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[21:00:02]

BEN RHODES, MSNBC POLITICAL ANALYST: And I think it's important for those of us who are more progressive and have a lot of concerns about the history of the United States arming insurgencies to recognize that an elected president with a sovereign military requesting that assistance is quite different.

CHRIS HAYES, MSNBC HOST, "ALL IN": Yeah.

RHODES: And there, I think we could be guided by -- if the Ukrainians are the one who want to be in this fight and they're going to resist across the board, Putin's aggression, then we, I think, have an obligation to support them.

HAYES: It's a very, very, very good point. Ben Rhodes, thank you very much.

RHODES: Thanks, Chris.

HAYES: That is "ALL IN" for this week.

THE RACHEL MADDOW SHOW with Ali Velshi starts now.

Good evening, Ali.

ALI VELSHI, MSNBC HOST: Good evening, Chris. Have yourself a good weekend. We'll see you on Monday.

And thanks to you at home for joining us this hour. I'm coming to you again tonight from Budapest, Hungary, one of Ukraine's western neighbors. And in just a few minutes, I'm going to bring you an interview with the chief of staff to Ukraine's president, as he leads his country through a fourth, grinding week of this Russian invasion.

Now, so far, this fourth week is playing out much like the previously one. The Russian ground invasion, largely, is stalled. But constant air attacks on Ukraine cities exact a devastating human toll.

Ukraine's eastern cities, the ones nearest to Russia, continue to be the hardest hit. This is Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest city, its intellectual capital. It has more than 30 universities.

The city is largely destroyed by Russian bombardment. The city morgue is overflowing. The morgue director says, there is no more coffins available. They are wrapping bodies and what they can find.

In the southeastern city of Mariupol, there is still no word on any further survivors from the Russian bombing, two days ago, over local theater, where local officials say hundreds of civilians were sheltering, 130 survivors have made it out, but officials say, they don't know the status of the rest. Rescue efforts have been hampered by continuous Russian shelling of the area.

Mariupol, also, cannot cope at the number of its dead. Here, a local post office was really will do with the word, more. Bodies are being kept there, until they can be buried. The mayor tells the BBC that fighting between Ukrainian, and Russian forces has now reached the city center. Around 260 miles to the west of

that, the Russian army is reportedly being pushed back. The city of Mykolaiv is key to Russia's presumed plan to, eventually, take Russia's largest -- I'm sorry, Ukraine's largest port city, Odessa.

Russian warships have been stalking the coast over Odessa, for weeks now, threatening to strike it any moment. These ground forces have been bogged down, in the streets of Mykolaiv, where the fighting is fierce, and brutal, with heavy casualties, we are told, on both sides. Now, "The Wall Street Journal" reports that a Ukrainian counteroffensive has pushed Russian forces back, so much so that, miraculously, residents are attempting some sort of return to normal life.

Coffee shops, restaurants, bank branches, of all reopened. Buses and trams are operating. The local flower shop says business is good because Ukrainian soldiers are buying flowers. Supermarkets have even managed to restock. Residents are grocery shopping.

Now, of course, the question is, how long can this last? And with Russia, increasingly, resorting to air power to pummel Ukraine cities, a moment of peace can be shattered in an instant, anywhere in the city, anywhere in the country, really.

NBC News chief foreign correspondent, Richard Engel, filed this report from Kyiv, this evening.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

RICHARD ENGEL, NBC NEWS CHIEF FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): A missile exploded here in Kyiv around 8:00 a.m. this morning. No military targets, anywhere in sight. Just apartments, kindergarten, an elementary school, and a grocery. An entire community devastated in a split second.

Attacking apartment complexes like this is a terror campaign, to frighten Ukrainians into surrendering. But it's not working. And all the damage here, and across this country, is only convincing Ukrainians of the need to fight even harder or lose everything.

In front of her building, Natalia was having her first cup of coffee when, and suddenly, her window exploded and shards. Everything started crumbling. I felt the shock wave, and I fell on the floor, she says. Even covered in iodine for all of her cuts, she's optimistic.

