To Russia with Hate: The Case Against Russia Economic Sanctions

By “Coach Vance” Trefethen

***Resolved: The United States Federal Government should significantly reform its import and/or export policy within the bounds of international trade.***

This case argues that US economic sanctions on Russia do more harm than good. They won't persuade Putin to stop the war in Ukraine. They drive up commodity prices, which perversely gives the Russian government more money. And they punish innocent people around the globe, while doing nothing to punish the real culprit. They will never motivate Putin to cancel the invasion, but they will end up hurting millions of others who had nothing to do with it.

OBSERVATION 1. DEFINITIONS 3

Significant 3

Policy 3

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, or the conditions of the Status Quo. One simple fact: 3

Massive US economic sanctions on Russia 3

OBSERVATION 3. The Plan, implemented by Congress and the President 3

OBSERVATION 4. JUSTIFICATIONS 4

JUSTIFICATION 1. Sanctions fail and backfire 4

Sanctions on Russia backfire by driving up commodity prices and giving Putin more money 4

JUSTIFICATION 2. Sanctioning ourselves 4

US sanctions destroy the property of Western investors and corporations 4

JUSTIFICATION 3. Global economic damage 4

A. The Link: Global economic damage with no possible benefit 4

B. The Impact: Humanitarian catastrophe 5

JUSTIFICATION 4. Risk of broader war 5

Sanctions blur the line between war and peace, and can easily push us over the brink 5

JUSTIFICATION 5. Innocent Russians harmed 5

A. The Link: Sanctions punish ordinary Russian citizens while having no effect on Putin and his allies 5

B. The Impact: Tens of millions of innocent people harmed while the guilty go untouched 5

2A Evidence: Cancel Russia Sanctions 6

DEFINITIONS & BACKGROUND 6

Bank financing is part of import/export policy 6

Banking provides financial services that complete international trade transactions 6

INHERENCY 6

Russia is under heavy sanctions but Russia can withstand them 6

US trade sanctions on Russia are the biggest sanctions ever imposed against a major economic power 7

US export controls block wide array of goods going to Russia, and ban import of oil, gas and coal 7

Biden imposed massive trade sanctions on Russia 7

Biden imposed trade restrictions blocking technology exports to Russia 7

JUSTIFICATIONS 8

J1 – Sanctions Fail 8

Sanctioned oligarchs can’t influence Putin to change, and Biden administration admits they’re not working 8

Economic sanctions produce negative net benefits. They do more harm than good 8

Sanctions on Russia backfire: They make it harder for Putin to back down and toughen his resolve to win 8

Russia is profiting even under sanctions. And complete energy sanctions would hardly harm them at all 8

Sanctions on Russia have historically failed and backfire against the world. Example: blocking wheat exports 9

For every country sanctioning Russia, there are 3 that don’t, including China and India 9

J2 – Sanctioning Ourselves 9

US sanctions on Russia have really had a big economic impact… On the US, not Russia 9

Sanctions violate the human rights of US persons and companies 9

Taking away people's rights in the name of fighting authoritarianism is…hypocritical and wrong 10

J3 – Global economic damage 10

Sanctions hurt us and the rest of the world more than Russia 10

Long-term risk of severe damage to the global economic system 10

Sanctions keep Russian food exports off international markets 11

Higher food costs = hunger and malnutrition in poor countries 11

Russian food production is key to solving global food crisis 11

J4 - Risk of broader war 11

No room for more escalation - Russia is already talking about nuclear war 11

J5 - Innocent Russians harmed 12

Sanctions on Russia punish millions of people who aren't responsible for the invasion of Ukraine 12

A/T "But we have to DO SOMETHING" - Doesn't justify sanctions. They hurt the innocent and have no effect on the guilty 12

To Russia With Hate: The Case Against Russia Economic Sanctions

Threatening your enemy by holding a gun to your own head and threatening to shoot is a foolish way to scare them off, and very unlikely to work. That’s why my partner and I are affirming that the United States Federal Government should significantly reform its import and/or export policy within the bounds of international trade.

