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RUSSIAN HYBRID WARFARE IN UKRAINE

Bachelor's Thesis

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I declare I have written the bachelor's thesis independently.

All works and major viewpoints of the other authors, data from other sources of literature and elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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ABSTRACT

After the revolutions in Ukraine capital Kiev, Russia used unmarked forces to annex Crimea and a separatism movement broke out in eastern Ukraine. The support for the separatism movement and the annexation of Crimea are just one of the hybrid warfare tactics that Russia is using against Ukraine. This paper analyses the usage of hybrid warfare against Ukraine by Russia. The paper provides an overview of the Ukrainian – Russian relations and their background. The author suggest, that the use of hybrid warfare has been caused by the fact that Russia does not want to see Ukraine integrating with European Union or NATO. This has created a two level security dilemma between Ukraine and Russia. Russia counters the possible threat by applying hybrid warfare in Ukraine.

Key Words: hybrid warfare, security dilemma, information warfare, Donbass, Ukraine, Russia.

INTRODUCTION

The crisis that has occurred in Ukraine has been one of the main topics in international relations during last two years. This crisis has shown how quickly can crowds of people change, and overthrow state and local governments, and how quickly Russian Federation acted to annex part of Ukrainian territory.

The Ukrainian Crisis started out from the difference in the Ukrainian people whether to choose closer ties with the European Union, or with the Russian Federation. This difference was carried out into Ukrainian politics. President Yanukovich promised to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union, although, on the last moment, he abandoned the promise, and declared to seek closer ties with the Russian Federation. This brought upon demonstrations throughout Ukraine but especially in the capital Kiev. The demonstrators demanded the resignation of President Yanukovich, eventually the protests in Kiev took the turn for worst as the demonstrations turned violent.

These demonstrations achieved their goal – they overthrew the government of President Yanukovich and the Ukrainian parliament elected new pro-European government. In contrast, these demonstrations resulted with an opposite reaction from the pro-Russian citizens of Ukraine. The people in the eastern part of Ukraine and in Crimea started to carry out protests as well but with a different cause – they argued that Ukraine should indeed seek closer ties with Russian Federation. This brought upon a separatism movement in the regions where ethnic Russians and pro-Russian people live. Russia used means of hybrid warfare to create a feeling of instability and fear amongst ethnic Russians living in Ukraine which resulted in a separatism movement in parts of Eastern Ukraine and Crimea. Pro-Russian people started to organize civil defence units and started to demand separation from Ukraine. This was expressed by overthrowing the local governments and occupying local administration buildings. This was achieved with the involvement of the Russian Federation, especially in Crimean, where active Russian regular forces occupied local administration buildings and forced Ukrainian military to surrender.

This paper argues that Russia views Ukraine`s integration with the European-Union and NATO as a threat to its own national security. Thus this has created a situation of security dilemma between Russian Federation and Ukraine. The Russian Federation, by conducting different means of hybrid warfare against Ukraine, tries to secure and increase its position of

influence over Ukraine. Hybrid warfare is the combination of military, political, social and economic pressure put on to the adversary. One of the characteristics of hybrid warfare in Ukraine is that Russia has been avoiding the public usage of large military intervention, rather Russia uses the local population loyal to Russia to organize themselves against Ukraine. The fact that Ukraine has a large minority of ethnic Russians and that the Ukraine economy and economic security is very closely tied with the Russian economy and economic resources, Russian usage of hybrid warfare is the most effective way to influence Ukraine domestic politics. This paper sets out research questions as: Why Russia uses hybrid warfare against Ukraine in transcending security dilemmas between two countries?

The paper is divided into four parts. The first part will give an overview of the theories of security dilemma, hybrid warfare and as well as information warfare – as it is one of the most important component of hybrid warfare.

The second part will give an overview of how tied Ukraine and Russia are as a state and as nationalities, this will help to understand the usefulness of using hybrid warfare against Ukraine by Russia. Also this part will give an overview of the Ukrainian and Russian shared historic background, as well as the Ukrainian national background. This will help to understand the relations between Russians and Ukrainians as nationalities as well as states, and to help to understand the different ideological interpretations of these two states.