Our wonderful boys and girls are fighting, and we will win. Our enemies, those damned occupiers, say we have some Nazism here. I do not understand what is happening in those brains of their ears.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

VELSHI: Those wild accusations of Nazism in Ukraine, Vladimir Putin was pushing them, once again. The scene, this giant CNN Moscow today, Putin is making their first public appearance since he launched his invasion of Ukraine over three weeks ago.

Tens of thousands of people packed into Moscow's largest stadium for Putin speech, though there were local reports that many of them were state workers who were bused in under orders from their bosses.

[21:05:08]

The event was held as an eight year anniversary of Russia seizure of Crimea, and Putin used to further his claims that he is liberating Ukraine from its genocidal, Nazi leaders, which is as nutty as it sounds.

Today at the United Nations, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N. took a swipe at Russia's increasingly paranoid, conspiratorial pronouncements.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

LINDA THOMAS-GREENFIELD, U.S. AMBASSADOR TO THE U.N.: Last week, we heard from the Russian representative a tirade of bizarre conspiracy theories. This week, we're hearing a whole lot more, where that came from, things that sound like they were forwarded to him on a chain email, from a dark corner of the Internet. President Biden has a word for this kind of talk -- malarkey.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

VELSHI: But, full of malarkey though they may be, today, the Kremlin demonstrated that nowhere in Ukraine is beyond its reach, at least from the sky. Black smoke, rising over the western Ukrainian city of Lviv today, after Russian missions struck a aircraft repair plant there. Lviv, 15 miles from Poland, largely untouched, as far, and the invasion. It was a hub for refugees who had been fleeing the eastern part of the country, and for humanitarian supplies, coming in. Just tonight, more large explosions have been heard in Lviv.

Joining us now, again, from Lviv, is NBC News Cal Perry.

My friend, you have heard some loud booms where you are long ago. What is the situation in Lviv?

CAL PERRY, NBC NEWS CORRESPONDENT: It is unclear. To be honest, and pull back the curtain for our viewers, this is a city that are under martial law, and under curfew. So, there is no moving around at night, there's no way to check it out but, the government here does not want to give the Russians anymore that they absolutely need to. So, the strikes this morning were put to assess strikes, quote/unquote, near the airport complex, again, the government does not want to let the Russians know they were successful in hitting targets.

There was initially six cruise missiles fired at the target using on the left side of the screen, air defenses not to move the missiles out. I share that information, because as possible, the booms we heard about 90 minutes ago, almost two hours, could have been air defenses, Ali.

VELSHI: Are there are concerns amongst the people in Lviv spreading to the western part of the country? That's where people went to, where they thought about how even Volodymyr Zelenskyy would be evacuated to Lviv, to be able to conduct the affairs of the government there. Is there considered this war is spreading west?

PERRY: So, there is not only concern, but preparations for it. The preparations we see on the ground are for a widened and further air campaign by the Russians. We see it doubling up of sandbanks. It's not just the government facilities, though, those do seem to be sort of braced, and ready for attacks, police stations, fire stations, government centers. It is also cultural things in the city, statues, paintings.

We've seen churches, and have sandbagged our, on the side of his screen. They've sandbagging the windows that are at street level. They are worried about some of these very famous windows, some of the stained glass that, as I said, are three or 400 years old. It is a city that is preparing for an intensified air campaign.

You still have, as you made it abundantly clear, the human trafficked. This flow of refugees, coming from places like Mariupol, where we see incredibly gruesome pictures of civilians, trapped, in basements, only outside for a few hours at best, like every third day, these mass graves. That is what people are fleeing.

And the renewed airstrikes, Ali, the airstrikes yesterday morning, the booms that I heard a few hours ago, this is only going to spur people who may have decided to settle here, in Lviv, people who found a place to stay with friends, family, or found empty rooms in the dormitory. This is only going to spur a second wave of refugees, a second wave of internally displaced people.

We are talking, again, over 3 million who have left this country. 1,300 intermediate needed, but as a campaign in the air widens, that numbers are only going to grow.

