RUSSIA & EURASIA STUDIES CENTRE

Will Russia Invade Ukraine? Moscow's Threat to European Security

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Executive Summary

Russian President Vladimir Putin has issued an ultimatum to the West, demanding written "security guarantees"[1] that there will be no further NATO expansion eastwards.[2] While this demand is primarily targeted against Ukraine, it also applies to Georgia, Finland and Sweden. The US, UK and NATO have rejected these red lines; they do not accept that Russia has a right to an exclusive sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, or to dictate terms that destroy Ukraine's sovereignty. They will not sign the "security guarantees" that Putin is demanding.

Russia has deployed approximately 100,000 troops[3] to its Ukrainian border, and US intelligence estimates that this number will rise to 175,000[4] by the end of the month. Although this is a significant mobilisation with a clear intention of putting military pressure on Ukraine and the West, military analysts believe that any Russian force would need three times as many troops to launch a successful full-scale invasion.[5] Oleksiy Danilov, Secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, said Russia would need between 500,000 and 600,000 troops on the Ukrainian border "in order to keep the situation under control in the event of an offensive".[6]

Russia's military build-up on the Ukrainian border and the weaponisation of migrants on the Belarusian border[7] with Poland, Lithuania and Latvia should be

seen as elements of a wider strategy of hybrid warfare against Western democracies. The European Parliament has described Russia as "using a confluence of threats, such as military, digital, energy and disinformation" to cause "chaos and confusion".[8]

Uncertainty over whether the build-up on the Ukrainian border is posturing or preparation is part of this strategy. A conflict at any scale would be deeply destabilising for European security. New Western sanctions against Russia would mimic those imposed against Iran, with a corresponding impact on its economy and finances. Germany and the EU would come under pressure to not certify Nord Stream 2, and Russia would once again find itself ostracised internationally.

A full-blown war with Ukraine, which has the third largest army in Europe, would impact on the neighbouring states of Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania – and thereby present risk of spill-over into four NATO and EU member states. In any of the scenarios outlined in this report, the UK would not be insulated from the economic and political disruption caused and would face considerable moral and diplomatic pressure to respond.

Several policy options are open to Britain and its NATO allies to respond to both the current posturing and an invasion. Putin's demand for a veto over NATO's expansion should be rejected under any circumstances. As a strong advocate of NATO enlargement, Britain should work with its partners to demand that Moscow respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbours, and reaffirm Ukraine's right to join NATO, should both parties agree.

Britain and NATO should be willing to designate Russia as a terrorist state, following the lead of Washington which recently introduced the Guaranteeing Ukraine's Autonomy by Reinforcing its Defense Act (GUARD Act). This act will label Moscow "as a state sponsor of terrorism in the event its forces further invade Ukraine".[9]

Britain is already a major provider of military training, cooperation and assistance to Ukraine, and is involved in the reconstruction of its navy through the provision of assistance for the construction of eight missile boats and two minesweepers. In the event of an invasion, this military assistance should be materially scaled up and, under 'business as usual', it should be continued to further dissuade Russian aggression.

Similarly, in the event of any of the four Russian invasion scenarios outlined in this

research paper, sanctions should be expanded to the level of those imposed on Iran. Diplomatically, Britain should push for the adoption of a Europe-wide Magnitsky Act to punish human rights offenders, and the suspension of Nord Stream 2.

The remainder of this report is divided into six sections. The first outlines Putin's ultimatum – what he wants and why now. The second analyses Russia's nationalistic view of Ukraine. The third outlines Russia's strategic objectives in Ukraine and how Putin expects to achieve them. The fourth analyses scenarios for a Russian invasion or military incursion into Ukraine. The fifth investigates threats to Western security arising from a Russian invasion of Ukraine. The final section provides proposals of how the West could respond to a Russian invasion.

