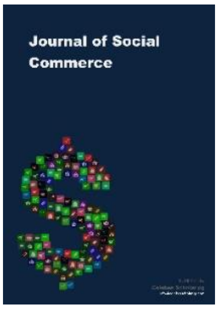

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Economic Consequences of Western Sanctions on Russia and the Evolution of Alternative Trade Networks

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Abstract

The research looks into how Western sanctions influence the Russian Federation and what outcomes they have intended and unintended effects. The main effect of the sanctions is that Russia has had to scale back its economy, reduce GDP growth and lose connections with other countries. Yet, Russia has overcome these obstacles by dealing with non-Western countries, increasing its own production and further enforcing strong rule over its systems. Because of these sanctions, some countries are choosing to strengthen their cooperation with those willing to dodge the restrictions. The study points out that, along with these big economic shifts, business trading habits are starting to change, for example with more interest in decentralized and digital versions, as the isolated economy continues to develop. Although sanctions aim to slow down the Russian economy and make its leaders surrender, their lasting success is not clear, reflecting the complexity of world economic ties and Russia's ability to change strategies over time.

Introduction

The imposition of economic sanctions (American-European) targeting Russia began in 2014 due to the crisis with Ukraine as a result of the annexation of Crimea, and was followed by successive waves of sanctions in 2022 against the backdrop of military intervention. These sanctions are unilateral and (illegitimate), as they were not issued by the United Nations. These sanctions were extended to be used by the United States of America and its European allies in various fields to include financial, economic, cultural and even sports institutions, with the aim of harming Russia, isolating it internationally and making it a pariah state (Witherspoon, 2018; Thomas, 2012).

The sanctions, which were characterized by diversity and breadth, with the accompanying unlimited financial and military support for Ukraine, were intended to result in the continuous depletion of Russia's capabilities, the weakening of its economy, the destabilization of its internal situation, and the achievement of its inability to resist the sanctions imposed on it, in

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order to defeat it, or even work to dismantle the Russian Federation, which the Russian President considered (an existential threat).

Perhaps the United States planned well for the issue of sanctions to have a negative impact on Russia and the European countries together, for purposes related once to the economic situation, and another according to the theory of pulling the parties together to ensure that the European decision remains in the space of resistance to the United States, in its struggle with the rising powers to maintain its position and the international system that it has dominated, and what is actually proven is that both parties have been harmed by the economic and financial sanctions.

However, the final accounting of its outcome remains postponed, but the indicators that have surfaced on the surface of economic interactions confirm that the proceeds of Russian exports of various goods and services, including (oil and natural gas), have decreased, in addition to the economy gradually transforming into a war economy. In return, European countries, especially (Germany), bore the costs of securing energy supplies, and this was clearly reflected in the rise in production costs and the rise in inflation levels, which prompted many European companies to transfer their production activities to other countries. The importance of the research lies in the fact that it discusses the American and European sanctions imposed on Russia following its intervention in Ukraine in 2022, and how these sanctions reflected negatively and positively on the Russian economy to continue its war on Ukraine and the resilience of its economy, and to show its impact on European countries due to their heavy reliance on Russian energy sources and how they were affected after reducing supplies to them after imposing sanctions on Russia.

The economic sanctions imposed on Russia and their consequences, which were adopted by the West as a whole, led by the United States of America, in their severity, comprehensiveness and depth, to push the Russian economy to collapse and inability to resist them, which allows for accepting the dictates of the West and returning to the state of Russia during the era of President Yeltsin. However, these sanctions left their clear impact on the reality of European economies, due to their dependence in the field of energy on Russian imports of oil and natural gas, which was negatively reflected in their conditions according to economic indicators. The United States of America relied on its Western allies to impose economic sanctions on Russia, to achieve the highest level of impact on the Russian economy and political system, but the effects accompanying the sanctions affected most European economies. While Russian economic policies were able to reduce the impact of these sanctions.

Intensifying economic sanctions to isolate the Russian economy from the world

The United States and its European Union allies, as well as other major countries such as Japan and Canada, have imposed a wide range of economic sanctions on Russia. These sanctions began in 2014 following Russia’s annexation of Crimea, but they were not as effective and effective when Russian forces entered eastern Ukraine in 2022. The option of imposing sanctions was the most appropriate alternative to American and Western engagement, with the aim of undermining Russia’s economic capabilities to finance its military operation in Ukraine. On the other hand, military action will not be widely accepted among American political and popular circles, given its high cost and potential futility, in light of Washington’s experience in both Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the possibility that it could lead the world to a third world war, especially since Russia is a nuclear state (Kamal, 2022).