VELSHI: All right. Cal, I know you and your team know your way around this sort of thing. You've been in doing it for a long time, but I am worried about you. Stay safe, my friend. Cal Perry in Lviv. We'll continue to stay in touch with Cal as this develops.

Well, today, Russia surpassed North Korea, Syria, and Iran, becoming the country with the most sanctions against it in the world. More countries are turning away from Russia, sounds like a big deal.

But how much does that international pressure actually matter if China, one of the largest, strongest, and wealthiest countries in the world, is still willing to stand behind them?

Let me read you the opening lines of the U.S. readout of a video call between President Biden, and the Chinese president, Xi Jinping today. Quote: the conversation focused on Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, end quote. Short, simple, to the point. It would totally makes sense if that's what the head of this state -- head of state of the two most powerful nations in the world were discussing today.

On the other hand, China's readout of the exact same conversation reads like it was from an entirely conversation. It says China stands for peace in general, but never mentions the word "invasion". And like the Kremlin censored news article, it refers only to the, quote, situation in Ukraine, and there have been, quote, new major developments in the international landscape.

Far from admitting Russia's role as the aggressor here, China would only go so far as to say, the U.S., and NATO, should address the, quote, security concerns of both Russia, and Ukraine, end quote.

Of course, Russia had no valid security concerns from Ukraine. None. Absolutely zero. But China's deference toward Russia isn't coming out of nowhere.

Early last month, just weeks before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Russia and China agreed to a new 30-year deal, under which Russia would provide oil to China. China is the fastest growing major economy in the world. It means all the energy it can get.

And the deal included building a massive new oil pipeline between the countries, a very helpful thing if you're worried that the west might stop buying your biggest purchase. That same day, the countries released a joint statement about, quote, international relations entering a new era, end quote.

And the press, rightfully, zeroed in on which said there would be no limits to the two countries' friendship, and no forbidden areas of cooperation. And so, now, the question of forbidden areas of cooperation is being put to the test. So far, China has not directly condemned Russia's actions in Ukraine. The country has remained incredibly neutral, while much of the rest of the world has sanctioned, and stop trade with Russia, because of its actions.

In fact, Russia and China have maintained deep economic ties. But, the U.S. is trying to draw a line in the sand. The U.S. is trying to define, with the west sees, as a forbidden area of cooperation between China and Russia, and that is direct military support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Yesterday, Secretary of State Blinken told the press that China will bear responsibility for any actions it takes to support Russia's aggression and the U.S. will not hesitate to impose costs. It is a point the White House tells us Biden reiterated in detail, during his tour call with President Xi today. So, if China helped Russia militarily, the United States will hit them with some sort of economic punishment. It sounds simple, until you really think about it.

For instance, one of the things Russia has reportedly requested from China are non-perishable military food kits. Russia's military has been a logistical mess on the ground in Ukraine so far, and a lack of basic items like non-perishable food is part of why their advances into Ukraine keeps stalling.

So, would providing food to be against these rules? Would the punishments to China actually look like? China is a lot harder to impose trade restrictions on than Russia is. U.S. trade with Russia was paltry. China is among -- well, it's among America's largest trading partners.

Joining us now is Ambassador Gary Locke. He was the United States ambassador to China during the Obama administration, former governor of Washington state.

Ambassador, thank you for being with us tonight.

This gets complicated because it looks to the rest of the world like everybody is turning on Russia, but if China stays with Russia, Russia can hold out for a lot longer.

GARY LOCKE, FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO CHINA: Thank you very much, Ali.

China is certainly in a predicament because even the images that we have been seeing every day on our television sets is being broadcast to the Chinese people. So they're seeing the incredible destruction, violence, death and mayhem of Ukraine at the hands of the Russians.

At the same time, the Chinese government is still enunciating the Russian line that this is really the fault of the West and NATO for coming so close to the borders of Russia. So China is in a predicament, while they have long-standing ties with Russia and would like to displace the Western order invented or devised by the EU and the United States, nonetheless, the trade between China United States and the E.U. is times the amount of trade that it does with Russia.