OBSERVATION 1. DEFINITIONS

Significant

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary copyright 2022. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/significant> (accessed 10 May 2022)

2a**:**having or likely to have [influence](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/influence#h1) or effect **:**[IMPORTANT](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/important)

Policy

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary copyright 2022. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy> (accessed 10 May 2022)

a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, or the conditions of the Status Quo. One simple fact:

Massive US economic sanctions on Russia

White House press release 2 June 2022. "FACT SHEET: United States Takes Further Actions to Counter Sanctions Evasion by Russia" (accessed 23 June 2022)

The United States, alongside over 30 partners around the world, has imposed unprecedented sanctions and export controls to hold President Putin to account for his war against Ukraine, restrict Russia’s access to critical technology it needs to fund its war machine, and turn Russia into a global financial pariah.

OBSERVATION 3. The Plan, implemented by Congress and the President

1. All US economic sanctions against Russia are canceled.
2. Enforcement consists of no longer enforcing any sanctions.
3. Funding is net reduction in federal budget by eliminating the cost of enforcing sanctions.
4. Plan takes effect the day after an Affirmative ballot.
5. All Affirmative speeches may clarify.

OBSERVATION 4. JUSTIFICATIONS

JUSTIFICATION 1. Sanctions fail and backfire

Sanctions on Russia backfire by driving up commodity prices and giving Putin more money

Larry Elliott 2022 (economics editor) GUARDIAN (British newspaper) 2 June 2022 “Russia is winning the economic war - and Putin is no closer to withdrawing troops” <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/02/russia-economic-war-ukraine-food-fuel-price-vladimir-putin> (accessed 23 June 2022)

The first set of economic measures were introduced immediately after the invasion, when it was assumed [Ukraine](https://www.theguardian.com/world/ukraine) would capitulate within days. That didn’t happen, with the result that sanctions – while still incomplete – have gradually been intensified. There is, though, no immediate sign of Russia pulling out of Ukraine and that’s hardly surprising, because the sanctions have had the perverse effect of driving up the cost of Russia’s oil and gas exports, massively boosting its trade balance and financing its war effort. In the first four months of 2022, Putin could boast a current account surplus of $96bn (£76bn) – more than treble the figure for the same period of 2021.

JUSTIFICATION 2. Sanctioning ourselves

US sanctions destroy the property of Western investors and corporations

Edward Chancellor 2022. (Masters of Philosophy in Modern History) “How sanctions against Russia could backfire” 26 May 2022 <https://www.reuters.com/breakingviews/how-sanctions-against-russia-could-backfire-2022-05-26/> (accessed 22 June 2022)

Washington is now actively forcing a Russian default by forbidding Western banks from receiving payments from Moscow. Russian stocks and bonds owned by foreigners have been marked down to zero. Multinational companies including McDonald's [(MCD.N)](https://www.reuters.com/companies/MCD.N), Renault [(RENA.PA)](https://www.reuters.com/companies/RENA.PA), British American Tobacco [(BATS.L)](https://www.reuters.com/companies/BATS.L), Heineken [(HEIN.AS)](https://www.reuters.com/companies/HEIN.AS) and BP [(BP.L)](https://www.reuters.com/companies/BP.L) are selling their Russian operations at fire-sale prices. It's hard to see how writing off hundreds of billions of dollars of foreign investments in Russia will persuade Putin to change his behaviour. Still, these remarkable events highlight another unwelcome feature of sanctions: they remove traditional legal protections afforded to private property, exposing investors to arbitrary state depredations.

JUSTIFICATION 3. Global economic damage

A. The Link: Global economic damage with no possible benefit

Dr. Daniel Larison 2022 (contributing editor at Antiwar.com and former senior editor at The American Conservative magazine. Ph.D. in History from the University of Chicago) “We should’ve known sanctions on Russia wouldn’t work as intended” 17 June 2022 <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2022/06/17/we-shouldve-known-sanctions-on-russia-wouldnt-work-as-intended/> (accessed 22 June 2022)

The inability to change the behavior of a targeted government is even less surprising, since it is extremely rare for unfriendly authoritarian states to knuckle under in the face of U.S.-led pressure campaigns. The negative effects of these sanctions on Russia are bound to be greater and more far-reaching than in previous cases because Russia is a much bigger player in the global economy. The harsher the economic warfare becomes, the more it is going to harm the entire world.

