



# The Diplomatic Envoy

## FRANCE WITHDRAWS FROM NIGER AS TENSIONS BOIL AFTER COUP

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Niger's coup d'état on July 26, 2023, along with recent news of France's withdrawal of its ambassador and military presence in Niger, has stirred questions of a troubling future for the country and region. The July coup saw the overthrowing of the Nigerien government and its president, Mohamed Bazoum, which was led by the newly self-proclaimed military junta leader Presidential Guard commander General Abdourahamane Tchiani, according to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Since Niger's coup in July, France has kept 1,500 troops in the region to maintain stability and fight Islamic extremist groups. The Associated Press reports that the new junta ordered France's

ambassador to leave but was consistently denied by France, who claimed they did not recognize the legitimacy of the leaders. Niger's situation has escalated within the last several weeks, and French diplomats there have had to depend on military rations for survival. Recently, coup leaders stated that they would be closing Niger's airspace to French military and commercial planes, which the new junta believes will allow them to regain control of its skies and land. France's response raises security concerns for Niger, who invited France a decade ago, along with other nations, to help fight Islamic extremist groups in the region. The Guardian reports that French President Emmanuel Macron has voiced concerns about the Sahel region's safety, especially with growing jihadist attacks

in Mali and Niger. In addition, problems boil as terrorist networks have grown since Niger's coup and less focus on counterterrorism against ISIS has led to the terrorist group taking advantage of that gap, reports NBC News. The Many European countries, according to The Guardian, the withdrawal of French troops from Niger marks a "turning point in Western nations' efforts to counter a decade-long Islamist insurgency in the Sahel region." Niger, along with countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso struggling through turbulent times, have responded with a surge of anti-French rhetoric that has diffused throughout the Sahel and led to French withdrawal. Reuters reports that France's response to the constant pressure to remove its presence from Niger has minimized

its influence in the Sahel region, leaving a gap for Russian expansion. Niger, a former French colony, has faced the lasting effects of colonialism to the present day, and sentiments against France have grown in the country and other francophone nations within the West African region. According to NPR, France's involvement with Niger and other francophone countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso have not been received well, especially as their economies have suffered due to French colonialism. NPR states that French leaders have actually received suitcases of money and diamonds in exchange for support of African dictators, which contributes to bad feelings. According to The Associated Press, Insa Garba Saidou, an activist and assistant to Niger's mili-

tary junta, has spoken of the reasons why Niger requested for the French to leave, which include French failures to fight terrorism in the region, its intrusion in Niger's domestic policies, and its hinderance of development in Niger and Africa. As anti-French rhetoric fills Niger's political climate, external influences such as Russia are expanding throughout the Sahel. Now questions have arisen regarding whether Niger will consult the help of the Wagner group, a private Russian mercenary group that operates in a few African countries in the region according to The Associated Press. Now that France has withdrawn its troops and its influence fades away, the United States has declared the removal of Niger's president a military coup, according to Al Jazeera. The designation

of the coup accompanies the U.S. also suspending aid to Niger because of the country's resistance to solutions that would restore civilian rule. While the decision has implications, the U.S. has not removed its troops from the region as tensions continue. Uncertainty looms in the air as the world awaits what will happen next in Niger, as it could have dangerous consequences in the Sahel, West Africa, and the continent.

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## ZELENSKY VISITS WHITE HOUSE IN PUSH FOR CONTINUED AID

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy visited Washington, D.C., early morning on September 21 for a meeting with lawmakers as well as United States President Joe Biden. This meeting was at the White House and included defense officials at the Pentagon, reports NBC News. The purpose of this visit was regarding the Russo-Ukrainian war and the push for continued aid. This is Zelenskyy's second visit to Washington regarding the war. During this meeting Zelenskyy spent time on Capitol Hill, at the Pentagon, and at the White House. NBC News also states that Zelenskyy met with House members of a bipartisan group, including former House

Speaker Kevin McCarthy. McCarthy denied the request to address Congress in a "joint session." Earlier that week, Zelenskyy attended the United Nations General Assembly in New York City with the purpose to appeal to world leaders for continued and additional aid, just as he did in his meeting with Biden. The U.S. has continued to be one of the biggest supporters and backers to the Ukrainian effort, despite the opposition the GOP has shown in Congress. According to The New York Times, Zelenskyy told lawmakers in the meeting that Ukraine will lose the war without the "flow of aid and weapons" provided by the U.S. The appeal for continued aid worked, after the visit Biden announced a new \$345 million Ukraine aid package, reports NBC



Humanitarian aid arrives in East Ukraine from the EU. Courtesy of EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (flickr) Creative Commons 2.0

News. The president urges congress to find a bipartisan agreement regarding this aid package. According to The Washington Post, the total package is \$24 billion. This money is not the only thing the U.S. plans to send Ukraine, in this package "more artillery, more ammunition or anti-tank weapons" will also be sent according to The Washington Post. With the passage of this bill, the first U.S. Abram tanks will

be delivered to Ukraine by as early as the next week. President Biden responded to the plea with the package, mentioning as well that the U.S. will be "staying with [Ukraine]" reports The New York Times. Biden said this without regard to the growing opposition he is facing from Senate Republicans. Zelenskyy mentioned during this meeting that this tension could cost Ukraine the war, considering how

much the U.S. plays a role in its continued support, according to Senate majority leader Chuck Schumer. "I'm counting on the good judgment of the United States Congress," Biden said. "There's no alternative." Unfortunately this plea for continued aid comes at a time where in the polls there is increased wariness over the war and the U.S.' role in it among the general public according to The New York Times. Unfortunately for the president, it is now up to a divided Congress to discuss and pass the financial aid package. As of right now, Biden is asking for almost \$40 billion dollars of continued aid, as reported by The Associated Press. There are also divides within how to debate about the need for continued aid. According to

The Associated Press, different Congresspeople disagree with how the bill should be written, whether it is a stand-alone bill or included in an omnibus bill with other short-term spending issues. This visit contrasts vividly with Zelenskyy's last visit at the end of 2022. In this visit, former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Vice President Kamala Harris unfurled the Ukrainian flag behind Zelenskyy while he addressed Congress. Now that Republicans control the House, Zelenskyy did not receive as warm of a welcome, writes The Associated Press. These divides could potentially create a stalemate that both the U.S. President and Ukraine President want to avoid for the sake of the war.

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## EGYPTIAN OPPOSITION CANDIDATE TARGETED WITH SPYWARE

**Yasmin Obeidallah**  
Staff Writer

The leading opposition Egyptian presidential candidate, Ahmed Altantawy, was targeted with spyware by Egyptian authorities, according to Al Jazeera. Altantawy received several suspicious messages on his phone and reported the surveillance attempt to Citizen Lab, a research lab that focuses on digital threats. Since announcing his candidacy for the Egyptian presidency in March, the former lawmaker was the target of several attempted hackings, including a prior attempt in May conducted through Predator links found in text and WhatsApp messages. Once a phone is infected by Predator spyware, it becomes a remote listening device that allows the attacker to eavesdrop and steal data from the tainted device.

The Associated Press says that Egypt is a

known customer of Predator's maker, Cytrox, and the hacking attempts were delivered via network injection on Egyptian soil. Security researchers at Citizen Lab confirmed in a blog post that it had "high confidence" the Egyptian government was behind the attack. Al Jazeera further writes that Altantawy believes these attempts are "inextricably linked to [his] political candidacy and [his] opposition role in the country against the Sisi regime." Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has instated a suppression of journalists, activists, human rights advocates, and political dissidents during his 9-year incumbency. Ahead of the February 2024 presidential election, the Sisi regime continues to crackdown on opposition throughout the country.

In a separate incident, Egyptian political activist Hisham Kassem was fined and sentenced to six months in prison af-

ter being convicted of slander, defamation, and verbally assaulting a police officer. Kassem was arrested in August after he allegedly slandered Kamal Abu Eita, a former labor minister, says Al Jazeera. After he refused to pay the bail of 5,000 Egyptian pounds, Kassem was brought to a police station in Cairo, where he reportedly verbally assaulted police officers. Amnesty International states that Kassem was being "arbitrarily detained" and called for his "immediate release." Kassem was the head of Free Current, a coalition of liberal opposition parties, and ran what is left of the little free press available in Egypt through several news outlets.

To improve its image domestically and abroad ahead of the upcoming presidential elections, the Sisi regime has allowed criticism of the government in recent months. Amid an ongoing eco-

nomics crisis and calls for reform, the government has launched forums with opposing parties to provide recommendations on how to address the political crisis and improve their human rights record. Despite concerns over human rights violations, United States relations with Egypt remain strong. The U.S. Department of State recently approved military assistance to Egypt, Al Jazeera reports, igniting pushback from organizations like Human Rights Watch, which says this assistance "disregards the Egyptian government's ongoing repressive policies." Similarly, Egypt has strengthened its ties with Italy and Germany through arms sales, says the Arab Center. By employing its regional weight, Egypt can secure implicit Western allies that embolden the Sisi regime to continue to commit human rights violations with little to no economic or diplomatic consequences.

The political instability in Egypt and the surrounding region is regarded as an aftereffect of the Arab Spring, a collective demand for self-determination that toppled dictatorships and corrupt governments around the Middle East and North Africa more than a decade ago. Longtime Egyptian leader Hosni Mubarak was removed from office in 2011 and Mohamed Morsi was elected president in 2012 in Egypt's first free election in decades. Hopes for democracy in Egypt were high, but just one year later, then-military leader Sisi overthrew Morsi in a coup d'état. After seizing power and installing himself as leader, Sisi quickly proved he had little tolerance for dissent. He arrested and exiled protesters that opposed him and hindered free speech around the country.

The Chicago Pol-

icy Review reports the Sisi government controls much of the media, allowing them to spread misinformation and suppress future revolutions. Although the Sisi regime is brutal in its censorship of activists and journalists, it is not new to Egypt. Foreign Policy describes Egypt as a breeding ground for authoritarian leaders that can "bend Egypt to their will." The interconnectedness of Sisi's military and government offers a similar picture to the repression of Mubarak and Anwar Sadat's presidencies. The Chicago Policy Review describes Sisi's Egypt as a "mirage of democracy" led by years of misguided policy. It is unlikely that Egypt will undergo any revolutionary change under Sisi, a fact that reaffirms the importance of the upcoming election.

