MAR 6, 2022

Attack on Ukraine Continues

This is The Weekly Letter for March 6, 2022. About this newsletter

News

(BBC)

(Washington Post, 3/4) The International Criminal Court is investigating alleged war crimes in Ukraine.

Ukraine: The city of Mariupol is under siege, an ominous development.

(Al Jazeera, 3/2)

In <u>a meeting</u> with members of the U.S. Congress, Ukrainian President

Volodymyr Zelensky called for additional steps to counter Russia. Zelensky supports a no-fly zone over Ukraine, but "Western governments have rebuffed the idea as all but impossible, citing the risk of direct conflict between NATO and Russian forces." (NY Times, 3/5) Climate: A new Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report states

(Al Jazeera, 2/28) The Supreme Court heard arguments in <u>a case</u> that challenges the power of the EPA. "A ruling that limits the EPA's authority may undercut the Biden

administration's plans to cut the country's greenhouse emissions in half by 2030."

that currently at least 3.3 billion people "are highly vulnerable to climate change."

SOTU: On March 1, President Biden delivered the State of the Union address. (PBS NewsHour, 3/1)

Rep. Rashida Tlaib delivered a <u>left-wing response</u> to the State of the Union on behalf of the Working Families Party. (Politico, 3/2)

Texas: Primary elections were held on March 1. Incumbent Greg Abbott won the

side. Three progressive U.S. House candidates in Texas performed well, with Greg

Republican primary for Governor while Beto O'Rourke won on the Democratic

Casar winning his primary in the 35th district, Jasmine Crockett advancing to a primary run-off in the 30th district, and Jessica Cisneros advancing to a primary run-off against incumbent Henry Cuellar in the 28th district. (Texas Tribune) A <u>legal battle</u> is under way over a Texas policy "to conduct child abuse investigations when medically accepted treatments — including hormones or

puberty-suppressing drugs, which doctors describe as gender-affirming care are prescribed to transgender adolescents." (NY Times, 3/2) The cost of Texas's <u>anti-abortion law</u>. (NPR)

Opinion

Ezra Klein: "Ninety-five percent of Afghans don't have enough to eat. Nearly nine million are at risk of starvation." <u>The U.S. is largely responsible</u>. (NY Times, 2/20)

George Monbiot: A segment of the left is <u>amplifying Russia's misinformation</u>. (The Guardian, 3/2)

My View

On April 3, 2008, NATO released a statement that included a new stance toward

membership in NATO. We agreed today that these countries will become

Ukraine: "NATO welcomes Ukraine's and Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations for

members of NATO." However, NPR notes that this promise did not include "any concrete timeline or pathway" toward NATO membership. The compromise was the result of a split within the bloc, with the U.S. supporting NATO membership for Ukraine and some countries opposing such an offer. With NATO formally committed to Ukrainian membership but not allowing the country to take the concrete steps necessary to join, Ukraine became more vulnerable to Russian aggression while still lacking NATO's protection. It seems to me that after the end of the Cold War, the U.S. and Western European states had two options: to work toward disbanding/minimizing NATO and integrating the Russian Federation into a new informal alliance of democracies, or to view Russia as a potential future threat and expand NATO to include all

alliance's commitment to security in Europe was not ironclad. I don't know enough to speculate about whether the first option—shifting away from NATO in the 1990s—would have been a wise choice. A different US/Western European policy toward Russia might have resulted in the country strengthening its democracy instead of moving toward a new authoritarianism. But today's reality is that Russia under Vladimir Putin has become a threat once again, and not only to Eastern Europe.

European states that might be vulnerable. For the most part, the latter path was

chosen. However, NATO's ambivalence toward Ukraine demonstrates that the

egregious example, in 2015, Russia began an intervention in the Syrian war between rebels and the government of Bashar al-Assad on the side of Assad. Russia attacked civilians in Syria and it is now engaging in indiscriminate attacks in residential areas of Ukraine. Given the **UN Charter's commitment** to responding to "Acts of Aggression," the invasion of Ukraine should be a situation perfectly suited to the United Nations.

However, responding to aggression is the responsibility of the UN Security

Council and, as a permanent member, Russia holds veto power in that council.

(China, France, Russia, U.K., and U.S.) is a major reason why imperial aggression

and crimes against humanity have continued despite the creation of the UN. The

Indeed, the veto power wielded by the five permanent Security Council countries

In fact, Russia under Putin has already done enormous damage. To take the most

veto power of the U.S. and Russia alone has been sufficient to prevent the UN from acting to prevent numerous crimes committed by these two countries and their allies. My understanding is that there is little the UN can do to end the Russian invasion of Ukraine so long as Russia has a veto on the Security Council. It is up to the U.S., Western European countries, and other willing countries to end the tragedy in Ukraine. I think there is still a diplomatic path forward—my hunch is that there are concessions that could be made to Russia which do not entail turning Ukraine into a puppet state.

However, I hope that Russia's blatant violation of the UN charter, and the UN's

inability to prevent it, will encourage a movement toward reform of the UN. While

Russia vetoed a Security Council resolution condemning the invasion of Ukraine,

the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly voted to condemn the invasion. If more power regarding matters of security is given to the representatives of the world as a whole, it is less likely that there will be inaction in the face of aggression and atrocities. Further, if the UN is able to keep the peace, it will be easier to create a world that is no longer divided into power blocs and military alliances. People of conscience must stand with Ukraine as it is under attack. We should also work toward building a global system where such an attack could not

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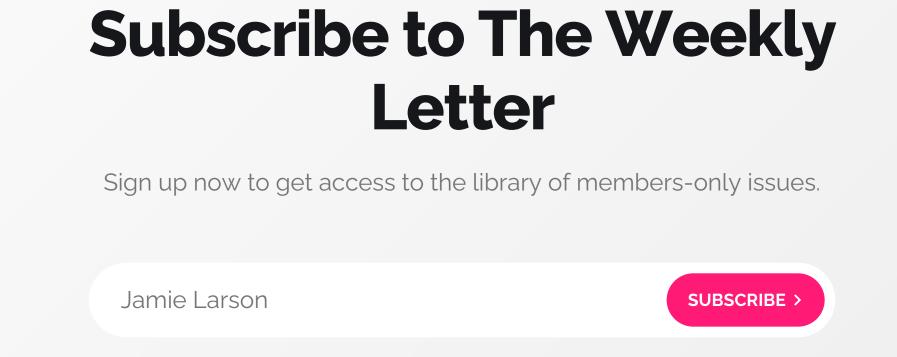
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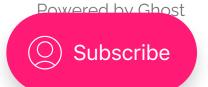


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