

ZMIINYI ISLAND DEFENDERS CAPTURE THE SENTIMENTS OF A NATION, AND THE G7 SWINGS INTO ACTION

Current Status

- Putin, in an address with Defense Minister Shoigu and Chief of General Staff Gerasimov, places deterrent forces, including nuclear weapons, on combat alert.
- Over 4,000 detained across Russia in anti-war protests.
- UN Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield said that energy sector sanctions are not off the table.
- 368,000 refugees have left Ukraine per UNHCR for Refugees.
- Estimates of Russian casualties: 4,300.
- UN Security Council calls on a procedural vote (not subject to veto; Russia voted no, and China, India and UAE abstained) for an emergency session of the UN General Assembly (resolution would be nonbinding). Only the 11th time there has been an emergency session, and the first time since 1982.
- State Department advises Americans to consider leaving Russia.
- Talks to take place between Russian and Ukrainian delegations on Monday.

Putin's Anger Builds

- Summer 2021 essay – Ukraine is an artificial construct; not a real country.
- Becomes more hostile towards Zelenskyy and the West.
- January meeting over Minsk–2 didn't go well.
- Invasion to demilitarize and de-Nazify Ukraine.
- Nuclear threat – NATO has not threatened Russia, and Ukraine gave up its arsenal in return for guarantees of territorial integrity.

Putin's miscalculations – overestimated the power of his forces and underestimated the power of the resistance. Putin may have descended into a parallel reality, believing his own version of history. Putin thinks the Ukrainian government is corrupt, and that the Ukrainian people (kin to Russians) would welcome Russian forces. Putin may have ignored the concerns of Gerasimov and of the SVR.

Putin has also managed to drive European unity, allowing leaders to overcome internal divisions and varying sympathies for Putin to coalesce around an increasingly tough package of sanctions. The shift was perhaps most pronounced for Germany, representing the most profound change of policy in modern German history. Chancellor Scholz called the invasion “a turning point in the history of our continent.”

- ***Russian forces would take Ukraine quickly, but:***
 - Attackers lost momentum in the first 48 hours – does Russia lack the ability to effectively conduct night-time operations?
 - Resistance has been much stiffer.
 - Ukraine air defense systems reportedly still operating, and Russia has failed to gain air superiority (Russians reportedly took out old sites).
 - Putin seems to have ignored lessons of history: some of the best Soviet soldiers were Ukrainian.

- **Zelenskyy would surrender, allowing for the installation of a puppet regime, but:**
 - Zelenskyy has galvanized both his people and the broader international community with his leadership – inspiring his people to fight, and inspiring the international community to see Ukraine as a victim of naked aggression.
 - He and his team have made effective use of social media. His 10-minute plea arguably galvanized reluctant western leaders to support sanctions.
 - He has remained in the capital, and his family has remained in the country.
 - His call “I need ammunition, not a ride” captured the essence of his leadership.
- **The West would be divided and would fracture further, but:**
 - **G7** members will decline to recognize any Russian military gains, and are considering further sanctions.
 - More than half of the Russian Central Bank reserves will be blocked by the **EU** ([EC Joint Statement](#); [Fact Sheet](#)).
 - Certain Russian banks will be excluded from **SWIFT**.
 - **EU** shuts down airspace to Russian aircraft (Russian-owned, Russian-registered and Russian-controlled aircraft), including private jets.
 - **EU** bans RT and Sputnik.
 - **EU** to provide financing to purchase weapons – first time the EU has done so: €450 million for weapons and an additional €50 million for medical and other supplies.
 - **EU** considering sanctioning wealthy businessmen as well as top officials in state companies and media, including oligarchs that are not on the US sanctions list. This would be in addition to the initial [sanctions](#) on Putin, Lavrov and other senior officials and 4 entities ([Feb. 25](#)).
 - **EU interior ministers** are considering a package of humanitarian aid, migration, cyber and crisis management proposals, including granting temporary protection for refugees from Ukraine. The Temporary Protection Directive has never been used.
 - **Japan** to sanction Putin and other government officials (by freezing assets); reported to be joining SWIFT ban.
 - **Germany** halts certification of Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline.
 - **Germany** vows to increase defense spending (will allocate €100 billion for its armed forces) and to build two LNG terminals to reduce dependence on Russian gas – the EU relies on Russia for 35% of natural gas needs, Germany’s reliance is 50%.
 - **Germany** to deliver 1,000 antitank weapons and 500 stinger missiles,
 - **Australia** to supply lethal weapons through NATO; imposes travel bans and targeted financial sanctions against Putin and senior members of the Russian government (in total 350 Russians and 13 Belarusians).
 - **US** has authorized \$350 million in new military assistance.
 - **US** to send close to \$54 million in humanitarian aid, which will go to international humanitarian organizations.
 - **Sweden**, for the first time since 1939, is sending arms to a country in an armed conflict: will include 5,000 anti-tank weapons, body armour, field rations and helmets.

