

# **Special Bulletin – Ukraine/Russia Conflict Summarised Update**

**Prepared by:** Mike Bluestone CSyP & Neil Shanks CSyP

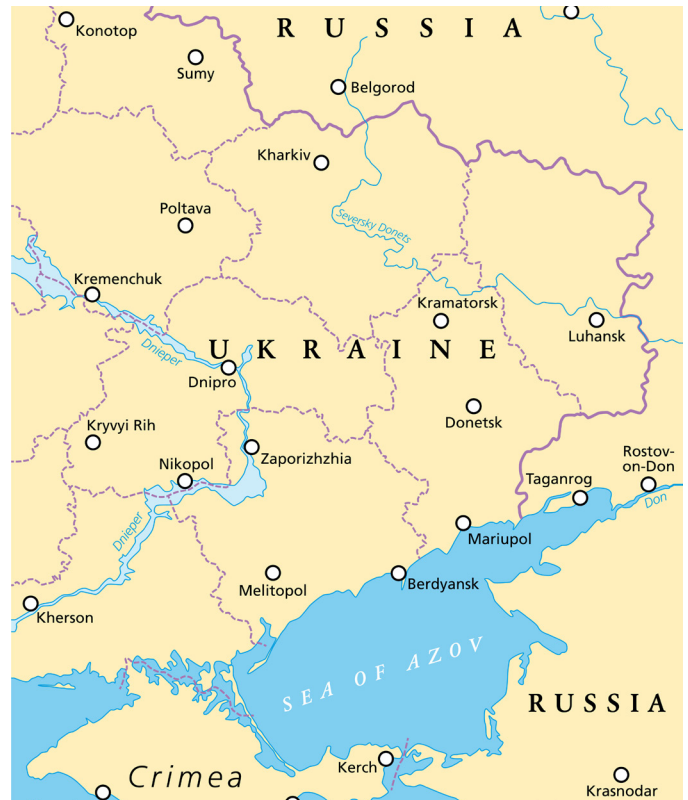
**Date:** 1 March 2022

**CORPS**  
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# Special Bulletin: Summarised Update

Our bulletin last week highlighted the increased threat of Cyber attacks that have emerged following Russia's military invasion of Ukraine. In this briefing we provide a summarised update of the wider nature of the crisis and consider the broader implications for UK businesses and organisations.

Russian strikes have already hit a number of Ukrainian cities including the capital Kiev, which is home to 2.8 million people, and Kharkiv. We are witnessing new footage and images of explosions and damaged buildings across the country on a daily basis. Air-raid sirens are sounding in many major cities and residents are taking shelter in bunkers. In the meantime, Russia is intensifying its attack on the Ukrainian capital, after earlier advances on Ukrainian cities in the east, north, and south. Battles continue to rage across Ukraine, with heavy fighting in the eastern breakaway regions. It is believed that logistical issues, amongst other factors, have resulted in the Russian advance being slowed. There have been multiple accounts of Russian vehicles, including tanks, becoming stranded after they ran out of fuel. This appears to have been addressed, however, as there are signs of significant Russian movement within Ukraine. This includes a Russian convoy of tanks and artillery that is reported to stretch 40-miles. Some of the weaponry being deployed by the Russians are particularly devastating, including the now infamous TOS-1 thermobaric missile launchers. These have resulted in large numbers of casualties, with recent figures (as of February 28h 2022) speculating that 1,684 people have been injured and 363 civilians have been killed. These figures include children, with at least 116 injured and 14 killed. The exact figures of Ukrainian soldiers to have been killed and injured is unclear, however, reports show that 13 Ukrainian guards died defending the tiny territory known as Snake Island located in the Black Sea, as well as over 70 that were killed in a rocket attack on the city of Okhtyrka on 1st March 2022.



The number of casualties and fatalities to the Russians is unknown. The Ukrainians have claimed that, as of Tuesday 1st March 2022, a total of 5,710 Russian soldiers have been killed fighting in Ukraine.

The Chernobyl nuclear site in the north, has also fallen under the control of Russian forces, as it sits on the route of the advancing Russian forces. Initial peace talks took place between representatives of Ukraine and Russia at the Ukrainian border with Belarus on Monday 28th February 2022. The talks ended without any breakthroughs being made. The bombardment of Ukrainian cities continued later that day and the Russian occupation moved further into Ukrainian territory.

The EU, Britain, Australia, and Japan have unveiled fresh sanctions targeting Russian banks, companies, and oligarchs. This includes the expulsion of certain Russian banks from using

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1 March 2022

the Swift international payment system. It has been suggested that Russia is attempting to use cryptocurrencies as a way to circumvent the impact of some of the financial sanctions.

Western nations have pledged aid and military supplies to Ukrainian forces and it is also reported that French President Emmanuel Macron has telephoned President Putin asking him to end the attacks. Furthermore, the International Olympic Committee has requested Russia be banned from all sports, and both Russia and Belarus have been banned from all international rugby union, hockey and football competitions (including the World Cup). Ukrainian President Zelensky has in the meantime questioned the power of Western sanctions.

Many people are wondering whether we in the UK and our other NATO partners will be drawn into the conflict. It is unlikely that NATO would intervene militarily, unless one of its member countries is attacked. The problem is that one 'stray' missile or 'false flag' incident, for example, along Ukraine's long border with Poland (which is of course a NATO country) could result in our involvement as a NATO member. President Putin has in effect threatened an implied nuclear response. There is a sense however that President Putin will not put a brake on his military intervention until he has installed a pro-Russian leadership in Kiev. The Ukrainian President has stated that he sees himself as Russia's No 1 target....

# The Impact

The impact of this crisis on the UK will, as stated in our previous briefing, increase the threat of Cyber attacks, but equally there will be other factors which have the potential to de-stabilise our daily lives and day to day business activity. Consequently, businesses and organisations across both the public and private sectors must remain vigilant, especially in those cases where they may be Ukrainian or Russian owned, or where their day to day activities include having an operational or premises based footprint in either country, or indeed in neighbouring countries including Poland and the Baltic states.

The crisis is also likely to exacerbate an already stressed and under pressure supply chain as well as an increase in threat to the suppliers of utilities, and energy. This increased threat has taken on a broader international profile due to the nature and location of the conflict, and we are already seeing severe delays in certain technologies/equipment based on the international microchip backlogs and prolonged shipping times. This in turn could lead to a shortage in a number of key pieces of security equipment. Current lead times for example, for the delivery of access control cards has already hit 12 weeks in some cases.

The following points should be factored in when considering the actual steps that need to be

taken in the light of a changing and evolving threat landscape:

- Is your business/organisation sufficiently resilient to withstand Physical and/or Cyber threats/attacks?
- Who has 'ownership' of your Resilience and Security policy and strategy?
- Are you satisfied with the overall business Security Culture?
- Are you conducting Security awareness training and/or briefings for your teams?
- When did you last conduct a comprehensive Security Review?
- Have you updated your Security Contingency Plans, and have they been tested and drilled?
- Do you have Crisis Management and Business Continuity policies and plans in place?

Our Chartered Security Professionals are available via our contact details below:

### **Mike Bluestone CSyP**

Executive Director - Corps Consult  
mbluestone@corpssecurity.co.uk

### **Neil Shanks CSyP**

Director - Corps Consult  
nshanks@corpssecurity.co.uk



Market House  
85 Cowcross St  
London  
EC1M 6PF



07890 590352  
Neil Shanks



[intel@corpssecurity.co.uk](mailto:intel@corpssecurity.co.uk)  
[www.corpssecurity.co.uk](http://www.corpssecurity.co.uk)