The third part will give an overview of the Russian and Ukrainian relations after the dissolution of the Soviet Union up to the Maidan protest, from 1990 – 2014. This chapter is divided into five different subchapters that give an overview of the Russian-Ukrainian relations under different Ukrainian presidents. One of the subchapters also gives an overview of the “Orange Revolution” and its effects to the Russian Ukrainian relations. This chapter also analyses the Russian influence and usage of hybrid warfare against Ukraine under the authority of different Ukrainian Presidents.

The fourth chapter analyses different Russian involvement in Ukrainian domestic politics from the start of the Maidan protests. Russian usage of hybrid warfare has turned most visible after President Yanukovich was overthrown. This chapter analyses the usage of Russian hybrid warfare against Ukraine in the Donetsk and Luhansk separatism movements.

The research methodology that is used in this paper is qualitative research. Author of this paper discusses and analyses the usage of hybrid warfare by the Russian Federation against Ukraine in order to achieve goals that would be beneficial to Russian Federation itself.

Writing this research, author uses different books, research papers and articles that have previously covered the aspects of Russia-Ukraine relations, hybrid warfare and Ukrainian crisis. Writing this research author observes the reliability, authenticity and topicality with the problem.

1. SECURITY DILEMMA

For the majority of European countries, they see the enlargement of NATO and European Union to the former soviet republics as a mean to stabilize and develop these countries into western communities. Russia on the other hand sees this as an encirclement, and a direct action against it (Staack, 2014). This has created a situation where Ukraine would like to integrate into European Union, in order to gain economic benefits and into NATO to gain security over Russian Federation. NATO and European Union have also expressed their will to accept Ukraine, if Ukraine meets the conditions that these two organizations have placed.

The theory that security can be ensured by increasing power, brings out a problem which could occur between states or organizations that simultaneously increase their military power in fear of each other – the Security Dilemma.

Central concept of the security dilemma is that even if a state does not have any intentions to attack others, hence its intentions are peaceful it still must accumulate power for defensive means, because the state cannot be sure of the intentions of other states (Snyder, 1984). Defence and offence forces could be very similar. When a country has defence forces and another country has offensive forces, the forces could be identical. That means also that defensive forces could be used for offensive objectives and vice versa. This also means that a state cannot assume the other states objectives, for which the state has to assume the worst scenario, and prepare for it, or even take preventive actions against the other state (Posen, 1993). Booth & Wheeler describe their theory of security dilemma as a „two-level strategic predicament“ which could lead to a security paradox. The first level is the dilemma of different interpretation. This means that a state cannot be sure of the other states intentions, motives and capabilities. For example, a shield, a common understanding is that a shield could be used only for defensive means, rather than a sword, which commonly is used only for offensive means. Although, when a shield is being used with a sword it could be a vital part of an offensive. The second level dilemma is the dilemma of response. This dilemma comes into effect when the country has already interpreted that the other country has taken steps to danger the first one. The dilemma for the first country is how should they react? Should they signal by words or by deeds, and what could be the response from the other

party? If they have misinterpreted the other states actions then they risk creating military confrontation (Booth & Wheeler, 2008). This kind of dilemma would lead to a situation where the search for security from one states would lead both countries to war with each other, for actually wanting to avoid the war, these steps to gain in security are generally done unintended to provoke the other party. The security dilemma in Ukraine Russia relations corresponds to the integration dilemma. This appears in the competition in either economic, military or political groupings (Charap & Troitskiy, 2013).

1.1 Russian – Ukraine: Economic Security Dilemma (EU)

The theory of security, although meant as to apply in the military sphere it could be also expanded to the economic security of states. As the military build-up and formation of alliances can cause threats between states, it is logical to assume that states would be concerned about their economic security in the same way. By this the author suggest that Russia and Ukraine had economic security dilemma before the Ukrainian crisis broke out. The issue at that time was that Ukraine wanted to gain economically by having association agreement with European. Russia on the other hand feared of having economic losses regards to that and losing its economic partner as well as influence over it. Russia accounted for a quarter of all Ukraine exports and one-third of all imports. Ukraine on the other hand accounted for little more than 3 percent of Russian exports and imports in 2012. These figures put Ukraine as sixth most important importer and fourth most important exporter to Russia (OEC). If Ukraine could have closer ties with European Union, Russia could lose a piece of its economy, and therefore a piece of its influence over Ukraine. According to Posen`s theory of security dilemma, Russia at that time did not know the objectives of Ukraine or the European Union regarding their integration. So Russia in order to achieve its goals and economic position it takes preventive measures. One of them was the quick developments of the Eurasian Union and the efforts to affect Ukraine to join this Union.

Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov has accused the European Union of trying to create its own influence of sphere in the eastern part of Europe, with the policies of European Neighbourhood Policy and Eastern Partnership. President Putin said that the closer integration by the means of association agreement between European Union and Ukraine would pose a

“big threat” to Russian Economy (BBC, 2013). Hence to stop Ukraine – a big economic partner for Russia, to further integrate into Europe, Russia has launched countermeasures.

European Union has launched programmes to integrate the rest of the former members of the Soviet bloc, programmes like European Neighbourhood Policy(ENP) and Eastern Partnership(EaP) help these countries to step up their development but also to create closer ties with European Union in aspects like: trade, travel and other economic fields. To counter this integration process Russia has launched its own union called the Eurasian Customs Union. This was created in order to reintegrate the former soviet countries to the Russian economic sphere (Dragneva & Wolczuk, Russia, the Eurasian Customs and the EU: Cooperation, Stagnation or Rivalry?, 2012).

There are three reasons why Russia has created the Eurasia Customs Union (EACU). Firstly, it is meant to strengthen the influence of Russia in the region. Secondly this union is created in order to have a mechanism to stop former Soviet Union members to integrate with the West, and thirdly to restore the Russian superiority in the former Soviet-Union area. In this Union the Russian Federation is most powerful, it will have the final say in every decision, this is a union where Russia could affect the decision making of other member states, and through which it plans to politically influence the Euro-Asia regions (Strzelecki, 2016). All of these reasons could be translated as preventive and countering measures by the theory of the security dilemma.

Ukraine is a relatively big economy, and its position between the European Union and Asia would give the EACU a big addition. Moreover, if Ukraine would join EACU, Russia could have greater influence over Ukraine and would give Russia a bigger leverage on international scale (Michael, 2013). Russia has tried to show the EACU as a worthy countermeasure for the European Union. Russia has declared that if Ukraine will join EACU, Ukraine will receive short term economic benefits like, discount for gas, and other subsidies, although if Ukraine does not join EACU they will receive economic and other sanctions (Dragneva & Wolczuk, 2013). This kind of carrot and stick method reflects how important economically Ukraine would be to EACU, and also what methods Russia is forced to use against Ukraine in order to force it for cooperation. If Ukraine were to join this EACU it would be easier to integrate Ukraine into the Russian sphere of influence thus it would be easier for Russia as a Union to counter the European Union economically.

Ukraine under the Presidency of Viktor Yanukovich surprisingly chose the other path – the path of having closer ties with the European Union, this means signing the European Association Agreement in 2013. This decision although did not seem to be agreeable to Russia. Russian president Vladimir Putin met with the Ukrainian president twice before signing this agreement. Since the talks that these two men had are not made public, it is suggested that Putin put pressure on his Ukrainian counterpart by threatening Yanukovich with economic sanctions and the loss of the Russian support (NATO StratCom, 2014). On the eve of the Vilnius Summit, where president Yanukovich was supposed to sign this agreement, he suddenly changes his mind, and declared that Ukraine will not sign this agreement and will choose closer ties with Russia instead (Agnieszka & Sakwa).