[21:15:04]

So I think China is fearing economic sanctions from the West were it to provide military or even economic aid to Russia.

VELSHI: Look, American -- polls indicate that American citizens are okay with the economic sanctions against Russia, in the same in Europeans concerned about it because of the amount of trade with Russia, particularly, as it relates to energy.

At some point, economic sanctions against China, or some kind of a conflict with China on that front, that's something that's going to hit Americans in the pocketbook and they not set as well with.

LOCKE: That's correct, because you are already seeing within Europe some reservation about going after Russian oil exports, and natural gas to Europe, because they depend on those energy supplies to heat their homes, and to provide gasoline for their automobiles and to keep their factories going. That's why many of the sanctions have kind of gone around to avoid touching those exports of natural gas or energy that Europe depends on.

What has happened is that I think Russia and China were surprised startled by how swiftly the West and how extensively the West imposed sanctions, very broad range sanctions against Russia. But it's going to be more difficult to impose those same type of sanctions against China because for instance cutting Russia off the international payment financial system hurts those Russian companies and, of course, not many U.S. companies and European countries do trade with Russia.

However, if we were to kick China off of the international financial system, the SWIFT system by which transactions occur -- well, how will our wheat farmers, our soybean farmers, our port exporters get paid from China if they sell to China. If we stop all trade with China, where are we going to get our clothes, our shoes, our sporting goods, our tools so much of which is made in China that we buy at Macy's, Home Depot, Target, et cetera, et cetera?

So, there will be a huge impact to American consumers as well. The challenge then is for the Biden administration if China were to provide military or economic assistance to Russia in the invasion of Ukraine, how can the Biden administration have targeted sanctions going after specific companies or specific units of the Chinese government?

VELSHI: Ambassador, it is good to talk to you. Thanks very much for joining us.

Ambassador Gary Locke is the former United States ambassador to China, thank you for your time tonight, sir.

LOCKE: Thank you.

VELSHI: Well, still ahead tonight, we got a fascinating look at how the Ukrainian army is getting the much needed supplies that it needs, live armored pickup trucks, SUVs from outside the country. We're going to talk to the journalist who had the exclusive access to this mission, next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

[21:22:20]

VELSHI: This is a garage in Lithuania where volunteers are working around the clock to turn ordinary cars into battle-ready vehicles for Ukrainian soldiers to use on the front lines against Russian invaders. Now, here's how it works: the cars are bought from or donated by civilians looking to aid the Ukrainian people in any way that they can. Volunteers check the engines, retrofit them with armored plating and give them a new coat of green paint so that they're not going to stand out on the battlefield.

The vehicles are then piled up and driven south as fast as they can through Lithuania and Poland to a secure checkpoint on the Ukrainian border. So if someone asks you what a trucker convoy for freedom looks like, please show them this picture.

Now, one reason we know about this Ukrainian armored truck pipeline is thanks to incredible new reporting by "The Washington Post's" Steve Hendrix exploring how critical supplies are making their way to Ukraine from supportive neighboring countries. It's not just cars. These convoys are carrying all kinds of emergency supplies to Ukrainian soldiers on the front line, everything from generators and mobile kitchen units to surveillance drones and night vision gear.

The most important equipment making its way over the border, bulletproof vests and helmets to protect Ukrainian fighters from Russian bullets. Now once the supplies reach Ukraine, the mission quickly shifts from urgent to perilous.

Today, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov declared that anything carrying military supplies in Ukraine will be considered legitimate targets for Russian strikes. But Ukrainians seem to be willing to take the risk to get the supplies that they need.

As one Ukrainian lieutenant told "The Washington Post," quote: From the army, we get the gun and the ammunition and the uniform, but under the uniform, what we eat what keeps us safe how we move around and fight, that comes from the people. Our people and foreign people, end quote.

Joining us now is "The Washington Post" Jerusalem bureau chief Steve Hendrix who's the lead byline on the story.

