Invasion

- Map It: “How Ukraine’s terrain could influence a Russian invasion”
- Photo Essay: Photojournalists Cover Ukraine
- Letter From Ukraine: “On the road from Kharkiv, checkpoints and a resolve to fight Russians”
- Post Behind the Story: “How three Washington Post journalists are covering Ukraine on the ground”
- Student Activity: Post Journalists Cover Ukraine
- Post Editorial: “Why Ukraine — and Russia’s aggression against it — matters”
- Post Editorial: “From the streets of Russia, protests rise to the war without a cause”
- Post Commentary: “Distinguished persons of the week: Breathtaking bravery in the face of war”
- Editorial Cartoons Activity: Visual Commentary | Ukraine Invasion and Questions
- Student Activity: Social Media, Satellites & Survival
On February 21, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin in a prerecorded speech “recognized the legitimacy of the breakaway territories of Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine.” He ordered “peacekeeping” troops into the region, “only parts of which were controlled by pro-Moscow separatists. The screed rejected Ukraine’s legitimacy as an independent nation and foretold what would become an invasion.”

On February 24, 2022, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky addressed the Russian people, telling them that nearly 200,000 Russian troops were across the border. “If these forces attack us,” Zelensky warned, “if you attempt to take away our country, our freedom, our lives, the lives of our children, we will defend ourselves. Not attack, defend.”

That same day Russia began its invasion of Ukraine. Troops that had been holding military exercises in Belarus to the north and gathering at the eastern border began shelling and advancing on the cities of Kharkiv and Kyiv.

The Washington Post and world media provided reports, photographs, videos and maps throughout each day. Post reporters, photojournalists and video journalists were eyewitnesses living in all regions of Ukraine. Protests against the Russian invasion were seen. Russia began to censor and threaten its independent media.

We have the first two weeks of the war in the pages of this curriculum guide. Use the resources in Invasion to inform your students. Share the photographs. Read how Post journalists covered the war. Consider the editorials, commentary and editorial cartoons. Delve into the use of social media and satellites to survive.

Do not stop here. Read the continued daily coverage in the pages of The Post and online at In videos and photos, a timeline of Russia’s war on Ukraine.

On the cover: Clockwise from top: A Ukrainian soldier takes a position as vehicles approach a checkpoint near Dnipro on Monday (SALWAN GEORGES/THE WASHINGTON POST); Ukrainian soldiers dig a bunker on the front line that separates Ukrainian forces and separatists on Feb. 8 near Novotroitske, Ukraine (MICHAEL ROBINSON CHAVES/THE WASHINGTON POST); Men are being prevented from crossing into Poland so that they can stay and fight Russian forces (WOJCIECH GRZEDZINSKI FOR THE WASHINGTON POST); Konstantinos Podobed makes molotov cocktails in Dnipro on March 1 (SALWAN GEORGES/THE WASHINGTON POST).
Photojournalists Cover Ukraine

The photojournalists capture events and people at the scene. They are eyewitnesses to life, including family and community celebrations, natural disasters and manmade attacks and invasions. Post reporters and photojournalists brought their sleeping bags, supplies and cameras to Ukraine to share the truth of what was taking place in cities and villages, along highways and near targeted structures, in separatist-controlled regions and Ukrainian-held lands, with leaders and the residents.

In addition to the still photographs, Post photojournalists are providing video shot at different locations throughout Ukraine. Their work appeared on the print pages and online. Some were collected in the visual timeline, “In videos, photos, and maps, how Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is unfolding on the ground.”

February 17, 2022

A kindergarten classroom in Stanytsia Luhanska, Ukraine, damaged from artillery rounds fired by Russian-backed separatists. No children were harmed, but three adults were injured, according to the Ukrainian military. Leaders of the separatist areas announced a mass evacuation of civilians, saying they knew of plans for an imminent attack by Ukrainian forces. Buses were escorted by the head of police from Donbas to Rostov, a city in southwestern Russia.

These pages share representative images of the first days of Russia’s advances into Ukraine, the resistance of Ukrainians, and women and children seeking safety. As the war continues, turn to print and online coverage.

They may work in teams with reporters. They include Salwan Georges, Whitney Leaming, James Cornsilk, Erin Patrick O’Connor, Lee Powell, Michael Robinson Chavez, Zoeann Murphy, Casey Silvestri, and The Post’s Berlin bureau chief Loveday Morris, Moscow bureau chief Robyn Dixon and Moscow-based correspondent Isabelle Khurshudyan, Cairo bureau chief Siobhan O’Grady and Europe-based foreign correspondent Sudarsan Raghavan.
February 19, 2022

A Ukrainian soldier takes shelter from Russian-backed separatist positions that had shelled the area in Novoluhanske in eastern Ukraine. Attacks along the border of Kyiv-controlled Ukraine and the separatist regions have increased sharply in recent days.

