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## Measuring the true cost of this war

Farah Stockman

### OPINION

I'll never forget the stories I heard on the Ukrainian-Polish border one year ago: Newlyweds who separated hours after saying their vows so the groom could return to the front. A tax preparer in Boston who quit her job to return to Ukraine with suitcases full of medical supplies. The wife of a border guard who made the three-hour round trip from Lviv to the Polish border almost daily to drop off fleeing women and children and pick up weapons and supplies.

The one-year mark of this terrible war brings up a range of emotions, including deep admiration for the Ukrainian people and dismay over the unfolding Russian offensive. But another feeling comes up, too, that doesn't get talked about enough: awe at the

breath-taking waste of war. How sad that human beings survived deadly waves of Covid only to get right back into the business-as-usual of killing one another. It's senseless to spend tens of billions of dollars on missiles, tanks and other aid, when more needs to be done to help

communities adapt to rising oceans and drying rivers. It's lunacy that farmers in a breadbasket of the world have gone hungry hiding in bomb shelters. It's madness that Vladimir Putin declared Ukrainians to be part of his own people — right before he sent his army into the country, where Russian soldiers have been accused of raping and murdering civilians.

Governments gussy up war. They talk of victory because that gives soldiers hope and the will to fight on. But in the end, war is death in a muddy foxhole. It's an existential fight over a frozen field with no strategic value. It's a generational grudge that begets new generational grudges. It's an \$11 billion, roughly 740-mile pipeline laid across the Baltic Sea rendered useless overnight. It's some of the largest steel plants in Europe unable to produce or ship a single metal sheet. It's a charming seaside city emptied out by bombings and siege.

When a country is fighting for its survival, as Ukraine is, the ability to wage war is essential. Indeed, it can feel like the only thing that really counts. But it is also true that our collective prosperity as human beings depends upon the absence of war, which gives people the breathing room they need to farm, to trade, to make scientific breakthroughs and art.

STOCKMAN, PAGE 13

The New York Times publishes opinion from a wide range of perspectives in hopes of promoting constructive debate about consequential questions.



Protests have erupted in Israel in recent weeks over plans by the new right-wing government, led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, to overhaul the judicial system.

## Exiting the start-up nation

TEL AVIV

### Tech leaders in Israel, alarmed at plan to overhaul judiciary, consider leaving

BY DAVID SEGAL

For years, budding Israeli tech executives have asked Yanki Margalit, a veteran entrepreneur, where they should start their fledgling companies. For years, he's offered the same advice: Here, in Israel, where software engineers are plentiful, international investors are eager and friends and family live.

But as Mr. Margalit prepares a new venture of his own, one focused on combating climate change, he has reluctantly concluded that Israel is the wrong place to open.

"Given the atmosphere now, it's almost irresponsible to start a company here," the 60-year-old said, "and that is heartbreaking."

The luminaries of Start-Up Nation, as Israel has been known for decades, are eyeing the exits.

Several have already announced that they are relocating or moving money out of the country, including the chief executive of Papaya Group, a payroll com-



Yanki Margalit, an entrepreneur, said that even though it would pain him to leave Israel, he is weighing the pluses and minuses of cities such as London, Paris and New York.

pany valued at more than \$1 billion.

The reason is that a right-wing government, led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, recently announced plans for a sweeping overhaul to the country's Supreme Court that many believe will end its 75-year run as an independent and widely revered institution.

The proposed changes would severely curtail the court's capacity to

like Mr. Margalit are reappraising what it means to operate here and deciding that if the government retools the judiciary, it is time to leave.

"It's all about risk management, and the risk is to the brand that is Israel," said Assaf Rappaport, the chief executive and co-founder of Wiz, a cloud security company worth \$6 billion. "It took a lot of time to build this brand, and today every company in the world can trust Israel as a partner in their cyberdefense. These reforms will put all that in question."

While the judicial changes will affect all Israeli businesses, the tech sector's reaction is of greatest concern because it provides so much of the economy's muscle.

