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On March 1, 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin received authorization from the Russian Parliament to deploy Russian troops to Ukraine. Russian troops then mobilized throughout Crimea and the southeast of Ukraine. By March 2nd, Russian troops had complete control over the Crimea.

On March 6th, 2014 the Crimean Parliament which had been part of Ukraine, voted to "enter into the Russian Federation with the rights of a subject of the Russian Federation" and announced that a referendum on the topic would be held on March 16th.

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On March 15th, 2014 the UN Security Council considered a resolution which would have urged member states not to recognize the results of the referendum, but that resolution was vetoed by Russia.

This is part of the problem when dealing with the UN Security Council. All decisions must be unanimous.

The Security Council consists of fifteen members, of which five are permanent: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These were the great powers that were the victors of World War II. Permanent members can veto (block) any Security Council resolution, including those on the admission of new member states to the United Nations

Based on these rules, you can see why it is so difficult to pass a UN Security Council Resolution. China and Russia veto US and United Kingdom resolutions. The US and United Kingdom veto Chinese and Russian resolutions.

This also explains why Ukraine will never be accepted into the United Nations.

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So, back to our story. The referendum, allowing Crimea to join with Russia, was held on March 16th, 2014.

The referendum asked the people of these regions whether they wanted to join Russia as a federal subject, or if they wanted to restore the 1992 Crimean Constitution and Crimea's status as a part of Ukraine.

Election officials in Crimea announced 97% of voters had voted in favor of joining the Russian Federation; local media alleged voter fraud. Many opponents were reported to have boycotted the vote.

The United States and the European Union stated they considered the vote to be illegal, and warned that there may be repercussions.

Crimea and Sevastopol formally declared independence as the Republic of Crimea on March 17th, with both entities requesting they be admitted as constituents of the Russian Federation.

Russia recognized their independence on the same day. Ukraine, the United States and the European Union stated they would not recognize Crimea's annexation to Russia.

Several days after the UN Security Council resolution was vetoed by Russia, the United Nations General Assembly subsequently voted by 100 votes to 11 (with 58 abstentions) in favor of a non-binding statement opposing Russia's annexation of the peninsula.

At the same time as the Crimean crisis, unrest began in the Eastern and Southern regions of mainland Ukraine. In several cities armed men, declaring themselves as local militia, seized government buildings and police stations in several cities of the regions.

The hostilities between the pro-Russian militia and Ukrainian forces escalated initially with few casualties. The first major incident occurred when a pro-Russian group tried to enter a military airport. Three invaders were shot and several were wounded.

On April 17th 2014 the foreign ministers of the EU, Russia, Ukraine and the US held a meeting in Geneva.

The meeting yielded a Joint Diplomatic Statement in which the parties requested that all unlawful militias lay down their arms and vacate seized government buildings, and also established a political dialogue that could lead to more autonomy for Ukraine's regions.

As the crisis in Ukraine showed no signs of easing, then U.S. Vice President Joe Biden promised support for Ukraine and stressed that the United States would not recognize Russia's annexation of Crimea.

"No nation has the right to simply grab land from another nation," Biden said. "We will never recognize Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea."

Ukrainian and U.S. officials said they thought Russian special forces were in the region and were behind the efforts to seize government buildings and generally promote unrest -- a claim Moscow denied. As we all now know, Russia used the Crimea as the jumping off point to launch its attack on Ukraine on February 24th, 2022.

That, my friends, is the conflict you are seeing on the news every night.

So how about a little history?

Ukraine was the center of the first eastern Slavic state, Kyivan Rus, which during the 10th and 11th centuries was the largest and most powerful state in Europe. In the 12th century the land came under the control of a Viking leader named Oleg and became known as the land of the Rus (Scandinavian Vikings).

The cultural and religious legacy of Kyivan Rus laid the foundation for Ukrainian nationalism through subsequent centuries.

A new Ukrainian state, was established during the mid-17th century after an uprising against the Poles. Despite continuous pressure from Moscow, the Ukraine managed to remain autonomous for well over 100 years.

