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Europe Commits Suicide-by-Sanctions

A Swiss billboard is making the rounds on social media depicting a young woman on the telephone. The caption reads, “Does the neighbor heat the apartment to over 19 degrees (66F)? Please inform us.” While the Swiss government has dismissed the poster as a fake, the penalties Swiss citizens face for daring to warm their homes are very real. According to the Swiss newspaper *Blick*, those who violate the 66 degree heating limit could face as many as three years in prison!



Ron Paul

Prison time for heating your home? In the “free” world? How is it possible in 2022, when Switzerland and the rest of the political west have achieved the greatest economic success in history, that the European continent faces a winter like something out of the dark ages?

Sanctions.

While long promoted — often by those opposed to war — as a less destructive alternative to war, sanctions are in reality acts of war. And as we know with interventionism and war, the result is often unintended consequences and even blowback.

European sanctions against Russia over its invasion of Ukraine earlier this year will likely go down in history as a prime example of how sanctions can result in unintended consequences. While seeking to punish Russia by cutting off gas and oil imports, European Union politicians forgot that Europe is completely dependent on Russian energy supplies and that the only people to suffer if those imports are shut down are the Europeans themselves.

The Russians simply pivoted to the south and east and found plenty of new buyers in China, India, and elsewhere. In fact, Russia’s state-run Gazprom energy company has reported that its profits have increased by 100 percent in the first half of this year.

Russia is getting rich while Europeans are facing a freezing winter and economic collapse. All because of the false belief that sanctions are a cost-free way to force other countries to do what you want them to do.

What happens when the people see dumb government policies making energy bills skyrocket as the economy grounds to a halt? They become desperate and take to the streets in protest.

This weekend thousands of Austrians took to the streets in a “Freedom Rally” to demand an end to sanctions and the opening of Nord Stream II, the gas pipeline on the verge of opening earlier this year. Last week an estimated 100,000 Czechs took to the streets of Prague to protest NATO and EU policy. In France, the “Yellow Vests” are back in the streets protesting the destruction of their economy in the name of “defeating” Russia in Ukraine. In Germany, Serbia, and elsewhere, protests are gearing up.

Even the Washington Post was forced to admit that sanctions on Russia are not having the intended effect. In an article yesterday, the paper worries that sanctions are inflicting “collateral damage in Russia and beyond, potentially even hurting the very countries that impose them. Some even worried



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that the sanctions intended to deter and weaken Putin could end up emboldening and strengthening him.”

This is all predictable. Sanctions kill. Sometimes they kill innocents in the country targeted for destruction and sometimes they kill innocents in the country imposing them. The solution, as always, is non-intervention. No sanctions, no “color revolutions,” no meddling. It’s really that simple.

Ron Paul is a former U.S. congressman from Texas. This [article](#) originally appeared at the Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity and is reprinted here with permission.



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