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**CAROL
SAIVETZ:**

Thank you for joining us today. I'm Carol Saivetz. I'm senior advisor at the Security Studies Program at MIT, and along with Elizabeth Wood, who is a professor of history at MIT, we cochair the Focus on Russia Seminar Series.

The discussion we're sponsoring today is a Starr Forum but under the rubric of the Focus on Russia Series. We've had several discussions already about the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and we thought today that we would widen our focus to discuss issues such as nuclear security, insurgency, China's role, et cetera. I'd like to introduce our speakers now so that we can move right along through the conversation, and I wanted also, even before I got to the speakers, to thank the Center for International Studies, the Security Studies Program at MIT, and the MIT Russia Program for cosponsoring our series.

So our speakers today are Jacqueline Bhabha, who is a professor of the practice of health and human rights at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Her expertise is health and human rights and international migration and refugee protection. Joel Brenner, who is a senior fellow at the Center for International Studies, who's the former head of US counterintelligence under the director of national intelligence-- and will talk to us today about cybersecurity and data protection.

Taylor Fravel is the Arthur and Ruth Sloan Professor of political science at MIT, and he's the director of the Security Studies Program. His expertise is Asian security and East Asian foreign policy, and as I said before, he's going to talk about China's role in the Ukraine crisis. Next will be Roger Petersen, the Arthur and Ruth Sloan Professor of political science at MIT, whose expertise is civil-military relations and comparative politics and ethnic conflict. Finally, last but not least, as they say, is Jim Walsh, who's a senior research associate at MIT Security Studies Program, who is an expert on nuclear weapons and WMD proliferation. So with no further ado, let me turn the floor over to Jacqueline, who can begin our conversation.

**JACQUELINE
BHABHA:**

Thank you very much, Carol. It's a pleasure to join you, and thank you for organizing this important event. So as you noted, I'm going to speak about the refugee situation caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and I'm going to basically organize my brief comments in four sections, starting with some introductory comments. And then I'm going to talk a bit about the response of state actors. Then I'm going to move to some brief remarks about nonstate actors or community response, and finally, I'm going to talk about particular vulnerabilities of some populations that the human rights community is particularly concerned about.

But let me just start with a couple of introductory reflections. As I'm sure most of our listeners know, nearly 4 and 1/2 million Ukrainians have already fled their homes. This is within a month and a half of the outbreak of the war.

Some are still internally displaced. Many have had multiple dislocations to multiple settings as conflict and insecurity has followed them, and we see this in many conflicts, that people don't just migrate or leave home once they go to a place which they think are safe and then are forced to move on. And this has been true in this conflict as well.

And I think, again, as has been noted, this is the largest refugee exodus of Europeans within Europe since World War II. If you make a comparison, at the end of World War II, about 8 million people were displaced. This is after six years of war at the end of World War II in Europe, and here, we already have about 4 and 1/2, 5 million people displaced just within six weeks. So the scale of the human tragedy and the human disruption and dislocation is immense.

I do want to note, however, that it's not that there haven't been other very massive forced migration episodes in very recent history. The number of Ukrainians is not that different to the number of Venezuelans who have been forced to leave their homes, and of course, numbers of Syrians and Afghans have also been in the many millions. We don't have clear figures about Tigrayans, but there's a massive conflict going on in Ethiopia, too. So my first introductory point here is that this conflict has received extraordinary attention, extraordinary media attention, and there has been, therefore, an extraordinary public response, something which is in many ways positive. But it does also highlight how different and inconsistent our response to human tragedy is.

Second introductory comment I wanted to make is specifically about one population, which is children. According to a UNICEF report put out last week, over 50% of Ukrainian children have been forced to leave their homes, over 50%. And for those of us who work on the links between human rights and migration, this is an extraordinarily significant number because we know that the consequences of forced migration, of conflict, of the sort of disruption that these children are experiencing are not short term. These children are likely going to have traumatic impacts maybe for their whole life, so what we've witnessed in the past six weeks is really the beginning of something that may well impact a whole generation of Ukrainian kids.

And my third point-- and again, this is something that I think many of our listeners will be familiar with-- is that we've also seen not just the consequences of the conflict for expulsion or forced migration but also for entrapment. And this, again, is a drastic humanitarian situation. I'm thinking particularly of Mariupol, where the reports of starvation and of the deliberate killing and maiming of civilians in violation of international law, have been really acute, and I'm sure we're going to hear more about this in our panel. But the fact that there is a nuclear deterrent in this conflict has meant that many of the most fundamental laws of war are being violated with impunity, it seems.

So let me move on now to the response of state actors, and I think the most important point to make here is that the response to Ukrainian refugees has been unprecedented. The European Union has never before opened its arms and its doors in the way that it is doing now. To speak a little bit more technically, within less than a week of the commencement of hostilities or commencement of the invasion, on March the 1st of 2022, the European Union activated something called the Temporary Protection Directive, which is a very important anticipatory move to create a baseline of protection across the Union.

This directive was brought into effect as a piece of EU equipment or policy after the Bosnian war, but it has never been used before. It's never been activated, and I don't think anybody ever thought it would be activated because its terms are so generous. But here we are. As of the 1st of March, the Temporary Protection Directive is now activated across the Union.

So what does that mean? It means a couple of very important things. Firstly, it means that anyone who was a citizen or a legal resident or a refugee or someone with equivalent legal status living in Ukraine on February 24 and who was in Ukraine on February 24 is given permission, legal permission to enter the European Union, any European Union member state, and that they have permission, legal permission to stay in an EU member state initially for a year, and if approval is given, which it is likely to be given, for another two years.

So the Temporary Protection Directive means that Ukrainians, unlike any previous group of refugees, have this possible sense of security that they will have three years legally in Europe. That is huge. That makes an enormous difference to one's sense of security and one's state of mind.

It's not just that they have legal access. Legal access brings with it some critical entitlements, one of which is the right to work legally; secondly, the right for children to go to state schools; and thirdly, the right to access at least emergency health care and, for vulnerable groups like unaccompanied minors and others, more than just emergency health care. So this Temporary Protection Directive really changes the playing field for Ukrainian refugees compared to, for example, Syrians or Afghans or many others.

And another thing I want to comment on is that the EU's Directive is a very good example of a flexible anticipatory policy. It's something that many of our human rights lawyers have been asking for for years, that states should anticipate predictable needs rather than always being behind the curve and acting after the needs have arisen. And so by making this declaratory decision and saying that people don't need to apply to be legal-- they will be legal if they just register for a residence permit-- the EU has set a very high baseline of protection, a baseline which will have certainly psychological and emotional and, of course, legal impacts for the refugee population.

And another important related point is that this approach means that the asylum systems of the different EU member states won't get overloaded because people don't need to apply for asylum. They have a legal residence for at least three years. So that's really, I think, an important point.

There is a lot I could also say about different member states' responses. I think we've all read how for the first time ever, Poland and Hungary have accepted that there are legitimate refugees, and they have opened their arms. Germany is dusting off the protocols that it used in 2015 for the Syrians and really coming up to scratch very quickly to institute procedures which enable arriving Ukrainians to get inserted into housing, into schooling, and so on. And other West European countries have really, again, demonstrated a willingness to act which has been unprecedented, the Netherlands in particular, which has been fairly hostile to many previous flows of refugees.

So the summary point here is that the EU's response is something which sets a wonderful precedent, I think, for previous and future refugee flows and will, at least in part, mitigate the tragedy that so many Ukrainians have experienced and are continuing to experience. That said, of course, though, the challenge is immense because the scale of arrival and the scale of harm and devastation are huge. And it's been really interesting to observe the ways in which communities have responded and businesses and local organizations and, of course, faith and other based entities.

So for example, Airbnb has made available over 100,000 spaces free of charge. Western Union is not charging relatives who are sending money to Ukrainians. Teachers are using Apple Translate and other tools to quickly absorb children without saying, oh, we have to put them in special situations because they don't speak the language.