During the latter part of the 18th century, most Ukrainian territory was absorbed by the Russian Empire. Following the collapse of czarist Russia in 1917, Ukraine was able to achieve a short-lived period of independence (1917-20), but was reconquered and forced to endure a brutal Soviet rule that engineered two forced famines (1921-22 and 1932-33) in which over 8 million died.

So, let's stop here for a second. Most people think Russia and the Soviet Union are the same thing. That is incorrect.

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Under Lenin, the USSR was created. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soviet mean “Council” in Russian).

The whole country used to be called Russia under the rule of the Czars of the Romanov dynasty.

When Lenin came to power, he divided the country up into 15 soviet states. Easier to govern. (11 time zones!)

Russia was the largest state, but there were now 14 other states of which, Ukraine was one.

Now think about that. Soviet rule is fairly recent history in the minds of the Ukrainian people. The current citizens have been told the stories of Soviet atrocities by their grandparents. Let me tell you a few.

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The Ukrainian famine—known as *the Holodomor*, (Hollow Doe More) a combination of the Ukrainian words for “starvation” and “to inflict death”—by one estimate claimed the lives of 3.9 million people, about 13 percent of the population.

Unlike other famines in history caused by blight or drought, this was caused when a dictator wanted both to replace Ukraine’s small farms with state-run collectives and punish independence-minded Ukrainians who posed a threat to his totalitarian authority.

In those days, Ukraine—a Texas-sized nation along the Black Sea to the west of Russia—was a part of the Soviet Union, then ruled by Stalin. It was the bread basket of Europe and still is. In 1929, as part of his plan to rapidly create a totally communist economy, Stalin had imposed collectivization, which replaced individually owned and operated farms with big state-run collectives.

Ukraine's small, mostly subsistence farmers resisted giving up their land and livelihoods. Many burned their crops and slaughtered their livestock (horses, cows, pigs, and sheep), rather than give them to the state.

In 1934, the Kulaks killed 26.6 million cattle, and 63.4 million sheep rather than let Stalin have them.

In response, the Soviet regime referred to the resisters as kulaks—well-to-do peasants, who in Soviet ideology were considered enemies of the state. Soviet officials drove these peasants off their farms by force and Stalin's secret police further made plans to deport 50,000 Ukrainian farm families to Siberia.

Stalin had a goal of transforming the Ukrainian nation into his idea of a modern, proletarian, socialist nation, even if this entailed the physical destruction of broad sections of its population.

Collectivization in Ukraine didn't go very well. By the fall of 1932—around the time that Stalin's wife, who reportedly objected to his collectivization policy, committed suicide—it became apparent that Ukraine's grain harvest was going to miss Soviet planners' target by 60 percent.

There still might have been enough food for Ukrainian peasants to get by, but Stalin then ordered what little they had be confiscated as punishment for not meeting quotas.

Now the Russian winter set in. Millions of people in Moscow and St. Petersburg starved as well.

Stalin now directed party officials to extract more grain from regions that had not met their quotas. It further called for the arrest of collective farm chiefs who resisted and of party members who did not fulfill new quotas.

Meanwhile, Stalin arrested tens of thousands of Ukrainian teachers and intellectuals and removed Ukrainian-language books from schools and libraries. (Book banning?)

Stalin used the grain shortfall as an excuse for even more intense anti-Ukrainian repression.

Stalin “targeted Ukrainian ‘saboteurs,’ ordered local officials to stop using the Ukrainian language in their correspondence, and cracked down on Ukrainian cultural policies that had been developed in the 1920s.”

When Stalin’s crop collectors went out into the countryside, according to a 1988 U.S. Congressional commission report, they used long wooden poles with metal points to poke the dirt floors of peasants’ homes and probe the ground around them, in case they’d buried stores of grain to avoid detection.

Peasants accused of being food hoarders typically were sent off to prison, though sometimes the collectors didn’t wait to inflict punishment. Two boys who were caught hiding fish and frogs they’d caught, for example, were taken to the village soviet (council), where they were beaten, and then dragged into a field with their hands tied and mouths and noses gagged, where they were left to suffocate.

As the famine worsened, many tried to flee in search of places with more food. Some died by the roadside, while others were thwarted by the secret police and the regime’s system of internal passports.

