

Ukraine v Russia – 1980 to 2024

Events from January 1980 to December 2024 that have led up to the ongoing Ukraine-Russia war...

1970s: The Soviet Union continued to exert control over Ukraine, which was part of the USSR along with many other “socialist republics” of the post WWII/cold war era.

1980s

1981: Reagan takes office with a strong anti-communist stance, initiating a significant increase in “peace through strength” defense spending.

1983: Reagan delivers his famous "Evil Empire" speech, further solidifying his anti-communist/anti-Soviet policies.

1985: Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev meet for the first time at the [Geneva Summit](#), beginning a series of negotiations aimed at reducing nuclear arms.

1986: The Chernobyl disaster occurs in Ukraine, highlighting the Soviet Union's communist central planners' mismanagement issues and leading to increased dissent.

1987: The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces [\(INF\) Treaty](#) is signed, eliminating an entire class of nuclear weapons and marking a significant step towards ending the Cold War.

1988: [Reagan and Gorbachev](#) meet again in Moscow, discussing arms control, human rights, and regional conflicts.

Impact on Ukraine's Independence

Support for Dissidents: Reagan's administration actively supported dissidents and national movements within the Soviet Union, including Ukraine. This support helped to embolden independence movements.

Human Rights Advocacy: Reagan's emphasis on human rights put pressure on the Soviet Union to address issues within its satellite states, including Ukraine.

Strategic Diplomacy: Reagan's negotiations with Gorbachev and the subsequent treaties helped to create an environment where Soviet control over its satellite states weakened, eventually leading to Ukraine's independence in 1991.

Reagan's policies and diplomatic efforts contributed to the weakening of Soviet control and the rise of independence movements in Ukraine and other Soviet republics. This set the stage for Ukraine's eventual declaration of independence in 1991.

1990s

1991: Ukraine declares independence from the Soviet Union on December 1, after the [collapse of the USSR](#), which resulted from the coup that led to the demise of Soviet

communism. The [CPSU](#)'s influence had been dwindling since at least the beginning of Gorbachev's reform regime in 1985. Many other states from the USSR followed suit.

1994: The [Budapest Memorandum](#) is signed on December 5, where Ukraine agrees to give up its nuclear weapons in exchange for security assurances from Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

1996: The [Trilateral Agreement](#) is signed on January 14th; further solidifying Ukraine's commitment to non-nuclear status.

2000s

2004: The [Orange Revolution](#) occurs in Ukraine, leading to a pro-Western government.

2008: NATO discusses extending a [Membership Action Plan](#) (MAP) to Ukraine, but Russia strongly opposes it.

2010s

2010: The [Kharkiv Pact](#) is signed, extending Russia's lease on the Sevastopol naval base in Crimea until 2042.

2013-2014: Ukraine signs an association agreement with the European Union (EU), leading to protests and the eventual ousting of pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich.

The protests began in November 2013 after Yanukovich's government decided to suspend the signing of an association agreement with the European Union, opting instead for closer ties with Russia. This decision sparked widespread demonstrations and civil unrest.

The situation escalated in early 2014, with violent clashes between protesters and security forces. On February 21, 2014, Yanukovich signed an agreement with opposition leaders to end the crisis, but the deal failed to calm the situation during the [Euromaidan protests \(and continued unrest\)](#). The next day, Yanukovich fled Kyiv, citing threats to his life. He eventually sought refuge in Russia, where he remains to this day.

Russia then annexes Crimea in March 18, 2014, and pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine declare independence, leading to the outbreak of war. This violated both the Budapest and Trilateral agreements of the 1990s. President Obama and his administration took no significant action to address the situation.

Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 (MH17) was shot down on July 17, 2014, while flying over eastern Ukraine. The aircraft was hit by a Buk 9M38 surface-to-air missile, which was transported from Russia and launched on the day of the attack. All 298 people on board, including 283 passengers and 15 crew members, were killed.

The shoot-down occurred during the war in Donbas, over territory controlled by Russian separatist forces. The Dutch Safety Board (DSB) and the Dutch-led joint investigation team (JIT) concluded that the missile was launched from pro-Russian separatist-controlled territory in Ukraine. The Buk missile system originated from the 53rd Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade of the Russian Federation.

The incident led to significant international condemnation and increased tensions between Russia and Western countries. The governments of the Netherlands and Australia held Russia responsible for the deployment of the Buk installation and began pursuing legal remedies.

Thus the war in eastern Ukraine, often referred to as the War in Donbas, began in April 2014, shortly after the annexation of Crimea in March 2014. This ongoing conflict lasted until February 2022, when Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, marking the beginning of the current war.

The result of the War in Donbas has been a stalemate with significant territorial changes.

2015: The [Minsk II agreement](#), signed in February 2015, aimed to halt the fighting in eastern Ukraine and establish a ceasefire, but it was never fully implemented. The conflict caused immense human suffering, economic damage, and geopolitical tensions.

2016-2017: President Trump is elected and takes office in Jan 2017.

During President Trump's time in office from 2017 to 2020, several significant events took place concerning Ukraine and Russia relations, particularly in Crimea and the Donbas regions.

Continued Conflict in Donbas: The conflict in the Donbas region persisted, with ongoing skirmishes and ceasefire violations. Despite various attempts at peace talks and ceasefire agreements, the situation remained volatile.

U.S. Military Aid to Ukraine: The United States provided military aid to Ukraine, including lethal aid such as Javelin anti-tank missiles. This support was aimed at helping Ukraine defend itself against Russian aggression (unlike the so-called blankets Obama supplied).

