

FEB 20, 2022

Ukraine Standoff

This is The Weekly Letter for February 20, 2022. [About this newsletter](#)

News

Ukraine: The connection between a [U.S. military base in Poland](#) and Russia's troop buildup around Ukraine. (NY Times, 2/16)

Abortion: The Florida House of Representatives [approved a bill](#) to ban abortion (with few exceptions) after 15 weeks. "Republican-led states are racing to tighten access to abortion, with the Arizona state Senate and West Virginia state House passing similar 15-week bans this week, in anticipation of the Supreme Court's actions. Abortion opponents are hopeful that the conservative 6-to-3 majority will decide to severely weaken or overturn the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision..." (Washington Post, 2/17)

Migration: Thousands of migrants are stranded in the Mexican city of Tapachula because of U.S. and Mexican policies. On February 15, "a dozen migrants [staged a protest](#) in which they sewed their lips together and went on a hunger strike." (Vox, 2/17)

Syria: More than a dozen charity hospitals in Idlib province have [recently closed or downsized](#) due to funding cuts, exacerbating a crisis. (Al Jazeera, 2/16)

Republican Party: Senator Mitch McConnell is [leading an effort](#) to recruit Republicans critical of former President Donald Trump to run for Senate. (NY Times, 2/13)

Opinion: Perspectives on Ukraine

Alexandra Matzota: [Everyday life in Ukraine continues, but anxiety is pervasive](#). (The Guardian, 2/15)

Rory Finnin: [Ukraine's value of universal democratic freedom](#). (Politico, 2/12)

Ross Douthat: The U.S. should take a [strategic retreat](#) from Ukraine. (NY Times, 1/22)

The Argument podcast: Bret Stephens and Farah Stockman debate [how the U.S. should respond](#) to the Russia-Ukraine crisis (hosted by Jane Coaston). (NY Times, 2/15)

Your View

On Vladyslav Heraskevych's [anti-war message](#) at the Olympics

That the I.O.C. might be guilty of hypocrisy is no surprise, given, for example, its history for decades of enforcing the sham of amateurism in the face of state sponsored athletic teams, or more recently its erratic application of sanctions for PEDs against individual athletes but not against state run doping programs (here's to you, ROC), but Rule 50 of the Olympic Charter takes hypocrisy to an absurd extreme. No display of "political propaganda"?! Again, it's the individual athlete who is singled out for sanctions. What are the Olympics if not a forum for nations to display political propaganda? That's the Olympic spirit. The games are organized to pit nation against nation, medals are tallied by nations, national anthems are played at victory ceremonies, the sponsoring country puts its best self on display for the world to see and reaps a media windfall. But individual athletes are forbidden to make a political statement?! Let's be thankful that some, like most recently the Ukrainian skeleton racer Vladyslav Heraskevych, have disregarded Rule 50 and spoken out against injustice or, in this case, impending disaster. "NO WAR IN UKRAINE" is the most urgent message the current Olympics have to offer the world. Just as in 1968 it was the raised black-gloved fists of Tommie Smith and John Carlos.

Daniel Kempton

The Colony, TX

Thanks for the input, dad! The I.O.C. appears to have [declined reprimanding Heraskevych](#), saying in a statement, "This was a general call for peace. For the I.O.C., the matter is closed."

Have some thoughts about a current event? Want to reply to an opinion article featured in the newsletter? To create a conversation about the news, all are encouraged to share their views. Send your letter along with your name and where you're writing from to theweeklyletternewsletter@gmail.com or reply to this email. Letters that are hateful or contain misinformation will not be published.



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Jamie Larson

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