That is why the United States of America and its European allies relied on a program of escalating and sequential economic sanctions, in the form of packages imposed according to the course of events and their developments, the goal of which, according to the Russian President (Putin), is to inflict a strategic defeat on his country. These sanctions came in stages, which are: The first stage - the stage of annexing the Crimean Peninsula: With it, the first package of economic sanctions on Russia was launched, targeting to (1) Ban on the export of various technologies used for oil and natural gas exploration; (2) Blocking credits to Russian energy companies; (3) Not allowing entry to Russian citizens whom the West considers close to the president (Putin), whether government officials, military personnel or oligarchs; (4) Cancellation of the G20 summitG-8) in Russia, and to get Russia out of it; (5) The European Union has banned its citizens from investing in bonds or stocks issued by Russian banks and companies.

The military operations phase in eastern Ukraine, with the entry of Russian forces into eastern Ukraine to liberate the Luhansk and Donetsk regions, and the accompanying recognition of their independence from Ukraine, angered the West. It is estimated that Ukraine was intended to be a (trap) similar to the (Afghan trap) during the Soviet era. The provocations encouraged by the United States and Europe, in order for NATO to expand towards the Russian borders, were intended to drag Russia into the Ukrainian quagmire. If Russia is defeated, this represents a strategic gain, and if it is also drained, it is a strategic displacement that benefits the United States in particular, while Russia sees NATO reaching its critical borders as an existential threat and a strategic breach of its national security. We are not exaggerating if we say that the sanctions packages that it has continued to adopt against Russia may have been prepared in advance and adopted the following approach:

Targeting Russian banks and financial institutions and preventing them from accessing the system (SWFT*) for banking transactions and international money transfers, and isolating Russia from the global financial system, which the Financial Times described as a "financial weapon of mass destruction." Imposing restrictions on US transactions involving Russia's national debt, especially government bonds. Imposing sanctions on wealthy Russians close to the Kremlin (the oligarchic class) and freezing their assets in European and American banks, which range between ($180 billion in Europe) and another part in American banks (less than $100) billion (Muhammad, 2022). Pressure on German Chancellor Olaf Scholter to stop the opening of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, and the Nord Stream pipeline was blown up under mysterious circumstances.

The United States has pushed the European Union to take measures to limit Russia's access to European markets and withdraw its companies from the Russian economy (financially and commercially) (Gamal, 2023; Leonard et al., 2007; Smith, 2008; Bown, 2024; Bjørtvedt, 2022; Hennessy, 2023; Big-Alabo & MacAlex-Achinulo, 2022). Sanctions were imposed on the Russian Central Bank.CBR), which plays a crucial role in the domestic foreign exchange market, and which owns about (640) billion dollars, and which regulates the level of the ruble exchange rate, and the freezing of the assets and accounts of this bank in the G7 countries means that the gold reserves worth (127) billion dollars held by Russia are of no use in maintaining the stability of the foreign exchange market. Sberbank was targeted.Sberbank, which is one of the largest banks in Russia, owns 33% of the banking system's assets, and that the sanctions will lead to its inability to pay its payments and those of its customers in dollars, making it difficult to manage the proceeds of exporting raw materials in global markets, especially since Russia is one of the largest suppliers of various raw materials. Imposing a ban on Western exports of advanced technological components (such as semiconductors) and other parts used in high technologies, in order to deprive Russia of their use in its industry under the pretext of (dual use) (Jamal al-Din, 2023; Borozna & Kochtcheeva, 2024; Borozna & Kochtcheeva, 2024).

Sanctions were imposed on the sovereign wealth fund and one of its subsidiaries, which doubled the pressure on the Russian ruble, which lost nearly 30% of its value during the first week of the war. However, the measures of the Russian Federal Bank were able to limit the effects of the ruble's decline and control its exchange rate. All Western countries rushed to take punitive measures, including sports competitions and cultural events, to the point of not allowing Russian musical evenings to be held, and even the rise of racism to target Russian citizens and speakers of its language (Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, 2022; Briggs et al., 2014). Ban on the import of gold, diamonds, seafood, alcoholic beverages, fertilizers, and wheat, ban on the export of American luxury goods and dollar-denominated banknotes, ban on Russian aircraft entering and using American and some European airspace, and ban on Russian ships entering American and European ports (Al-Dessouki, 2022; Yamada, 2023; Baxi, 2023; Grimm, 2023; Gardner & Gardner, 2020).