2019: Volodymyr Zelensky is elected.

Impeachment Inquiry: In 2019, President Trump faced an impeachment inquiry triggered by the “resistance factions” within the democrat party and the D.C. swamp related to his dealings with Ukraine. The inquiry centered around a phone call in which Trump **allegedly** pressured Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to investigate Joe Biden and his son, Hunter Biden, in exchange for military aid.

Sanctions on Russia: The U.S. imposed additional sanctions on Russia in response to its actions in Ukraine, including the annexation of Crimea and support for separatists in the Donbas. On Aug 2, 2019 the USA **withdrew from the 1987 INF Treaty** claiming Russian violations over several years; including the Crimea situation under Obama.

Normandy Format Talks: Efforts to resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine continued through the Normandy Format talks, involving Ukraine, Russia, Germany, and France. These talks aimed to implement the Minsk agreements and achieve a lasting ceasefire.

2020s

2021: Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky appeals to the United States to join NATO. Such actions have always been viewed as unacceptable by Russian leaders.

2022: Russia launches a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, marking the beginning of the current war. President Biden remarked that a small invasion might be tolerated but later he claimed the U.S. will support Ukraine "for as long as it takes".

2023: The war continues with significant international involvement and sanctions against Russia. Biden's administration gives billions to Ukraine while supplying arms.

2024: The conflict persists, with ongoing military operations and international diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis. The military complex gets rich off the war as WWII nears.

Russia recently tested a new hypersonic missile called the Oreshnik in Ukraine on Nov 21, 2024. This missile is a nuclear-capable intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) that was used in an attack on the Ukrainian city of Dnipro. The missile traveled at speeds of up to Mach 10, making it extremely difficult to intercept.

The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, signed in 1987 by the United States and the Soviet Union, banned all ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers. However, the United States withdrew from the INF Treaty in 2019, citing Russia's violations of the treaty. Since the treaty is no longer in effect, the recent hypersonic missile test does not technically violate the INF Treaty, but it does raise significant concerns about the escalation of military capabilities and tensions in the region.

Nuclear weapons were withdrawn from Belarus after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, but Putin announced in 2023 that Russia was placing tactical nuclear missiles there as a deterrent to the West. Lukashenko, in power in Belarus **since 1994**, said in October 2024 that any use of Russian nuclear weapons now deployed in Belarus would require his personal assent.

In the first week of Dec of 2024 Tucker Carlson traveled once again to Russia to [interview Russia Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov](#) who, like in his Putin interview, painted an odd picture of the history between Ukraine and Russia and why Russia took over Crimea, invaded the Donbas, etc..

Ukraine's and Russia's Rulers from 1990 to 2024

Ukraine

[Here's a list of the presidents of Ukraine from 1990 to 2024, along with how their terms in office were established and concluded.](#)

Leonid Kravchuk (1991-1994): Kravchuk was elected as the first president of Ukraine on December 5, 1991, following the country's declaration of independence from the Soviet Union. He resigned from office on July 19, 1994, after a power struggle with Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma.

[Leonid Kuchma \(1994-2005\)](#): Kuchma was elected president on July 19, 1994, and served two terms. His presidency concluded on January 23, 2005, when he stepped down after completing his second term.

[Viktor Yushchenko \(2005-2010\)](#): Yushchenko was elected president on January 23, 2005, following the Orange Revolution. His term ended on February 25, 2010, when he completed his five-year term.

[Viktor Yanukovych \(2010-2014\)](#): Yanukovych was elected president on February 25, 2010. He fled the country and abandoned his office on February 22, 2014, during the Euromaidan protests, and was subsequently impeached.

[Oleksandr Turchynov \(Acting President, 2014\)](#): Turchynov served as acting president from February 23, 2014, to June 7, 2014, following Yanukovych's departure.

[Petro Poroshenko \(2014-2019\)](#): Poroshenko was elected president on May 25, 2014, and inaugurated on June 7, 2014. He lost the 2019 presidential election to Volodymyr Zelensky.

[Volodymyr Zelensky \(2019-present\)](#): Zelensky was elected president on May 20, 2019, and is currently serving his term. His presidency continues as of December 2024.

Russia

[Here's a list of the presidents of Russia from 1990 to 2024, along with how their terms in office were established and concluded.](#)

[Mikhail Gorbachev \(1990-1991\)](#): Gorbachev became the first and last president of the Soviet Union during his unsuccessful reforms of the Soviet Union's one-party communist state. His tenure ended with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in late 1991.

Note: When Mikhail Gorbachev met with Ronald Reagan in 1985, he held the title of General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). This was his position when he participated in the Geneva Summit on November 19-20, 1985.

[Boris Yeltsin \(1991-1999\)](#): Yeltsin was elected as the first president of the Russian Federation in June 1991. He resigned from office on December 31, 1999.

[Vladimir Putin \(1999-2008\)](#): Putin became acting president on December 31, 1999, following Yeltsin's resignation. He was elected president in March 2000 and re-elected in 2004. His second term ended on May 7, 2008.

[Dmitry Medvedev \(2008-2012\)](#): Medvedev was elected president in 2008 and served a single term. He was succeeded by Vladimir Putin in 2012.

[Vladimir Putin \(2012-2024\)](#): Putin was re-elected in 2012 and again in 2018. He won the presidential election held in March 2024 and **assumed** office on May 7, 2024.

The process for electing a president in Russia involves a direct popular vote. Candidates must be nominated by political parties or collect a certain number of signatures from citizens. The president is supposedly elected for a six-year term and should only serve a maximum of two consecutive terms; yet Putin remains in power.