Putin's Ultimatum

The massing of Russian forces on the Ukrainian border is intended to back up a *de facto* ultimatum issued by Moscow to the West. The ultimatum was described in stark terms by the Russian Foreign Ministry: "The West has two paths: to take seriously Russia's proposals on security guarantees, or to deal with a military-technical alternative."[10] Putin's ultimatum consists of three elements:

A Halt to the Eastward Expansion of NATO: Putin is demanding written guarantees against further NATO expansion to the East, and the denial of accession to the alliance of any former USSR member states.[11] Although primarily targeted against Ukraine and Georgia, this demand also affects Sweden and Finland. Russia is demanding: "Nato and the US must not station any additional military personnel or weapons outside the countries where they were stationed as of May 1997 (prior to the accession to the alliance of Eastern European countries) except in exceptional cases with the consent of Russia."[12] Russia is also demanding that NATO does not militarily cooperate with, and does not establish military bases in, Ukraine and former Soviet republics in the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

US President Joseph Biden and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg have rejected Putin's red lines,[13] with Biden's spokesman stating that the President "stands by the proposition that countries should be able to freely choose who they associate with".[14] Speaking on a visit to Lithuania, German Defence Minister Christine Lambrecht rejected Russia's right to dictate to NATO or Ukraine.[15]

The Implementation of the Minsk-2 Ceasefire Agreement: Moscow blames

Ukraine for a lack of progress in the peace process in the Donbas,[16] with Putin describing President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's proposals for updating and revising the Minsk ceasefire agreements as the "destructive line of Kyiv".[17] Zelenskyy's proposals are reflective of his country's public opinion, with only 12% of Ukrainians believing the Minsk Accords should be implemented in their current format.[18]

Guarantees Against Military Deployments in Ukraine: Russian leaders have expressed concerns that NATO weapons systems will be installed in Ukraine. They have also demanded guarantees that former USSR territory will not be used for military purposes.[19] Further requests for guarantees against missile deployment are somewhat irrelevant; NATO members have never deployed offensive missiles in Ukraine and the West continues to desist from such transfers. Those materials provided – such as Javelin anti-tank weapons or drones are defensive, and unable to strike targets within Russia from range. Germany and the Netherlands have blocked the transfer of even defensive weaponry to Ukraine. The only countries willing to transfer offensive capability are the three Baltic states. Ukraine's requests for air and missile defence systems "have gone unanswered despite assurances that "NATO stands with Ukraine."[20] Ironically, Russia's demand ignores Ukraine's domestic missile capabilities which continue to develop and with a range of 300 kms could theoretically hit targets in Russia.[21]

Russian Nationalist View of Ukraine

Russia and Ukraine have been independent states since the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. While Ukraine was reconciled to the borders it inherited from the USSR, Russia has always been an irredentist power with an unclear understanding of what territories constitute "Russia" and an unwillingness to limit its understanding of "Russia" to the confines of the Russian Federation.

The origin of the current crisis lies in the belief of Russian leaders that Ukraine is a "Russian land" torn away by Western conspiracies and intrigue, a "territory under external management by foreign forces".[22] In a recent article,[23] Putin emphasised his unwillingness to accept that Ukraine is a sovereign and independent country. As Russian political consultant Tatiana Stanovaya puts it, Putin "thinks you need to talk to the Americans so they recognise Ukraine as a Russian zone of influence and let us do whatever we deem necessary there."[24] This obsession with Ukraine has driven the Russian–Ukrainian war for the last eight years.[25]

Putin has lamented the dissolution of the USSR as the demise of "historical Rus-

sia", a common refrain among those who conflate "Russia" and the Soviet Union.[26] Russian nationalists demand an exclusive sphere of influence in Eurasia, consisting of the former Soviet Union minus the three Baltic states. Presidents Yeltsin, Medvedev and Putin form a consensus on Russia's "right" to this, or at least share an "implicit assumption of entitlement and exceptionalism".[27] In demanding an exclusive sphere of influence, Russia categorises its neighbours as possessing limited sovereignty.

This entitlement has never been accepted by the West but has widespread resonance in Russian society. Former Russian President Dmitri Medvedev has stated that he sees discussions with Ukrainian President Zelenskyy as a waste of time: "it makes no sense for us to deal with the vassals. The Kremlin believes 'business must be done with the overlord'; that is, the US."[28] Similarly, the general population has high support for the Kremlin's narrative in the Ukraine conflict. Some 68% of the Russian population blame the US/NATO and Ukraine for its escalation.[29] Russians of all age groups played down blaming the Kremlin.[30]

This desire for an exclusive sphere of influence has meant Russia has always opposed the involvement in or enlargement of international and Western organisations to Eurasia, and in particular any potential enlargement of NATO. The decision to admit the three Baltic states in 2002, only three years into Putin's first term in office, was not well received.

