

### 3 H-3 N work on ongoing war

**STEP ONE:** two students from one of the two classes give a general introduction to the crisis/war (duration: 5-7 minutes)

#### THE RUSSIAN UKRAINIAN CONFLICT – AT A GLANCE

Russia has begun a large-scale military attack on Ukraine, its southern neighbour, on the orders of Russian President Vladimir Putin. There are reports of attacks on Ukrainian military infrastructure across the country, and Russian convoys entering from all directions. This sheet will give a brief overview as to the origins of the conflict and how things currently stand.

#### THE THREE KEY STRANDS

##### GEOGRAPHY

- The country shares borders with Russia both to the east and northeast.
- In 2014 Russia annexed the Crimea. The region was of particular interest to Russia since it depends on the Black Sea for access to the Mediterranean. The Port of Sevastopol, is one of the few ice-free deepwater ports available to Russia.
- The Ukraine is an important route for Russian gas. The continent gets nearly 40% of its natural gas and 25% of its oil from Russia.

##### HISTORY

- A huge amount of this current crisis is rooted in the legacy of the Cold War (1945-1991) which was a period of mistrust and competition between the USA (the West) and the Soviet Union (the East).
- Ukraine, which was part of the Soviet Union won independence as the USSR broke up in 1991.
- Russia has always considered Ukraine to be within its 'sphere of influence' and is extremely hostile to allow the Ukraine to have closer ties with the EU/NATO.

##### POLITICS

- From a Russian perspective the politics of this situation is about what the country DOES NOT want. Essentially Russia does not want the Ukraine to join the US led NATO.
- At the current moment relations between President Biden and Putin have deteriorated.
- Whilst Russia has decided to engage in invasion countries such as the USA, UK, Britain and France have decided to enforce tough economic sanctions and provide weaponry.

#### CONFLICT CHRONOLOGY

- MARCH 2021** – Russian troops begin amassing across the Ukrainian border.
- DECEMBER 2021** – An estimated 100,000 troops are concentrated across the Ukrainian border.
- JANUARY 2022**
  - Russia, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) and the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) hold talks
  - The US and Russia meet in Geneva to de-escalate tensions – differences remain unresolved.
  - NATO puts troops on standby.
- FEBRUARY 2022**
  - Ukraine and Russia conduct military drills.
  - Putin order Russian forces to Ukraine rebel regions.
  - Western powers call for more sanctions on Russia.
  - Russia launches full scale invasion of the Ukraine.

#### WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

**BOOK: Prisoners of Geography – Tim Marshall:**  
Chapter 1 of the book focuses on Russia and its geopolitical situation. It explores where the North European Plain opens a path from western European armies directly into Russia. This has contributed to Russians' desire to control a buffer zone of countries between it and the rest of the world.

**PODCAST: RUSSIA: The Geography:** Tim Marshall looks at how the world's geography dictated politics, history and the future of its countries.  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07sm1bd>

## What is NATO?

- The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO/OTAN) is a group of countries united against potential Russian aggression during the Cold War.
- Russia has in the past attempted to join NATO: Putin allegedly sought to join when he first took office in the Kremlin.

Article 5 of NATO stipulates that if one NATO nation is attacked, each member state must declare war upon the aggressor.

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

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BBC

**STEP TWO:** two students, again from one of the two classes, briefly give the latest news they got from the media. (5-7 minutes)

They cover these areas:

1. progress of negotiations and the humanitarian crisis (with the latest figures about refugees moving to other countries/being helped by other countries);
2. the progress of invasion and military actions, cities under Russian control (while speaking they have to illustrate a map they chose in advance particularly clear about the topic);
3. sanctions to Russia so far and their possible effects on Russian economy

**STEP THREE:** discussion, 15 minutes.

1. Do you think attacking Russia economically will prevent further encroachments into Ukraine?
2. How might Russia look to keep control of Ukraine if they take over?
3. What threats might Russia's incursion have on the United States?
4. Why are NATO nations worried about the Russian-Ukrainian conflict?

5. What economic toll might Russia's invasion have?
6. Should Russia take over Ukraine, would Ukrainians vote to join Russia?
7. If a NATO country invoked Article 5, would the United States invade Russia?
8. In what way do you think the United States should respond, if at all?
9. As ordinary citizens, is there anything we can possibly do? What can ordinary people all around the world do in this war? State your ideas.