February 22, 2022

Newlyweds posed for photos, the downtown mall was bustling, and grocery stores were stocked — as if people didn’t want to give Putin the satisfaction of disturbing daily life.
February 24, 2022

As Russian forces drew nearer to Kyiv, the lines for buses grow crowded. On the same day, thousands of people protested President Vladimir Putin’s attacks on Ukraine in cities across Russia, a brave show of anger in a nation where spontaneous mass demonstrations are illegal and protesters can face fines and jail.

A mother and her son wait for trains at the train station in central Kyiv as they try to flee.
February 25, 2022
A young person looks at the damage to a residential building in Kyiv.

The queue to the Polish border is about nine miles long, and Ukrainians have been waiting several hours to cross.
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: A resident is awakened by sounds of sirens and explosions at dawn in an apartment in downtown Kharkiv on Saturday. Documents are checked while civilians line up to join the Territorial Defense Forces, which is now estimated to have over 130,000 volunteers, in Kharkiv over the weekend. Volunteers prepare molotov cocktails in the capital as the Russian military continues to close in on the capital. A man waits to join the Territorial Defense Forces in Kharkiv over the weekend.
February 27, 2022

Tens of thousands of people gather in Tiergarten park in Berlin on Feb. 27 to protest the ongoing war in Ukraine.

SEAN GALLUP/GETTY IMAGES
KHARKIV, Ukraine — As we were about to pull out of our Kharkiv hotel, an eruption sounded so close that we all sprinted back inside the lobby. It seemed that our opportunity to drive out of the city had closed. But after a minute of calm Monday, we got back into the car and headed southwest.

Russian troops on Sunday breached the city, the second-largest in Ukraine and 25 miles from the Russian border. And then the Ukrainian military successfully repelled them. A second, more forceful Russian push seemed likely. Few foreign journalists remained.

Though we had been deeply invested in Kharkiv’s story, as we had been based in the city since before the start of Russia’s invasion, we decided there was safety in numbers and linked up with another group of journalists to drive together in two cars to Dnipro, about 140 miles to the southwest. Google Maps said it would be about a three-hour drive.

Ukrainians across the country have had to consider a similar choice: stay put and risk a Russian assault, or hit the road and face unpredictable and potentially even more unsafe conditions while driving. We were fortunate to have the resources to make an exit — an option not available to all in Kharkiv.

City streets were deserted as we left Kharkiv. They had been bustling with rush-hour traffic just five days earlier. One car frantically drove around us. The driver yelled out his window that we were going too slow. Artillery strikes could still be heard in the distance. But we had grown used to that sound after four days of
enduring shelling here.

Apparently locals had, too. As we drove, we saw a line of more than 100 people outside a grocery store. Sheltering in basements and underground metro platforms for four days had left people desperate to restock on supplies. The booming thuds, then still seemingly far away, didn’t prompt them to abandon their positions in line.

We knew we should expect armed checkpoints on our journey to Dnipro, and we encountered our first one at the edge of the city center. Men dressed in military-style uniforms had set up barricades along the road and directed us to pull over. Everyone in our car was wearing a protective vest as a precaution. I was driving, so I tried to cover my vest with a scarf so as to not alarm the soldiers, who were already on edge at these checkpoints.

There were four people in our car, but he asked to see just one passport. Satisfied that it was American, he let us pass. At the next one, we were all asked to show our passports and also open the trunk.

It was unclear if these checkpoints were manned by members of the armed forces or civilian militia volunteers. We saw plenty of the latter walking around Kharkiv and along highways on our trip. They were dressed in street clothes while carrying firearms.

We pulled off at one gas station about 90 minutes into the journey, but it was out. We were about to continue on when I noticed more than 10 men with their rifles raised crossing the street to surround our two cars.

Our colleague in the other vehicle opened his door to get out, and I heard one of the men yell in Russian: “Get in the car!”

I told the people in my car to stay still and silent. These members of a Ukrainian militia had seen one of our colleagues take a photo of a gas station sign and thought he might be documenting their movements. They kept their hands up while explaining the misunderstanding.

When the militia members came to my car, I showed them my passport and assured them we wouldn’t be photographing anything. They let us leave.

The next checkpoint we encountered was friendlier. Soldiers asked our two cars to pull over to make way for a Ukrainian military vehicle passing behind us. At the center of the checkpoint, a gunman peered through his scope to ensure the truck passed through safely. Then when they saw our passports, they cheered that we were from a country that has supported Ukraine with more than $2.7 billion in military aid.

One soldier raised his fist and said he was ready to “kill Russians.” The drive continued.