B. The Impact: Humanitarian catastrophe

Larry Elliott 2022 (economics editor) GUARDIAN (British newspaper) 2 June 2022 “Russia is winning the economic war - and Putin is no closer to withdrawing troops” <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/02/russia-economic-war-ukraine-food-fuel-price-vladimir-putin> (accessed 23 June 2022)

In every multilateral organisation – the IMF, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations – fears are growing of a humanitarian catastrophe. The position is simple: unless developing nations are energy exporters themselves, they face a triple whammy in which fuel and food crises trigger financial crises. Faced with the choice of feeding their populations or paying their international creditors, governments will opt for the former. Sri Lanka was the first country since the Russian invasion [to default on its debts](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/19/sri-lanka-defaults-on-debts-for-first-time), but is unlikely to be the last. The world appears closer to a full-blown debt crisis than at any time since the 1990s.

JUSTIFICATION 4. Risk of broader war

Sanctions blur the line between war and peace, and can easily push us over the brink

Edward Chancellor 2022. (Masters of Philosophy in Modern History) “How sanctions against Russia could backfire” 26 May 2022 <https://www.reuters.com/breakingviews/how-sanctions-against-russia-could-backfire-2022-05-26/> (accessed 22 June 2022)

Early critics of economic restrictions had an even more worrying concern. Sanctions, they said, blur the line between the state of war and that of peace. It’s not clear at what point a sanctioned nation will consider an extra punishment to be an act of war. Billionaire investor George Soros told the Davos audience [this week](https://www.reuters.com/world/davos-soros-says-ukraine-may-be-start-world-war-three-2022-05-24/) that, in his view, World War Three was already under way.

JUSTIFICATION 5. Innocent Russians harmed

A. The Link: Sanctions punish ordinary Russian citizens while having no effect on Putin and his allies

Dr. Daniel Larison 2022 (contributing editor at Antiwar.com and former senior editor at The American Conservative magazine. Ph.D. in History from the University of Chicago) “We should’ve known sanctions on Russia wouldn’t work as intended” 17 June 2022 <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2022/06/17/we-shouldve-known-sanctions-on-russia-wouldnt-work-as-intended/> (accessed 22 June 2022)

A recent Bloomberg [report](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-14/corporate-self-sanctioning-of-russia-has-us-fearing-economic-blowback?srnd=premium-middle-east#xj4y7vzkg) called attention to the unwelcome but predictable consequences of broad Russia sanctions: “But some Biden administration officials are now privately expressing concern that rather than dissuading the Kremlin as intended, the penalties are instead exacerbating inflation, worsening food insecurity and punishing ordinary Russians more than Putin or his allies.” These harmful effects of broad sanctions should not come as a surprise to anyone that has followed these issues closely, since this is what almost always happens when a country’s entire economy is targeted for punishment.

B. The Impact: Tens of millions of innocent people harmed while the guilty go untouched

Dr. Daniel Larison 2022 (contributing editor at Antiwar.com and former senior editor at The American Conservative magazine. Ph.D. in History from the University of Chicago) “We should’ve known sanctions on Russia wouldn’t work as intended” 17 June 2022 <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2022/06/17/we-shouldve-known-sanctions-on-russia-wouldnt-work-as-intended/> (accessed 22 June 2022)

Often sold as a “low-cost” alternative to military conflict, broad sanctions in practice are an indiscriminate attack on an entire nation. They inflict punishment on tens of millions of ordinary people while leaving the wealthy and well-connected mostly untouched. In some cases, they create humanitarian crises all on their own, and in others, such as [Venezuela](https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2022/02/17/why-did-a-biden-official-deny-us-sanctions-humanitarian-impact-on-venezuela/), they greatly exacerbate existing crises and make them far deadlier than they would be otherwise. Sanctions are often imposed on countries under the de facto control of abusive authoritarian governments, which means that the people suffer twice over from those that rule them and outside powers that wage economic war in attempts to isolate those rulers. In every case, the people made to suffer for a given policy are in no position to change it, and sanctions tend to tighten the grip that authoritarian leaders have while the leaders’ domestic opponents are forced to scramble just to survive.

