



TENNESSEE
WORLD
AFFAIRS
COUNCIL

In Focus: Russia's Invasion of Ukraine

A Ukrainian Perspective

**The Tennessee World Affairs Council in association with the
Belmont University Center for International Business, and the Nashville Area
Chamber of Commerce**

Anna Novosad

**Former Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine and Member of Parliament
and Education Activist in the Midst of a War**

with moderator

LCDR Patrick Ryan, USN (Ret)

President, Tennessee World Affairs Council

Original Broadcast: July 21, 2022

Verbatim Transcript by TNWAC

Video: [YouTube.com/TNWAC/videos](https://www.youtube.com/TNWAC/videos)

Podcast: [SoundCloud.com/TNWAC](https://www.soundcloud.com/TNWAC)

(and wherever you get Pods, look for “Global Tennessee”)

Patrick Ryan [00:00:25] Welcome to our special series on Russia's invasion of Ukraine. I'm Tennessee World Affairs Council President Patrick Ryan. We're pleased you joined us today. Earlier this year, we presented a series of virtual conversations on the invasion of Ukraine featuring Ambassador John Kornblum, who joins us again on July 7th. We're continuing those conversations alongside our partner, the American Council on Germany. I'd like to thank Dr. Steve Sokol at the Council for all the things that they do to bring awareness programs like this to the public. Their work to strengthen German-American relations is an important contribution to knowing the world. We're also joined by Sister World Affairs Councils in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Kansas City, Missouri and Peoria, Illinois. We welcome their members and members of the network world affairs councils around the country who are with us today as well. We're also thankful for the commitment of our regular partners for the series and all that we do at the Tennessee World Affairs Council. They are the National Area Chamber of Commerce, the Belmont University Center for International Business and the University of Tennessee Center for Global Engagement.

This series will continue on August 18th with a program featuring distinguished history professor Tom Schwartz from Vanderbilt University talking about Cold War competition between the United States and Russia, and Ambassador Kornblum will return on August 25th to wind up the series, along with Dr. Marieta Velikova, a professor of economics and director of the Center for International Business at Belmont University. And they'll talk about the domestic situation in Russia and the U.S.-Russian relationship. You can register now for those programs at TNWAC.org. I'm also pleased to announce one of our fall programs in the Distinguished Visiting Speaker series. The Tennessee World Affairs Council will host Admiral Michael Rogers, retired U.S. Navy four star, November 7th and 8th. He is the most recent director of the National Security Agency and commander of the United States Cyber Command. Don't miss that. We'll have an in-person town hall on the evening of November 7th. So mark your calendars. We invite businesses and other organizations to contact the World Affairs Council for hosting and sponsorship opportunities for Admiral Rogers visit.

The last piece of housekeeping. This World Affairs Council, like all the others in the network of 90 councils around the country, is a public service organized by volunteers and made possible by your financial support. Please become a member and make a donation. The Council is in the midst of a transition from a founder led volunteer organization to a new model for the future. And your financial support is essential to the continued success of our speaker programs and education outreach to you. Please visit TNWAC.org to give or to become a member. Thank you. We look forward to your participation today in this important conversation. You can start adding your questions at the Q&A tab on your Zoom screen.

Now on to our special guest. Anna Novosad is a Ukrainian educational activist. She served many years at the Ukraine Ministry of Education and Science, including being a minister in 2019 and 2020. Anna contributed and led the Comprehensive School Reform Project in Ukraine, and she was a leader of a higher education funding reform this past year and completed the Hubert Humphrey Fellowship Program at Vanderbilt University in Nashville and now leads projects that aim to restore education access in the midst of a war of Russia against the people of Ukraine. Welcome Anna Novosad.

Anna Novosad [00:04:10] Hello, Patrick and greetings to everyone who's listening to us today.

Patrick Ryan [00:04:17] Anna, before we talk about the Russian invasion in February and the consequences and your work now, let's step back in time and have you tell us briefly about your background, your hometown, your education, your service in government and the private sector.

Anna Novosad [00:04:34] Yeah. So, I'm Ukrainian, born and raised in Ukraine. I'm originally from central Ukraine, but I moved to Kiev where I reside right now. At around 15 years old. So since then, I've been a Kiev inhabitant. My background is - it was actually shaped by political events in Ukraine because the first one of the first large kind of societal uprisings against the unfair elections was in 2005. I was back then in the 11th grade in high school, and that's when I realized that this was the big political signs. Everything that relates to politics is of interest to me. And so, I chose political scientist as my background, and I did bachelor here in political science and then I got the scholarship from the George Soros Foundation and continued my education in the Netherlands doing a masters degree in European studies.

Well, back then, Ukraine's integration into the European Union was to me, was basically like a fantasy because of our president that was very pro-Russian. But in 2013, 2014, when we had another revolution again against another man who wanted to be totalitarian or authoritarian and decide where to lead our country against the will of its people, to lead it towards Russia, not towards the EU. We had another revolution which was called the Revolution of Dignity. I was the very active participant of that. And basically the first day after the government was changed and the illegitimate president ousted to Russia where he resides still now, from the very first day I was working in the Ministry of Education and Science, was back then the First Minister, and six years after that, I myself became Minister of Education and Science, and I worked in the President Zelensky team. I was elected on his party list to the Parliament, where I spent unforgettable 10 hours as a member of Parliament. But then I was promoted to the government. And so I was then I worked as the minister and last year in August I moved to Nashville. I was honored to get the scholarship from the State Department, and I was honored to be a fellow, the Hubert Humphrey Fellowship.

