

FORUM:	Security Council
ISSUE:	Situation in Russia
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POSITION:	President of Security Council

Introduction

In February of 2021, Vladimir Putin declared Russia’s initiation of what he described as a “special military operation”. Three days after his declaration to the public, Russia instigated one of the largest wars of attrition since the Second World War, with Ukraine’s capital city Kyiv at its center. The repercussions of the war have caused immense economic distress and significant damage for both sides of the rivalry, with an innumerable number of civilians displaced and thousands scathed and/or deceased. From the beginning



Ukrainian serviceman stands guard near Artemivsk (Image sourced from Gleb Garanich/Reuters)

of his time in office, Putin has forever upheld the belief that Ukraine has been one with Russia from the very start. In a notable speech, he claimed that the modernization of Ukraine could not have occurred in such progressive succession if it had not been for Russia being at its core to support its formation, regarding Ukraine as not just a closely neighboring state, but “one nation” with Russia’s territories. Most critics suggest otherwise, since Ukraine - despite sharing some portions of history with Russia during the reign of the USSR

- possesses enough differentiation from the Soviet’s primary de facto successor state to stand alone as a sovereign state, from its espousal of a completely distinct language to democratic constitution since the disintegration of the USSR. Nevertheless, it is indubitable that the forceful ventures of Putin and his possession of critically formidable arsenal and military dominance are being unanimously condemned by many world leaders. Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, described Russia as “barbaric” and prone to abusing the most “cynical [of] arguments to justify” its violative and remorseful activities on an international scale.

Background



Russian Revolution and The Ukrainian War of Independence (1917)

The Russian Revolution of 1917 aimed to upend Russia's then political and social frameworks by dislodging its monarchical government. It eventually allowed Russia to be excluded from the World War, while aiding to reshape its empire into one of the most prominent superpowers under the name of "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" (USSR) or otherwise known as the Soviet Union that governed under a proliferative, Communist rule. At about the same period, the Ukrainian government also underwent exhaustive means to declare its own sovereignty but was absorbed into the Soviet Union shortly after its claim of independence under the name of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. During this time, Joseph Stalin successfully converted Russia's once ineffectual and poverty-stricken economy into something more formidable, providing the nation's industrial and military sectors with financial freedoms and lucrative endeavors.

Ukraine becomes a NATO partner (1994), Ukraine withdraws from the Association Agreement/ Revolution of Dignity (2013-2014)

By the early 1990s, NATO had successfully expanded its alliance-dependent influence on other areas of Europe by exhibiting its leverage onto nations that were once affiliated under the 'Soviet sphere'. In response to the rising tendency for post-Soviet nations to join the NATO for cooperation, Ukraine, too, declared partnership with the international body in 1994 (However, partnership at the time was not strictly analogous to becoming an official member). By the same token in 2013, Ukraine showed initial eagerness to mend its associations with the European Union that had not been officially rectified following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. However, the agreement was revoked abruptly on account of its pro-



Ukrainian demonstrators take to the streets during the Dignity March in response to the revoking of the peace agreement with the EU in 2014-15 (Image sourced from Ukrainian Solutions Media).

Russian government, consequently, prompting the president of the time to withdraw from signing the Association Agreement proposed by the EU to instead strengthen its ties with the Russian Federation, a decision that many critics view inherently engendered a "[paradoxically] weakened" (Center for Eastern Studies) result – a concomitant relationship of deficiency between Ukraine and Russia. Furthermore, such a decision fueled public rage amongst the

Ukrainian populace, with many taking to the streets to demonstrate their disappointment and discomposure against the withdrawal from an agreement that projected to help recover Ukraine's then weakened and

instable economy. The president of the time ultimately resorted to the brutal massacres of around a hundred people, to which he was later deported from the country's capital for his malfeasances.

