

intro to russia/ukraine conflict

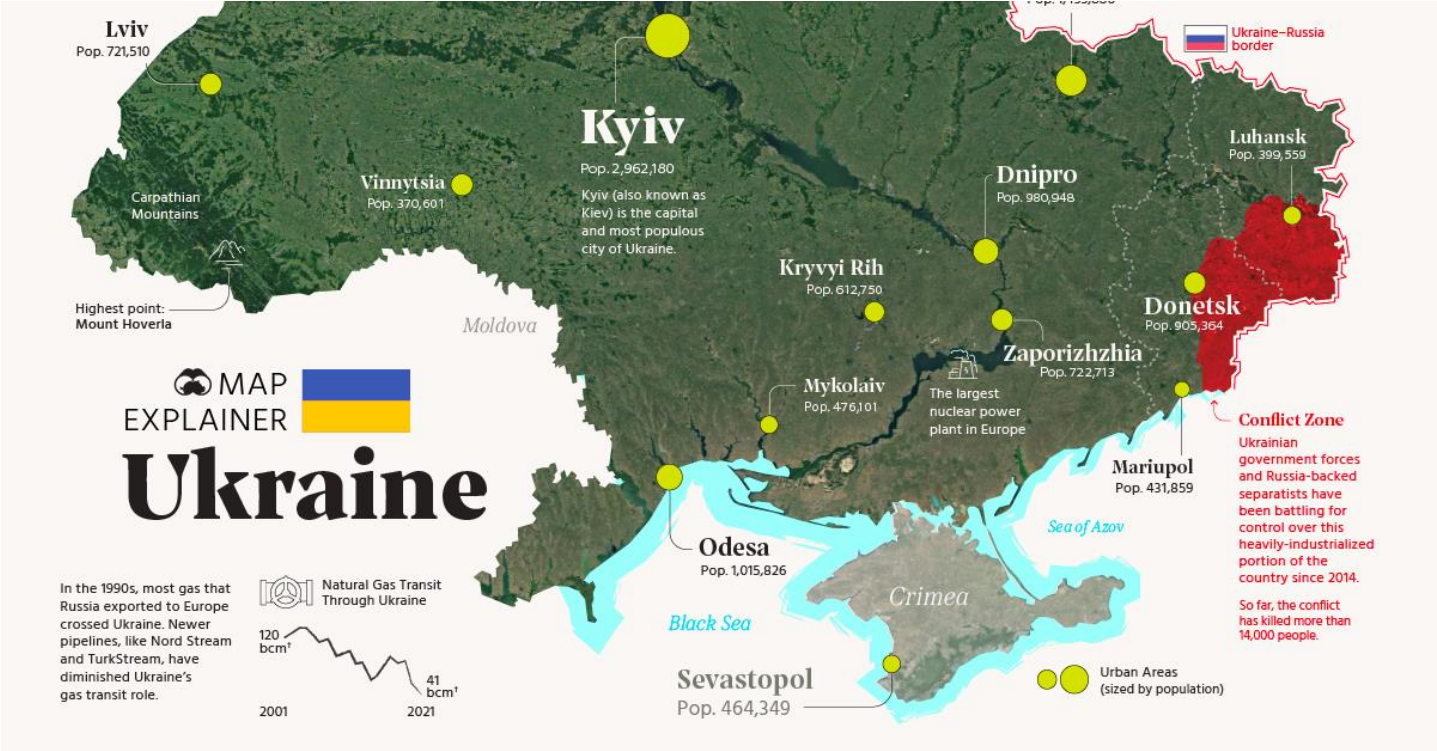
disclaimer:



source: vox

context *at least our attempt*

population



“East is densely populated, west is like Central Illinois”- Lee Eysturlid

vladimir putin / russia's side

- **ukraine is fundamentally a part of russia, culturally and historically**
- goal is to protect people subjected to bullying and genocide and aim for the "demilitarisation and de-Nazification" of Ukraine

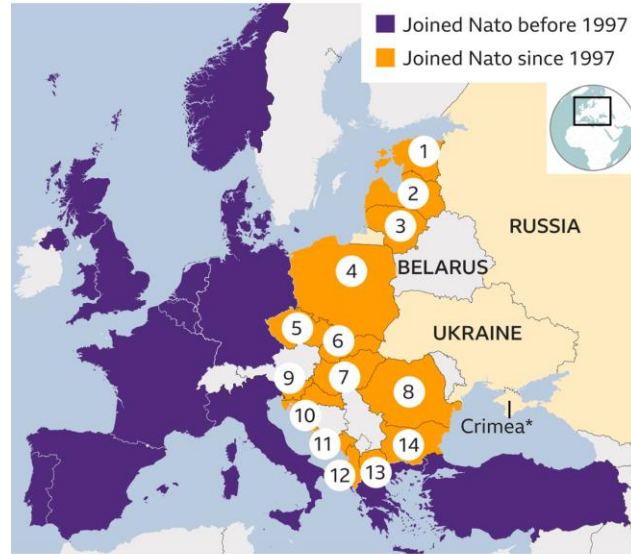
volodymyr zelenskyy / ukraine's side

- **ukraine is an independent country with an independent culture**
- "been no genocide in Ukraine: it is a vibrant democracy, led by a Jewish president." - bbc

relevant timeline/nato expansion

- **December 26, 1991**: Soviet Union collapses → major loss of geopolitical clout
 - Leads to the creation of **Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine**, and 11 other countries
 - **1992-1996: Ukraine** had the 3rd **largest nuclear arsenal** in the world
 - **US** and **Russia** worked together to denuclearize **Ukraine** in diplomatic agreements
 - **Ukraine** would give **Russia** nuclear warheads, and **Russia** wouldn't **attack Ukraine**
- **NATO** and **Eastern Europe**
 - **Years following collapse**: Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania joined NATO
 - Leads to the expansion of NATO towards eastern europe
 - Putin calls this “menacing” and is firmly against it
 - **Independence-Now**
 - **Ukraine** attempts to join NATO
 - Putin throws tantrums against it

