation has grown more dire after the Russians dropped “bunker busters” and other bombs.

“Locals who manage to leave Mariupol say it is hell, but when they leave this fortress, they say it is worse,” the mayor said.

U.N. spokesman Farhan Haq said the organization was negotiating with authorities in Moscow and Kyiv to create safe passage.

This time, “we hope there’s a slight touch of humanity in the enemy,” the mayor said. Ukraine has blamed the failure of numerous previous evacuation attempts on continued Russian shelling.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, told Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya TV that the real problem is that “humanitarian corridors are being ignored by Ukrainian ultra-nationals.” Moscow has repeatedly claimed right-wing Ukrainians are thwarting evacuation efforts and using civilians as human shields.

Fighting could be heard from Kramatorsk to Sloviansk, two cities about 18 kilometers (11 miles) apart in the Donbas. Columns of smoke rose from the Sloviansk area and neighboring cities. At least one person was reported wounded in the shelling.

In his nightly video address, Zelenskyy accused Russia of trying to destroy the Donbas and all who live there.

The constant attacks “show that Russia wants to empty this territory of all people,” he said.

“If the Russian invaders are able to realize their plans even partially, then they have enough artillery and aircraft to turn the entire Donbas into stones, as they did with Mariupol.”

Ukrainian troops in the Luhansk region of the Donbas repulsed an attack by Russian airborne troops and killed most of their unit, the governor said.

“Only seven of the invaders survived,” Gov. Serhiy Haidai said Friday on Telegram. The claim could not immediately be confirmed.

He did not say where the attack took place but said Russian forces were preparing for an attack on Severodonetsk.

In a neighborhood on the outskirts of Kharkiv that is regularly shelled by Russian forces, some residents remain in their apartments, even though the buildings have charred gaping holes. There is no running water or electricity so they gather outside to cook on an open flame.
Ukrainian reservists staying in a neighborhood cellar say the Russians have hit the buildings with rockets, artillery and tank fire.

"A tank can come at a short distance and fire all of its ammunition on residential areas. It doesn’t care where. And it’s impossible to figure out where it will fire," said Vladiislav, who like others in the unit would only give his first name. "There is nothing here besides residential buildings, schools and kindergartens."

Most of the reservists had civilian jobs before the war started and said they took up arms when the Russians invaded.

"When your city is being destroyed, when people close to you are being killed, there is no other option," said a reservist named Ibor.

Another reservist, who goes by the nickname Malysk, expressed frustration that he wasn’t able to do more to stop the Russian advance.

"I took up arms, but unfortunately I can’t catch flying missiles with my bare hands and throw them back," he said.

In the nearby village of Ruska Lozava, hundreds of people were evacuated after Ukrainian forces retook the city from Russian occupiers, according to the regional governor. Those who fled to Kharkiv spoke of dire conditions under the Russians, with little water or food and no electricity.

"We were hiding in the basement. It was horrific. The basement was shaking from the explosions. We were screaming, we were crying and we were praying to God," said Ludmila Bokharnikova.

Former U.S. Marine Willy Joseph Cancel, 22, was killed Monday while working for a military contracting company that sent him to Ukraine, his mother, Rebecca Cabrera, told CNN.

"He wanted to go over because he believed in what Ukraine was fighting for," she said, "and he wanted to be a part of it to contain it there so it didn’t come here, and that maybe our American soldiers wouldn’t have to be involved in it."

The Marine Corps said Cancel served four years but was given a bad-conduct discharge and sentenced to five months' confinement for violating orders. No details on the offense were given.

At least two other foreigners fighting on the Ukrainian side, one from Britain and the other from Denmark, have also been killed.
US urges more arms for Ukraine amid fears of expanding war

April 27, 2022 (Mainichi Japan)

A woman stands next to a crater from an explosion that damaged an apartment and a basement of a residential building in Lyman, Ukraine, on April 26, 2022. (AP Photo/Leo Correa)

TORETSK, Ukraine (AP) -- The U.S. pressed its allies Tuesday to move "heaven and earth" to keep Kyiv well-supplied with weapons as Russian forces rained fire on eastern and southern Ukraine amid growing new fears the war could spill over the country's borders.

For the second day in a row, explosions rocked the separatist region of Trans-Dniester in neighboring Moldova, knocking out two powerful radio antennas close to the Ukrainian border. No one claimed
responsibility for the attacks, but Ukraine all but blamed Russia.

In other developments, Poland and Bulgaria said the Kremlin is cutting off natural gas supplies to the two NATO countries starting Wednesday, the first such actions of the war. Both nations had refused Russia's demands that they pay in rubles.

Poland has been a major gateway for the delivery of weapons to Ukraine and confirmed this week that it is sending the country tanks.

The potential effect of the cutoff was not immediately clear. Poland said it was well-prepared for such a move after working for years to reduce its reliance on Russian energy. Bulgaria gets over 90% of its gas from Russia, and officials said they were working to find other sources.

Two months into the fighting, Western arms have helped Ukraine stall Russia's invasion, but the country's leaders have said they need more support fast.

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin convened a meeting Tuesday of officials from about 40 countries at the U.S. air base at Ramstein, Germany, and said more help is on the way.

"This gathering reflects the galvanized world," Austin said, adding that he wanted officials to leave the meeting "with a common and transparent understanding of Ukraine's near-term security requirements because we're going to keep moving heaven and earth so that we can meet them."

After unexpectedly fierce resistance by Ukrainian forces thwarted Russia's attempt to take Ukraine's capital, Moscow now says its focus is the capture of the Donbas, the mostly Russian-speaking industrial region in eastern Ukraine.

In the small city of Toretsk in the Donbas, residents are struggling to survive, collecting rainwater for washing up and fervently hoping for an end to the fighting.

"It's bad. Very bad. Hopeless," said Andriy Cheromushkin. "You feel so helpless that you don't know what you should do or shouldn't do. Because if you want to do something, you need some money, and there is no money now."

Russian advances and heavy fighting were reported in the Donbas, with one town, Kremiinka, apparently falling after days of street-by-street fighting, according to the British military.

In the gutted southern port city of Mariupol, authorities said Russian forces hit the Azovstal steel plant with 35 airstrikes over the past 24 hours. The plant is the last known stronghold of Ukrainian fighters
in the city. About 1,000 civilians were said to be taking shelter there with an estimated 2,000 Ukrainian defenders.

"Russia has drastically intensified strikes over the past 24 hours and is using heavy bunker bombs," said Petro Andryushchenko, an adviser to Mariupol's mayor. "The number of those wounded will be clear once the rubble is cleared."

He also accused Russian forces of shelling a route it had offered as an escape corridor from the steel mill.

Beyond Mariupol, local officials said at least nine people were killed and several more wounded in Russian attacks on towns and cities in the east and south. Pavlo Kryvyenko, governor of the Donetsk region of the Donbas, said on the Telegram messaging app that Russian forces "continue to deliberately fire at civilians and to destroy critical infrastructure."

Russian missile fire also knocked out a strategic railroad bridge along a route that links southern Ukraine's Odesa port region to neighboring Romania, a NATO member, Ukrainian authorities said. No injuries were reported.

Ukraine also said Russian forces shelled Kharkiv, the country's second-largest city, which lies in the northeast, outside the Donbas, but is seen as key to Russia's apparent bid to encircle Ukrainian troops in the Donbas from the north, east and south.

Ukrainian forces struck back in the Kherson region in the south.

The attack on the bridge near Odesa -- along with a series of strikes on key railroad stations a day earlier -- appears to mark a major shift in Russia's approach. Until now, Moscow has spared strategic bridges, perhaps in hopes of keeping them for its own use in seizing Ukraine. But now it seems to be trying to thwart Ukraine's efforts to move troops and supplies.

The southern Ukraine coastline and Moldova have been on edge since a senior Russian military officer said last week that the Kremlin's goal is to secure not just eastern Ukraine but the entire south, so as to open the way to Trans-Dniester, a long, narrow strip of land with about 470,000 people along the Ukrainian border where about 1,500 Russian troops are based.

It was not clear who was behind the blasts in Trans-Dniester, but the attacks gave rise to fears that Russia is stirring up trouble so as to create a pretext to either invade Trans-Dniester or use the region as another launching point to attack Ukraine.
Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the explosions were carried out by Russia and were "designed to destabilize," with the intention of showing Moldova what could happen if it supports Ukraine.

Austin, the U.S. defense secretary, said the U.S. was still looking into blasts and trying to determine what was going on, but added: "Certainly we don't want to see any spillover" of the conflict.

With the potentially pivotal battle for the east underway, the U.S. and its NATO allies are scrambling to deliver artillery and other heavy weaponry in time to make a difference.

German Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht said her government will supply Gepard self-propelled armored anti-aircraft guns to Ukraine. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has faced mounting pressure to send heavy weapons such as tanks and other armored vehicles.

Austin noted that more than 30 allies and partners have joined the U.S. in sending military aid to Ukraine and that more than $5 billion worth of equipment has been committed.

The U.S. defense secretary said the war has weakened Russia's military, adding, "We would like to make sure, again, that they don't have the same type of capability to bully their neighbors that we saw at the outset of this conflict."

A senior Kremlin official, Nikolai Patrushev, warned that "the policies of the West and the Kyiv regime controlled by it would only be the breakup of Ukraine into several states."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov cautioned that if the Western flow of weapons continues, the talks aimed at ending the fighting will not produce any results.

A day earlier, Lavrov accused NATO of "pouring oil on the fire" with its support for Ukraine. He also warned against provoking World War III and said the threat of a nuclear conflict "should not be underestimated."

"A nuclear war cannot be won and it shouldn't be fought," Pentagon spokesman John Kirby responded in an interview with CNN. "That kind of rhetoric is clearly not called for in the current scenario. What is called for is Mr. Putin ending this war."

