

The Conflict in Eastern Ukraine - The New Geopolitical Source of Terrorism

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The New Year finds the situation in Ukraine still rather complicated. The western countries are preoccupied with ISIS and the migration crisis and its consequences and thus have seemingly put the situation in Ukraine on to a side. It is however important not to forget about eastern Ukraine, especially because the current status quo plays largely into the hands of Russia since it supports Russia's claims that the West is neglecting Ukraine and that only the Russians care about the Ukrainians' wellbeing. The current developments in Ukraine show that the progress of post-conflict situation and the support of democratization processes are crucial for the future direction of the country.

The current situation causes concern in the world, and, it is imperative to see it as a clash of western and Russian perceptions of the geopolitical direction of Eastern Europe. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian region could not decide on its own political and economic path. Its economy is strongly linked to Russia, and the links to Western Europe are more personal and political, rather than economic. Ukraine cannot cope with the high level of corruption and the influence of its oligarchs, who have basically divided the country into several regions and different industries. The current state of affairs in Ukraine cannot be blamed on Moscow, it is rather the result of the inability to formulate a clear definition for the next political and economic direction of Ukraine and the totalitarian governments of Leonid Kuchma, the failed Orange revolution, the failed governments of Tymoshenko and Yanukovich, as well as the overall dissatisfaction of the population with the developments in Ukraine. Ukraine is essentially culturally and geopolitically divided into two parts, which have been historically developing in dramatically opposed ways. The western areas had for several centuries been under the influence of Poland, Lithuania, the Austria-Hungarian Empire and later Czechoslovakia and Hungary with a strong influence from Christianity and Judaism. The eastern part of the country had been developing under the strong influence of orthodoxy and also Islam, Cossack and tartar tribes.

The current conflict is a clash of different perceptions of historical events, prejudices and revenge for the suffering endured during the Soviet era. The Ukrainians perceive the critical point to be the violent integration of Ukraine into the USSR, and the subsequent Stalinism that caused intentional starvation in the 1930's. This cruel act by the soviet leadership is seen in Ukraine as genocide of its population, brought on as retaliation against the efforts for Ukrainian sovereignty and resistance to Bolshevik ideology. It is, however, not the communist leaders that are being accused of oppressing the Ukrainian people, but the Russians. And the Russians, on the contrary, perceive the critical point to be the Ukrainian association with the German fascists and physical violence conducted on the Russian population by the Ukrainian nationalist group led by Stepan Bander, Andrey Melnikov, Jaroslav Steck and the Ukrainian SS troops "Galicia". These ideas were suppressed by the totalitarian regime during the existence of the USSR, however, after its collapse in 1991, they reemerged. Political and military leaders of the Ukrainian insurgent army, as already mentioned, Bandera, Melnik, commander Dmytro Kljackivsjj or Roman Šuchevyč, are presented as heroes of the Ukrainian nation. Russians are very sensitive to the Ukrainian glorification.

These people are jointly responsible for the murders committed not only of Russian, Belarusian and Jewish people during WWII and after, but also for the massacres in Western Ukraine that killed more than 100 000 Poles¹, and displaced more than half a million people to Poland.

At present, the geopolitical conflict over the sphere of influence over Ukraine's space and its next political direction are adding up to the historical hostilities between Ukraine and Russia. On one side, there is Western Europe and the USA, which consider the conflict in Ukraine to be the result of Russian attempts to restore the Soviet sphere of influence. The EU committed itself to provide military assistance to stop Russian aggression against Ukraine. There is also a difference in how the Western countries perceive the maintenance of European security: they see the increase in security and stability in the expansion of regional organizations such as the EU and NATO. Russia, on the other hand, perceives the support for the Ukrainian reforms as Western expansion of its zone of influence, namely of the USA via the expansion of NATO, to be way beyond what was expected in the 90's, for example, to the territories of Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia². Russia sees such expansion as a threat to European security and as destabilizing efforts by the USA and the EU to get ever closer to the Russian borders. Russia feels more and more isolated from the West, even though the West thinks that it is building a strategic partnership at a diplomatic level in different areas with Russia. The West and Russia have also held divergent views on the causes and consequences of various events from the period after the Cold War, such as the color revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine, gas crises in 2006 and 2009, the Russia-Georgian war in 2008 and the overall tense atmosphere in the South Caucasus republics. The current crisis in Ukraine is also another example of this. The West is accusing Russia of aggression against Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea. Moscow, on the other hand argues, that it was just responding to the crisis triggered by the EU and the USA, and is simply protecting its national interest and zone of influence against the spread of Western and NATO influence³.