Unfortunately, my fellowship in Nashville was severely distorted by the war. I don't know what was that in tuition or whatever, but I returned to Ukraine just in case on the 21st of February and on the 24th of February, war started. So I spent here two months in Kiev before returning back to Nashville to wrap up my program. It was always my dream to, to be honest, to live in DC, at least for a while. And in May I was having a fellowship with the World Bank within the Hubert Humphrey Program. And I decided that, you know, I'm not going to give that dream of mine to Russians. So I decided still to complete that and also to use that time to forge connections in D.C., in the U.S. that would help to restore Ukraine later on. So, yeah, I got back from the U.S. to Ukraine on the beginning of June. And now I'm very, very actively involved in restoration of access to education of Ukrainian children.

Patrick Ryan [00:08:26] Well, we certainly appreciate the time that you spent here in Nashville. And we just regret that we didn't have you in person for a program here. But the future always holds that opportunity. We look forward to having you back for a visit to Nashville. Anna, it's been almost five months since the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by Russia, and it has changed the global world order and the geostrategic landscape. But obviously, to you and your fellow Ukrainians, the day-to-day combat operations have been a catastrophe. Millions of Ukrainians have fled, 5 million abroad and many more internally displaced cities have been leveled by the indiscriminate artillery and airstrikes by the Russian forces, and unspeakable war crimes have been perpetrated against the Ukrainian people by the Russian forces. Yet Ukrainians continue to fight with courage and great honor. Give us some insight from your perspective on what the last five months have been like for you and your fellow Ukrainians.

Anna Novosad [00:09:48] You know, Patrick, when I look at the mirror and look at myself, I just realize how old I got within this five months. And when I look back at the last year, you know, I wish I had that difficult life that I had before, before the war, because whatever the life that we started to have the 21st of February does not even closely compare to all our problems, to all the issues that we might have had before, before that. So it's clear for each and every cranium there is that before and after. Right. But just to be completely honest, the war has been here all eight years.

So that revolution that I mentioned, 2014, when we decided we Ukrainians decided we do not belong to the Russian world, we never did. We were forced to be in that prison and we want to be in this civilized European Union family. It was back down on the 1st of March in

2014 when the war started, but it was all these eight years in the East. It was not felt here in Kiev. It was not felt in other cities. So whatever happened this year, it wasn't the start of the war. It was the full scale continuation of the war. And, you know, I cannot convey the emotions and explain how it feels to leave your city on the dawn of the winter day and realize that the most probably you will not return here and most probably your country will be occupied. Because, you know, back then on that Thursday, early morning when we were ran out of Kiev it was exactly that feeling because when you see a 60 mile long line of tanks going to kill you, you do not understand that it's possible to combat it. You think that that's it, right? We are going to be occupied and we going to I don't know how our life going to look like. So those first weeks, to be honest, I don't quite remember them very well because things were evolving so, so, so quickly. And maybe I can show just a little bit of a, you know, a map of the whole thing. So this is just to give you an understanding of the size. So the biggest country in the world decided to invade Ukraine that they deem an existential threat to them. And if you just compare in size, it's ridiculous. Right.

But empires do not do not think about that. So this is the this is what my friend sent me on that morning on 21st of February and from his window. So these were like first missiles flying over Kiev destroying the important key infrastructure objects and just civilian houses. And, you know, when you see that and when you hear the first missile explosions, that's the sound that stays in your ears for many, many days. And I still remember that now. This is just to give you an example of the - another example, but the map of the invasion. So when Russia started to invade us, it was from all the all the borders that they managed to can access. So from north, from east, from south, from the occupied Crimea, from missiles, from occupied Transnistria, missiles and bombs from occupied Belarus. Because this country has been occupied by Russia de facto for many, many, many years. So when you see that you - back then we didn't we didn't even think that it's possible to combat that. Right. But now the North has been liberated. Many parts of the north have been liberated. And what we have under occupation are still up to more than 20% of our territory. But it's now only - well, I cannot say only, but it's now more of east and south. They're under occupation and where we do not control the territories. But on the, on the daily basis, you know how, how life looks like. We have the every day missile attacks.

So since 21st of February, Russia launched around 3000 missiles. I don't want to be precise on how many Syria experienced, but it's less than 400. So all those for less than 400 within the more than five years of war in Syria. But we had within five months, more than 3000. So every day, every single time there is a siren and it's a couple of times a day it's - one can be sure that in in in exactly 30 minutes because this is roughly what it takes for the missile to reach Ukraine, there will be - some will be bad. You don't know who, you don't know where. So you have to be always be ready to, I don't know, to die every minute. And it's a very, very strange feeling, you know, to understand that your life can be over any minute.