Diplomatic efforts to end the fighting also continued. U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres met with Russian President Vladimir Putin, and the U.N. said they agreed in principle that the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross should be involved in the evacuation of civilians trapped in the steel plant in Mariupol. Putin said Ukrainian troops were using civilians in the plant as shields and not allowing them to leave.
Japan, U.S. foreign ministers condemn Russia’s invasion of Ukraine

The Yomiuri Shimbun

Foreign Minister Yoshidee Hayashi speaks to the press at the Foreign Ministry after talks with U.S. counterpart Antony Blinken.
Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi held a 25-minute telephone conversation with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Saturday morning, during which they condemned Russia's military invasion of Ukraine as a serious violation of international law.

The two ministers reaffirmed the policy of close cooperation between Japan and the United States, and among the Group of Seven advanced nations.

"We must never accept unilateral changes in the status quo by force," Hayashi said after the meeting. "We need to deal with Russia's actions appropriately so that it doesn't learn the wrong lessons."

The foreign ministers shared an understanding that "the impact of aggression by Russian forces will not be limited to Europe," and agreed that strengthening the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. alliance was essential.

The G7 is preparing to hold an emergency online meeting of foreign ministers on Sunday night, during which the Ukraine situation and further measures, including additional sanctions against Russia, will be up for discussion.

The U.S. has announced sanctions against Belarus for supporting Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the Japanese government is considering following suit.

The U.S. sanctions are targeting Belarusian state-owned banks and other entities.
State leader, not the people, proper target of criticism against Ukraine invasion

Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its atrocities there can never be tolerated. But the responsibility lies with the state and its leader. It is not right to direct anger toward ordinary Russians.

Incidents of discriminatory behavior and defamation against Russians living in Japan have become a problem.

In February, a ryokan inn in Nagahama, Shiga Prefecture, said on its website that it would stop accommodating people from Russia and its ally Belarus because the inn had taken a stance of opposing Russia's invasion of Ukraine. But later, the inn deleted the notice after receiving administrative guidance from the prefectural government.

Some people have harassed Russian restaurants and shops that deal with Russian products, and have even posted messages on social media, such as "Go back to Russia."

At JR Ebisu Station in Tokyo, a station sign in the Cyrillic characters used in the Russian language temporarily disappeared. As passengers and others told East Japan Railway Co. (JR East) that they were offended by the Cyrillic sign, a station staff member covered the sign with a piece of paper. After that, there was growing criticism of JR East's response, so the paper was removed from the sign.

It is quite natural for Japan to stand firm against Russia — which is attempting to change the status quo by force — in line with the international community. A series of moves to ban Russia from participating in international sports and arts competitions also can be said to be unfortunate consequences of Russia's outrageous acts in Ukraine.

It is understandable that many people are angry at Russia's barbarism. However, it is Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russia as a nation that should be blamed. It makes no sense to defame someone just because he or she is a Russian.

More than 9,000 Russians live in Japan, and many of them have integrated into Japanese society. Some of them voice their opposition to the invasion of Ukraine by their home country and take part in demonstrations. Nor do all people in Russia itself support the aggression.

At a press conference, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi called on the Japanese people not to ostracize or defame ordinary Russians living in Japan.
The law on measures against hate speech states that discriminatory behavior against people from other countries is not allowed. The central and local governments must continue to make such calls.

It has often been the case in the past that when factors such as international conflicts, disasters and pandemics raise anxiety and fear, exclusionary moves increase.

Still fresh in people’s minds is the spate of discriminatory behavior and acts of violence against Asian people in Western nations over the novel coronavirus, based on the prejudice that “it is highly likely that Asians have spread the virus.”

The shunning of Russians is a shameful act that degrades the dignity of the Japanese people. It is vital that every one of us is keenly aware of this.

(From The Yomiuri Shimbun, May 6, 2022)
EDITORIAL: Japan’s aid to Ukraine cannot lead to broader arms exports

April 30, 2022 at 16:33 JST

A strong case can be made for Japan to provide aid to Ukraine in concert with other countries to support the beleaguered nation against Russia’s unpardonable aggression.

But the government’s unprecedented decision to provide defense equipment to a country involved in armed conflict raises grave questions about Japan’s commitment to its restrictive arms export policy. As such, the government is obliged to offer a more thorough explanation to ensure complete transparency in the procedures.

More to the point, this special support to Ukraine should not lead to a further easing of Japan’s principles concerning arms exports.

In response to a request from Ukraine, the government last month provided the country with bulletproof vests, helmets, tents and field rations. This month, the government announced it will also supply Ukraine with drones and gas masks as well as protective clothing for defense against chemical agents.

Japan will ship noncombat camera-equipped drones to Ukraine, which, unlike those provided by the United States and other countries, do not carry weapons. They are expected to be used for intelligence, surveillance-gathering and reconnaissance. In Ukraine, however, drones are used to detect and identify Russian military targets for attacks. Unlike bulletproof vests and protective masks, drones of any type cannot be regarded as purely defensive equipment.
For half a century, Japan’s three principles regarding arms exports effectively banned it from providing weapons to other countries.

But in 2014, the Abe administration arbitrarily replaced the longstanding policy with its “Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology.”

This shift made it possible for Japan to export arms if three requirements are fulfilled. Firstly, weapons must not be exported to a state party to a conflict. Secondly, the government must restrict instances where arms exports are allowed and conduct strict advance inspections of individual cases. The government is also obliged to reach an advance agreement with the recipient on any unintended use or a transfer to a third-party nation.

Ukraine is involved in a war, but is not deemed to be a "state party to a conflict" under the three principles, which define the term as "a country against which the U.N. Security Council is taking measures to maintain or restore international peace and security in the event of an armed attack.”

But Ukraine does not qualify under the terms where arms exports are permitted as described in the guidelines for implementing the three principles. The government hastily revised the guidelines to add aid to Ukraine to the list. With regard to drones, the government contends they are not subject to the restrictions because they are commercially available.

Even if the Japanese public supports providing equipment of this nature to Ukraine, it is hard not to be worried that this approach may be used to gradually widen the scope of Japan’s arms exports simply through revisions to the guidelines.

Only North Korea at the time of the Korean War and the Iraq during the Persian Gulf War fit the definition of a “state party to a conflict.” The Diet should engage in exhaustive debate on whether this definition is appropriate.

A set of security policy recommendations the ruling Liberal Democratic Party submitted to Prime Minister Fumio Kishida this week called for a review of the new three principles concerning defense equipment exports, in addition to giving the Self-Defense Forces the ability to strike targets in enemy territory.

The party has urged the government to consider a system to allow Japan to "transfer a wide range of defense equipment to a country subject to aggression that violates international law.” This proposal is apparently aimed at making it possible for Japan to provide deadly weapons of offense as well.

We cannot just accept such a serious policy shift that concerns the nation’s core pacifist principles.

This issue requires policymakers to engage in cool-headed debate from a long-term and comprehensive perspective while taking a hard look at the current international situation.

--The Asahi Shimbun, April 30
THE NIKKEI VIEW

Asia needs unity on Russia, and Japan should take the lead

Reckless violence cannot be allowed to spill over to East Asia

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida in New Delhi on March 19. (Photo courtesy of the Japanese Prime Minister’s Office)

March 23, 2022 13:18 JST

After a recent summit in New Delhi, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said they opposed the use of force to solve disputes and "any attempt to unilaterally change [the] status quo."

Their joint statement did not mention Russia by name, but it is clear who the words point to. As the international community accelerates diplomatic efforts to press Russia to end its invasion of Ukraine, Japan, too, must exercise leadership in aligning the Asian response.

Kishida is to be commended for choosing India as his first overseas trip this year, and for deepening relations with Modi at this crucial time.
India has not joined other countries in imposing sanctions on Moscow in light of its historically friendly relations with Russia. Even as Kishida called on Modi to coordinate policies on Russia, the Indian leader avoided mentioning Moscow by name. That reluctance can be seen in the joint statement.

It is extremely disappointing that India abstained from the United Nations General Assembly statement condemning Russia in early March. Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed to advance defense cooperation through new arms sales when they met last December.

While convincing India to fully change course may be difficult, Japan must keep India in the democratic camp and not allow it to become Russia's escape route from sanctions.

Next on Kishida's itinerary was Cambodia, this year's Association of Southeast Asian Nations chair. Like India, Cambodia has deep relations with Russia. It has even deeper relations with China.

Southeast Asia is crucial to the "free and open Indo-Pacific" the U.S. and Japan envision, and efforts should be made to explore avenues of cooperation with countries like Cambodia.

Meanwhile, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi visited Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. Both are important players in the current context. The strategically located Turkey is attempting to mediate between Russia and Ukraine. The UAE is a major oil producer, with whom collaboration is essential to tame the volatile oil market.

On Monday, Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement, "Under the current conditions, the Russian Federation does not intend to continue peace treaty talks with Japan."
Russia said it is suspending visa-free visits of Japanese people to the Northern Territories, the four islands that the Soviet Union occupied in the closing days of World War II, and that Russia will withdraw from the dialogue on developing joint economic activities there.

The ministry said these decisions were the result of Japan taking "an explicitly unfriendly position" over Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Japan's stance is a consequence of Russia's invasion; blaming Japan for the change in status quo is preposterous. Tokyo need not hesitate. The international community must unite and force Putin into a position where he has no choice but to agree to a cease-fire.

Rather than appease a country that indiscriminately attacks another nation in violation of international law, Japan should be on the side of governments that defend the international order and pursue peace.

In the week that Japanese leaders were flying around the globe making diplomatic overtures, U.S. President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping held an online summit. The American leader warned that if China were to assist Russia through military or economic means, it, too, could be subject to sanctions.

The world cannot let authoritarian states run amok. Reckless violence cannot be allowed to spill over to East Asia.