Similarly, Russia was not overtly hostile towards the EU until it unveiled the Eastern Partnership in 2009. Aimed at former Soviet republics such as Ukraine, this programme was viewed by the Kremlin as encroaching into Russia's sphere of influence. Although the Eastern Partnership offered integration rather than membership, as any country can be a member of only one customs union, any association agreement would preclude membership of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) Customs Union (renamed the Eurasian Economic Union in 2015) and thereby drag a nation's economic centre of gravity westward.

While NATO has never actually offered Ukraine membership or entry into a Membership Action Plan (MAP), the decision to promise eventual membership to Ukraine and Georgia in 2008 led to a significant deterioration in relations with Moscow and clearly played into Russian strategy in the subsequent war with Georgia. As former President Medvedev has stated, if Russian soldiers "had faltered back in 2008, the geopolitical situation would be different now... And a number of countries which [NATO] tried to deliberately drag into the alliance, would

have most likely already been part of it now."[31]

While the underlying motive has remained constant, the timing of events requires some explanation. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told the December 2021 meeting of the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) that ignoring Putin's three ultimatums would lead to Russia taking "countermeasures to rectify the military/strategic balance".[32] Former Kremlin advisor Sergey Markov explained: "The choice facing Putin is that if he waits, the security situation for Russia will continue to change for the negative." Therefore, "Better war now. War later is worse."[33]

This dynamic is driven by US and British defence support to Ukraine, including upgrades to naval assets and bases on the Black Sea coastline; Turkish military cooperation in the modernisation of Ukraine's armed forces; and domestic improvements undertaken under Presidents Petro Poroshenko and Zelenskyy.[34] Numbering between 255,000 and 280,000, Ukraine's standing army is the third largest in Europe after the Russian and French.

The Russian view is that, in the past, a strategy of threatened, hybrid and actual warfare has successfully halted what it sees as Western interference in an area that it sees as its exclusive sphere of influence. The following section examines this strategy as applied in Ukraine up to the present day.

Background: Russian Strategic Objectives in Ukraine and How Putin Expects to Achieve Them

Russia is insistent on implementing the ceasefire agreements reached in Minsk in September 2014 and February 2015 to achieve the twin goals of "Bosnianisation" and "Finlandisation" of Ukraine.

"Bosnianisation" would be achieved by transforming Ukraine into a highly decentralised federal republic with a weak central government. Russia would secure a position to veto domestic and foreign affairs through its two proxy entities in the Donbas – the so-called Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR).

"Finlandisation" would be brought about by Ukraine dropping its goals of NATO and EU membership and accepting "neutrality" as a buffer state within Russia's sphere of influence in Eurasia. Russia's understanding of "neutrality" has nothing in common with the internationally accepted norm; Ukraine was a neutral ("non-

bloc") country in 2014 when Russia invaded and occupied Crimea. Towards this goal, Russia would seek Ukraine's withdrawal from the Eastern Partnership and, as it did in 2012–2014, pressure it to join the Eurasian Economic Union.

Ukrainian support for NATO and EU membership is high and any attempt to remove these two goals would be met with widespread protests. The Euromaidan Revolution began in November 2013 when President Viktor Yanukovych dropped plans to sign an Association Agreement with the EU. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba has ruled out dropping the goal of NATO membership.[35]

While Russia is convinced it can use military pressure to force Kyiv into alignment, and indeed believes it has already succeeded with this tactic, Kuleba has rejected providing any "guarantees" to Russia, instead insisting "that it's Russia who has to guarantee that it will not continue its aggression against any country."[36] If NATO agrees to give Putin his demand for "written security guarantees" it will have *de facto* given the Kremlin a veto over its policies.

This response is partly driven by past experience of Russian behaviour. In 1994, Ukraine agreed to give up the world's third largest nuclear arsenal and join the Non-Proliferation Treaty in exchange for the security assurances provided in the Budapest Memorandum by the UK, US and Russian Federation (France and China also signed separately). These five countries agreed to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia's subsequent 2014 invasion of Crimea was a clear violation, and in this context any demand for "written security guarantees" is highly provocative.