Many road signs had been taken down or were covered in paint — an attempt to confuse Russian forces. On one sign, someone drew a U-turn arrow and labeled it “Moscow.”

We were able to refuel in Novomuskovsk, where life seemed surprisingly normal. Along the way, we had seen a crater left from an artillery shell. But here, just 15 miles north of Dnipro, the traffic lights still worked. There was no wait for gas or at any of the grocery stores.

During this brief break in driving, I saw the updates on my phone about what had transpired in Kharkiv just after we departed. Civilian areas were devastated by Russian artillery strikes — possibly cluster munitions, which disperse submunitions or bomblets. At least 11 people were confirmed dead, with many more injured.

I then thought of all of those people who had left safety because they needed groceries.

We continued to scan the reports out of Kharkiv while stuck in more than two hours of traffic for our last checkpoint. My colleagues — one a photographer and other a video journalist — tried to capture the scene of the road congestion to get to Dnipro. But when we finally made it to the checkpoint, the soldier asked our car to pull over. He had our license plate written down on a piece of paper.

“We heard your car was taking pictures,” he said.

I assured him that we were journalists. He asked for all of us to get out of the car so he could search it. But after a quick glance into the trunk, he let us pass, ushering us forward into Dnipro. The normally three-hour trip had taken six hours.

Isabelle Khurshudyan is a foreign correspondent based in Moscow. A University of South Carolina graduate, she has worked at The Washington Post since 2014, previously as a sports reporter covering the Washington Capitals, high school sports and local colleges.

NOTE: Teachers may wish to view the video in which The Washington Post’s Whitney Leaming describes what it was like to travel from Kharkiv to Dnipro on Feb. 28 on roads now marked by checkpoints and armed men. (Zoeann Murphy, Whitney Leaming/The Washington Post) https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/02/28/ukraine-russia-kharkiv/
Behind the Story: How three Washington Post journalists are covering Ukraine on the ground

BY KANYKritt VONGKIATKAJORN

• Originally Published March 4, 2022

The Post has been covering the escalating war in Ukraine closely, with multiple correspondents based in Ukraine and other teams around the world covering developments 24/7. We spoke to Moscow correspondent Isabelle Khurshudyan, video journalist Whitney Leaming and staff photographer Salwan Georges. The three have been reporting together on the front lines of the conflict in eastern Ukraine. They spoke to us from Dnipro, after leaving Kharkiv as heavy shelling hit the city on Monday.

We spoke to each person over the phone. Interviews have been edited for length and clarity.

How long have you been reporting on the Russia-Ukraine conflict? When did you decide you needed to go to Ukraine?

Isabelle: For me, the conflict really started last spring when we saw the first Russian buildup around Ukraine. Back then, everybody was pretty convinced that it was a show of force: saber-rattling, challenging the Biden administration. People didn’t take the buildup seriously. After a month or two, Russia did start pulling back some of its forces. We saw the build up again in October and it kept going.
I was in Ukraine in December, right after a classified U.S. intelligence report said that the U.S. expected a multipronged invasion involving 175,000 Russian troops.

After New Year’s, it was clear things were going to escalate. My editors and I made the decision that we needed to be here before the invasion because we knew that once it started it would be very hard to get in. I came to Ukraine on Jan. 22 or 23, and I’ve been here since.

Can you give us a sense of where you are right now?

Whitney: [Dnipro] feels and looks really similar to Chicago to me — it’s on a river and it’s really cold. There’s multiple bridges in the city.

This town hasn’t seen a lot of bombing or fighting at the moment but it is in a precarious position. Russian troops are advancing from the south.

[On March 1] when we went out to report, it was actually a real struggle. People are very, very edgy. There’s a lot of rumors going around on Telegram that Russian agents are posing as media, that they’re taking photos of different things that they might want to attack or take over.

The situation has changed so quickly over the past few days. How do you decide which stories to focus on, and who goes where?

Whitney: Isabelle’s institutional knowledge on Russia and Ukraine has been invaluable. She’s taught me and Salwan so much. We had just checked into a hotel in the east and about five minutes later, she was like: “I think we need to go to Kharkiv, I think the invasion is closing in on us.” We were in the car within an hour and driving up to Kharkiv. And two days later, we woke up to the invasion starting by bombings.

Isabelle: You try to make a judgment, but it’s so hard. It was one thing when the invasion hadn’t started yet. Post-invasion, the situation changes so quickly. You have a plan to go to one place, then it’s not accessible anymore because of the presence of Russian forces or shelling or how dangerous the roads are.

We’ve organized it in a smart way, where we have a team of reporters in the west, a team in the capital, which is the center, and a group in the east. Any story we do, we can have all three areas covered and get those perspectives in.

Salwan, as a photographer, what are you looking for as you are out reporting? How are you deciding what to capture?

