

Russia's Assault on Ukraine: What's at Stake?

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As violence in Ukraine escalates under Russia's unprovoked invasion, America must stand up for the people of Ukraine and protect our nation's values and interests. It is horrific moments like these that underscore why America must continue to work with our allies and leverage our full diplomatic, economic, and security toolkit.

America must act swiftly to defend our interests and values in support of democracy when authoritarianism is on the march. This is clearly a time when politics must stop at the water's edge – bipartisan efforts in Congress are critical for providing support for democracy and its ideals, humanitarian operations, and the refugees who are fleeing the violence.

Growing Humanitarian Crisis in Ukraine, Neighboring Countries, and Beyond

As conflict continues with Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Ukrainian people are suffering the horrific impacts of the war. Thousands of Ukrainian civilians have been killed so far, according to Ukraine's State Emergency Services, with more deaths every day that Russian aggression continues. Although the invasion has been met with fierce resistance from the Ukrainian people, Russia's assault has also created the largest humanitarian crisis in Europe this century.

- ▶ **Refugees.** Since the crisis began on February 24, more than 1.8 million people and growing have fled Ukraine to surrounding countries like Poland, Romania, Moldova, and Slovakia. The U.N. estimates that as many as [5 million people](#) could be forced from their homes in the coming days and weeks.
- ▶ **Humanitarian Relief.** The U.N. [estimates](#) that 12 million people in Ukraine will need relief and protection, with more than 4 million Ukrainian refugees in need of assistance in neighboring countries in the coming months.
- ▶ **Hunger.** The World Food Program (WFP) is launching a three-month emergency operation in Ukraine to provide food assistance for people fleeing the conflict. The agency is scaling up to reach up to [3.1 million](#) civilians through the use of cash-based transfers as well as in-kind food distributions. Further, half of WFP's grains come from the Russia-Ukraine region, now dramatically impacting food costs, shipping costs, oil and fuel and exacerbating global hunger crises caused by COVID-19, climate change and conflict.
- ▶ **Infrastructure.** Russian bombardments have targeted residential areas and critical infrastructure including hospitals, schools, water, and sanitation facilities. Disrupting access to critical medical supplies and other essential services [cuts millions](#) of Ukrainians off from safe drinking water and energy access to stay warm, and raises the risk of [gender-based violence](#) in the hardest-hit areas.

How Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Directly Impacts Americans

Russia's invasion of Ukraine serves as yet another vital reminder for Americans that what happens globally matters locally as they begin to feel the impact of the conflict in their daily lives. Western nations have been unified in implementing harsh economic sanctions on Russian banks, its elites, and President Putin himself. With Russia

as a top energy and food exporter, these robust sanctions have caused ripple effects throughout the global economy. Surging commodity prices and intense supply chain disruptions have begun to strain consumers and erode spending power, particularly in emerging and low-income economies. Continued conflict only promises to exacerbate these impacts.

- ▶ **Rising Inflation.** Experts estimate the crisis's economic aftershocks could increase inflation by as much as 2.8 percentage points, driving year-over-year price increases above 10 percent.
- ▶ **Higher Food Prices.** Ukraine and Russia account for nearly [29% of global wheat exports](#), and 15% of global corn exports come from Ukraine. Following Russia's invasion, the cost of wheat, corn, and other agricultural outputs are up [double digits](#) and prices have [surged 20%](#) since the beginning of the year.
- ▶ **Agriculture Impact.** Since Russia is a global leader in fertilizer production, American farmers are preparing for supply chain disruptions that are likely to increase the price of agricultural fertilizers.
- ▶ **Increasing Energy and Oil Prices.** In 2020, Russia was America's [third-largest](#) supplier of foreign petroleum. Today, Americans are paying [almost a dollar more](#) per gallon of gas than in early-2021, making it much more expensive to fill up a tank of gas and transport goods. The United States is releasing oil from strategic reserves to protect American consumers as the oil market responds to economic uncertainty in Russia.
- ▶ **Chip Shortage.** Ukraine is the leading supplier of [neon gas](#) for the world and for the United States' nascent semiconductor industry, which could spur another chip shortage affecting the prices of cars and cellphones.

America's Call: Defending Our Values and Interests

Leading up to and throughout the conflict, the United States has led with allies to pursue diplomacy, rallying global solidarity to hold Russia accountable economically and politically. U.S. diplomats have worked to ensure that U.S. decisions are made with the coordinated and reinforced support of our European allies.

- ▶ **Rallying the World to Hold Putin Accountable.** Over [30 countries](#) representing well over half the world's economy have announced sanctions and export controls targeting Russia. Working with the EU and other allies and partners, the U.S. has banned all transactions with the Russian central bank, the Russian finance ministry and national wealth fund, preventing Russia from raising sovereign debt. Several Russian banks have been cut out of the Swift international payments system, and the U.S. has placed Russia's top 10 financial institutions (representing 80% of the country's banking sector) under restrictions.
- ▶ **Humanitarian and Security Assistance.** The United States is one of the largest humanitarian donors to Ukraine, and our humanitarian assistance now amounts to nearly \$405 million to vulnerable communities since Russia invaded Crimea, Ukraine eight years ago.
 - The Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development have committed nearly [\\$54 million in humanitarian assistance](#) to those affected by Russia's further invasion.
 - The White House has [requested \\$5 billion](#) in humanitarian, security, and economic assistance to Ukraine.
- ▶ **U.S. Private Sector Cutting Ties.** From energy and transportation to technology and consumer goods, private sector companies are [cutting ties with Moscow](#). These actions will further isolate the Russian economy and apply economic pressure against Russia's aggression.