2A Evidence: Cancel Russia Sanctions

DEFINITIONS & BACKGROUND

Bank financing is part of import/export policy

Comerica Bank copyright 2022. (international bank that finances foreign trade) “A Quick Guide to Import and Export Financing“ <https://www.comerica.com/insights/business-finance/a-quick-guide-to-import-and-export-financing.html> (accessed 22 June 2022)

What are import and export trade financing? Import and export financing, as their titles imply, pay for the accompanying expenses associated with receiving and shipping goods to and from companies in other parts of the world. From tariffs to freight rates, duties and fees, capital requirements run the gamut. Import and export financing provide the funding advances so the exchanging of goods can transpire.
How does it work?
There are at least three parties involved in the trade flow process: the customer receiving the goods (importer); the company selling (exporter); and the lending institution that's financing the operation. Once a sales agreement is reached between the two parties that are buying and selling, the financial institution makes the funds available for the transaction to proceed. Where the funds go - and how they're delivered - depends upon the nature of the loan. For export financing, where the exporter's bank is involved, the lender sends the appropriate funds to use as a deferred payment. For import financing, it's the importer's bank that pays the exporter, and the importer repays the lending institution the principal amount plus interest. Countries may not always have the same monetary system, so the lender ensures that the funds align with the local currency.

Banking provides financial services that complete international trade transactions

UN Food & Agriculture Organization 2022. Food Outlook - BIANNUAL REPORT ON GLOBAL FOOD MARKETS <https://www.fao.org/3/cb9427en/cb9427en.pdf> (accessed 23 June 2022)

Although these sanctions do not directly target the Russian food and fertilizer sectors, these concerns are rooted in the possible indirect effects that the sanctions targeting the banking sector could have on Russian agricultural exports by constraining access to the financial services needed to complete international transactions.

INHERENCY

Russia is under heavy sanctions but Russia can withstand them

Edward Chancellor 2022. (Masters of Philosophy in Modern History) “How sanctions against Russia could backfire” 26 May 2022 <https://www.reuters.com/breakingviews/how-sanctions-against-russia-could-backfire-2022-05-26/> (accessed 22 June 2022)

Since President Vladimir Putin’s ill-fated invasion of Ukraine, Russia has been expelled from the Western financial system and punished with a variety of international economic and financial penalties. Addressing the World Economic Forum earlier this week, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy [called for](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraines-zelenskiy-tells-davos-that-world-faces-turning-point-2022-05-23/) “maximum” sanctions so that Russia “clearly knows the immediate consequences of their actions”. Policymakers often view such measures as a relatively quick and painless way for law-abiding nations to punish transgressors. But history shows their efficacy is doubtful and, at times, they can seriously backfire. Besides, if there’s one country that has proven it can withstand sanctions, it’s Russia.

US trade sanctions on Russia are the biggest sanctions ever imposed against a major economic power

Ben Walsh 2022 (*freelance journalist focusing on business and finance*) The unprecedented American sanctions on Russia, explained 9 March 2022 <https://www.vox.com/22968949/russia-sanctions-swift-economy-mcdonalds> (accessed 23 June 2022)

The [sanctions](https://www.vox.com/22956536/what-sanctions-do-russia-economy-ukraine-oil) the United States and its European allies have imposed on Russia, which now include an American ban on Russian energy imports, are the most restrictive ever imposed against a major economic power. The speed with which they were put in place, against a country whose economy ranks among the dozen largest in the world, was remarkable. The sanctions are so strong that they were described as an “all-out economic and financial war” by Bruno Le Maire, the French economic minister, a comment so frank and potentially inflammatory that he immediately walked it back. The measures, which include sanctions targeting Russia’s financial system, the wealth of powerful individuals, and Russian fossil fuels, are designed to punish Vladimir Putin and the oligarchs who support and depend on him, and hobble the Russian economy. They make it impossible to conduct normal business in Russia.

US export controls block wide array of goods going to Russia, and ban import of oil, gas and coal

Ben Walsh 2022 (*freelance journalist focusing on business and finance*) The unprecedented American sanctions on Russia, explained 9 March 2022 <https://www.vox.com/22968949/russia-sanctions-swift-economy-mcdonalds> (accessed 23 June 2022)

The US has also put in place controls that block companies from sending a wide array of goods to Russia, including aviation, defense, and shipping components, along with higher-tech items like semiconductors and telecom equipment. Those US export controls are intended to hurt Russia’s ability to get its hands on the kinds of manufactured goods it needs to wage a lengthy war, but they are also intended to hobble high-value manufacturing and other domestic economic activity that is not strictly related to the war effort, such as commercial aviation, which will not find it very hard to source replacement parts for its planes. There is also an almost total embargo against US companies exporting anything to the Russian military. The US has also taken a step that even just a week ago seemed beyond what it was willing to do: The Biden administration banned the import of Russian oil, natural gas, and coal into the US.