According to the French geopoliticians, the only superpower in the current geopolitical affairs is the USA. During the last two centuries, this country has gradually economically, politically and militarily eliminated all other powers such as France, Great Britain, Germany, Japan and ultimately Russia, as the successor of the USSR, too. Russia, however, does not agree with this definition, and is keen to establish along with China a sort of counter balance to the American perception of world politics and decision-making in the world. The USA, after the internal economic, political and geographic disintegration of the USSR, considers itself the only world superpower. They left behind Kissingers's policy of balance of power among the superpowers and they did not support the stabilization of Russia as a geopolitical partner⁴. Starting with Bush senior's administration; they started a trend of unilateral control of the world with the potential for political and military interventions in the effort to maintain this position and to prevent other countries from expanding their political and economic influences, whether in Asia, the Middle East, Africa or Latin America. The territory of Ukraine, as well as the Baltic States, the Caucasus and Central Asia are still in the geopolitical interest of Russia. Russia, after Putin's return to power, began to politically regain its previously lost positions in the region, even at the cost of the military intervention in South Ossetia, Transnistria and Chechnya. The USA has long sought to strengthen its influence in Ukraine, and specifically directly in the Crimean Sevastopol and Simferopol mainly through philanthropic activities, such as building and rebuilding of schools and hospitals⁵. In this manner, the USA was supporting a total of 8 humanitarian projects, mostly conducted in Crimea but also in cities such as Lviv, Vinica or Perevalsk in Lugansk region.

¹Timothy Snyder. "To Resolve the Ukrainian Question Once and For All": The Ethnic Cleansing of Ukrainians in Poland http://web.mit.edu/cis/www/migration/pubs/rwpp/9_resolve.html

²Pepper, John. U.S.-Russia-Ukraine: The Danger Escalates. 4. Júl 2015. <http://pepperspectives.blogspot.sk/2015/07/us-russia-ukraine-danger-excalates.html>

³The Ukraine crisis and NATO-Russia relations. Nato Review Magazine <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2014/Russia-Ukraine-Nato-crisis/Ukraine-crisis-NATO-Russia-relations/SK/index.htm>

⁴EICHLER, J.: Francouzské pojetí geopolitiky. Mezinárodní vztahy, ÚMV, Praha, č. 1, 2001.

⁵Renovation of Sevastopol School #03, Ukraine, Federal Business Opportunities, 20. 08. 2013, <https://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=4d12ea4be2c5189c44cc2eefa4e7a11&tab=core&tabmode=list>

Renovation of Sevastopol School #05, Ukraine, Federal Business Opportunities, 05. 09. 2013,

https://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=2bb691b61c59be3a68180bd8c614a0cb&tab=core&_cview=1 Renovation to Republican Children's Hospital in Simferopol, Ukraine, Federal Business Opportunities, 12. 12. 2013,

https://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=bb0d51accbb97bab2f8cb74835164a13&tab=core&_cview=1

The West have developed similar activities also in Georgia, Armenia, Moldova, Romania, Latvia, Serbia, Bosna and Hercegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and in other European countries including France⁶. Russia, however, feels threatened by such activities. It suspects that the USA, in this manner, are renovating buildings and preparing the command posts and other objects of logistical support for future military actions in the region. Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, Russia has put in significant effort in the maintenance of their naval bases in Sevastopol.

Crimea represents a very important geopolitical space in Russia's view of the region. Russia has therefore signed a long-term bilateral agreement with Ukraine, in which it rented out the Sevastopol port. The control of Sevastopol and Crimea for Russia means the control of the entire area of the Black Sea. Another important place is the port city of Kerch, which is essentially the only gate from the Black Sea to the Sea of Azov, and thus to the two strategic Russian rivers, Don and Volga and through them to Moscow and to the Caspian Sea. Russia was therefore very keen to retain the influence over these areas, even at the cost of military annexation of Crimea and the subsequent political and economic sanctions and protest⁷.