Table 1. Number of Western sanctions imposed on countries until February 25, 2024

Venezuela	Belarus	North Korea	Syria	Iran	Russia	The State
747	1454	2171	2844	5011	19282	Number of penalties

Abdul Ali Kazim Al-Maamouri (2024), The Time of the East: Removing Western Injustice and Obstinacy, Dala Center for Policy Analysis - Rawafed House, Baghdad-Beirut, 2024. Ranking of the countries with the most sanctions around the world, on the link:https://wwwarabic.cnn.com

According to the data in Table (1), Russia has become the first country in the world in terms of the total number of unilateral economic sanctions, displacing Iran from the top spot, which had enjoyed this position for the years 1979-2022. The United States and its allies aim, by imposing economic sanctions, to harm the living standards of the population by increasing inflation and decreasing the value of the commodity. and The local currency is depreciating, which leads the population to protest, riot and demonstrate. These are signs of igniting the so-called (color revolutions). The West will seize them and support them by all means, especially the huge media machine, to harm the political system and force it to submit to Western pressure.

In parallel with the imposition of Western sanctions on Russia, financial and military aid poured into Ukraine, the largest share of which went to the United States, which is the sole winner of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Estimates suggest that it exceeded $200 billion, of which the announced support was military support (Table 2).

Table 2. The volume of declared military support provided by Western countries to Ukraine

Support Size (Billion USD)	The State	T
56.1	United States of America	1
11.4	Britain	2
17.7	Germany	3
12	Japan	4
8.4	Denmark	5
7	Germany	6
4.4	Holland	7

The European countries also agreed on 7/26/2024 to transfer (1.5 billion euros of proceeds from frozen Russian assets to Ukraine, to help it defend itself against Russia, after the European Union and the G7 countries froze nearly half of Russia's foreign exchange reserves, which amount to about (300) billion euros, and there are more than (200) billion euros in the European Union.

Second: the impact of Western economic sanctions on Russia

Many Russian banks, including large banks such as Sberbank, are unable to make payments and payments in US dollars due to being cut off from the SWIFT financial system, which in turn leads to an increase in the cost of payments. A loss for international foreign companies as a result of the Western sanctions imposed on Russia, as the Russian market was lost to more than (1000) international investing companies, which deprived Russia of a revenue percentage exceeding (35%) of the Russian GDP, in addition to a loss of approximately (12%) of the workforce in those banks.

The exit of foreign capital from Russia, due to the fact that the US Federal Reserve sought to attract all investments in the world, by raising the interest rate by (75%) in 2022, at a time when Russia was suffering from the repercussions of the economic sanctions imposed on it, which made it unable to compete with the United States of America in this field. Russian federal budget deficit, according to Russian government data, the Russian budget deficit in 2023 was about (2.3%), as a result of the excessive increase in government expenditures to reach (30%), following the Russian military intervention in Ukraine, and the situation worsened during January 2023, with the budget deficit rising to (25) billion dollars with government expenditures increasing to (60%) (Ahmed, 2024; Petrukha et al., 2024; Boyarchuk & Dñabrowski, 2023; Jakupec, 2024).

Russia's GDP declined, against the backdrop of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the United States of America and its Western allies imposed severe sanctions packages on Russia, and the Group of Seven proposed (G7) Imposing a price cap (price ceiling) on Russian oil and gas exports, in its attempts to limit Russian revenues, which reduces the size of the gross domestic product, which was reflected in its decline in 2022 to about (2.27%). The Russian arms trade declined significantly after 2022 as a result of the military-industrial effort being directed towards supplying the war (Ahmed, 2023; Ensing, 2023; Kirchberger, 2017). Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov estimated that Russia is incurring between $130-140 billion annually due to sanctions, which is equivalent to 7% of the gross domestic product (Al Jazeera, 2014).

