



Introduction

As the world continues to exit the last stages of a global pandemic, now familiar military conflicts continue to rage, new ones threaten to boil over and destabilize already tumultuous regions, and worldwide economies find themselves stumbling while trends of automation emerge with little oversight. All the while climate change continues to relentlessly push the world to inhospitable levels, and the constant detrimental spread of disinformation and malicious use of artificial intelligence disrupt the global physical and information landscape respectively. The governments of today find themselves in precarious positions

Since February of 2022 Ukraine and Russia have remained at war with nearly half a million dead.¹ Ukraine's counter-offensives have begun to push the invading Russian army back with slow progress as their drone strikes remain a constant terror in the Black Sea near Crimea.² This and other devastating outbreaks of warfare should stand not only as important issues on their own, but also as worrying signs of potential escalations of conflict elsewhere across the globe. Border tensions and constant displays of might and violence threaten to erupt with devastating consequences. As Ukraine and Russia remain in conflict, western countries like the United States and those of Europe must decide their best path forward to aid their allies in the immediate conflict and to prevent it from spreading elsewhere on the continent. Whereas regional powers like the People's Republic of China may eye the conflict as an opportunity to both seek leverage over nearby partners embroiled in the conflict to attempt to cement themselves as the sole regional powerhouse, or even view it as a welcome distraction to pursue other goals as much of the fixation of the world is drawn elsewhere. No conflict happens in a vacuum. The lessons learned from Russia's direct aggression may be applicable in unforeseen circumstances, especially ones arising far sooner than any might think as tensions continue to escalate in the Taiwan Strait as well as across the globe.

Information-based warfare continues to spread and dominate much of modern technological discourse through social media and other information sharing platforms. On platforms like X (formerly known as Twitter), WeChat, and others, artificial intelligence continues to explode in popularity as new unregulated programs develop with risks of minor misrepresentations of facts at best, and dangerous violence-inciting misinformation at worst.³ Current problems have only grown as platforms like X have become unmoderated landscapes of falsified information with competing propaganda narratives and an unchecked spread of near outright lies. To compound this issue, the true volatility of A.I. remains yet to be seen, as does its potential impact on the economies of the world through automation & obsolescence, beyond the continued engagement and

¹ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/ukraine-war-estimated-casualties-1.6940723>

² <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60506682>

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/08/technology/ai-chatbots-disinformation.html>



creation of disinformation. Programs like ChatGPT, DALL·E 2, and other artificial intelligence applications continue to develop and run rampant throughout the internet with little oversight.

Beyond the known concerns of warfare, both conventional and digital, climate change and its effects remains a looming specter over the entire globe. Natural disasters are



Source: Stanford University, 2022

undeniably increasing in intensity and frequency with record breaking heat waves, floods, and droughts.⁴ The average temperature of the planet has risen an entire degree Celsius since the late 19th century,⁵ the Greenland & Antarctica ice sheets have lost an average of 280 and 150 billion tons of ice respectively,⁶ and “Global sea level rose about 20 centimeters in the last century. The rate in the last two decades, however, is nearly double that of the last century and accelerating slightly every year.”⁷ The world must find common ground and solutions that can work for all while there still remains a world to save.

The delegates of this body are expected to be among the brightest available and will be called to answer many challenges in a variety of unique and effective ways. The validity of the very information being presented must be questioned alongside the decisions of how to solve the issues, and no stone must be left unturned to obtain a future that will be to the benefit of all, hopefully in a world of peace and understanding.

*This guide will present the primary concerns facing each Cabinet, Committee, and Board of Directors at the start of the conference, **December 7th, 2023**. Each body will be approaching the same issues and expected to make their own decisions in the face of an uncertain future.*

⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-62712301>

⁵ <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/monitoring>

⁶ https://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/?trk=public_post_comment-text

⁷ <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1717312115>



What is the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)?

The U.N. Security Council is a 15-member body and one of the six main organs of the U.N. chartered on October 24, 1945. Its primary purpose is to maintain peace and security around the world.⁸ Five of its 15 members sit on the council permanently: China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States.⁹ These permanent members, often referred to as the P5,¹⁰ all have the power to veto resolutions: if any one of the P5 votes against a resolution, it fails. 10 other countries sit on the council and are elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly.

The UNSC is arguably the most powerful U.N. body considering it is the only one that can require member states to carry out the contents of its resolutions. It is also unique in its ability to dispatch peacekeepers and use enforcement measures that can include economic sanctions and collective military action. As members of the Security Council, you are tasked with resolving conflicts that require leadership and careful consideration of multiple states' interests. You will have to decide when to pursue peaceful settlements, when to pursue enforcement measures, and what measures may be appropriate. Choose carefully: your decisions will be felt around the globe.