All of this is, I must say, unprecedented. And there's a kind of ramping up of just making food, housing, protection, mentorship available, which is really a heroic effort. So any [INAUDIBLE] you speak to-- and I've spoken to several recently-- will tell you how people are bringing food, bringing clothing, are standing with placards saying they have one couch available for a single woman, or they have a room available for a family without pets or whatever it is, so a really remarkable response.

My final point, though, is, of course, that despite this generous outpouring, we're seeing many, many very concerning developments, even amongst this relatively privileged refugee population. Firstly, we are already seeing retrenchment. Hungary, for example, which initially welcomed these white Christian refugees with open arms, is now pulling back from some of the provisions of the Temporary Protection Directive. I won't go into details, though I'm happy to answer questions, but there's clearly a sign that that initial sense of, yes, we are in this together is perhaps fraying. And I think the recent announcement of Orban's election is only likely to increase the risks to the many refugees who are in Hungary, though I should say there are extraordinary organizations like the Helsinki Committee and others who are working 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

And finally, there are other vulnerabilities that we need to think about. As in any such situation, the risks to women and girls of exploitation, of violence are exacerbated, and we are already hearing concerning reports. And the same is true of unaccompanied minors.

In these mass exodus situations, you often see abusive adoptions. You see exploitation and trafficking people, really exploiting vulnerabilities, so unfortunately this massive exodus is no exception. So I leave my comments there. Thank you.

CAROL Great, thank you so much. Turning it over to Joel.

SAIVETZ:

JOEL BRENNER: Well, thanks for having me this afternoon. It's a pleasure to address this group. I'm going to talk about cyber network operations, computer network operations in Ukraine and in Russia and defense in the United States.

I'm not going to talk about cyber war, and I want to discourage the use of that term altogether. We're not in a cyber war any more than we're in a javelin war or an AK-47 war. We're in a war that has cyber aspects to it, and it's anything but a stand-alone cyber event.

What are we seeing now? The enormous amount of destructive attacks by various Russians, not always precisely attributable but clearly Russian, to more than a dozen places in Ukraine. Some of them were in January, mostly in February, mostly preinvasion, not so much during the invasion. In mid February, the UK government reported that the GRU-- that's Russian military intelligence-- was almost certainly involved in various disruptive DDoS attacks against the financial sector in Ukraine, and the Ukrainian cyber emergency response team known as the CERT has told us that there have been lots of malware attacks on Ukrainian systems and in one case at least from Belarus rather than Russia.

What we haven't seen, however-- and I'm now looking at a report from Kevin Mandia from Mandiant because Mandia is speaking publicly, and he's one of the few who are actually in the front line speaking publicly. We haven't seen, according to him-- there are better-known groups like Energetic Bear or Berserk Bear or Isotope or Dragonfly. We haven't seen them out of their ordinary sort of patterns of operations. Same goes for Russian foreign intelligence, the SVR.

And this looks like a puzzle at first, but it's really not. If you're blowing up the hospital and if you're blowing up the power plant, taking out its cyber network really is sort of beside the point, isn't it? So the Russians are just-- they're blowing things up. And going into delicate, long-preparation cyber attacks when you can go into much more destructive kinetic attacks doesn't make much sense.

Now on the Ukrainian side, starting two days after the operations, the Ukrainians announced the formation of an IT army, and that has been quite astoundingly effective. They are fighting digital intrusions, and they are fighting back. Reuters in mid March announced that the Russian telecoms firm Rostelecom and Russian Digital Ministry both reported substantial cyber attacks. And there have, if you've been following the news, as this audience, I think, is, is aware that the Ukrainians have pulled off massive data heists from Russian military and intel sites that have really been seriously compromising.

We also know that there have been seven general officers killed in this war so far. That's extraordinary. Now, how has that happened? In at least one case, we know that a general officer was speaking on an open cell phone. Now, it's possible that general officer was being reckless, but I rather doubt it.

A characteristic tactic in warfare, communications tactic in warfare is when your enemy is communicating in ways you can't find or in ways you can't intercept or decrypt or decrypt quickly enough. One tries to herd those communications from media that you can't intercept or decrypt to open-source communications that you can. I think that's what's happening here, and I suspect that Western intelligence services, probably chiefly CIA but maybe also MI6 and Israeli intelligence, have long known where those nodes are of classified communications and have told the Ukrainians where to put ordnance to blow them up. So I think what we've seen is a herding of Russian secret communications into the clear as a result of network operations of which we can be proud, by the way.

Turning to the United States, there's been substantial years-overdue emphasis on network defense. Those of us who used to have hair and were tearing it out over the lack of seriousness in this are starting to really see some payoff in this respect. On March 22, the House passed-- and the Senate had previously passed-- the cyber crime bill that requires lots of illumination of cyber crime, much more heavy reporting. There's also been another bill passed that is making American companies much more open about what's going on in their networks. It's about time.

These steps are not going to prevent determined Russian attempts to penetrate those networks. What they will do, however, is make penetration somewhat more difficult in some cases and make resilience greater because the attacks will be reported more quickly, understood better. And then the cavalry, so to speak, the cyber cavalry can go to the aid of those companies much more quickly.

The White House has sort of but not clearly denied an NBC report on 24 February that the president has given a menu of options for the United States to carry out massive cyber attacks designed to disrupt Russia's ability to sustain its military operations in Ukraine. I suspect this is true. I also think the White House doesn't want to talk about it.

Basically, US intelligence and military commanders-- I'm now quoting the NBC report-- are proposing the use of American cyber weapons on a scale never before contemplated, and among the options reported by NBC are disruption of internet connectivity across Russia, shutting off electric power, tampering with railroad switches to hamper Russia's ability to resupply its forces. None of this has happened. Why not?

Because we don't want to launch cyber attacks against Russia that under the law of armed conflict could be regarded as the equivalent of a kinetic attack and thereby put the United States directly in conflict with Russia. We don't want that. They want it even less than we want it. Besides, they haven't attacked us yet, so the idea that somehow we should be conducting massive cyber attacks against Russia when our strategy is not to be in direct conflict with Russia doesn't make a lot of sense.

It's not, by the way, because our defenses are so great. Of course, the Russians could attack us, turning the question around a little bit. As Mandia notes, we haven't seen an escalation outside of Ukraine. He says, it's like we're bracing for impact. Everybody is on high alert.

This is more of a puzzle. Why haven't the Russians attacked us? Well, for some of the same reasons, and, of course, they still might. But I think there are several reasons, and here's what I think they are.

First place, it wouldn't accomplish anything. Putin's goals in Ukraine are not going to be furthered by going into conflict with the United States and messing around in our networks. It just won't accomplish anything.

Secondly, as the director of GCHQ-- that's the equivalent of British NSA-- Sir Jeremy Fleming said only a few days ago, while some people look for cyber Pearl Harbors, it was never our understanding that a catastrophic cyber attack was central to Russia's use of offensive cyber in their military doctrine. OK, we haven't seen it because that's not how they play ball. Third, it might cross our own red line, whether we've consciously drawn it or not. Putin wants a direct fight with the US military even less than we want one with his military.

Now, there's a lot of conversation about what if it came to nukes-- serious issue. Russia military doctrine is that they would use them if Putin thinks his regime is threatened. It's not.

Putin is not suicidal. A general exchange of nuclear weapons would be suicidal. It's not what he's after.

Could he use a tactical nuke in Ukraine or drop one into the Baltic or the North Sea? Yeah, he could. What would the Chinese reaction to that be? The Chinese are already really unhappy with the Russians because this is a strategic disaster for them.

I think if that happened, we wouldn't necessarily respond with a nuclear response. We would have precision weapons. We might attack launch sites, with promises not to do more.

That's a very hairy scenario, but it's a mistake just to focus on Putin's red lines. Putin's thinking about our red lines, and you should, too. His risk of escalation is even greater than ours because for him, he faces the prospect of regime change. We don't.

I, therefore, would be inclined to send in those Polish MiGs. I would also supply the Ukraine with antiship weapons that could sink any ship in the Baltic fleet that got anywhere near Odessa. And it's also worth thinking about not a no-fly zone but, as Timothy Naftali recently suggested, a no-fly corridor, a humane corridor.

