

Cutting Russia out of the SWIFT financial system, which moves money from bank to bank around the globe, would be one of the toughest financial steps they could take, damaging Russia's economy immediately and in the long term.

The move could cut Russia off from most international financial transactions, including international profits from oil and gas production, which accounts for more than 40 percent of the country's revenue.

The US also holds one of the most powerful financial weapons against Putin if he invades Ukraine – blocking Russia from access to the US dollar. The currency still dominates in financial transactions around the world, with trillions of dollars in play daily.

The US is considering imposing export controls, potentially cutting Russia off from the high tech that, among other things, helps warplanes and passenger jets fly and powers smartphones.

Russia has a war chest of more than \$600bn in foreign exchange reserves and gold that it can use to prop up the currency and absorb the shock of sanctions.

The prospect of war and sanctions disrupting energy and commodities markets posed an immediate threat to a global economy barely emerging from the pandemic. Stocks and bond yields plunged, while the dollar and gold rocketed higher. Brent oil surged past \$100/barrel for the first time since 2014.

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