

A Return to the Rules-Based Order of the World

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“Russia is always a very stable state, until suddenly it’s not” (Herbst). This has never been more true, as we see Russia violating the rules-based order of the world with its invasion of Ukraine. The rules-based international order

“consists of: a set of rules encouraging peaceful, predictable, and cooperative behavior among states that is consistent with liberal values and principles; formal institutional bodies, such as the United Nations (UN) and NATO, that serve to legitimize and uphold these rules, and provide a forum to discuss and settle disputes; and the role of powerful democratic states to help preserve and defend the system” (Cimmino and Kroenig).

The rules-based order of the world is crucial to the protection of the triple bottom line; people, profit, and planet. Russia’s violation of this order places the triple bottom line in danger and presents the world with a unique situation that calls for specific actions. An effective return to the rules-based order of the world requires direct military intervention by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with specific sanctions for political leaders and oligarchs.

Direct Military Intervention by NATO

The first thing that comes to mind when discussing direct military intervention is the old-fashioned “boots on the ground” option. However, there are many other options for military intervention. Some that might be familiar include the utilization of drones, no-fly zones, and digital warfare. Drone warfare is increasingly more prominent since the US has sent 121 new Phoenix Ghost drones to aid Ukrainians. These new drones are “lightweight and portable, and

‘can be described as a loitering munition’” (Webber). However, drones are not the only method of aerial intervention.

No-fly zones are areas of aerial space that become restricted. They are effective, and “Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky called on the international community to implement a no-fly zone to protect civilians and deny the Russian air force the ability to gain air superiority.” (Reid and Hwang) Currently they have not been enacted because doing so would be tantamount to NATO or the US being in direct conflict with Russia. However, if nothing is done, direct conflict will be inevitable. If no-fly zones can be implemented, it can reduce the number of fronts Russia poses a threat on. The less of a threat Russia is, the easier it is to directly intervene with military power and end the war. This would be an effective form of direct intervention to aid in the return to the rules-based order of the world.

Digital warfare is yet another front in which Russia is a threat. Digital combat can be in the form of anything from denial of service attacks to economic disruption. While “Ukraine has pursued a unique strategy in cyberspace, attempting to mobilize international sentiment and create an army of cybersecurity professionals to attack military and critical infrastructure targets in Russia” (Fendorf and Miller), there are still more options to explore and the previously mentioned ones can be further explored. Cyberspace is becoming increasingly more relevant, and to beat Russia on that front would end the war much faster. This is because all Russia would have left would really be its military strength. Military strength is limited in terms of soldiers and weapons, whereas cyberspace is not.

Cryptocurrency can act as a means for “illicit transactions, including as a means for Russian individuals and entities to bypass sanctions.” (Arasasingham and DiPippo). With

more severe regulation of cryptocurrency, current sanctions would be more effective. Wealthy Russians would not be able to find a way around account freezes with cryptocurrency, and then placed sanctions would be much more effective. When these sanctions are really felt by Russia, Putin and his oligarchs will not want to be at war.

Additionally, Elon Musk has sent satellites or internet access, but this route needs to be explored more. If his satellites could be used to broadcast actual news to Russian citizens, dissent would potentially grow even more severe and Putin would lose more of the support behind the war from his own citizens. Musk has said that he thinks “we can launch satellites faster than they can launch anti-satellite missiles.” (Business Insider). When dissent grows, citizens become more likely to revolt or go against leaders. This would destabilize Russia from the inside. If Russia is unstable at its very core, it will be easier to take down the rest of it and make a swift return to the rules-based order of the world.

While NATO has been standing against Russia, the member states need to take a more aggressive stance. Russia has targeted US and NATO supply lines, showing a clear stance against the two, so NATO needs to increase their intensity and resistance. As a result, they would be strengthened as a bloc, and demonstrate that a return to the rules-based order of the world is possible. If NATO does not continue and increase their direct intervention, they risk the failure of the bloc and destruction of the rules-based order of the world. NATO is, by definition, an institutional body that serves to uphold the rules-based order of the world. NATO must intervene as soon as possible as the Russia-Ukraine war is currently an escalating issue that cannot be ignored. If NATO does not or fails in this challenge, it will be delegitimized as a protector of the rules-based order of the world. The rules will be reduced to guidelines, providing conditions for

chaos that threatens everything. Direct intervention by NATO is crucial, yet there is more that must be done.

