

War In Europe, 2022.

The Battle of the Backbones: The Russian Bear vs The Leviathans of the West

I said, war, huh (good God, y'all)
What is it good for?
Absolutely nothing, just say it again
— War, Edwin Starr

War on the European continent is a very bad thing. It doesn't take an armchair historian, such as myself, to prove that statement true. Nor does it take a learned professor, with degrees Piled high & Deep, to cite how many times in human history that a war in Europe quickly turned barbaric and then raged for a very long time.

Yet, some historical context is required here. So, please, allow me to introduce that armchair historian, Sir Michael Jagger, late of the Rolling Stones, whose history of the barbarity of European wars is both succinct and cogent. What sets Sir Michael's history of European war apart from the others, is that Sir Michael's history is, as that notorious rejecter of phony British titles, Keith Richards, also late of the Rolling Stones, put it: Sir Michael's history is set to a samba beat.

World War 1
Stuck around St. Petersburg
When I saw it was a time for a change
Killed Tsar and his ministers
Anastasia screamed in vain

World War 2
I rode a tank
Held a general's rank
When the blitzkrieg raged
And the bodies stank

Sir Michael's history of the barbarity and ferocity of European warfare takes us farther back than just the horrible wars of the 20th century. Sir Michael knows, as do all Europeans, that once started, European wars can go on seemingly forever, and often fought over issues of little real consequence.

The One Hundred Years War
I watched with glee
While your kings and queens
Fought for ten decades
For the gods they made
— Sympathy for the Devil, The Rolling Stones

In the 21st century, war in Europe is not only a war of iron vs iron as two armies shoot at one another, but, also there is a war in ways just as hot occurring in cyber space. And here, Russia is at a distinct disadvantage. The Russian Bear is simply no match for the Leviathans of the West, through whose sheer weight and clout alone make these global capitalist giants the true rulers of the Internet, assuming there are any such creatures. The corporate heavyweights that run these companies know what life is like in Putin's Paranoid Police State. Last year, a Google executive was threatened with prison in Russia, if the **"the Smart Voting app - an app created by Putin opponent Alexi Navalny which allowed Russians to register protest votes against Putin"** was not taken in down. Other executives of American tech companies doing business in Russia have faced similar threats.

The first of these Leviathans of the Web to make clear where it stood regarding Putin's unjustified war on Ukraine was Microsoft. On February 28, 2022, Microsoft President, Brad Smith, published on the company blog its position paper on Putin's genocidal war in Ukraine. Titled, **Digital technology and the war in Ukraine**, Smith states Microsoft knows who is the aggressor here, and who is responsible for the **"the tragic, unlawful and unjustified invasion of Ukraine."** [Follow the link, to learn about all the ways in which Microsoft extensive efforts to aid Ukraine and western governments to help fight this common foe.](#) One example here is within 3 hours of detection of a new strain of **wiper malware** spreading across Ukraine, Microsoft had mitigated this new malware targeting Ukraine. Microsoft is also busy removing virtually all Russian media from its web services. Then, **on March 4, 2022, Smith wrote:**

Like the rest of the world, we are horrified, angered and saddened by the images and news coming from the war in Ukraine and condemn this unjustified, unprovoked and unlawful invasion by Russia.

I want to use this blog to provide an update on Microsoft's actions, building on the blog we shared earlier this week.

We are announcing today that we will suspend all new sales of Microsoft products and services in Russia.

Any Russian server still running Windows Server 2012, has been and will continue to be ripe for the pickings for any hacker group so inclined to hack Russian cyber Infrastructure. And, boy are they ever. The headline in the February 27, 2022 edition of the **UK's Guardian said it all: "Anonymous: the hacker collective that has declared cyberwar on Russia."**

In the days since, the group has claimed credit for several cyber incidents including distributed denial of service attacks – where a site is rendered unreachable by being bombarded with traffic – that have brought down government websites and that of Russia Today, the state-backed news service.

The DDoS attacks still appeared to be working on Sunday afternoon, with the official sites for the Kremlin and Ministry of Defence still inaccessible. Anonymous also said it had hacked the Ministry of Defence database, while on Sunday it was claimed the group had hacked Russian state TV channels, posting pro-Ukraine content including patriotic songs and images from the invasion.

I never thought the day would come when I would say the following: **"God bless Anonymous. Whoever they are."**

Other tech giants of the West are using their extensive cyber services to help Ukraine in its fight. **Google, Amazon, along with Microsoft, are each utilizing their unique strengths to help Ukraine.**

Then came the greatest example of how Putin's puny army of puppets and puppies are no match for the phalanx of forces of the West now focused on the foundation of Russian interconnectivity. On **March 5, 2022, the following occurred, and was widely reported:** Russia was disconnected from the **Internet backbone.** It is now very difficult for Russians of any and all stripes to use the Internet, not to mention order up a Big Mac.

Cogent Communications, an internet backbone provider that routes data across intercontinental connections, has cut ties with Russian customers over its invasion of Ukraine, as first reported by The Washington Post. The US-based company is one of the world's largest internet backbone providers and serves customers in 50 countries, including a number of high-profile Russian companies.

This was followed only days later by **Lumen Technologies also disconnecting Russia from its servers and services.** Lumen tried to downplay the significance of their move, but as ZdNet pointed out:

It's actually a much bigger deal than Lumen lets on. According to Doug Madory, Director of Internet Analysis for network observability company Kentik, Lumen was the top international transit provider to Russia state telecom Rostelecom and all three of Russia's major mobile operators: MTS, Megafon, and VEON.

There will also be downstream problems from these actions. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan will lose some connectivity. In addition, the internet in Iran, Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Russian-occupied Crimea and Abkhazia will also be affected.

For his part, Putin's response to Russia having its Ethernet plug pulled seems to be borrowed **from that old saw taken from my years in sales: "If you can't dazzle them with brilliance, then baffle them with bullshit."** **Since 2019, Russia has been trying to "disconnect from the internet."** Apparently, this effort was not too successful since Russia was also supposed to disconnect itself from the Internet March 11, 2022. Or as some have reported, those reports were simply **"misinterpretations" of certain Kremlin "documents, which were real."** This notion is based on Russia having its own **Doman Naming System** (DNS) in place. Also by Friday, March 11, 2022, all Russian websites were required to have changed their final domain extension to **".ru."** **No more DotComs for the Ruskies.** Yet, Russia is still connected to what is left of its Internet connectivity.

Another way Russia is attempting to mitigate the crippling effects of sanctions in cyber space is by issuing its own **Transport Layer Security (TLS) certificates.** As Western credit card payments systems are withdrawing from Russia, **web browsers are refusing to complete transactions from Russia.** It is unlikely that a cert that cannot be recognized by the global authority will be accepted.

So, Dude, let me let you in a secret most of the world knows. We built it. We own it. We just let the rest of the world play with it, as long as they Play By the Rules. And, Dude, you ain't playin' By the Rules.

Russia is/was very much a wired economy. Ordinary Russians of his generation might be dazzled by Putin's bullshit, but younger Russians and the Russian middle class will know they are being squeezed by the West because of the Putin's genocidal in Ukraine.

And a historical footnote: All successful revolutions against a despotic tyrant have, since the first revolutions

against the English monarchy in the 17th century, succeeded because the revolutionaries gained the support of the middle class.

**When the New York Times said, "God is dead
And the war's begun"
— Levon, Elton John / Bernie Taupin**

Gerald Reiff

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