Russia defends the annexation of Crimea by pointing out the parallel actions of the West in other regions of the world. President Putin in his speech about the Crimea annexation said that the secession of Crimea from Ukraine is the same as the secession of Kosovo from Serbia, and any other evaluation of this situation is simply a manipulation of the West's recognized rules used in the case of Kosovo⁸. The fact that the West is accusing Russia of violating international law and at the same time defending Kosovo as an exemption to the rule, according to Russia, only shows what has long been done: the rule of western exceptionalism, i.e. Western countries, led by the USA do not need to follow international law, but rather the law of "military power". As an example, Russians point out the activities in Yugoslavia in 1999 when NATO bombed the country even without a UN Security Council mandate, or to the military operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and to the air support of the rebels in Libya. Russia builds this view on the philosophy that if the West can enter and lead military action on the territory of other countries under the pretext of protection of that country's citizens, then Russia can do the same in Ukraine, Transnistria or in Ossetia⁹. Controlling Crimea and the Black Sea has an important geopolitical significance for Russia, as it also reflects on the Russian efforts toward the Mediterranean Sea and the retention of another strategic geopolitical point – the Syrian port of Tartus. Although the Russians maintain that the port is being only used as a logistical base for the replenishment of their fleet, in reality, it is an important strategic port with major importance for Russia. Russia is, thanks to this port, able to extend its control not only to the Mediterranean Sea but also gain access to Syria and thus further into the Middle East region. The port also offers easy access to the Suez Canal meaning that the Russian ships will be able to access the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and also get further into the Indian and Pacific oceans¹⁰. This activity interferes with the interests of the West and thus increases mutual concerns about the expansion of the Western and Russian influence in the Mediterranean region. If Russia wants to remain in the position of global power player, from the military-strategic point of view, Russia cannot lose these two geopolitically very important areas. If that were to happen, Russia would lose access to the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and consequently to the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, which would significantly weaken its position in international affairs.

The current crisis in Ukraine is not a conventional interstate war, nor a war against terrorism. It is a war of principles and also a war fought by proxy. Technically, it is a non-conventional war, which uses different techniques that can be called hybrid methods, and thus the war can be labeled as a war of the fourth generation. Ukraine and Russia accuse each other of using specially trained commandos, and specially trained experts as safety advisers into the centers of fighting and then denying their existence.

⁶Хотели ли американцы реконструировать школу в Севастополе под военную базу?, VOA Голос Америки, 22. 04. 2014, <http://www.golos-ameriki.ru/content/mg-aksonov/1899042.html> a Partners, NATO, <http://www.nato.int/cps/de/natolive/51288.htm>

⁷Chossudovsky.M. Global Research, Crisis in Ukraine: Russia Extends its Control over the Black Sea and Strategic Waterways, March 18. 2014, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/russia-extends-its-control-over-the-black-sea-and-strategic-waterways/5374021>

⁸Putin: Crimea similar to Kosovo, West is rewriting its own rule book. RT. 18 Marec 2014. <http://www.rt.com/news/putin-address-parliament-crimea-562/>

⁹Zezo,E.: The Precedent of Kosovo, Crimea and Greater Russia. New Eastern Europe. 25 Marec 2014. <http://www.neweasterneurope.eu/interviews/1153-the-precedent-of-kosovo-crimea-and-greater-russia>

¹⁰Harress, Ch.Civil War: Russian Navy Base Tartus In Syria Giving NATO Cause For Concern While Helping To Prop Up Assad Regime in International Business Times. Sept 16, 2015<http://www.ibtimes.com/syrian-civil-war-russian-navy-base-tartus-syria-giving-nato-cause-concern-while-2092371>

Russia is using not only its military capabilities but also economic and energetic coercion, special intelligence units, satellite spy equipment, etc. leading the so-called information war involving cyber-attacks, creating hoaxes and false news and reports which are then propagated all over the Internet. They are thus creating information smog, which confuses ordinary people who find it difficult to differentiate the truth from propaganda and form an objective opinion on the issue. It is not expected; however, that conventional force would be directly used by Russia as the current “status quo” plays into the Russian cards.

Politically, the West is pushing Ukraine to the negotiating table, thus proving its diplomatic significance. Russia on the other hand, declares its technical and technological maturity by supplying weapons to Ukraine, with the aim of leveling up to the western technology and together with the propaganda about its successes, enhancing the impression about its military superiority.

In the context of popularity of the regime and the historical commitment of Russian citizens to protect their own country, these attributes are sufficient to deter the West from direct intervention in Ukraine. At the same time, Russia does not have enough interest to send its military troops since the possible victims from these troops deployed in Ukraine would only worsen the situation. Further deterioration of the situation could potentially raise concerns about the war in Europe. This situation increases the economic costs of armament in the West, requires an increase in the number of military exercises and transfer of equipment, thus depleting the resources that could have been spent in another ways. The first signs have already caused concern to Eastern European members of NATO and started a new debate in the west about Article 5, which obliges the NATO members to defend their other members. Preparations of the so-called Readiness action plan have started, meaning that there will be an increase in intelligence activities, more intensive military exercises, moving of equipment and supplies to the East as well as increasing of NATO’s Rapid Reaction Force capacities. This process is used by Russia to show its citizens the perceived western threat and the need for defense. Moscow is presenting these steps as NATO’s shifting closer to Russian borders, and efforts to change the balance of power in Europe, as well as increasing the influence of NATO in the Black Sea and the Caucasus. It is very probable that Moscow will increase their military presence in Kalingrad near the borders with the Baltic countries and Poland, and also in the region of Ukraine and Georgia. It will continue with the military exercises in cooperation with Belarus and China, which will lead to increased cyclical tension and dissonance¹¹. Politically, Russia will seek support from China and other countries from the UN General Assembly and the Security Council, and at the same time it will veto all resolutions condemning its actions. Russia will probably suspend its membership, or maybe entirely withdraw from the membership of the arms control agreements. It will attempt to redirect the bilateral negotiations of NATO – RUSSIA COUNCIL to the OSCE and direct possible agreements to be only politically binding – that is; open to change.