Steve, thank you for agreeing to spend some time with us tonight and walk us through this.

Volunteers started these emergency supply lines back in 2014, after the invasion of Crimea. What happened between then and now? How are they able to scale this up for a war that is much bigger than the one that happened then?

STEVE HENDRIX, THE WASHINGTON POST, JERUSALEM BUREAU CHIEF: Well, the scaling up is happening you know as we speak. It's only been since the invasion that they went from a relatively small operation with a few people, kind of responding on requests to bring supplies in as the units in Ukraine ask for them.

Of course, in the last three weeks, the need has exploded but so has the support.

[21:25:05]

Ukraine -- I'm sorry, Lithuania, a country of under 3 million people has donated more than 18 million euros, almost \$20 million in the last three weeks and most of it has gone to this particular group that started in 2014 as you said, and they have quickly you know more than increased by more than tenfold the numbers of vehicles they're buying and converting and shipping, the amount of equipment they're buying, they're shopping all across Europe and China and North America to find bulletproof vests and helmets really basic supplies.

You know, the governments are dealing with the high-end weapon systems but the soldiers really need basic equipment and it's that need that these private volunteer operations are beginning to fill in a fairly impressive way.

VELSHI: What do they make of the idea that Sergey Lavrov said it today, but Vladimir Putin has said it many times, anybody basically helping the Ukrainian military is considered a legitimate target?

HENDRIX: Well, I think they have mixed feelings. One is this is -- this is not a secret process, but the location of some of the steps along the way they want to keep as quiet as possible, although they're fully aware that Russia knows what's going on in many cases. But the process itself, these are public campaigns. They need public support. That's why they gave us permission to let us embed with the process from beginning to end and for this particular.

They're taking a risk and they know it, but I think the risk as they perceive it isn't so much in Lithuania or transporting through Poland or even on the Polish border where the supplies are handed off, but it's once the soldiers begin taking them back to their battlefield positions in Ukraine. And we talked to several people this week for this story who had driven 11, 12, 15, 16 hours from the east of Ukraine to pick up these supplies we're turning around again to get back.

And a couple of the guys suggested to me that this is the least dangerous part of their lives these days. It's when they get back that they feel like they are in a pretty constant peril.

VELSHI: And the governments of Lithuania and Poland, by the way, the two places through which these convoys come are, in fact, the strongest NATO partners in terms of wanting to push back on Russia. They are -- these are governments and people who are actually worried about Russian expansion.

But what you're describing here are civilian efforts, not governmental efforts.

HENDRIX: Yeah, but the impulse is the same. The people -- the citizens of Lithuania that I talked to feel like the Ukrainian fighters are fighting a defensive battle for Lithuania, as well as for Ukraine.

They -- they are members of NATO. They know they are protected by Article 5, and then, you know, shield. But especially people who lived in the Soviet era can only imagine what Russia and Vladimir Putin have in mind for countries like Lithuania, a tiny Baltic country right on Russia's shadow if he prevails in Ukraine.

So they see this as their fight and I was very moved and very impressed by the depth of support, the flags that are everywhere, the restaurants that are raising money giving portions of their support. I happened to be there during Lithuania's own independence day recently when they -- when they did shed the Soviet cloak, and there were as many Ukrainian flags on display as Lithuanian flags. They really do see this as their fight.

VELSHI: Steve, thanks for your great reporting on this. It's an important story. Steve Hendrix is the Jerusalem bureau chief for "The Washington Post." We appreciate your time tonight.

HENDRIX: Thank you.

VELSHI: In just a minute, I speak with the chief of staff to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. That's next.

And later, we'll talk with the war photographer assigned to Kyiv, who is taking these incredible photos.

Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

[21:34:07]

VELSHI: As Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelenskyy spends his days overseeing the country's war effort and effort and soliciting help from Western allies, he's usually accompanied by his chief of staff and closest advisor, Andriy Yermak. The two have known each other for over a decade and together they're coordinating Ukraine's response at all levels to Russia's invasion.