Biden imposed massive trade sanctions on Russia

NEW YORK TIMES 2022. "How the World Is Seeking to Put Pressure on Russia" 3 June 2022 <https://www.nytimes.com/article/russia-us-ukraine-sanctions.html> (accessed 23 June 2022)

March 8: President Biden announced a [ban on the importation of Russian oil, coal and natural gas](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/08/world/europe/biden-bans-russian-oil.html) into the United States. The move effectively shuts off the flow of Russian fuel into the country, which receives less than 10 percent of its energy resources from Russia. March 11: In a coordinated move with leaders of the European Union and other Group of 7 countries, [President Biden announced that the United States would strip the country of normal trade relations](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/11/business/economy/russia-trade-status-us.html). He also moved to impose economic sanctions on members of the Russian elite and cut off additional avenues of trade between the United States and Russia, banning lucrative imports like seafood, vodka and certain diamonds. The United States will also restrict exports to Russia and Belarus of luxury items like high-end watches, vehicles, alcohol, jewelry and apparel.

Biden imposed trade restrictions blocking technology exports to Russia

NEW YORK TIMES 2022. "How the World Is Seeking to Put Pressure on Russia" 3 June 2022 <https://www.nytimes.com/article/russia-us-ukraine-sanctions.html> (accessed 23 June 2022)

March 2: The Biden administration said that it would impose sanctions on several Russian military organizations and take action to stem the flow of important technologies to Russian oil refineries. The Commerce Department said [it had extended to Belarus the same restrictions](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/02/business/us-ukraine-belarus-technology-restrictions.html) the United States placed on Russia on Feb. 24, preventing items like technology and software from being routed through Belarus to restricted sectors in Russia.

JUSTIFICATIONS

J1 – Sanctions Fail

Sanctioned oligarchs can’t influence Putin to change, and Biden administration admits they’re not working

Nick Wadhams 2022 (journalist) 1 June 2022 “US Officials Are Split Over the Next Round of Russia Sanctions” <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-01/us-wavers-over-next-russia-sanctions-as-fears-of-divide-grow> (accessed 23 June 2022)

Officials are confronting the fact that the oligarchs who have been targeted by sanctions may not wield the influence with Putin they once had. And the administration has shifted away from its argument that sanctions could hasten the end of the war to the claim that sanctions, export controls and other restrictions will take a long time -- perhaps years -- to weaken Putin.

Economic sanctions produce negative net benefits. They do more harm than good

Dr. Daniel Larison 2022 (contributing editor at Antiwar.com and former senior editor at The American Conservative magazine. Ph.D. in History from the University of Chicago) “We should’ve known sanctions on Russia wouldn’t work as intended” 17 June 2022 <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2022/06/17/we-shouldve-known-sanctions-on-russia-wouldnt-work-as-intended/> (accessed 22 June 2022)

Economic coercion through broad sanctions can cause tremendous destruction, but it routinely fails to advance U.S. interests or improve security conditions in other parts of the world. It is time to recognize that broad sanctions do more harm than good, and they worsen many of the problems they are supposed to remedy.

Sanctions on Russia backfire: They make it harder for Putin to back down and toughen his resolve to win

Dr. William Ruger 2022 (Ph.D. in politics specializing in foreign policy, president of the American Institute for Economic Research) 5 May 2022 REASON magazine " William Ruger on Russia's Invasion of Ukraine" <https://reason.com/2022/05/05/william-ruger-on-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/> (accessed 23 June 2022)

The history of sanctions shouldn't leave anyone all that sanguine about their ability to effect the ultimate ends that you're trying to seek. Now, these sanctions may be extreme in many ways. If you impose essentially a financial blockade, they may have more bite. But the question is, do they actually cause what you're trying to achieve or do they make it much harder for Russia to stand down? You can imagine Putin and the Russian state not wanting to appear to cry uncle to this pressure. I think that's a real concern.

