



To our community:

We were about to send out our February newsletter, when Russia invaded Ukraine. In view of the immediacy of this tragic event, we decided to create this special edition.

Our hearts go out to those facing war.

While journalists and ordinary citizens keep us updated via mainstream and social media with breaking news and human stories, analyses from NGOs, governments, and think tanks provide a deeper understanding of the big questions. Why and how did we get here? What might happen once the fighting stops? These reports can be authored by the very researchers appearing in news broadcasts and current affairs programmes.

Ukraine–Russia: the background

In an attempt to understand why Vladimir Putin felt compelled to invade a neighbor, we've compiled a [list of key documents](#) on the background to the conflict. The list includes a copy of Putin's July 2021 essay, *On the Historical Unity of Ukrainians and Russians*.

The essay is no longer accessible from the Kremlin website because of [ongoing Denial of Service Attacks](#) (DDoS). Because the former US national intelligence expert on Russia, Fiona Hill, now at Brookings, [thinks the essay](#) is central to understanding Putin's motivation, we tracked it down, preserved it, and [it can now be studied via Policy Commons](#).

The fact that this essay is so hard to access at a moment of crisis speaks to the role libraries and publishers have in preserving information and making it accessible, whatever the circumstances. Some of these reports, we think, will become primary resources for tomorrow's historians.

In the [list](#) you'll also find a [2004 paper written by Lehman Brothers' Chief Economist, John Llewellyn](#), never published, which analyzes the history of foreign occupations and what an occupying power needs if it is to succeed. Written at the time of the Iraq War, the findings and lessons are strikingly relevant for the events unfolding in Ukraine.

Further insights

Here are some searches to try as you seek insights beyond the headlines:

- [Ukraine NEAR/5 NATO published from 2020 to 2022](#) (247 items)
- [Russia AND "effective sanctions" published from 2014 to 2022](#) (131 items)
- [Disinformation AND Russia AND Ukraine](#) (1657 items)
- [Russia AND cyberwarfare](#) (431 items)
- [\(Kremlin OR Russia\) AND "western policy" published from 2014 to 2022](#) (310 items)
- [\(Russia AND "civil resistance"\) OR \("russian occupation" AND resistance\)](#) (301 items)
- [\(Oligarchs OR Putin\) AND sanctions published since 2018](#) (2263 items)
- [Putin NEAR/5 motivation](#) (186 items)
- [Zelenskij AND Putin](#) (33 items)

We will continue to follow this crisis and highlight briefings, reports, and other resources that may bring insight to understanding this crisis and its aftermath. If you come across any reports, resources, or organizations you feel we should be covering, please upload them yourself, or let me know.

Our thoughts are with everyone affected by the conflict.

Toby Green

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