

POLICY MEMORANDUM: RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

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In 2014, Canada's defense minister under then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Jason Kennedy, refused the provision of military equipment to aid the Ukraine government in its fight against pro-Russia separatists, despite the Canadian military having a surplus of equipment. However, Canada has loaned Ukraine a total of \$400 million between 2014 and 2015, which was repaid with interest as of 2020. As Russia continues to invade and occupy parts of Ukraine's territories, the government of Ukraine has pleaded for help from Canada and its NATO allies. Considering Canada's previous attempts in supporting Ukraine, construct a policy brief on what you believe Canada's next steps should be. Consider the type of sectoral sanctions to impose, provision of military equipment, whether providing more loans is beneficial, and other ways Canada can offer its support. You may want to consider the following information when constructing your brief:

- Operation Unifier is the Canadian Armed Forces contribution to the security of Ukraine in coordination with the Ukrainian Armed Forces.
- In January 2022, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau agreed to loan up to \$120 million in the face of Russia's ongoing attempts to destabilize Ukraine, and continues to explore other ways to get involved.
- Ukraine has requested more aid in the form of weapons and military equipment, and severe sectoral sanctions.
- As of February 2022, Putin has carried out various military operations, including bombing Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, and other cities. Putin has also threatened a nuclear attack if the West intervenes.

Executive Summary

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is President Vladimir Putin's most aggressive action to redraw borders of the former Soviet Union since the Cold War (1). On the 12th day of this invasion, the United Nations recorded an estimated 406 civilian deaths, 801 injuries and 1.7 million displaced Ukrainians as a result of the conflict (2). Ideological debate and division is reflected from the

20th century into our present world. This memorandum encourages the government of Canada to take lead and support Ukraine differently than it historically has. Resolutions propose the creation of sectoral sanctions against Russian oil imports, the deployment of Canadian troops to support the Ukrainian military in Kyiv with the establishment of meaningful dialogue between the Western

world and Russia to reach an agreement and halt current warfare.

Introduction

It is clear that the Russian invasion of Ukraine is deeply rooted in ideological warfare brought by the Eastern movement of NATO; the Cold War is persisting. Today, the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008 is critical to understanding how President Putin's present military strategy works and revealing his motivations to retain international supremacy. Vladimir Putin's public recognition of Luhansk and Donetsk as independent countries, prompt deployment of Russian troops into them and the launch of a full-scale invasion on Ukraine, the occupying country, resembles exactly how he and the Russian government invaded Georgia in 2008.³ That action prevented Georgia from joining NATO with minimal international attention (4).

It was only six years later when Putin deployed these same tactics in Ukraine against

Crimea and now in 2022, in Donetsk, Luhansk and Ukraine.

During this time, Canada remained quiet with hesitancy to intervene.⁵ This is not uncommon for the country throughout historical international affairs. Canada has demonstrated a tendency to follow the behaviour of NATO and its allies, rather than take initiative and lead humanitarian aid. Canadian refraining in the Afghanistan conflict of 2001 was motivated by domestic politics rather than foreign policy imperatives.⁶ However the reflection of volatile international conflict demands commitment and solidarity from not simply the West, but superpower nations including Canada. The democracy, peace and sovereignty of Ukraine must be prioritised.

Approach and Results

Actions of Mr. Putin are violating the foundation of international relations and the United Nations Charter; the right of nations to decide their future without fear of aggression or invasion (7).

It is imperative that Canadian

participation in this conflict creates international cooperation and unity over division to combat the recirculating Cold War.

Comprehensive Western and European sanctions against Russia, particularly with oil, have performed effectively. The skillful allocation toward oligarchs and upper-class Russians has been impressive (8). Particularly, American President Joe Biden banning oil imports to the United States provided an aggressive attack to Russia's economy and motivation for Russian military withdrawal (9).

Canada must follow this technique, targeting Russian oligarchs over civilians, and demanding the end of Russian aggression.