Topic 1 - The Russia-Ukraine War

The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 resulted in the emergence of multiple post-Soviet states on the global stage, including the newly independent Ukraine. 92.3% of all voters responded favorably towards Ukrainian independence in the 1991 referendum,¹¹ but a large percentage of the nation remained ethnically Russian. This divide would result in visible splits in Ukrainian politics for decades to come, including the 2004 & 2010 elections.¹² In both elections a clear split between the western heavily ethnically Ukrainian and the eastern ethnically Russian populations was visible.

⁸<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/what-security-council>

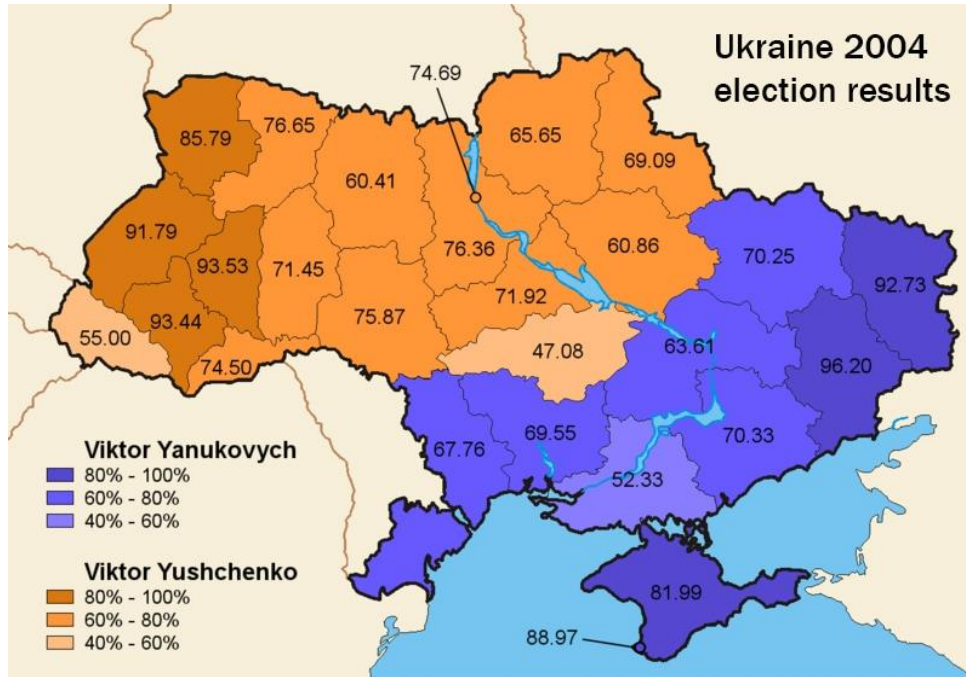
⁹<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/current-members>

¹⁰<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/un-security-council>

¹¹Magocsi, Paul R. *A History of Ukraine: The Land and Its Peoples*. University of Toronto Press, 2012.

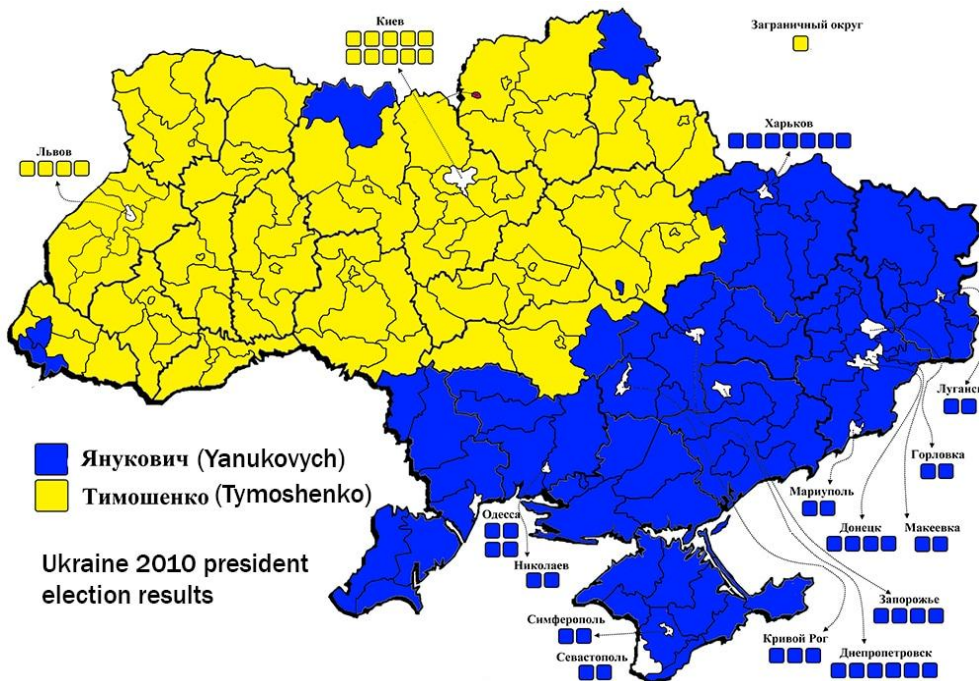
¹²<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2013/12/09/this-one-map-helps-explain-ukraines-protests/>

Figure 1. 2004 Ukrainian Election Results



Source: The Washington Post, 2013

Figure 2. Ukrainian 2010 Presidential Election Results



Source: The Washington Post, 2013



Such divisions led to multiple clashes and protests across the country such as the 2013 Euromaidan protests that lasted three months in the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv.¹³ The divide between pro-European and pro-Russian perspectives would eventually lead to the dramatic and sudden annexation of Crimea in 2014.

