

## Weekly Top 10

**WASHINGTON, D.C. March 11, 2022**

**TO: NCSEJ Leadership and Interested Parties**

**FROM: James Schiller, Chairman;  
Mark B. Levin, Executive Vice-Chairman & CEO**

Dear Friend,

The world watched in horror this week as Russia continued its destructive war against Ukraine. The people of Ukraine have been able to slow this onslaught by exhibiting an incredible amount of courage and bravery but at a tremendous cost.

In response to this unwarranted ongoing attack, the US Congress passed a massive thirteen billion dollar humanitarian and security aid package. NCSEJ was among many Jewish organizations to fully support this legislation.

NCSEJ continues to work to counter the allegation that this conflict is about the “denazification” of Ukraine. We are monitoring social media and traditional media to rebuke false stories as they appear. This includes rebuking an article that appeared last week alleging Jews evacuating Zhytomyr were beaten by non-Jewish Ukrainians. The story was a complete fabrication and was removed.

NCSEJ also continues to brief our constituency about the current situation in Ukraine and the impact on the Jewish community. We spoke to several Jewish Federations and community groups and hosted Melinda Haring of the Atlantic Council on our recent webinar. [Please see the attached link to watch Ms. Haring’s remarks.](#) This week’s update includes a Washington Post article focusing on the movement of Ukrainian Jews out of Ukraine.

I would like to acknowledge Ukrainian Ambassador Oksana Markarova and the Embassy staff for all of their assistance in keeping us informed on the latest developments in Ukraine.

Sincerely,  
Mark B. Levin  
NCSEJ Executive Vice-Chairman & CEO

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**NCSEJ WEEKLY TOP 10**  
**Washington, D.C. March 11, 2022**

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**Speaker discusses war’s impact on Ukraine’s Jewish community**  
**Jesse Berman**  
**Baltimore Jewish Times | March 7, 2022**

For the country's Jewish community, Ukraine — the site of World War II's infamous Babyn Yar massacre — has become a more tolerant place than it was even a few years ago.

That was one of the topics discussed during a virtual briefing, organized on March 3 by Bet Chaverim Congregation, which addressed the status of the country's Jewish population in light of the Russian invasion. The event featured Lesley L. Weiss, the deputy director of the National Coalition Supporting Eurasian Jewry.

"Since the independence of Ukraine, we've seen an amazing revival of Jewish life, which is so tragic now," Weiss said. "Throughout the country, we see synagogues, day schools, community centers, Hillels, kosher restaurants, more than we have in Washington, D.C., and every other kind of Jewish services available. So all that now is, of course, at great risk, and lives are at risk."

Weiss also addressed one of Vladimir Putin's justifications for pursuing this war, namely that Ukraine currently has a fascist, neo-Nazi and antisemitic government — a claim, she said, that the Russians have been using for years and which has zero basis in fact.

[Read the Full Article Here](#)

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## **What is The Point of Saying 'Never Again?'**

**Thomas Kahn**

**Times of Israel | March 9, 2022**

On March 1, Russian missiles hit the Babyn Yar memorial, one of the most haunting symbols of the Holocaust. Babyn Yar is a ravine near Kyiv. At that site in 1941, the Nazis murdered 34,000 Jews over a two-day period, dumping their bodies in the ditch. Just four months ago, I was privileged to be part of a U.S. delegation attending the eightieth anniversary ceremony where the presidents of Germany, Israel and Ukraine inaugurated a huge new memorial complex to remember its victims. It was a long overdue day of relief that the souls of Babyn Yar finally got their fitting remembrance.

So there is poignant symbolism that only four months later, the murderous dictator, Vladimir Putin, would damage this very memorial site by engaging in the type of terror for which the Babyn Yar Memorial was built to protest.

After the bombing, Zelensky said, "what is the point of saying 'never again' for 80 years, if the world stays silent when a bomb drops on the same site of Babyn Yar. History repeating?" Zelensky is absolutely right.