Salwan: In every war, people are the victims, not the politicians or politics or whatever. As a former refugee myself and as a person who grew up in the war in the ’90s in Iraq, I never wish it on anyone. But I can really connect with people and what they’re feeling and how they’re reacting.

What I look for as a photographer is really showing the impact on humans. This is what breaks my heart. We were in Kharkiv a couple of days before the war started, and it made me speechless to see how it went from such a vibrant city to no one standing outside at 8 p.m.

We went to this underground metro subway that was packed with hundreds of people — a lot of women and children, because men were volunteering to go fight. Being there was surreal. You don’t know where to photograph. I had to be respectful to people and also put my camera down and observe it first and make a connection with people. That’s what I did, but it was such a sad thing to see because it reminded me of fleeing Iraq. I hope all those people are okay because, again, in every war, people are always the victims — innocent people. And that’s exactly what’s happening in this war.

You and other Post journalists have filed multiple dispatches showing how the crisis is affecting everyday Ukrainians. How are you approaching people in these situations, and how have they responded to you? Have they been open to sharing their stories?

Whitney: I don’t speak Ukrainian or Russian. I have relied heavily on Isabelle’s amazing language skills. We try to be very respectful of what people are going through right now. We approach them without the camera and talk to them for a few minutes. And a lot of people want to share their story. They understand the power of media, they understand the power of video and their own voices. We just try to explain who we are, what we do and that we aren’t Russians.
Isabelle: I am a fluent Russian speaker, which does really help. The other thing is, a lot of times I’m able to tell people that my family is from Odessa, Ukraine. I was the first person in my family born in the U.S. It’s like, “My family’s from Ukraine. Your story is my story, too.” That doesn’t mean I don’t have professional distance, but I do think people are more willing to trust you in that situation, to know that you’re not a total outsider, that you have some cultural understanding.

I tell them that our job is to report about what’s happening on the ground, to show what the effects of this are, to show people what’s really happening.

Salwan: You have to really respect people and not photograph them in their most vulnerable time. There’s always a balance to making an impactful photo and not overstepping. So what I always try to do is make a connection, smile, talk to them. And not just walk around, take pictures, and then go and leave and never think of these people — because these situations stick with me for the rest of my life. I think what plays to my benefit is me going through similar things, so I can totally understand and feel it.

There’s a lot of misinformation being spread about the conflict. In addition to your own on the ground reporting, how do you assess which sources to trust and how do you vet this information?

Whitney: People we have met, we’ve stayed in communication with. For example, with the Freedom Square in downtown Kharkiv, which was the home of the territorial defense, there was a supply chain tent where people were gathering to go out on assignment and being trucked off to different stations to protect their city — [it] was hit with at least one bomb. A lot of these videos were coming over Telegram, and there’s an amazing team back at The Post that works to verify these videos and lets us know which ones that they can say with great confidence of what was happening at the square.

Out of everything that’s happened, what has been most surprising to you so far? What’s something that’s staying on your mind?

Whitney: On a really selfish note, I’ve been really amazed in the past few days of what people are willing to do in order to help us with our reporting. Fixers who had to leave in order to take care of their families are now contacting us being like, “What can we do to help?” Our fixer [on Tuesday] tried to refuse payment when we first started talking to him, and when we gave him the money, he was like, “I’m donating this to aid organizations. Whatever you guys need from me, even after you leave the city, let me know.” People are eager to help in any way they can.

(A fixer is a local journalist or contact who helps other journalists in areas they aren’t as familiar with, often by serving as translators.)

Isabelle: I think it would be the resilience and chutzpah of Ukrainians. Whether it’s older women who are spending their time weaving camouflage nets for military equipment or all of these people who are volunteering for the Civilian Defense Force. You see lines to the blood bank of 3,000 people, and they’re waiting in line while there’s shelling ongoing. People are finding their own ways to mobilize. And I think that’s something Russia underestimated — what the civilian resistance would really look like.

Salwan, what is one photo that will stick with you? Can you tell me the story of that photo?

Salwan: One of the photos that went viral on my Instagram — it’s of families at that train station [in Kharkiv]. There are two photos, but one has been on my mind. In that train station, I remember the mother — I was trying to approach her. She gave me a smile that kind of told me, without saying, to wait a second as she was
trying to comfort her daughter. I was, of course, respectful, and later I approached them and had a conversation. [The mother] told me that [her daughter’s] dad is in the army right now. And that stuck with me because this young girl, I don’t know if she will ever see her dad again, and her mother was doing her best to comfort her.

**Whitney**, you took a video of a boy playing piano in Kharkiv that drew a huge reaction online. How did that video happen?