1.2 Russia – Ukraine Security Dilemma (NATO)

Ukraine has sought closer ties with the western states, looking for closer integration with European Union. Ukrainian more pro-Western politicians have even flirted with the idea of Ukraine becoming a member of NATO alliance. Viktor Yuschenko sought the membership of NATO during his presidency, it was openly criticised by Vladimir Putin and Russia, and ultimately was dropped because of the opposition of France and Germany (Taylor, 2014). For Russia it could create a dangerous situation since their big naval base and the headquarters of the Black Sea Fleet is in Ukraine territory in Sevastopol Ukraine. Russia and Ukraine have had many disputes about this base before. Ukraine under the administration of president Yuschenko – considered a pro-European, declared that the lease of the base in Sevastopol for Russia would not extend over 2017. Although the next president Yanukovich extended the lease for Russians until 2042 (Harding, 2010). One could make a conclusion that after the Maidan revolution, when president Yanukovich's government was overthrown, Russian interpreted that the possibly the new government would be with pro-European, pro-NATO views and thus nullify the previous contract that was reached with Yanukovich.

Second interpretation for Russia would be that when Ukraine would join NATO, then Russia would be surrounded with “enemy” forces throughout the western side of Russia, also this would create uneven situation in the Black Sea. Russia's interest in this situation with Ukraine thus might be to keep Ukraine unstable, it cannot join NATO nor European Union.

Russia could keep Ukraine in a favourable position by either integration it more into Russian sphere or keeping it relatively unstable, so it cannot join the European Union or NATO. One way that Russia could achieve this is to use the means of Hybrid warfare.

1.3 Hybrid Warfare

There is no one and only definition to “Hybrid War” although there is overall understanding what is the set of tactics that could be named or understand as Hybrid War are. Overall understanding is that hybrid warfare is a set of hostile actions that seeks to undermine the opponents through various different operations. These operations could be economic pressure, threat to energy supply, proxy insurgency, sabotage, hacking, intelligence operations etc. (Popescu, 2015). One of the main goals of this Hybrid war is to target the stability of the country not the security. Hybrid war creates a situation were the population of the country would feel constant fear and insecurity, this is created by trade wars, energy blackmail, propaganda, and other similar methods (Shelest, 2015). One idea behind hybrid warfare is that there could be crated an effect to show that the aggressor is actually not the aggressor, like in Ukraine, where the aggressor as Russia, hides behind the pro-Russian volunteer people and defence units.

Lt Col Daniel T. Lasica has defined the hybrid war as such: “...hybrid war is the merging of different methods and theories of war and warfare at different levels of war, in different realms and domains, especially the cognitive and moral domains, by a blend of actors, arranged in time and space to achieve objectives at all levels of war.” Lasica also emphasises that the tactics of hybrid war are not directed against the physical field, but against the moral and cognitive (Mulhern, 2012).

Colonel John J. McCuen describes that the west is facing a new form of threat, the hybrid war, which he describes as: “Although conventional in form, the decisive battles in today’s hybrid wars are fought not on conventional battlegrounds, but on asymmetric battlegrounds within the conflict zone population, the home front population, and the international community population. Irregular, asymmetric battles fought within these populations ultimately determine success or failure.” This means that Hybrid warfare is fought in three different fronts, the first is the conventional battleground, the second is the

population of the attacked country – they would have to be convinced of the usefulness of the war and the third is a home front – where the population in home country would have to be convinced of the usefulness of the war. With the first front of the hybrid warfare, presumably the essential services, government offices and economy will be severely damaged or even destroyed. To establish the sympathy of the local population and the favour of the home population, the attacking side must immediately rebuild and restore the security of essential services and basic security of the foreign population. By doing that the attacking side will win in all of the three fronts of the hybrid warfare, and thus presumably winning the war (McCuen, 2008).

In the 2010 Russian military doctrine there are also named features of the modern military conflict, however Russians do not refer to them as hybrid war features, but features of the modern military conflicts. Amongst them are: “the unpredictability of their emergence”, “the presence of a broad range of military-political, economic, strategic, and other objectives” the prior implementation of measures of information warfare in order to achieve political objectives without the utilization of military force and, subsequently, in the interest of shaping a favourable response from the world community to the utilization of military force.”, “Military conflicts will be distinguished by speed, selectivity, and a high level of target destruction, rapidity in manoeuvring troops (forces) and firepower, and the utilization of various mobile groupings of troops (forces).” These features are identical of the above mentioned hybrid war features (Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 2010).

