

EDITORIAL

Oregon investments in Russia

State Treasurer Tobias Read has faced calls to pull state investments out of fossil fuels and NSO Group, an Israeli company whose software was used to spy on people's phones. And now there are questions about state investments in Russia.

His office told us the state has \$135 billion in assets under its management. They ran the numbers and of that about \$122 million is invested in bonds, public equity and currency connected to Russia.

Is Oregon going to pull that money? Not at the moment. Should it?

"We support the people of Ukraine," Read said in a statement that was sent to us on Feb. 28. "I've asked my team to fully evaluate the portfolio's exposure to investments in Russia and to identify our options as institutional investors. I'm also meeting with the U.S. Treasury this week to determine, with their guidance, any opportunity we have to aid the U.S. response."

Read has pointed out Oregon's investment policy is about making money and doesn't allow purely political divestment. "We are to 'make the moneys as productive as possible' (ORS 293.721) and the 'investment funds shall be... managed as a prudent investor would do...' (ORS 293.726). This means we cannot insert personal or political preferences into our investment decisions," Read and other members of the Oregon Investment Council wrote in a letter in 2021 to Senate President Peter Courtney about investments in fossil fuels.

What's also interesting about that letter is that they did not ask for more authority to make investment decisions based on political factors. In fact, they cautioned against it. They argued they did not believe it was an effective way to change corporate behavior. There could be financial penalties for pulling out of certain investments.

As you might expect, if that is his perspective, Read did not ask this legislative session for changes, either. To be fair to Read, he didn't know Russia would invade Ukraine or what the international response would be.

Do you believe the people managing Oregon's investments should have more authority to make investment decisions based on political decisions? In some cases? In the case of this Russian invasion? You can tell Read what you think at oregon.treasurer@ost.state.or.us.

There is a short summary on the treasurer's blog about investments and fossil fuels at tinyurl.com/ORfossilfuels.

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COLUMN

Kick Russia off UN Security Council

BY IRYNA ZAVERUKHA

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has changed the world. While Ukrainians try to defend themselves and call for collective self-defense, millions of people in the free world plead for action. The post-World War II international political order is failing. But it has not yet fallen: The United Nations still can take action to regain moral standing and to secure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and all other member states.

The U.N.'s main purpose is to maintain international peace and security, but it did not prevent the full-scale brutal war now happening in Ukraine, nor did it prevent or punish Russia's unlawful seizure of Crimea and its occupation of Donbas in 2014.

The organization's final insult to Ukraine and everyone horrified by its treatment has been Russia's role presiding over the Security Council. From this soapbox, the highest stage in the world, the Russian ambassador has amplified the Kremlin's propagandistic narrative for weeks.

By giving this platform, the U.N. has conveyed legitimacy for Russia and done real harm to Ukrainians and to world peace. That need not be its legacy. The U.N. can now be part of the solution.

Sergiy Kyslytsya, the Ukrainian ambassador to the United Nations, gave an emotional speech on Feb. 24, pointing to a provision in the U.N. Charter intended to deal with members that persistently violate U.N. principles. According to Article 6, such members may be expelled from the organization by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.

Because any one of the permanent members of the Security Council — the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France — can veto any action the council considers, it is clear this provision was not designed to be employed against any of those five.

However, by the time of Kyslytsya's admonition, it was becoming impossible to ignore the Russian Federation's persistent and blatant violation of principles of international law and the deceitful manipulation of legal norms.

There is a path forward, however, without Security Council unanimity, following the "Uniting for Peace" resolution model from 1950.

The Ukraine ambassador's appeal deserves a response. The United Nations is holding an emergency session of the General Assembly, something that has happened only 10 times since the first major deadlock of the Security Council. On Wednesday, 141 states demanded that Russia immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Further and substantially more action is needed. This time, the emergency session should go well beyond any of the previous 10. Although this would admittedly stretch the terms of the U.N. Charter, there is nothing to stop the General Assembly from enacting reforms that would be needed to expel Russia from the Security Council.

Keeping Russia in this inner circle has yielded no benefit for the international community. The U.N. is not restraining the Kremlin's belligerence thus far, and we have no reason to believe that it ever will if Russia continues to have veto authority.

Removing Russia from the Security Council would signal an end to the impotent response to the aggression, autocracy and nuclear threat. It would signal that the U.N. didn't abandon its main purpose. At this point, the expulsion of Russia is not mere punishment. It is lifesaving necessity.

The time for condemnation, punishment and expectations of changes in Russian behavior has long since passed. By the time Russia massed more than 190,000 troops at the Ukrainian border, the international community was well aware of the imminent threat to Ukrainian sovereignty. Such action by Russia was again in direct contravention of the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances for Ukraine, signed by Russia, the U.S. and the United Kingdom in 1994.

The hope in ousting Russia from the Security Council would be to restore peace through the employment of a collective

self-defense mechanism that would secure Russian withdrawal of military forces from Ukraine, based on borders that were internationally recognized when the sovereign republic gained independence in 1991.

Moreover, emasculation of Russia as a player with veto power is essential to render Russian President Vladimir Putin and others subject to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court for the crime of aggression.