The West has imposed economic sanctions on Russia as a response to the Russian actions in the Ukraine with the aim of weakening the Russian economy. The sanctions, from the long-term perspective, will, however, not have a significant negative impact on the Russian economy. Russia replaces the European products through broader cooperation with BRICS states as well as with Iran and Latin and South American countries. In the long term, the sanctions could actually increase Russian economic and industrial self-sufficiency, restart the Russian economy especially in relation to the closer cooperation with technologically superior China and India, and thus create another significant economic player on the world stage. Overall, it can be concluded that the long-term sanctions will hurt Europe more than Russia¹².

The current attitude of the Ukrainian citizens is very different. After more than 24 years of independence, Ukraine, unlike its Central European neighbors, has not significantly moved forward and people are disappointed in political leaders from both the left and the right. Their attitude reflects either in their apathy towards politics or, the opposite, they turn towards radical solutions. Consequences for Ukraine’s political and economic system can be disastrous. The current conflict and its development points to the assumption that the situation in Ukraine can escalate to extremist and terrorist movement, regardless of the outcome of the conflict.

¹¹The Ukraine crisis and NATO-Russia relations. Nato Review Magazine <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2014/Russia-Ukraine-Nato-crisis/Ukraine-crisis-NATO-Russia-relations/SK/index.htm>

¹²Hybrid War-hybrid reactions? Nato Review Magazine <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2014/Russia-Ukraine-Nato-crisis/Russia-Ukraine-crisis-war/SK/index.htm>

Ukrainian president Poroshenko as well as the Ukrainian chief prosecutor already call the current war in Donetsk and Luhansk regions the war on terrorism and label the two self-proclaimed republics as terrorist organizations¹³. The armed conflict, despite the statements of the top Ukrainian officials, cannot be classified as war against terrorism. The rise of terrorism in the region, will however, most likely occur. Another piece of evidence that supports the likelihood of an increase in terrorism is the fact that some of the leaders of the Ukrainian radicals or pro-Russian separatists as well as individual members of the groups have both ideological and direct combat experience with terrorism in the Caucasus.

Regardless of who “wins” the conflict in eastern Ukraine, if any of the sides wins with the use of force, that is without the respect of the other party it is likely that the conflict will deepen and transform into a significant increase in terrorist attacks.

Such conflict transformation would be preferred by the defeated extremist right wing or nationalist movements, which will not accept a ceasefire and which will be very difficult to control. The executors of such attacks will be the defeated party and its militant groups. The targets of these attacks will mainly be the top politicians of the opposing group, and also police, army, individuals and state or local government organs as well as civilians, who express a desire to calm the conflict. The center of the attacks will be the capital city - Kiev, but also local administration centers such as Lviv, Kharkiv, Odesa, Dnipropetrovsk, Poltava, Iziium, Mariupol' and other cities especially in the affected areas. The methods of the attacks will intend to cause the highest number of victims and material damage such as a large attack with a small automatic gun, attacks with a vehicle or drone loaded with explosives directed to the places where a large number of people meet, for example railway and bus stations, underground, airports, shopping centers, theaters or sport stadiums. The targets can also be public meetings organized to protest or support a political settlement of the conflict.

In the event that the Ukrainian government agrees with the separatists in Novorussia to peacefully settle the conflict and to establish any form of autonomous government or federation in currently warring regions, the far right and nationalist Ukrainian groups will be “disappointed”. It is likely, that these groups would not accept such a decision and would concentrate on destabilizing the political environment, focusing their attacks on the state authorities and on other national minorities e.g. (Jews, Poles, Hungarians, Moldovans...). The targets of the attacks will not be geographically concentrated only in the eastern Ukraine, but also elsewhere in the country. Russians and pro-Russian thinking Ukrainians will be blamed for the attacks and thus increasing the antipathy and hatred against the Russian population. Techniques of the so-called information war, cyber-attacks and so on, will also continue to be used between Russia and Ukraine¹⁴. The information war techniques have always been used by states to manage the flow of information in order to create a competitive advantage over the opponent, and these efforts have only increased during the crisis in Ukraine.