Like a few weeks ago, when they launched over six missiles to Kiev at 4 a.m., my friend woke me and took me to ... And it's 100 kilometers from where I stay now. And she said, like Anna, we've got a lot of missiles explosion. Her house crashed. And she said it's like military it's soldiers are saying that the next batch is not going to Kiev. So you just you know, you run to the parking lot because this is the safest space, the safest place you can stay. And that happens pretty much every night. So that's on daily basis how the life looks like. You can never be - you can not be safe anywhere. Your family cannot be safe. You cannot go anywhere safely. There is a curfew, obviously. So but I think the worst part is that we are getting used to that. Right. It's getting normalized. And this is really what scares me, what tremendous psychological effects this whole thing is going to have for our

society. But on the other hand, to maybe jump in a bit ahead to us, everyday life is now about struggle, about fight. And to us it's every day of understanding that we're not going to give up. And we realize that Ukraine has been the only country that has been attacked blatantly by Russia within the last 15 years, who actually had guts to stand up. Right. That was not done by Belarus, that was not done, unfortunately, by Moldova, that was not done by Georgia. But we will not definitely have that fate. I mean, every single man and woman in this country will fight as long as it is necessary. So I think this is how our everyday life looks like right now.

Patrick Ryan [00:17:37] Anna, tell us about life in Kiev. When you and I spoke a couple of weeks ago, you were outside on a nice street that was quiet and peaceful and the sun was shining. And a day later, I saw that Kiev was under attack. So you say it's become normalized. Have people - have the refugee flows slowed down or stopped or people still trying to leave? Do they do the attacks away from the front in places like Kiev, do they come sporadically once a week, twice a week?

Anna Novosad [00:18:22] Yes. So missile attacks are pretty frequent. So in Kiev, they continue attacking as they think military, military objects. But what happens in 99% of time is that they hit civilian infrastructure, buildings, kindergartens, schools. So last time they destroyed completely a residential apartment building at 5 a.m. in the morning and the nearby kindergarten. So I have no idea what those innocent people did, but definitely they were not soldiers. They were not as Russia thinks terrorists. They were just peaceful people sleeping in their houses. But that's what happens. So and that happens pretty much every day. And if not in Kiev, then in other cities.

Last week - so I'm from central region ... It's a pretty large city. And they had the Russian missile hit one of the central civilian buildings in the city center and killed 45 people, 20 wounded, including a couple of kids, including that four-year-old girl whose mother now is struggling for her life in the hospital. So they are you know, now it's a very clear policy of terror against civilians, of trying to apparently push our government to negotiate, only to negotiate on, I don't know, whatever, so that it stops. So I think they are hoping that because of this terror and people being terrorized every day, so they hope that people will be Zelensky to conclude any kind of a peace treaty. But I can tell for sure that that's not going to happen. People understand that any peace with Putin is bad to Ukraine. But everyday life in Kiev - yeah it's getting back to that normal life very quickly. People are returning back for various reasons including and primarily because this is our home. I returned here even though I had a chance to stay in the U.S. I could live in Canada, I can live anywhere. But there is nothing dignified to care only about your safety, right? You have to be here and to help whatever you can.

So I totally applaud the restaurants that are open or all the services there are open because this is what keeps our economy alive. Right. We also have to keep, keep up economically and financially. So, yes, it's on the one hand, you can think that it's a peaceful life, but that's only until the next missile comes. Right. But obviously, in comparing to March or end of February when the Russian tanks have been five kilometers from Kiev and there was endless artillery fire because artillery can - the range of artillery fire is 20 to 30 kilometers. So when they were setting next to you, they could just randomly shoot whatever. So that was very, very dangerous, period. And that's why people were leaving. But now a lot of people returned, like my own family, not my whole family, but the family of my brother, his wife and the kids. They spent two months in Warsaw, but now they return because it's very hard mentally, you know, to be to feel, to be a refugee, to feel,

to live outside of your home. So for thousands of people decide to take a risk, but to rather to be here and to help whatever they can.

Patrick Ryan [00:22:18] You talked about the strikes against civilian targets, the terrorism against the civilians. I know in your brief, you have some pictures of Bucha and some other places. Can you touch on what the extent has been of the war crimes against Ukraine in the five months since the invasion?

Anna Novosad [00:22:44] Well, it's hard to be honest. It's very hard to comprehend the scope because figures do not tell, do not convey whatever you see here. So this the style of Bucha. It's become pretty symbolic for the world. It's a very wealthy suburb of Kiev. It's if you live in Nashville, it's pretty much like a Franklin or Belle Meade to Nashville. So it's a wealthy suburb where the middle upper class lives. But this is how it looked after Russia came. This is another city, the same wealth, the city of Irpin, that little town of Irpin, the suburb of Kiev. And this is what the - how it looked after months of Russian occupation. It's just one of the many fresh cemeteries of tortured and killed Ukrainians who lived in occupation in Irpin just eight kilometers from Kiev. So these people in their wealthy homes have been tortured, have been constantly raped. The Russians were raping infants. Russians were raping little girls. They were doing that continuously and then shooting people. And that was happening through the whole month of March.