After Ukrainian President Yanukovich fled the country following the Euromaidan protests (largely due to the backlash he faced domestically), numerous unmarked and unidentified armed men began occupying the military facilities on the Crimean peninsula, Ukraine's southernmost region.¹⁴ Crimea is a critical piece between both Ukraine and Russia given the key naval station for the Russian Federation at Sevastopol as well as the large access to the Black Sea it provides. In a near bloodless move in March of 2014, armed soldiers occupied and denied entry to the Crimean Peninsula and established military installations through checkpoints as well as searches and seizures. While President Vladimir Putin denied the Russian origin of the armed forces at first he would eventually later admit their Russian origins and commend their leaders.¹⁵ The annexation of Crimea resulted in numerous global sanctions on Russia which would slow its economy briefly, but President Putin's approval ratings would still rise to 88%.¹⁶

On February 24th, 2022, President Vladimir Putin announced the decision to "conduct a special military operation... to protect people who have been subjected to abuse and genocide by the Kyiv regime for eight years."¹⁷ A multitude of missile strikes and artillery barrages early in the morning would soon follow striking cities across Ukraine, including Kyiv, Mariupol, and Kharkiv. Most would target airports and military installations but photo and video evidence would show clear damage to apartment buildings and other pieces of civilian infrastructure.¹⁸ Russian troops would follow in a ground invasion with a coordinated combined arms effort between infantry, armored divisions, as well as airborne units. Most vehicles would be marked with a white letter "Z" to identify themselves as Russian.¹⁹ Russian forces would quickly move west, taking control of areas surrounding the cities of Mariupol, Kherson, and Bakhmut among others.

These forces were bolstered by the presence of fighters under the organization Wagner Group. The private military organization has assisted the Russian Federation on numerous previous engagements, including the annexation of Crimea. Wagner provided an estimated 50,000 fighters

¹³<https://www.e-ir.info/2020/07/01/the-maidan-revolution-in-ukraine/>

¹⁴<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/crimea-six-years-after-illegal-annexation/>

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/21/the-devastating-human-economic-costs-of-crimeas-annexation>

¹⁷<https://www.cnn.com/2022/02/24/europe/ukraine-russia-attack-timeline-intl/index.html>

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹<https://www.npr.org/2022/03/09/1085471200/the-letter-z-russia-ukraine>



to the invasion of Ukraine.²⁰ The mercenary forces were effective in Russia's seizing of the city of Bakhmut but sustained heavy losses. Their leader in the offensive, Yevgeny Prigozhin, voiced criticisms of Moscow's military leadership for supply shortages along with allegations regarding friendly fire from Russian artillery strikes.²¹ On June 24th, 2023, Wagner forces marched north from Rostov-on-Don towards Moscow in an apparent rebellion. The troops reached as close as 124 miles from Moscow before halting and turning around in the same 24-hour period. An agreement between Moscow and Wagner promised stability between the two along with negotiations for contracts between Wagner troops and the Russian Ministry of Defense.²² Two months later a plane with Prigozhin onboard crashed near Kuzhenkino, Russia.²³

Russia's invasion of Ukraine resulted in numerous ground gains for the Russian Federation, predominantly in the eastern border regions. In June of 2023, Ukraine would mount a counteroffensive armed with weapons and training provided by the global West and NATO respectively.²⁴ In preparation for the expected counteroffensive, the Russian military utilized trenches, landmines, and new artillery positions.²⁵ The Russian defenses heavily blunted the Ukrainian movement, the latter in turn slowing down their counteroffensive to evaluate the scale of the Russian defenses. The Ukrainian military managed to recapture areas in Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia to the southeast of Ukraine but the counteroffensive has since stalled.²⁶ Ukraine's original goal in the offensive to split the Russian forces in two has not been achieved as of now.²⁷

Figure 3. Visualization of the Military Control of Ukraine

²⁰<https://abcnews.go.com/International/International/wagner-group-brutal-russian-military-group-fighting-ukraine/story?id=96665326>

²¹<https://time.com/6289991/wagner-rebellion-russia-prigozhin-putin/>

²²Ibid.