- **Denmark** is sending 2,700 anti-tank weapons.
- **Belgium** is sending machine guns and anti-tank grenade launchers.
- **UK** to deliver an additional \$53 million in humanitarian aid (per the PM), bringing the total to £140 million (\$186 million).
- The **UK** government plans to introduce on Monday legislation in Parliament (the Economic Crime (Transparency and Enforcement) Bill, which first was proposed in 2018, but since has languished) to create a “register of overseas entities” that will identify foreigners that own property in the UK. The legislation will also strengthen the system of “unexplained wealth orders.” The UK Treasury is to step up enforcement of sanctions under a strict civil liability test for monetary penalties. Other measures will include obligations to provide beneficial ownership disclosure to Companies House when setting up a company in the UK.
- ***Invading is much harder than occupying – lessons learned by the US in Iraq, US and Russia in Afghanistan, and Russia in Chechnya.***

Other Reactions

- Ruble hits its lowest level ever against the USD, causing prices of imports in Russia to surge.
- EC President says Ukraine belongs in the EU.
- BP to sell its 19.75% stake in Rosneft (per BP chair Helge Lund).
- Norwegian sovereign wealth fund will divest its Russian assets (per the PM).
- NY governor orders state businesses to cease transactions with Russian entities.
- Czech, Polish, Swedish and English football teams refuse to play against Russian teams for the foreseeable future.
- Zeman (Czech Republic) and Orban (Hungary) have criticized the invasion.
- Le Pen and Zemmour (France) and Salvini (Italy) also have criticized the invasion.
- China as well as India abstained in the UN Security Council.
- Turkish foreign minister characterizes the attack as “war,” potentially allowing Turkey to ban passage of Russian vessels through the Dardanelles and Bosphorus straits under the Montreux Convention of 1936.
- UPS and FedEx halt deliveries to Russia.
- Metropolitan Opera to cut ties with performers or institutions that voice support for Putin.
- Royal Opera House cancels Bolshoi Ballet residency this summer.

Next Steps

- Fighting likely to lead to more casualties as Russia runs low on precision-guided missiles (Russia is reported to have launched more than 320 missiles as of noon Sunday EST), turning to urban warfare.
- Even if Putin succeeds in installing a puppet, the resistance will be long and drawn out.
- Domestic (Russian) reaction
 - Hard to reconcile being told Ukrainians and Russians are one people, and having Russian forces kill Ukrainians
 - Putin will fear high Russian casualties and domestic resistance

- One can read his triggering combat alert status of nuclear forces as a sign of increasing anger and isolation. Is there a tipping point for those around him to move against him? The televised meetings with Shoigu do not convey an air of optimism. This was a repeat of the [performance](#) of SVR chief Naryshkin last week when humiliated in a televised meeting of the national security council.

Other Thoughts

- Countries outside the G7 are wary of the United States (and of a new Cold War) – how will this affect relations going forward?
- What does this mean for foreign Russian adventures elsewhere: Syria, Sahel and other parts of Africa? Syria is reported to have cut domestic spending.

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Much of the foregoing is based on public reporting of fast-moving events.

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