Putin declares ceasing of NATO expansion (2021-2022) and Invasion of Ukraine (2022)

About a year before declaring invasion of Ukraine, Putin released a public ultimatum out to leaders of NATO, urging them to not only limit, but physically shrink their spread of influence formed by NATO alliances/ military borders back to where they resided in 1997 (before the dissolution of the Soviet Union when post-Soviet nations were unified under one rule). Despite such demands, NATO strictly refused and instead took the warning as an indication to further stay circumspect in their awareness of Russia's military activities, in addition to reinforcing its military presence on a global scale with close attention to European countries that have lie between NATO-alliance regions and Russian territories. Ultimately, on February 24, 2022, just three days after Putin's public declaration, Russian troops attacked Ukraine through its periphery territories.

Problems Raised

Human Rights Violations/ War Crimes

In Russia-controlled territories, Russian soldiers have committed a myriad of inhumane war crimes after the capturing of Ukrainians. In many reported cases, Russian forces have murdered, repeatedly raped,



Mass graves of unidentified Ukrainian civilians have been uncovered
(Image sourced by the New York Times)

and tortured Ukrainian civilians, resorting to the most brutal and hostile of forces to suppress their victims. Ukraine city Lviv has had no choice but to resort to exhuming its graveyards to make space for the innumerable number of soldiers that were killed in the war. Ukrainian forces have located numerous mass burial sites comprised of at least thousands of unidentified bodies of Ukrainian civilians that likely passed due to

complications of attempted manslaughter and significant torture. Not only have

Russian soldiers physically murdered people using brute force, but they have also resorted to the inhumane quantities of arsenal use, including bombing and shelling. In particular, it has come to light that such soldiers predominantly and specifically aim their trajectory towards infrastructure of humanitarian provisions, including abode (villages and apartments), healthcare (hospitals and community centers), and



educational (schools and colleges) facilities across the nation, causing many to suffer with deprived standards of living. Many have resorted to utilizing potentially dangerous areas to take shelter such as low-maintenance basements, while others have been forced to flee to underground railroad facilities to take cover in the case of bombings and unpredictable massacres from Russian troops. Seclusion in such areas have only caused standards of living to worsen as people slowly run out of sustenance and water supplies as their duration of stay is lengthened in response to the continuation of brutal war above.

Economic and Geopolitical Instability (Domestically in Russia)

The repercussions of the war have inevitably affected Russia adversely via its many economic and geopolitical sectors, just as much as it has impacted Ukraine. On account of critically harmful sanctions imposed by world leaders, especially those associated in the opposition NATO alliance, Russia's economy has become the most isolated it has ever been; member states that have condemned its brutal endeavors have ceased their international transactions with the nation, which has prompted Russia to resort to last-minute methods of capital flow restrictions in an attempt to save what is left of its exchange rate and financial standing. From the public eye, Russian citizens and those that temporarily reside in Russia may not be affected by the imposing of such sanctions directly in the short term, as such forms of monetary ultimatum are designed to prompt contractions in military activity predominantly. Yet, critics and literature maintain that Russia's economy will continue to darken as time passes (with or without the continuation of war) and ultimately alter the standards of living for the Russian population; it is projected that such standards of living could drastically decline in the next couple of years.

Additionally, despite playing an irrevocably instrumental role in the rise of Russia's militance (especially during its invasion of Ukraine), Priogozhin, head chief of the Wagner Group, has recently declared revolt against Russia, wishing to cut its major ties with the military giant. Experts have varying explanations to justify such rebellion from one of Russia's most significant endorses of military aid; many suggest that such revolt was triggered by Russian defense leadership's hostile interference in Wagner's



Priogozhin has remained as “Putin’s Chef” for an extended period of time, however, has been seen involved in revolts against the regime, further instigating shock from both external and internal sources (Image sourced by the New York Times).

military endeavors in Ukraine and its abrupt attempts to absorb the private group into Russia's military force. After the rebellion, CNN reported that despite erupting and receding in the span of only 24 hours, the “short-lived mutiny” (CNN) and its reverberations have spawned long-lasting creases in Russia's ability to move forward with its plans of territorial seizure, claiming that such an event left Putin

looking deficient and credulous as ever – an event that taints his national image as an omniscient being.