Some 54 percent of Israel's exports are high-tech products and services, according to the Israel Innovation Authority, a support arm of the government. Israelis have created more than 90 so-called unicorns — privately held companies valued at more than \$1 billion — including Wix.com, which offers cloud-based web services; the mobile game company Moon Active; and the financial services company eToro.

Losing top-level earners and the corporations they run would have a devastating impact in a country where 81 percent of tax revenue comes from just 20 percent of the population.

ISRAEL, PAGE 9

## A moment to shore up alliances on both sides

WARSAW

### Efforts by Putin and Biden have a Cold War feel, but today's situation is knottier

BY MICHAEL D. SHEAR, DAVID E. SANGER AND ANTON TROIANOVSKI

In dueling efforts to shore up alliances, President Biden wrapped up a three-day trip to Europe this week with a commitment to America's allies as President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia warmly welcomed China's top diplomat to Moscow and rallied pro-war Russians.

Taken together, the scenes created the impression that the world is retreating into two blocs that bear similarities to the Cold War, this time with many former Eastern Bloc countries — Hungary is a notable exception — aligning fully with the West to oppose Mr. Putin's aggression. And China and Russia, dropping their many differences, are conducting military exercises together and deepening their financial ties as each faces Western sanctions.

But the reality is more complicated. Many other powers — including India, Turkey and Israel — remain on the fence, continuing to buy oil and gas from Russia or to work with Mr. Putin diplomatically, while buying arms from the United States and remaining in its defense orbit. That has touched off a messy, behind-the-scenes effort by both sides to win support.

For Mr. Biden, the question is whether the Western allies have the wherewithal to continue arming and supporting the Ukrainian government at the levels needed to keep an emerging Russian offensive at bay and to deter Mr. Putin from once again seeking to take over the entire country.

For Mr. Putin, the doubts may be even greater, even as he tries to telegraph confidence and public support. An offensive he began in recent weeks has yet to make substantial gains. And while he welcomed Wang Yi, the Chinese diplomat, at the Kremlin and spoke of a coming visit from China's president, Xi Jinping, it is clear that China is wary about being seen as supporting the war — at a moment when American officials are releasing intelligence suggesting that Mr. Putin is again seeking arms and technology from Beijing.

"China is willing to work with Russia to maintain a strategic focus, deepen mutual political trust and enhance strategic coordination," Mr. Wang told Mr. Putin. He also said the Chinese-Russian partnership "is not aimed at any third party, and will not accept meddling from any third party, and even less will it accept duress from any third party."

That was a clear reference to the United States, which has threatened

UKRAINE, PAGE 6



RINKO KAWAUCHI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

## To be 'Spirited Away' in animated worlds

FROM THE MAGAZINE

### A theme park in Japan is inspired by the films of Hayao Miyazaki

BY SAM ANDERSON

As an American, I know what it feels like to arrive at a theme park. The totalizing consumerist embrace. The blunt-force, world-warping, escapist delight. I have known theme parks with entrance gates like international borders and ticket prices like mortgage payments and

At Ghibli Park in Japan, the Cat Bus, an interactive exhibit that takes visitors into the world of "My Neighbor Totoro," an animated movie from Studio Ghibli.

parking lots the size of Cleveland. This is a theme park's job: to swallow the universe. To replace our boring, aimless, frustrating world with a new one made just for us.

Imagine my confusion, then, when I arrived at Ghibli Park, Japan's long-awaited tribute to the legendary animation of Studio Ghibli.

Like filmgoers all over the world, I had been fantasizing about a visit to Ghibli Park since the project was announced more than five years ago. Ghibli's animation has always felt destined to be turned into a theme park. Hayao Miyazaki, the studio's co-founder, is one of the all-time great imaginary world builders. Even Miyazaki's most fantastical creations — a castle with giant metal chicken legs, a yellow bus with the body of a cat — feel somehow plausible and real.

Miyazaki started Studio Ghibli in JAPAN, PAGE 2

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