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## CANADIAN HOUSE SPEAKER RESIGNS AFTER ACCIDENTALLY HONORING NAZI

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The speaker of Canada's House of Commons resigned on September 26, only days after he honored a Ukrainian veteran who served in a Nazi military unit during World War II, according to CNN. On September 22, Speaker Anthony Rota recognized 98-year-old Yaroslav Hunka as a war hero who "fought for Ukrainian independence against the Russian aggressors then, and continues to support the troops today," CNN also notes.

The announcement followed an address to the Canadian parliament by the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. The Guardian states that Zelenskyy could be seen raising his fist in appreciation of Hunka. However, Zelenskyy himself is Jewish, reports Al Jazeera. The article also states that Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and other Canadian officials,

were seen giving Hunka two standing ovations.

House government leader Karina Gould argued that Canadian and Ukrainian lawmakers alike were not informed of Hunka's invitation. Rota honored him on his own accord, NPR explained, and thus, the government was unknowing of the details of Hunka's life. Gould also noted, according to NPR, that she would have never expected to be asked by the Speaker of the House to celebrate someone who had fought with the Nazis: "This is very emo-

tional for me. My family are Jewish Holocaust survivors. I would have never in a million years stood and applauded someone who aided the Nazis."

Rota and all other government officials confirmed Gould's statement, in an article by Politico, claiming they were not aware of Hunka's history until it was revealed over the weekend that the veteran had participated in the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS under Nazi rule. Rota said that he was very apologetic for the situation. Trudeau describes the in-

cident as "deeply embarrassing" for Canada, reports Politico. However, he has not apologized for his honoring of Hunka.

Following the reports of Hunka's involvement in Nazi affairs there were cross-party calls within the Canadian cabinet for the resignation of Rota. According to The New York Times, the first call for Rota's resignation came from the leader of Canada's New Democratic party, Jagmeet Singh. Other Canadian leaders and academics including the foreign minister and the industry minister sim-

ilarly urged Rota to step down. Lori Turnbull, a professor of public and international affairs at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, said in a discussion with The New York Times, that although it is understood that Rota made a genuine mistake, "it doesn't matter. The point is that [Canada] is still the country that got Zelenskyy to applaud a guy who fought with the Nazis." Foreign Affairs Minister, Melanie Joly, said she does not think there is any alternative to stepping down, according to BBC News. Canadian parliamentarian for the New Democratic Party, Peter Julian, said, "We fully accept Mr. Rota's apology and believe that he didn't intend to cause harm but, unfortunately, there are very real consequences to his lapse in judgment." After meeting with party leaders in Ottawa, Rota officially resigned. Reuters reports that Rota has taken full responsibility for his actions. On Octo-

ber 3, Canada's House of Commons elected Greg Fergus as its new speaker. Fergus is the first Black Canadian to hold the role, ABC News states.

Polish Education Minister Przemyslaw Czarnek has begun an effort to possibly extradite Hunka to Poland, according to The Washington Post. The nation is working to discover if Hunka is responsible for crimes committed in Poland during World War II. Hunka's age and the fact that Canada does not have an extradition treaty with Poland will make the action complicated, The Washington Post explains. Canada's Minister of Justice and Attorney General refused to comment on the possibility of Hunka's extradition. However, he noted that the Canadian government had not yet received a formal request from the Polish government.

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The Canadian Parliament building rises above the city of Ottawa. Courtesy of Iridescent (Wikimedia Commons) Creative Commons 3.0

# US EXTENDS TEMPORARY STATUS PROTECTION TO NEARLY 500,000

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The Biden administration granted thousands of Venezuelan migrants already in the United States the ability to work and live legally for more than a year. The announcement comes as more than 472,000 Venezuelans entered the U.S., fleeing the political and economic crisis that plunged the country into a humanitarian crisis. As the influx of migrants continues to rise exponentially, lawmakers in metropolitan hubs like New York City called on President Biden to extend work access for migrants surviving off local and state resources, reports *The New York Times*.

According to Reuters, nearly half a million migrants who entered the U.S. before July 31 are now eligible to apply for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for 18 months. TPS is a humanitarian immigration program that

allows foreign nationals to live and work in the U.S. without fear of deportation. The measure will enable asylum seekers to find work and ease the strain on state and local resources following Mayor Eric Adams' remarks that the migrant crisis "will destroy New York City" if asylum seekers cannot support themselves, says Al Jazeera. Mr. Adams pointed out that the situation could cost New York City residents an estimated \$12 billion in the coming years in housing, healthcare, and education expenditures.

The precarious relationships between the U.S. and Venezuela's Maduro regime make it difficult to return nationals. Reuters reports that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agreed with the administration, stating that the expansion is justified due to "Venezuela's increased instability and lack of safety" that prevents its people from

safely returning home.

However, as the number of unauthorized border crossings continues to skyrocket, Democratic strategists are worried about the effects on American voters. Republicans, on the other hand, see this as an opportunity to make their case for the White House and blame the administration for fueling the crossings. According to PBS News Hour, GOP senator Lindsay Graham stated, "We cannot possibly pass legalization legislation until we regain control of the border." Establishing immigration law reform as dependent on border

security and stricter enforcement rules. More officials believe that expanding TPS will also incentivize more migrants to cross into the country.

In response to Republican lawmakers, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre explained that the Biden-Harris Administration is taking action to increase border law enforcement by deploying military personnel, removing families without a lawful basis to remain in the United States within 30 days, and increasing the DHS holding and processing capacity at the same time as the

TPS expansion, as stated on the DHS website. The White House Press Secretary also argues that "this is an issue that has been around for decades. This is a broken immigration system," reports Al Jazeera. The remarks address failed Congressional efforts to provide a clear legal status path for millions of people already inside the United States.

Apart from Venezuelan migrants, Governor Kathy Hochul highlights that thousands of migrants in metropolitan areas must also begin signing up for work permits to become self-sufficient. Beyond urban hubs, NPR reports that Representative Darren Soto (D-Florida) believes TPS is an opportunity to "unify thousands of families, give them legal status and allow them to work to help alleviate Florida's labor shortage," alluding to Senate Bill 1718, which attempts to restrict the flow of un-

documented immigrants by invalidating driver's licenses issued to undocumented individuals in states like New Jersey, and required hospitals to report patient's immigration status to take advantage of Medicaid dollars.

The administration's decision to expand TPS for Venezuelans became a central topic during the President's visit to New York the past week. Mayor Adams, who has been at the forefront of a battle with the administration to deal with the influx of migrants, thanked the White House for its efforts but insisted that there is more to do for thousands of migrants from other countries who are still in need of support from local resources. Nevertheless, the White House maintains that only Congress can effectively change the nation's immigration laws.

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Mayor of New York City Eric Adams.  
Courtesy of nycmayorsoffice (Flickr)  
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# HAWAIIAN FAMILIES RETURNING TO LAHAINA RESIDENCES AFTER WILDFIRES

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Residents of Lahaina, the historic town in Maui that was ravaged by wildfires on August 8, were allowed to visit the remains of their properties beginning on September 25, reports the Associated Press.

The first neighborhood to open for reentry was at the westernmost point of the burn zone, according to *The New York Times*. Visitation was initially limited to residents, people affiliated with property in the area, and any necessary people to accommodate them, such as insurance officials or religious leaders for support purposes, reports ABC News. In order to see their properties, *The New York Times* reports that authorities required Lahaina residents to show proof of residency and reentry permits. *The New York Times* also re-

ports that authorities on Maui provided returners with masks and other personal protective equipment to protect them from potentially hazardous chemicals that could be present in the remains.

The Associated Press reports that some residents were allowed to assess the damages of their properties in the days immediately following the wildfire, which occurred on August 8, but following that, the area was completely restricted to everyone except for authorized workers. In addition to residents and authorities, some nonprofit and charitable groups were present to provide both emotional support and, in some cases, help survivors try to recover any possessions that remained in the ruins, reports the Associated Press.

A family that had been living in their Lahaina home since 1974, according to *Hawaii News Now*,

was among the first group of survivors to visit their property. The Vierra family owned one of the first Lahaina homes ever built. The fire destroyed not only their home, *Hawaii News Now* reports, but most of their possessions and their three businesses. Despite this loss, the Vierras, and many other residents of Lahaina, hoped to find some life, and a sense of healing, by returning to the burn site.

Thousands of survivors of the fire, which Al Jazeera says took at least 97 lives, are currently living in temporary housing provided by the government. The fire also destroyed approximately 2,000 buildings, most of which were homes, reports the Associated Press. According to *The New York Times*, approximately 6,000 displaced residents are living in hotels in Maui and another 1,000 are living in Airbnbs and

other similar short-term rentals. The government will continue to provide financial assistance for rent for 18 months, *The New York Times* reports.

*The New York Times* also writes that early estimates show that it could cost around \$5.5 billion to rebuild West Maui. In addition to the physical damages, the fire also has significant economic impact, as it limits tourism, which is a major source of income for the island. The Hawaii Tourism Authority also approved a \$2.6 million marketing campaign to encourage tourism to the island but asked that tourists avoid the burn zone out of respect, continues *The New York Times*. Additionally, the government is considering a moratorium on the purchase of damaged property in order to protect residents from having their land bought out by outsiders, says *The New York Times*.

The fire, and other recent natural disasters, have led to speculation regarding the role of global warming in these types of tragedies. Though climate change may have played a role in the severity of the fire, writes *The Washington Post*, it is far from the only factor. On the day of the fire, the *Post* continues, Hawaii was experiencing high winds, which contributed to the rapid spread of the fire. At the time, Hawaii was in the middle of a high-pressure weather system, which, along with "a flow of hot, dry air," may have contributed to these high winds, writes *The Washington Post*. There were also drought conditions at the time, but *The Post* reports that climate change was not the direct cause of these.