And just, you know, now in Ukraine, everyone has someone who one they lost. And that list is getting longer and longer. And I'm not an exception, but my first loss was happened pretty soon. So this is Mark, you know, one of - before the war my plan for the return to Ukraine was to establish a private school. And it's actually what I've been doing in the U.S. I was traveling around to various states in the U.S., researching your school models and high school models. I spent a lot of time in California visiting a lot of schools. I visited thanks to Vanderbilt program pretty much every school, every good school in Nashville learning from your best approaches. And my plan was to establish school. And Mark was supposed to be my colleague partner, and he was the great educator, the deputy head of the Kiev school. But he had the bad luck of living in the city that was very quickly captured by Russia.

And so the city, this little town of Berezanka, it's just 20 kilometers from Kiev, they arial bombed continuously through the first week of March. And this house in the middle, it's where they dropped one of many five kilogram bombs. And this is exactly where Mark lived. We managed to get out his body only on the 1st or 2nd of April. Children of his school chipped in and all of us chipped in to hire the necessary cars and those digging machines to dismantle all this, all these blocks and take away the people's bodies and to bury them. So, he did nothing to Russians. He did nothing to anyone. But he ended his life like that. Russia tried, Russia uses everything that every single weapon that is forbidden in this on this planet, apart just the earth from nuclear bombs against Ukrainians. So in this photo, we can see phosphor bombs being dropped and they do it continuously in the south and eastern parts. And when phosphorus bombs fall, it has many, many, many pieces. And you can see it kind of looks like a firework, but when it drops on people's bodies, they basically burn down and they and they die of those burn out. So I will show you those slides a bit later. But then apart from just thousands and thousands of Ukrainians, we have like in the beginning of the 20th century we have around 2 million Ukrainians who have been kidnaped and deported to Russia. So can you imagine this? We all believe that we live in 21st century, but we again have concentration camps where they kidnaped up to 2 million including 200,000 Ukrainian kids who now live in concentration camps. So, you know, the damage to our nation has been and continues to be just incredible. I have so

many friends of mine - I think more than 50% of my male friends are now on the front line. And every single minute, you just you know, you kind of unconsciously wait for a message that he's dead. It's I don't know how to, how do you explain to you how that feels.

Patrick Ryan [00:28:16] Well Anna, condolences to you and everyone who held Mark close. We're sorry that you lost your friend and all the many others who have been victimized by this aggression against Ukraine. We have a great many questions from our participants today. And before we turn to that, let me just ask - there's been a lot of conversation about the relationship between Ukraine and Russia. Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union until it broke up in the 1990s, signed an agreement that it would be independent. They gave up nuclear weapons. And yet Vladimir Putin and the leadership in Moscow has had eyes on Ukraine for many years. You talked about the revolution of dignity. And you showed us on the map the annexation of Crimea and the war in the eastern part of the country. But just give us a snapshot of what the relationship is between Ukraine and Russia.

Anna Novosad [00:29:20] Well, thank you Patrick very much for the question. And to me, it's very important that our audience understands and hears that Ukrainians have never been I mean, by our nature, we have never been, never wanted to be part of Russia. We never wanted to be part of Russian so-called Russian world. And despite all the Russian propaganda, Ukraine is and has for centuries been a separate nation, a separate country. We didn't have a very long history of statehood. That is true. We are in terms of political nation we are very, very young. You know, I'm older than our independence for half a year. It's very, it's very strange feeling. But we have always been fighting against Russia. And, you know, like this is something that I've been telling to my mom when she's having this very low moments about us going to war. I say, look, mom, we've been fighting Russians at least less for centuries when they occupied us, our whole state, when they occupied us in 1654. Since then, every single generation of Ukrainians has been having its war against Russia. It has taken many, many forms, like my grandmother and grandfather as we went through the Great Famine in 1932, 1933 when 7 million of Ukrainians died of manmade hunger done by Stalin. Then we had dissidence, then we had Chernobyl. That was another war against Ukrainians, right? The Second World War has been nothing but the war against Ukrainians as well by the Red Army.

So it's been this constant fight all along. But to us, it's very important, and to my generation it's very important that this is the first time in the history of Ukrainian people that we have a real chance to win. And, you know, oftentimes people say that you are the same because you speak the same language. Well, this is just not true, because if you've been Russified for 300 years, then obviously people speak Russian. Right. At least 40% of this country speaks Russian every day. But speaking the language that you were forced to read 300 years ago does not mean that you are Russian, right? The only thing that unites us with Russia, that we understand their language. That's pretty much it.

But the most important difference between us and Russia, it's not the - it's not even language. It's not even traditions, even though they are tremendously different. But it is the political, political tradition, political culture. If you look at the history of Ukrainian modern statehood from 1991, when we became independent from the aggression from the Soviet Union, we had six presidents. Six presidents, right? Belarus had one. Russia had two. For us, have an electoral democracy is a key. We might be, you know, not very stable in terms of building very capable institutions, you know, setting up a lot of important mechanisms for effective state right? But still electoral democracy and making our own choice has been our - it's been in our blood for all these centuries. And that's why Ukrainians have been

fighting Russia. But now, once we have this independence that hasn't been given to us, it's one of those myths that Russia is also trying to impose that, you know, they just got independence. You know, that's really not true because millions of Ukrainians died for this independence. Millions and now they continue doing that just, you know, 30 years after the formal agreement was signed.