Earlier this evening, I spoke to Andriy Yermak in the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv. I begin by asking him about his country's fight against a formidable enemy and what President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian people are doing to try to win this war.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

ANDRIY YERMAK, HEAD OF THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT: We continue to lose every days, our heroes, our people, but we are fighting. And we continue to fighting until the victory. What is necessary for victory?

[21:35:00]

I think we have enough brave, we have enough motivation for our people defend our lands. We need the very concrete things. We need help, we need continued help from our partners.

We need concretely weapons to continue fightings, and, finally, we need to close our sky, because it's impossible to see how every night and every day we can the Russians continue bombing and attack with civilians -- with civilians' buildings, residents and how every day, we lost the children, the woman's, the -- our people.

You know, about some very tragic things which happened during the last days. It's about the bombing of the drama theater in Mariupol in which thousands of the people tried to found the place for saving. It's last night it was bombing of the civilian houses, buildings in Kyiv, and we unfortunately, we -- every day -- can see these dramatic -- dramatic facts, dramatic photos and dramatics video of the -- our beautiful cities, our beautiful countries which now looks a very tragedy and it's impossible without emotions to see all of this.

VELSHI: That theater in Mariupol has been destroyed but it does seem that more than 100 people have been rescued from that theater. What -- what's the latest news that you have?

YERMAK: The last news that it's continue evacuation of the people. It's continued the working of this area, and we know about the -- a lot of people who was damaged during these attacks and we can't say finally the numbers of the people who is killed and who is -- was damaged.

VELSHI: What do you think Vladimir Putin wants out of Ukraine? Will he settle for anything other than taking over Ukraine?

YERMAK: You see it's very difficult to understand what in the head of the another person, especially this kind of the person. But I think that -- I don't know what wants Putin, I know that our people and this fact that now understand in all the world, that Ukrainians -- it's impossible to leave Ukrainians without freedoms, to -- and it's impossible to speak with Ukrainians in the language of ultimatums of capitulation or something else, because the freedom in our blood.

And we never going for -- we never compromise for our independence, for our integrity for our sovereignty. It's impossible and this is unacceptable. And we show to the older world that we continue to fighting and all the people, it doesn't matter.

From the young people, up to the all people, everybody it's -- absolutely in good mood. They very optimistic and they very believe in our country and they very believe in our victory.

VELSHI: Andriy Yermak, thank you for your time today. Mr. Yermak is the chief of staff to Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelenskyy. We know how busy you are and we appreciate that you've been willing to talk to our viewers and help them understand what's going on in your country right now and as you discussed what you hope will be happening in the future. So thank you, sir.

YERMAK: Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you for the support and help.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

VELSHI: Well, heartbreaking images showing the devastation in Ukraine were taken by the award winning photojournalist, Marcus Yam. Marcus joins us next to discuss his photos and the importance of capturing wartime, after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

[21:43:58]

VELSHI: The war in Ukraine started 23 days ago, but judging by the destruction we're seeing in on cities all across the country, we would think this assault has been going on much longer than that. Entire residential zones are being bombed, schools, hospitals, bars, shops, museums, theaters -- all of them, gone.

In this war, Russia is apparently making no distinction. Its forces are attacking everything and everyone in its path, and the evidence is in these photos.

This one was taken hours ago in the capital city of Kyiv. This is someone's living room. It was destroyed by a Russian bombardment. The owner, clearly in shock, covers his mouth, while taking in the destruction.

Then there's this photo of an older man looking at what is left of the building that he used to live in in the Obolon district north of Kyiv. It's almost as if he's saying goodbye.

These are images of entire neighborhoods now turned into frontlines of the war of people, soldiers, doing what they can, using what they can to protect what's left, trying to survive as the sounds of bombs echo through entire apartment buildings, hiding inside their homes, behind windows, protecting with they can, and looking to the outside world, their new world, with absolute fear.

[21:45:14]

All of these photos I've just shown you were taken by "The Los Angeles Times" photojournalist Marcus Yam. He's been in Ukraine since the beginning of this conflict and is keeping a photo diary of life in times of war.