In a conventional warfare the opposite sides usually use conventional weaponry and conventional means to fight against each other. The fighting in a conventional warfare is taking place between mutually understandable parties, in other words combatants, that use specific clothing. In other words, conventional warfare could be defined as armies fighting against armies. Unlike conventional warfare, hybrid warfare is usually not public and is not declared against the opposite side. Also unlike conventional warfare, in hybrid warfare the spectre of means to affect the opposite side broadens to almost every aspect that could affect the home and local population. The main difference between conventional warfare and hybrid warfare is the means that are used to affect the opposite sides, also that usually hybrid warfare is not public and conventional warfare is. Although there could be hybrid tactics in a conventional warfare strategy and conventional tactics in hybrid warfare tactics these two are usually distinguishable.

Difference between Russo-Georgian war in 2008 and the Ukrainian Crisis in the context of hybrid and conventional warfare comparison would be that, in Georgia, both parties were actively and publicly involved in the war. Russia used its armed forces against the Georgian armed forces. In Ukraine however Russia has not publicly used its armed forces against the Ukrainian armed forces, so far Russia has denied its involvement in the Donbass region and admitted of using special forces in Crimea only after Crimea was already annexed. Russia has hidden itself behind the separatist defence units and the local population of Donbass citizens. In Georgian war, Russia did not use the information warfare as much as it has done in Ukrainian crisis rather they relied on pure military power. In Ukraine Russia systematically uses social media and its own state backed media to display the situations in Ukraine as it suits Russia the most. Russia has also used economic means as natural gas and export blockade to affect and destabilize Ukraine. This shows Ukraine as weak and as a failed state, from which the journalist (information warfare combatants) could create narratives to affect local population.

1.4 Information warfare

One of the most powerful aspects of the Hybrid war is the usage of information and to project it in a way which could be beneficial to the user. Information warfare is one of the most modern methods of warfare, although it is very simple and relatively cheap, and has been around for more than decades, the spectrum it could achieve is the highest at present day time. This has to do largely with the availability of modern technology and internet. By controlling what kind of information people are consuming and by intentionally affecting the information that it then could affect the consumer in a way that is necessary, could eventually make the difference in winning and losing in a modern day conflict.

In 1996 the United States Department of Defence defined information warfare as "an information operation conducted during time of crisis or conflict to achieve or promote specific objectives over a specific adversary or adversaries." The Field Manual of the United States Army in 1997 has described the same thing as: "actions taken to achieve information superiority by affecting a hostile's information, information based-processes, and information systems, while defending one's own information, information processes, and information systems." (Thomas, 1998)

The use of information warfare for Russia mostly came out of its military weakness, information warfare provides flexibility, that could be used in order not to risk repercussion by engaging into a conventional war. Information war for Russians came out of the Soviet reflexive control and “spetspropaganda”, Russians have found large use for it both in tactical reasons but also for internal and external politics (Snegovaya, 2015) (Darczewska, 2014). The idea of reflexive control is to create an environment where the opponent will choose the solution which would be more suitable for the aggressor. What is important is that the opponent comes up with the decision on his own and that the implementation of reflexive control is usually secret or denied (Kagan & Kagan, 2015).

The western states know that Russia is using misinformation and reflexive control to gain ground on decision making that could favour them. This kind of reflexive control could be Russian backed television channels that show news which are directed in a way to be more suitable to Russian side, or to question and doubt everything that the enemy (NATO, EU, Ukraine) is doing. Television station like RT and news agency like Sputnik play an important role, they create a constant message to a specific audience in the Central and Eastern European region. The way they project countries in these regions are always from the bad perspective. The pro-Russian parties or parties that seek closer ties with Russia in these countries, are portrayed as being constantly persecuted. The Russian people in these regions are also portrayed as persecuted with language laws and ethnic aspects. More over, these countries are being displayed as poor, failed, and run by people that do everything against Russia and do whatever the United States tells them to do. On the other hand, all decisions that Mr. Putin or Russia take, are demonstrated to be the only right choices (Lucas & Nimmo, 2015).