Russia is profiting even under sanctions. And complete energy sanctions would hardly harm them at all

Edward Chancellor 2022. (Masters of Philosophy in Modern History) “How sanctions against Russia could backfire” 26 May 2022 <https://www.reuters.com/breakingviews/how-sanctions-against-russia-could-backfire-2022-05-26/> (accessed 22 June 2022)

Furthermore, Europe remains dependent on Russian energy. Over the past three months, Russian imports have fallen faster than exports, producing a record trade surplus. Even though Western countries have seized Russia’s currency reserves, the rouble has strengthened against the U.S. dollar. Evenett [calculates](https://www.wita.org/atp-research/making-moscow-pay) that a European ban on imports of Russian energy would permanently lower its GDP by just 1%.

Sanctions on Russia have historically failed and backfire against the world. Example: blocking wheat exports

Edward Chancellor 2022. (Masters of Philosophy in Modern History) “How sanctions against Russia could backfire” 26 May 2022 <https://www.reuters.com/breakingviews/how-sanctions-against-russia-could-backfire-2022-05-26/> (accessed 22 June 2022)

Now Putin’s Russia is the international outcast. Unlike Italy, the country’s abundant natural resources make it extraordinarily resilient to external economic pressure. In fact, sanctions were first used against Russia after the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917 in what Mulder calls a form of “counter-revolution on the cheap”. The new regime withstood this economic siege and even used its monopoly on trade to withhold commodities from Europe, just as Russia today is keeping Ukrainian wheat from reaching foreign markets. By the early 1930s, when the Soviets ceased almost all trade with the outside world, Russia’s autarky was complete.

For every country sanctioning Russia, there are 3 that don’t, including China and India

Edward Chancellor 2022. (Masters of Philosophy in Modern History) “How sanctions against Russia could backfire” 26 May 2022 <https://www.reuters.com/breakingviews/how-sanctions-against-russia-could-backfire-2022-05-26/> (accessed 22 June 2022)

International opposition to Putin is also far from unanimous. According to international trade expert Simon Evenett, for every country sanctioning Russia there are three that are not, among them China and India. Roughly half of Russia’s exports go to these countries, whose export share has risen sharply over the past decade.

J2 – Sanctioning Ourselves

US sanctions on Russia have really had a big economic impact… On the US, not Russia

Prof. Edvard Chesnokov 2022 (*adjunct professor at the Far Eastern Federal University in Vladivostok, Russia)* US tries to hit Russia with severe sanctions, but fails 26 May 2022 <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202205/1266663.shtml> (accessed 23 June 2022)

After the events of February 2022, instead of the previous hundreds of sanctions, we've faced thousands. The US tried to disrupt the Russian externally oriented economy, prohibiting our agricultural, oil, and gas export. This really caused disaster - at another shore of the Atlantic. Since the beginning of the year, petrol cost in the US has 27.6 percent increased; it is the largest price jump from the 1970s oil crisis, as Vyacheslav Volodin, the Chairman of the Russian Parliament, pointed out in his May 23 statement. Moreover, the US and its allies are hit with food shortages, the largest inflation since the 1980s, consumer price runs and a critical fall of their political leaders' ratings.

Sanctions violate the human rights of US persons and companies

J.D. Tuccille 2022 (contributing editor) 13 May 2022 REASON magazine "Don't Oppose Russian Authoritarianism With More Authoritarianism" <https://reason.com/2022/05/13/dont-oppose-russian-authoritarianism-with-more-authoritarianism/> (accessed 23 June 2022)

The plight of a troubled yet functioning liberal democracy under assault from a brutal neighboring regime should involve the defense of freedom against those who would dictate terms to the unwilling. But sanctions have creeped from punishing the Russian state, to targeting the Russian people, to telling private firms and individuals in the United States that they can't do businesses with the customers of their choice. "The United States will prohibit U.S. persons from providing accounting, trust and corporate formation, and management consulting services to any person in the Russian Federation," a separate White House [fact sheet specifies](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/08/fact-sheet-united-states-and-g7-partners-impose-severe-costs-for-putins-war-against-ukraine/). So, admittedly not for the first time, the private sector is being used as a tool of foreign policy. Businesses are being ordered to close offices and sever ties with clients because they're subjects of rulers our rulers don't like, without regard for those customers' relation to that country's government or its invasion of a neighboring state.