Although sanctions provide a modern, peaceful form of intervention, Canada must make efforts to establish more meaningful solutions onward, truly targeting this Cold War aggression. Political scientists make a strong case that persistence of further Russian attacks on Ukraine may worsen the situation. The continuation of Western sanctions may

become ineffective, directly endanger the Russian and Ukrainian people and supplement Russian trade in the East (10). To analyse the potential outcome of increasingly strong sanctions against the Russian economy, it is important to understand how historically authoritarian regimes and their resistance to Western sanctions targeted civilians while boosting Eastern trade. In 2008, the Iranian economy persisted through harsh Western sanctions against its oil and energy. It was only six years later when Putin deployed these same tactics in Ukraine against sectors as well as their exclusion from Swift and the international payments mechanism (11).

It was the depression of living standards and depletion of Iranian currency that remained an attack against them, targeting the Iranian people (12). Russia may become another example of authoritarian endurance to sanctions with subsequent civilian impact. Similar to the Iranian case, if the absence of many Asian countries including China continues in the current sanctions, the East may prop up the Russian economy and offset the entire Western intervention (13).

Willfully yielding sanctions does

not guarantee peace and security, but instead targets the economy and livelihood of people, aggravating division between the East and West. Promoting Western dialogue with Russia proposes long-term cooperation that would demonstrate the power of international unity and prevent further war (14).

The military action and diplomatic relationships of Ukraine are centralised in this conflict. If Ukraine were to join NATO and a conflict erupted, it is hypothetical that Ukraine could trigger Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty (15). The nation could utilise NATO to fight Russia in reclaiming Crimea and the Kremlin would face a war they know they will lose. What Russia has made clear is that Mr. Putin wants the current NATO alliance to freeze, preventing Ukraine from uniting with the West; Russia fears Ukrainian-Western unity (16).

Establishing an agreement for Russian troops to be withdrawn from Ukraine under Western commitment to end sanctions and consider alternatives to NATO membership of Ukraine

serves the interests of Ukraine, the West and Russia. In order to implement this solution, Russia must guarantee the future security of Ukraine. That is something Moscow had already promised under the 1994 Budapest Memorandum and violated.¹⁷ The difference in this attempt would be that there is no longer a future prospect of Ukraine joining the alliance that defeated the Soviet Union.¹⁸ With NATO membership no longer uncertain, Russia may claim that it has stabilised the security order of Eastern Europe in ways not possible since 1994 (19). Plainly, Ukrainian NATO membership appears unrealistic (20). It requires an extensive legislative process, risks present military aggression from Russia in Ukraine and does not effectively comply with Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty- which states that an invitation to NATO must offer further stability to the Western region, something this prospect does not do (21).

This proposal from Canada will return the Russian economy to Putin. Some may consider this too gentle towards the president.²² That is understandable, for he deserves no aid. But the people of Ukraine and Russia do not deserve

to suffer from the sins of Mr. Putin more than they already have and international, ideological tensions must not grow. The safety of all citizens and peace, security and democratic sovereignty of Ukraine must be prioritised.

Implications and Recommendations

Salient, relevant solutions are as follows:

1. Impose sanctions against key Russian economic sectors including oil.
2. Provide military troops to the Ukrainian military and humanitarian aid to the Ukrainian people.
3. Attempt to foster meaningful dialogue with the Putin regime, by proposing the conditional removal of sanctions.

The Putin regime is relying on the inability of foreign nations to consider the effort to support Ukraine too costly, too dangerous and Canada must begin to adequately participate in the global sphere to foster meaningful dialogue and unity among nations.

There is no perfect solution

to this crisis, as events continue to rapidly unfold and change the course of action. The details of this proposed agreement would need to be carefully negotiated among NATO members, the European Union, Canada, Ukraine and Russia, however it would essentially allow Russia to claim achievement of stabilising the security order of Eastern Europe by promptly leaving Ukraine under Western supervision.

Should endurance in the Russian economy withstand current economic sanctions and further ground troops in Ukraine, a potentially acceptable solution is a conditional agreement between the Western world and Russia that removes Russian sanctions and forbids Ukrainian membership to NATO, should the Putin regime agree to withdraw troops from Ukraine.

Although this proposal may contradict previous praise of increased sanctions, concern rests in the increased aggression between the West and East if the deployment of sanctions turns ineffective. Ideological conflicts in these regions must be resolved through peaceful, meaningful dialogue, rather than short-term economic mechanisms to prevent

another recirculation of this Cold War conflict. Given the complications and legislation in mobilising any major international proposal, if the course of this memorandum is chosen, efforts should begin as soon as possible.

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