Ukrainian peasants resorted to desperate methods in an effort to stay alive, according to the Congressional commission’s report. They killed and ate pets and consumed flowers, leaves, tree bark and roots. One woman who found some dried beans was so hungry that she ate them on the spot without cooking them, and reportedly died when they expanded in her stomach.

Local citizens and officials pleaded for relief from the state. Waves of refugees fled the villages in search of food in the cities and beyond the borders of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. The regime’s response, he says, was to take measures that worsened their plight. He shut down the borders and executed anyone traveling outside their home territories.

By the summer of 1933, some of the collective farms had only a third of their households left, and prisons and labor camps were jammed to capacity.

With hardly anyone left to raise crops, Stalin's regime resettled Russian peasants from other parts of the Soviet Union in Ukraine to cope with the labor shortage.

Eventually, when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Ukraine finally became an independent nation—and the Holodomor remains a painful part of Ukrainians' common identity.

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So, based on what you have learned, do you now have a better understanding of why the people of Ukraine are fighting to keep Russia out of their homelands?

If you find this topic interesting, please visit your local Camden County Library where we have pulled resources from our collection that can help you in furthering your knowledge of the current conflict between the Ukraine and Russia that we are seeing on the nightly news.

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(Transition from Jim's piece to our featured online resource and upcoming events.)

Want to learn more about these or other countries or cities? Be sure to check out our *A to Z Resources*. These resources are great for doing research before traveling, whether it be for pleasure or business.

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A to Z World Travel is great for those wishing to travel for pleasure and acts as an online travel guide. Search and learn about 202 world cities from Aberdeen to Zurich. Within this resource, you can learn more about local activities such as attractions, excursions, and shopping, the climate and weather, geography, maps of the city, travel essentials, and so much more.

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Are you traveling for business reasons? Be sure to check out *A to Z World* and discover 174 countries from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe and learn more about a country's business culture, business style, relationship building, and business etiquette. Or dive deeper into their demographics, government, history, money and banking, economy, or trade just to highlight a few options.

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We also invite you to check out our other *A to Z Resources*, *A to Z Food America* and *A to Z World Food*. Search for local or ethnic recipes, by region, country, or ingredient. Or learn more about local cultures, classic dishes, dining etiquette, and so much more.

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Are you always on the go? Take these resources and so much more with you by downloading our mobile app. The *A to Z Resources* are only a click away when you open the app and click on Online Services. No library card is needed to access the *A to Z Resources*.

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In honor of Beverly Cleary's 108th birthday this Friday, April 12th, we invite you to Drop Everything and Read (D.E.A.R.) by pulling up a cozy chair and opening a new read or visiting an old favorite. The Osage Beach Library will hold a special storytime on this day at 3:30 pm.

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Celebrate Native American culture at the Camdenton Library by learning about the powwow on Saturday, April 13, at 2 pm. The American Indian Culture Center of Springfield will present traditional dances that may be found at powwows, and teach how Native American children

participate in their heritage. Kids will have a chance to learn some dance steps from Powwow Princess Nizhoni Falcon while honoring the strong traditions of Native People.

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Are you looking to indulge your crafty side? We invite you to join us at the Stoutland Library on Friday, April 16, at 5:30 pm for a fun and exciting evening when Dan Rivera, local artist, returns to the library to teach us new painting techniques.

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The Camdenton Library will host an After Hours NERF Battle event for ages 7 to 11 on Friday, April 26, from 6 to 9 pm. Registration is required for this event. Rules and registration can be found on our calendar of events. The link is in the comments.

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Are you wanting to find mom a one-of-a-kind, handcrafted gift this Mother's Day? Be sure to stop in at the Osage Beach Library's Mother's Day Maker's Market Bazaar on Saturday, April 27, from 10 am to 2 pm where we will have local craft vendors selling their unique wares from stained glass to jewelry to t-shirts to handcrafted bags, there is something for everyone.

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You won't want to miss this...Our friends from the Lake of the Ozarks will return to the Camdenton Library on Saturday, April 27, at 1 pm for a free acoustic session.