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Such levels of national corrosion will likely be reflected in domestic efforts as repercussions of internal conflicts begin to exhibit in the long run; experts forecast that senior leaders in Russia will likely have to redirect their focus to dedicating a predominance of resources towards establishing prevention mechanisms in the case of future internal threats against Russia like the latter example, with less efforts going into expanding war efforts. Standing as one of the world’s most authoritative states, domestic disputes like the mutiny and defiance upheld by Priogozhin further highlight to world leaders just how “flimsy [of a] structure” (Podolyak, CNN) Russia is truly built upon.

Likewise, Anti-war movements consisting of tens of thousands of Russians have also stood as a major political obstacle for Putin and his authoritative militance. Recently, Kremlin has released



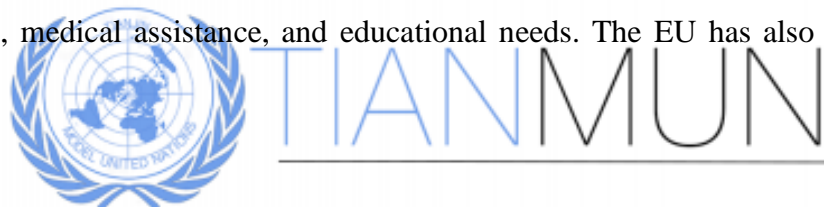
Anti-war demonstrators protest in peaceful rally against Putin and his authoritative regime (Image sourced by Maxim Shemetov/ Reuters).

official statements regarding its use of censorship as anti-war protests rise as domestic threats; Putin has even resorted to publicly denouncing anyone who has expressed their outspoken defiance against the war, calling them “scums and traitors” with views analogous to that of the West. Putin has continuously referred punitive measures against Anti-war demonstrators to “a social cleansing” of some variant that strives to

“strengthen [Russia], [its] solidarity, cohesion and readiness to respond to any challenges”. Despite the consequences, internal conflicts of the Russian populace, alongside international criticism, continue to inundate national headlines and inherently weaken domestic efforts.

International Actions – Explain what the world has done to solve the issue

Comparable to most wartimes, NATO-affiliated member states have had to choose but to ultimately resort to harsh sanctions that limit the economic and geopolitical activities of Russia’s most prolific sectors that contribute the most towards the nation’s domestic growth. The European Union remained as an assistive and contributive ally to Ukrainian forces through the supplication of military aid such as lethal and non-lethal supplies, ammunition, and troop forces. It, alongside NATO and the United States, has also remained as an entity to rely on for humanitarian aid of its people. The EU has successfully channeled its share of aid to Ukrainian forces via its 29 member states. Other sources of humanitarian aid rise from the opening of borders that allow fleeing Ukrainians displaced from their homes to gain access to housing, rights to residencies, medical assistance, and educational needs. The EU has also been instrumental in



facilitating punitive forms of sanctions to ameliorate tensions and soften Russian military powers and access to arsenal and weapons capable of engendering mass destruction.

Key Players

Russian Federation

The Russian Federation is undoubtedly one of the most instrumental key players involved in the current situation of Russia concerning the Russo-Ukrainian War/ Invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Critics have unanimously concurred with the belief that Russia’s decision to invade post-Soviet territory Ukraine was driven by Putin’s desire for the “Greater Russia” or Russian irredentism, a form of geological nationalism that ties to the Soviet Union’s history of absorption and dissolution.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Due to the ever-growing Communist expansion triggered by the absorption of territories under the establishment of the Soviet Union, 12 Western nations including the United States, Britain, and others, formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 in an attempt to restore military and peaceful powers through alliance. By conforming under its alliance, countries would pledge to “promote cooperation among its members and to guard their freedom” (NATO) in a sense to counter the enlargement of the Soviet Union’s international leverage through synergetic promise of military support and aid in times of need. In response to such rivalry, the Soviet Union alongside its European, Communist alliances, formed the Warsaw Pact in 1955 as means to counterbalance the collective works of its Western adversaries.

