



Optimism in Moscow as it takes on the West

Russia making strides in its mission to challenge U.S.-led financial system

BY CATHERINE BELTON

Russia is increasingly confident that deepening economic and diplomatic ties with China and the Global South will allow it to challenge the international financial system dominated by the United States and undermine the West, according to Kremlin documents and interviews with Russian officials and business executives.

Russia has been buoyed by its success in holding off a Western-backed Ukrainian counteroffensive followed by political stalemates in Washington and Brussels over continued funding for Kyiv. In Moscow's view, the U.S. backing of Israel's invasion of Gaza has damaged Washington's standing in many parts of the world. The confluence of events has led to a surge of optimism about Russia's global position.

Officials in Moscow point to growing trade with China, military cooperation with Iran, diplomatic outreach in the Arab world and the expansion of the BRICS grouping of major emerging economies — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — to include Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Ethiopia.

The BRICS expansion demonstrated the group's "growing authority and role in world affairs," and its work will focus on "sovereign equality," Russian President Vladimir Putin said in a Jan. 1 statement as Russia assumed the chairmanship of the group. The Kremlin has begun to refer to itself as part of the "Global Majority."

Internal Russian Security Council documents obtained by a European intelligence service and reviewed by The Washington Post show that the Kremlin convened meetings in 2022 and 2023 on ways to undermine the dollar's role as the world's reserve currency. The ultimate goal, one

SEE RUSSIA ON A19



A chance encounter at a N.Y. playground leaves a father asking, 'What is justice now?'

RIPPLES OF HATE

BY RUBY CRAMER WITH PHOTOGRAPHY BY VICTOR J. BLUE IN NEW YORK

There was a woman walking toward him, but he didn't recognize her. They were at a basketball court on a Tuesday morning in Brooklyn, just after 10 a.m. — two strangers at a playground. The sun was out. It was warm. Ashish Prashar, 40, had taken off his jacket and laid it on the ground. He watched his son, who was 18 months old, standing near the three-point line, happy, babbling, fascinated by an older boy playing basketball. Maybe the boy was this woman's son, Ash thought, and now she was coming closer, and she began to speak.

The tone of her voice surprised him. It was firm and direct.

Two weeks from now, in a courtroom, a prosecutor would summarize what Ash said he heard:

"You support Hamas."

"They kill babies."

"Your baby should die."

"You're a terrorist."

That morning, it was one month into the Israel-Gaza war, and as the woman came closer, Ash asked himself what was happening. He scanned the playground, and now the facts of the situation came to order in his mind: Around his neck, he was wearing a kaffiyeh, a Palestinian scarf. He and his son had brown skin. They were not Palestinian — Ash was

SEE HATE ON A12

Ashish Prashar with his son at Edmonds Playground in New York's Brooklyn borough, where Ash filmed the two getting attacked by a woman in November. Ash was wearing a kaffiyeh, his scarf, during the time of the attack as well.

Border U-turn exposes failings

SURGE GREW UNDER BIDEN'S POLICIES

President shifts course as reelection bid takes flak

BY NICK MIROFF AND TOLUSE OLORUNNIPA

President Biden's surprise declaration Friday that he would "shut down" the southern border when illegal crossings surge to overwhelming levels illustrates how his many other efforts to address immigration have fallen short of their goals.

Biden signed more executive orders related to immigration than any other topic on his first day in office. He's taken more than 500 executive actions since then, already surpassing former president Donald Trump's four-year total, according to a recent tally by the nonpartisan Migration Policy Institute (MPI).

But one of Biden's most active areas of policymaking has become one of his biggest vulnerabilities to reelection. The president's management of the southern border and immigration is his worst-rated issue in polls, and record numbers of illegal crossings have galvanized Republicans, undermined the president's push for Ukraine aid and played to the perceived strengths of Trump, the GOP front-runner.