With its deep historic ties with China, Japan, together with the U.S., will need to find a way to convince Beijing not to take Russia's side.
EDITORIAL: Biden points the way on sanctions and Japan should follow

March 10, 2022 at 17:30 JST

President Joe Biden announces a ban on Russian oil imports, toughening the toll on Russia's economy in retaliation for its invasion of Ukraine. He made the March 8 announcement in the Roosevelt Room at the White House in Washington. (AP Photo)

Russia's aggression against Ukraine grinds on, with mounting civilian casualties. Stronger condemnation by the international community over Russia's lawless invasion is a necessity, as are enhanced efforts to stop it. Economic sanctions against Moscow are a key means to achieve the goal. Japan should consider additional steps to tighten the economic vice around Russia.

U.S. President Joe Biden announced March 8 that his administration is banning Russian oil, natural gas and coal imports to the United States.

"We're moving forward on this ban, understanding that many of our European Allies and partners may not be in a position to join us," Biden explained.

The United States, Europe, Japan and many other countries have acted together in imposing a broad slate of economic sanctions against Russia, including freezing the foreign currency assets of the country's central bank and prohibiting exports of certain high-tech products, including advanced semiconductors, to Russia. These measures have caused the ruble to crash and a growing number of foreign companies have decided to stop operations and sales in Russia.

As a leading exporter of natural gas and oil, Russia can keep earning a sizable amount of foreign exchange as long as it can sell energy to other countries. The U.S. ban on Russian energy is aimed at dealing a major blow to the country's main source of foreign exchange. The
United State can afford to take this step because it is a leading oil producer. We wholeheartedly support this decision.

Germany, on the other hand, has said it has no choice but to continue importing Russian energy because of its dependence on oil and gas from the country. The European Commission has outlined proposals to “make Europe independent from Russian fossil fuels well before 2030.” The commission says Europe should consider ways to diversify energy suppliers and develop more renewable energy. One goal is to cut natural gas imports from Russia by two-thirds by the end of the year.

What should Japan do? Russian natural gas and crude oil account for about 8 percent and 4 percent, respectively, of Japan’s imports of these materials. Much of the imports come from the giant Sakhalin-1 and 2 oil and gas projects, which involve both the Japanese government and the private sector. There are bound to be significant consequences if Japan cuts or stops imports of Russian oil and gas while the world faces an energy crunch.

Since its dependence on Russian energy is smaller than Europe's, Japan has more room for maneuver on this matter. This is a time for Japan to play a role in strengthening the foundation for international solidarity against Russia's aggression. At the very least, Tokyo should seek to reduce Japan's imports of Russian crude in stages.

With regard to Sakhalin-1 and 2 and planned energy projects in Russia, Japan should weigh a range of options while evaluating the effectiveness of withdrawing from them as a means to punish Russia. The government has the primary responsibility for working out plans to deal with the matter since joint energy development projects with Russia are promoted as a national policy.

If imports are to be reduced, Japan will need to find alternative supplies, at least for the time being. But Japan should not increase its dependence on fossil fuels over the medium- and long-term, given the policy imperative of slashing carbon emissions.

In tackling this challenge, the government should focus on moving forward in its efforts to reduce its carbon footprint.

For now, it is vital to prevent soaring energy prices from wreaking havoc on the overall economy. Higher energy prices offer the benefit of curbing demand for fossil fuels. But they are likely to trigger broad price hikes for daily necessities, which would place low-income households under heavy financial strain. This requires the government to take well-targeted policy measures to deal with the challenge.

--The Asahi Shimbun, March 10

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EDITORIAL: Putin’s Victory Day speech was a weak attempt to justify invasion

May 10, 2022 at 13:49 AST

Russian President Vladimir Putin delivers his speech during the Victory Day military parade marking the 77th anniversary of the end of World War II in Moscow on May 9. (Sputnik, Kremlin Pool Photo via AP)

What has Russian President Vladimir Putin learned from history?

He needs to realize that he has committed a cardinal sin by launching Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, which has revived the scourge of outright military aggression that once plagued the world, and stop the operation immediately.

Russia on May 9 celebrated the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in World War II. In early May in 1945, Nazi Germany surrendered after nearly six years of brutal attempts to expand its territory into surrounding countries and exterminate Jews.

It is known that the Soviet Union played an important historical role in liberating Europe. But the war waged by Putin, who apparently wants to resurrect the Soviet empire, is an outrageous act of trampling on people in a neighboring country as Nazi Germany did.

In his closely watched Victory Day speech, Putin did nothing but try to justify his invasion. He made an unfounded claim that Ukraine plans to acquire nuclear weapons in a serious security threat to Russia as a justification for Moscow’s invasion, saying Kyiv left Russia with no choice but to launch a “pre-emptive” attack.

Putin also clearly stated that his country’s main supposed enemy is the United States and pledged to protect Russia’s “traditional values” in the face of security threats from the United States. His remarks apparently reflected his determination to reject Western-style democracy and maintain his authoritarian rule in the country.
His vow not to allow the devastation caused by a world war to be repeated only rang hollow. He has stepped up his threat to use nuclear arms in the run-up to the day in what should be seen as a blatant challenge to the international security regime.

His recent words and actions seem to reflect his frustration at how his war plan has gone awry. The Russian forces gave up its original goal of seizing Ukraine's capital in March and shifted its focus to occupying the two eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, collectively known as the Donbas.

But the Russian military has failed to make expected progress.

Now that the Victory Day celebration is over, there will be no politically important date for Putin in the coming months. This raises concerns about the possibility that the conflict may drag on for a long time, increasing civilian casualties.

The other day, a school in Luhansk used as a shelter for local residents was bombed by a Russian aircraft in an appalling tragedy that confirmed the concerns.

The leaders of the Group of Seven leading democracies, including Japan, held an online meeting this week to discuss their collective responses to what is transpiring in Ukraine. They agreed on a phased embargo of Russian oil to choke off the main revenue source for the country.

They also reaffirmed their commitment to continue providing military aid to Ukraine.

There is a compelling case for the leading democracies to support Ukraine's unflinching fight to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of Putin's threats. Overlooking such an attempt to unilaterally change the status quo by force would make it impossible to maintain peace and security in the international community.

But a war of attrition between two military forces with similar capabilities would lead to further bloodshed and destruction, raising the risk of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction being used. Military support to Ukraine alone cannot bring the war to an end.

In its first unanimous vote on an initiative to end the war in Ukraine, the U.N. Security Council last week adopted a presidential statement stressing that all member states have "the obligation to settle their international disputes by peaceful means."

This is time for the permanent members of the council, including the United States, China, Britain and France, to fulfill their duties.

They should work with U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to make tenacious diplomatic efforts to correct the mistakes committed by Putin. Other major countries including Japan and Germany are also facing a crucial test of their diplomatic prowess.

-- The Asahi Shimbun, May 10

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Appendix C

US Media Articles

Reportage
How far will Biden go in helping Ukraine and where would you draw the line?
What Ukraine most wanted from the West, the West was least likely to give. That was the inherent tension between Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and President Biden. Closing the skies, as Zelensky repeatedly asked of the United States and NATO, would stop Russia from bombing Ukrainian cities. But enforcing a no-fly zone over Ukraine could lead to the United States entering a war with Russia — or even, Biden warned, “World War III.”

The Biden administration has drawn its line at actions that it thinks could provoke Russia. But the demarcation between proxy war and real war is getting fuzzier. The United States has been supplying Ukraine weapons for years and ramped that up as the Russian invasion began. They’ve sent them missiles, antitank weapons, some 50 million bullets and systems that can shoot down Russian aircraft. Biden has accused Russia of war crimes and genocide, and regularly announces that he’s sending Ukraine more aid, including lethal weapons like mines and even helicopters.

As the war enters its fourth month, Congress approved tens of billions more in aid for Ukraine, most of it for weapons and military assistance, at Biden’s request. Biden used some of that money to send even more powerful rockets to
Ukraine, which Russia called “unprecedented.” He is also increasing economic pressure on Russia, and has asked Congress to give his administration controversial new power to take yachts and planes from Russia oligarchs, liquidate the money and give it to Ukraine.

As the Biden administration increases the amount and even lethality of weapons going to Ukraine, officials insist they’re not escalating the war in a way that could aggravate Russia.

“America’s goal is straightforward: We want to see a democratic, independent, sovereign and prosperous Ukraine with the means to deter and defend itself against further aggression,” Biden wrote in the New York Times in June.

Where would you draw the line on helping Ukraine? Weigh the pros and cons, from the United States’ point of view, of how to help Ukraine fight off Russia.

Sanctions

The West is determined to keep choking off Russia’s economy the longer the war goes on. Russia already faces more sanctions than any other nation, according to Castellum.AI, a global database that tracks such penalties. The United States is leading on this front. The United States has placed sanctions on all 10 of Russia’s largest banks, many Russian oligarchs, and it has banned imports of Russian oil.

“IT has caused the Russian economy to, quite frankly, crater,” Biden has said of the sanctions regimen already in place. But in a globalized economy, these sanctions have ricocheted. Biden was initially reluctant to ban Russian oil because of the likelihood that it would push up gas and energy prices. (It has.)

Here are the options the Biden administration is already doing or has considered.
Where would you draw the line for U.S. involvement amongst these 8 options? Click the line to see how your decision compares with U.S. policymakers.

Sanction Russian oligarchs

PRO It can turn Russian elite against Putin.
CON Not much as far as the U.S. is concerned; Russian sanctions on U.S. politicians and officials got laughed off in America.

Draw the line

Sanction major Russian financial institutions

PRO It has crippled Russia’s economy as it’s trying to wage a war.
CON In a globalized world, a downturn in a major country affects others that do business with it.