We've already blown past one of Putin's red lines. I think we ought to be-- this takes steady nerves, a cool head, but also a stiff backbone. Otherwise, you allow Putin or anybody else with nuclear weapons to make the rest of the world think they cannot be confronted. That would be a strategic disaster.

Finally, let me just say this about Russian information space. They've really lost the information war externally. Nobody believes anything that they say, and the revulsion against Russian behavior is almost worldwide.

But Putin believes that the Soviet Union lost the Cold War because they couldn't control their own information space. That is why he has closed his information space. Penetrating it now is one of our great objectives, ought to be one of our great objectives. Thank you.

**CAROL
SAIVETZ:**

Thanks so much, Joel. Taylor, your turn.

**TAYLOR
FRAVEL:**

Thanks, Carol, and thanks to everyone at CIS for putting this together. It's a great pleasure to be with all of you today. I've been asked to focus on China, and I'm going to try to answer three questions. What has been China's response? Why is China responding the way in which it has been responding, and what are the implications of China's response?

So first to start, what is China doing? How has China responded to Russia's invasion of Ukraine? As summed up, I believe, first by a friend and colleague of mine, Evan Medeiros, you could sort of view the Chinese response as a sort of pro-Russian neutrality. And so on the one hand, China leans very heavily towards Russia but is not seeking to become directly involved in the conflict or provide substantial direct military support to Russia.

So what are the diplomatic, economic, and military components of the Chinese response? I think the most sort of noteworthy aspect of China's response has been in the diplomatic realm, which has been to accept and amplify Russia's view of the origins of the crisis, which is NATO expansion. This reflects Chinese concerns about US alliances more generally, but it is also an attempt to place the onus for resolving the situation created by Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the United States.

China refuses to call it a war, has never referred to it as an invasion, very rarely maybe references the flames of war, but generally, it's described as a situation, [CHINESE], or as a crisis, [CHINESE]. And so they've downplayed the severity of what's happening. Other elements include somewhat paradoxically underscoring the importance of sovereignty and territorial integrity in the UN Charter. This is one effort, I think, to nod slightly in Ukraine's direction, despite the overwhelming tilt towards Russia.

Also with Russia, China sort of accepts and amplifies Russian propaganda and talking points, most recently regarding US so-called military biolabs in Ukraine. And this is not coming out of second-tier Chinese media but from the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Of course, there's a refusal to condemn Russia's actions.

On the slightly more, perhaps, positive diplomatic side, there is generic support for peace talks, although if it's not a war, it's unclear what peace talks are intended to resolve. But I think there is an idea that China certainly is open and would support a peaceful sort of settlement. And then of course, on the diplomatic front at the United Nations, there's been a little distance between China and Russia, at least in resolutions that were put forward to the Security Council in the General Assembly, which China abstained but did not veto.

The last element of China's approach has been a six-point humanitarian plan to provide humanitarian relief. So far, I believe that includes \$2.3 billion of aid that has been provided, so pretty heavily pro-Russia although trying to strike a somewhat neutral position. On the economic front, China opposes sanctions, often describes them as unilateral sanctions, even though the sanctions are being put in place through coordination of many states from Europe as well as those sort of advanced industrialized economies in Asia. But nevertheless, even though China opposes the sanctions, China so far does not appear to be helping Russia to circumvent or overcome them and, in fact, has been quite cautious in seeking to understand the limits of these sanctions so that its companies and firms do not get entangled in them because that ultimately would be bad for Chinese business and something that China wants to avoid.

Finally, militarily, China is not providing, so far as we can tell in open sources, weapons or other material support for the Russian war effort. They may be providing other kinds of support that have not-- or other kinds of support-- excuse me-- that have not yet been discussed. But despite some of the reporting earlier, a few weeks ago, China has not sort of heavily backed Russia in this effort by providing what Russia may or may not have asked China to provide.

So why is China doing this? I think there's probably three main reasons but two of which are most important. The first is that China has grown quite close to Russia before the invasion occurred. I think it's important to stress before the invasion.

This culminated in Putin's visit to China on the event of the opening of the Winter Olympics and the issuance of a statement between the two governments on the 4th of February, which I sort of describe somewhat jokingly as a list of shared grievances with the United States and the US-led order. It didn't contain a lot of action items, but it did contain a lot of complaints. And I think from China's standpoint, Russia and growing closer to Russia has been useful, as relations with the United States have deteriorated and atrophied, and although China was hoping for a reset with the election of President Biden in early 2021, that, of course, has not come to pass. And the focus and pressure from the United States on China remains, which has elevated the importance from Beijing's standpoint in terms of growing closer with Russia.

And towards the end of last year, you had an effort by the United States to lead a boycott of the Olympics, and you had a summit of democracies that was convened, albeit, I think, virtually. But nevertheless, I think China felt it was time perhaps to elevate its partnership. And so we don't know what Putin said when he visited and spoke with Xi Jinping on the 4th. I don't believe he informed China of his intention to invade, and Chinese analysts did not believe that an invasion was forthcoming. And so I think China was probably snookered a little bit by Putin in this regard, but nevertheless, it's very hard to unwind the very strong sort of position China and Russia took in early February.

The second factor here is related to the first and which is the continued deterioration of ties with the United States. I think China's approach to the conflict and how it talks about the conflict has not so much been to support Russia as it has been to find more ways to criticize the United States. And so for the last two years, China has countered the US narrative of China being a challenge to sort of the global rules-based order by portraying the United States as a source of global instability and an unreliable country.

And so China is viewing and sort of characterizing the, quote, "situation" in Ukraine through this kind of anti-US or counter-US frame which it has. And so this is why NATO gets so much attention, not just because it is a Russian talking point but also because as China has its own concerns about US alliances in East Asia and the way in which they've been strengthened in the last one to two years and the elevation of the quad and so forth. So this is a way of essentially kind of trying to delegitimize the United States and place the onus of responsibility also on the United States for the situation in Ukraine, however far fetched that may seem to the rest of us.

And then finally, I think another consideration has been China does want to see continued global macroeconomic stability, and I think sort of challenging the sanctions or inviting the sanctions to come down on itself could have economic consequences that would go far beyond what China would be willing to stomach at this point. Especially because this is perhaps the most critical year in sort of the Chinese political calendar since reform and opening in 1978 with a 20th Party Congress that will be held this coming fall to sort of put in place arrangements that would consolidate Xi's third term, and perhaps cement his power for an even longer period to come.

So what are some of the implications? Let me talk about implications for four areas. First, diplomacy-- I think this has been a strategic blunder for China in many ways. China, because of its concern about the United States, for the last few years, has tried to drive a wedge between Europe and America, and over the past 12 months, culminating with the February 4 statement between Russia and China and then, of course, China's support for Russia in the course of the invasion, China has basically unified Europe against it in ways that were unimaginable in December of 2020, when China and the EU reached an investment agreement.

It's not just about Russia. It's also about the treatment of European parliamentarians and being sanctioned over their views on Xinjiang. It's about China's treatment of Lithuania and other factors, but nevertheless, China has managed very successfully to alienate the one group of countries it was seeking to cultivate as part of its broader response to the United States.

I think diplomatically, it further strains ties with the United States. It suggests that China presents an even greater challenge to the future of stability and international order because of the way in which it is seen as abetting the Russian action by not condemning or opposing it. I think it also does raise some interesting questions, though, about China-Russia relations and whether or not there are, in fact, some limits on the no-limits partnership because we haven't seen the military aid. We haven't seen an effort to break sanctions and so forth.

I think the implications for the developing world are more open. We primarily talk about this as sort of Europe and other advanced industrialized economies in Asia vis-a-vis their stance on China and Russia, but I think for the developing world, China's narrative may have a little more purchase than we might give it credit to. We don't really talk about that very much. And then, of course, the last implication here is simply the unity of the advanced industrialized democracies around the world and the way in which they've responded because that does have implications for China.