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Similarity of Russian and Ukrainian History

The success of Russian hybrid warfare is largely linked to the shared history of Ukrainian and Russian states. Russia uses different symbols and narratives that are linked to the shared history, which affect the cognitive and moral domains of people. By doing that, Russia is able to destabilize the situation in Ukraine and cause panic and mistrust among Ukrainian people and government. Russia also uses the shared history to justify the usage of power against the Ukrainian state, as to project it as justifiable (Müür, Mölder, Sazonov, & Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, 2016).

Ukraine and Russia in a simplified way are two very similar countries with a lot of shared history. The Ukrainian language is very similar to the Russian language, it uses almost the same alphabet, has very many similar words, and a very similar grammar structure (John & Slocum, 2014). Russian language is the first language in the eastern and southern part of the country, also since the Ukrainian and Russian is very similar, in everyday business life dealing in Russian is a common phenomenon.

Ukrainians and Russians have same roots, in both countries, cultural ancestors are considered to be the Kievan-Rus –which was a loose federation of East Slavic tribes. After the fall of the Kievan-Rus the Muscovite Grand Dukes took over the control of the eastern part of the country, while the western part of the country was absorbed by Kingdom of Poland and Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The south eastern part (including Kiev) of the nowadays Ukraine come under the rule of Tsardom of Russia, the Russian Tsars contemptuously referred to the people living in the nowadays Ukraine are as “Little Russians” at the same time they called themselves as “Great Russians”. The western part of the nowadays Ukraine came under the rule of the Austrian Empire. While the Soviet Ukrainian government was founded in 1919

and in 1922 became a part of the Soviet Union, it wasn't until 1939 when all of the Ukrainian area was united into one for the first time (Motyl, 1993).

As Ukraine has been for several hundred years a colony of Russia, there has developed an attitude against Ukrainians from the Russian point of view. Russians see Russia as the empire, Ukraine as the province, Russia as the metropolis, Ukraine as the countryside and so on. Ukrainians have defended themselves with the saying that Ukraine is that what Russia is not. Ukrainians and Russians also see their shared history differently. As Ukrainians see the nineteenth century as a time of serfdom and colonialism, and argue that their state was exploited and culture and language persecuted. The Russians however see these years as the merging of Little Russia into the Great Russian nation. By Ukrainians the 1917-1921 period is seen as a proud time of the awakening of Ukraine, the Russians however condemn this period. The Soviet time is being remembered by the Ukrainians mostly as time of repression, famine, and physical destruction, while in Russia it is viewed completely opposite way (Motyl, 1993).

2.2 Ukraine – Nation divided into two

During the time of Soviet-Union, workforce was imported from different areas of Soviet Union to the eastern part of Ukrainian SSR, they were mainly imported from the Russian SSR especially to the areas we now know as Donetsk and Luhansk, mainly because there was workforce needed for the large coal mines and other industrial manufactories. Reason for using Russian workers had to do with the Russification programme in the Soviet Union. As the official language in the Soviet Union was Russian, the language that the workforce, who were imported, spoke was also Russian, especially because most of them came from Russian SSR. The amount of people today speaking Russian as first language in the whole Ukraine is 29.6 percent. Although in Donbas region and in Crimea the number is approximately 70 percent (Radio Free Liberty , 2016).

Ukraine and Russia - both countries were the founding members of the Soviet-Union and were the members of Soviet-Union for almost 70 years. Even two of the leaders of the Soviet Union were from Ukraine or had close ties with Ukraine. Nikita Khrushchev – who was born near Ukrainian border, but move to nowadays Donetsk, Ukraine to work because the wages were much higher, and Leonid Brezhnev who was born and raised in nowadays Dniprodzerzhynsk, Ukraine. After the collapse of the Soviet-Union, when both countries

gained independence, they still remained very connected ethnically, economically and culturally. It is very surprising that these two nationalities which politically differ so much are so similar with their shared history and similarities ethnically.