Draw the line

Make it harder for Russia to trade with the U.S. and other Western countries

PRO It cuts off the Russian economy from the West, making it harder for Russia to sustain the war.
CON It hurts U.S. businesses that do trade with Russia, like in the semiconductor industry.

Draw the line
Ban all Russian oil and gas imports

**PRO** It's a powerfully symbolic stance.
**CON** It is causing gas and energy prices in the U.S. to rise, at a time when prices are already high.

Make it harder for Russia to use cryptocurrencies

**PRO** Some policymakers worry the Russian regime and Russian oligarchs will use digital currencies to end-run sanctions choking off their access to the global banking system.
**CON** Federal regulators say the traceability of cryptocurrencies on public blockchains and the limited size of the digital asset market make it an unworkable alternative to traditional financial channels.

Sanction all Russian politicians who don’t denounce Putin (a Zelensky ask)

**PRO** Zelensky asked the U.S. to do this, to try to turn Russia’s elite against the war.
**CON** It could cut off whatever diplomatic relations the U.S. has with Russia to try to end this war, or prevent future ones.
Designate Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism

**PRO** Zelensky asked Biden to do this; Biden was noncommittal, The Post reports. It would be the ultimate economic punishment for Russia, cutting it off from almost all business with the U.S.

**CON** How much economic activity would the U.S. lose as a result? Experts also say it can be difficult to take Russia off the list, should relations return to normal in the years to come.

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Liquidate Russian oligarch’s assets, and give them to Ukraine

**PRO** It’s an aggressive new front on the sanctions war that would essentially take billions from Russia’s elite and give it directly to Ukrainians to fight Russia.

**CON** The ACLU helped nix a previous proposal in Congress, arguing it was unconstitutional for the federal government to liquidate someone’s assets without letting the target challenge it in court.

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Military

How to help Ukraine’s military is a much thornier topic for U.S. policymakers. They’re very worried about starting a much larger war by provoking more Russian aggression to NATO allies bordering Ukraine and Western Europe — or, in a worse-case scenario, opening the door to nuclear war. *We will not fight the*
third world war in Ukraine,” Biden has said. But Ukraine says the only way to stop its war is for the West to get more aggressive toward Russia.

Here’s a menu of military options. Some of these the Biden administration is already doing or has considered. Others it has ruled out entirely.

*Where would you draw the line for U.S. involvement amongst these 9 options? Click the line to see how your decision compares with U.S. policymakers.*

**Provide intelligence to Ukraine**

**PRO** The U.S. and other nations have vastly superior intelligence agencies than Ukraine, so some of the world’s best intelligence about Russia’s movements during the war is getting to Ukrainian fighters quickly.

**CON** The U.S. has to be careful what it shares, operating under the assumption there are Russian spies in Ukrainian intelligence.

**Arm Ukraine with anti-armor and antiaircraft missiles**

**PRO** As Russia flies through its supplies, Ukraine is receiving powerful weapons that have destroyed large numbers of armored vehicles and tanks and some aircraft and disrupted Russian supply lines. The effects of these weapons have probably taken a toll on Russian soldiers’ morale, amid reports that some have deserted their units.

**CON** Weapons moving through Ukraine are appealing targets for Russian forces. If Russia escalates further to attack a place like Poland, through which the weapons are flowing, it would undoubtedly expand the conflict beyond Ukraine.
Provide Russian-made fighter jets to Ukraine

PRO Additional jets would allow Ukraine to expand the number of flights it makes per day against the Russian air force. The planes also could be used to provide spare parts for other jets Ukraine still has that are damaged.

CON U.S. officials fear this could provoke an escalatory attack from Russia. The Pentagon also has said that with Russia operating a large number of surface-to-air missiles, Ukraine would still be limited in how much it can fly.

Draw the line

Send Ukraine more powerful air defenses

PRO It could be even more effective than sending Ukrainian forces fighter jets. Russian jets would be less able to bomb Ukrainians at high altitudes. A Ukrainian fighter recently pilot told The Post that his pilots are “just targets” for Russia’s more advanced planes.

CON Russia could see supplying these more powerful systems as escalatory and attack nations that provide them to Ukraine, triggering a broader conflict. There also are a finite number of these aging systems available, making them prime targets for Russian forces.

Draw the line

Send drones

PRO The drones will create a new dilemma for Russian forces to deal with and could be used to target Russian artillery units and convoys. Ukraine already has made use of Turkish-made drones it owned before the invasion to destroy Russian armored vehicles.

CON Russia could see supplying these more powerful systems as escalatory and attack nations that provide them to Ukraine, triggering a broader conflict. It is not yet clear how effective Ukraine will be with them.
Send weapons to find and attack Russian artillery

**PRO** “Counter-battery fire,” as it is known, limits the ability of an opposing force to lob multiple rounds at the same target from one location.

**CON** Weapons moving through Ukraine are appealing targets for Russian forces. If Russia escalates further to attack a place like Poland, through which the weapons are flowing, it would undoubtedly expand the conflict beyond Ukraine.

Send more powerful rockets to Ukraine

**PRO** As Kyiv and Moscow struggle for control over eastern parts of Ukraine, these more powerful rockets could help put Russia in a defensive mode.

**CON** Russia made clear it sees this move as aggravating the conflict. “We believe that the United States is deliberately and diligently ‘pouring fuel on the fire,’” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Pesko said.

Create a no-fly zone over Ukraine

**PRO** It could stop or curtail the bombing of Ukrainian cities.

**CON** Enforcing it would be equivalent to direct combat with Russia, U.S. officials say, and could lead to World War III. It also would require attacking Russian targets, such as surface-to-air missile systems, that are over the border in Russia.
Send U.S. combat troops to Ukraine

**PRO** Ukrainian forces would have reinforcements in their fight against Russia with superior weapons and combat experience.

**CON** Doing so would be nothing short of direct combat with Russia, U.S. officials say, and they warn it could lead to World War III.

Draw the line

*This has been updated with the latest news.*

**About this story**


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**By Amber Phillips**

Amber Phillips explains and analyzes politics and authors The 5-Minute Fix newsletter, a quick analysis of the day's biggest political news. 🦉 Twitter

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EUROPE

Kissinger says Ukraine should cede territory to Russia to end war

By Timothy Bella

May 24, 2022 at 10:47 a.m. EDT

Former U.S. secretary of state Henry A. Kissinger said Monday that Ukraine should cede territory to Russia to help end the invasion, suggesting a position that a vast majority of Ukrainians are against as the war enters its fourth month.

Speaking at a conference at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Kissinger urged the United States and the West to not seek an embarrassing defeat for Russia in Ukraine, warning it could worsen Europe's long-term stability.

After saying that Western countries should remember Russia's importance to Europe and not get swept up "in the mood of the moment," Kissinger also pushed for the West to force Ukraine into accepting negotiations with a "status quo ante," which means the previous state of affairs.

"Negotiations need to begin in the next two months before it creates upheavals and tensions that will not be easily overcome. Ideally, the dividing line should be a return to the status quo ante," said Kissinger, 98, according to the Daily Telegraph. "Pursuing the war beyond that point would not be about the freedom of Ukraine, but a new war against Russia itself."

The "status quo ante" mentioned by Kissinger, who was secretary of state to Presidents Richard M. Nixon and Gerald Ford, refers to restoring a situation in which Russia formally controlled Crimea and informally controlled Ukraine's two easternmost regions of Luhansk and Donetsk. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has emphasized that part of his conditions for entering peace talks with Russia would include a restoration of preinvasion borders.
Kissinger’s comments come as world leaders say Russia’s war in Ukraine has thrown the “whole international order into question.” European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told global leaders in Davos that the war is not only “a matter of Ukraine’s survival” or “an issue of European security” but also “a task for the entire global community.” She lamented Russian President Vladimir Putin’s “destructive fury” but said Russia could one day recover its place in Europe if it “finds its way back to democracy, the rule of law and respect for the international rules-based order ... because Russia is our neighbor.”

Much of Ukraine agrees with Zelensky on not giving up land in exchange for peace. A poll conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology this month found that 82 percent of Ukrainians are not prepared to give up any of Ukraine’s land, even if it means the war will drag on. Only 10 percent believe that giving up land is worth it to end the invasion, while 8 percent were undecided, according to the poll conducted between May 13 and last Wednesday.

The sample did not include residents of territories that were not controlled by the Ukrainian authorities before Feb. 24 — such as Crimea, Sevastopol and some districts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The survey also did not include citizens who went abroad after Feb. 24.

Kissinger’s comments follow a recent editorial from the New York Times’s editorial board that argued Ukraine would have to make “painful territorial decisions” to achieve peace.

“In the end, it is the Ukrainians who must make the hard decisions: They are the ones fighting, dying and losing their homes to Russian aggression, and it is they who must decide what an end to the war might look like,” the Times editorial board wrote Thursday. “If the conflict does lead to real negotiations, it will be Ukrainian leaders who will have to make the painful territorial decisions that any compromise will demand.”

The editorial was met with backlash, including from Zelensky adviser Mykhailo Podolyak, who said that “any concession to Russia is not a path to peace, but a war postponed for several years.”

In his comments Monday, Kissinger, a longtime advocate of a realpolitik approach that has nations putting their practical aims in front of morals and principles, urged European leaders to not lose sight of Russia’s place in Europe and risk the country forming a permanent alliance with China.

“I hope the Ukrainians will match the heroism they have shown with wisdom,” he said, according to the Daily Telegraph.

Critics described Kissinger’s comments as what one called “an unfortunate intervention.” Inna Sovsun, a member of the Ukrainian parliament, denounced Kissinger’s position as “truly shameful!”