Several of the Biden administration's signature initiatives intended to make the immigration system fairer and more orderly have stalled out or remained too limited to significantly curb illegal entries and reduce chaos at the border, according to analysts, and current and former administration officials.

"This is the area where the gap between the president and Trump is the widest, and where the country seems to have least confidence in the president," said Muzaffar

SEE BORDER ON A10

Stalemate: A debate over "parole" is holding up aid for Ukraine. **A11**

ELECTION 2024

Telling her abortion-ban story — on the campaign trail

Personal trauma pushes Tennessee day-care provider into political arena, and she's not alone

BY MOLLY HENNESSY-FISKE IN CLARKSVILLE, TENN.

Framed ultrasounds hang next to Allie Phillips's mantel, a shrine to the child she never had: delicate silver necklaces and receiving blankets embroidered with the name Miley Rose, beside a tiny pink urn containing fetal ashes.

It's here, by the fireplace, where Phillips runs her in-home day care, greets her mechanic husband at the end of his workday and watches their daughter play with the family's pit bull rescue. It's also here where she's coordinating her campaign for the state legislature, motivated by the trauma of seeking an abortion while pregnant with Miley Rose.

Phillips had been overjoyed by the prospect of another little girl. Then, at about 19 weeks, a routine ultrasound revealed devastating problems: Amniotic fluid supporting the fetus had drained; its lungs, heart, brain and other organs were

SEE CANDIDATE ON A6



STACY KRANITZ FOR THE WASHINGTON POST



ALLIE PHILLIPS

An ultrasound, right, revealed problems that, due to Tennessee's near-total abortion ban, led Allie Phillips to an out-of-state clinic. The resulting trauma inspired her to run for the state legislature.

Health focus: Biden aims to boost access to reproductive care. **A3**

Law firms roll out red carpet to snag Supreme Court clerks

Six-figure bonuses, other perks to recruit lawyers prized for experience

BY TOBI RAJI

Last spring, as the Supreme Court wrapped up oral arguments for what was shaping up to be a blockbuster term, the law firm Jones Day invited a group of law clerks to dinner at Del Mar, an upscale restaurant on the D.C. waterfront.

At the dinner, the law clerks traded small talk with Jones Day lawyers over the restaurant's Spanish seafood cuisine and bottles of wine. While jovial on its face, the Monday-night dinner was like other recruiting events in Washington: The firm and its prospective hires were vetting each other.

So goes the courtship of Supreme Court law clerks by Washington's top law firms. Only around three dozen law clerks work for the justices during each one-year term, which means these

lawyers — and their unparalleled knowledge of the court — are in incredibly high demand. Jones Day, the leader in the race to recruit and hire as many clerks as possible, announced last month that it snagged eight law clerks, all of whom worked for conservative justices during the term that began in October 2022.

But they don't come cheap.

During the courting process, the city's top law firms treat this elite group of lawyers to perks like an expensive dinner at the Wharf or Penn Quarter or a trip to a baseball game or spa. The recruitment is so competitive that signing bonuses for Supreme Court law clerks have reached a new high — \$500,000, according to a spokeswoman for law firm Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher. Such a sum far exceeds the salaries paid to the justices — the clerks' former bosses — who are paid slightly less than \$300,000 a year.

The bonuses — alongside annual starting salaries of more than \$200,000, which alone are nearly triple Americans' median household income — are the product of a decades-long competition among

SEE CLERKS ON A8

METRO

Divisive project in Chevy Chase advances: a new library with housing.

ARTS & STYLE

How "Days of Wine and Roses" went from a 1962 film to Broadway.



BOOK WORLD

First full John Lewis biography details the life of the civil rights giant.

BUSINESS

Some companies are "greenwashing" food to ease your climate guilt.



SPORTS

When she's entering an NFL game, Taylor Swift is just like us.

TRAVEL

Dining at the best restaurant in one of America's worst airports.

\$167

SUNDAY COUPON INSERTS

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