Even though human-caused climate change did not cause the fires by itself, it likely played a role. *The Wash-*

ington *Post* writes that Hawaii is, on average, about two degrees hotter now than it was in 1950. Hotter temperatures do increase the likelihood of fires like the one in August, and while climate change may not have caused this specific tragedy, according to the *Washington Post*, it has certainly played a role in other recent tragedies, such as recent floods in China, fires in Greece, and extreme heat in the southern U.S.

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## ARMENIANS FLEE NAGORNO-KARABAKH AFTER AZERBAIJAN'S TAKEOVERS

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According to CNN, Azerbaijan's offensive attack on September 20, in the Nagorno-Karabakh region resulted in a victory for Baku. The self-declared primarily Armenian republic of Nagorno-Karabakh will dissolve into Azerbaijan by next year, following a decree signed by the disputed region's president. This conflict is considered by the International Crisis Group as the longest running post-Soviet Eurasia conflict.

Despite this seemingly sudden attack, nine months of Azeri influenced shortages on essential needs such as food, medication, and hygiene products created a dire humanitarian situation in the region. Azerbaijan also

disrupted vehicular and pedestrian traffic to the region as well, writes Human Rights Watch.

The Azerbaijani victory resulted in a mass exodus of Armenians living in the area. This mass exodus marked the end of a decades long conflict, potentially ending the presence of ethnic Armenians in the region. Since the victory by Azerbaijan, around 50,000 Armenians have fled Nagorno-Karabakh to go to Armenia, reports NPR.

"Civilians in Nagorno-Karabakh are facing a dire humanitarian crisis and grave uncertainty about their future," says Human Rights Watch Europe and Central Asia director Hugh Williamson. "Azerbaijani authorities have said that everyone's rights will be protected, but

that is hard to take at face value after the months of severe hardships and decades of conflict."

The decree signed by the de facto Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh President Samvel Shahramanyan, called for all organizations and institutions in the Republic of Artsakh, the Armenian name for Nagorno-Karabakh, to cease by January 1, 2024, reports CNN. In the decree it directly states that the "[t]he Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh [will] cease its existence."

This land has been highly contested since 1923, when the Soviet Union established the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast according to the Council on Foreign Relations. This 95 percent ethnically Armenian population was within the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic's

borders. In 1988, a resolution was passed regarding the control of the region. This legislature declared the intention of joining the Republic of Armenia, despite the location. This resolution was rejected by the Azerbaijani government and armed fighting commenced.

The Council on Foreign Relations further explains that when the USSR dissolved in 1991, Armenia and Azerbaijan declared their sovereignty as independent countries, yet the land of Nagorno-Karabakh was still being fought over. Without the USSR to keep the peace in the region, war broke out killing thirty thousand and displacing hundreds of thousands more. The war did not last long, however, and by 1994 Russia negotiated a ceasefire, known as the Bishkek Protocol. This

led to the primarily Armenian-run Nagorno-Karabakh region to have a de facto independent government in Stepanakert. Yet despite this, the region still was reliant on Armenia for economic, political, and military support. This ceasefire was active until 2020.

In September 2020, armed combat broke out on the border of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. The Council on Foreign Relations reports that during this time more than seven thousand people were killed, both soldiers and civilians. Hundreds more were wounded. Both Armenia and Azerbaijan ignored pressure from the United Nations and other countries to hold peace talks and continued fighting. Despite several failed attempts by France and the United States,

Russia finally brokered a deal in November 2020, ending the six-week war. With this deal Azerbaijan reclaimed most of the territory lost since the conflict, leaving Armenia with a sliver of land in Karabakh. This brings a decades-long conflict over a region with an even longer history to an end for the time being.

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## TWO KILLED IN RUSSIAN AIRSTRIKES IN THE KHERSON REGION

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The latest news about the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine brings word of Russian airstrikes on a remote region in Ukraine, leaving two dead. On September 24, 2023, Al Jazeera reports that Russian airstrikes in the Kherson region, located in southern Ukraine, left three injured in addition to the two deaths. South China Morning Post states that the Kherson region has been "marked by a battle line since Russian troops withdrew across it in 2022."

The news of this devastating attack comes in the wake of Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, dismissing any suggestion that Russia would rejoin the Black Sea grain initiative. There have been attempts made to improve current Ukrainian grain exports. The Guardian explains that the United Nations introduced an agreement to hopefully bring the Ukraine grain export corridor back to

life. Unfortunately, Moscow expressed great distaste and disapproval for this notion at the UN meeting in New York in late September. Lavrov was quick to note Russia's disadvantages in the Black Sea grain initiatives, citing broken promises as the contributing factor to Russia's departure from the agreement. The Guardian further revealed that Lavrov viewed Kyiv's ten-point peace blueprint regarding the initiative and other peace and negotiation elements as "not feasible," as well as elaborating by noting, "It is not possible to implement this. It is not realistic, and everybody understands this, but at the same time, they say this is the only basis for negotiations." This statement further extends Russia's forward display of resistance towards reaching peace.

Despite relentless attacks and potential setbacks unleashed by Russian forces, the latest developments from Kyiv reveal Ukraine is making slight strides related to its

counteroffensive strategy. The New York Times reports that Ukrainian armed vehicles managed to make advancements during the early weeks of September through Russia's "main anti-tank defenses at one location on the front line, according to reconnaissance video and commanders." The New York Times also explains that Lieutenant Ashot Arutiunian, the commander of a drone reconnaissance unit operating in the area, stated that "vehicles had broken through near Verbove, a village in the Zaporizhzhia region. The vehicles, however, are confined to slender routes through minefields and have little room to maneuver."

Zaporizhzhia, like Kherson, is also located in southern Ukraine. Another Ukrainian General, Oleksandr Tarnavsky, gave a positive, yet realistic statement to CNN, explaining that they were making advancements but, "Not as fast as it was expected, not like in the movies about the Sec-

ond World War," he said. "The main thing is not to lose this initiative (that we have). And, well, not to lose it in practice, with actions." CNN also elaborates that these newest revelations from Ukraine seem to hint toward strong progress on the war's southern front. Additionally, it has been noted that a long-term goal of Ukraine regarding its ongoing conflict with Russia has been to secure and break the "land bridge" that connects to currently occupied territory and annexed Crimea.

Additionally, Ukraine is receiving more aid to continue making advancements in the southern front despite setbacks, including the airstrikes in Kherson. Al Jazeera reveals in early reports that the Biden administration will be providing Ukraine with Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) missiles. These have been on Ukraine's wish list since the early days of the war, as CNN reports. These reports came after the announcement that

the United States would deliver a \$325 million military aid package to Ukraine. CNN explains that the exact details of the ATACMS agreement are unclear, and the White House and Pentagon both declined to give a statement to NBC regarding this issue. Al Jazeera also notes that while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy did not directly comment on the ATACMS, he expressed gratitude for the United States as Ukraine's biggest supplier of military aid and weaponry.

There is ongoing political turmoil within the American government regarding the massive amounts of aid being provided to Ukraine. CNN reports that \$133 billion was approved to be used to aid Ukraine. While there is a question regarding the quality of this investment, CNN also notes the experts agree that without the United States' support, Ukraine would have been unable to withstand a Russian invasion, nor

would the nation have been able to make the recent inroads. In reports from Al Jazeera, it is noted that the Washington Post explains that the "US plans to provide Ukraine with a version of the ATACMS that will be armed with cluster bomblets rather than a single warhead, citing several unnamed sources familiar with the deliberations, and that can fly up to 306km (190 miles)." There is hope that with continued support from the United States and other NATO and EU members support, Ukraine will be able to continue to make crucial inroads in the southern front, whilst continuing to withstand constant Russian attacks.events.

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## AMAZON SUED BY FTC AND 17 STATES OVER MONOPOLY POWER

**Aaron Stanway**  
*Staff Writer*

CEO, Entrepreneur, born in 1964, now the Federal Trade Commission is knocking on his door. Since 2017, Amazon has been the dominant seller in the e-commerce market. Some estimates show that they now control over 40 percent according to The Associated Press. This majority stake in the market has allowed Amazon to reign supreme and rake in the profits. However, the way that they have been making these profits has garnered the FTC's attention.

Before that, it is imperative to understand how Amazon.com works. Amazon is a host for different sellers. For sellers that actively hold inventory, Amazon holds their stock in a warehouse and then when a customer orders the product, they ship it. Amazon also

has a fulfillment service for drop shippers. This is when a product is bought on a third-party website or sold on Amazon through a third-party seller, the product is shipped from the stock warehouse to an Amazon warehouse where it is then shipped to a customer. These two services make up the majority of e-commerce on Amazon, says The Associated Press.

In exchange for these services, Amazon takes a cut of the sale and charges shipping. This is where trust in Amazon starts to falter. Amazon has been consistently raising the percentage fees. It is up 35 percent since just 2020, writes The Associated Press. Amazon is also forcing sellers to use their fulfillment service to have their products listed on Amazon Prime. Additionally, Amazon Basics, Amazon's product line, has been undercutting other sellers on



An Amazon fulfillment center in Shakopee, Minnesota.  
Courtesy of Tony Webster (Wikimedia Commons)  
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their website. Amazon's product line is artificially kept as the lowest prices by burying undercutters of their product in the far reaches of the Amazon catalog.

Normally, these factors would not raise eyebrows as they are in the nature of competing in the marketplace. However, since Amazon has a majority share in the market these practices have caught the FTC's attention. It is important to note that Amazon is

not being sued because they are too big. Amazon is being sued because they are using their size to stifle competition and stop them from taking their majority share.

In addition to the FTC, 17 state legislatures are also attempting to stop what the FTC alleges as a "monopolist that uses a set of interlocking anticompetitive and unfair strategies to illegally maintain its monopoly power." There has been discussion to break

up the tech monopoly that Amazon possesses as they also have a large share of the cloud computing market.