“It’s a pity that the former US Secretary of State believes that giving up on part of the sovereign territory is a way to peace for any country!” Sovsun tweeted.
Podolyak returned to his refrain that Ukraine could not concede territory, even if it leads to peace, saying the country "does not trade its sovereignty for someone to fill their wallet." He tweeted out an old photo of Kissinger shaking hands with Putin on Tuesday, with Podolyak saying he was thankful that Ukrainians fighting the war did not listen to the diplomat's suggestion.

"As easily as Mr. #Kissinger proposes to give [Russia] part of [Ukraine] to stop the war, he would allow to take Poland or Lithuania away," Podolyak said. "It's good that Ukrainians in the trenches do not have time for listening to 'Davos panickers.' They're a little bit busy defending Freedom and Democracy."
ТовАр унДерСтауНиНг Шапане и АС мУНСТРеаM мЕДиа

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As easily as Mr. #Kissinger proposes to give ⚪ part of 🇺🇦 to
stop the war, he would allow to take Poland or Lithuania
away. It's good that Ukrainians in the trenches do not have
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busy defending Freedom and Democracy.

Adela Suliman contributed to this report.
EUROPE

Putin made ‘big strategic mistake’ in Ukraine, NATO chief says in Davos

By Adela Suliman and Annabelle Timsit
May 24, 2022 at 9:59 a.m. EDT

The shadow of war in Europe continued to cast a pall over the high-impact networking of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on Tuesday, as leaders criticized Russia’s ongoing invasion of Ukraine.

Addressing a crowd of politicians and chief executives, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg called out Russian President Vladimir Putin, saying Putin had “made a big strategic mistake” by invading his neighbor.

The NATO chief termed the invasion a “game changer” both for European security and the wider international order, and said it has “shattered peace in Europe.”

Paradoxically, as a result of the war, Putin is now getting “more NATO on his border, and more members” of the alliance, Stoltenberg said, referring to the increasing likelihood that Sweden and Finland will be admitted to the alliance, which currently has 30 members.

As a former prime minister of Norway, Stoltenberg welcomed their decision to apply to join the body, calling it “historic,” and said that any concerns from NATO member Turkey would be addressed and resolved. About 96 percent of Europeans would be protected by NATO when Sweden and Finland join, he added.

Stoltenberg told business leaders that “freedom is more important than free trade,” and he called for the protection of common values over profit. He warned that dealing with authoritarian regimes is “undermining our security,” citing Russia and China as examples.

Three months after Russia invaded Ukraine, Stoltenberg said the task of NATO is to ensure that “this brutal, heinous war doesn’t escalate to a full-fledged war in Europe between NATO and Russia.” The alliance must prevent any “miscalculations” that could trigger its core Article 5 collective self-defense mechanism, he said.
Addressing the forum just before Stoltenberg, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the war in Ukraine has thrown the “whole international order into question.” Rather than finding solutions to climate change and shaping globalization, “instead, we must address the costs and consequences of Putin’s war of choice,” she told the audience.

“The playbook of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine comes straight out of another century: Treating millions of people not as human beings but as faceless populations. ... Trying to trample the aspirations of an entire nation with tanks.”
Von der Leyen, who visited Ukraine in April, chastised Russia for disrupting global supply chains, impeding grain exports from Ukraine and “weaponizing” its energy supplies. She lamented Putin’s “destructive fury” but said Russia could one day recover its place in Europe if it “finds its way back to democracy, the rule of law and respect for the international rules-based order ... because Russia is our neighbor.” She acknowledged that this idea is a “distant dream and hope” at present.

Stoltenberg said it is important for NATO and the European Union not to duplicate defense efforts. And von der Leyen, a former German defense minister, underscored that the E.U. would “never be a military alliance.” However, “freedom must be fought for,” she said during her speech. “Ukraine must win this war.”

The E.U. is providing unprecedented military aid to Ukraine, as well as billions of dollars in financial support for reconstruction, and is hosting about 6 million refugees in its member states, she said. “It is an economic-relief operation with no precedent in recent history.”

Sanctions on Russia are “draining the Kremlin’s war machine,” von der Leyen added, as she pledged to continue to help Ukraine pursue “its European path” to becoming an E.U. member state. “Ukraine belongs in our European family,” she said. “We stand with them, and I think this is a defining moment for all the democracies of the world.”

Stoltenberg and von der Leyen spoke a day after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky addressed the forum by video link, urging the world’s economic elite to set “new precedents” for punishment of Russia over its invasion. No Russian representatives from government or business were invited to Davos, which resumed at the Swiss ski resort after a pandemic-induced hiatus.

*Emily Rauhala contributed to this report.*
**Why Calls for War Crimes Justice Over Ukraine Face Long Odds**

If those in power act as if they are immune to the laws of war, it may be because they often are. But following through is not necessarily an empty exercise.

By Max Fisher

April 10, 2022

This past week, as Ukrainian forces retook the town of Bucha to find its streets littered with the bodies of bound and shot civilians, and as rockets rained on a train station packed with fleeing families, killing dozens, two words were on the lips of diplomats, world leaders and rights groups: war crimes.

But as investigators comb Ukraine for evidence, which could be used to bring charges, an uncomfortable fact hangs over their work.

Members of sitting governments and their militaries, no matter how horrifying the evidence against them, virtually never face international prosecution for their country’s conduct in war.

There have been many successful war crimes trials since the foundations of such proceedings were laid at the end of World War II. But look closely and a pattern emerges that is not encouraging to hopes that the perpetrators in this war will be similarly held to account.

In practice, justice for war crimes has been applied by conquerors, as in postwar Germany or American-occupied Iraq; by victors in civil war, as in Rwanda or Ivory Coast; or by a new government overthrowing an old one, as in Serbia or Sierra Leone.

Champions of international law argue that the International Criminal Court and similar bodies apply rulings dispassionately and transparently. Trials typically stretch on for years and sometimes end in acquittals: It is hardly brute victor’s justice.

Still, the fact remains that perpetrators almost never arrive in the dock unless they are delivered there by the victors in a war or power struggle that has deposed them.

This means that as long as a government remains in power, any war crimes charges against it, however well proven, are likely be little more than symbolic. If those in power act as if they are immune to the laws of war, it is because, in practice, they often are.

This problem has long bedeviled the world’s efforts to police war; with atrocities going largely unpunished in Syria, Myanmar and many other conflicts where the accused remain in power.

Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine’s president, has expressed frustration at these limitations, telling the United Nations Security Council on Tuesday that it might as well “dissolve yourself all together.”

Urging the Council to establish a tribunal for possible Russian war crimes, he said of the body’s failure to hold Moscow accountable, “Do you think that the time of international law is gone?”

Maybe so, or maybe it has not yet quite arrived.

**Justice for Some**
The limits of international justice stretch back even to the Nuremberg tribunals, set up in Germany after World War II, and which became a basis for the international rules of war.

The tribunal was meant to establish that conduct in war can be punished as a crime, but would be done so under principles of due process and impartiality.

Ever since, global treaties and a body of international law have forbade deliberate attacks on civilians or population centers, among other acts, including torture and genocide.

Still, Nuremberg's tribunal only considered atrocities by the vanquished Nazis. Conduct by the victorious allies was left to those countries' own judicial systems, which, unsurprisingly, faulted some individual soldiers but not their governments.

This model has largely held ever since.

When Rwanda's civil war toppled its government, widely accused of genocide, it may have been the United Nations that set up a tribunal, but it was the new Rwandan government that decided who was handed over. It was mostly the defeated who stood trial.

Slobodan Milosevic, Serbia's wartime leader, faced trial in The Hague only after opposition leaders deposed and extradited him. Milosevic, off Serbian soil, would be out of the picture. And outsourcing his punishment would keep the opposition's hands clean.

The International Criminal Court, or I.C.C., the pre-eminent body for prosecuting war crimes, has indicted about 40 people. All are from Africa. Many are leaders or rebels who lost a war or power struggle. Many, like Milosevic, were shipped over by those who'd deposed them.

While the court's rulings are considered credible, it is perceived at times as rubber-stamp for the outcome of a civil war or power struggle by helping the victors banish their opponents to a faraway prison.

The reach of such courts and tribunals is often restricted by the countries in which they were called to investigate. The courts had access to Rwanda, Bosnia and Cambodia because those countries' governments wanted them to.

In 2010, the I.C.C. opened an investigation into election violence that had killed over 1,000 people in Kenya, later naming the politician Uhuru Kenyatta and others as suspected instigators. But it dropped the case after Mr. Kenyatta became the country's president, saying it had no way to proceed.

Mr. Kenyatta, before his case was dropped, even traveled to The Hague to sit before the court investigating him, dismissing the I.C.C. as a "toy of declining imperial powers."

Serving Justice or Power?

Omar al-Bashir, the former president of Sudan, on trial for corruption in Khartoum in 2008. Though he was accused of war crimes, he was never tried for them. Mohamed Nureldin Abdallah/Reuters

Efforts to overcome the hurdles of bringing war crimes charges have struggled.

Some proponents of atrocity investigations in Ukraine have argued that senior Russian leaders might be tried in absentia.
This is what happened to Sudan's longtime leader, Omar al-Bashir, for whom the I.C.C. issued arrest warrants in 2009 and 2010 for war crimes. This effectively barred Mr. Bashir from visiting countries that had signaled they would comply with the warrant. Still, this travel ban — like so much of international law — was ultimately subject to the whims of national governments. Dozens of countries that wished to host Mr. Bashir continued to do so freely. Those that barred his entry now had a legal justification, though many had previously placed him under sanctions that had the same effect.

The world's major powers have consistently resisted the ability of international courts to hold them or their allies accountable, even symbolically. The United States, Russia, China and India all reject the I.C.C.'s jurisdiction.

In 2002, a few months into the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan, Congress passed a law requiring that the United States cut off aid to any country that would not agree to never send an American to the court.

International justice officials have, in recent years, sought ways to investigate governments still in power.