It also denies the Kremlin the ability to provide credible assurances. Unless Russia withdraws from Crimea and ends its military aggression, Moscow will be unable to sway Ukrainian public opinion; some 81% of Ukrainians hold a negative view of Putin[37] and 57% have a negative view of Russia (up from only 13% in 2014).[38]

Four Scenarios for Russian Military Intervention

The threat of a full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine is a continuation of a conflict which began in 2014, when Moscow annexed Crimea and began providing covert support to separatist forces for the creation of a "New Russia" in southern-eastern Ukraine.[39]

This entity failed to receive Ukrainian public support, and only in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine were pro-Russian proxies able to establish a base with

the support of two Russian military incursions in August 2014 and January 2015. When most Russian forces withdrew, some 5,000 to 10,000 military and intelligence officers remained to train and command a larger force of 35,000 locals and Russian nationalist mercenaries which form the 1st and 2nd Corps of the so-called DNR and LNR respectively. These 2 corps are under the command of Russia's Southern Military District. These heavily equipped armed forces are larger in size than the armed forces of seventeen of NATO's thirty members.

While the position of the Russian state throughout has been that the conflict in eastern Ukraine is a "civil war" and there are no Russian armed forces present outside Crimea, these denials are disbelieved by Western governments, NATO, the EU, the Council of Europe,[40] and indeed the Russian legal system; in December 2021 a court in the Russian city of Rostov-on-the-Don passed a sentence on corruption in which documents inadvertently wrote about food sent "to the military units of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation stationed on the territory of the DPR and LPR". [41]

Russia invaded Ukraine in August 2014 and January 2015 to force Ukraine to sign the Minsk 1 and Minsk ceasefire agreements respectively. Eight years on, Russian troops have massed in a state of apparent battle-readiness twice in 2021, the first being in April, and the current build-up from the end of the year. A full-scale invasion of Ukraine would qualitatively change the nature of what has been a relatively low-intensity conflict.

A leaked US intelligence report[42] suggests that there is a genuine threat of such an invasion in early 2022. This intelligence is of sufficient quality to have persuaded EU and NATO doubters of the seriousness of the Russian threat when it was circulated to the November 2021 meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Riga.[43]

While it is possible that the manoeuvres are designed to attempt to force movement from Ukraine, NATO and the US, the assumption that Moscow's bark is bigger than its bite would be a bold one given previous experience of Russian behaviour.

There are four main scenarios for Russian military intervention.

1. Repeat of the 2008 Georgian Invasion: Repeated military provocations by South Ossetian proxy forces led to intervention by Georgian troops in the frozen conflict zone. Russia then deployed forces to protect Russian citizens: many

South Ossetians hold Russian passports. Russia's military intervention was followed with "declarations of independence" by South Ossetia and Abkhazia which were recognised by Russia.

Russia's foreign intelligence service (SVR) has openly boasted how Russia would like to repeat this scenario against "Kyiv's sense of permissiveness and impunity".[44] Ukrainian officials have accused Russia of sending tanks and snipers to eastern Ukraine to "provoke return fire", providing Russia with a pretext to respond as it did in Georgia.[45] Belarus is joining Russia's chorus of complaints about Ukraine's alleged "provocations". Ukraine's military attaché was summoned on 5 December 2021 to receive a Belarusian protest of alleged repeated violations of Belarusian airspace by Ukrainian aircraft. In April 2019, Russia began issuing passports to Ukrainian citizens in the DNR and LNR and by December 2021 had distributed one million, covering just over a third of the 2.7 million inhabitants.

Russia's repeat of the 2008 Georgian scenario would have two goals. The first would be to repeat the "independence" of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, but this time in the Donbas with the subsequent integration of the DNR and LNR into Russia. Russian nationalists have clamoured for the Kremlin to take this step since 2014, and 65% of Russians would support the incorporation of the DNR and LNR into Russia if its inhabitants requested this.[46] The second would be to destroy as much as possible of Ukraine's army and military equipment located in forward positions in Ukrainian-controlled Donbas.

2. Enlarging Russian-Occupied Donbas: Under this framework, Moscow would seek to enlarge the DNR and LNR to the remainder of the Donbas region; that is, all the Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts*. Currently, the DNR and LNR control approximately 40% of the Donbas. Important strategic prizes would be the port of Mariupol, and Kramatorsk, the Ukrainian military headquarters in the Donbas. Kharkiv, although not in the Donbas, could also be targeted in such a military operation.

3. Revival of "New Russia": A significant step up would see the revival of the 2014 "New Russia" project seeking to establish a Russian protectorate and buffer state over southern-eastern Ukraine. The port of Odesa, with additional Russian forces attacking from occupied Crimea, would be an important strategic objective in order to cut Ukraine off from the Black Sea. In south-eastern Ukraine the cities of Dnipro and Zaporizhzhya, which have large military-industrial plants, would be targeted. The creation of a "New Russia" would effectively divide Ukraine into two parts along the Dnipro River.