Turning to some political implications, I mentioned this is a very important year in the Chinese political calendar, and in some ways, being so closely associated with Russia and its destructive activity in Ukraine and the destruction it's caused in Ukraine and so forth, I think, could open up a potential to criticize Xi Jinping for mismanagement of a really important relationship at a time in which he is seeking to put in place arrangements to consolidate his power and position for many years to come. China, during this year or in any year there's a Party Congress, prizes stability above all else, and in fact, we are seeing a quite unstable international order. And I think that's a challenge.

Finally, turning to Taiwan, I think there are a couple of implications. First, we haven't seen any opportunistic Chinese behavior, and so there's sort of a trope that whenever the West or the United States is distracted elsewhere, China is going to invade Taiwan or take some significant action against Taiwan. And yet again, that has not come to pass, but not to mean it's a serious issue to consider. But certainly, I think it helps provide a broader context for thinking about Chinese calculations.

I think in terms of a future conflict over Taiwan, though, I think China would be looking at the way in which this unity among the OECD states was so quickly formed and able to act quite decisively-- is going to be something that they would have to take into account going forward and especially in terms of the willingness to place somewhat broad economic sanctions, although not sort of total sanctions, since many folks are still buying gas and oil from Russia. I think it also would raise questions in the mind of Xi Jinping of just how well prepared the PLA is to fight a high-intensity conflict because any conflict over Taiwan is going to be much more complicated than the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which essentially involved moving combined armed groups across a land border. And of all those kinds of modern military operations, this should be easier than amphibious assault, right? And so I think they're going to be real questions being asked about, well, just how ready are you? And that, I think, is an important implication.

And then more broadly, just the uncertainty of war-- China's not fought a war in 40 years. The last war, in which they invaded Vietnam, did not go so well, and I suspect this might also induce some caution because it has revealed the way in which no plan survives first engagement with the enemy. And this is a particularly bad plan and so is doomed to fail, the Putin plan.

But I think it just reflects the uncertainty that is inherent in war more generally, and though, of course, China is not going to abandon any of its ambitions with respect to Taiwan, it may be more cautious perhaps in thinking about using the military instrument in the ways in which it possibly could. So I'll wrap up here and look forward to the discussion period. Thank you so much.

CAROL Great. Thanks so much, Taylor. Turning it over to Roger.

SAIVETZ:

ROGER Hey. So I've been asked to talk about insurgencies, so I guess the first thing to do is to define insurgency. There are countless ways to distinguish among the closely related concepts of guerrilla warfare, unconventional warfare, irregular warfare, partisan warfare, and so on, but for the purposes of analyzing Ukraine war, I'm going to define insurgency as war by small, lightly armed bands, hit-and-run tactics, sabotage, avoiding set battles, and conducting operations behind a front line. This is in distinction to conventional war, which is regular armies fighting set battles along front lines.

Now, when the war started six weeks ago, there was actually a lot more talk about insurgency than there is now, and that is because the way the war is actually fought is very much a conventional war so far. Six weeks ago, it was assumed that the Russians would win quickly a conventional war and the Ukrainians would have to turn to insurgency in either part or all of the country. Well, that really didn't happen.

So what is the relevance of insurgency at the current moment of this unpredictable war? There's many scenarios. I'm going to relate the discussion of insurgency to just one of them. Several analysts believe that the Russians are aiming for a frozen conflict. In the Russian version, this is where troops take a section of a target's territory, establish a ceasefire, and then gradually establish longer-term control.

The front lines are frozen. Set battles stop. The occupier has time to consolidate control and wait for favorable terms in negotiations or perhaps favorable conditions to renew the war. And this is what we've seen in Moldova, in Georgia, in Russia's Armenian ally in Nagorno-Karabakh, and in the Ukrainian Donbas region from 2014 until the start of this war.

So what is the relevance of insurgency in considering the possible implementation and success of Russia's frozen conflict strategy? Well, on current strategic thinking, if the Russians believe Ukrainians could produce an insurgency behind front lines, the Russians may be less likely to employ that strategy in the first place. There would be problems of consolidation of the territory, but they'd also need to deploy combat troops from defense to the front lines to police actions in the rear. And there'd have to be costs with little respite. There'd be domestic and international costs.

So if an insurgency seems likely, the Russians and Putin might be more willing to make concessions in current negotiations, or they could just try to take more chances for a decisive conventional victory now. I don't know what Putin really believes are the chances of a significant Ukrainian insurgency, but how should we think about it? Could the Ukrainians actually sustain an insurgency behind front lines?

I think there's four elements to this. One, is there a population willing to provide information and material support to insurgents? Insurgency war is very much an information war.

Related to that, the second point is, is there an absence of a population that's going to provide information and support to the occupying forces? A third point is, local armed organizations, will they be formed? There's a process of forming them around sort of first actors and local leaders, and can they remain hidden and protected? And the fourth is just the level of forces that the occupying force has, or are they able to maintain a presence in localities and able to conduct cordon and search operations, other counter-insurgency operations?

So when we consider these four issues, first, we can think about demography, and it depends how big is this frozen area that the Russians might want. Would they try to take it all the way to the Dnieper River? Would they just basically freeze and maybe incorporate Luhansk and Donetsk? Would they try to expand their operation over the Donbas? If they try to expand all the way to the Dnieper River, it doesn't seem like the Russians have enough troops to prevent an insurgency.

In Northern Ireland the British government for 25 years employed about 32,000 security forces for a population of 1.6 million. That's a ratio of 20 per 1,000 residents, 20 security forces per 1,000. At that percentage, Russia would require-- I mean, it's one security force for 20 civilians. At that percentage, the Russians would require 250,000 troops just to control a region of 5 million. They don't have that many troops to devote to counterinsurgency.

On the other hand, if they are just going to try to freeze the smaller area around the Donbas, they might be able to do that very well because, one, the refugees which we talked about here, internally displaced people-- who's going to be left in these areas? Mariupol was 430,000 people before the war. It's now estimated 130,000 civilians, probably lots of them old people, are left there, and a lot of the conscripted soldiers are gone. So who is going to be left there? And the size of it wouldn't be that big. Plus, I think the people who do stay, there's going to be a substantial number of Russian sympathizers or those who are going to make their life with the Russians, and they'll be able to provide support and information.

And so you may get what was-- Crimea was a very easy occupation for the Russians. They could do that, but again, it depends upon Russian ambitions. And if they go for the smaller area, they don't have as much area to bargain in negotiations or bargaining away.

Could the Ukrainians form these local organizations? I think they could because they do have leaders coming from the territorial defense forces. Ukraine does have an idea about people's war or embedded special operations forces, and the members of these cells very possibly have training and weapons. Ukraine has had eight years of preparation for an asymmetric contest, and they have known that NATO will not come on to their territory. So they'd have to fend for themselves.

So I think there's local leadership in parts of these areas. They're going to get support, and the US will support them. The US really supporting insurgency is in the CIA's DNA. I mean, a lot of people don't like that, but that's a lot of what they do. And the stingers and javelins are actually transportable, ideal weapons for hit-and-run and small-group operations, which they've already shown they can do in the suburbs of Kyiv.

Now, on the downside, insurgent organization usually takes time to coalesce and adapt. It really was a fluid environment. If you look at Iraq and Afghanistan after the US invaded, there's really a quiet period because the insurgents had to take a year or two really to get up to speed, and that's a normal phenomenon.

Evading detection-- on the Russian side, now there are drones, satellites, thermal imagery, but it's not clear how competent Russian forces are to actually use this in a counterinsurgency operation. And Ukraine is not Afghanistan. Some people say, well, the Afghans drove the Soviets out with stinger missiles. The Ukrainians can do the same thing with javelins and stingers in Ukraine.

But it's a very different topography. The Russians are using stand-off weapons, missiles, long-range artillery. That's not what you can hit with the stinger. And you have to remember, the Soviets fought for nine years before they left Afghanistan, so even with the demographic, organizational, and weapons advantages that the Ukrainians might have, we should remember that insurgencies are very long. They're on average about 10 years according to most studies.

Insurgencies are bloody. In Chechnya, there's a population of 1.4 million, and there were 40,000 civilian casualties. Insurgencies also involve a variety of units, some of them criminal or politically unsavory. The Azov Battalion and other forces are going to be fighting or find their way into this insurgency on the Ukrainian side.