The Kremlin, as well as the West have been stepping up their efforts to change the perception of their respective audiences through formal and social media, with Russia aiming the information towards the West and around the world, while the EU and the West are trying to counter this Russian propaganda campaign and blaming Russia for its involvement in Ukraine. The West has been accusing Russia of denial and deceit regarding its presence and operations in Ukraine, using their so-called “troll houses¹⁵” to undermine America and Europe¹⁶. A recent example of the war on control and manipulation of information could have been seen in international media when Malaysian airline's flight MH17 was shot down over the Ukrainian territory. Russia's Channel One news station reported that the CIA was responsible for the incident with support from the Ukrainian government.¹⁷ They further insisted that a Ukrainian fighter jet was flying close to the passenger airplane before it was shot down and also denied that Russia supplied separatists in Ukraine with so-called BUK missile systems that the USA believed were used to shoot down the plane¹⁹.

¹³ Ukraine's prosecutor general classifies self-declared Donetsk and Luhansk republics as terrorist organisations, v Kyiv Post, 16.5.2014
<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/ukraines-prosecutor-general-classifies-self-declared-donetsk-and-luhansk-republics-as-terrorist-organizations-348212.html>

¹⁴ Kavicky V, Jangl, S, Gaspierik L.: Terorizmus – Hrozba doby. 2015. Citadella. aBratislava

¹⁵ Galeotti, M. The west is too paranoid about Russia's information war. The Guardian, 7.7.2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/07/russia-propaganda-europe-america>

¹⁶ Institute for the Study of War, Putin's Information Warfare In Ukraine: Soviet Origins of Russia's Hybrid Warfare, 2014
<http://understandingwar.org/report/putins-information-warfare-ukraine-soviet-origins-russias-hybrid-warfare#sthash.0RrgIqYG.dpuf>

¹⁷ Wofford, T. Russian State Media Says CIA Shot Down Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17, in Newsweek, 22.7. 2014
<http://europe.newsweek.com/russian-state-media-says-cia-shot-down-malaysian-airlines-flight-mh-17-260381?rm=eu>

However, later the Dutch led investigation and report proved that, the plane was indeed shot down with a Russianmade BUK missile, although another criminal investigation might have to be launched in order to find a culprit¹⁸. Regardless of what the truth is, Russian reputation has suffered a lot.

Each group will build its own special bases for training of terrorists and terrorist groups. The state also has to anticipate the growth of the illegal trade in arms, explosives and also in drugs, human trafficking and organs, as well as an increase in prostitution as a source of illegal income for the fighting. The leader of the Ukrainian nationalists Dimitro Jaros has already expressed similar ideas about the use of the AZOV units in internal political battle, saying that in the case of dissatisfaction with the Ukrainian government, he would send the troops to Kiev¹⁹. Several other groups could benefit from preventing the implementation of peace agreements. These could be criminal but also radical groups, leaders of various paramilitary groups and oligarchs who made a profitable business from the war. The targets of these attacks are then not only the adversaries but also their “own people”. The most common methods used in the attacks will be small automatic weapons or a bomb attack on a target’s car. Another possible method could be the use of small military anti-tank weapons or a drone loaded with explosives. This was also the method used by the Irish Republican Army to murder the Member of Parliament and it’s ex Commander Michael Collins²⁰, and also by the orthodox Jews in the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin²¹. These actions are already taking place in Ukraine, although it is very difficult to assess whether all could be classified as acts of terrorism or a war among different factions of groups. During the years 2014 and 2015, there were several murders, including the murder of ex-member of parliament representing the Party of Regions – Oleg Kalashnikov, who was accused of financing anti-majdan, then the murder of journalist Oles Buzina who was supporting the idea of the federalization of Ukraine, bilingualism and cohesion of the Ukrainian, Russian and Belarusian nation²², but the “hardliners” were also murdered, such as the leader of the Ukrainian nationalist movement Right Sector, Olexander Muzycko²³ or the pro-Russian separatist leaders Alexander Mozgovoj²⁴ and Alexander Bednov²⁵. So far the last victim of such a terrorist attack was the Ukrainian Chief Prosecutor Viktor Sokin. The Chief Prosecutor escaped death only thanks to the bulletproof glass at the office²⁶.