But just, you know, for our audience to understand that this is exactly what differs us and this is what makes us a part of the civilized democratic world, is that we care about that democracy. And this war that we are having here is exactly about that. It's about us making our choices for our life, not by Putin or whoever there is. If Belarus wants to be ruled by them and have their choices that's their choice, but that's definitely not ours.

Patrick Ryan [00:33:45] We have a question from Angela White, who runs the Peoria Area World Affairs Council. Angela asks about Ukrainian children. And I guess this applies to the rest of the diaspora in countries where refugees have fled to. Are there any networks being set up for Ukrainians who were living abroad during the conflict to maintain their ties to the homeland, language, et cetera, especially school age children who need to continue their education even though they're in new situations.

Anna Novosad [00:34:20] Yeah, first of all, we are very grateful to every country that hosted our families and mostly women and kids, and that kids have access to education pretty much every country that they reside right now. But obviously, for us, it's very, it's vital to have, to make sure that these kids keep connection with Ukraine. So there are a lot of digital resources and digital opportunities set up by the Ministry of Education to learn to follow Ukrainian curricula. There is a really high class, full Ukrainian online school that was developed during COVID time, but now it is very, very intensively used to keep in touch and to kind of as a tool to do for our kids to keep, keep in touch, keep connection with the Ukrainian curriculum while they reside in Germany, in Poland or France.

So networks are there. But, you know, just to answer your question, Angela, of course we understand that you can learn how much you want online. But if you live for two years in Poland, you will get assimilated. If you live for three years in Germany, you will get assimilated. And this is exactly what we feel right now. And this is also why I try to do whatever I can with my little efforts to make sure that there are schools here, that schools are restored so that kids can return to their families, can return to their cities. Because one of the observations that we have is that Ukrainian women resided abroad as refugees having access to education is one of the key, one of the key reasons when they decide to whether they return or not, at least to the liberated areas. If there is a school, if there is a kindergarten, there are high chances that they will get back because for Ukrainian women, at least what I saw in Warsaw, the second thing they do after finding the apartment or shelter is look for a school for the kids. So to us, that that part is really, really important.

Patrick Ryan [00:36:24] And Joan Rice says that everyone knows that Ukraine is one of the major breadbasket of the world, providing much needed grains, especially to Africa and the Middle East. And the Russians have blockaded the Black Sea. You showed us on the map the Port of Odessa, which is the key transshipment point. But Joan asks how has the war impacted the agrarian workforce, the fertile areas of the country that might have been impacted by the war? How is the agricultural sector handling what's going on? And can you comment on the - there's been talk about a NATO maritime corridor to help shipments get out of the country.

Anna Novosad [00:37:10] Well, first of all, we all here in Ukraine think that the people who have been, how is it called, like the seeding season or I don't know, how do you call that when you seed, when you plant the seeds? When you plant seeds in spring? I mean, to us - yeah, exactly. Thank you. To us these people have been just heroes because all the fields where the wheat grows, where the corn, where the sunflower grows are closer to those areas where the most heated battlefields now happen to the south, to the east. And all these territories are either mined or they are under constant artillery fire. So I honestly, I, I just - I paid a huge respect to the people who are still doing that because they realize that if they don't do it, then the consequences will be huge.

So here in Ukraine, we don't feel any kind of lack of food or something, but obviously that's not for us to feel. You know, that's the paradox of this war, because of this war, a lot of - around 40% of North Africa supplies of wheat have been coming from Ukraine. Right. That's a lot. And we all remember how the war in Syria started. Right. It's been it's been driven exactly by the very, very similar reasons. So though we don't feel it here, at least now we will see what the autumn and the harvest bring. But we definitely understand that for the world it's going to be - it might be a disaster. So what we see now is that Turkey is trying to be a sort of the advocate in this whole thing with the transporting of wheat. But to me, looking at what Erdogan does and how he kind of behaves and presents himself in those negotiations, to me it's a very, very tricky thing. And, you know, no one knows what we trade in for this wheat being exported out of the country. You know, there definitely are subtle successions from our side, but we just don't know which ones.

Patrick Ryan [00:39:35] Anna, you say that you're an educational activist and you have a project going on in in the northern areas around Kiev. Can you tell us about the work that you're doing, what the need is, and what you and your colleagues are doing, and how you're getting assistance from abroad and how people can help?

Anna Novosad [00:39:57] Yeah. Thank you very much for that. So back in May, I decided that, first of all, I have to get back home from the U.S. and I have to start using my connections, using my network, using kind of my access to various international partners to start helping somehow with the situation. Because just for you to understand, Russians are primarily destroying schools with the missile attacks. I have no idea what their reasons are, but there are more than 1000 destroyed schools in our country. And that's only I'm talking about the destroyed by the artillery or missiles fire. Those occupied territories that have been under occupation during March. They have all been looted. I've been to a lot of schools here in Kiev, regions that were under occupation. Russians stole everything, everything that they could take out of that school.