Taking away people's rights in the name of fighting authoritarianism is…hypocritical and wrong

J.D. Tuccille 2022 (contributing editor) 13 May 2022 REASON magazine "Don't Oppose Russian Authoritarianism With More Authoritarianism" <https://reason.com/2022/05/13/dont-oppose-russian-authoritarianism-with-more-authoritarianism/> (accessed 23 June 2022)

Restrictions on freedom are authoritarian, even if government officials try to justify them with hollow claims of being on the side of peace and liberty. Just as you've gained nothing if battling monsters turns you into a monster, you need to rethink just what you hope to win if fighting authoritarians pushes your own society towards authoritarianism. If we want support for Ukraine to equate to defense of freedom, we have to actually respect that value instead of becoming what our political leaders pretend to oppose.

J3 – Global economic damage

Sanctions hurt us and the rest of the world more than Russia

Dr. Daniel Larison 2022 (contributing editor at Antiwar.com and former senior editor at The American Conservative magazine. Ph.D. in History from the University of Chicago) “We should’ve known sanctions on Russia wouldn’t work as intended” 17 June 2022 <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2022/06/17/we-shouldve-known-sanctions-on-russia-wouldnt-work-as-intended/> (accessed 22 June 2022)

Economic warfare consistently worsens food insecurity in the targeted country, and now the same destructive effects are being felt around the world because of the disruptions created by the war itself, the sanctions response to it, and Russian retaliatory moves in response to the sanctions. As Amir Handjani [warned](https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2022/03/16/ukraine-war-could-cause-a-global-food-crisis/) in an article for Responsible Statecraft earlier this year, “We are truly in uncharted waters and seemingly unprepared for the consequences.” We are used to coercive policies backfiring on us in the form of worsening security problems, but now we are confronting a future where we will be experiencing economic blowback as well. Economic warfare ceases to be a “cheap” option when the target can fight back.

Long-term risk of severe damage to the global economic system

Edward Chancellor 2022. (Masters of Philosophy in Modern History) “How sanctions against Russia could backfire” 26 May 2022 <https://www.reuters.com/breakingviews/how-sanctions-against-russia-could-backfire-2022-05-26/> (accessed 22 June 2022)

The longer-term danger is that the invasion of Ukraine and the accompanying Russian sanctions, like those imposed on Italy in the mid-1930s, will provide a further impetus to deglobalisation, driving Russia into China’s camp and upending the U.S. dollar-based financial system. Evenett [warns](https://www.weforum.org/whitepapers/conflict-sanctions-and-the-future-of-world-trade) that the advent of a multipolar world could result in yet more stranded assets for Western investors. This is not a desirable outcome, but a chain of events has been set in motion that may make it unavoidable.

Sanctions keep Russian food exports off international markets

UN Food & Agriculture Organization 2022. Food Outlook - BIANNUAL REPORT ON GLOBAL FOOD MARKETS <https://www.fao.org/3/cb9427en/cb9427en.pdf> (accessed 23 June 2022)(brackets added)

Although no impacts on agricultural production appear imminent in the Russian Federation, international sanctions imposed on the country in response to the war could directly or indirectly inflict economic losses on Russian agriculture going forward. The incomes of Russian farmers risk being negatively impacted by the loss of export markets that could result from the sanctions. This could in turn drive farmers to curb their production of export-oriented crops. Moreover, although the Russian Federation is a net exporter of fertilizers, Russian agriculture is particularly dependent on imported seeds and pesticides, as depicted in Figure 6. In 2021, the Russian Federation purchased USD [U.S. dollars] 872 million worth of herbicides, fungicides, insecticides and other pesticides, 58 percent of which came from the EU. Russian imports of -high-value- seeds (i.e. hybrid, genetically modified organisms (GMO) or certified seeds), amounted to another USD 409 million that year, with 68 percent originating in the EU. This high import dependency on the EU suggests that trade sanctions could take a hefty toll on Russian crop production. If such an eventuality materializes, the combined effects of lower seed and pesticide uses, such as reduction in plantings, yields and/or product quality, could affect the availability of many food crops, both for domestic use and, arguably, even more so for products destined for international markets.

