

# British tanks ‘rolling through Russia’

[theday.co.uk/british-tanks-rolling-through-russia-3](https://theday.co.uk/british-tanks-rolling-through-russia-3) 18 August 2024



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*Provocation:* Ukraine’s 82nd Air Assault Brigade, part of the Kursk invasion, has been using British Challenger 2 tanks (above) since last year. The UK has supplied 14 of these tanks.

**Does this give Putin a right to strike back? The Ukrainian Army has sent Britain’s Challenger 2 tanks into Russian territory. The consequences might be felt around the world.**

Vladimir Putin thought he had everything under control. It was just a matter of time until he could declare victory over Ukraine’s “neo Nazi regime”.<sup>1</sup>

But on 6 August he had a rude awakening. Up to 12,000 Ukrainian troops crossed the border to Kursk **Oblast**.<sup>2</sup> Within a week Ukraine had captured 82 settlements. It emerged this week that Ukrainian soldiers were using British Challenger 2 tanks. A piece of **NATO** technology was leading the charge.

Putin was rattled. After two years of supporting Ukraine with weapons but remaining at arm’s length themselves, it might feel for Putin like NATO itself had invaded. Western weapons were storming into **Mother Russia**.

Volodymyr Zelensky has well and truly poked the Russian bear in what he says is an attempt to create a buffer zone to prevent further attacks across the border. The Kremlin has already accused NATO of planning the attack. To some Russians, this might feel like grounds for a new world war.

US spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre said the White House had “nothing to do” with the attack. Yet while the US and its allies may have not known about the attacks, they have given Ukraine enormous amounts of weaponry.<sup>3</sup>

Ukraine believes it is acting within **international law**. Its allies agree. A UK government representative said: “Under Article 51 of the **UN Charter**, Ukraine has a right of self-defence against Russia’s illegal attacks,” that could include fighting in Russia itself.

The Russian Army has reduced cities to rubble and tortured and killed civilians. Ukrainians might feel it is only fair to strike back.

There is also a strong military argument for it. By moving the battle to Russia, they hope to remove Russian soldiers from their own territory.<sup>4</sup>

Putin probably sees things differently. If Russia attacked NATO member Poland, the alliance would spring into action to defend it. If NATO is behind these attacks, why should Russia not do the same?

At the start of his invasion, Putin said that Ukraine’s territory should be part of Russia. That makes it a civil war inside Russia itself. The West is messing with a local matter.

**Does this give Putin a right to strike back?**

**Eye for an eye**

**Yes:** If Russian civilians have been attacked and Russian land occupied, it is within Russia's right to try to take them back. And just as Ukraine attacked Kursk to loosen other fronts, Russia could strike back for her own defence.

**No:** NATO has given Ukraine's weapons for defence, not offence. But sometimes a little bit of offence is really a way to improve defence. After all, Russia invaded Ukraine first — and Ukraine has the right to strike back.

**Or...** War is always evil. It brings suffering to many for almost no gain. The idea that Putin has any right to attack another nation or people is ridiculous. He should be looking to end the war, not expand it into World War Three.

*FOR YOUR SUMMER READING CHALLENGE CLUE GO TO STEP SIX IN THE SIX STEPS TO DISCOVERY BELOW.*

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1. Putin has called Ukraine a "neo Nazi" country and claimed his invasion is a "denazification" exercise. This has no basis in fact.
  2. Figures are unconfirmed, but according to the BBC could be anywhere from 5,000 to 12,000.
  3. Last week, the US authorised its 63rd delivery of equipment in the course of two and a half years.
  4. Preliminary reports suggest that it has already been a success. US officials say Russia appeared to have diverted several thousand troops from occupied Ukraine.

### Six steps to discovery

#### Some people say

*"There is no avoiding war; it can only be postponed to the advantage of others."*

**Niccolo Machiavelli (1469 – 1527), Italian political philosopher**

*"The two most powerful warriors are patience and time."*

**Leo Tolstoy (1828 – 1910), Russian novelist and activist**

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*What do you think?*

#### 1. Connect

**How do you feel about this story?** - How close does the war in Ukraine seem to you? Do you worry that your country will be drawn into the conflict?

#### 2. Wonder

**What questions do you have?** - For example: Who were NATO's founding members? Who are the most recent members to join?

#### 3. Investigate

**What are the facts?** - *The Washington Post* says: "Biden should let Ukraine strike back at Russian air bases." Does Biden have the authority to "let" Ukraine act? If so, why?

#### 4. Construct

**What is your point of view?** - Your country is conscripting soldiers to join the war in Ukraine. Would you sign up?

#### 5. Express

**What do others believe?** - In a paragraph each, summarise Zelenskiy's, Putin's and Biden's views on the Ukraine war.

#### 6. Reflect

**What might happen next?** - What word describes an administrative area inside Russia? Download your challenge entry form [here](#) and fill in the answers to the clues.

### Glossary

**Oblast** - Oblasts are Russian administrative areas or territories.

**Nato** - The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was founded in 1949 to unite Western democracies in Europe and North America against the perceived growing threat of the USSR. It now has 31 members.

**Mother Russia** - An historic and maternal personification of Russia.

**International law** - Non-refoulement is a fundamental principle of human rights law that forbids "pushback," returning refugees to warzones. Countries sometimes attempt to circumvent this by using private ships to return migrants.

**UN Charter** - The foundational treaty of the United Nations.