The most dangerous attacks will be the attacks conducted by “lone wolves”. In this type of terrorist attacks, there is a high probability that the act will be conducted by persons suffering from mental health issues caused by the long term information war or by persons suffering from the so-called Afghan syndrome, in the USA also known as the Vietnam syndrome, but in this case “Donbas syndrome”. Individuals from the war in Ukraine, who will be returning back to Ukraine, Russia or Europe after the war is over, will be mentally worse off than the veterans of the Afghan or Chechen wars²⁷. War is causing great psychological stress, including post-traumatic stress disorder that many soldiers - veterans suffer from. People, returning back to peaceful everyday life, unlike trained regular soldiers, do not undergo any psychological examination nor medical tests or an eventual resocialization or reintegration back to society. Moreover, it is possible that other problems, such as drug or alcohol abuse, may arise too. These returning people will face difficulties integrating back into their communities, families or work.

¹⁸ Sterling, T, Escritt, T. Flight MH17 shot down by Russian-built Buk missile, Dutch report says. Reuters. !3. 10. 2015
<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-mh-idUSKCN0S71C820151013>

¹⁹ Ярославівчаночко. ЯможувестидекількабатальйоніввКиївівирішитипитаннязвладую,

Ярош http://ipress.ua/articles/ya_mozhu_vesty_dekilka_batalyoniv_v_kyiv_i_vyrishyty_pytannya_z_vladyu_yarosh_90414.html

²⁰ Feehan, John M "The Shooting of Michael Collins: Murder or Accident?" Cork, Mercier 1981

²¹ Yahrzeit of Yitzhak Rabin, Hadracha, 4.11.1995 <http://www.hadracha.org/en/historyView.asp?historyID=122>

²² Убийства Бузины и Калашникова были совершены по одинаковой схеме. In: Московский Комсомолец. 16. 04. 2015.

<http://www.mk.ru/politics/2015/04/16/ubiystva-buziny-i-kalashnikova-byli-soversheny-po-odinakovoy-skHEME.html>

²³ *Ukraine nationalist Oleksandr Muzychko killed in police operation*, Associated Press, 2014-03-25, *The Interior Ministry said Tuesday that Muzychko was shot dead after opening fire on police.*

²⁴ Quinn, Allison. "Russian-backed military commander assassinated after speaking out against cease-fire". Kyivpost.com, 23.5.2015

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/kyiv-post-plus/russian-backed-military-commander-assassinated-after-speaking-out-against-cease-fire-389345.html>

²⁵ Piggot, Mark, Who killed Batman? Pro-Russian separatist's death blamed on Ukraine and other separatists, International Business Times.

4.1.2015 <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/batman-pro-russian-separatist-death-blamed-ukraine-separatists-1481805>

²⁶ Ukrajina informovala o neúspešnom útoku na generálneho prokurátora, Aktuality.sk 3.11.2015 <http://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/307519/ukrajina-informovala-o-neuspesnom-utoku-na-generalneho-prokuratora/>

²⁷ Ukraine invasion “veterans” are bigger problem for Russia than ones from prior two wars. Euromaidan Press. 22 April 2015.

<http://euromaidanpress.com/2015/04/22/ukraine-invasion-veterans-are-bigger-problem-for-russia-than-ones-from-prior-two-wars/>

Many of the lone wolves could have been suffering from psychological issues that might have been further exacerbated by war, or already might have had a criminal history, and after their return, they may succumb to depression and turn to violence and criminal activities, thus posing a serious threat to the society. This problem, however, may not only be the Ukraine – Russia problem since on both sides of the conflict there are foreign fighters. These fighters can blame their own governments for their passivity or abandonment of principles for which they were fighting. These attackers use a wide variety of methods for conducting their attacks, ranging from individual attacks with small weapons, to bigger attacks with automatic weapons, light munition from the war (hand grenades, hand-held anti-tank weapons) a letter, parcel or mail bombs, to an attack with a car or a drone loaded with explosives targeting places with a high concentration of people. Targets can also be public meetings supporting or protesting the political settlement of the conflict.

Conclusion: Possible steps to improve the situation and reduce the risk of terrorism

Reform of the current relationships: According to Russia, the current Euro-Atlantic structure is not able to effectively solve existing problems such as arms control and ammunition, especially the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), neither does it solve the existing conflicts such as the Moldova-Transnistria conflict.