Since this breaking news, Amazon has responded on their website attempting to shift the blame away from themselves. They claim that they are in fact not undercutting competitive prices from sellers but instead matching them to encourage competition. Additionally, Amazon suggests that

if the FTC were to win this lawsuit that it would discourage competition across the marketplace. Finally, they finish by saying how much they look out for the small businesses and have created 1.5 million jobs through their fulfillment and seller programs. They also mention that while their fees have been increasing, they are still less than the average two-day shipping service.

Amazon may be forced to stop price matching low prices from sellers leading to more sales for smaller companies. As seemingly distant and unlikely a split up of Amazon is, if it were to happen there would be a huge hole in the marketplace for ecommerce fulfillment services.

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## AT LEAST 100 KILLED IN DEVASTATING WEDDING FIRE IN IRAQ

**Sofia Diaz**  
*Staff Writer*

Tragedy struck in Iraq on September 26, 2023, when a wedding celebration turned into a nightmare. A devastating fire broke out, claiming the lives of at least 113 individuals and leaving more than 150 injured. The incident has left the nation in mourning and raised questions about safety measures at public gatherings, reports Al Jazeera.

On that Tuesday night, a wedding was in full swing at a reception hall in the Christian town of Hamdaniya, also known as Qaraqosh, located in the Nineveh province of northern Iraq. As joyful celebrations were underway and the bride and groom danced, a sudden blaze erupted, engulfing the venue in flames. The fire appears to

have been ignited by indoor fireworks which then set the ceiling on fire says Al Jazeera. The event hall's flammable material is suspected to have contributed, as well as "improper safety measures," including emergency exits. Another danger of the inferno came by the "release of toxic gases linked to the combustion of the [building] panels" says Al Jazeera.

Early reports of Al Jazeera highlight the severity of the incident, citing local media reports and confirming the tragic loss of over 113 lives. Reuters reports the severity of the fire in one eyewitness account from Mariam Khedr, who stated "This was not a wedding. This was hell," as she cried and mourned the lives of her daughter and young grandchildren, the youngest just eight months old. They provide in-depth



After the wedding fire, Iraqis are urging officials to pass stronger safety regulations.  
Courtesy of Dr.bashiti (Wikimedia Commons)  
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analyses of the incident, shedding light on the immediate aftermath and the response from local authorities.

The disaster prompted an urgent response from local emergency services and civil defense teams. Firefighters and paramedics worked tirelessly to control the blaze and tend to the injured. According to CBS News, the injured were rushed to nearby hospitals for treatment,

as families anxiously awaited news of their loved ones. As the scale of the tragedy unfolded, questions arose regarding safety protocols and measures at public gatherings in Iraq. According to BBC News, these types of incidents are not rare in Iraq due to corruption and mismanagement. Al Jazeera reports that the incident has prompted a wider discussion about the enforcement of safety

standards in such venues, urging authorities to take stricter measures to prevent similar incidents in the future.

The devastating fire has left the community of Hamdaniya in deep mourning. Funerals were held for the victims, attended by grieving families, friends, and sympathizers from across the region. "Yesterday there was a wedding and happiness. Now we are preparing their

burial," said deacon Hani al-Kasmousa at Mar Youhanna church, where the wedding service took place before the evening celebrations, according to Reuters.

In the wake of the tragedy, there have been calls for a thorough investigation to determine the cause of the fire and to hold any negligent parties accountable. BBC News reports that authorities are examining various factors, including the venue's adherence to safety codes, the availability of fire-fighting equipment, and the response time of emergency services.

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# SERBIA AND KOSOVO

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The question of who has the right of self-determination has reached many political leaders in Post-Soviet and Post-Yugoslavian states. The internationally recognized lines that divide countries have grayed in the eyes of many allies of Russian President Vladimir Putin. According to Politico, September 28 saw one of the worst confrontations between Serbia and Kosovo since Kosovo declared independence in 2008.

In the ethnic Serbia-majority region, near Banjska, Reuters reports that four people, including a Kosovo police officer, were killed after masked gunmen arrived in armored vehicles and forced their way into a Serbian Orthodox monastery where priests and pilgrims locked themselves inside the monastery's temple. The siege went on for hours and ended after the police officer and three of about 30 attackers were killed in shootouts. After the attack, ABC News reports

that Kosovo police found large quantities of weapons and equipment owned by the attackers that suggested they had a broader attack planned. U.S. officials also monitored a large deployment of Serbian troops along the border with Kosovo, describing it as an "unprecedented staging of advanced Serbian artillery, tanks and mechanized infantry units," according to ABC News.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Kosovo's interior minister, Xhelal Sveçla, alleged that these operations originated in Serbian training camps for Kosovo Serbs who have dual citizenship. Furthermore, Sveçla told The Associated Press, "We found some documents which lead us to a suspicion that there were individuals coming from Russia too. For the equipment, we have evidence, but for the people we still have only suspicion."

This shooting was larger than a group of Kosovo Serbs operating in Kosovo. With the influence of Serbia, there is suspicion of backing from Russia, Ser-

bia's ally who also does not recognize Kosovo's independence. Politico stated that Kosovo's Prime Minister, Albin Kurti, described this shooting as "organized crime, which is politically, financially and logistically supported from Belgrade, is attacking our state."

ABC News adds that John Kirby, spokesman for the White House National Security Council, regarded the size of the weapons cache during the attack as threatening the safety of Kosovo officials and international personnel, including NATO troops. "The number of weapons possessed by the insurgents, involvement of NATO troops in the attack, and the buildup of Serbian troops on the border highlights that this up flare is larger than Kosovo Serbs rebelling against a government and are seeking support from external leaders.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Russian government officials defended the insurgents, categorizing them as treated unfairly by the Kosovo government and international community. Politico

adds that President Vucic denied any involvement from Belgrade and defended the gunmen as local Kosovo Serbs who "do not want to suffer under Kurti's terror anymore."

More evidence of Russian support is found in Euronews, as the Russian Foreign Ministry said, "There is no doubt the bloodshed is a direct and immediate consequence of the policy of inciting conflict of the so-called Prime Minister Albin Kurti." Additionally, Putin's press secretary, Dmitry Peskov, told Russian state media site Ria News that he watched "closely" the "potentially dangerous" situation in Kosovo, stressing that there is a "biased attitude towards the Serbs."

On the Monday following the shooting, Kosovar leaders declared a day of mourning and described the event as a terrorist attack seeking to destabilize the region. President Vucic spent Monday meeting with Russian Ambassador Aleksandr Botsan-Kharchenko, accusing Prime Minister Kruti of carrying out "brutal ethnic cleansing,"

according to in Politico.

This allyship between Russia and Serbia against Kosovo has not helped Serbia's case to join the European Union. The European Council's recent annual report on Serbia read, "In the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the Council expects Serbia to show unequivocal commitment to the EU, to stand up for our common principles and values and to communicate objectively on the EU and actively engage in preventing disinformation and foreign information manipulation." Instead, recent action shows that Serbia's relationship with Serbia is still very active.

Additionally, the U.S. is concerned with this allyship. Euronews adds that the U.S. sanctioned Aleksandar Vulin, currently head of Serbia's intelligence agency, for "us[ing] his public positions to support Russia, facilitating Russia's malign activities that degrade the security and stability of the Western Balkans and providing Russia a platform to further its influence in the

region," the U.S. Treasury Department said in a statement. This is extremely concerning, as this is the first time a Serbian official has been sanctioned while in office since the wars of the 1990s. According to The Telegraph, Russia and Serbia collaborating accomplishes three goals: to distract the West from the conflict in Ukraine; strengthen Moscow's standing amongst former Soviet states, and give Putin leverage over the West in order to keep regional conflict at bay. As President Putin wages war in Ukraine, many post-Soviet and post-Yugoslavian states have followed his ideology of gaining territory they believe is theirs to claim. Serbia and Russia's allyship has caused concerning uprise of destabilization in the Balkan region and others alike.

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# MOLDOVA AND TRANSNISTRIA

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The Moldova, in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, has been dealing with the thawing of a territorial dispute within its own borders. Along the eastern bank of the Dniester River and the Moldovan-Ukrainian border lies the unrecognized state of Transnistria, officially the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic, the center of a frozen conflict for the nation of Moldova. Transnistria is located within the territory recognized by the Moldovan government as the Administrative-Territorial Units of the Left Bank of the Dniester. This means that, according to CNN, while it is not recognized as an independent nation by the international community, Chisinau has very little control over the territory, which is run by its own breakaway government.

Moldova has a long and complicated history existing on the periphery of Russia. While the nation has a long, in-

tertwined history with Romania, the early 20th century saw Moldova fall under Russian rule and influence. Cultural and societal changes, such as changing from a Romanian-adjacent script to Cyrillic, conflated the Moldovan state with Russia, and pushed it towards joining the Soviet Union. Due to the location of Transnistria along the Ukrainian border, and its separation to the western part of the nation, the region became much more ethnically diverse than the rest of Moldova, according to The Collector. Today, the region's population of roughly 435,000 is made up by nearly 39 percent Russians, 33 percent Moldovans, and 27 percent Ukrainians. When the Soviet Union fell, Moldova restored its relations with Romania, and society within the nation followed its previous pre-Soviet orientations, retaining Romanized script and other aspects of previous culture that was suppressed by the nation-building of the Soviet Union.

Unlike the rest of the nation, however, those in Transnistria strove for independence from Moldova in order to keep their Russian roots. According to Critical Threats, Russia has 1,500 troops stationed in the region in current day, although now it is agreed upon by experts that many of these troops are Transnistrian citizens dressed up in Russian garb. Regardless of how many are truly Russian, the unwavering support for the Kremlin within Transnistria poses a danger to Moldovan sovereignty.

While the region is geographically strategic for Russia's war campaign, and Moscow has more complex, ulterior motives to keep troops in the region. For years, Moldovans have sought admission to the European Union (EU) – as one of the poorest nations in Europe, joining the EU would bring many advantages, particularly economically. Moldova has also had one of the largest intakes of Ukrainian refugees because of the war,

which it cannot properly support financially. While the goal of the government is for Moldova to be admitted to the EU by 2030, The Conversation reports that their membership will be stalled until Russian troops leave the nation. Foreign troops present without their consent prevents Moldova from being in control of its own borders, posing territorial and security threats that make the EU hesitant to accept the nation's bid. This lack of EU membership is advantageous for Russia if it chose to pursue a campaign in Moldova in the future, as lack of contractual alliances and a withering economy would make the nation easy to topple.

