

**Houston Area
Model United Nations
Standard Committee**



Security Council

Chair | Christina Boufarah

Topic A Background Guide

Houston Area Model United Nations 48

February 2-3, 2023

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Note to Delegates

Delegates,

I am honored to welcome you to the 2022 Houston Area Model United Nations Conference! My name is Christina Boufarah, and I have the privilege of serving as your Chair this year in the Security Council! I am a sophomore at Rice majoring in History with an Arabic certificate and a minor in Jewish Studies. I am originally Lebanese, grew up in Dubai, and moved to The Woodlands, Texas my junior year of high school! Model UN has been a passion of mine since middle school, underscoring my personal, academic, and professional interests as someone whose life has in many ways intersected with the very conflicts addressed in MUN. Having participated in HAMUN as both a delegate and a staffer, I am incredibly excited to return.

Created in the wake of World War II, the Security Council was tasked with upholding international peace and security. As such, the topics chosen for debate this year reflect the urgency, complexity, and importance characteristic of UNSC debates. While they are no doubt difficult, I am certain of your abilities to formulate multifaceted solutions for these multifaceted issues, all through fruitful, respectful, and intellectual debate. I look forward to working with you all this February!

Christina Boufarah

Chair of UNSC

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Topic A: International Action on the Ukraine Situation

Introduction

In February 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine, a dramatic escalation in the conflict that began in 2014 and the beginning of one of the bloodiest conflicts in Europe since the second World War. Since then, the conflict has only grown, with rising nuclear tensions emerging.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has had global ramifications: there have been over 17,000 civilian casualties, 6.5 million have been internally displaced, 7.8 million refugees have been displaced across Europe, and millions globally have been affected by the shortage of Ukrainian grain in the international market.

On the global stage, Russia's position as well as economy have taken brutal hits as sanctions and boycotts have left President Putin isolated.

Justifying the the invasion as a response to the spread of NATO across Eastern Europe and an attempt at "de-nazifying" Ukraine, Putin had presented opposition to his invasion of Ukraine as detrimental to long term Russian security interests and emphasized Russia's nuclear capabilities. In this way, the conflict has taken on additionally dangerous contours that require urgent action on the part of the UN.





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Historical Background and the Geopolitical Significance of Ukraine

The geopolitics of Ukraine have always been intimately tied to the nuclear politics and, by extension, Cold War politics and are thus critical to international peace and security. A cornerstone of the Soviet Union, Ukraine was particularly important as it housed part of the Soviet nuclear arsenal. Today, in fact, a central concern of foreign observers of the Russian invasion is ensuring that Chernobyl (the nuclear plant and the site of the infamous nuclear catastrophe during the dying days of the Soviet Union) remains under secure and safe monitoring. As such, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine's independence has taken on particular importance. As such, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the international community was primarily concerned with consolidating the USSR's nuclear arsenal into Russia;

thus was born the 1994 agreement, the Budapest Memorandum. In return for giving up its nuclear weapons, Ukraine would become an independent and sovereign state. Russia, the UK, and the US (three major nuclear powers signed on). However, in 2014, Russia invaded the Donbas region of Ukraine, claiming that the Ukrainian government that had signed the memorandum had been illegally overthrown and thus the document was void. Thus began the conflict that was dramatically escalated with the invasion of the Ukrainian mainland this February. In this way, it is important to consider the politics and danger of nuclear power and weapons in any UNSC action.

Another Cold War consideration has manifested in the conflict: Vladimir Putin's claims that his invasion of Ukraine were prompted by the spread of NATO. Thus, the great power politics of the Cold War are an important consideration in any lasting peace negotiations or action.



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Questions to consider

1. What is the role of the nuclear in this conflict? How must the UNSC factor this in and shape potential action steps with this in mind?
2. How must the UNSC consider the historical significance of Ukraine and differing views of its role on the global stage?
3. How can the UNSC mitigate both Western fears of nuclear war and Russian fears of NATO in crafting its respond?

Further Reading

“Ukraine War: What Are the Impacts on the World Today?” *The International Rescue Committee*, International Rescue Committee, 23 Aug. 2022, www.rescue.org/article/ukraine-war-what-are-impacts-world-today.

“Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads of Europe and Russia.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, www.cfr.org/backgrounder/ukraine-conflict-crossroads-europe-and-russia.