Russia blames the West for creating new conflicts, like the Balkan crisis, supporting the Arab spring and overthrowing the authoritarian regimes of Saddam Hussein, Hosni Mubarak, Muammar Kaddafi and Bashar al-Assad. However, the West is also supporting the authoritarian regimes in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and other former Soviet Republics. Russia has therefore responded by building their own security initiatives, like the so-called Kozak Memorandum or Medvedev's proposal for the new security debate in Europe. The proposals were proposed in OSCE, but failed. Russia interpreted the rejection of these proposals by the West as not based on their flaws, but rather on the fact that they were initiated by Russia. The Ukrainian crisis is therefore sort of a confirmation or the culmination of the worsening West – Russian relations. The West and Moscow accuse each other of providing political and material support to the conflicting parties and urge one another to do more to resolve the situation²⁸.

To avoid further deterioration of the crisis and its possible effects, it is necessary to start developing diplomatic relations on a political level and not through the media. Diplomatic negotiations must take into account the significant differences in the understanding of the events on both sides, and to try to understand their actions and thinking. Representatives from all sides should be present at the negotiating table so that they all have access to the same information and would not feel isolated or frustrated from not being able to present their view on the conflict. It is also important that the negotiations about the future peace process are conducted with Ukrainian representatives acceptable to all, who have sufficient authority among their groups and who are ready for the negotiations. The formation of credible governance and public administration, led by the leaders who are mutually accepted by all parties involved in the conflict, who have legitimacy, accountability and authority is one of the crucial determinants of sustainable recovery, long lasting peace and stability in any crisis or post conflict situation²⁹.

The recent elections in Ukraine have been won by the pro-EU and pro-West parties, however, Ukraine still remains profoundly divided. While the People's Front party of the newly elected Prime Minister Yatsenyuk and the President's Poroshenko Bloc came on top in the polls, there is still quite a large support among the Ukrainians for the Opposition bloc, associated with the former president Yanukovich that placed just after the leading parties in the elections in 2014. In 2015 Ukraine seems even more divided with Petro Poroshenko again on top followed by the Opposition bloc. It could be very counterproductive to adopt the perhaps west-promoted winner-take-all approach, since there is a great risk of alienating the segment of the population who supported the Opposition bloc, many of whom are located in the eastern part of Ukraine. Segregating these voters could hinder the efforts at reconciliation and the peace process currently in place as well as lead to future rebellion, thus pushing other areas in eastern and southern Ukraine under the separatists' control³⁰.

²⁸The Ukraine crisis and NATO-Russia relations. Nato Review Magazine <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2014/Russia-Ukraine-Nato-crisis/Ukraine-crisis-NATO-Russia-relations/SK/index.htm>

²⁹Kauzya, J. Building Capacities for Public Service in Post-Conflict Countries. DESA. New York 2007. ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/121

³⁰Negrouk, K. The Aftermath of Ukraine's Elections: One Step Forward or Two Steps Back? The National Interest. 1.11.2014.

<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-aftermath-ukraines-elections-one-step-forward-or-two-11586>

Poroshenko and Yatsenyuk are already seen to cooperate with the West in a way that excludes the Opposition bloc and other opposition parties and rebels. Such action will however only promote distrust and may cause further future disagreements and dissent.

Furthermore, for the further socio-economic and political development of Ukraine it is necessary that the country follows through with its “de-oligarchization campaign” that does not seem to be achieving much. Poroshenko has not been successful in curbing the powers of oligarchs in Ukraine who control the country’s economy through the gas and energy sector as well as the media and banking sector. They still continue to be above the law and what is more, Poroshenko himself together with Klitschko granted some of the “gas lobby” a formal immunity from prosecution³¹. The gas lobby members include the supporters of Yanukovich with strong pro-Russian ties, which is at odds with Poroshenko’s pro-European position.

Therefore a strong leader from within Ukraine, who would be acceptable to ALL parties in the conflict, including the West and Russia, as well as the people of Ukraine has to be found. The leader would have to work with other stakeholders and invite them to a roundtable with trust, not with fear, to decide about the future of the country that is also acceptable for all.

Mutual distrust and fear could cause another cold war of sorts, when the fear promotes actions that could be easily turned into a new wave of dissent and violence. “For a truly peaceful resolution to take place, Ukraine,” and also the West and Russia, have “to embrace dissenting voices in their governments not with contempt, but with an intention to work with them³²”.