This entry from the past Sunday, March 13th, includes the photos that you see now it reads, quote, dimness sustains, ferrying souls to a broken bridge, a gentle kiss to reassure, dog paralyzed with fear, bombardment reaches beyond, dark smoke paints sky, a journalist killed, daylight tears.

Joining us now, "Los Angeles Times" foreign correspondent and award-winning photojournalist Marcus Yam joining us from the capital city of Kyiv in Ukraine.

Marcus, thank you so much for being with us.

Your photographs are at once illuminating and incomprehensible for the pain that they capture. If you don't mind, I'd like to take our viewers through a few of them and this one is one of a local resident sort of packing in and trying to clean up a home in a residential building caused by what authorities call a Russian bombardment. This was on March 15th. It's an image of a man sort of taking things off his sofa.

MARCUS YAM, FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT, LOS ANGELES TIMES: Correct, I had spoken to that man very briefly and he said it was his -- his blanket that he wanted to save. There was shards of glass all over it, debris, and I was kind of amazed that he still was willing to dust it off and take it out with him, you know?

People hold on to things that they consider parts and pieces of their lives and the bombardment we've seen the last couple of days showcases Russia's scorched-earth policy. They've killed more than 200 civilians in Kyiv alone, and it's just awful, just awful. It's been a very, very long, you know, 20-something days and we're all, you know, Ukrainians are all very, very exhausted.

And I've spoken to so many people who've you know echoed the same sentiment.

VELSHI: Marcus, as I see people arriving here in Budapest or when I was on the border and watching people coming in, many of them would come in with dogs and cats, their pets, in addition to their children. You took a picture on March 13th of a man named Andrei Kulik (ph) and he is in the middle of the street with a dog.

Can you tell me what's going on here?

YAM: That neighborhood was just bombarded the night before and Andrei's dog refused to move and was paralyzed. Andrei wanted to evacuate and couldn't bring his dog with him, and the dog refused to go anywhere. So, Andrei took a moment you know put everything down put his head to the dog's head reassured the dog that everything was going to be okay and eventually the dog relented and was led back into the home and Andrei had left the dog behind.

VELSHI: Wow, that's heartbreaking.

There's a picture from today's photo diary, which is much more of the kind of thing that uh people are used to seeing when they think about war. It's a group of soldiers carrying something. That something is a sheet -- a fabric that has a dead body in it.

YAM: Correct. I had seen -- I had walked into the scene and immediately stumbled into the dead body and I was just very shocked to see you know the position of the body. I mean, the hands -- his hands were together, it looked like he was asleep. I only -- I only hoped and prayed that it was painless, when it all happened.

VELSHI: I don't know -- I mean -- I don't know how to measure what's more sad. Those images or this next image that was also from today's photo diary of a man who did not die but he has come back to his home.

We can't see his face, but the caption suggests that he is crying.

YAM: Correct. This is a gentleman named Nick and this is his bedroom he told me and he would keep coming back to his bedroom, back and forth, back and forth from helping his other family members out, but he would just come back, take a peek, come back and go come back, take a peek, and eventually from time to time weep and look for things that, you know, try to hold on to something and eventually, eventually picked up you know bags of candy to take with him.

It just goes to show like he didn't know what to do with all this. I mean, his bedroom was just blown open.

[21:50:02]

VELSHI: He didn't know what to do and I have to tell you, as I look through your photographs, it's kind of hard for us to keep it together as we look at them because they so graphically capture what's happening there. How do you manage, Marcus? How do you deal with this?

I know you've done this a lot before. How do you take in this grief and this tragedy and process it?

YAM: I -- you know, I'm going to be honest. I haven't figured that out -- I've been compartmentalizing as much as I can. I remind myself I have a job -- I have a job to do and, you know, I can't just give -- you know, give in to my emotions just yet because it's not about me. It's about -- you know, the suffering of civilians and it's about the -- you know, unjustness of this whole situation.

Yeah, I mean, I have to push it all aside and we try our best. I mean, like I said, I'm only human but I -- we forge forward.