Modern-day Moldova laid in the territory of imperial Russia decades ago, giving the Kremlin historical reason to attempt to take back the land, similarly to the campaign in Ukraine and past attempts in other former Soviet states such as Georgia. In February of this year, The United States Institute for Peace

reports that the Ukrainian government claimed they had intercepted Russian plans to overthrow Moldovan President Maia Sandu. This was later confirmed by both Moldovan and United States intelligence, with the U.S. stating that Russia intended to spark mass protests and an insurrection in favor of the Kremlin.

The Kremlin relies on the Russian majority in Transnistria and an older generation of Moldovans to spark such protests; however, Russia has also dwindled in its support for the region regarding energy, trade, and healthcare as a result of the War. As the region is completely landlocked, the first year of the war saw Transnistria completely reliant on Moldova for imports, giving the population a taste of reintegration. According to the London School of Economics, Sandu, a member of the Party of Action and Solidarity, fully supports Transnistrian reintegration, which would in turn allow the nation to meet its 2030

goal. Her government is committed to finding a solid plan for reintegration, learning from the mistakes of previous administrations who seemingly expected the conflict to resolve itself.

As The Kyiv Post reports that missile debris has landed in Moldovan territory, emphasizing the closeness of Russia's terror, both the nation and de facto Transnistria look toward the future. With Carnegie Europe reporting that a majority of Moldovans supporting EU membership and a presidential election next year, focus on the economy, infrastructure, immigration, healthcare, and much more are at an all-time high. The results of the War in Ukraine do not only impact those in Russia and Ukraine, but millions of lives in the periphery of the two nations.

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## KAZAKHSTAN

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As Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Kazakhstan has operated with a level of diplomatic caution, seeking to strike a delicate balance between its international relationships and domestic stability. This delicate balancing act reflects the country's ongoing efforts to maintain stability in a complex geopolitical environment. Kazakhstan has refrained from openly criticizing its traditional ally, Russia, while consistently advocating for peace. In an interview with Al Jazeera, Kazakhstan's Deputy Foreign Minister Roman Vassilenko affirmed how impactful this war is for the Kazakhstani people. Because of its close ties with both Russia and Ukraine, Kazakhstan sought to establish itself as a potential mediator right from the start of the conflict.

In 2022, Kazakhstan underwent a year of turmoil and transformation. As DW explores, the nation was rocked by days

of extensive unrest in western Kazakhstan in the early days of January, triggered by public anger over a sharp surge in gas prices. Over the following days, protests rapidly spread to numerous major cities across the country. This period, now referred to as "Bloody January," saw the burning of administrative buildings, widespread looting of businesses and banks, the occupation of the airport, and the looting of security services' arms depots. Official figures indicate that the January tragedy resulted in 238 casualties nationwide, including approximately a dozen police officers.

As the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) explains, in a bid to quell the protests, Kazakhstan's President, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, sought assistance from the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), a Russian-dominated military alliance. At the time, this move was widely perceived by both Kazakhstani peo-

ple and international observers as a gesture of allegiance to Moscow. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan has maintained a close and dependable partnership with Moscow within the post-Soviet landscape, participating in all regional initiatives initiated by Russia in the region. While the CSTO's involvement might have been seen as a potential shift towards closer alignment with Russia, the balanced stance adopted by Kazakhstani authorities following Russia's invasion of Ukraine raised cautious optimism about the country escaping Russian influence.

Responsible Statecraft notes that Kazakhstan has faced Western criticism for its approach to the conflict. However, the nation's decision to refrain from supporting United Nations (UN) resolutions condemning Russia is pragmatic, considering its geographical location and internal makeup. As a vast landlocked nation, Kazakhstan has tradition-

ally pursued a multi-vector foreign policy to foster peaceful coexistence with its neighbors, relying heavily on diplomacy to ensure its security and stability. Despite the dissolution of the USSR, Kazakhstan maintains a significant ethnic Russian minority, constituting approximately 16 percent of the population. Given the multi-ethnic fabric of the society, the ruling elite have promoted the concept of a "Kazakhstani" nation, one that embraces all ethnicities, as opposed to a strictly "Kazakh" nation. This approach has effectively mitigated ethnic tensions to this day.

While Kazakhstan has yet to condemn Russia's actions, Kazakhstan has taken some attempts to distance themselves from Russian influence. As The Guardian details, the Kazakhstani legislature has unveiled initiatives aimed at boosting the usage of the Kazakh language in its media, signaling a response to mounting concerns about Moscow's influence in the country

following the Ukraine invasion. While Kazakh serves as the country's official language, Russian is also acknowledged and widely spoken within the country. The new legislation is presently under debate among lawmakers, but it is anticipated to receive approval in parliament as well as by Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

Additionally, Radio Free Europe reports President Tokayev has affirmed that his country will not assist Russia in evading Western sanctions imposed in response to the conflict in Ukraine amid suspicions that Moscow may use Central Asian nations to acquire goods. Kazakhstan shares a lengthy 7,500-kilometer border with Russia. However, Kazakhstan has not formally recognized the Ukrainian regions occupied by Moscow as part of Russia. In line with the European Union's efforts to tighten control on the re-export of sensitive goods to Russia by third countries, Kazakhstan is

actively engaged in compliance with the sanctions. President Tokayev emphasized that there should be no European concerns regarding potential actions aimed at circumventing the sanctions.

Kazakhstan has continued their attempts to walk a fine line since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It has largely opted to abstain, rather than side with Russia, in UN votes on the war. But it understands the threat Russia poses, given their shared border. Kazakhstan has been left in a very precarious position. For the time being, Kazakhstani officials will watch the conflict play out and hope for the best.

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## NAGORNO-KARABAKH

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Nagorno-Karabakh, also known as Artsakh, is a region with a complex history that spans centuries. Situated in the South Caucasus, it has been the subject of territorial disputes and ethnic conflicts between Armenians and Azerbaijanis for much of its existence. The dispute reached a new head on September 19 when Azerbaijan began an "anti-terrorist" offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan declared that it had reclaimed total control over the area in less than two days, according to The Council on Foreign Relations.

The dispute initially turned into a full-scale war in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which caused major casualties and population displacement. Following a truce in 1994, Artsakh gained de facto independence under Armenian rule. However, periodic clash-

es and negotiations have continued into the twenty-first century, and the conflict has not yet been settled. Recently, the conflict was exacerbated by the war in Ukraine, which had a significant impact on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Last December, Azerbaijan imposed a blockade on the Nagorno-Karabakh region by targeting the Lachin Corridor, the only road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and the outside world. The blockade has led to a humanitarian crisis, with thousands of people being displaced from their homes and a scarcity of food, medical supplies, and electricity, reports CNN. Days after expectations for a resolution to the issue were raised by an agreement to reopen the Lachin Corridor for humanitarian supplies, Azerbaijan carried out their latest attack.

Chair of the Center of Analysis of International

Relations in Baku, Farid Shafiyev, told CNN "Those who don't want to accept Azerbaijani jurisdiction, they have to leave. Those who would like to stay and get the passports, they are welcome to stay." However, Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and international experts have repeatedly warned of the risk of ethnic cleansing. Many Armenians fear that this could potentially be a repeat of the Armenian Genocide, which was a systematic campaign of mass killings and deportations carried out by the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1923, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 1.5 million Armenians, according to .

One may begin to wonder why Russia, a historical ally of Armenia, has not immediately jumped in with support. Many believe that this is due to Russia's current instability following its invasion of Ukraine. "Russia as we

know it may not survive the coming decade and risks becoming a failed state as it pursues its costly war in Ukraine," CNBC reports. Russia has severely damaged itself by encroaching on Ukrainian territory and has subsequently alienated itself from a large number of nations in the global business and political world. Due to the instability caused by the war in Ukraine, a rift is beginning to form between Russia and Armenia.

Many in Armenia's leadership feel betrayed by Russia's unwillingness to step in. "Armenia's security architecture 99.999 percent was linked to Russia," Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan told journalists according to CNN.

However, this lack of faith in Russia is not a new development. About a year ago, Pashinyan expressed his dissatisfaction at a CSTO summit over the inabil-

ity of a security alliance headed by Russia to support Armenia, Reuters reports. Pashinyan called into question the effectiveness of the six-nation Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which could be seen as a direct critique of Putin. Azerbaijan is not a party to the security agreement that binds the six former Soviet states, including Armenia and Russia, to provide military assistance to one another in the event of conflict. Russia also has a military base in Armenia, but the Russian government has not sent any troops to support Armenia in the current conflict, reports Al Jazeera.

However, Armenia might have a new global ally as its relationship with Russia is declining. Approximately 85 U.S. Soldiers will train alongside approximately 175 Armenian soldiers during Eagle Partner, a peacekeeping training exercise in Armenia,

from September 11 to September 20, 2023, reports U.S. Army Europe and Africa. Russia faces the possibility of losing power in regions of the former Soviet Union that it has long considered to be inside its sphere of influence as the war in Ukraine drags on.

Russia's diminishing influence in post-Soviet states reflects the currently evolving geopolitical landscape. While Moscow's historical ties and regional interests continue to shape its relationships with these post-Soviet states, the war in Ukraine and the state's self-interests have led to a potential reconfiguration of Russia's influence. Russia's ability to interact with these governments while respecting their ambitions will determine its future dominance in the post-Soviet era.

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## IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE, NO ONE WINS.

**Andrea Hebel**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

On October 7, one of the world's most contentious regions was thrown into chaos once again when Palestinian militant groups, led by Hamas, launched a massive attack on Israel and initiated fighting to a degree not seen since 1948, according to CNN. Thousands have been killed in both Israel and Gaza. Israel declared war on Hamas the following day, halting deliveries of food, water, electricity, and fuel into the occupied territory and warning Palestinians to leave for their own safety. In the crossfire on both sides are thousands of civilians and massacres that threaten to change the face of war in the international system.