In 2016, the I.C.C. opened an investigation into possible war crimes committed during Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia. Unable to gain access to territory that remains occupied by Russia, the court's investigation has been limited. Prosecutors requested their first arrest warrants only last month, naming three individuals in Russian-held territory. None are expected to face arrest.

In 2020, the I.C.C. launched an inquiry into American conduct in Afghanistan. In response, the Trump administration imposed sanctions and travel bans against some I.C.C. officials, though the Biden administration reversed this.

Last year, the I.C.C. announced it would, after a decade of Palestinian lobbying, investigate possible war crimes in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories. Israeli officials are expected to bar the investigators from entering.

**Symbolic Justice**

Still, even when perpetrators are beyond reach, international courts can have a role to play.

For one, proving out crimes in absentia, under the auspices of an independent legal process, can help to establish what happened. After a commercial airliner was shot down over separatist-held eastern Ukraine in 2014, an international investigation accused four people, three with ties to Russian intelligence, of responsibility. Some legal scholars have called for a similar approach in the current war.

Proof of responsibility, or the word of a trusted international court, can also be useful as tools of statecraft. Mr. Zelensky could use such charges to keep pressure on Western governments for military support or to lobby fence-sitters like India.

Such cases can also prove restorative for victims to see their suffering acknowledged.

The I.C.C. investigation in Georgia collected testimony from 6,000 witnesses, most in communities that felt the world had forgotten them. It also led to the creation of a fund, financed by donations from foreign governments, that provides medical care, counseling and financial support for families displaced by the war.

Still, with a few hundred thousand euros to spread among thousands of victims, and no power to punish Russian perpetrators, it is hardly the vision of justice conjured by references to Nuremberg, which Mr. Zelensky has urged as a model.
"We have heard about the I.C.C.,” Tina Nebieridze, a 73-year-old survivor of Russia’s invasion of Georgia, told Justice Info, a Swiss-based development site, last year.

“For 12 years they’ve been laughing at us, the government as well as the others in Strasbourg or The Hague,” Ms. Nebieridze said. Relocated to a crumbling apartment building far from her home, now under more than a decade of Russian occupation, she was little impressed by promises of coming assistance. “I no longer have any hope in justice.”
Shaken at First, Many Russians Now Rally Behind Putin’s Invasion

Polls and interviews show many Russians now accept the Kremlin’s assertion that their country is under siege from the West. Opponents are leaving the country or keeping quiet.

By Anton Troianovski, Ivan Nechepurenko and Valeriya Sadrowskaya
April 1, 2022

The stream of antiwar letters to a St. Petersburg lawmaker has dried up. Some Russians who had criticized the Kremlin have turned into cheerleaders for the war. Those who publicly oppose it have found the word “traitor” scrawled on their apartment doors.

Five weeks into President Vladimir V. Putin’s invasion of Ukraine, there are signs that the Russian public’s initial shock has given way to a mix of support for their troops and anger at the West. On television, entertainment shows have been replaced by extra helpings of propaganda, resulting in an around-the-clock barrage of falsehoods about the “Nazis” who run Ukraine and American-funded Ukrainian biowarfare laboratories.

Polls and interviews show that many Russians now accept Mr. Putin’s contention that their country is under siege from the West and had no choice but to attack. The war’s opponents are leaving the country or keeping quiet.

“We are in a time machine, hurtling into the glorious past,” an opposition politician in the western Russian region of Kaliningrad, Solomon I. Girzburg, said in a telephone interview. He portrayed it as a political and economic regression into Soviet times. “I would call it a devolution, or an involution.”

The public’s endorsement of the war lacks the patriotic groundswell that greeted the annexation of Crimea in 2014. But polls released this week by Russia’s most respected independent pollster, Levada, showed Mr. Putin’s approval rating hitting 83 percent, up from 69 percent in January. Eighty-one percent said they supported the war, describing the need to protect Russian speakers as its primary justification.
Moscow police officers detained an anti-war protester in February. Protests have largely dried up in recent weeks. Sergey Pozharskiy for The New York Times

Analysts cautioned that as the economic pain wrought by sanctions deepens in the coming months, the public mood could shift yet again. Some also argued that polls in wartime have limited significance, with many Russians fearful of voicing dissent, or even their true opinion, to a stranger at a time when new censorship laws are punishing any deviation from the Kremlin narrative with as much as 15 years in prison.

But even accounting for that effect, Denis Volkov, Levada's director, said his group's surveys showed that many Russians had adopted the belief that a besieged Russia had to rally around its leader.

Particularly effective in that regard, he said, was the steady drumbeat of Western sanctions, with airspace closures, visa restrictions and the departure of popular companies like McDonald's and IKEA feeding the Kremlin line that the West is waging an economic war on the Russian people.

"The confrontation with the West has consolidated people," Mr. Volkov said.

As a result, those who still oppose the war have retreated into a parallel reality of YouTube streams and Facebook posts increasingly removed from the broader Russian public. Facebook and Instagram are now inaccessible inside Russia without special software, and Russia's most prominent independent outlets have all been forced to shut down.

In the southern city of Rostov-on-Don, near the border with Ukraine, a local activist, Sergei Shalygin, said that two friends who had previously joined him in pro-democracy campaigns had drifted into the pro-war camp. They have taken to forwarding him Russian propaganda posts on the messaging app Telegram that claim to show atrocities committed by Ukrainian "fascists."

"There's a dividing line being drawn, as in the civil war," he said, referring to the aftermath of the Russian Revolution a century ago. "It was a war of brother against brother, and now something similar is happening -- a war without blood this time, but a moral one, a very serious one."

Mr. Shalygin and other observers elsewhere in Russia pointed out in interviews that most supporters of the war did not appear to be especially enthusiastic. Back in 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea in a quick and bloodless campaign, he recalled, every other car seemed to sport the orange-and-black St. George's ribbon, a symbol of support for Mr. Putin's aggressive foreign policy.
Now, while the government has tried to popularize the letter “Z” as an endorsement of the war, Mr. Shalygin said it’s rare to see a car sporting it; the symbol is mainly popping up on public transit and government-sponsored billboards. The “Z” first appeared painted on Russian military vehicles taking part in the Ukraine invasion.

“Enthusiasm — I don’t see it,” said Sergei Belanovsky, a prominent Russian sociologist. “What I rather see is apathy.”

Indeed, while the Levada poll found 81 percent of Russians supporting the war, it also found that 35 percent of Russians said they paid “practically no attention” to it — indicating that a significant number reflexively backed the war without having much interest in it. The Kremlin appears keen to keep it that way, continuing to insist that the conflict must be called a “special military operation” rather than a “war” or an “invasion.”

But for those who watch television, the propaganda has been inescapable, with additional newscasts and high-octane talk shows replacing entertainment programming on state-controlled channels.

On Friday, the program schedule for the Kremlin-controlled Channel 1 listed 15 hours of news-related content, compared with five hours on the Friday before the invasion. Last month, the channel launched a new program called “Antifake” dedicated to debunking Western “disinformation,” featuring a host best known for a show about funny animal videos.

In a phone interview from the Siberian city of Ulan-Ude, Stanislav Brykov, a 34-year-old small business owner, said that while war was a bad thing, this one had been forced on Russia by the United States. As a result, he said, Russians had no choice but to unite around their armed forces.

“It would be a shame for those servicemen protecting our interests to lose their lives for nothing,” Mr. Brykov said.
He put a friend named Mikhail, 35, on the phone. Mikhail had criticized the government in the past, but now, he said, it was time to put disagreements aside.

"While people are frowning at us everywhere outside our borders, at least for this period of time, we have to stick together," Mikhail said.

The war's opponents are becoming targets of pervasive propaganda that depicts them as the enemy within. Mr. Putin set the tone in a speech on March 16, referring to pro-Western Russians as "scum and traitors" to be cleansed from society.

In the last two weeks, a dozen activists, journalists and opposition figures in Russia have arrived home to find the letter "Z" or the words "traitor" or "collaborator" on their doors.

Aleksii Venediktov, the former editor in chief of Echo of Moscow, the liberal radio station forced to shut down in early March, said he found a severed pig's head outside his door last week and a sticker that said "Jewish pig." On Wednesday, Lucy Stein, a member of the protest group Pussy Riot who sits on a municipal council in Moscow, found a photo of herself taped to her apartment door with a message printed on it: "Don't sell your homeland."

She said she suspected a secretive police unit was behind the attack, though Dmitri S. Peskov, the Kremlin's spokesman, on Thursday said such incidents were "hooliganism."

Antiwar protests, which led to more than 15,000 arrests across the country in the first weeks of the war, have largely petered out. By some estimates, several hundred thousand Russians have fled amid outrage over the war and fear of conscription and closed borders; a trade organization said that at least 50,000 tech workers alone had left the country.

In St. Petersburg, which had been the site of some of the biggest protests, Boris Vishnevsky, a local opposition lawmaker, said he had received about 100 letters asking him "to do everything" to stop the war in its first two weeks, and only one supporting it. But after Mr. Putin signed legislation effectively criminalizing dissent over the war, that stream of letters dried up.
“These laws have been effective because they threaten people with prison terms,” he said. “If not for this, then the change in public opinion would be rather clear, and it wouldn’t be to the benefit of the government.”

In a phone interview, a political analyst in Moscow, 45, described visiting police stations across the city in the last month after her teenage child’s repeated arrests at protests. Now, the teenager is receiving threats on social media, leading her to conclude that the authorities had passed along her child’s name to people who bully activists online.

But she also found that the police officers she dealt with did not seem particularly aggressive, or enthusiastic about the war. Overall, she believed that most Russians were too scared to voice opposition, and were convinced that there was nothing they could do about it. She asked that her name not be published for fear of endangering her and her child.

