What is the historical relationship between Russia, Ukraine, and the West?
How did conflicts within Ukraine, and interference by Russia, lead to the Feb. 2022 invasion?

**History of Russo/Ukran relations**
- When the Russian Empire fell in 1917, a Ukrainian parliament established itself in Kyiv, but was 'swept away' by the Russian militia, German occupation, and Polish occupation.
- Soviet-made Great Famine contributed to Ukrainian desire for statehood.
- After Stalin died in 1953, Ukraine enjoyed a state of relative peace and cooperation with Russia — seen as a "little brother" to the Soviet Union.

**Russia's Relationship With The West**
- NATO enlargement didn't pose a military threat to Russia, but it signified Russia's shrinking influence in eastern Europe.
  - Former Soviet satellites joined NATO because they were scared of Russia.
- Russia toyed with the idea of joining NATO, but it was never a serious possibility.
- Hostility between Russia and the West, particularly the US, goes far beyond NATO expansion.

**Ukraine Pre and Post Euromaiden**
- Nov. 2013: Ukrainian President Yanukovych rejected a popular economic agreement with the EU and pivoted toward Russia.
- Euromaidan protests and the Revolution of Dignity result in the ousting of Yanukovych.
- Disarray caused by the Revolution led to the invasion of Crimea and the establishment of the DPR and LPR.

**Buildup to Invasion**
- 2014- Russia invaded Crimea under the pretense of a civil war.
- 2014-2021: Russian-backed separatists continued fighting in Donbas.
- July 12, 2021- Putin released an essay about the illegitimacy of Ukraine as an independent nation and began amassing Russian troops at the Russo-Ukrainian border.
- February 21, 2022- Putin recognized the Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics.
- February 24, 2022- Putin invaded Ukraine ("special military operation").

**Conclusions**
- Ukraine’s desire for self-determination extends beyond its independence from the Soviet Union.
- Russia's primary concern is — and always has been — global relevance.
- Ukrainian institutional reforms, especially after the election of Zelensky, prevented 2022 from becoming another 2014.

**Recommended Readings**
- Anna Reid. 2022. "Putin’s War on History: The Thousand-Year Struggle Over Ukraine."