So the last couple of points-- some people ask, well, what about nonviolent resistance? If the Russians try to occupy and control and put down a government, could there be an Orange Revolution against this puppet government? Well, what Russia has learned about repression is repression works but not in moderation, if you look at Syria and Chechnya. So I think the Russians will be brutal and likely effective against nonviolent resistance.

And I just end by saying a lot of this is just really speculation. Anybody who actually says they know where this war is heading, we should be skeptical of. Thanks.

CAROL That's great, Roger. Thank you so much. Jim Walsh.

SAIVETZ:

JIM WALSH: Thank you. Hi. I'm Jim Walsh, and I study nuclear weapons at MIT Security Studies Program.

I want to thank Michelle English and everyone at CIS for putting this panel together. I've learned so much, as I have from Carol and Elizabeth about Russia over these many years, and it's obvious that Carol is a great facilitator. She runs a tight ship, which is no small thing. Believe me. So thank you for that.

I've been tasked with talking about the wider implications with respect to nuclear weapons, and I have several points I want to make as I start my timer. One is, as Roger alluded to, the story is not over, and how it ends and how the ending is framed will shape the implications, will shape whether things go in one direction or another direction. And that story isn't over.

And here, I observe that I've already been surprised about what's happened in this conflict. I expect I will be surprised again, that I will get things wrong, and so as we think about the implications, we need to bear in mind the uncertainty right now. Things could break in different ways.

But given that, let me make some general points. One, the general theme when it comes to nuclear related stuff is that nuclear events tend to create cross-cutting impulses. Now, for countries with nuclear weapons, that means, for example, on the one hand, nuclear dangers produce the urge to hug your nuclear weapons more closely in a seemingly more dangerous world.

Now, I say "seemingly" because the nuclear weapons were always there. We just decided to ignore them for a long period of time and focus on proliferation, which is other people trying to get nuclear weapons rather than the countries with nuclear weapons. But those that have them, in a context of insecurity, some people will be drawn to want to draw them close.

On the other hand, for others, it encourages the conclusion that we have been asleep at the wheel and really bad things could happen. Not a lot of confidence in world leadership these days after COVID and all that has happened, so the prospects that someone could use these nuclear weapons and we would be in a terrible world of hurt, that's actually on the table. And for those folks, the impulse is to reduce nuclear dangers. Some will pull them closer and closer, and some will want to reduce them, as this is a reminder of what could happen in the future.

So let me speak more specifically about a couple of areas. The first is US nuclear policy. Now, for Biden again, we have this cross-cutting impulse playing out in the particular because Biden, on the one hand, is very pro-alliance. He's all about NATO alliance and South Korea and Japan alliance, and he's an alliance guy.

And he's also pro-arms control, and in this case, those things are in tension. The allies on the front line who depend on the US nuclear deterrent want to see a forward-leaning, robust deterrent posture, which can come in conflict with arms control and disarmament. And we've seen that play out, and so far, I'd say arms control has been the loser on it so far.

What do I mean by that? Well, the first casualty of the Ukraine war for nuclear-related issues was Biden's decision to end the pursuit of sole purpose. This is sort of getting into the weeds, but there's a debate in the US nuclear community, one-sided debate but a debate nonetheless, that we should shrink and reduce the situations in which we would use nuclear weapons, therefore reducing the chances they will be used in conflict.

And so what we should do is promise, as some have advocated, that we will use nuclear weapons solely for the purpose of deterring the use of other nuclear weapons or in response to nuclear weapons, not for other things, because in the US in the past has said, we'll use nuclear weapons for things beyond nuclear deterrence. So in that group includes deterring chemical and biological weapons, and in the case of NATO during the Cold War, it was always US policy that if there was a big battle on the Eastern Front and the Russians, who would enjoy massive conventional advantages if they started to crush our Western European allies-- we would threaten and perhaps use nuclear weapons in the face of losing a conventional war. And this was something that would have said that Biden supported during the campaign that we will only do nuclear for nuclear, nuclear deterrence for nuclear deterrence.

Well, he checked that. That's all gone, and I think the odds of us removing tactical nuclear weapons from Europe have diminished significantly for a period of time. I don't know how long, but it's going to be hard to take them out in the middle of a Russian war.

I think the Nuclear Posture Review, which was supposed to be released, is about to be released, whatever, will include no changes whatsoever that reduce the role of nuclear weapons. Maybe that's a little strong, but you get the general idea. And Biden had pushed for some of that, but in the current political context and given where that plays out in the bureaucracy, that never had much of a chance happening, in my view, to begin with. Now it has even less of a chance.

I guess the good news for me-- and I'm in the minority here-- is I just don't think the Nuclear Posture Review matters very much. I don't think Trump read the Posture Review, would have acted on it. I think when push comes to shove and there's a crisis, there are going to be other things going on. But insofar as that document is important, it will show no progress for arms control, if that's something you like.

And I think for US policy domestically, it means more money is going to be thrown at the Pentagon, and in that rush of-- which has always been the case, right? Congress always approves more money than the Pentagon requests. It'll do so again in fullness, fulsomeness, and some of that will go into things that are nuclear or nuclear-adjacent-like space.

All right, let's shift from the US focus to arms control and disarmament more generally. And first, we might think about US-Russian bilateral arms control, the core of arms control and disarmament activities during much of the Cold War, US bilateral negotiations, SALT and START and all that business. Well, at some point, I expect there will be an attempt to restart US-Russia nuclear stability talks.

Events so far and perhaps in the near term will demonstrate the need for that, but it's just really difficult to do under current circumstances. And I think current circumstances could go on for a while. Well, maybe they'll end quickly, but I think this is going to go on for a while. And I think that will continue to impede those conversations. But eventually, quietly, perhaps, at first, but eventually, the two countries will be pressed to talk again to reduce mutual dangers.

Let's talk for a moment about multilateral arms control, and here, one typically thinks of the Iran nuclear deal or the North Korea problem, where you have groups of countries, six or eight countries, depending on the situation, who are cooperating together to try to solve a nuclear problem. Well, I followed nuclear developments in Iran and North Korea for some 20 years, and one of the really sort of shocking aspects of that history is the degree to which Iran and North Korea have been kept separate and apart from other issues in the US-China, and the US-Russian bilateral relationship. Now, it's not a perfect vacuum, and things spill over. But in the main, it's been sort of impressive that even when the US and China are at a low point or the US and Russia are at a low point, they're still able to have enough cooperation based on mutual self-interest that they could make progress on Iran and North Korea as a separate thing.

But now, for the first time that I remember, we are witnessing Russia trying to use its position in the Iran talks as leverage for sanctions against Russia. Now, that didn't go very far, and I don't think it's likely to succeed. But it's definitely a crack in the wall.

And to some extent, it's not surprising. When you're at war, everything else is secondary. And Russia is at war, so Putin's going to make everything else secondary. But that's one of the new things we just saw.

Let me talk for a moment-- and I only have two minutes left-- about Ukraine as a nonproliferation precedent. I think there's a lot of talk about that. So Ukraine gives up nuclear weapons. It's promised that it won't be invaded, is invaded, and the invader makes nuclear threats while invading.

So what lesson does that suggest for other countries? Are we going to see a rush of nonnuclear weapon states reconsider their options for other countries that are nonnuclear in alliances? And I say, for right now, the answer is probably no. It's not clear to me that even though I get the logic that that's what happens in practice.

As a practical matter, I don't think that's how policymaking works. There are large barriers to entry here for nuclear weapons. It's not so much the technology is tough. It's all the stuff you have to do to get ready for it that tells the rest of the world that you're developing nuclear weapons that puts you in their crosshairs.

Now, I think my friends are going to write a lot of articles about the difficulties of extended deterrence and nervous allies, but nervous allies confront their own cross-cutting impulse. A more dangerous world may raise the value of nuclear weapons, but it also raises the value of a US alliance. Nuclear might be nice if you're in that country, and you think that way.