²³<https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/24/europe/prigozhin-wagner-russia-plane-crash-explainer-intl-hnk/index.html>

²⁴<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/06/08/russia-ukraine-war-news-counteroffensive/>

²⁵ <https://www.ft.com/content/7582506b-1337-4570-abcc-31f5f602bde7>

²⁶<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60506682>

²⁷<https://abcnews.go.com/International/ukraine-generals-view-war-stalemate-appears-recognition-failed/story?id=104576525>



How military control of Ukraine has changed

Feb 2022: Before the invasion

Mar 2022: Russia's rapid advance



Nov 2022: Ukraine regains ground

Sep 2023: Ukraine advances



- Russian military control
- Limited Russian military control
- Russian-backed separatist-held areas
- Held or regained by Ukraine
- Russia annexed Crimea in 2014

Note: Areas held or regained by Ukraine were reset by the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) on 12 May 2023

Source: Institute for the Study of War



Source: BBC, 2023



Currently, the war remains in a stalemate. Russia has faced severe sanctions and repercussions across the globe for staging the invasion but remains in control of large swathes of land in Ukraine. Ukraine's Ministry of Defense claims Russia's combat losses now exceed 310,000 since the invasion began.²⁸ While resources for weapons, training, and aircraft continue to pour into Ukraine from the United States and other nations, the delays in their arrival have enabled Russia to entrench itself, heralding a prolonged conflict without a clear end in sight. Early on in the invasion, the International Criminal Court opened an investigation on allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity, while the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution deploring the aggression of Russia against Ukraine.²⁹

The U.N. has monitored the situation closely with constant motions, resolutions, and visits to the affected regions. On February 25th, 2022, the Russian delegation to the United Nations Security Council vetoed a resolution that would have demanded the immediate cessation of the attack on Ukraine.³⁰ They also vetoed a resolution on September 30th, 2020 that demanded the reversal of the decision to annex the four primary regions of Ukraine currently under Russian control.³¹

Topic 2 - Preventing Future Conflicts of Expansion Born of Ideological Differences

Ideology is one of the driving factors behind much of the conflict facing the world today. Whether it be political systems, economic systems, or religious beliefs—ideology has proven throughout history to be a key factor in initiating contentions. An ideological conflict is any kind of conflict primarily caused by an ideological difference between groups. This type of conflict can be rooted in a variety of differences, such as politics, class, or religion, in addition to a variety of other characteristics.³² Ideological conflicts can manifest in many ways as well, such as proxy wars, civil wars, and even full-on states of war between nations. There have been countless conflicts driven by ideological differences throughout history. Moving forward, the world looks to the Security Council to attempt to change this.

Historical Examples of Ideological Conflicts

The Korean War. Following the end of the Second World War, the Korean peninsula was split in half along the 38th Parallel, with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) in the north and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) in the south. In 1950, following years of tension between the communist-run north and capitalist-run south, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea invaded the Republic of Korea. Shortly after, a U.N. relief force (mostly

²⁸<https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/10/ukraine-war-live-updates-latest-news-on-russia-and-the-war-in-ukraine.html>

²⁹<https://unric.org/en/the-un-and-the-war-in-ukraine-key-information/>

³⁰<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/02/1112802>

³¹<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/09/1129102>

³²<http://encyclopedia.uia.org/en/problem/ideological-conflict>



comprised of American soldiers) mobilized to defend South Korea. The conflict would last approximately three years, and although an armistice would be signed in 1953, the two nations technically remain at war to this day.³³ This conflict was fundamentally driven by a difference in ideology. In particular, the communist north felt threatened by the capitalist and pro-American leadership of South Korean President Syngman Rhee and wished to ensure a communist political and economic system.

The Vietnam War. Vietnam was divided following the end of the Second World War, with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) and the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) agreeing to hold reunification elections in 1956. These elections would never come, however, and by 1958 the two were at war. The Communist North Vietnam sought to reunify Vietnam under communist rule, while the Western-aligned South Vietnam sought to denounce communism and keep the Viet Cong at bay. In 1964, the United States formally entered the Vietnam War, in part justifying a need for intervention based on domino theory which argued that allowing one communist power would lead to another, spreading communism across multiple regions.³⁵ This is a very famous example of a conflict driven by ideological differences. The capitalist United States, to contain the spread of communism and advocate for their ideals, sent soldiers to support South Vietnam against Communist North Vietnam.

The War in Afghanistan. Following the September 11th terrorist attack, the United States demanded that the Taliban (based out of Afghanistan) extradite Osama Bin Laden to the U.S. The Taliban refused, and a month later, a coalition of nations led by the United States invaded Pakistan. Although the Taliban would be defeated relatively quickly, the coalition would remain in Afghanistan for nearly 20 years to ensure the nation's democratic transition, and to combat Islamic Extremism within the nation.³⁶ This is a different type of ideological conflict—one which highly involves religious and cultural differences. In response to the 9/11 terror attacks, which were carried out by Islamic extremists motivated by an anti-American worldview and religious beliefs, the U.S. and its allies invaded Afghanistan to eliminate an Islamic extremist terrorist cell.