“This is the state of someone who feels like a particle in the ocean,” she said. “Someone else has decided everything for them. This learned passivity is our tragedy.”

Anton Troianovski and Ivan Nechepurenko reported from Istanbul, and Valeriya Safronova from London. Alina Lobzina contributed reporting from Istanbul.
Can Sanctions Really Stop Putin?

April 22, 2022

By The Editorial Board
The editorial board is a group of opinion journalists whose views are informed by expertise, research, debate and certain longstanding values. It is separate from the newsroom.

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When Vladimir Putin ordered the invasion of Ukraine in February, trampling on the sovereignty of a neighbor, international sanctions were the best path forward for the United States and its allies to take. The ruthlessness and grave atrocities toward civilians that have ensued since then reinforce that call.

As of this week, those sanctions have made dents in both Russia’s economy and its ability to wage war in Ukraine. As foreign companies have withdrawn operations from Russia, Moscow’s mayor, Sergei Sobyanin, estimated that some 200,000 people there are at risk of losing their jobs, and there’s some evidence that the decision by Europe and the United States to restrict the export of microchips has already affected Russia’s ability to produce and repair tanks. The sanctions have also sent a vital message of support to the Ukrainian people.

It is undeniable that the United States and its allies were — and still are — right to use sanctions to try to end this war.

Yet as the Biden administration weighs the next phase of this conflict, Americans should be clear-eyed about the limits of what sanctions are likely to achieve.

It’s too early to know how history will judge this unprecedented, sweeping effort to make Mr. Putin pay a price for his war. Nor can we predict the unintended consequences these sanctions may produce in the coming months or years. But there are lots of indications that the war — and the sanctions it triggered — could last a long time. As it is wise to have definite goals and an exit strategy when a country enters a military conflict, the same is true for waging economic warfare.

The West has turned to sanctions as a tool with growing frequency since World War II — in places as varied as South Africa, the Soviet Union, Cuba, Venezuela, North Korea and Iran. It is relatively easy to apply sanctions, and they nearly always satisfy the domestic political need to “do something” about military engagement.

Here’s the issue: Sanctions historically have not been particularly effective in changing regimes, and their record at changing dictators’ behavior is mixed at best.

Cuba, Venezuela and North Korea never bowed to American demands. Where there are success stories, they are modest: Crippling sanctions brought Iran to the negotiating table over its nuclear program, but that regime never stopped asserting its right to enrich uranium. The bite of sanctions eventually contributed to the end of white-minority rule in South Africa, but it was just one of many factors.

Or, to understand the limits of sanctions, Americans might consider our own national experience. When Arab nations imposed an oil embargo on the United States in the 1970s, it caused a lot of pain, but it did not cause the United States to stop supporting Israel.

The Biden administration deserves credit for laying the groundwork for multilateral sanctions, which are the only kind that have the hope of success. The greatest effects seen so far from the sanctions have been by unplugging Russia, if only partially, from the international financial system through moves like freezing billions of dollars in assets overseas and taking some Russian banks off SWIFT, the global messaging system for financial transactions. These far-reaching punishments, unthinkable even a few months ago, displayed a new sense of cooperation among the United States and the other Group of 7 countries.

Even Mr. Putin acknowledged that they have “achieved certain results.” But focusing on helping Ukraine financially and with military equipment might prove more productive than thinking up new sanctions on Russia. The Biden administration appears to recognize this, at least in part, with its latest $800 million in military aid and $500 million in emergency funding announced on Thursday.
Sanctions alone — at least any sanctions that European countries would be willing to now consider — will not bring Russia to its knees any time soon. As long as Europeans still depend on Russian oil and gas, Russia will be able to depend on significant income from that relationship. The spat over whether gas deliveries will be paid in rubles, as Russia has demanded, only highlights the bind that European countries find themselves in.

The oligarchs who are losing their yachts and the people who are tightening their belts have little sway over the Kremlin. In Russia, with average citizens, Mr. Putin has grist for a loud “I told you so” about the West’s purported longing to bring down Russia.

Will the sanctions imposed by the Group of 7 nations truly isolate Russia? No. A number of countries, including Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and, most significantly, China, remain on friendly terms with Russia. The fact that this list also includes archrivals Pakistan and India, as well as Iran and Israel, illustrates Mr. Putin’s influence as an arms dealer and a power broker in South Asia and the Middle East.

The United States could tighten the economic screws on Russia by imposing secondary sanctions. U.S. officials already appear to be threatening as much in meetings and calls with officials in India and China. Secondary sanctions are a powerful tool to compel other countries to get in line with American policy. But the potential benefits need to be weighed against the risks and costs. The extraterritorial application of American laws can also incite deep resentment, even from European allies at times. Secondary sanctions should be used sparingly, and only after consultation with partners.

Sanctions can have other unintended consequences as well. They can actually end up strengthening a dictator’s grip on power by tightening state control over the economy. Private businesses can have a hard time weathering the storm of sanctions, but authoritarian regimes and their state-owned enterprises often find ways to circumvent them. Sanctions also provide dictators with a credible external enemy to blame for the misery of their people. Instead of pushing people to rise up against their rulers, sanctions often inspire a rally-around-the-flag effect. After Western sanctions were placed on Russia in 2014, in the aftermath of the annexation of Crimea, 71 percent of Russians saw them as an attempt to “weaken and humiliate Russia,” according to an independent poll.

It is also worth remembering that, although Russia’s invasion proves that economic integration is no cure for war, economic isolation is also not a recipe for peace. Sanctions are often sold as an alternative to war. But they can also be a precursor to war, as seen with the institution of the American oil embargo against Japan and the freezing of Japanese assets about five months before the attack on Pearl Harbor.

So, while sanctions can hobble economies, they rarely compel the kinds of wholesale political changes that American officials would like to see. Research has shown that they produced some meaningful changes in behavior about 40 percent of the time. Change is unlikely to occur when sanctions are imposed without communicating the steps that must be taken for them to be rolled back.

All the more reason that the United States should have a clear plan for how and under what circumstances it would be appropriate to roll back these latest sanctions. Right now, this has been left deliberately vague to allow the Ukrainians to directly negotiate with Russia. It is laudable to give deference to Ukrainians whose lives are on the line in this terrible war. But creating clear goals and communicating benchmarks for sanctions relief are important factors in successful sanctions. Too often, sanctions are left in place for decades, without evaluation of whether or not they are achieving what they were put in place to do.

The United States and its allies have been wise in tightening the economic screws on Russia, so long as they bear no illusions about what this can and cannot achieve.

A correction was made on April 22, 2022: An earlier version of this editorial mischaracterized the former apartheid government of South Africa. The regime upheld rule by the country’s white minority, not a white majority.
THE POST'S VIEW

Opinion  Let's think about the Russians we are canceling. Not all deserve it.

By the Editorial Board

March 11, 2022 at 2:15 p.m. EST

Soprano superstar Anna Netrebko, who reigned supreme at the Metropolitan Opera after singing nearly 200 performances over 20 years, is no longer welcome there. Washington Capitals captain Alex Ovechkin, one of the league's most heralded players as he seeks to best Wayne Gretzky's scoring record, is now being greeted with boos and jeers. Renowned maestro Valery Gergiev was dismissed as chief conductor of the Munich Philharmonic. Formula One driver Nikita Mazepin was fired by the U.S.-owned Haas team.

Russian musicians, artists, athletes and other cultural figures are facing broad backlash as Russian President Vladimir Putin has continued to press his relentless and increasingly brutal invasion of Ukraine. Much of the world is outraged and repulsed by the assault on a democratic country and is making clear it wants nothing to do with anything Russian. Crippling economic sanctions were imposed by the United States and its allies. Russian vodka was stripped from American liquor store shelves. U.S. companies suspended operations in Russia. Russian teams have been banned from international competitions.
We applaud those steps. But there are thornier issues at play when Russian-born individuals are singled out and ostracized. Some, such as Mr. Gergiev, have been cheerleaders for Mr. Putin’s aggressions; they deserve to be shunned by Western institutions. Others, such as piano prodigy Alexander Malofeev, have seen their engagements canceled even after they spoke out against the war, simply because they are Russian; that is unjustified. And still other cases are more complex. Ms. Netrebko, a singer with unparalleled talent, posted on social media her opposition to “this senseless war of aggression” and called on Russia “to end this war right now, to save all of us.” But Ms. Netrebko, whose ties to Mr. Putin span decades, including her endorsement of his election in 2012, refused to denounce him. In one post, later deleted, she chided as hypocrites those in the West seeking repudiation of Mr. Putin. “There was no way forward,” said the opera company’s general manager, explaining the organization would no longer work “with artists or institutions that support Putin or are supported by him — not until the invasion and killing has been stopped, order has been restored and restitutions have been made.”

Perhaps the Met and Ms. Netrebko were right to agree to cancellations of her upcoming appearances. But it is discomfitting that U.S. cultural institutions, with their proud traditions of free and diverse speech, would think it right to compel statements by leading artists and athletes. What constitutes a sufficient repudiation, given Mr. Putin’s sometimes murderous response to criticism? Mr. Ovechkin, for example, reportedly had plans to change the profile picture on his Instagram account showing him with Mr. Putin to a symbol of world peace but was advised against it because his wife and children are in Russia.

“I am not in politics. Like, I’m an athlete,” Mr. Ovechkin said in a Feb. 25 news conference in which he tried to thread a political needle with a plea for peace but no renunciation of Mr. Putin. Mr. Ovechkin launched the PutinTeam social movement in 2017 to support the dictator, so his comments seem disingenuous as well as disappointing. Still, in America, they should not be disqualifying. That is one of the things that should distinguish us from Mr. Putin’s Russia: Tactics he uses to keep people in line should have no place here.
Opinion  As Russia escalates its aggression on Ukraine, evidence of war crimes mounts

By the Editorial Board

March 7, 2022 at 5:40 p.m. EST

Among the many ways Russian President Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine threatens human progress is the degree to which it defies the laws of war. Those laws emerged from the crucible of the 20th century to reflect a noble, if never fully realized, goal: curbing the worst excesses of armed conflict. As Mr. Putin’s forces bombard Ukrainian cities, the question of war crimes necessarily — appropriately — presents itself. What a prosecutor might call probable cause to suspect Russia of war crimes already exists, relating both to its reasons for launching the conflict and the manner in which it has waged it.