**Whitney**: That was day one of the invasion. We had changed hotels and were waiting to check-in. The lobby was pretty tense. There were rumors that Russian forces were going to come into the city at any moment. I had gone into my room and heard some piano. It was actually a song my mom used to play when I was a little kid at night when I couldn’t fall asleep. I walked up to the hallway and looked down, and there was a teenage kid, probably 12 or 14, playing the piano. I recorded a video, mainly to send to my mother, and then Isabelle was like, you should post that and send it in. Then we went out to report, and I never saw that kid again.

Honestly, I haven’t really had time to focus on [any of the reaction], but I’m glad it touched a lot of people. I think it’s one of those things when there’s a lot of devastation and horrible things going on, it was a moment of peacefulness and beauty that people are clinging to.

**Isabelle**, I heard that you recently turned 30 while you were in a bunker. Can you tell us about that?

**Isabelle**: We were in Kharkiv, which had been pretty heavily hit. The local government put out a message that was like, “If you go outside today, police might mistake you for a Russian saboteur and shoot you.” So we did as much reporting as we could without venturing too far out and most of the day was spent inside of the bunker.

But it was nice. Salwan brought me a piece of cake from the breakfast buffet. The hotel gifted me a bottle of wine even though they’re not supposed to be selling alcohol, and some of the freelance and other media celebrated with me. It’s not how I envisioned spending my 30th for sure, but all things considered, I did feel really loved. And I honestly wouldn’t want to be anywhere else right now. I think this is one of the few times, at least in my case, when you feel like what you’re writing about is really, really important and you’re doing a real service. So as difficult or as dangerous as it can be, it feels like a really great responsibility that you want to embrace.

---

We interviewed Isabelle, Whitney and Salwan the week of Feb. 28.
Post Journalists Cover Ukraine

After reading “How three Washington Post journalists are covering Ukraine on the ground,” from the Behind the Story series through which The Post shares how it reports and produces its journalism, discuss the following questions.

Assigned to Cover Ukraine
1. Where were bureau chiefs and foreign correspondents, journalists and photojournalists assigned in Ukraine? What was the plan?

2. Look at the bylines and captions. On the map of Ukraine find the locations from which Post staff and freelancers are reporting.

3. There are no troops with which to be embedded. What means do they have to remain safe?

Communicating with Citizens
4. If citizens do not speak English, how do the three communicate with them?

5. What do you learn about the journalists’ approach to people they want to interview or photograph?

6. What obstacles do they have to overcome to gain the trust of citizens?

Personal Information
7. What do you learn about each Post staff member’s background? How does this inform their professional life?

8. Isabelle Khurshudyan is a Moscow-based correspondent. It is evident from the interviews that she is respected by her colleagues. Give examples of this respect.

9. Look for Salwan Georges’ photo credits in The War in Ukraine coverage. What do you observe of his subjects, his camera angles and photographic techniques?

10. As a video journalist Whitney Leaming may work alone or in a team with a reporter. Find three of her video pieces to view. What photographic techniques does she use? Does she use close-up, medium and panoramic shots? How do the subject and location influence what she is able to do?
As has happened so many times before in European history, an aggressor’s bombs, missiles and tanks are wreaking horror and havoc on a weaker neighbor. The toll of killed and wounded is rising; fleeing civilians are clogging highways. This time, the victim is Ukraine, a member state of the United Nations inhabited by more than 43 million people. The perpetrator is Russia, whose repressive ruler, President Vladimir Putin, insists — contrary to black-letter international law — that Ukraine has no sovereign rights he is bound to respect. Once again, civilized life in this strategically vital continent is being overwhelmed by blood and fire. The conflict may be contained — for the moment — in Europe’s eastern reaches. But Russia’s war could all too easily spread, with destabilizing repercussions worldwide. And once again, the United States is called upon to respond.

The United States has no mutual defense treaty with Ukraine and, thus, no legal or prudential obligation to protect it militarily. Many Americans may wish, instinctively and understandably, not to get involved in a European war, even indirectly, by levying sanctions on the aggressor, Russia. Such
measures could trigger disruptions in energy and financial markets, creating costs for people in the United States, when we already suffer from problems ranging from a pandemic to inflation to racial injustice. Certainly, this country, its service members — and their families — paid a high price, financial and human, in, and for, Middle Eastern wars that ended without clear victory. President Biden must keep his promise to limit the pain to his own people.

And yet, as an encouragingly bipartisan range of members of Congress advocated [Feb. 24], Mr. Biden can and must counter Mr. Putin robustly, even at some risk to the United States and allied nations, which are also isolating Russia economically and diplomatically. This country has a stake in the peace and stability of Europe, a continent of nearly 750 million people that is anything but peripheral. Americans share with it a long-standing commitment to democracy, innumerable familial ties and more than $1 trillion in annual commerce, upon which millions of jobs depend.

