

HOW NOT TO LOSE A WORLD WAR BETWEEN AUTHORITARIANISM AND DEMOCRACY, TWO

My last thread on how not to lose a World War between authoritarianism and democracy got really long and I'm overdue for an update. Same rules, new developments.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy has provided masterful leadership since Russia invaded. This morning, Ukraine let it be known that when the US offered him safe passage out of the country, he responded, "I need ammunition, I don't need a ride."

Not only will this bolster Ukrainians fighting for their country, but it will make it clear that Zelenskyy is not a mere pawn of the US.

1. DON'T LET IT BECOME A WORLD WAR BETWEEN AUTHORITARIANISM VERSUS DEMOCRACY

Last night, a joint US-Albanian motion to condemn Russia's invasion failed in the UN Security Council with a Russian veto. Russia holds the presidency right now, so Ukraine's ambassador and others criticized Russia's involvement in presiding over the vote.

Importantly, however, China abstained. While China is still protected Russia in its invasion, the abstention vote suggests Russia hasn't been able to persuade China that it had created enough legitimacy for its invasion.

Ukraine's ambassador suggested that one day the Russian people might be liberated too.

2. RETAIN THE TOOLS OF HEGEMONIC POWER

Over the course of the last day, Europe led the US in imposing sanctions in Putin and Sergei Lavrov personally.

Most major oligarchs still escape sanctions (in part because they've obtained residency in Western countries). But minutes ago, Roman Abramovich announced he's stepping back from management of Chelsea football.

3. DON'T ANTAGONIZE YOUR ALLIES

Over the course of the day, the last remaining hold outs on limiting Russia's access to SWIFT have come on board. So in a few days, Russia will be further removed from the world economy.

Symbolically, Germany just announced they're sending arms to Ukraine, regarding the invasion of Ukraine as a threat to the post-war order.

"The Russian invasion of Ukraine marks a turning point," German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said in a statement. "It threatens our entire post-war order. In this situation, it is our duty to do our utmost to support Ukraine in defending itself against Vladimir Putin's invading army. Germany stands closely by Ukraine's side."

Update: Ursula von der Leyen has just made the SWIFT removal official.

First, we commit to ensuring that a certain number of Russian banks are removed from SWIFT. It will stop them from operating worldwide and effectively block Russian exports and imports.

Also, the EU has collectively closed their

airspace to Russian planes.

4. KEEP THE PUBLIC HAPPY

Largely thanks to Volodymyr Zelenskyy's leadership and courage, the support of western public around the world have joined in supporting Ukraine.

5. INCREASE PUTIN'S VOLATILITY

The biggest developments in the last day, however, come in increased volatility for Russia. Prominent Russians continue to condemn the war. Russia has had nowhere near the success in Ukraine they expected and the delay has given time for a resistance to form. European nations have committed to send more weapons to Ukraine. Ukraine just rolled out a website where Russian mothers can check to see if their sons have been killed or captured in Ukraine.

In addition to protests in Russia and all over the world, a particularly big protest in Georgia must seriously concern Putin. Kazakhstan also reportedly refused to send troops to Ukraine.

Russia has been really ratcheting up the propaganda and censoring both formal media outlets and social media, in an attempt to prevent Russians from learning how things are really going in Ukraine. But Ukraine has had some successes in hacking through these media defenses.