But do you really want to go it alone with a nascent nuclear program that isn't quite finished when you can settle instead for a US alliance that gets you both the US military and nuclear weapons? I think it's going to be very hard to beat that deal. It's been hard to beat that deal for a long time. I don't see that changing. And so Ukraine will stand as a horrible irony and tragedy, but I don't think it's going to have a material impact on nonproliferation.

I mean, at the end, I want to say one thing. I was going to pull up a couple of graphs. I won't do it because it'll take too much time. Let me conclude with this, about this moment in nuclear history.

There's limited empirical evidence that this is the highest salient nuclear event for Americans and English-speaking people since 2004 if you go to the Google Trends data and if you think of searching on nuclear war as a rough metric for salience for how urgent a problem is. And I've played with different search terms, and I've gone and I've plotted the peaks. And the peaks all correspond to nuclear shocks.

The peaks since 2004 mostly happened after President Trump was elected and involved President Trump in North Korea. That's when people were really, really nervous, the most nervous they've been in 20 years, and now Google Trends says that what's happening now has blown through that as the record and has topped that. So I think it is a moment of high salience for nuclear issues, and that creates opportunities for advocates of nuclear weapons who believe in nuclear deterrence. And it creates opportunities for people who fear nuclear weapons who think that this will lead to an extinction event and that you need to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons.

And I'm not going to say which way it's going to go, but I can tell you right now, it is a peak moment of saliency. We're going to get a North Korean nuclear test within the year. We're going to have some synergy between those events, and so this could be a big nuclear year or a couple of years where things are in play. Let me pause there so that we can get to questions and answers. Thank you very much.

ELIZABETH WOOD: So I'm going to pick up. Elizabeth Wood here, professor of Russian and Soviet history. What a wonderful panel, and we've got great questions coming in from the audience. I want to ask a question to our first speaker, to Jacqueline Bhabha, just to start us off.

We've had a couple of questions about what's happening with the refugees and in particular the problems of-- one person asked about the people of color who've been leaving Ukraine, what's happened to them and the experience of discrimination. Another important question, I think, is the question of trafficking of children and women, which you alluded to as a possibility. The question could be, what do you think is really happening, Jacqueline? Can you fill in on whether we're seeing actual trafficking and what may happen?

JACQUELINE BHABHA: Thank you very much, Elizabeth, and thank you to the lively audience in the chat. So let me start with a very good point about the African and other people of color residents, students, and others from Ukraine who have also been trying to flee. And it's a very important point, which I neglected to mention just because numerically it is not as significant as so much else that we're seeing, but it's nevertheless important. Unsurprisingly, discrimination and racism are alive and kicking at the borders that surround Ukraine, just like they are everywhere else, and I think in my comments, I did say how distinctive the response to Ukrainians has been by contrast with all the other large-scale forced migrations we've seen recently because, I mean, undoubtedly there's a question of race playing out here very strongly. And so yes, we have seen reports.

I mean, I don't know the total number of people of color residents in Ukraine. I think according to the Nigerian government, there are about 4,000 Nigerians, many students from Africa in Ukraine, and we have seen reports of discrimination, of pushback, of abuse, of people trying to prevent Black and nonwhite students and others from boarding means of transport to escape. So undoubtedly, these incidents exist, and it's deplorable.

I mean, what else can one say? It's unfortunately not surprising, but there certainly are reports. So I'm glad that point was raised, and it's a point very well worth making that even though the general picture here is one of enormous generosity and solidarity, racist divisions still show themselves.

In terms of children, I think, according to UNICEF, there are about 7 and 1/2 million Ukrainian children, and as I said in my earlier comments, according to UNICEF-- and that's my only source-- about half of them have had to leave their homes. Some are IDPs-- Internally Displaced-- and others have crossed borders, the majority with a parent but not all.

And there have been reports. There have been reports from human rights organizations that there have been incidents of trafficking. These are not systematic reports. Nobody has actually, of course, done any systematic research. It's too early, but it's certainly in line with every other major incident we've seen where people helping people to cross borders are kind of cheek by jowl with people who are exploiting situations of vulnerability to make money, to sell children for sex, to capture children for adoption.

We saw this in Darfur. We've seen this in Haiti. We've seen this again and again in the big tsunami in Sri Lanka and other places.

And so there have been reports that this is happening. I cannot point to particular traffickers or particular organizations that are involved, but there has been a lot of activity of traffickers in Eastern Europe for decades. And so it's hardly surprising that these abusive, exploitative phenomena are taking place in this context.

CAROL Thank you. Joel, we have a question for you about cyber, if you're still there.

SAIVETZ:

JOEL BRENNER: I'm here.

CAROL OK, good. I didn't see your picture. Several different people asked two sort of interrelated questions. One, what is
SAIVETZ: the role of nonstate cyber actors in all of this? And we've heard reports about Anonymous and everything else hacking into Russia.

And somebody asked a really important question, I think, about can we use some of our cyber technology or could some of these nonstate actors use some of their cyber technology to get information into Russia. The big report has been that the average Russian citizen doesn't know the reality of the war. How do we break through that using our cyber technologies?

JOEL BRENNER: Nonstate actor-- I mentioned in my opening remarks that the Ukrainians have started an IT army. That is fundamentally a group of organized and semi-organized and unorganized private-sector actors, hacking into Russian networks, and we've seen Anonymous and others from the outside. I don't have data on that, but I know that it's happening. And it's happening quite intensively.

It's a really good question, the next question about how do we get data into Russia. Putin has closed down Twitter. He's squeezed down everything that he hasn't closed down in order to control his information space. Friends of mine in Russia say that every 12-year-old knows how to use a VPN now. I expect that's an overstatement, but I think what we're seeing in Russia is a further breakdown of the population between old and young in terms of what they know.

This is a very hard question, and I think that the private sector and private actors may have a substantial role to play. But I can't specify because I don't know what the particular channels would be best used and how successful the Russians could be in countering those channels. I expect that we will have a cat-and-mouse game here, but to a large degree, the Russians have closed themselves off. This will be hard.

**ELIZABETH
WOOD:**

Great. I will say that I have an MIT student who is studying cyber controls, and he has argued that the Russians are on the verge of being able to block VPN. This is very scary. MIT students sometimes [INAUDIBLE] very interesting studies.

Some questions for Taylor-- what about the Russian oil that is imported into China? Another question about Russian involvement in Chinese military hardware-- will Chinese send engineers to Ukraine for reparations? But also, where does Ukraine fit in the larger Belt and Road project of China? Are the Chinese concerned about their own economic efforts?

**TAYLOR
FRAVEL:**

Right, so there's a lot there. If I don't get to all of it, please remind me. So I guess firstly on the oil and gas, I mean, China imports, I guess, decent amounts of both from Russia.

I suspect that will continue, and I suspect the price might even fall. So in that sense, it, from China's standpoint, might be quite positive, especially as there are fewer buyers elsewhere, although China has been very careful to, I think, purchase or not issue letters of credit in dollars but rather just in Chinese currency. But again, that's also an area that's not fully sanctioned more broadly.

In terms of the Chinese military and dependence on Russia, China buys some very selective systems from the Russians, notably surface-to-air missile systems such as the S-400, but it really manufactures almost all of its own hardware now. In some cases, it's reverse-engineered Russian systems such as the Su-27, which is a fighter aircraft that the Chinese call the J-11, and in some areas like ballistic missiles and probably cruise missiles, China's technology is probably farther ahead of Russian technology. So there is a lot of military dependence, although there is dependence on sort of specific systems. China's much less dependent on Russia for military hardware than, say, India for whom something like 60% to 70% of its advanced systems are all sourced from Russia, which is probably the main reason why India also has not condemned the Russian invasion as far as I know.

In terms of the economic components, Ukraine is important for the Belt and Road, but in some ways Russia is even more or equally important for the Belt and Road because of the rail routes that would take goods from China through Russia before then branching off into different European areas. And so one of those branch lines would go into Ukraine, which would then go into other parts of Southern and Central Eastern Europe. Other rail lines will go into Northern Europe. And so it's not just Ukraine that matters here for China, but that Russia actually matters in terms of the connectivity portion of the Belt and Road.