I was given the opportunity to visit Israel in May 2022 with a group of college students, with the goal of learning more about how peace might someday develop in this controversial region. I learned quickly that there is no clear answer. Both Israelis and Palestinians believe that they have a fundamental, indigenous

right to live on the same land, and neither government has been committed enough, in the 75 years since the United Nations partitioned the land between the two groups, to their peaceful coexistence. While it is unclear exactly what caused the attack to occur now – Al Jazeera hypothesizes three potential triggers, including increasingly right-wing Israeli policies and Arab normalization of Israel's existence – peace now seems further than it ever has.

One thing must be established – Hamas is a terrorist organization, as declared by the U.S. Department of State. Their fundamental goal is the elimination of the Israeli state and the Jewish people. Hamas's extreme position is shown through the way that they conducted their attacks.

The stories and images of dead lining the streets across Southern Israel are heartbreaking – of the 1,200 killed thus far in Israel, over a thousand are civilians, Al Jazeera adds. Many of the dead are young people, as The New York Times describes. The attack



A building on the Gaza Strip hit by Israeli shelling. Courtesy of Wafa (Wikimedia Commons) Creative Commons 3.0

started at a music festival, where hundreds of festivalgoers were killed, and an unknown number were abducted into Gaza. At least 20 were shot in their cars in Sderot, where two years ago I met students who ran programs dedicated to fostering Palestinian-Israeli peace.

And in the small farming Kibbutz, Kfar Azza, the closest Israeli community to Gaza, my group met a woman named Chen, who described the resiliency and hope in humanity required to live in a war zone. She showed us her collection of mortars that had land-

ed in her yard, but emphasized that 99 percent of the time, the community was idyllic. Now, The New York Times reports, the Kibbutz is flattened and hundreds in the community are dead.

But there is inhumanity on the other side, too. The Israeli response has been to fire rockets back into Gaza, where citizens are trapped, CNN adds. At least 950 Palestinians are dead, mostly civilians as well. So many of the Israeli communities along the border, which were hit the hardest as a result, were full of individuals who were critical of their

government's policies oppressing the Palestinian people. As The New York Times describes, an antigovernment banner reading "Shame!" could be seen hanging from a water tower in Kfar Azza, a haunting reminder of government divisiveness and the horrors that have resulted.

The brutal goals of Hamas, however, are one of the reasons why Israeli occupation continues. From a realist perspective, it is clear – Israel understands that if they lift their thumb off of Gaza, they may well cease to exist as a state. But clearly, as Time describes, this solution was both unsustainable and inhumane in its own right. As Israel's government has grown further to the right, the lid tightened on the pressure cooker. And now it has exploded.

But pressure cookers have been exploding around the world, leading to death and destruction and wars that have no winner, even when they technically do. From Russia in Ukraine, to the Taliban in Afghanistan, to Chinese treatment of Uyghur Muslims, as

The Atlantic describes, it seems as though actions committed by so many of the world's leading powers are flying in the face of international law regarding the laws of war, human rights, and genocide. And it will prove to be nothing short of devastating to the international community.

This is obviously not the first time these norms have been violated – in fact, the argument could be made that they have been violated more than they've been kept. But normalizing these violations is inexcusable. The murder of civilians in the name of war is inexcusable. In a world in which so many are desensitized to violence, countries must not fall into the trap of justifying devastation and hatred. In these scenarios, no one wins.

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## FROM COLONIAL LEGACY TO DEMOCRATIC ASPIRATIONS: AFRICA'S ONGOING QUEST FOR STABILITY

**Eman Fatima**  
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The interpretation of a country's history is influenced by external and internal factors within the region. However, what often goes unnoticed is that many internal factors, such as flawed institutions, power-hungry leaders, and persistent corruption, can be attributed to post-colonial effects, which are essentially external factors. The presence of corruption and the insatiable hunger for power are not solely driven by self-interest but are rooted in deep psychological motives. The leaders of Africa are following a similar pattern of greed and annihilation that the colonizers left behind, affecting the region and its people. Historical and current studies on Africa continue to reflect the long-standing effects of an incredible catastrophe of the colonial past. It is crucial to recognize

that Africa was not always in this state; the result of European colonialism and international intervention has shaped the region into what it is today.

As Vox mentions, most attempted coups recorded were found to be in Africa in which 214 were attempted and 106 were successful. It is no surprise that a region like Africa is the victim of such a large number of coups. Sure, Africa has its own internal conflicts, but is trapped in a com-

plex web of geopolitics and internal struggles for a reason. Al Jazeera also goes into detail about the statistics of the coups, stating, "Based on data compiled by American researchers Jonathan M Powell and Clayton L Thyne, at least 45 of the 54 nations across the African continent have experienced at least a single coup attempt since 1950."

Unfortunately, according to the Washington Post, four days following the controversial presi-

dential elections in the central African nation of Gabon, which reported an electoral victory for the incumbent Ali Bongo, army officers took to state television to declare the nullification of the August 26 election and the dissolution of the nation's institutions. This speaks volumes about how democracy is valued within the nation.

The nation's history and current challenges can only be understood in light of the impact of

external factors such as colonialism and international intervention. The legacy of European colonization, along with the division and manipulation tactics employed by the colonial powers, has left deep socioeconomic and political tensions within African society.

Foreign Affairs and Voice Of America write about how these tensions were further exacerbated by the interference of superpowers during the Cold War era, leading to the proliferation of armed conflicts and the influx of weapons into the region. The internal struggles faced by Africa, including military coups, power struggles, and economic hardships, are the deep determination of the people to forge a better future, free from external interference and internal divisions. Africa's path to stability and progress ultimately lies in acknowledging its historical context, working towards genu-

ine democratic reforms, and granting the people the power and agency to shape their destiny.

Through such efforts, the African continent can overcome geopolitical challenges, heal internal wounds, and build a more inclusive and prosperous future for all its citizens. The people of many African countries have been denied the opportunity to govern and determine their fate, with their aspirations for democracy often betrayed by those in power and the international community that pledged support. Overcoming the post-colonial effects and the flawed institutions they left behind is arduous. It requires addressing internal issues and challenging the structures of power and corruption deeply ingrained in many African countries.

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President of Gabon Ali Bongo was met with military opposition following an August 26 election. Courtesy of World Economic Forum (flickr) Creative Commons 2.0



# AIDING UKRAINE IS NOT ONLY A MORAL CAUSE FOR THE UNITED STATES

**Cameron Bird**  
Staff Writer

When the Russian invasion of Ukraine began in February of 2022, the response from NATO and the West was swift, purposeful, and massive. According to PBS, the United States, leading the charge amongst Ukraine's allies, has given Ukraine almost \$77 billion in total aid. The U.S. has so far provided Ukraine with "Abrams battle tanks, anti-aircraft missiles, coastal defense ships, and advanced surveillance and radar systems" as noted by the Council on Foreign Relations.

To say that the U.S. has been Ukraine's primary supporter would still not fully encompass the importance and essential nature of American help to the country defending the integrity of its sovereignty. Despite vast amounts of aid from various other western countries, Ukraine's long-awaited counter-offensive "continues to make slow progress," as reported

by BBC News. The stagnant nature of this counter-offensive has led to a re-evaluation of long-term U.S. aid to Ukraine by many top officials.

This newfound divide in American politics complicates an issue that was a rare form of strong bipartisanship within the U.S. Congress for a long time. However, The Associated Press reports that "Republican resistance to the aid has been gaining momentum and the next steps are ahead, given the resistance from the hard right flank." Republicans view the providing of aid as a path with no foreseeable conclusion and a vulnerability in the budget of the U.S. depending on the length of the conflict's timeline. For many, there is a concern that the culmination of aid will eventually amount to a much more significant value than what would be fiscally responsible, particularly given the already divisive political perspectives regarding the focus of government spending. However, the argu-

ment in favor of continued aid of Ukraine is a moral one, rather than a geopolitical one. Aiding Ukraine, a fellow Western liberal democracy, is paramount given its clash with the authoritarian state of Russia. In a moral and ideological framework, this is a strong argument in favor of aiding allies in Ukraine. Yet some emphasize that there is an economic limit to the moral prerogative that the West maintains during this conflict, and that it



Ukrainian soldiers operating in the country's east. Courtesy of Ministry of Defense of Ukraine (flickr) Creative Commons 2.0

cannot be viewed as a limitless option for Ukraine.

Regardless of this argument, there are essential geopolitical implications that must be taken into consideration to fortify

further support of aiding Ukraine. Ukraine's location in a geographic sense, and in a political sense, are critical points when discussing its security in the context of a European state. Foreign Policy illustrates that there were long held views that regarded Ukraine as a 'buffer state' between Russia and the rest of Europe. Culturally, economically and politically, Ukraine served as the balancing act between the powers of Europe. This created

an inherent tenuous relationship for Ukraine with both sides of that tension.

Foreign Policy then adds that "the buffer zone strategy was clearly suboptimal." NATO

did not correctly predict the growing pains of such a strategy or the assumed threats it would create. Russia, feeling itself threatened by the prospect of Ukraine shifting even slightly in favor of the West, annexed Crimea, and then proceeded to invade the rest of the country. This proved indicative not only of the U.S. and NATO incorrectly assessing the role of Ukraine, but then vulnerably positioning Kiev to face Russia when Putin felt most frightened by the West's power. This could even become cyclical if Ukraine is not properly aided, as the Wilson Center adds, "...all Eastern Europe would be under constant direct military threat from Russia."

While supporting Ukraine appears as a move rooted in multilateralism, it is inherently selfish in some ways. Contradictory to the argument that the U.S.'s innate self-interest is in isolation, there is an incredible opportunity to be made from Ukraine's conflict with Russia. Ukraine's

stance towards Russia will only worsen, while the opportunities to take back territory and re-establish sovereignty will increase, resulting in the solidification of an essential ally in Eastern Europe.