The Wagner Group

The Wagner Group (pronounced as “Vog-ner”), presumably founded by Russian oligarchist Yevgeny Prigozhin in 2014, is often referred to as an informal unit of Russia’s military. It presents itself as



Troops presumably associated with Wagner group assemble in Southern Russia (Image sourced by Stringer).

a private military company (PMC) situated in Russia, however, its ulterior endeavors that were only recently exposed to the public in response to the Russia-Ukraine war, surpass in levels than those of the common PMC, making its self-entitled denomination a misnomer. The Wagner Group has been responsible for the predominance of Russia’s military invasion of Ukraine through its supplication of activities key to fortifying



military dominance, ranging from security training and advice to physical instrumentals necessary for combat. In the past, Russia has consistently made undercover deals with the Wagner Group in an attempt to heighten its chances of exerting greater military dominance over foreign territories, such as during the annexation of Crimea (and peripheral region of Ukraine) and other militant successes of Russia, most of which were instigated by the likes of separatist groups.

Possible Solutions

Use of technology to monitor situation and Increased Journalism

In times of war, it becomes critically demanding for evidence of human rights violations to be accumulated to outside publications and reporting entities as entering war zones can lead to potential risks and unwanted tension caused by the obtrusiveness of other international bodies entering. Yet, it is extremely



Pro-Russian troops and pertaining journalists attempt to take cover during October shelling of Donetsk Airport (Image sourced by AFP).

important for war crime evidence to be quickly monitored and reported upon to not only disseminate factual news to the public (as an indicative sign of ultimatum for Russian forces), but to assist in independent investigations of specific felonies when the war eventually comes to cessation. Therefore, it is recommended that delegates attempt to find methods that allow for increased journalism and traction for the current

situation in Russia, whether it is through the use of increased dispatchment independent entities near borders or the transition to technological developments such as benign drones (as those used by Ukrainian soldiers).

Monitoring of new weaponry/ arsenal entry into Russian territories

The most preliminary steps towards heightening the chances of ceasefire are by completely altering the availability of the arsenal equipment entering Russian territories and into the hands of armed troops that are capable of manipulating and utilizing them to satisfy their ulterior motives of mass destruction. Henceforth, delegates should consider the reasonability of forming a new branch of an existing UN-affiliated organization or a completely independent entity to govern and monitor entries of arms into Russian territories. This form of resolution has been somewhat implemented recently, where Ukraine had seized North Korean rockets before their entry into Russian lands with the assistance of its defense ministry. Despite the effectual fruits of certain harsh sanctions, such modes of financial repression have deemed statistically detrimental to Russian citizens in the long-term via the degradation of living standards,



establishing a separate entity to monitor regional initiatives or particulars such as entry or new availabilities of arms from outside forces into Russian territory may be significantly more plausible and successful in terms of delivering long-term peace between Ukraine and Russia.

Glossary

Russian Irredentism/ “Greater Russia”

“Russian Irredentism” strictly refers to the political ideology that attempts to assert territorial claims over areas that were once associated with the former Russian Empire and/ or the Soviet Union; the ongoing Russia-Ukrainian war stems from this belief.

Separatists/ Separatism

Separatists, as the name somewhat alludes to, refers to individuals who separate themselves from their ‘group’ (ethnic, racial, tribal etc.) to establish new territories or entities away from where they reside.

Summary Execution/ Extrajudicial Killing

A summary execution refers to when an individual is accused of a felony and executed with no opportunity for legal trial and fair testimony.



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