That said, the rail connectivity portion, I think, is a nice symbol of what China is trying to achieve in the Belt and Road. As a practical matter, container shipping is still going to be much cheaper than rail shipping, although it won't be quite as fast, but it'll have much more capacity than rail shipping. And so the loss of access to these rail routes for some period of time I don't think is going to have a significant effect on overall trade levels, all else held equal because, of the ability of the Chinese to rely on their container shipping fleets. It just takes a little bit longer, even though it's cheaper.

Ukraine itself, though, is important for China for other reasons. China buys a lot of grain from Ukraine, as do others, and it's a way in which China's been able to diversify grain supplies away from the United States. Ukraine also has a very sophisticated defense industrial base, and over the years, China has bought specific systems that have been sort of engineered and designed and manufactured in Ukraine, most notably jet engines, which is a real deficiency in the Chinese Air Force. And so I think from a purely economic standpoint, the destruction in Ukraine is certainly not welcome from China's standpoint. So I think I've covered everything you asked, Elizabeth, but if not, please let me know.

**CAROL
SAIVETZ:**

Great. Thank you. We have a really interesting question about European dynamics, and Roger, I think I'm going to turn to you because the questioner asked about Serbia and Hungary particularly and yesterday's elections there. What does that portend for the unity of the Western alliance against Russia in effect on behalf of Ukraine, and what do you see going forward?

**ROGER
PETERSEN:**

Well, I mean, Hungary and Serbia are not exactly the major powers of Europe. Being married to a Serb, someone of Serbian background, I can say that they got bombed for 78 days by NATO, so what do you want from Serbs? And they're not that anti-EU. They'd like to belong to the EU, but you don't really like people that fought what they consider an illegitimate war against you. There is some cultural affinity with the Russians, but I wouldn't actually overstate that.

One idea that this war was going to end illiberalism in European states. I think that's probably overblown, to tell you the truth. I mean, you can see that in Orban. You can see that in Serbia. I'm not sure that we're going to take that lesson.

A lot of people sort of were thinking, well, you can't be connected to Putin and survive, but I think, given the oil dependence and all that, a lot of people are thinking, well, you've got to be realistic with this. So it's not clear, again, where the domestic politics in Western Europe go, but it's no doubt that the Ukrainians have won the information war and that they've solidified Western Europe, although looking at how wars go, I'm not sure that after another month that this is going to be-- it's going to be routinized. People are going to get tired of Zelenskyy, actually. I mean, right now, he's a hero, but there's only so much you can try to use guilt against people. And we'll see where this goes, and that's why if it goes into some frozen conflict insurgency, this could be years and years of war.

The sanctions-- talk about Serbia. The US had completely destroyed Serbia's economy. It didn't change the outcome of the war or anything, and Milosevic only was out of power in Serbia after he lost the War of Kosovo. So if I were Putin to look at that, it's like, I can withstand sanctions, but I can't withstand losing a war, which is just going to make this thing go further and further, actually.

**ELIZABETH
WOOD:**

All right, let's take a couple of questions for Jim Walsh. We've got a question. If Russia uses tactical nukes, how should NATO and the US respond, which I think is related to another very, very important question. Should the US get more involved diplomatically, and what about pressure between NATO and the US? Are there diplomatic ways that this can be headed off? And then the last question is, it's not quite your field, nuclear power plants, but I have definitely heard people arguing that having nuclear power plants in the way of potential strikes might be an argument for trying to wean countries off of nuclear power. And I'm curious if you have a thought about that, so yeah, how to respond if there's tactical nuclear weapons by Russia.

JIM WALSH:

All terrific questions. I probably won't give them the treatment they deserve, and certainly, the first question on Russian use of tactical nuclear weapons and a US response will be very displeasing to people. I think in the main, we should expect that the US will be quite reluctant to respond to a Russian tactical weapon used in Ukraine not involving NATO. But let me say, this is going to very much depend on the circumstances. You can theorize about what Putin might do this, and then what you find out as life plays out, it really is the details that sort of drive this.

And so let's say there's some scenario where the reason why Putin's using tactical nuclear weapons is he's losing. He's facing the prospects that Roger just suggested, that somehow this thing gets away from him, and he's about to suffer an enormous defeat. And he hits a Ukraine military target as a demonstration shot or maybe against a very small military target, which is still using nuclear weapons and killing tens of thousands of people, but it's not attacking a city. If the US believes that it can win and enforce punishment conventionally without having to resort to nuclear weapons, it will do that as much as it can. I think once you cross the line into retaliation, you're in a whole new world.

Now, let me say, having talked about this very scenario in class this semester I am teaching in the physics department, that you might reasonably ask, well, if Putin uses a nuclear weapon and we don't respond, does that make the world safe for the use of nuclear weapons? Is the lesson drawn that others can do it, that he could do it again if he got cornered and started to lose? And those are serious questions, and there aren't great answers here. And this is one of the reasons why I think we should be reducing nuclear weapons, is that we're in a domain where basically there aren't a lot of good choices.

Should the US be involved diplomatically? Yes, absolutely. You have to stay with diplomacy because you don't know when it's going to happen and mature and ripen to a point where it's going to be meaningful, and if you have to wait to the point where it's exactly right to do it, then you won't be ready to take advantage of the moment. So it's a constant thing even though it's fruitless most of the time.

And as for nuclear power plants, it's unlikely to mean the end of nuclear power. Nuclear power-- there's a big debate whether it's good or bad. My own assessment, having studied it recently with respect to laser enrichment, is the economics do not point well. The industry's own numbers have them declining. Staying the same is their best 30-year prediction at this point, International Nuclear Institute, but they're probably going to decline because they're not cost competitive.

So this adds to those reasons, but I don't think it's going to be something that's really a driver. Nuclear power will win or lose, survive or not survive based on whether it can economically and maybe for climate deliver on its benefits, and that's always been the problem. So let me stop there.

**CAROL
SAIVETZ:**

Great. Thanks, Jim. Taylor, we have a couple more questions for you on China's role. One questioner asks whether or not ultimately China would help Ukraine to rebuild and would send engineers, et cetera. Would they be willing to take that risk? Would it aggravate the Russians?

And another questioner asked, how dependent is China on Russia's military technology? I know that they've had some joint production agreements and everything else. What is the relationship between the two militaries at this point, and how does that impact the crisis?

**TAYLOR
FRAVEL:**

Thanks, Carol. So on the question of helping Ukraine rebuild, I think China and Chinese firms in particular would be quite willing to do so, and they may have some natural competitive advantages that they have developed through various Belt and Road-style investments and infrastructure and so forth. I don't think China would necessarily shy away from that, especially because of this sort of pro-Russian neutrality. Helping Ukraine rebuild is something I think China could get behind while still at the same time wanting to maintain its ties with Russia. That said, I don't think that they would perhaps go into the most dangerous areas.

In terms of ties between the Russian and Chinese militaries, at the technical level, China buys very select systems from the Russians, as I mentioned a few moments ago, notably surface-to-air missile systems. There's some cooperation in terms of early warning defense systems and so forth, but in the main, China buys much less than it purchased, say, in the mid-1990s or in the mid-2000s. China makes all of its own surface combatants for its naval forces. It manufactures and designs all of its armored forces and so on and so forth.

And so the other area would be in very advanced fighter aircraft. The Su-35s are still systems that China purchases from Russia, but it's a small share of their overall weapons imports. And China overall is not a big importer of weapons anymore, and here, there's a stark contrast with some other countries around the world.

The ties between the Russian and Chinese militaries beyond technology are growing. I mean, you have sort of an increasing frequency of joint exercises between the two over the last 10 years, culminating most notably in exercises that were held in the last two years, which sort of featured a larger Chinese participation and some willingness to exercise in the areas of combat operations and not just humanitarian assistance and so forth. And so it's a growing relationship, but it's growing from a pretty small base. And I wouldn't say necessarily it's particularly close, and I think despite the February 4 statement and the areas of political agreement between China and Russia, I think the Chinese military probably does watch-- sorry, the Russian military-- excuse me-- watches the Chinese military with some sort of concern.