Common action on reconstruction and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. A country affected by protracted conflict is usually not in a position to respond to all the problems and challenges that lie ahead and that need to be addressed. It is therefore necessary to accept the support from outside, which however, has to be accompanied by activities of domestic players. As was mentioned above in the article, Russia accuses the West, and specifically the USA, that they, through the guise of humanitarian aid, are creating conditions for future NATO naval bases, which would be directed against Russia. The West is in turn accusing Russia of using humanitarian convoys destined for areas in eastern Ukraine to provide supplies of food and clothing to not only the civilian population but also supplying arms and other military material to the militant groups. In order to create mutual trust, the UN or the OSCE should coordinate all of the humanitarian activities, and both Russia and the West should be explicitly informed about the scope of the humanitarian aid. Donations of the individual countries should not go directly to Ukraine but to the so-called trust funds for the respective regions. The oversight and the management of these resources should be in the hands of the countries that both sides can accept and trust (such as Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Japan, Switzerland or even Slovakia). Both parties should have their representatives in the trust fund steering committee so that they are always informed how and where the resources are spent. The resources should be in the first instance used on recovery and subsequent protection against terrorist attacks on medical facilities, schools, power stations, gas and water plants, distribution networks of energy and water, agricultural land and infrastructure.

Ending support for paramilitary units and reducing the influence of military leaders. It seems that the Western countries and the USA still believe that the ideology, which encourages the support of the paramilitary groups and rebels to fight against the regime pays off, as the saying goes “the enemy of my enemy is my friend”. Such support, however, has proven ineffective in the past and what is more, it spiraled out of control and turned against the West. The scientific literature confirms that supporting the uncontrolled paramilitary rebels almost always prolongs the conflict, making it bloodier and more difficult to resolve³². There are several examples: the support of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in the war against the USSR in Afghanistan, support or rather the lack of response to the use of chemical weapons by Iraq in the war against Iran, the armament of the Syrian rebels against Assad or logistical support of Kurds in fighting ISIS. After the main adversary of these groups or organizations had diminished, they all turned their ideology and policy against the West.

Taliban and Al-Qaeda attacked the USA as well as western European targets, Iraq annexed Kuwait and supported Al-Qaeda training bases, part of the Syrian rebels together with their weapons joined ISIS and the weapons which were given to Kurds were used by the PKK members in their armed clashes with the Turkish army – an army of a NATO member state.

³¹Kuzio, T. Money Still Rules Ukraine. Foreign Policy. 25. 9, 2015. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/08/25/money-still-rules-ukraine-poroshenko-corruption/>

³²Beauchamp, Z. Why arming Syria’s rebels wouldn’t have stopped ISIS, VOX, August 13 2014

The USA has been supporting Ukraine and its military for some time now as part of a partnership for the modernization and training of the Ukrainian army. It has recently announced the intensification of the so called non-lethal support to Ukraine, but some members of the Congress, as well as other members of Obama's cabinet, such as Secretary of State John Kerry and Defense Secretary Ashton Carter advocate for lethal support³³. Western support of the Ukrainian armed forces and groups should therefore be well thought out considering the possible long term effects it can have, especially if it involves lethal support – supply of larger arms and ammunition. If lethal support takes place, it should be for the regular Ukrainian army only. Security sector reform will be problematic in terms of appointment of the new police and military leaders. An amnesty for the members of paramilitary units and weapons amnesty, that is giving up of the weapons without any criminal charges to the regular army or to the UN or OSCE units would also help the situation. The government authorities have to agree on these amnesties, as they are important for ensuring stable post conflict development of the country. Although the amnesties will not resolve all the problems, it is possible that the members of paramilitary groups would prefer to use the amnesties and exchange their membership and weapons for freedom in their new lives. Amnesties could therefore reduce the size of the militant groups from several thousands down to several hundreds or dozens, thus making the elimination of their terrorist and criminal activities easier.

This limits the impact of the military leaders of radical movements who may not be satisfied with the outcome of the conflict, and whose behavior, due to the trauma they have been through, is often cruel, arrogant and condescending. They oftendo not identify themselves with the recovery needs of the country, especially in the regions of the enemy. In terms of weapons amnesty, its impact also has long-term effects. During the conflict, there is a large quantity of legal and illegal weapons, ammunition and explosives in the country, which may be a source of terrorist threats. If it is possible to control a large part of them, it will reduce the security risks of their use.

The situation in Ukraine is very dynamic and constantly evolving. However, it should be understood in a broader historical and political context of Western and Russian perception of the direction of the Eastern European region. While the US and Western countries accuse Russia of illegal annexation of the Crimea and its support for the separatists, Russia sees Western support for Ukraine's efforts to obtain US influence in the region as a threat. Without the general support of other interested countries, the situation is unsolvable for Ukraine. If the conflict in the east of Ukraine is "won" by whichever party by force and with no respect for the other party, it might worsen and transform, causing significant increase in the number of terrorist attacks. It is therefore necessary to adopt the proposed steps, which might contribute to the improvement of the current situation and reduce the risk of terrorism and further traumatization of Ukrainian society.

³³ [Foster.P.](#) US to increase military aid to Ukraine including Humvees and drones, The Telegraph [March 11 March 2015](#)