But in return for these negative effects on the Russian economy, Russia has achieved many benefits, which has benefited the Russian economy and its flexibility in facing Western sanctions and continuing its war. Russian economic data showed a significant decline in the unemployment rate, which reached (2.6%) in 2023, after this rate was (3.9%) in 2022. Although the Western sanctions imposed on Russia have led to an increase in prices and a rise in inflation rates, this increase did not continue and inflation rates and price increases began to decline. According to data from the Russian Ministry of Economic Development, there is a noticeable decrease in the rates of price increases and inflation in Russia, as the inflation rate slowed by about (0.1%) during March 14-20, 2023. The data also showed a decrease in the level of the price increase rate by up to (5.99%), which was praised by Russian President Vladimir Putin during his meeting with the government to discuss financial affairs. He also expected the decline in the inflation rate to continue until it reaches (4%) during the second quarter of 2024 (Ahmed, 2024).

The West planned, through imposing sanctions that included freezing Russian assets, preventing investment in government bonds, capping oil prices, and limiting trade in oil, gas, and other commodities, to harm the reserves available to the Russian Federal Bank. However, the policies adopted by the Russian Bank, according to statistics from the International Institute of Finance, resulted in the Russian current account surplus reaching an estimated (270) billion dollars by the end of 2022, which allowed it to compensate for the frozen assets of the Central Bank, which amounted to about (300) billion US dollars. This undermined the goal of the US-European sanctions packages (Tawfiq, 2023).

The resilience of the Russian ruble: The policy adopted by the Russian Bank and the push to conduct trade exchanges in the local currencies of trading partners also resulted in avoiding the need for the dollar in financial transactions. It also stimulated demand for the ruble, which facilitated the process of stabilizing its prices despite the severe financial and monetary pressure. Especially since the ruble exchange rate on average is (75) rubles to the dollar, which is almost identical to its price a year before its war on Ukraine.

A reality that is different from expectations of a decline in GDP: The shock of sanctions that affected the Russian economy was supposed to be more severe and violent, especially since it is generally a rentier economy that depends on fossil energy sources. The year of war 2022, during which the Russian economy recorded negative growth of (2.27%), which is less than the expectations of the West and its institutions, but the situation that turned away from the possibility of the Russian economy to transform sanctions into an opportunity was in 2023 when the GDP recorded growth of (3.7%), which is higher than the growth rates of the G7 economies (G-7), which came as a big surprise when US Secretary of State Blinken admitted that the Russian measures were successful, even though the US President had pledged to cut the Russian economy in half through economic sanctions. Likewise, German Foreign Minister Biryuk stated that the sanctions would hit Russian President Vladimir Putin at the core of his power (Ahmed, 2023).

Table 3. GDP growth rate of major European economies and Russia

2023	2022	2021	The State
3.6	*(2.1)	5.6	Russia
*(3.0)	1.8	3.2	Germany
0.9	4.0	8.3	Italy
0.1	4.3	8.7	UK
0.7	2.5	6.4	France
2.5	5.8	6.4	Spain

From the data in Table (3), Germany recorded negative growth in 2023, while the growth rate did not reach (1%) in the French and British economies and was close to zero. In 2023, Russia was able to achieve progress in metal processing and production worldwide, as follows:

Table 4. Global Position of Four Major Metals Based on Quality

Steel	Titanium	Aluminum	High quality nickel	Metal type
5	3	2	1	Rank in the world

Self-reliance and compensation for European markets

Sanctions and shortages of technology and some components have stimulated Russian capabilities to find or manufacture alternatives. Distinguished economic and political relations with India, China, Iran and Turkey have also contributed to easing the pressure on the Russian economy and provided markets for its energy and products, allowing it to turn to the East as an alternative to the West, which has guaranteed it appropriate returns from exports of energy, goods, technology and weapons (Khader & Ali, 2024; Smith, 2004).

Third: The impact of economic sanctions on European countries

The economic sanctions imposed by the United States of America and European countries have clearly begun to have negative repercussions on European countries, especially Germany and other countries in Eastern Europe. Russia is the third partner of the European Union, while the European Union is the first partner of Russia. According to the Commission's figures, the European trade balance after the Russian war and the imposition of sanctions lost (86) billion and (700) million euros in 2023 (Sky News, n,d). Regarding unemployment, the sanctions and their consequences have put (230) thousand jobs on the verge of extinction in European countries. According to the data in Table (4), unemployment in Russia has declined to nearly half due to the war.While the number of workers in 2022 was approximately (73.4) million workers, employment rose in 2023 to (74.1) million workers. While unemployment did not decline significantly in most European economies except in Spain, especially since these economies are supposed to be in a state of recovery after the Corona pandemic (Muhammad, 2023; Boscá et al., 2021; Pedauga et al., 2022; Casquilho-Martins & Belchior-Rocha, 2022).