In the 20th century, when people talked about reforming the U.N., it was an academic exercise. Today, changes are simply unavoidable. We are at the point of no return.

Failing to heed the prescient adage of philosopher George Santayana and ignoring the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939 is to fail to learn the lesson of history, thus condemning us to repeat it. But there is still time to prevent a complete collapse of the international order; the U.N. need not crumble as did the League of Nations.

The Ukraine crisis offers an opportunity for the U.N. to preserve its relevance and reshape itself in a way that would provide security for the entire global community. If the General Assembly convenes in an emergency session and takes decisive action, we will have reason to hope.

Will the United Nations assume the necessary leadership to stop the aggressor, employ all meaningful tools for reestablishing peace and hold the perpetrators accountable? Or will it leave members embroiled in a brutal war in the center of Europe?

As Kyslytsya stated in his speech on the first day of the U.N. emergency session, if Ukraine falls, the U.N. will fall. If the U.N. can assert its moral standing, it will organize its members to save Ukraine and the significance of democracy. The fates of Ukraine and of the global community are entwined.

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CONTACT YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

President Joe Biden: The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500; 202-456-1111; to send comments, go to www.whitehouse.gov.

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Oregon Legislature: Legislative documents and information are available online at www.leg.state.or.us.

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State Rep. Mark Owens (R-Crane): Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., H-475, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1460. Email: Rep. MarkOwens@oregonlegislature.gov

Baker City Hall: 1655 First Street, P.O. Box 650, Baker City, OR 97814; 541-523-6541; fax 541-524-2049. City Council meets the second and fourth Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in Council Chambers. Councilors Jason Spriet, Kerry McQuisten,

Shane Alderson, Joanna Dixon, Johnny Waggoner Sr. and Dean Guyer.

Baker City administration: 541-523-6541. Jonathan Cannon, city manager; Ty Duby, police chief; Sean Lee, fire chief; Michelle Owen, public works director.

Baker County Commission: Baker County Courthouse 1995 3rd St., Baker City, OR 97814; 541-523-8200. Meets the first and third Wednesdays at 9 a.m.; Bill Harvey (chair), Mark Bennett, Bruce Nichols.

Baker County departments: 541-523-8200. Travis Ash, sheriff; Noodle Perkins, roadmaster; Greg Baxter, district attorney; Alice Durlinger, county treasurer; Stefanie Kirby, county clerk; Kerry Savage, county assessor.

Baker School District: 2090 4th Street, Baker City, OR 97814; 541-524-2260; fax 541-524-2564. Superintendent: Mark Witty. Board meets the third Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. Council Chambers, Baker City Hall, 1655 First St.; Chris Hawkins, Andrew Bryan, Travis Cook, Jessica Dougherty, Julie Huntington.

OTHER VIEWS

To protect Ukrainians in U.S., fix our immigration system

Editorial from The Dallas Morning News:

There is little that Republicans and Democrats in Congress agree on nowadays, so we are heartened to see them come together to support the people of Ukraine. Bipartisan calls are growing louder to extend temporary protections to Ukrainians already in the U.S., and we hope the Biden administration will listen.

The special protection, called Temporary Protected Status or TPS, shields recipients from deportation for 18 months and gives them permission to work. Eligible people include Ukrainians who are here on nonim-

migrant visas to attend college, do business or visit family. TPS would also protect Ukrainians who have overstayed their visas.

Lawmakers are also asking the Biden administration to relax rules for Ukrainian students to allow them to work off campus and take less than a full course load at school.

It would be callous for Americans to force Ukrainians to go back home to a brutal invasion. The U.S. has previously offered TPS to citizens of other countries, including El Salvador, Haiti and Venezuela, after natural disasters and political crises.

But we urge members of the U.S.

House and Senate to look beyond the TPS designation. Our country can grant this special status, but there is more work that needs to be done behind the curtain. Our lawmakers must fix the case-processing backlog in our immigration system that complicates the lives of people waiting in line for humanitarian protections and other immigration statuses.

About 30,000 Ukrainians could benefit from TPS, according to the Migration Policy Institute think tank. Yet as of September, there was a backlog of 281,000 TPS applications, said Julia Gelatt, a senior policy analyst with MPI. The average wait time is

about four months, which is far better than other programs in which applicants wait for years, but there is also a significant backlog for applicants seeking employment authorization documents.

After our country's bungled exit from Afghanistan last year, public pressure mounted on American officials to expedite protections for Afghan immigrants. That led to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, or USCIS, shifting people and resources to process those applications faster, Gelatt said. It was the right step, but it also meant that people in line for other programs will have to wait even longer.

The USCIS backlog of cases across programs — from refugee status to work visas to family green cards — has grown from 5.7 million in 2019 to 9.5 million as of February. It's a giant headache for applicants, who find themselves in a legal limbo that keeps them separated from family or that causes them to lose out on job offers or university admission.

We hope this country's efforts to help our Ukrainian visitors will bring renewed attention to the gaps in our immigration system and perhaps muster the political will to do something about them.