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## **‘We’re entering into a new period of confrontation with Russia’: Experts react to invasion of Ukraine**

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Foreign policy analysts warned Thursday that Russia’s invasion of Ukraine could be a harbinger of prolonged hostilities with the potential to roil global markets and upend decades of relative calm and stability that have persisted in western Europe.

“I think it’s clear that we’re entering into a new period of confrontation with Russia that will last almost certainly as long as [President Vladimir] Putin is at the helm,” said Thomas E. Graham, founder of the Russian, East European, and Eurasian studies program at Yale, in a conference call with reporters organized by Defense Priorities, a think tank based in Arlington, Va.

“We can no longer take peace and stability for granted in Europe,” Graham continued. “And we’re going to have to rethink how we’re going to manage the security situation going forward.”

Graham also predicted Americans will feel some pain as well.

The public, he said, must “understand that as we confront Russia, there are going to be sacrifices here” including rising gas prices, troubled equity markets, and more Russian cyber attacks on critical infrastructure.

“I think we need to prepare ourselves psychologically for that change,” Graham said.

Another expert on the call, Rajan Menon, head of the Grand Strategy program at Defense Priorities and a non-resident scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, noted that while severe sanctions are expected to be levied against Russia, Putin’s government has become “much better” at weathering such penalties since 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea.

Menon cited several factors including that Russia has the world’s fourth largest supply of oil reserves, which Europeans depend on.

“If you make sanctions wider and deeper, one, the Russian people will suffer,” Menon said. “That is not a good way to win hearts and minds.”

Menon said Europe does eight times as much trade with Russia than the US, and Europeans are “much more dependent” on Russian energy. That suggests, Menon said, that going forward there could be “cracks in the coalition” among western powers levying sanctions.

In addition, Menon said, Putin's ultimate goal in Ukraine remains unclear.

One possibility, Menon said, is that Russia plans to extend the boundaries of two breakaway republics in eastern Ukraine to include the entire Donbas region, with "the eventual idea of annexing them" or letting them continue as two Russian-backed states.

However, Menon said, it's "entirely possible that something bigger is brewing," noting Moscow's multifront attack that's already racked up some 80 airstrikes in Ukraine during the latest assault.

But Benjamin H. Friedman, a former defense analyst at the libertarian Cato Institute who also lectures at George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs, said on the call that he hasn't seen much indication Putin has a "greater desire to conquer other countries as a result of this."

"I don't think it's inevitable that we need to have another Cold War," Friedman said. "Let's not rush to the barricades just yet." He said US interests include a prosperous trading relationship with Europe which "includes, to a degree, Russia."

Friedman also said US officials should "demand" European countries spend more on their militaries ease the American security burden for the region.

Graham, who said Putin's short-term goals in Ukraine include destroying its military infrastructure and installing a pro-Russian government in Kyiv, echoed the comment about European nations ponying up more on defense in light of Moscow's aggression.

"China is our long-term strategic competitor," Graham said, adding that Europeans are going to have to assume a "greater burden" for their own defense. "One would hope the recent actions taken by Russia [will] finally shock the Europeans into taking steps they have hesitated to take for the past 30 years."

The experts spoke after Russia launched a wide-ranging attack on Ukraine on Thursday, hitting cities and bases with airstrikes or shelling, as civilians piled into trains and cars to flee. Ukraine's government said Russian tanks and troops rolled across the border in a "full-scale war" that could rewrite the geopolitical order and whose fallout already reverberated around the world.

In unleashing Moscow's most aggressive action since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, Putin deflected global condemnation and cascading new sanctions — and chillingly referred to his country's nuclear arsenal. He threatened any foreign country attempting to interfere with "consequences you have never seen."

"I am horrified by Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, which endangers the lives of innocent civilians, disregards international law, and could create a major humanitarian crisis in Europe," said US Representative Carolyn B. Maloney, a New York Democrat who chairs the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, in a statement.

“To be clear, Putin personally provoked this war despite numerous opportunities to seek a diplomatic solution and avoid conflict,” Maloney said.

Maloney’s words were echoed in the statement by US Representative Stephen F. Lynch, a South Boston Democrat who chairs the panel’s Subcommittee on National Security.

“Vladimir Putin will have blood on his hands for his war of choice against Ukraine,” Lynch said. “This is an unjustified, unprovoked attack against the free and sovereign nation of Ukraine and an affront to international peace and stability. Russia’s actions require condemnation in the strongest possible terms, and I support President Biden’s efforts to unite the NATO alliance against this naked use of military force against a civilian population. The free world must stand united and send a clear.”