In terms of entrenching U.S. influence in Europe and presenting a strong front towards Russia in a long-term sense, the U.S. should not do anything to risk its relationship with Ukraine. The U.S. must also keep in mind that simply backing off of the conflict, whether it is gradual or sudden, projects a message of indifference and lack of awareness that the U.S. lacks the political capital to ignore. With the U.S. losing even further credibility, it would only increase the risk of further skepticism of the U.S.'s commitment to maintaining its position as protector of democracy and its allies abroad.

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## SHU STUDENTS VISIT OSLO FREEDOM FORUM IN NYC

**Christian Almestica**  
Staff Writer

On September 28, students within Seton Hall University's School of Diplomacy and International Relations had the rare opportunity to catch a glimpse into the darkest parts of the world. The Undergraduate Diplomacy Student Association (UDSA) led a trip to the Oslo Freedom Forum hosted by the Human Rights Foundation (HRF) in New York City. The Oslo Freedom Forum is a dialogue where first-hand survivors, visionaries, artists, and lion-hearted activists are able to tell their stories and share their gifts with the goal of creating a free, peaceful, welcoming world.

Opening the night was Thor Halvorssen, the CEO of the HRF, who told the story behind the creation of the foundation and explained how deeply he believes in developing a world of equality and peace. All the work that he

has poured into his dream over the last eighteen years proved abundantly fruitful as the foundation has been able to help thousands across the world.

Following Halvorssen, the audience heard from Gulbahar Haitiwaji and Kalbinur Sidik, two extraordinarily strong women who were wrongly imprisoned in Uyghur concentration camps in China. While in prison, they endured unimaginable levels of anguish – so much so that as they shared their story, they teared up relieving those moments of suffering. Yet, after escaping, both Haitiwaji and Sidik chose to speak out against the atrocities committed by the Chinese government. Despite numerous threats, they continue to share their testimonies and work tirelessly to inform the public and advocate for Uyghurs still trapped in China.

Sanaa Seif, Egyptian filmmaker and activist, spoke next, sharing her experiences as a warrior

fighting against the Sisi regime in Egypt. In 2011, Seif witnessed protests in Tahrir Square, a major town square located in downtown Cairo, which were sparked by rampant periods of intense police brutality. Inspired by this movement, Seif, alongside some friends, started an independent newspaper to report on the various issues at the core of the Arab Spring. She has been imprisoned three times, most recently from 2020-2021 for trying to get a letter to her brother, Alaa Abd el-Fattah, who is also a writer and political activist fighting against the Sisi regime. Currently, Seif is working toward freeing her brother and many others from prison and bringing peace to Egypt.

Following Seif's message, the audience heard from Víctor Navarro, who shared his experiences as a political prisoner in Venezuela. While studying at university, Víctor worked as a journalist, and in 2018

he was imprisoned for speaking out against Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. At age 22, he was sent to El Helicoide, the largest prison in Venezuela, known globally for imprisoning political enemies and those who have committed various human rights violations. While he spoke, he recounted the terrible conditions he witnessed and endured. He watched as prisoners were electrified, beaten, and hung by their limbs. The walls of the prison were filled with screams of those experiencing unbelievable levels of torture, leaving many of Víctor's nights sleepless.

In 2019 he fled for Argentina, where he has stayed since, in exile from his home country. While in Argentina he embarked on an incredible task and founded the non-governmental organization (NGO) Voces de la Memoria, a technological marvel that uses virtual reality within human rights activism. One of the organiza-

tion's most recent projects, titled Helicoide, recreates the terrible experiences of the prisoners in El Helicoide. By melding technology and reality, his NGO has been able to provide insight into the suffering that hundreds of political prisoners experience daily.

Pastor Seungeun Kim, a human rights advocate and leader of the New Age Underground Railroad, also spoke. As the head of Caleb's Mission, a Christian Church located in South Korea, he works to aid North Korean defectors. After the unfortunate loss of his son, he and his wife devoted their lives to working to free, house, and ensure care of hundreds of North Korean orphans. The documentary Beyond Utopia highlights Kim's work and portrays the trials many families undergo while escaping North Korea.

Other speakers at the event included Iranian actress and human activist, Nazanin Boniadi, who

spoke about how the rights of women in Iran are being diminished rapidly. Garry Kasparov, Russian political activist, also spoke, passionately denouncing the actions of Russian President Vladimir Putin. The testimonies of the speakers emphasizes the value of freedom and how millions of people each day experience their rights being stripped from them. Yet, the stories demonstrate how millions are fighting for good and willing to die for freedom. Despite the danger, the speakers' passion and vigor inspire millions across the world. It is because of their efforts that we witness a global movement pushing members of the United Nations and legislatures to move to action against dictatorship and tyranny.

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## MATT KLEIN VISITS BUCCINO LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Colin Little  
Staff Writer

On Matt Klein, the Senior Director of Global Corporate Communications and Media Relations at Viatrix, a pharmaceutical company, visited the Buccino Leadership Institute on October 6. He is also an avid long-distance runner who spoke of what running races of over 200 miles has taught him, both professionally and personally. Klein shares that he has used running as his motivation as well as a foundation for maintaining a fruitful life. The discipline that is required to run these long distances has helped him become a better father, worker, and boss, amongst other aspects of life.

In 2006, he was accepted into the New York City Marathon, and although he did not know if he would be able to finish the race, he explained that the training before the marathon and experience itself changed his life. Klein shares that running has taken him to

places, quite literally, that he never thought possible. Sharing pictures of scenic locations in which he has run, he explained to Leadership students that running has allowed him to push himself to his limit and find his capabilities.

He advised the Buccino students to not be afraid to ask for help and to not be afraid to ask for mentors. People want to share their experience and knowledge, because “keeping knowledge is not nearly as valuable as sharing it,” he said. Regarding professional and personal achievements, he emphasized the importance of the mindset that “a mile is a mile.” It is easier to focus on each mile alone rather than look at the whole task; breaking daunting feats down to a “mile” makes each task much easier to accomplish. He shared that after losing his father, which inspired the start of his long-distance running journey, running reassured him that he can do hard things. He also shared that stepping on



The New York City Marathon runs across the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge to Brooklyn. Courtesy of Metropolitan Transportation Authority (flickr) Creative Commons 2.0

stage and speaking to students is not an easy thing, but by preparing and with help of people around him, he is able to tackle the hard tasks “mile by mile” and encourages the students to do the same.

Klein advised students that ultimately, it is important to not be afraid to take a leap. It is also important to identify those in your circle who will always support you; life around us is always changing and expanding, but we must focus on keeping a close circle strong and healthy. When asked how he implements the lessons

he has learned running within his work and personal life, he explained that he has learned that it is important to have long-term goals because having an event or goal to look forward to is motivating. He explains that this allows him to set approachable yet structured targets, which he attains with the help of friends, mentors, and coworkers.

Klein was asked how he also allocates time to himself and his family with the commitments of his running and professional life. He says that right now, his life is out

of balance. However, it is necessary at times to take a step back from an area of one’s life, which ultimately allows the balance to return to normal. This led him to explain that it is important to always be self-aware. When life gets in the way, one must be aware of where the imbalance within one’s life lies and work to get back up with a circle of close supporters.

Questioned about how he finds the motivation to run and persevere through life’s hardships, he shared that it is important to turn to one’s

“team.” He also shared that although running provides him mental solace, there is only so much that running can fix. He explained that it is always okay to reach out for help from others, especially those one is closest to. Klein concluded his presentation by saying that one must always take pride in the work that person produces while maintaining identity. We must find what we are truly passionate about and pursue it, Klein shares, which reaches well beyond just what we do in school. Klein ended his speech with a call to action: look around in life and do not be afraid to try something different. After all, he shared, it could take you on a life-changing journey that can then be shared with the next generation of leaders.

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## CEO OF DIRECT DIGITAL HOLDINGS SPEAKS TO BUCCINO LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Madeline Rowe  
Campus News Editor

On October 13, Mark Walker, the CEO of Direct Digital Holdings, a NASDAQ-listed digital marketing company, visited Seton Hall University’s Buccino Leadership Institute to discuss his journey to entrepreneurship in America.

Walker began his presentation sharing that based on the United States census, 40 percent of the U.S. population is diverse. Only 5 percent of marketing within the U.S., however, aims to reach the diverse population of the nation. As leaders, Walker called upon the Buccino students to cater to diverse ranges of people. He then shared that the average age of entrepreneurs in the U.S. is 49.9 years old, which begs the question: why does it take so long for an individual to become an entrepreneur within the U.S. workforce? Walker drew upon his

own experience to comment on this question, sharing how his experience, including his mistakes, led to his success.

In 1998, he attended the University of Texas, which allowed him to make connections, network, and create lifelong friendships. There, he joined the Texas Union Council which gave people of various races, cultures, and backgrounds a space to engage in valuable discourse. As a first job, Walker worked as an Assistant Buyer for Macy’s, which taught him the importance of paying attention to details.

He realized while working there that the digital revolution was unfolding. Using a connection through his wife’s roommate at the time, he exited his job at Macy’s and began a position as Marketing Manager at Questia, a technology startup. There, he shares, he gained many of the skills that have proved invaluable throughout his

career: presentation skills, product and business development, and market research, among others, he explained. Walker then entered Deloitte working in recruiting and marketing management, where he learned how to recruit people that are a perfect fit for his company based on company culture. Learning people skills, an indispensable skill, was empowering, Walker shared.

Emphasizing that “one hundred roads lead to Rome,” Walker explains that although there are many opportunities to reach one’s goals, he believes that each of his experiences led him in the direction for which he aimed. Realizing that he should demonstrate that he is capable of staying with a company for a long time, Walker joined NRG, an energy company, as the Director of eCommerce, Business Development, and Alternate Channels. This helped him form a solid track record, he shared, leading him

to his next position as Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Ebony. This role taught him ultimately what not to do in business, which he advised is just as important as knowing what to do in business.

He then summarized his lessons learned in corporate America, advising first that it is important to network before one needs something. Leaving networking until the last minute excludes opportunities. He shared also that it is important to make 5-year decisions and display attention to the long-term. He explained that details matter, and that it is important to be kind to everyone. Last, he shared that it is valuable to master a domain or niche, explaining that digital is his niche, which grants him a field in which he can display comfort. His company provides targeted ads to viewers of websites by showing the advertisement of the “highest bidder” of a group of companies to consum-

ers based on information of website users.