Source: Britannica, 2023²⁷

³³<https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/ea/archives/the-korean-war-101-causes-course-and-conclusion-of-the-conflict/>

³⁴<https://www.britannica.com/event/Korean-War>

³⁵<https://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/vietnam-war-history>

³⁶<https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-war-afghanistan>



Contemporary Examples of Ideological Conflicts

China-Taiwan Conflict. Since 1927, China has been embroiled in civil war. Although many actors were involved in the conflict, two distinct groups did a majority of the fighting. First was the Kuomintang party, led by Chiang Kai-Shek. The Kuomintang was a Chinese nationalist, pro-democracy group founded in the early 1900s to remove the Chinese monarchy and install a Western-style democracy.³⁷ Opposed to them was a collection of communist organizations under the larger umbrella of the Chinese Communist Party. They would come to be led by Mao Zedong, who strived to install the CCP as the leader of a soon-to-be Communist China.³⁸ On August 1st, 1927, the Communist Party in the city of Nanchang launched an uprising to overthrow the Nationalist government present there. The communists would be successful and would begin to spread across Central and Eastern China, capturing cities as they went. In response, the Kuomintang mobilized the National Revolutionary Army to crush this insurgency. What would follow would be nearly two decades of ideological struggle (with a lull from 1936 to 1945 as both sides joined forces to resist the Imperial Japanese invasion) as the Communist CCP and Nationalist Kuomintang battled for control of China.³⁹

In 1949, following some 20 years of Civil War, the Chinese Nationalist Party fled to the Island of Taiwan off the coast of China. In mainland China, the Chinese Communist Party had taken control and established China as a communist nation. Since 1949, the People's Republic of China (Communist China) and the Republic of China (Taiwan) have been in a standoff over their respective ideologies, sovereignty, and borders. The Taiwan Strait, a key sea lane and the only "border" between Communist China and Taiwan has been the hotbed of conflict between the two. In three major instances between 1949 and the present day, some 2,000 individuals, soldiers and civilians alike, have lost their lives in a series of un-declared "border wars" between Communist China and Taiwan. These conflicts have seen full-blown military engagements between the two sides, with the United States often supplying equipment and intelligence to Taiwan. The U.S. has even gone as far as to deploy significant naval units to the region to help protect Taiwan (although these have not been used in combat).⁴⁰ The U.S. is widely considered Taiwan's most significant ally, and as such, the U.S. has frequently lent support to Taiwan as a way to oppose Communist China.

In August of 2022, in an extremely controversial decision, United States Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan. The decision was strongly protested by Communist China and was seen as the stoking of already hot tensions between the U.S./Taiwan and China. In response to

³⁷<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Nationalist-Party-Chinese-political-party>

³⁸<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Chinese-Communist-Party>.

³⁹<https://www.britannica.com/event/Chinese-Civil-War>.

⁴⁰<https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/Article/3253814/averting-escalation-and-avoiding-war-lessons-from-the-1995-1996-taiwan-strait-crisis/>



this decision, Communist China launched a series of sweeping military training maneuvers around the island of Taiwan, sending a clear message to the island about their disdain for Taiwan's Western connections.⁴¹ With this considered, the China-Taiwan situation is a perfect contemporary example of a modern ideological conflict with roots stretching back nearly 100 years. Communist China insists that Taiwan, an American-supported democratic state, is nothing more than an illegitimate breakaway state used to spread American hegemony in the Far East. Taiwan insists themselves to be the rightful heir to China. The two sides have been poised against one another for decades, and as the situation develops more and more by the day, lessons as to the nature of ideological conflict become more and more prevalent and applicable.⁴²



Source: Taiwan Presidential Office (AP), 2022³⁵

The 2022 Invasion of Ukraine. Russia and Ukraine are two nations with an extremely complicated history. Ukraine has long been a nation divided by foreign powers. From 1500 onward, Ukraine as we know it today existed as parts of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Austrian Empire, Austro-Hungarian Empire, Russian Empire, and independent Cossack States.⁴³ Following the treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1917 and the subsequent Russian Civil War, Ukraine would fight a brief, bloody war for independence, ending in 1921 with their joining (by force) the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). For the next 70 years, Ukraine would remain as a member of the USSR, with its bountiful grain resources earning it the title of the “Breadbasket of Europe.”

In 1991, the Soviet Union was in decline. Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev had passed policies of *Glasnost* (openness) and *Perestroika* (restructuring), seeking to reform the union. These policies broadened freedom of speech and political demonstration as well as decentralized the economy, and although they were well-intentioned, they would ultimately be the downfall of the Soviet Union. A loosening of political freedoms across the Eastern Bloc resulted in both Soviet

⁴¹<https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/08/17/how-pelosi-s-taiwan-visit-has-set-new-status-quo-for-u-s-china-tension-s-pub-87696>