4. Full-Scale Invasion: Despite sensationalist Western reports, such as in the German *Bild* newspaper,[47] this is the least likely of the four potential Russian military scenarios. An invading force is usually assumed to need a 3:1 advantage in troops for it to be successful, which in the Ukrainian case would require 500,000–600,000 Russian troops – more than half its standing army and double the number of troops projected to be in place by January 2022.[48] While Kyiv has symbolic importance for Russian nationalists, it is doubtful that Moscow is preparing for a conflict of this magnitude.

A full-scale invasion would require simultaneous incursions from the east (DNR and LNR), south (Crimea) and north (Belarus). Belarus is the closest and therefore biggest threat to the capital city of Kyiv. In November 2021, Russia and Belarus signed a union treaty,[49] with self-declared President Alexander Lukashenka declaring that Minsk "will not stand aside" in Moscow's confrontation with Kyiv.[50] In November 2021, Belarus and Russia conducted joint military exercises near the Ukrainian border.[51] The Kremlin has pressured Lukashenka to recognise Russian sovereignty over Crimea.

Three Threats to Western Security

Putin's brinkmanship in Ukraine has the potential to create one of the greatest threats to European and east Asian security for decades. While there is no risk of NATO becoming directly embroiled if the war is short-lived, the size of the potential conflict could create serious spill-over, and the longer the war continues, the more likely it would be that NATO would become involved, even if indirectly. In early December 2021, President Biden reassured the "Bucharest Nine" eastern flank members of NATO of US support in the face of Russia's aggressive military posture.[52]

Renewed Migration Crisis

Scenarios two and three above of Russian military operations would lead to Ukrainian migrants moving into western Ukraine and eventually into Europe. The intense period of military activity in the war in 2014–2015 led to two million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees from the Donbas. Such a large movement of people would have the potential to cause significant headaches for European countries tasked with housing and integrating new arrivals. 15% of Ukrainians, or nearly seven million people, have stated their intention of moving to a safe zone in the event of an invasion.[53]

Increased Military Entanglement

While the US would not directly involve itself in any Ukraine conflict, a Russian invasion would still have the potential to become Russia's "next Afghanistan".[54] The US Congress is already preparing to "dramatically increase the amount of lethal aid [sent to Ukraine]",[55] and any escalation of the conflict would result in further financing for defensive arms. On 15 December 2021, the US Senate registered the[56] GUARD Act. Such a scenario could end up resembling the US's proxy war against the USSR in Afghanistan.

A Russian quagmire in Ukraine would raise NATO's threat level to its highest level.[57] If Ukrainian forces are pushed back into the western part of the country following a Russian invasion, four NATO members would be neighbouring an on-going war zone with the threat of it spilling over into Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. These members, alongside the three Baltic states, would almost surely demand additional forces be deployed in their countries, and receive them; President Biden has stated additional US forces would be sent to defend NATO's eastern flank.[58] In the event of a Russian occupation of parts of Ukraine and a likely guerrilla war, the US and NATO would most likely supply military assistance, resembling the covert US assistance provided to the anti-Soviet Afghan resistance in the 1980s.[59] Some 59% of Ukrainians have stated their readiness to put up armed resistance in the event of a Russian invasion and occupation.[60] "NATO countries might not fight for Ukraine, but they're likely to arm and train Ukrainians to fight for themselves. A Russian invasion would open the floodgates of Western support and activate similar mobilizations of civilian society among NATO frontline states."[61] Special forces from the US and other NATO countries, including the UK, could assist in the covert training of Ukrainian partisans in the event of a Russian occupation.[62]

Increasing the Chinese Threat to Taiwan

A weak Western response to a Russian invasion of Ukraine would send the wrong signal to China. After all, "Putin speaks of Moscow's eternal bond with Kyiv in nearly the same way that Chinese leaders demand reunification with Taiwan."[63] With Russians and the Chinese viewing Ukraine and Taiwan respectively as part of their homelands, whatever the West does – or does not do – in response to a Russian invasion of Ukraine will be eagerly watched in Beijing. China supports Russia's ultimatums.[64] A "potential nightmare scenario" in 2022 would be "Russia invading Ukraine and China launching a military campaign to take back Taiwan".[65]

How the West Should Respond to Russian Belligerence

Western responses to the Ukraine crisis should recognise that Russian national-ist ambitions, in addition to the personal views of Putin, are likely to mean that these tensions will remain well into the future.[66] Continuing competition between Russia and the West over Kyiv's future is "unavoidable and will get worse before it gets better".[67] Policy solutions should therefore be framed through providing long-term disincentives for further aggression and returning to relative stability.