[Read the Full Article Here](#)

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## **What are the risks and benefits of US/NATO military options in Ukraine? Our strategic risk calculator has answers.**

**Lt Col Tyson Wtzel and Barry Pavel**

**Atlantic Council | March 9, 2022**

Faced with the shocking images of Russian military forces indiscriminately shelling civilians across Ukraine, Western countries are under mounting pressure to find new ways to help Ukrainians defend themselves. As the Atlantic Council's military fellows concluded in their latest assessment, Russian forces—despite seriously stumbling during their first week of combat in Ukraine—still pose a perilous threat as the Kremlin's invasion proceeds.

While the Biden administration is working closely with NATO allies and European partners to respond to the invasion diplomatically and economically—as well as pledging billions of dollars in military aid to Ukraine—many analysts also are advocating specific ideas for how Western leaders can “do more” to bolster Kyiv’s defenses. Clearly, if the United States and its allies and partners are going to increase their support for Ukraine, it must happen immediately. But such action also must be carefully considered, and its relative benefits in terms of effectiveness must be weighed against the potential risks of escalating the conflict to a war between Russia and NATO.

With that in mind, on March 3 the Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security conducted a survey of thirty-seven national security experts, including a former ambassador to Russia and top NATO official, former senior officials at the US National Security Council and Defense Department, retired and active-duty military personnel, and experts across the Atlantic Council. We asked them to evaluate eleven options, all primarily military in nature, that the United States and NATO could take to strengthen Ukraine’s defenses. The result is a strategic risk calculator for policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic to assess the possible risks and benefits of boosting their military assistance to the Ukrainian government.

[Read the Full Article Here](#)

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## **Putin Loves to Roll the Dice. Ukraine Is His Biggest Gamble Yet.**

**Zvika Klein**

**The Jerusalem Post | March 10, 2022**

While bombing continues across Ukraine, Jews in Kharkiv reinforce doors and windows of the synagogue.

Windows of the main synagogue of Kharkiv were shattered last night, following the impact of a missile fired by the Russian army that exploded in a nearby mall.

More than 100 Jewish refugees were in the basement of the synagogue at the time of the incident.

“In recent days, we have filled the windows on the entrance floor with sandbags,” said Chabad emissary and rabbi of Kharkiv, Moshe Moskowitz. “We fear for the lives of the Jews who moved into the basement of the synagogue, most of them elderly people who cannot leave. Food and medicine are running out, and we are trying to bring more supplies despite the danger on the roads.”

Kharkiv Choral Synagogue is the largest in Ukraine and one of the largest synagogues in Europe. Completed in 1913, it is described as a combination of Romano-Gothic, Neo-Gothic and Islamic architecture styles.

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## **Ukrainian rabbi denies reports they left Ukraine because of antisemitism**

**Zvika Klein**

**The Jerusalem Post | March 9, 2022**

Ukrainian rabbi Shlomo Wilhelm of Zhytomyr says that reports in the Israeli media claiming that Jews of his city ran away because of antisemitism are false.

Wilhelm spoke to the *Jerusalem Post* on Wednesday and denied the report. "This is a complete, utter lie; there were no beatings and nothing of the sort. The only reason we left is this damn war: because of the sirens and missiles that fell nearby. There is no other reason for us to leave Ukraine."

The rabbi asked the following from the media: "Please publish this everywhere: The report is a complete lie that harms the Jewish community in Zhytomyr and Ukrainian Jews in general. The Jews of Ukraine are leaving solely because of the war. To say that there has been no antisemitism in recent years - this is a complete lie."

[Read the Full Article Here](#)

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## **With Ukraine Bracing For Potential Russian Invasion, Belarus Emerges As Key Player**

**Anat Peled and Milan Czerny**  
**Haaretz | March 10, 2022**

"I love Israel. I'm a patriot," says Yaroslav, a 22-year-old Israeli who immigrated to Israel from Kharkiv, Ukraine at age 12 with his parents. "But Ukraine is my birthplace. It's my motherland...my best friend from childhood is now in the Ukrainian army. My grandma is now hiding in her apartment in Kharkiv."