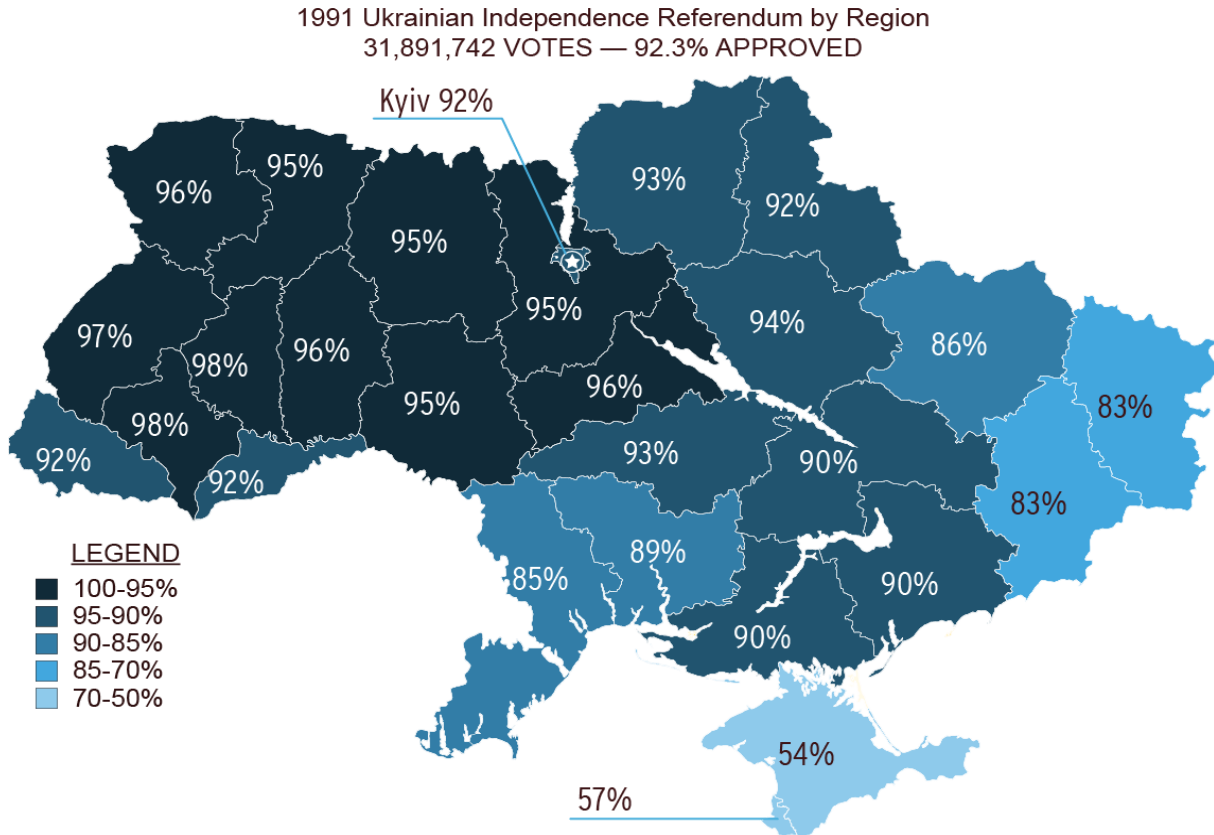
⁴²<https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2022/8/3/photos-nancy-pelosis-taiwan-visit>

⁴³<https://www.britannica.com/summary/Ukraine>.



client states and members of the USSR holding free elections, in which anti-Communist parties won massive majorities.⁴⁴ One notable instance of this was in Ukraine.

Figure 6. 1991 Ukrainian Independence Referendum by Region⁴⁵



Source: Data from Verkhovna Rada (Supreme Council) of Ukraine and the State Archival Service of Ukraine

Source: Brookings, 2015

In 1991, the people of Ukraine voted overwhelmingly for independence from the Soviet Union, and the creation of a sovereign Ukrainian nation. Despite the nation voting overwhelmingly for independence, there are a few notable outliers. While the Crimean Peninsula and Port of Sevastopol (the two southernmost areas pictured in Figure 1) did vote for independence, they did so with a much narrower margin than the rest of the nation (54% and 57% respectively). This region would go on to be one of the catalysts of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine. In 2013, Ukraine began a sharp transition toward the West.

⁴⁴<https://www.history.com/news/did-perestroika-cause-the-fall-of-the-soviet-union>

⁴⁵<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/10-maps-that-explain-ukraines-struggle-for-independence/>



A bill to join the European Free Trade Agreement had been brought to the Ukrainian government, and it was predicted that then-President Viktor Yanukovich would sign said agreement. However, in November of that year, it was discovered that Yanukovich was secretly working on an agreement that would instead draw Ukraine much closer to Russia. As a result of this news, the Ukrainian people initiated a series of protests centered around the capital of Kyiv, and would eventually spread across the country. Their protests, which would come to be known as *Euromaidan*, would ultimately see President Yanukovich forced to resign and flee to Russia.

