

Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: Overview of U.S. and Allied Responses

February 25, 2022

Russia launched a full-scale air, land, and sea attack on the independent and democratic state of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The [United States](#) and its [allies](#) around the [world](#) have condemned Russia's "unprecedented military aggression" as "unprovoked and unjustified." On February 24, President Biden [said](#),

Now the entire world sees clearly what [Vladimir] Putin and his Kremlin allies are really all about. This was never about genuine security concerns.... It was always about naked aggression, about Putin's desire for empire by any means necessary—by bullying Russia's neighbors through coercion and corruption, by changing borders by force, and, ultimately, by choosing a war without a cause. Putin's actions betray his sinister vision for the future of our world—one where nations take what they want by force.

Moscow's objectives [appear](#) to include a broad seizure of territory across Ukraine and replacement of Ukraine's democratically elected government with a nondemocratic satellite regime. Russia also may be [seeking](#) to annex a greater part of eastern and southern Ukraine, leaving a rump Ukraine to serve as a puppet state. Reports show many incidents of Ukrainian armed forces' resistance to the Russian invasion. Many civilians have fled their homes, and Ukraine's government has ordered a general military mobilization. Russian troops reportedly entered Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, on February 25, 2022.

Since December 2021, the United States and allies had [warned](#) Russian officials they were prepared to impose severe new sanctions on Russia if it launched a new invasion of Ukraine, a country Russia first invaded and partially occupied in 2014. The United States and allies imposed an initial round of sanctions on February 21-23, 2022, in response to Russia's purported recognition of two Russia-occupied regions in eastern Ukraine as independent states. The United States and allies imposed more sanctions on February 24, 2022, after Russia launched its attack. Members of Congress are considering additional sanctions on Russia and other actions in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

U.S. Sanctions

The most recent rounds of U.S. sanctions and related actions in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine are potentially more impactful than many previous sanctions the United States has imposed on Russia

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(see CRS Report R45415, *U.S. Sanctions on Russia*). [Sanctions](#) and related actions imposed since February 21, 2022, include the following:

- Restrictions on transactions by U.S. financial institutions (including correspondent and payable-through accounts) with Sberbank, Russia's largest financial institution and one of Russia's five largest companies (with exceptions for certain transactions, including relating to [energy](#)).
- Full blocking sanctions (including restrictions on transactions and asset freezes) on
 - VTB Bank (Russia's second-largest financial institution) and four other Russian financial institutions, including two that operate in Russia's defense sector (with the exceptions mentioned above);
 - VEB, a major state development bank that "[provides](#) financing for large-scale projects to develop the country's infrastructure and industrial production" (with the exceptions mentioned above);
 - [Nord Stream 2](#) AG, the parent company of Russia's Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline project, and its chief executive officer; and
 - 10 members of Russia's Kremlin-connected business elite, 5 of whom are the sons of senior Russian officials (themselves subject to U.S. sanctions and now designated a second time).
- Export controls the U.S. Commerce Department [describes](#) as "the most comprehensive application of Commerce's export authorities on U.S. items." In addition to new controls on exports from the United States, Commerce imposed restrictions on "sensitive U.S. technologies produced in foreign countries using U.S.-origin software, technology, or equipment." These controls are intended to restrict the ability of many foreign manufacturers to export "semiconductors, telecommunication, encryption security, lasers, sensors, navigation, avionics and maritime technologies" to Russia.
- Restrictions against secondary-market transactions by U.S. financial institutions in Russian sovereign debt issued after March 1, 2022 (previous restrictions applied to transactions in the primary market).
- Restrictions against new equity investment and financing (other than 14-day lending) for 13 top Russian companies, including
 - Russia's largest firm, state-owned energy company Gazprom;
 - Alrosa, the world's largest diamond-mining firm;
 - Sovcomflot, Russia's largest maritime and freight shipping firm;
 - Russian Railways; and
 - Alfa Bank, Russia's largest private bank.
- [Prohibitions](#) against U.S. trade or investment in Russia-occupied regions of eastern Ukraine and the authority to impose sanctions against those the President determines have operated in those regions. These sanctions parallel sanctions the United States imposed with respect to Ukraine's occupied Crimea region in 2014.

In addition, the Administration imposed [sanctions](#) on 24 Belarusian entities, officials, and elites in response to Belarus's support for Russia's invasion. Media reports have [indicated](#) the Administration also plans to impose sanctions on Russian President Vladimir Putin and other senior officials.

Allied Sanctions

The European Union (EU), the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan all have imposed or announced plans to impose sanctions and export controls in response to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, in close coordination with the United States. Many sanctions imposed by U.S. allies are identical or similar to U.S. sanctions. In addition, the EU has [announced](#) or [imposed](#) sanctions on other senior officials, including Russian President Putin, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov, Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu, senior military officials, and prominent state media figures. The EU also imposed sanctions on 336 members of the Russian Duma, the lower house of Russia's parliament, for their support of a resolution requesting that President Putin recognize the separatist regions of eastern Ukraine as independent states.

Allies have taken other actions, as well. Prior to Russia's full-scale invasion, the German government [withdrew](#) permission for the Nord Stream 2 pipeline to proceed with its certification process, thereby preventing the pipeline from entering into operation. The UK [announced](#) a ban on Russia's national airline Aeroflot. Additional EU sanctions, including restrictions related to the financial, energy, and transport sectors, are [forthcoming](#).

For more on U.S. and allied responses, see CRS Insight IN11866, *Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: NATO Response*, by Paul Belkin.

Author Information

Cory Welt
Specialist in Russian and European Affairs

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