First, Mr. Putin’s rationale for war utterly lacks the necessary legal basis — or jus ad bellum, in legal Latin. Recognized at the post-World War II Nuremberg trials of accused Nazi war criminals, the crime of aggression was defined in a 1998 treaty establishing the International Criminal Court (ICC): “The planning, preparation, initiation or execution, by a person in a position effectively to exercise control over or to direct the political or military action of a State, of an act of aggression which, by its character, gravity and scale, constitutes a manifest violation of the Charter of the United Nations.” That perfectly fits Mr. Putin’s assault on United Nations member Ukraine’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence.

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Next comes the issue of *jus in bello* — the lawfulness of the Russian military’s actual conduct on the battlefield. The basic rule is that there may be no deliberate targeting of civilians, and that collateral damage is legally tolerable only if it results from attacks that were themselves intended to hit military targets, with proportionate force. Obviously, those criteria leave a lot of room for debate — but not about the massive Russian shelling of Kyiv, Kharkiv, Mariupol and other densely populated cities, which has struck schools, apartment buildings and hospitals. Hospitals are supposed to enjoy special protection because of international law’s requirement that medical care is provided impartially even amid war. Yet the World Health Organization says nine attacks have hit health facilities, health-care workers and ambulances since Feb. 24. Fleeing civilians are entitled to safe passage, yet one of the ugliest incidents of the war so far was Sunday’s sudden mortar attack on a civilian area of Irpin, outside of Kyiv, which killed four people, including an 8-year-old. Even when no one is killed or injured, artillery barrages such as those being unleashed by Russia can violate the laws of war, which expressly prohibit the “wanton destruction” of property.

The ICC’s chief prosecutor, Karim Khan, has announced that the court will investigate potential war crimes stemming from the Russian invasion. This may or may not lead to prosecutions such as those which imposed accountability for atrocities in ex-Yugoslavia during the early 1990s. Russia has never recognized the ICC’s jurisdiction — and neither has Ukraine. (Or the United States.) Unlikely as it may be that Mr. Putin himself ever stands trial, Russian officers assigned with following his orders may be deterred by the prospect that they will be. Lives may yet be saved if those waging this war fully understand that it is a crime in every sense of the word, moral and legal.
The Senate passed a $40 billion emergency aid package for Ukraine on Thursday, but with a small group of isolationist Republicans loudly criticizing the spending and the war entering a new and complicated phase, continued bipartisan support is not guaranteed.

Avril Haines, the director of national intelligence, warned the Senate Armed Services Committee recently that the next few months may be volatile. The conflict between Ukraine and Russia could take "a more unpredictable and potentially escalatory trajectory," she said, with the increased likelihood that Russia could threaten to use nuclear weapons.

These are extraordinary costs and serious dangers, and yet there are many questions that President Biden has yet to answer for the American public with regard to the continued involvement of the United States in this conflict.

In March, this board argued that the message from the United States and its allies to Ukrainians and Russians alike must be: No matter how long it takes, Ukraine will be free. Ukraine deserves support against Russia's unprovoked aggression, and the United States must lead its NATO allies in demonstrating to Vladimir Putin that the Atlantic alliance is willing and able to resist his revanchist ambitions.

That goal cannot shift, but in the end, it is still not in America's best interest to plunge into an all-out war with Russia, even if a negotiated peace may require Ukraine to make some hard decisions. And the U.S. aims and strategy in this war have become harder to discern, as the parameters of the mission appear to have changed.

Is the United States, for example, trying to help bring an end to this conflict, through a settlement that would allow for a sovereign Ukraine and some kind of relationship between the United States and Russia? Or is the United States now trying to weaken Russia permanently? Has the administration's goal shifted to destabilizing Vladimir Putin or having him removed? Does the United States intend to hold Mr. Putin accountable as a war criminal? Or is the goal to try to avoid a wider war — and if so, how does crowing about providing U.S. intelligence to kill Russians and sink one of their ships achieve this?

Without clarity on these questions, the White House not only risks losing Americans' interest in supporting Ukrainians — who continue to suffer the loss of lives and livelihoods — but also jeopardizes long-term peace and security on the European continent.

Americans have been galvanized by Ukraine's suffering, but popular support for a war far from U.S. shores will not continue indefinitely. Inflation is a much bigger issue for American voters than Ukraine, and the disruptions to global food and energy markets are likely to intensify.

The current moment is a messy one in this conflict, which may explain President Biden and his cabinet's reluctance to put down clear goals. All the more reason, then, for Mr. Biden to make the case to American voters, well before November, that support for Ukraine means support for democratic values and the right of countries to defend themselves against aggression — while peace and security remain the ideal outcome in this war.

It is tempting to see Ukraine's stunning successes against Russia's aggression as a sign that with sufficient American and European help, Ukraine is close to pushing Russia back to its positions before the invasion. But that is a dangerous assumption.

A decisive military victory for Ukraine over Russia, in which Ukraine regains all the territory Russia has seized since 2014, is not a realistic goal. Though Russia's planning and fighting have been surprisingly sloppy, Russia remains too strong, and Mr. Putin has invested too much personal prestige in the invasion to back down.
The United States and NATO are already deeply involved, militarily and economically. Unrealistic expectations could draw them ever deeper into a costly, drawn-out war. Russia, however battered and inept, is still capable of inflicting untold destruction on Ukraine and is still a nuclear superpower with an aggrieved, volatile despot who has shown little inclination toward a negotiated settlement. Ukraine and Russia now "appear further apart than at any other point in the nearly three-month-long war," as The Times reported.

Recent belligerent statements from Washington — President Biden's assertion that Mr. Putin "cannot remain in power," Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's comment that Russia must be "weakened" and the pledge by the House speaker, Nancy Pelosi, that the United States would support Ukraine "until victory is won" — may be reiterating proclamations of support, but they do not bring negotiations any closer.

In the end, it is the Ukrainians who must make the hard decisions: They are the ones fighting, dying and losing their homes to Russian aggression, and it is they who must decide what an end to the war might look like. If the conflict does lead to real negotiations, it will be Ukrainian leaders who will have to make the painful territorial decisions that any compromise will demand.

The United States and NATO have demonstrated that they will support the Ukrainian fight with ample firepower and other means. And however the fighting ends, the United States and its allies must be prepared to help Ukraine rebuild.

But as the war continues, Mr. Biden should also make clear to President Volodymyr Zelensky and his people that there is a limit to how far the United States and NATO will go to confront Russia, and limits to the arms, money and political support they can muster. It is imperative that the Ukrainian government's decisions be based on a realistic assessment of its means and how much more destruction Ukraine can sustain.

Confronting this reality may be painful, but it is not appeasement. This is what governments are duty bound to do, not chase after an illusory "win." Russia will be feeling the pain of isolation and debilitating economic sanctions for years to come, and Mr. Putin will go down in history as a butcher. The challenge now is to shake off the euphoria, stop the taunting and focus on defining and completing the mission. America's support for Ukraine is a test of its place in the world in the 21st century, and Mr. Biden has an opportunity and an obligation to help define what that will be.

A version of this article appears in print on 3/21/2023, Page A10 of the New York edition with the headline: The War in Ukraine Is Getting Complicated, and America Isn't Ready.
Opinion  Biden’s three rules for the war in Ukraine are working. He should stick to them.

By Jason Willick
Columnist | + Follow
March 15, 2022 at 5:22 p.m. EDT

President Biden has been consistent throughout the Ukraine crisis on three rules of American engagement: The United States will impose “devastating sanctions” on Russia if it invades Ukraine. It will “make sure Ukraine has weapons to defend against an invading Russian force.” And it will defend “every inch” of NATO territory with the full force of American power.

The administration has executed on each rule. The Western financial and technological sanctions against Moscow are so comprehensive that Russian President Vladimir Putin claims they are “akin to an act of war.” The stream of U.S. weapons into Ukraine is helping to destroy hundreds of Russian warplanes and tanks, kill thousands of Russian soldiers and call into question Putin’s ability to achieve his war aims. The United States has also surged forces to fortify NATO’s position in Poland and in the Baltics.

But as the war continues and Ukrainian casualties mount — including from a weekend Russian strike deep into western Ukraine — calls for Biden to bend or break his rules are growing louder. Former director of national intelligence James R. Clapper Jr. suggested on Sunday that NATO would be forced into the conflict if “the Russians use chemical weapons in a siege of Kyiv.” Reporters are asking Western officials whether a Russian attack on weapons shipments in Ukraine would prompt military retaliation against Russia. Former State Department official Eliot Cohen writes in the Atlantic that NATO “could sweep the skies over Ukraine clear of Russian aircraft, and after a week or two of smashing Russian air defenses, devastate its ground forces.”
Russia was the original escalator of violence with its invasion, but U.S. intervention in the war theater itself would also be an escalation. Because of its inferior conventional forces, Moscow might have little room to escalate further besides deploying tactical nuclear weapons against NATO forces, knowing that its arsenal is larger and more flexible than that of the United States.

That could either force a humiliating U.S. climbdown or trigger an unpredictable escalatory spiral. Biden can best keep control of the conflict not by introducing new rules but by leaving no doubt through word and deed that the three already in effect — sanctions, weapons and the inviolable NATO perimeter — will be enforced to the hilt.