Preventing this continent from falling under the sway of a hostile hegemon — as it almost did in 1914, 1939 and during the Cold War — has been a vital U.S. interest for decades. This is the vital interest for which the United States invested in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and other institutions. And it is precisely the vital interest that unchecked Russian aggression would sooner or later undermine, with, as Mr. Biden declared Thursday, “consequences for America [that] would be much worse.” Indeed, the consequences could be more damaging and more lasting than any turmoil stemming from the economic sanctions, limited troop deployments and other measures Mr. Biden has announced, including a new package [Feb. 24] that will freeze Russian bank assets in the United States and curtail Russian access to high-tech imports.

Deterrence, to be sure, has failed; the roar of explosives across Ukraine proves that. Raising the costs to Mr. Putin of this adventure may still have an impact, but not unless those costs are truly punishing to Russia’s economy and to the business oligarchs who dominate it in corrupt collaboration with the Russian president. The immediate and long-term impact of the sanctions Mr. Biden added Thursday could be substantial; the mere threat of them caused Russia’s currency, the ruble, to plunge in value. Russia’s crucial revenue source, the oil and gas industry, retained access to the Brussels-based SWIFT interbank payment facilitation system. Key European allies, without whom there could be no SWIFT ban, objected to expelling Russia from the system, a move that would have potential blowback against Western economies themselves. Mr. Biden says the bank asset freezes will offset this omission, and there is a plausible case that he’s right. Meanwhile, SWIFT cancellation should remain an option and he should buttress the message of resolve sent by troop deployments to NATO’s eastern flank with a request for a supplemental defense appropriation from Congress.

“Security,” “territorial integrity” and “international law” are buzzwords — abstractions. In practical human terms, however, they connote something precious: time and space for people and nations to develop freely. That includes the people of Russia, whose legitimate security concerns the United States does not threaten and has offered to discuss. Thousands of them courageously took to the streets to protest Mr. Putin’s war, an astonishing sign that his propaganda has not conquered all Russian hearts and minds. In the three decades that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, the transatlantic community may have taken peace and freedom for granted. Now comes Mr. Putin, a former mid-level intelligence official of that vanished empire, who still bitterly laments its passing, to explode Western complacency. In his characteristic manner, he claims, grotesquely, that Russia must make war on Ukraine because it threatens Russia, when his real ambition is imperial restoration and his real fear is that a neighbor’s exemplary democratic success would undermine his own kleptocratic rule.

He must not get away with it. If the United States — firmly, calmly and in concert with like-minded nations — stands with Ukraine, there is a chance he won’t.

— February 25, 2022
For a year, the streets of Russia have been relatively quiet. Protests in early 2021 in support of opposition leader Alexei Navalny were met with arrests, beatings and prison sentences. But after President Vladimir Putin announced war against Ukraine this week, the streets swelled again with thousands of protesters. These courageous people, making themselves heard despite the fear and risks, demonstrated vividly that Mr. Putin faces opposition at home for what has quickly become known to be a war without a cause.

Mr. Putin draws power from cronies and clans, not the voters. It is not clear if public discontent can change his course. But the outpouring against the Ukraine war at the very outset was far larger than might have been expected. Russia’s educated urbanites were joined in protests by hundreds of journalists, entertainers, social media influencers, athletes, actors, television presenters and others. They have the potential to become a powerful force galvanizing opposition to the war.

The Kremlin fears this kind of opposition. Government censor Roskomnadzor warned the Russian news media to publish only information from official sources and threatened penalties for violators. Russian prosecutors threatened against unauthorized demonstrations, saying marchers could face “criminal charges,” including “severe punishment for organizing mass unrest.” They added ominously that a criminal record would have long-term consequences.

Nonetheless, thousands took to the streets on Thursday. In 60 Russian cities, more than 1,860 people have been detained, according to OVD-Info, a nongovernmental group that monitors political arrests. Alexei Nurullin, an activist from the Ulyanovsk region, picketed with a sign declaring, “A madman is bombing all of Ukraine.” Elena Chernenko, a prominent journalist for Kommersant, organized a protest letter from journalists and others involved in foreign policy. With about 300 signers, the letter condemned the war against Ukraine: “War has never been and will never be a method of conflict resolution and there is no justification for it.” On Friday, Ms. Chernenko was informed by the Foreign Ministry that she was expelled from the press pool, meaning she will be barred from ministry briefings and has lost her access to the minister.

A few celebrities also spoke out against the war. Ivan Urgant, who hosts a popular comedy show, wrote, “Fear and pain. NO to war.” His show was taken off the air almost immediately.

What will happen next depends in part on how Russians perceive the war, whether there are serious casualties, and whether Facebook and other social networks convey the truth from the battlefield. In the early hours, Facebook posts were filled with emotion, outrage and distress. On Friday, the government censor announced the start of an effort to slow down access to Facebook, as was done earlier with Twitter.