Table 4. Unemployment rates for Russia and European countries (2021-2023) (%)

2023	2022	2021	The State
2.6	3.9	4.70	Russia
5.9	6	5.7	Germany
4.4	4.4	4.8	Britain
7.5	7.5	8.1	France
5.9	5.8	5.9	Belgium
11.29	11.27	14.3	Spain

These sanctions have affected agricultural exports to the euro area, as these countries are large net importers of certain products that may be difficult to replace in the short term, such as sunflower oil and seafood, in addition to the dependence of agricultural production in the European Union on a number of key imported inputs, such as energy and Russian agricultural fertilizers, as the European Union countries depend on (31%) of potassium fertilizer imports from Russia, while (59%) of the European Union's imports come from nitrogen fertilizers.

Table 5. Inflation rates for Russia and European countries (2021-2023) (%)

2023	2022	2021	The State
8.3	8.6	6.7	Russia
5.9	6.9	3.1	Germany
6.8	7.9	2.5	Britain
4.9	5.2	1.6	France
5.6	8.2	1.9	Italy
3.5	8.4	3.1	Spain

The imposition of sanctions on Russia has reduced its energy supplies to European countries, which has greatly harmed those countries that depend on Russian supplies, as they import 40% and 27% of gas and oil respectively. Despite Europe's strength and large economy compared to the Russian economy, it is weak in the energy file and does not have the ability to force Russia to do anything (Mahdi, 2023; Romanova, 2016). While the United States invested in this to sell natural gas at four times its global price to some European countries. The sanctions imposed on Russia have led to higher levels of inflation, due to the rise in energy and commodity prices. Inflation reached 43% in 2022, which poses a threat to the economies of European countries, and this affects the standard of living of families, especially those with low incomes (Muhammad, 2023).

Theoretical Implications and the Role of Emergent Trade Networks in Sanctioned Economies

What declining GDP, increasing inflation, the loss of foreign investment and the disruption of typical trade routes mean is that Western sanctions resemble more than pressure from the outside on Russia's power. They reveal the connected weaknesses of global trade and discuss the different reactions economies have when standard ways of exchanging goods are interrupted. It has been found that, in the face of intense outside pressure, Russia has been able to remain economically flexible by altering its trading partners, boosting its own industry and trying new financial ideas. Although these headline changes are important, a larger economic transformation is unfolding, as people are swapping goods and processing trades using alternative, decentralized approaches and digital platforms. This matter is particularly significant in areas where official commercial routes do not function or are aimed at hurting the people.

People and firms operating in countries with economic isolation must thus explore other ways to do business. As a result, Russian citizens are utilizing their digital services for buying and selling goods and services. VK (VKontakte) and Telegram which were originally just for social networking and communication, are now often used to carry out commerce. Both independent craft makers and large retail shops have chosen to join Russian-based communities rather than Western platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Now, small merchants often promote their products on VK posts or Telegram channels by asking their followers to leave product reviews and using channels for both interacting with customers and handling orders and payments. Such trends are observed widely; they signify growing togetherness and the persistence of business in spite of rules. Social commerce has naturally grown here, as a result of the country's fractured economy—rather than due to direct policy making.

Rather than serving only as markets, these services have merged advertising, trust management, logistics and even informal rules. Since large global platforms for e-commerce do not usually provide specific dispute resolution, users generally ensure transactions are speedy and covered by others' trust and feedback online. It supports a key idea in sociology: strong networked trust allows transactions to be carried out without requiring government regulation. Studies based on digital trust demonstrate that individuals looking for guarantees can use informal systems such as reviews or a reputation history which stand in for formal agency assurances (Kim & Li, 2014; Israelsen & Ahmed, 2019). Trust among customers is a main reason why social commerce succeeds under sanctions. Because the West's digital payment systems were ending, new innovations became a necessity. With PayPal and Visa leaving the Russian market, there was a hole in the safe processing of transactions. Russian banks introduced and expanded the use of Mir, while many smaller businesses and folks making transfers chose to use QR codes, mobile banking and messaging apps. For example, Telegram lets merchants utilize bots and mini-apps to post catalogues, process payments and organize logistics, functionality similar to what you get with a light version of Shopify or WeChat in China. Integrating technology in this way, without an official plan, has given a big lifeline to small and medium enterprises (Oduyoye et al., 2013; Kato & Charoenrat, 2018). Cases from the sanctions experience suggest that improvised technology is essential for a country's economic survival.