Nato's expansion since 1997



- | | | | |
|-------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| ① Estonia | ⑤ Czech Republic | ⑨ Slovenia | ⑬ North Macedonia |
| ② Latvia | ⑥ Slovakia | ⑩ Croatia | ⑭ Bulgaria |
| ③ Lithuania | ⑦ Hungary | ⑪ Montenegro | |
| ④ Poland | ⑧ Romania | ⑫ Albania | |

*Russia annexed Crimea in 2014

BBC

NATO expanded eastward after the fall of the Soviet Union

relevant timeline

- **Crimean Peninsula, 2014:** ukraine protests oust pro-russian president (of Ukraine) from office, after he abandoned trade agreement with EU (russian demand)
 - Russia supports pro-russian seperatist insurgency in Eastern Ukraine
 - annexes **crimean peninsula**
 - **invades** eastern ukraine
 - US is **hesitant to escalate tensions** with **Russia** and **doesn't** mobilize a **diplomatic response** in Europe and nor provide Ukrainians with **offensive weapons**.

“A lot of us were really appalled that not more was done for the violation of that [post-Soviet] agreement,” - **Ian Kelly**, a **career diplomat** who served as **ambassador to Georgia** from 2015 to 2018

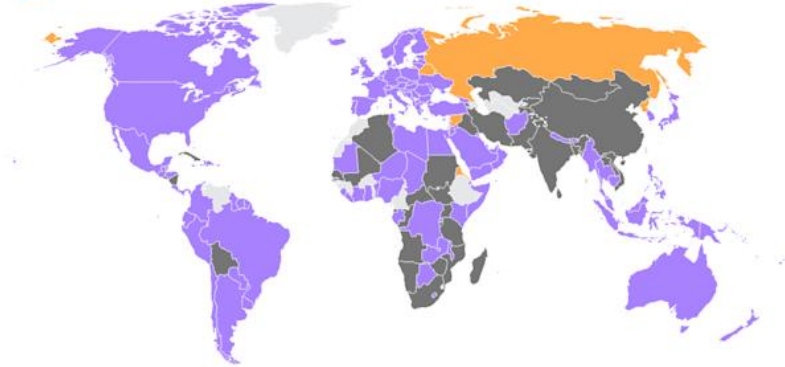


international response

How countries voted on UN resolution condemning Russia

March 2, 2022

■ Yes ■ No ■ Abstain



- **United States** and **Allies** condemned **Russia's** invasion of Ukraine, introducing strict sanctions to isolate **Russia** from the rest of the world
 - Leads to economic costs for everyone (rising gas prices)
- **February 24:** US announces that sanctions would be placed on Russian financial institutions
 - Export controls on certain technologies
 - UK and Europe also added their own sanctions

nato/global military response

- **February 24:** Pentagon announces it would **send 7,000 more troops to Germany** (NATO's east flank)
 - **February 26:** Secretary of State announces that he is authorizing up to **350 billion in additional military aid** for Ukraine
 - Aid will be provided asap and includes anti-tank and air defence
- Other **European** and **NATO** countries are also **increasing aid**
 - **Germany** reverses long-standing policy of not sending lethal aid to conflict zones



Secretary of State: Antony Blinken

nato/global military response 2



President of Ukraine: Volodymyr Zelenskyy

- **February 25th:** NATO announces it would activate part of its NATO Response Force
 - NATO vowed to protect its members from Russian aggression
 - NATO holds a 40,000 troop unit that was modernized (upgraded) after the **Crimea invasion** in 2014
- **March 5th:** Zelensky asks for NATO to institute a no-fly zone over Ukraine
 - NATO vowed to protect its members from Russian aggression
 - However, most NATO members (included the US) have shied away from any direct military action

battle right now?



- **Russian** “Debacle in Ukraine”
 - Expectation was a combined arms campaign
 - Why didn’t we see that?
 - Russia believed there would be **little resistance**, but there was **much resistance**
 - **No usage** of Air Force
- **Michael Kofman**: Expert on Russian military
 - War/resistance **wasn’t** the plan
 - Troops were sent to **seize** key roads to isolate sectors
 - Troops weren’t **psychologically prepared** for war

what's going on in russia?

- **Government** enacted two laws that criminalize independent war reporting and protesting the war
 - Imposed strict **censorship** on **all discussion** of **Russia's** war with **ukraine**
 - TV
 - Social Media
 - News
 - Can't use terms **“war”** or **“invasion”**
- Law can also be applied **retroactively**
- **Suppression** + imprisonment of protesters nationwide



what is going to happen?

1. Russia overruns Ukraine and forces Ukraine to surrender (not out of the question)
1. Russia decides to turn away from the conflict (“Highly Unlikely” - Lee Eysturlid)
1. Russia and Ukraine reach some type of compromise?

how do you think the US should be reacting to the russia and ukraine conflict?

follow up: imagine the US has unlimited resource and firepower, how would you WANT the US to handle to the russia vs ukraine situation?

How should the US react if a land war breaks out in Europe between Russia and NATO?

What roles do the US and China have in facilitating negotiations to end the conflict?

In general, how do you feel about US isolationism and interventionism? Do you think the US's actions are justified either way?