Still, opposition voices in Russia have a way of getting through. In an ongoing prison trial, Mr. Navalny declared, “I am against this war. I believe that this war between Russia and Ukraine is being waged to cover up the robbery of Russian citizens and to distract their attention from the problems that exist within the country from the degradation of the economy.” His will not be the last protest.

— February 25, 2022
We live in a time of soul-crushing evil. Russian dictator Vladimir Putin is seeking to obliterate a sovereign country. And he’s murdering innocents in the process.

Yet it is also a time of breathtaking bravery. The Ukrainian people and their leaders, with unimaginable grace and courage, have refused to relent in the face of overwhelming force. Thirteen Ukrainian border guards on a tiny island in the Black Sea were told by Russians aboard a warship to surrender. Their response: “Go f-- yourself.” They were all initially reported to have been killed, but Ukrainian officials said Saturday they might have survived. Whatever their fate, they will go down as heroes in Ukrainian history. (One cannot but think of Shakespeare’s St. Crispin’s Day speech from “Henry V”: “For he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother.”)

We saw the images of Ukrainian families hunkering down for the night in subway tunnels, a scene reminiscent of Londoners during the Blitz, when another madman underestimated the will of a free people.

We heard from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who before the invasion made a dramatic appeal to the Russian people. As his nation was being pummeled, he appeared again to tell his fellow Ukrainians about the casualties but also about the brave military that “defended almost the entire territory of Ukraine, which suffered direct blows.” He said Ukrainian forces had recaptured the airport near Kyiv. He then announced he would “stay in the capital” and “stay with my people.” He noted that “the enemy marked me as the number one target” and his family “number two.” He warned Kyiv residents that Russian saboteurs might have entered the city.

And, yes, we saw glimpses of thousands of Russians marching in the streets, shouting “No to war!” Some 1,700 people were arrested on the first day. Russian scientists, journalists, celebrities and other figures put their names on statements and took to Instagram to protest the war. The showing was a courageous stand against a police state and a marked contrast to U.S. politicians who cannot bring themselves to condemn defeated former president Donald Trump, who served up propaganda for Putin.

Before this is over, many brave Ukrainians will be killed or injured, or lose their homes and livelihoods. Many Russian protesters will feel the wrath of Putin’s thugs. They are risking their lives for the simple idea that democracy, freedom and independence are worth defending. It is a cause worth fighting for.

The past week should serve as a deafening wake-up call to the West, which for too long has taken its democracy and security for granted. Just as Western nations must fortify their democracies against authoritarian bullies internally, they must also make sacrifices to keep at bay vicious regimes willing to wage war against free peoples and international order. Collectively, NATO will need to spend more on defense. The West will also need to bear the cost of finding new energy sources and separating from Russian energy supplies, which remain Putin’s lifeline.

I found it sad that so many reporters and politicians demanded to know whether Russian sanctions would mean that people would need to pay more for gas. Surely we are not so selfish, so materialistic and so feeble as to reject our obligation to other free people because filling up our tanks will cost a little more.

For their courage and idealism, for their defense of democracy and international peace, we can say to Ukrainians and Russian protesters, well done. Moreover, we can pray for their survival and be willing to make sacrifices to support them in the weeks and months ahead.
Visual Commentary | Ukraine Invasion

Editorial cartoons are found on the op-ed pages in print and in the Opinions section online. Cartoonists make their points of view through visual commentary — using their artistry, symbols, metaphors, allusions, exaggerations and, sometimes, well-chosen dialogue and labels. They, like editorials, are responses to recent actions.

January 15, 2022  Tiptoe the Line

February 21, 2022  Putin’s Power Play

February 23, 2022  War and Pea Shooters

February 25, 2022  Putin’s Historical Hypocrisy
January 15, 2022

1. The White House is an iconic symbol. Stantis draws two iconic symbols in his editorial cartoon. What are they and what do they represent? What details does he add for emphasis?

2. When editorial cartoonists do not want you to guess, they add labels. “Ukraine” indicates what about the location? What is the reason for the line?

3. Who speaks in this image? What is the significance of “Nyet?!!” and the punctuation marks?

February 21, 2022

1. Who is Putin? What is his image of himself?

2. Editorial cartoonists use details and symbols — that they may exaggerate — to communicate larger ideas. Putin is flexing what muscles? What details indicate Telnaes thinks he needs to look at himself more carefully?

3. What idea is Telnaes communicating about Putin? In what ways may she be correct? In what ways may she be wrong?

February 23, 2022

1. Who are the two figures in the cartoon? Look at de Adder’s details, including dress and their eyes. Describe them.

2. There is a contrast in weaponry. What does each use to battle?

3. What message does de Adder express in his visual commentary?

February 25, 2022

1. Editorial cartoonists use symbols and iconic images. Identify the two figures in this frame. What details and symbols support your response?