But the final fact they were you know, because I think this is a story that everyone knows that Russians did not show a lot of intelligence. So one of the schools that I've been to, they stole everything. I mean, the equipment, things like that. But they left to 3D printers just because they didn't know what it is, you know. So that's just, you know, sad and hilarious. So the damage to infrastructure is huge. And I decided to focus on the city of ... This is the northern city to the north of Kiev. And I have no connection to that city whatsoever. But that's the city - it's a northern fortress to me, because if that would fall, Kiev would be probably - well at least part of it will be taken over by Russians. So I owe so much to the people that I sit here in my home and Russians bombed 27 out of 34 schools in that city. I just want to show you a few pictures. These are all my pictures so you can see how this city looks like. It's a beautiful city. It's very enchanted. It's where the oldest 9th century churches are. It's really, really beautiful. And luckily, the center survived, but schools did not. And so a lot of like - all those, almost all those 27 schools that have been

damaged look now like this. So Russians have been dropping, have been dropping heavy weapons, not heavy weapons, but heavy bombs on the schools. That's yeah, that's me on one of those sites, what's left of that school.

Patrick Ryan [00:42:43] Anna, remind us - at the early phase of the war, the Russian forces came across the border with Belarus to the north, heading towards Kiev. And that was what led to the destruction of these cities and the war crimes and bloodshed and other avenues on the way from Belarus to Kiev.

Anna Novosad [00:43:06] Yeah, that's it. Thank you, Patrick. That's exactly what happened. So this was exactly the direction where they had this the 60 miles long lines of tanks rolling towards Kiev. And the ... is just one of the cities that is just along the way. It's the biggest city. It's around 300,000 inhabitants. And the 27 schools are destroyed. And right now, right now, around 60% of children are back because the city is it's now more or less safe. Apart from occasional missiles, if I may say so. So people are returning there. And this is also picture of ours. Kids are just playing on this, the playground in front of their former schools. So what we are now doing with the team is we set up an initiative called Safe Education to raise funds to restore Ukrainian schools. So we work two folds. We work with institutional donors. I try to attract all the international partners, humanitarian partners that are to come to this northern part of the country. And because it's now liberated and the restoration efforts can take place to help us to restore the damaged infrastructure and to restore the access to education.

And on the other hand, we are also launching a large fundraising campaign to, you know, buy a crowd funding sources to raise funds to help with to rebuild the schools back. And so I'll be grateful Patrick if you could share it, that website here. What we did is we made with the funds of the Finnish embassy in Ukraine, we did assessment, engineering assessment of each and every school in ... We have all the calculations what every school has. We have all the information to show that we are very serious about our intent to help people who want to donate even \$1, \$5 to make very informed decision.

But also, I just want to use this platform to ask those who are listening to us to, you know, if you have any advice on how to better fund raise or have networks that could help in the United States. I'd be really, really grateful for that, because as I told Patrick earlier today here in Ukraine, all of us, we donate only to the army every month. They donate around 60% of my income, only to the army. We have people here I can't ask them for funds to restore schools because there are more pressing issues to survive. So we donate to drones and weapons and artillery. But yeah, so we will be looking for more funds to restore education through this, the fundraising campaigns that we will launch in mid-August, when everyone is more or less back to working life after the vacations.

Patrick Ryan [00:46:26] So the assistance from abroad is key for humanitarian and educational programs.

Anna Novosad [00:46:32] Yes.

Patrick Ryan [00:46:34] Well that that website is www.SavedSchools.in.ua. for those who might be listening in a future podcast.

Anna Novosad [00:46:48] Yeah. I'll be really grateful for any help, any advice, any connection, any, you know, even just putting me in touch with foundations or funds or any other organizations that help in this field out there. I would really, really appreciate that. I

told Patrick before that, we set up a very good partnership with one of the largest American NGOs that helps Ukraine to raise funds. It's called Noble Ukraine based in California. And we will be using them as our local partner, very trusted, reputable partner to help to raise the funds. So we want to do this very, very transparently and very, you know, with the very long term goal. So any help is really, really great. I'm really grateful for that.

Patrick Ryan [00:47:38] Let's go back to some questions from our friends from Knoxville. Nick McCall asks how do you and your colleagues and others and your friends in Ukraine perceive the war as ending? And that's the subject of questions from several of our participants. You mentioned in the beginning of the program that giving up sovereign territory in trade with Putin was not tenable. But do you see that that the conflict is likely to be long and drawn out like the battles in the eastern part of Ukraine have been since 2014 or - what's your view?

Anna Novosad [00:48:25] You know, first weeks of this full-scale war, each of us, I mean, who was just like asking each other and trying to get any information from military, from whoever, like how long this going to last? Because every day felt like forever. Now, no one asked that question. We all understand that this is going to be a very long war. And we are mentally, physically, financially, economically preparing for that. Why would think so? And, you know, like, I totally understand that the world is by now fed up with this war. You know, it's not interesting anymore. It's not in the media anymore. And I get that that's how the world, kind of modern world operates. But unfortunately, the aim of things is not to get 20% of our territory. It's not even to get Kiev. His aim is to eliminate, to destroy entirely Ukrainian political nation, not Ukrainians as people but Ukrainian political nation. He does not you know, like you don't ask why Hitler hated Jews, right? Because there is no sane answer to that. And you didn't ask, like, when will Hitler stop? When he will kill 5 million or 1 million? Right? This is exactly the same situation. This person he just hates with all his guts, this this nation. And he wants us to be over.

