

## *Put the word out's War in Ukraine*

(Message from Sponsor): this podcast is brought to you by “Big Blocks Galore”. Would you like to show off at English tests or job interviews? Consider it done with Big Blocks Galore. Contact your local agent today.

(Music)

### **Host:**

Good afternoon, listeners! Have you recently tried to buy a bottle of sunflower oil? Have you refilled your tank and had to pay through your nose? Have you noticed how prices seem to be endlessly rising?

We're Carmen and Patricia and, in today's show, we're going to ask some important questions and try to figure out why this is happening. Let's get started!

(Music)

For about 70 days, we have seen the war in Ukraine from up close. There has been extensive coverage of the conflict, and while women and children fled the country, men stayed to become part of the resistance. Ukrainians are clearly outgunned, but they also seem to be outsmarting the Russian army.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, these 2 countries had an awkward relationship. As of last January, they're officially enemies.

In any case, how did we come this far?

(Music)

You probably know where Ukraine is, but you might not know the exact details of its history and its relationship with Russia. To find out more, let's have with us 2 history experts who had to run away from this terrible war. They're joining us today to give us an inside look at what is going on.

Their names are Sonia and Manuela, and our colleague Mary has some questions for them.

### **1st interview**

**Hello! As we just said to our audience, you studied the issues between both countries for a long time, but could you explain in layman's terms: what is the root of this war?**

First of all, I'm so glad to be here and I would like to start by saying, it is quite clear that different media portray Ukraine as a divided country. As regards this, the key question is in the evident east – west division.

On the internet you can find maps in which this division is clear.

**How long have those 2 areas had problems?**

A long time now, but war broke out long before we expected.

**Can you explain it in terms of culture, like language?**

Yes of course, it goes without saying that there is a huge division in Ukraine depending on how close to the Russian border the different regions are. For example, when it comes to the language, a whopping 75 % of Ukrainian citizens claim they speak Russian as native speakers.

**How about politics? Could citizens find any advantage in voting for a pro- Russian candidate?**

First, please let me express my sorrow for the situation of people in Ukraine. Actually, I can't find the right words to do it properly, I think, but that's my feeling. And now, following your idea, there are maps that show that the vast majority of people in the east side with V. Yanukovich, who is the pro-Russian candidate. This trend should be considered as a potential trigger for citizens' worry. The way I see it, this fact is proved by a remarkable 75% of votes, attending to economic reasons.

**Do you mean if you support Yanukovich you can use Russian motorways, etc.?**

Yes, that makes sense. For example, if you support Yanukovich, you can feel free to do business there, use motorways, markets, even lower taxes...we just can't deny this situation

**That's truly an outstanding point!**

**Could you share your view on the salary gap between west and east? Is it as a consequence of the proximity to Russia?**

Well, I have another map that falls in line with the previous thoughts and it goes to show that the neighboring regions to Russia were the most thriving before the war broke out.

**Very interesting. Will my children ever understand all of this? What do you think the situation will be 10 years from now?**

I am an optimistic person so I hope that this situation can improve in the short term. Nevertheless the data on this issue leave no room for doubt about the convenience of staying close to the always-powerful Russia.

**(Music)**

## **2nd interview**

OK, let's move on to another aspect of this situation. Vladimir Putin has repeatedly said that Russia feels threatened by NATO. But why? It's time to interview more experts.

We had the opportunity to ask Isabel Rodas and Miguel "El profe".

**I wonder if you could explain how NATO expansion happened until the present day?**

First of all, thanks for having us here. So, if you don't mind, I'll start the History class. NATO was founded in 1949 as a consequence of WWII... Just joking. Since that formation up to now, NATO has been expanding eastwards, reaching the Russian border. It's possible that, at some point, the Russian government has felt this approach as a threat, maybe that is why they started conflicts in countries like Georgia and Ukraine. Actually, these two countries are candidates to be included in NATO.

**Would you mind telling me about the changing position of other border countries like Sweden and Finland when it comes to joining NATO?**

Surprisingly enough, it's so curious how rapidly a war or a conflict between two countries can change people's minds in other countries. Five years ago,

not even one in five Finnish people wanted to join NATO. But shortly after the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war, the support for joining the alliance has risen above 50% in Finland. Otherwise, the Swedish survey also shows an increase in supporting integration in the alliance, but not as noticeable as the Finnish one. As a reminder, I'd like to say that Finland has a huge natural border with Russia.

**I wonder if you could explain whether Ukrainians would like to join NATO and EU or not. Has their position changed after this year's events?**

If you pay attention to the Ukrainian intention of joining NATO or the EU, you can find out that the percentage of people who share the idea of becoming part of both organizations has increased evenly, in a constant and soft way, for 2 years. But, by the moment Russia announced the attacks, the graphic lines raised so sharply.

**(Music)**

**3rd interview**

**But how about the consequences for us?**

**Here we have two Economy experts to shed some light on the consequences of this war.**

**On my right an expert in the Russian economy, currently working for Forbes magazine Paul Red.**

**Nice to meet you, Paul, and happy to have you here.**

Thank you for having me here

**On my left, a social economy expert who lived in Moscow for the last ten years, he is currently writing a book about the Russian influence on**

**European markets: Here we have the widely known John Smith. It is a pleasure having you here, thanks a lot for answering our call!**

Glad to be here. Thank you.

**Given the complexity of the situation , let's try to get a deeper insight on the matter...**

**Paul, Would you mind telling us why goods production in Ukraine is relevant for the rest of Europe and the world's economy?**

In general terms, Ukraine is one of the most powerful countries at producing goods, for example, Ukraine could meet the food needs of 600 million people.

**Wow, 600 million people... Can you name a product that could exemplify this dependence on Ukrainian goods?**

Some examples of that is Ukraine is the first country in Europe in terms of arable land, the third corn producer and the fourth in exporting. In the same way, it is the fourth largest producer of potatoes in the world.

Those are basic reasons why sunflower oil and potatoes have seen their prices increase these days.

**So, there is not just Sunflower oil, there is also an increase in products such as potatoes... Families already had a very tight budget, but this war can completely throw it off balance.**

**Listening to your conclusions, I wonder John, do you feel that those outcomes are related to the skyrocketing price of oil barrels?**

Well, the other country involved in this crisis is Russia, the third largest oil producer of the world. We are talking 10.7 million barrels a day which means

almost the same amount as the second one (Saudi Arabia) with 11.0 million and twice the production of the fourth country (Canada) with 5.1 million.

Petrol and diesel prices have been skyrocketing due to the fact that Russia exports oil to the rest of the European countries.

You can see how influential Russia is, as it is pretty close to Saudi Arabia figures...

**That's an excellent point.**

**Finally, and back to Paul, May I know your opinion about the European gas dependence on Russia?**

A side effect of that is the serious situation of the gas market because 30% of European gas does come from Russia which could represent an issue for countries like Germany because 40% of the gas they use is from that transcontinental country, and could pose a problem if they manage to cut ties with them.

**We go back to head-quarters, hoping our knowledge of this “special operation” has widened... Thanks a lot for your time and opinions, let's hope to see each other again with a prospect of peace.**

That brings us to the end of this episode. I hope you could learn more about what Ukraine is like, why Russia says they feel threatened by NATO, and what the consequences could be for those of us living in other countries.

I hope you enjoyed the show. If you liked it, join us next week to discuss pollution in big cities and what to do about it. Thanks for being with us and stay tuned!

(Music)