2. When did the figure in the suit make the comment? To what was he referring?

3. The figure in the mirror partially explains why Telnaes considers the comment an “historical hypocrisy.” What is the point of view of Ann Telnaes?
Social Media, Satellites & Survival

Residents, journalists and international students who are studying in Ukraine are using social media.

SOCIAL MEDIA

1. Ukrainians in the capital, cities and villages have used real-time videos, Facebook, Telegram, TikTok and Twitter to show and tell the truth, countering propaganda and false claims coming from the Kremlin. “Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, a former TV actor, has posted videos nearly every day to his 1.1 million-subscriber Telegram channel, allowing him to quickly undermine the kinds of false-flag operations and phony rumors that Russia has often weaponized against its opponents.” Read “How Ukrainians have used social media to humiliate the Russians and rally the world.”

https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/03/01/social-media-ukraine-russia/

2. An estimated 10,000 international students are enrolled in Ukrainian universities. As attacks increased in Kharkiv in eastern Ukraine, The Post reported that “[s]tranded Indian students have issued desperate appeals on social media for help in being evacuated, as the government steps up efforts to bring them back via neighboring countries such as Romania and Hungary.

“Please help us get out immediately,”’ one student says in a video shared widely on Twitter. “‘There is a lot of panic.’”

Read “Indian, Algerian students killed in Ukraine; others stranded during Russia’s invasion beg for help” to learn more about another group threatened by this attack.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/03/01/ukraine-students-killed-stranded-russia-war/

3. When invasion began, people residing in Ukraine — and millions more around the world — turned to social media for reports, video and photographs. Using multiple sources, events could be followed almost in real time. “Vulnerable to real-time manipulation, social media fuels a new ‘fog of war’” for perspectives on its use.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/02/24/ukraine-russia-war-twitter-social-media/

Using the information from the three articles, write a short essay on the uses and influence of social media during the invasion of Ukraine by Russia.
Social Media, Satellites & Survival  | continued

SATELLITES

1. Advances have been made in satellite imagery. These are available online making it harder to hide the most sensitive military movements and deployments. Read “Satellite photos give a bird’s-eye-view of Ukraine crisis.” [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/satellite-photos-give-a-birds-eye-view-of-ukraine-crisis/2022/02/18/6b33bc14-907b-11ec-8ddd-52136988d263_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/satellite-photos-give-a-birds-eye-view-of-ukraine-crisis/2022/02/18/6b33bc14-907b-11ec-8ddd-52136988d263_story.html)

   a. It is argued that “[c]ommercial satellite images, as a snapshot in time, do not provide indisputable evidence of exactly what the Russian military is doing or why.” What do you think of the images that you have seen in photographs and maps? To what extent are they useful for personal and military purposes?

   b. Some of The Post maps of Ukraine have notations such as: “Satellite images taken Friday show more than 140 helicopters and ground forces with vehicles in convoy position in Belarus near Mazyr and Chojniki.” Do ideas presented in this article influence how you accept this kind of information?

2. There are definite benefits in the information provided by Google maps — in every day life and invasion. But its drawbacks, depending on what side you are on, can be life threatening. Read “On Google Maps, tracking the invasion of Ukraine.” [https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/02/25/google-maps-ukraine-invasion/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/02/25/google-maps-ukraine-invasion/)

   c. What decision did Google Maps make regarding services in Ukraine? Do you agree or disagree with this decision? Explain your response.

3. What do Tim Cook and Elon Musk have in common? They received and responded to tweets from Mykhailo Fedorov, one of Ukraine’s deputy prime ministers. Read “The Ukrainian leader who is pushing Silicon Valley to stand up to Russia.” [https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/03/02/mykhailo-fedorov-ukraine-tech/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/03/02/mykhailo-fedorov-ukraine-tech/)

   d. Which companies have made decisions not to do business with Russia? What types of products are involved? How might these decisions impact the lives of citizens?

   e. Do you believe that technology giants have an ethical responsibility to aid countries under attack? Who or what determines who are the “good guys” and “bad guys?”
Social Media, Satellites & Survival | continued

SURVIVAL

Survival takes many forms for Ukraine’s citizens. Shopping for groceries, lining up for gas, drawing cash from an ATM. Boarding up museum windows, creating roadblocks, taking up arms. Finding shelter in a subway station, continuing chemo treatments in a hospital basement, escaping to Poland or Hungary or Moldova.

Through the different photographs and videos you have viewed and the articles you have read about this invasion of Ukraine, what impressions do you have about surviving as one’s country and people are assaulted?