While this was happening, the Russian Federation made a move to annex Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula. The Crimean Peninsula, a sovereign piece of Ukrainian territory that held a large ethnically Russian population, was transferred to Ukraine during the Soviet era and had been Ukrainian territory for some 60 years at the time of the Russian annexation.⁴⁶ In early 2014, as Ukraine was still in the middle of the *Euromaidan* protests, armed men (with insignia and national identity markers removed) began to occupy key strategic areas across Crimea. Rumors that these “little green men” were actually Russian soldiers were confirmed when Putin announced a referendum to decide the fate of Crimea. The referendum, although seen as illegitimate and rigged by much of the international community, would see the region of Crimea formally annexed into the Russian Federation via treaty on March 18th.⁴⁷

Shortly after the Annexation of Crimea, the Eastern Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk (referred to as the Donbas region), both of which have a large ethnic Russian population, declared independence from Ukraine.⁴⁸ For the next eight years, a bloody proxy war between Russian-backed separatists and the Ukrainian Military, claiming thousands of lives and thoroughly destroying the region, would wage across the Donbas. The war would see Russian soldiers, equipment, and information actively assist the Donbas separatists for the duration of the war.



Source: *The Economist*, 2022⁴²

⁴⁶<https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2014/02/27/283481587/crimea-a-gift-to-ukraine-becomes-a-political-flash-point>

⁴⁷<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/crimea-six-years-after-illegal-annexation/>

⁴⁸<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/russia-and-ukraine-the-tangled-history-that-connects-and-divides-them>



The situation would all change, however, on February 24, 2022. It was in the early morning hours of this day that the Russian Federation launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The invasion came after weeks of a buildup of Russian forces along the Ukrainian border and took the Ukrainian military by surprise. The Russian plan for the attack was simple: capture Kyiv and eliminate Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. The attack began with a simultaneous broad push across the Ukrainian land border, and paratroopers capturing the Hostomel Airport near Kyiv. The paratrooper attack failed horrifically and the Ukrainian military held the airport and destroyed the Russian assault. Simultaneously, logistical issues and a stiff Ukrainian resistance saw a Russian push to capture Kyiv stop dead in its tracks. However, the Russian military was able to make further pushes in the south. The Ukrainian industrial city of Mariupol fell after months of siege, Russian forces were able to gain control of much of Southern Ukraine south of the Dnieper River, and the town of Bakhmut has been traded back and forth between Russian and Ukrainian forces multiple times over the past year.⁵⁰

At the same time, NATO and other Western allies began to send billions of dollars worth of aid to the nation. Soon, western equipment, guns, artillery, rockets, tanks, planes, helicopters, intelligence, and even training personnel began arriving in the nation and began helping to rebuild the Ukrainian army. Soon, much of the Ukrainian military was trained and equipped in the usage of all sorts of Western equipment. Since the Spring of 2023, however, the frontline has stagnated. Trench warfare has set in, and with the onset of winter imminent, it is unlikely that any major actions will occur until next spring.

The War in Ukraine has quickly developed into a proxy war between the East and West. Russian forces have suffered numerous significant setbacks throughout the war, but still control (and have since formally annexed into the Russian Federation)⁵¹ large areas of Ukrainian territory. Ukraine has lost a substantial portion of its territory, but has received billions of dollars in aid from Western powers and has been able to hold its own against a far larger enemy.

This war has also strengthened NATO substantially. Following the invasion, Finland and Sweden, both nations that sit near Russia, have petitioned to join NATO, with Finland joining the organization in the Spring of 2023, and Sweden expected to join soon. Ukraine has also expressed an adamant interest in joining NATO once the conflict has ended. NATO has responded in kind, making assurances to Ukraine that they will be allowed to apply to join the organization once the war has concluded.⁵²

⁴⁹<https://www.economist.com/europe/2022/03/28/russia-says-it-is-changing-its-war-aims-in-ukraine>

⁵⁰<https://www.csis.org/analysis/russias-war-ukraine-identity-history-and-conflict>

⁵¹<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-putin-signs-documents-to-unlawfully-claim-4-ukrainian-regions-in/>

⁵²https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_218847.htm



The reality of Ukraine as a member of NATO is an extremely concerning prospect for Russia. One of the catalysts of the Russian invasion was Ukraine's closing ties with NATO and the West. If Ukraine were to join NATO, it would mean a major Western player positioned directly on the border with Russia. Russia has felt surrounded by the West for years, with many of Russia's former Eastern Bloc client states joining NATO since the end of the Cold War. The addition of Finland and the possible addition of Ukraine within the coming years has only made this perceived stranglehold appear tighter and tighter and has forced Russia to draw closer to other allies, such as China. The war in Ukraine has propelled a new, modern Cold-Waresque dynamic between East and West. As this war drags on and Western support continues to enter Ukraine, Russia is likely to become more antagonistic towards the West and NATO and move further away from cooperation with its neighbors.