Looking at other countries under sanctions points to the same trend. In Iran, due to years of U.S. sanctions, many sellers have shifted their businesses to online platforms, like Instagram and WhatsApp, where secure messaging is used for buying and selling (Rizal et al., 2022). Just as in Venezuela, when hyperinflation and foreign firms pulling out damaged formal businesses, thousands of micro-entrepreneurs use Facebook groups, Telegram channels and shops on Instagram to offer food, medicines and basic goods, usually priced in U.S. dollars or in USDT currency. We see that social commerce develops best in places where standard commercial activities do not function. Because of its stronger digital infrastructure and government capability, Russia's digital transformation is somewhat different. At the same time, promoting economic and digital sovereignty has made the government hospitable to informal resilience in economic activities, as long as it helps further the official policies. The moves to set up the digital ruble, use the SPFS system and join CIPS are meant to work around the prominent use of dollars in the world's financial system Bank of Russia, 2023. In the smaller-scale world, it is the willingness of consumers and small companies to adjust to domestic options that has sustained business activity. The existence of two routes of resilience demonstrates that resilience emerges organically from social sources.

These systems' main contribution is shifting the way we do business, not just rebuilding it. The rise of digital communities as places to do business changes the process of making, transferring and validating value. Rather than having central credit scores and official consumer protection, members of these platforms trust each other, the community and the brand stories—all based on social aspects (Ramadan, 2018). Because of this, trust, identity and relationships take center stage in how economic transactions are carried out. As a result, these systems can endure, yet still be weak, as they may fall to misleading information, fraud and manipulation. In Russia, the large role played by the state in digital platforms means social commerce can easily be affected by surveillance and political issues (Qiang, 2019). Even so, the results of the study explain some of the big-picture conditions that support these noteworthy developments. These changes in firm presence, trade and market focus affect both the quantities involved in import/export and the daily experience of the economy. Indeed, social commerce should be regarded as a structural building block for holding up under the pressures of sanctions. This is the creative part of a larger shift in economics that can't be seen in trade treaties or the strategies of governments. We should examine this issue more closely, as such kinds of informal dealings are likely to continue after the sanctions end, shaping the future after globalization.

Conclusion

The United States of America has been dragging Western countries behind it, adopting economic sanctions on countries that it sees as opposing its orientations or that it wants to subjugate. Perhaps the European countries are the ones who contributed to bringing negative effects on their economies, which was clearly reflected in the European situation expressed by European citizens more than governments, that it will bear fruit and force Russia to make concessions. However, the results that have emerged, despite the lack of clarity in the situation, are that large economies can absorb the shock of sanctions, and rational and effective policies can mitigate their severity and impact. In addition, the nature of the state's foreign relations, patterns of interactions and alliances have overthrown a significant portion of these sanctions, and evidence of this is the flow of Russian oil and liquefied gas to Europe through other parties, including Turkey and India.

While this study centers on the macroeconomic and geopolitical consequences of Western sanctions on Russia, the broader economic shifts it reveals gesture toward more profound structural transformations. The disruption of formal financial systems—such as the exclusion from SWIFT, corporate withdrawals, and restrictions on conventional trade—has not only forced states to reconsider their diplomatic and economic alignments but has also unsettled the architecture of global trade itself. In these fractures, new spaces for exchange are emerging, some formalized through interstate partnerships, others improvised at the margins of visibility. These include the rise of regionally localized trade systems and potentially the increased reliance on digital platforms, informal networks, or community-mediated transactions that operate beyond traditional regulatory frameworks. Such developments, while beyond the scope of this paper, merit further inquiry as they may come to redefine how economic resilience and sovereignty are pursued in the 21st century. Perhaps Russia will be credited with benefiting from the experience of countries that were subjected to Western sanctions, as it succeeded in thwarting the largest package of sanctions witnessed in the history of international relations.

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