After 10 years of living in Israel, the Haifa resident, who has just finished his three-year compulsory military service in an IDF tank battalion, decided to return to his birthplace and join the fight against the Russian invasion.

Despite admitting that he was "terrified," he flew to Poland last week and crossed the border into Ukraine to take up arms. He asked to use a pseudonym as some of his family members in Israel do not know he is currently fighting in Ukraine.

[Read the Full Article Here](#)

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## **Meet the Israelis Fighting in Ukraine's 'Foreign Legion'**

**New York Times | March 9, 2022**

After the Russian president, Vladimir V. Putin, ordered the invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, multinational companies have been forced to re-examine their ties with Russia. Some, like McDonald's, PepsiCo and Shell, had built relationships with the country over decades and were faced with untangling complicated deals.

Under pressure from investors and consumers, many Western companies have started to unwind their investments, close stores and pause sales in Russia.

On Thursday, Goldman Sachs became the first big American bank to say that it would exit the country. The Japanese clothing company that operates Uniqlo has said it will suspend operations, as has the construction equipment-maker Caterpillar. Burger King will end corporate support locations in Russia. And the maker of Jeep, Fiat and Peugeot vehicles suspended imports and exports.

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## **After decades of building their lives in Ukraine, Jews are once again fleeing the country**

**Sam Sokol**

Ukraine's Jewish community was on the up.

After centuries of pogroms and emigration driven by antisemitism, followed by the devastation of the Holocaust in World War II, and then Soviet repression, recent decades brought a flourishing of synagogues, Jewish schools and community centers. Estimates of how many Jews remained vary, in part because of differences in how Jewish communities define who is Jewish. But Jewish aid organizations estimate that 200,000 Ukrainian Jews — some religious, many more not — were integrated into the life of the country. The most notable part of secular President Volodymyr Zelensky's Jewishness was that it was barely considered a factor in his 2019 campaign.

Then Russia invaded.

[Read the Full Article Here](#)

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## **The Caucasus card in Russia's war on Ukraine**

**Nikola Mikova**

**Eurasianet | March 10, 2022**

Russia's war in Ukraine has ostracized Moscow from the international community, with Western leaders presenting a united front against President Vladimir Putin.

Closer to home, the Kremlin has more influence, particularly in the South Caucasus. But even here, tensions between two of Moscow's allies — Azerbaijan and Armenia — are threatening to weaken Russia's hand.

Just two days before Russia launched its march toward Kiev, Putin met with Azerbaijan's leader, Ilham Aliyev, in Moscow. The two presidents signed a 43-point "allied cooperation" agreement, which nominally strengthened Russia's position in the energy-rich country. It also made Russia, at least on paper, an ally of Azerbaijan — and of Azerbaijan's archenemy, Armenia.

[Read the Full Article Here](#)

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## **Russia's War in Ukraine Spells Disaster for Neighboring Central Asia**

**Bradley Jardine**

**Time | March 10, 2022**

In a world of economic interdependence, sanctioning Russia will likely prove more globally destabilizing than policymakers realize. To be effective, the West needs to look to vulnerable Russia-dependent economies, like those of Central Asia, in order to mitigate collateral damage.

Landlocked Central Asia is flanked on all sides by countries sanctioned by the West—Afghanistan, Iran, Russia and, to a lesser extent, China. Now the region is struggling to cope with the new economic onslaught on Moscow. Energy-rich Kazakhstan, which exports two-thirds of its oil supplies through Russian ports, is reeling from the international sanctions regime and burning through vital currency reserves to prop up its faltering national currency, the tenge. These challenges come at a sensitive time for Kazakhstan, which has been working to re-establish investor confidence following violent unrest in January 2022 that left 225 people dead.

The economic catastrophe of the Ukraine war will reverberate far

beyond Russia's borders for decades to come. While the sanctions may be a just response to Putin's aggression in Europe, they are without precedent and could result in violent instability in neighboring countries. The international community needs to work to mitigate collateral damage before it is too late.

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