Walker shared several stories, including one commenting on the drinking habits of his Ukrainian business partners, humorously including a lesson he learned of the necessity of adapting to the culture and expectations of those one is interacting in within business. Understanding and navigating nuances between cultures and expectations in international settings are important when interacting with others, he points out. As companies grow, those within the company must have an openness toward interacting with and learning about other cultures, Walker flags. He explains that his own business model includes a diverse team, with 66 percent of his team a minority and over 50 percent female. To get the best result in a business transaction, it is pivotal to understand the cultures and backgrounds of those with whom

business is interacting.

The five cultural pillars of Direct Digital Holdings, Walker concluded, are integrity, authenticity, diversity, servant leadership, and continual learning. These were developed through the many lessons he has learned in his experience within corporate America, he shares. First, he has learned that reputation matters; one can always find a leader based on who follows that person. Next, he shares that being an entrepreneur is an “all day, every day” commitment. He explains also that it is vital for an entrepreneur to be comfortable with the unknown: the last 20 percent of the easily understood 80 percent is where money is made. He ended his presentation with a call to action toward the students: be curious.

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## SLAVIC CLUB HOSTS DISCUSSION ON CURRENT STATE OF UKRAINE

Alex Lee  
Staff Writer

On October 12, Seton Hall University's Slavic Club hosted Professor Nathaniel Knight, Director of Seton Hall's Russian and East European Studies program, as well as Lieutenant Colonel Adam Scher, Professor of Military Science and Director of the Seton Hall Army ROTC Battalion, to discuss the current state of the war in Ukraine.

The discussion began with Professor Knight providing an overview of the invasion of Ukraine, drawing attention to the strategic failures the war has included, seen through the slow grind of the twenty months of the war. He touched upon the ways that corruption ate away at the Russian army, the strength of the unity of the West, the determination of the defending Ukrainians, and the lack of a perceived chokehold on the European energy market that the Russians previously thought they had held. Russian President Vladimir Putin's actions further isolated Russia after their reception of the toughest sanctions

in history as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) expanded.

Lieutenant Colonel Scher then explained the war through a military lens, noting first that he hopes this future generation of students from Seton Hall University's School of Diplomacy and International Relations see military sciences and the armed forces' actions as a tool to understand the implications of force and the armed forces' strategic considerations.

The discussion then moved on to explain United States' expectations regarding the invasion of Ukraine. It was noted during the discussion that the Pentagon had overestimated Russia militarily, believing that the Russians were as powerful or more powerful than analysis suggested. What was not accounted for, however, was the corruption of the Russian army. The speakers explained that when Putin seized Donetsk, Luhansk, and the Crimean Peninsula in 2014 Russia was met with low resistance, as the international

community did very little. This trend was reinforced internationally in 2019 and 2020 as the People's Republic of China crushed the pro-democracy movement of Hong Kong with, again, no resistance from the Western democracies.

The speakers noted that the Pentagon also failed to properly assess Ukraine's ability to resist Russian forces, the discussion included. At the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the U.S. believed that the Ukrainians would not be able to hold back the Russian military for a prolonged period of time. Lieutenant Colonel Scher commented on this conversation, dividing the war into three phases. He explains that first phase was the initial Russian invasion of Ukraine, when Russian forces attempted to decapitate the Ukrainian military in an initial effort to take Kyiv. Lieutenant Colonel Scher stressed the importance of American support within that first phase, most importantly in the form of the weapons sent, including the Javelin an-



Tanks move across field in Eastern Ukraine. Courtesy of Ministry of Defense of Ukraine (Flickr) CreativeCommons 2.0

ti-tank guided missile and the Stinger anti-air missile.

The second phase was the attritional and artillery duel which took place in the battles in the Eastern provinces, in cities like Bakhmut and Severodonetsk, in which the battlefields resembled those of the World War I. In this phase, the debate over escalation and in increase in aid began as the U.S. and its allies attempted to convert Ukraine to a combined arms offensive. This would

be manifest in phase three, which is the current phase of the war. In this phase, the Ukrainians began a counterattack using infantry, armor, artillery, and air support in combination to create a highly effective and mechanized system of warfare. However, this has not been as effective as originally hoped.

Lieutenant Colonel Scher and Professor Knight stressed the Ukrainian accomplishments against strong Rus-

sian defenses, as well as the Ukrainians' advances made in the Black Sea as it destroyed several Russian craft. The Lieutenant Colonel stressed that the Russians have been learning, which means that as time goes on, Russian units have the potential to become stronger, better trained, and more knowledgeable about this type of warfare.

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### The Diplomatic Envoy



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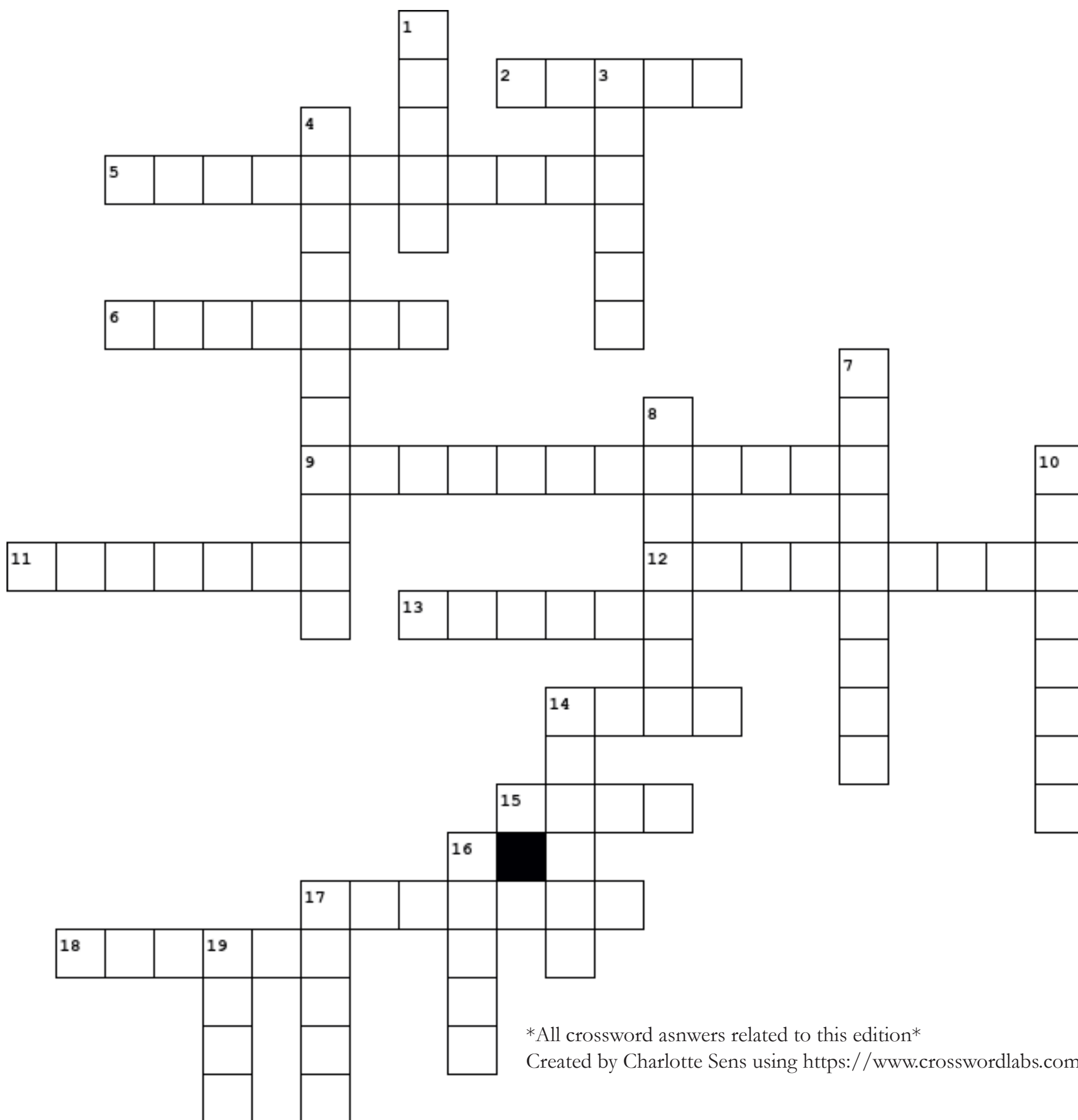
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For more information on sources, go to [blogs.shu.edu/thediplomaticenvoy](https://blogs.shu.edu/thediplomaticenvoy)

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## October Edition Crossword



\*All crossword answers related to this edition\*  
 Created by Charlotte Sens using <https://www.crosswordlabs.com>

### Across

- 2. Mark Walker's first job was as an Assistant Buyer at this department store
- 5. Hub of Armenian-run de facto government
- 6. This city has requested for the Biden administration to extend work access for migrants
- 9. Name of Amazon's product line
- 11. Ukrainian region recently targeted by Russian air-strikes
- 12. One of two named Uyghur women who were wrongly imprisoned in concentration camps in China
- 13. Nigerian president ousted in July coup
- 14. Kazakhstan's president sought assistance from this treaty to help curb protests
- 15. Matt Klein tells audience that breaking big tasks down to this unit makes them easier to accomplish
- 17. United States Senate majority leader
- 18. Hawaiian family who owned one of the first Lahaina homes

### Down

- 1. Terrorist organization battling Israel
- 3. Maker of Predator spyware used to tap Egyptian president's phone
- 4. Church where service for tragic Iraqi wedding was held
- 7. Armenian Prime Minister warning of risk of ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh
- 8. One named Ukrainian city where battlefields resembled those of World War 1
- 10. President of Gabon opposed by military after August election
- 14. Peninsula annexed by Russia in 2014
- 16. Prime Minister of Kosovo
- 17. President of Moldova
- 19. Canadian Speaker of the House who accidentally honored Nazi in speech