Evening Update: Russia's parliament leaves door open for Putin to launch wider invasion of Ukraine; Western allies announce sanctions

Also in the news today, a key organizer of the convoy protests that blockaded Ottawa, Tamara Lich, was denied bail today

S.R. Slobodian

Good evening, let's start with today's top stories:

The latest developments in the Russia-Ukraine conflict: Western allies target Russian interests with sanctions while Putin formerly given power to send troops 'abroad'

The upper house of Russia’s parliament has formally given President Vladimir Putin the power to send troops "abroad," a vaguely worded decree that could open the door for a wider invasion of Ukraine. Even before Tuesday's rubber-stamp decision by the Federation Council, Kyiv Mayor Vitaly Klitschko told The Globe and Mail that he already considered Russia and Ukraine to be at war.

The U.S. has joined Britain and other countries in targeting Russian banks, oligarchs and the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project in a series of moves aimed at punishing Russia for its military incursion in Ukraine. But critics are already saying the sanctions don't go far enough and will do little to deter Russian President Vladimir Putin.

U.S. President Joe Biden today announced the "first tranche" of sanctions on Russia, involving that country's development and military banks, the borrowing of money or trading in sovereign debt on American and European markets, and personally sanction members of Russia's elite and their families.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson says his government will freeze the assets of five Russian banks and three oligarchs who have close ties to Putin. And German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has stopped the approval process for the Nord Stream 2 pipeline that would have made Germany more reliant than ever on Russian natural gas.

Developing: At a news conference this evening, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is announcing Canada's "first round" of economic sanctions over Russian military's deployment into eastern Ukraine and its commitments to NATO. Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly and Defence Minister Anita Anand are also speaking.

Read more: Putin grows impatient with American influence in strategically im-
Analysis: Germany halts Nord Stream 2 pipeline, but other sanctions still in doubt - Eric Reguly

Opinion: Putin's fictions endanger all of us in ex-colonies - Doug Saunders

In photos: Russian President Vladimir Putin orders troops into eastern Ukraine

Live updates: Catch up on today's events and follow the latest developments with our guide here.

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Key Ottawa blockade organizer Tamara Lich denied bail

Tamara Lich, who was instrumental in organizing a convoy of trucks that blockaded Ottawa for more than three weeks, was denied bail today after her arrest last Thursday. The judge found there is a "substantial risk" that she would reoffend if she was released, and that she would not follow a court order requiring her to stop the illegal activity she is accused of.

Meanwhile, police descended on Ottawa's Rideau Centre today as part of an evacuation that occurred just hours after the mall opened to the public for the first time in weeks. They announced this afternoon that the operation was over, an investigation was continuing and one person had been taken into custody. No further details were released.

Opinion:

Protesters need to understand: Canada's Charter is not the U.S. Bill of Rights - Martha Jackman, professor of constitutional law, University of Ottawa

I witnessed the creation of the Emergencies Act. It shouldn't have been invoked in Ottawa - David Schneiderman, professor of law, University of Toronto

Globe analysis: Racialized prisoners in Canada get fewer chances at parole than white prisoners

An analysis of seven years of federal prison data has found that Indigenous, Black and other racialized men are 26 per cent, 24 per cent and 20 per cent, respectively, less likely than their white peers to be paroled in the first year they're eligible - even after controlling for their age, sentence length, offence severity, the year they were first eligible for community release and the risk assessment scores that estimate their likelihood of reintegrating into society. (Due to the limitations in the data obtained by The Globe, the analysis excluded women and people serving life sentences.)

Today's episode of The Decibel podcast: Investigative reporter Tom Cardoso explains the findings of a Globe analysis into parole, and speaks with Renford Farrier about his experience of 30 years behind bars.

ALSO IN THE NEWS TODAY

Nova Scotia mass shooting inquiry begins: Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston slammed the long-awaited public inquiry into the April, 2020, mass shooting on the day hearings began, accusing the commission responsible for probing the attack of "disrespectful" treatment of victims' families.

Hate-crime convictions in Arbery killing: The three white men convicted of chasing down and murdering a young Black man, Ahmaud Arbery, as he was out jogging in their suburban Georgia community, were found guilty today of committing federal hate crimes and other offences in the 2020 killing.

Burkina Faso probes fatal blast: One person has been detained and an investigation opened to determine the cause of an explosion that killed at least 64 people and injured 40 more at an informal gold mining site in Burkina Faso, a judicial source says.

Largest U.S. pension fund appoints Canadian as CIO: Nicole Musicco has been named the new chief investment officer of the California Public Employees' Pension Retirement System (CalPERS), the largest U.S. public pension plan with nearly US$500-billion in assets - bigger than any pension fund in Canada.

Ontario scrapping licence plate renewal fees: Premier Doug Ford also says the province is eliminating the requirement for drivers to have a licence plate sticker, effective March 13.

MARKET WATCH

Crude oil futures hit their highest levels since 2014 on supply concerns while stocks sold off in a volatile session as investors eyed international responses to Russia recognizing two breakaway regions in Ukraine and sending troops there.

On Wall Street, The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 482.57 points or 1.42 per cent to 33,596.61, the S&P 500 lost 44.11 points or 1.01 per cent to end at 4,304.76, and the Nasdaq Composite...
dropped 166.55 points or 1.23 per cent to 13,381.52.

In Toronto, the S&P/TSX composite index slid 100.38 points or 0.48 per cent to 20,907.82. The loonie slipped to 78.31 U.S. cents.

Got a news tip that you’d like us to look into? E-mail us at tips@globeandmail.com. Need to share documents securely? Reach out via SecureDrop.

TALKING POINT

Is it time to dispense with proof-of-vaccination?

"The alternative that most provinces are embracing - dropping vaccine passports altogether - gives the unvaccinated a free pass, which feels like a slap in the face to the overwhelming majority of Canadians who have had their shots. It also puts those who are at greatest risk in society (the immunocompromised) in danger." - André Picard

LIVING BETTER

If you're concerned about preventing osteoporosis - and every woman 50 or older should be - here are some strategies to help keep your bones strong. They include:

Eat a calcium-rich diet: In addition to dairy products, good sources include fortified plant-based beverages, cooked collard greens and rapini as well as almonds.

Get enough protein: Distribute sources - such as fish, eggs, lean meats and beans - throughout the day.

Be physically active: Include weight-bearing exercises such as walking or Tai Chi or muscle strength activities such as yoga or Pilates.

TODAY’S LONG READ

Canada's top law firms are raising pay levels for younger lawyers amid a war for talent in the industry

The pandemic has cracked open the labour market for corporate lawyers in Canada.

A war for talent amid soaring workloads is pushing up pay for early-career associates at Canada's largest Bay Street firms, some of whom are opting to take jobs in the United States for higher salaries, while others are leaving the legal field completely for lucrative careers that demand less of their time.

Some cite feeling that they are replaceable and have sought more rewarding work. Others say the allure of becoming a partner has dulled, especially when some young lawyers feel that senior managers don't often hear their calls for change. But partners on Bay Street say they believe their firms have a lot to offer to younger lawyers, and that better compensation is part of improving the workplace experience. Read Jaren Kerr's full story here.

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