VELSHI: Yeah. Well, it is only humans we have who are covering this war and taking those images and bearing witness for the world. So please look after yourself, Marcus. We appreciate the work that you've done.

The award-winning photojournalist for "The Los Angeles Times", Marcus Yam.

I've encountered some incredibly resilient Ukrainian refugees here in Hungary. Equally, I've met some remarkable Hungarians who by their actions have restored a certain faith and hope in humanity, a hospital with a history of stepping up to people displaced is next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

[21:56:13]

VELSHI: Nearly 300,000, that's the number of refugees the UNHCR says have now arrived here in Hungary. Impossibly large number, but they do not tell the stories of the highly specific, individual needs of every one of those people, who arrived here with literally all they can carry. Unclear about how they will ever see home again.

But that's not a question for them to answer today. Today, they need the basics.

As you know, this country's government was downright awful to the Syrian refugees. Even then, many people in Hungary stepped up to help the displaced Syrians, including the organizers of a group called Migration Aid. Now, they are at it again this time for the Ukrainians.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

VELSHI (voice-over): Budapest, a river city, where a kaleidoscope of architecture from Romanesque to Renaissance rises from the streets. A city of 1.7 million people now rising to thousands of new residents, residents who are refugees, arriving from Ukraine.

MARTON ELODI, MIGRATION AID ORGANIZER: Everything you see here are coming from the nations, from my friends and communities.

VELSHI: On the outskirts of the city, a local nonprofit have rushed to transform an office building into a hospital for refugees. Food and shelter for up to 300 people.

ELODI: So, for example, we have up to two person bedroom here. This is one of the smallest rooms. And they would also have their own toilets, and shower.

VELSHI: Privacy and comfort, a play room lets kids colorful imaginations roam.

Marton Elodi is one of the organizers who helped get the doors open, just a few days ago.

ELODI: Currently, we have 110 people here. We expect that these numbers will go up, as the trains from the east will arrive.

VELSHI: Maryna Bidna arrived with her family by train from Mykolaiv, Ukraine. They're staying for a few days, trying to figure out how to get to Germany, where they don't have friends or family.

MARYNA BIDNA, UKRAINIAN REFUGEE (through translator): We are going to Munich, and hoping to get a job there, because it is a big city, so there are a lot of possibilities.

VELSHI: Across town, the workshop restaurant is serving a different need, fresh hot meals, right next door to Budapest Ukrainian Cultural Center.

ANASTASIIA KHARKO, UKRAINIAN REFUGEE: It's heartbreaking to hear these stories, and how they have left the family behind, who cannot come with them. They are just lost and, they don't know what to do. They're just seeking kindness.

VELSHI: Kindness, from people who understand. Anastasia Kharko left her family behind in Ukraine two weeks ago.

KHARKO: Just couldn't sit, and wait, and it is constantly news. It was driving me crazy, and I thought that the best thing to do is to help.

VELSHI: She is now volunteering at the restaurant, and his families eat, Angelina Kaserova (ph) has started an art therapy program. She's a psychotherapist who came to Budapest with her two children. Her husband is back in Ukraine, as well.

She showed us these drawings, that reveal both children's trauma, and truth.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: This is boy. It is my family. His mother, of course, he's strong.

VELSHI: And while across Budapest, we found people in need of rebuilding their lives. Like the buildings that rise above the streets, the Ukrainians we met say they will rise again.

KHRYSTYNA PROMINSKA, UKRAINIAN REFUGEE: You can see how Ukrainians fight. I guess everyone in this world realize what it means to be Ukrainian.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

VELSHI: Well, people are, certainly, seeing what it means to be Ukrainian, as they continue to fight tirelessly for their home country. People are also seeing what it means to be of service to refugees. And that's a lesson we can all take with us going forward.

That does it for us tonight. I will see you again tomorrow, 8:00 a.m. Eastern, on my show, "VELSHI".

It's time for "THE LAST WORD WITH LAWRENCE O'DONNELL".

Good evening, Lawrence.

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