And so if there is this goal in his mind, then it means that this is an all in war for him. Right? And it means for us as well, because our just existence is at stake. So we obviously prepared that this war is going to last long. And I now hear a lot of questions from my foreign friends, like, so maybe you can give in him all this the occupied territories like right now and things will stop. No. Once we give, once we say, okay, take what you have now and we're good with that, then the next wave of war will come. It's definitely not the - not something we can do, you know, for us and of this war is getting back all of our territories, including Crimea has been illegitimately occupied, has been annexed and the whole world did not really say anything when that happened. Right?

So for us, the war will be over only then, but geopolitically speaking, because we have also ambassador probably here on this webinar, it's so clear that geopolitically speaking, the war will only be over when Belarus will be free because they will not use Belarus to, you know, to fly every day to Ukraine, to bombard cities. When Moldova occupied Transnistria will be free, when parts of Georgia will be free, and in general let all those enslaved nations within Russia will be free. Because if you look at the population of Russia, these are predominantly not Russian people. These are enslaved nations. Right? That have really little link to Slavic Russia as people might think otherwise. So that's a bit long answer to your question.

Patrick Ryan [00:51:55] Well, we appreciate you being with us despite the time time zone difference, 8 hours from Kiev to the Nashville. So we appreciate you being with us after

hours. Talk a little bit, if you would, about the support from the West. You talked about, you know, people are no longer watching the news every day and the media has not been covering it as vigorously as they did at the beginning. A lot of the foreign correspondents who went to Ukraine, you know the anchors from major networks and cable news are no longer reporting from Ukrainian cities. And we see reports about the energy crunch in Western Europe, the Russians turning off the Nord Stream pipeline supposedly for maintenance, the Europeans resolving to cut the dependence on oil and gas from Russia. So if this does become a protracted conflict and these, the sources of foreign support, military and otherwise become more tenuous, that that could be problematic for Ukraine. So tell us what's the perspective from Kiev on the level and hardness of Western support?

Anna Novosad [00:53:20] Yeah, so first of all. I don't, you know, I don't complain and expect that the media would cover this war every single day. I now feel much more what Syria is probably feel or other nations that are going to war feel because in the current world where everything is so fast and you can watch this war online, it very quickly gets probably boring to you if you live somewhere far, far, far away from here. So I get that. And I don't expect much from people because they have their own lives. But I do expect and I do, you know, as millions of Ukrainians demand much more from politicians, because I don't know - one has to be very, very ignorant to not to understand that this war is not only against Ukraine, it's war against all. Post Second World War political order that has been, it has been so fragile and it has been so difficult to forge. And now it's been just blatantly destroyed.

It's not the war only against Ukraine. It's the war against all that. And make no mistake, if Ukraine would fall, Russian tanks will be very, very close to the Polish border and very soon in Poland. So to us and to Poles and to Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians this way is - this is not the fantasy. This is their reality. So that's why they're helping us so much. And what Putin did is he very openly, very blatantly, he dismantled the kind of golden rule of the Second World, post-Second World War world. Right? That the borders are set and the borders are sacred. And unfortunately, in 2014 world said nothing to Crimea situation and that was 1938 of Czechoslovakia. Right? When the prime minister of the United Kingdom, Neville Chamberlain, thought that he would pacify Hitler by giving up part of Czechoslovakia. And then you've got the Third World War, right? It's the completely same situation. Just completely same. It's just very hard for people to understand when it happens real time.

So it's just a long answer to say that we do expect a lot from politicians and unfortunately, a lot of politicians get so short sighted. Unfortunately, we do like FDR. We do like people like him. We do like people like Kennedy who can think a bit, you know, a bit more long term. And having said that, we now 100%, 150% rely on Western support, on the United States support, because this is what happens when you fight the second largest army in this world. We you know, we don't expect the military help in in terms of soldiers. We don't ask for soldiers. We don't want foreign soldiers to come here and die here for us. We have by now 1 million men army. And I have lines of my friends who want to be drafted, but they are still in line because there are just a lot of people doing that. But we do need weapons, unfortunately. Like we cannot, we cannot do anything with 3000 missiles that that have flown over Ukraine since 24th of February. Yes, we take down around 50% of those, but still 50% hit someone's house. Still 50% hits someone's house, right? So to us for us, it's vital. You know, a friend of mine who is he is a member of parliament.

But since March, he is the on the frontline, on the very, very frontline in the south. And I asked him a few weeks ago, like how things are when he came here for rotation. He said,

like, we don't have weapons, we just don't. And there are just so many Russians with so much artillery, we have nothing to answer to. So when like the whole world is kind of getting a bit more relaxed because, well, Kiev was not taken over. So things are probably good, right? No, they are not. We have we don't have enough stuff to fight back. We don't have close enough to take back our territories. Things are gradually getting better. And that's to be honest, that happens solely thanks to the United States, because if not for your active position, I don't know where Russian tanks will be by now, but also, to be honest, I don't think it it was supposed to come to this, right. So that we would finally start getting those high elevations, not high range, but a long-range artillery. If we would, if we had those weapons earlier, I'm pretty sure that there will be less casualties, that we will lose less of our territory.