I mean, nevertheless, the relationship is good enough that Russia moved most of its forces from the Far East and put them in Ukraine, right? So China has enabled Ukraine in a way, which is to say that-- Russia in a way over Ukraine, which is to say that Russia has absolutely no concern about any vulnerabilities in its East because of this political relationship. And the troop movements, I think, made that abundantly clear. Thanks.

**ELIZABETH
WOOD:**

OK, so we're coming toward the end of an absolutely fascinating panel about the many different aspects of this war. One thought I had for a way to end this-- ask each of you, our speakers, to go back and think about two questions. And one might be better for you, and go in the order that we have presented.

Is this a different kind of war from the perspective of each of your topics, and do you see a way to end this war relating to your topic? Are there ways that knowing what we know about refugees, cybersecurity, China, nukes, and insurgency that we can-- is there anything we can say about how this could end? So let's start with-- again, go in the order you spoke in. Jackie, what do you want to leave the audience with about this as a kind of war and its potential end?

**JACQUELINE
BHABHA:**

Thank you, Elizabeth. I would say from the point of view of refugee protection, there are enormous similarities but also differences to previous wars. The similarities, of course, are the extraordinary human suffering and the dramatic disregard for the protection of innocent civilians, which we see increasingly in war, and the implications this has for disruption of life, not only now, not only in the short term but possibly for several generations. That's the commonality.

The difference is, as I said, the extraordinarily generous response from the European Union, which really stands in stark contrast to the response of any global North state or region to any large refugee crisis of the last postwar period. So that's the difference. That's the kind of what's encouraging, if you like.

In terms of bringing this conflict to a conclusion, obviously-- and I'm no expert on this. Obviously, there has to be a diplomatic solution, and I think the experts that you've invited are better positioned to answer that. But in terms of the enormous scale of human suffering, one can only hope that something happens really soon and, in the meantime, that humanitarian corridors at least as a minimum are protected.

**CAROL
SAIVETZ:**

Joel?

JOEL BRENNER: Every war is different. I think one of the things that's clear from this one is that insofar as cyber is concerned that it's an aspect of war that is going to be involved in every kind of conflict, whether shooting breaks out or not, and certainly again after it breaks out. But then after it breaks out, it seems to become a lot less important. That's one thing we've seen.

It seems to me, though, that we're looking at the warfare in Europe now. It looks to me back to the future. We have got past the idea that warfare between states, modern states, is impossible because of nuclear weapons. We're now seeing warfare that looks like old-fashioned warfare over borders. It looks a lot like warfare from the 1860s in Europe or 1870 in Europe.

And as for ending it, ending it with a border adjustment created by force is contrary to everything all of us thought we thought about international relations in our adult lives, but that is how it might happen. Whether a border adjustment would be acceptable to Ukraine is really the question, and I don't think that could happen till the 13th or 14th round of a 15-round fight. We're not there and won't be there soon, and I think I'm afraid that I share Roger Petersen's view that this is going to be long. It's going to be nasty. It's going to be involved a lot of human suffering.

And remember, also, it's hard to think about this, given what the Russians are doing now. In the long run, we're not interested in isolating Russia. The question is, can Russia be incorporated into what we in the West think of as a civilized international order? Because if not, we're either driving them permanently-- or whatever that means in international relations terms-- but in the long term into the arms of the Chinese, which is not in our interest. What we create then, even separately, is a volatile, unsatisfied, revanchist state which will continue to cause trouble. We don't want that.

ELIZABETH WOOD: Great points. OK, let's turn it over to Taylor.

TAYLOR FRAVEL: So in terms of the war itself, I agree with Joel. Every war is unique. I think one notable aspect of this conflict is, certainly for American audiences, it's been a war in real time. I mean, you can go on social media and basically follow the fighting in many places. I think it's a distorted view. It's not necessarily an accurate view, but even with the last crises involving Russia, I don't think it was this way. And so this is a new aspect of war that makes it seem more immediate, more pressing, and so forth.

On how it will end, I'll comment on China's role. I don't think China will play a big role in the conclusion of the war because that would require China playing a role in directly sort of assuming a leadership role in mediating a dispute in which it sees as being very far away from itself. I think this also means that we should not expect China immediately to seek global leadership in many other areas because, of course, one has to take risk to be a global leader, and this is an area where they've clearly shied away from leadership, even though perhaps having some potential leverage that they could use to bring about its conclusion. So I think it will really probably be a consequence of a hurting stalemate on the battlefield, and China may help on the margins but won't be decisive in its resolution.

ELIZABETH WOOD: OK, Roger, let's get your perspective on is this a different kind of war?

ROGER PETERSEN: I mean, the shocking thing is just how this is a conventional war, and cities are going to be bombed back to rubble like Warsaw was. Joel goes back to 1870, but we're talking about the same things in Security Studies, really, is offense, defense, dominance, is same kind of concepts you were like 40, 50 years ago when I was-- well, I'm only 62, I guess, so not 40 years ago when I was in college-- still the same stuff. So I think that's the interesting thing about it, and we don't seem to have norms about killing civilians. That hasn't even changed. That's just going on.

But where is this going? One of our key pieces we teach people in war classes is an article called "The Rationalist Theory of War," and it's an article by Jim Fearon. But the idea is that wars can't end until both sides have sufficient information about the capabilities and resolve of the other side. And in fact, one of my recent PhD students is now the director for Western Europe for the National Security Council, Lieutenant Colonel Tim Wright. And another one of our grad students meet him down in Washington, and he says, I use that article every day. Professors like to hear this, that they actually teach stuff it's relevant.

But I use that article every day to think where this war is headed. And where is there going to be a point where the information where both sides are clear? Taylor references with a hurting stalemate, that both sides become clear that this is our capabilities. That's their capabilities. That's their resolve, our resolve, and then you can come to negotiations.

We are not close to that point. No side has found out what the capabilities are. I still don't understand the Russian capabilities. I keep thinking that they're going to get smarter, and they're going to do better. And they don't, and maybe it's because they don't have the capability.

Or I don't know, but it seems that they have capabilities they haven't used very effectively. Now, are they going to use them effectively or not? We don't know. So the war is going to go on until we have some clarity, and that is not even on the short-term horizon.

**ELIZABETH
WOOD:**

Yeah, we may also want to remember that Russia has done spectacularly badly in the Crimean War of the 19th century [INAUDIBLE] but we'll see. You're definitely right. Jim, what do you want to tell us about how to see this war and its possible end?

JIM WALSH:

Is this war different? I think if you ask Putin, he would say no. I'm fighting the same way I did in Syria and Chechnya. I'm going to use brutality, and I'm going to destroy a bunch of stuff. Sadly, no one cared about that, right?

So what's different is the location, that it's on the doorstep of Europe, and that people are paying attention and will likely pay sustained attention. I think that's the difference. We've had brutal wars, but we haven't had brutal wars in Europe.

So as for nuclear, I go back where I started. We can't really judge the implications until the thing finishes because if it finishes badly for one party or the other, lessons will be drawn, and that will depend on the framing of why it happened the way it did. And those will be the lessons drawn.

I don't think we'll see a use of nuclear weapons, but as I said in my talk, this is a moment, arguably the highest moment in 22 years of salience for concerns about nuclear weapons. And then the question is, what is that attention, and what is that emotion and concern? What does that translate into?

And it can go in different directions. I don't know. Thank you.

**CAROL
SAIVETZ:**

Thank you. I wanted to thank all of our speakers for a great conversation about the wider implications of the war in Ukraine. Unfortunately, as everybody has said, it's not ending anytime soon, so we may reconvene to continue this conversation.

I would also like to remind our audience that we have one last Focus on Russia Seminar, which will be April 25, and our speaker will be Vlad Zubok, who's written a brilliant book about the Gorbachev era and actually the collapse of the Soviet Union. And I wanted to also thank Michelle English and Laura Kerwin for their behind-the-scenes help in actually helping us put all of this together, and that's the end. And hopefully, everybody will be well, and we'll go forward. Take care, everybody.