Reject Putin's Ultimatums and Demand for a Veto: Britain and its NATO allies should reject Putin's ultimatums and demand for a veto over NATO's and Ukraine's sovereign decisions, not recognise a Russian sphere of influence in Eurasia, and demand that Moscow respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neigh-bours.

Reaffirm Ukraine's Right to Join NATO: At the 2008 summit of NATO, it issued a declaration[68] that Ukraine and Georgia "will become members of NATO" and "MAP is the next step for Ukraine and Georgia on their direct way to membership. To-day we make clear that we support these countries' applications for MAP." NATO should reject the Russian demand to revise the 2008 summit declaration and reaffirm the right of every country, including Ukraine and Georgia, to decide which international organisations to join, including NATO. NATO should reject Russian demands for a veto over NATO decisions.

Increase Military Assistance: Ukraine should be provided with additional military assistance. The three Baltic states are leading the way in providing offensive weap-ons to Ukraine.[69] Ukraine should be supplied with weaponry that would overcome its limited air power and, in the event of an invasion, Russian air dominance. Former US national security advisor John Bolton has suggested that "The United States and other members of NATO should rotate troops through Ukraine to deter Russia from pursuing military action against its smaller neighbor."[70] Without going this far, the provision of training and niche capabilities to the Ukrainian armed forces is a viable and useful tool should Russia continue to sabre-rattle. The UK Government has prepared to fly in a combined force of 600 Special Air Service (SAS) para-troopers from 16th Assault Brigade, including medics and engineers.[71] The US and UK have "quietly dispatched cyberwarfare experts to Ukraine in hopes of better preparing the country to confront … cyberattacks that take down the electric grid, the banking system, and other critical components of Ukraine's economy and government" ahead of an invasion.[72] The US is also considering providing Ukraine with battlefield intelligence that would allow it to respond quicker to a Russian in-vasion. "The number one thing we can do is real time actionable intelligence that

says, 'The Russians are coming over the berm,'" said Evelyn Farkas, who served as deputy assistant secretary of defense for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia in the Obama administration. "We tell them, and they use that to target the Russians."[73] Other NATO members should follow the US and Britain's commendable lead.

Prepare to Designate Russia as a Terrorist State: Russia has pursued a covert war against Ukraine for the last eight years which has led to the deaths of 20,000 civilians and combatants.[74] Far more Europeans joined Russian terrorist forces in the so-called DNR and LNR than join ISIS.[75] Britain and its fellow NATO members should follow America's lead in the GUARD Act, which designates Russia "as a state sponsor of terrorism in the event its forces further invade Ukraine".[76]

Expand Sanctions: In the event of conflict, sanctions should be expanded to the level of those imposed on Iran. In April 2020, the European Parliament adopted a non-binding resolution which stated, in the event of a Russian invasion of Ukraine: "imports of oil and gas from Russia to the EU be immediately stopped, while Russia should be excluded from the SWIFT payment system, and all assets in the EU of oligarchs close to the Russian authorities and their families in the EU need to be frozen and their visas cancelled."[77] When Iran was removed from SWIFT in 2012, its gas and oil revenues dropped by almost half, crippling its economy.[78] Other areas that have been considered for new sanctions are Russian state debt, Russian state banks, and Russian energy, mining and metals businesses.

In a December 2021 resolution, the European Parliament underscored its willingness to pursue such actions, calling also for the cancellation of all travel opportunities and withdrawal of "the visa exemption for Russian diplomatic passport holders, with the exception of accredited diplomats".[79]

Adopt a European-Wide Magnitsky Act: In March 2019, the European Parliament adopted a resolution in favour of the EU adopting a Magnitsky Act, and in September 2020, President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen stated that this would be a goal for her Commission.[80] Following any invasion, the EU could push for the collective adoption of a Magnitsky Act.

Suspend Certification of Nord Stream 2: In the event of conflict, the EU should not certify Nord Stream 2.[81] UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson explained the choice facing Europe of "mainlining ever more Russian hydrocarbons in giant new pipelines, and sticking up for Ukraine and championing the cause of peace and stability."[82]

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