Higher food costs = hunger and malnutrition in poor countries

UN Food & Agriculture Organization 2022. Food Outlook - BIANNUAL REPORT ON GLOBAL FOOD MARKETS <https://www.fao.org/3/cb9427en/cb9427en.pdf> (accessed 23 June 2022)(brackets added)

In countries that depend on imports to meet their consumption needs, the higher food costs caused by these disruptions imperil the food security of vulnerable consumers. This is particularly the case for groups that dedicate a larger share of their disposable incomes to food, since in order to cope with the food price hikes they reduce the quantity and/or quality of the food they consume. This leads to more hunger and malnutrition or to less money available for other necessities, such as health and education.

Russian food production is key to solving global food crisis

J.D. Tuccille 2022 (contributing editor) 10 June 2022 REASON magazine " Ukraine War Unlikely to End Anytime Soon" <https://reason.com/2022/06/10/ukraine-war-unlikely-end-anytime-soon/> (accessed 23 June 2022)

Russia's imperial ambitions endanger the world beyond Europe, given the roles the aggressor and the aggrieved play in feeding a planet on which [food was already rising in price](https://reason.com/2022/01/03/food-costs-likely-to-rise-as-farmers-expenses-shoot-up/) and hunger spreading. "Between them, Ukraine and Russia produce almost a third of the world's wheat and barley and half of its sunflower oil," UN Secretary-General António Guterres [warned last week](https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sgsm21285.doc.htm). "There is no effective solution to the food crisis without reintegrating Ukraine's food production, as well as the food and fertilizer produced by Russia and Belarus, into world markets — despite the war."

J4 - Risk of broader war

No room for more escalation - Russia is already talking about nuclear war

J.D. Tuccille 2022 (contributing editor) 10 June 2022 REASON magazine " Ukraine War Unlikely to End Anytime Soon" <https://reason.com/2022/06/10/ukraine-war-unlikely-end-anytime-soon/> (accessed 23 June 2022)

Inevitably, the Russian government [threatened retaliatory strikes](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/putin-warns-west-rocket-systems-russia-ukraine-war_n_629c95d6e4b090b53b865dd9) against unspecified targets that had previously been left alone. What that means is unclear, given that Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was [already hinting in April at nuclear war](https://reason.com/2022/04/27/the-world-is-back-on-a-war-footing-and-well-all-pay-the-price/) with the West. Whatever it does militarily, Putin's regime isn't leaving a lot of room for further rhetorical escalation. Those threats understandably have some western countries looking for solutions that don't involve widening the conflict.

J5 - Innocent Russians harmed

Sanctions on Russia punish millions of people who aren't responsible for the invasion of Ukraine

Murtaza Hussain 2022 (journalist) 28 Apr 2022 "AS SCREWS TIGHTEN ON RUSSIA, A WARNING ABOUT CIVILIAN HARM OF SANCTIONS" <https://theintercept.com/2022/04/28/russia-sanctions-civilian-harm-reform/> (accessed 25 June 2022)

The diverse views of over 140 million citizens of the Russian Federation — spanning a huge number of ethnicities and languages, not to mention geography — mean little when it comes to foreign policy choices. Yet when Russian tanks began rolling into Ukraine, the U.S. and its European allies turned to a familiar weapon, one that indiscriminately targets all Russian citizens rather than just those responsible for the crimes we are seeing today: broad-based economic sanctions.

A/T "But we have to DO SOMETHING" - Doesn't justify sanctions. They hurt the innocent and have no effect on the guilty

Murtaza Hussain 2022 (journalist) 28 Apr 2022 "AS SCREWS TIGHTEN ON RUSSIA, A WARNING ABOUT CIVILIAN HARM OF SANCTIONS" <https://theintercept.com/2022/04/28/russia-sanctions-civilian-harm-reform/> (accessed 25 June 2022)

Oftentimes, as in the case of Russia today, countries subject to broad sanctions truly are unsavory or engaged in behavior that needs to be stopped. The problem, though, is that untargeted sanctions that punish civilian populations have been a poor means of making foreign governments change their policies. While elites in sanctioned countries usually find a way to get what they need, ordinary people find themselves sent into poverty — victimized by economic blockades that U.S. politicians treat as open-ended.