Specific Sanctions

Sanctions from various actors are already in place, such as freezing assets within some of Russia's banking systems; however more specific sanctions must be utilized to be more effective and ensure the effectiveness of those already in place. Sanctions specific for political leaders and oligarchs must be placed. One sanction that can be aimed at political leaders and oligarchs is a passport hold. Passport holds would target schemes "that allow wealthy people to buy their way into the bloc's citizenship" (Petrequin) and the European Commission "urged [EU nations] to assess whether Russian oligarchs linked to the Kremlin or who support the war in Ukraine should be stripped of citizenship rights previously granted." (Petrequin). Doing so would be effective and felt by oligarchs in Russia. Another sanction for oligarchs would be the freezing of bank accounts and cryptocurrency regulation at the same time, to ensure that political leaders and oligarchs could not find a way around freezes on their main accounts.

Additionally, sanctions could look like the recalling of diplomats. "Diplomatic recalls represent an appealing type of diplomatic sanction, or political disengagement, as they are low-cost and relatively simple instruments employed in an effort to undermine or delegitimize foreign governments" (LaBreck). Not only are they simple and effective, but when a diplomat is absent, it is more obvious to the public. "Revocation is a move capable of garnering widespread attention from the media and public" (LaBreck). This would make it so more Russian citizens knew about the severity of the Russian-Ukraine war, and aid the growth of dissent within Russia.

Dissent could lead to a strong opposition movement within Russia. With the support of its own citizens, stopping Russia would be much easier.

Counter Arguments

Some may say that direct intervention is too risky, that it could lead to nuclear war. Well, in the words of John E. Herbst, “We have nukes too.” To worry only of the future implications is to look over what is happening now. Direct intervention is necessary to save more lives in the long run. There is no promise that Russia would stop with the taking of Ukraine. If anything, the evidence points the other way. Crimea was annexed, but obviously Russia was not satisfied with that. Appeasement will not work, and direct intervention is a necessary measure to ensure the safety of many more people in the future.

Others are worried that direct intervention would lead to more war and chaos, especially as it concerns them. However, if the world sits idly and waits, war and chaos will spread to all. If NATO does not prevail, the protection of the rules-based order of the world will be a joke. What this means is that Russia and others would be able to continue to abuse the rules-based order of the world.

Members of NATO might be against direct intervention due to sharing borders with Russia and Ukraine. The five NATO members who share borders with Russia are The Baltics, Turkey, and Poland (Raymond). However, if NATO fails and Russia is allowed to keep expanding they will be in even more danger should Russia decide to continue expanding. These members will literally be in immediate danger if Russia is not stopped.

Another argument against direct intervention is that there are other options. Sanctions must be put in place, but it must be done so effectively. Appeasement has not worked with Russia, and the world should not expect it to now. Isolationism is merely an option for those lacking morality and who do not care about the rules-based order of the world. Increased direct intervention by NATO simply must happen, and it must happen soon. The sooner the Russia-Ukraine war is over, the sooner the return to the rules-based order of the world will be. This is in the best interest of protecting more lives, future lives, countries economic systems, and the overall condition of the planet. The sooner the world returns to its rules-based order, the sooner it can focus on other imminent dangers, like that of climate change.

The rules-based order of the world is designed to uphold peaceful behavior. Without direct military intervention by NATO and specific sanctions for the wealthy, a complete return to the rules-based order of the world will be impossible. Without a return to the rules-based order of the world, the triple bottom line will be placed into imminent danger. More lives will be lost, focus on other immense issues will be lost, more economic disruptions will occur, and more of the planet will be damaged. The Russia-Ukraine war calls for specific actions, and quickly. It is glaringly obvious that NATO needs to stand strong in the face of Russia's violation. Without NATO directly intervening and without specific sanctions, much will be lost, destroyed, and damaged. A rules-based order of the world? Without direct military intervention and specific sanctions, forget about it. If this return to the rules-based order is not made, there will eventually be no world left to have order in anyways.

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