Topic 3 - Enforcing Global Digital Borders

Historical Background

There are four key factors that determine the establishment of a state: the possession of a permanent population, a defined territory, a government, and the capacity to conduct international relations.⁵³ Given the widespread adoption of technology across the populations of most states, the world's citizens are continually increasing the depth of their digital lives. As such, they begin to push the boundaries of territory across the digital landscape. How such international interactions are regulated by states, and how citizens can move between states digitally, is a matter of rising importance as digital lives increase their impact and interconnection with their physical counterparts.

Current Situation

One of the central aspects of enforcing global digital borders is directly tied to security. A recent area of contention related to security comes from the use of data, especially in an age in which thousands of personal data points can be processed to better profile individuals. While this technology is being used by companies like TikTok to provide entertainment in the form of an algorithm tailored to the likes of its user, the perceived relationship between TikTok and the Chinese government, and the influence the latter can have on American citizens, has drawn both scrutiny and threats from Congress.⁵⁴ Assurances of many Chinese-based companies, including TikTok and Tencent, to create servers outside the Chinese mainland to house the data of U.S. citizens has done little to assuage fears. These concerns arise not simply due to distrust for the

⁵³<https://www.britannica.com/topic/international-law/States-in-international-law>

⁵⁴<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/banning-tiktok-alone-will-not-solve-the-problem-of-us-data-security/>



Chinese Communist Party, but more so as an expression of digital sovereignty. A state has the responsibility to monitor and protect its borders, and rather than deliver a frictionless and interconnected world, the internet has instead opened up a new space for competition through the geopolitics of cybersecurity in which states need to guarantee the health of national information infrastructures.⁵⁵

These issues might seem distant or unimportant, but international attacks have been occurring in the realm of cybersecurity for more than a decade. In 2013, Iranian hackers targeted and accessed the controls of the Bowman Avenue Dam in Rye Brook, New York, with the intent of crippling U.S. infrastructure.⁵⁶ Nothing came out of this attack due to the plant being offline at that exact moment, but if the attack was a practice test for a more relevant target or something else, it reveals that even the U.S., with its aging infrastructure, is vulnerable to foreign attacks. A more morbid scenario could come into play, and it highlights the importance of the issue, when recalling the Israeli hack of Iran's Natanz nuclear plant, which threatened a nuclear meltdown and was decryed by Tehran as cyberterrorism.⁵⁷

Beyond the security of critical infrastructure, it is also important to consider how developments in global digital borders can affect both global connectedness as well as travel and tourism. New technologies are being implemented into border protection. A recent study by the Human Rights Council reveals that these technologies have proven to be harmful to human rights, in particular to those of migrants. The use of biometric recognition tools, massive databases, emotion detection tools, drones, and other technologies to manage borders can often result in unlawful profiling, the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes, racism, and discrimination.⁵⁸ Furthermore, digital spaces are being locked behind geographies. Although the Chinese Great Firewall is the most evident example, governments are reproducing existing borders and power structures in digital spaces, and in so doing, innovating through new forms of securitization and territorialization⁵⁹ that can hamper and threaten the way its citizens interact with others.

The need for digital global borders is not born out of an irrational or paranoiac desire for sovereignty and territorial protection. The internet has a physical component, housed across thousands of servers spread across warehouses and connected by underwater fiber-optic cables. The internet, too, is becoming increasingly fragmented as more and more countries, such as China and Russia, as well as India, Turkey, and the United States, to name a few, deploy a

⁵⁵<https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2023.2216737>

⁵⁶<https://www.industrialcybersecuritypulse.com/facilities/throwback-attack-how-the-modest-bowman-avenue-dam-became-the-target-of-iranian-hackers/>

⁵⁷<https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/here-s-how-israel-hacked-iran-s-nuclear-facility-45838>

⁵⁸<https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2023/10/digital-technologies-borders-threat-people-move>

⁵⁹<https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2023.2216737>



comprehensive monitoring system.⁶⁰ No matter the use states give to their digital infrastructure and the data it collects, they recognize the need to establish robust cyber defenses as a way to protect physical assets and citizens inexorably linked to a digital presence.

Even though approaches vary, there is no entrenched way of thinking when it comes to global digital borders. Given the security concerns and the heightened risk that may come with an increase in internet fragmentation, it is imperative that the Security Council tackles the issue and establishes guidelines to enforce safety in the digital realm.

Additional Resources:

- Russia-Ukraine war at a glance: what we know on day 632
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/nov/17/russia-ukraine-war-at-a-glance-what-we-know-on-day-632>
- Here's what we know about how Russia's invasion of Ukraine unfolded
<https://www.cnn.com/2022/02/24/europe/ukraine-russia-attack-timeline-intl/index.html>
- Digital technologies at borders: A threat to people on the move
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2023/10/digital-technologies-borders-threat-people-move>
- Digital Border Governance: a Human Rights Based Approach - September 2023
<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/digital-border-governance-human-rights-based-approach-september-2023>

⁶⁰<https://www.fastcompany.com/90792643/pov-why-its-time-for-digital-borders>