But I totally understand that - I'm not an expert on your foreign policy but I totally understand that probably after Afghanistan for the United States, it's very, very hard to commit to something against something like that. But last thing I will say, and it's not my words, it's first and foremost words of your Secretary of Defense, Lloyd Austin, is that there is no doubt from the United States side that Ukrainians are using the weapons to the maximum effectiveness and to the maximum capacity. You will not find those weapons on black market. You will not find those weapons in Russia. You will find only those weapons in Russian camps and in destroyed Russian artillery bases. This is the only place where you will find them. So just to close that up, us millions of Ukrainians, we are really grateful for the United States support. And we just hope that for the months and unfortunately years to come, the world support will stay regardless of the elections that you will have, both parliamentary congressional elections and also presidential in two years.

Patrick Ryan [00:59:40] Well, you know, we've seen that there has been great unity in the West among the NATO allies. They quickly came together and agreed to support Ukraine. And different countries have different levels of support. But the West is unified in that respect. The European Union has been unified. So let's hope that this this alliance stays together and continues to support, because as President Zelensky has said this isn't just a battle and as you've said for Ukraine, but it's a battle against the expansion of Russian power in Eastern Europe.

Anna Novosad [01:00:25] Yeah. Not only Eastern Europe. I mean, I think people have to also understand that if Putin understands that there is no consequences for the actions, that there is no fight back, then what really stops China from doing the same to Taiwan? Right? Or what stops Russia to doing the same to Estonia? Right? Or Lithuania, the small countries? Yeah, it's crucial to give that unity. And I do hope that the United States will keep the same active position because only, you know - look, I'm not saying that because I talk to you, the American public, but this is the reality because of your position, because of Biden's position. And I know that you might have very different political views, but because of the active administration position and especially active position of the defense minister, all this very atomized allies and the governments in Europe have been actually brought around one table and came up with at least the strategy that is now being implemented. Unfortunately, the NATO itself did not really help us with anything. Right? It's been all along the way only the only the governments of the of the NATO countries, but not the NATO itself.

Patrick Ryan [01:01:45] Right. Well Anna, we've we reached one hour and I'd like to give you the floor to make any closing remarks that you'd like to share. And we thank you for the time you spent with us today. Do you have anything that you'd like to leave us with?

Anna Novosad [01:02:04] Well, as I said many times, I really want to leave you with a clear understanding that we in Ukraine, we cannot overestimate all the help that you give to us, especially the weapons. And unfortunately, for many, many months to come, the weapons will be the number one priority to us. And as we like to say, you know, \$1 donated to weapons or buy weapons really saves the world \$10 that they would spend on Ukrainian refugees. We do not want to leave our country. We do not want to live anywhere abroad. And we you know, we will do whatever it takes to defend it. And this is why I returned and this is why millions of Ukrainians returned. And I think the world just all of us have to stop being so, so naive and a bit, you know, sleepy with regard to what happens because what is happening in the world, apart from Ukrainian case, is really a decline of democracy. And it's - one has to be blind not to see that. Right?

And if Russia wins Ukraine, that will be one huge nail to the coffin of the of the world democracy that has been so, so struggled for during last 70 years of the post-Second World War world. And I think what is an important, really important step that everyone, all the democratic, all the citizens of democratic countries have to lobby for is to recognize Russia as a terrorist state, as it has done to Iran, as it has done to North Korea, as it has done to some other countries. Russia deserves that because thousands of Ukrainians killed by missiles and millions who are in concentration camps. What is that then, if not terrorists? Right? How can everyone close out of that? And just to just to close that remark, you know, in Syria, you know, the Syrian city of Aleppo, it's an ancient city. It's beautiful city. It was. It's now leveled. It's been leveled for years and has been leveled by the same Russian general who leveled Mariupol. And if the world will say something, you know, something very strong to that situation back then, probably that wouldn't happen to our city. And so what brings us confidence that that won't happen again, right? That's the question we all ask ourselves here.

Patrick Ryan [01:04:46] Well, for sure. And thank you. I know you've been a very articulate spokesperson for what's happening in Ukraine, and we thank you for your time and we wish you and our Ukrainian friends all the best. Thanks again. This has been a special series on Ukraine and the Russian invasion and the impact. We would like to thank the American Council on Germany for partnering with us in this series and thank the World Affairs Councils in Harrisburg, Kansas City and Peoria for joining us in promoting this event. And to our friends at the World Affairs Councils of America around the country, we'd also like to thank Belmont University Center for International Business, the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, University of Tennessee, Center for International Business for being foundational partners of the Tennessee World Affairs Council join us in August for our conversations with Professor Thomas Schwartz on the 11th, Ambassador John Kornblum and Professor Marieta Velikova on the 25th. Again, please help support the work that we do through your membership at the World Affairs Council or by providing a donation. Just check out TNWAC.org for details and please be mindful to lend your support to the educational activities of Anna and her colleagues. You can go to [SavedSchools.in.ua](https://www.savedschools.in.ua) and Anna tells me it's a new website so check back and you'll see new information and features there as time moves along. Anna Novosad, former Minister of Education and Science and briefly a member of parliament and now an educational champion in Ukraine. Thank you so much for being with us.

Anna Novosad [01:06:45] Thank you very much.