The people living in Ukraine, in a simplified example, on political manners, have divided into two. People who live in the eastern and southern part of Ukraine usually are influenced by pro-Russian way of thinking – hence vote for the candidate that usually wants to have closer ties with Russia. People who live in central and western part of Ukraine are influenced by pro-European way of thinking – hence vote for the candidate that is looking for closer ties with the European Union and the western world. This is clearly seen from the turnout of the presidential elections. Usually there are two candidates, one of them is pro-Russian and the other is pro-European, and the turnout of the elections is that the northern and western part of the country vote for the pro-European candidate and the southern and eastern part of the country votes for the pro-Russian candidate. The first divergence of this kind occurred on the second Presidential elections in 1994, when Leonid Kuchma and Leonid Kravchuk ran for office. One very good example of this divergence is also the example of the Ukraine Presidential elections in 2010.

In 2010 elections, Julia Tymoshenko was the favour of the western part of Ukraine, she was at that time very pro-European and promised better integration into European society. Viktor Yanukoych was the favour of eastern part and the ethnic Russian people living in Ukraine, one of he`s campaign promises was to make Russian language as second official language in Ukraine. The results from the elections were very even, Julia Tymoshenko collected 45.5 percent of all votes and Viktor Yanukoych collected 49 percent of all votes. It is interesting to look at where either candidate got its votes, the line between eastern and western part of Ukraine is very clearly seen. Results in the Ukraine capital Kiev were predominantly for the pro-western candidate Yulia Tymoshenko, with the result of 69.7 percent of all votes while Viktor Yanukoych got only 23.6 percent (BBC, 2010) (Nesterov, 2010).

This has helped Russia to create narratives that Russian media is producing to influence the people of Eastern Ukraine. These narratives usually imply that the Russians and Ukrainians are so closely tied, that they could be considered as one nation. Although Russia would be a supremacy over Ukraine, because Ukraine is unable to be a sustainable state and take care of their citizens. These narratives also include references to the Great Patriotic War,

common history, common Orthodox religion and common culture. The narratives that were created and highly expressed in the Russian mass media during the Euromaidan protest and onwards were ideas that Crimea “belongs” to Russia, Donbass is historically Russian, and that Russia as a state and as a nation face the threat of fascism and Nazism which they must fight against (NATO StratCom, 2014). Russian media has also produced narratives which project Ukrainians as “west puppets”, “false Russians”, Russophobes and that Ukrainian army uses execution squads and is consisted of criminals, drug addicts, rapist etc (Müür, Mölder, Sazonov, & Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, 2016). One of the narratives is also that during the time of Soviet Union life has better, older people tend to praise the soviet time. This narrative is usually cognitively linked to Russia, and Russian politics. Russian media has successfully linked fascism to the current Ukrainian government and the pro-European protesters in Kiev. The fear and moral obligation to fight against Nazism and fascism has been the most visible justification of the leaders, fighters and pro-Russian people of the so-called republics of the Donetsk and Luhansk (Butterfield, 2016).

3. UKRAINE – RUSSIA RELATIONS FROM 1990 – 2014

In 1990 Ukrainians voted for independence, it was the first step of disintegration from the Soviet Union, after declaring itself independent, Ukraine found itself in possession of the third largest nuclear arsenal of the world (After U.S.A and Soviet Union). While Ukraine had physical control over these weapons, the operational control was still in the hands of the Russian command and control system. In 1994 the Ukrainian Government and Russian Government signed the Budapest Memorandum of Security Assurances, which in short ordered Ukraine to give away or demolish all of the nuclear arsenal which in return the Russian Government assured the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine (Pikayev, 1994). The foreign minister of Russia, Sergei Lavrov has commented that, by the Budapest Memorandum, Russia promised not to use nuclear weapons against Ukraine. Although this is not the case, Russia, United States and United Kingdom signed an agreement which said the following: “to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine;” (Pifer, 2016). This shows how Russia is interpreting documents the way that suits Russia the most. Russia under current authority does not seem to have any respect for the agreement that its predecessors have signed regarding Ukraine.

When Ukraine gained independence it was considered as with the best precondition of high economic growth from the former members of the Soviet Union and the members of the Warsaw pact. Ukraine had produced big part of the whole Soviet Union production, hence it had all the facilities and capabilities to continue production by independent state. Ukraine at that time had advanced heavy and light industry which produced everything from bicycles and washing machines to military and space equipment. The agricultural land of Ukraine produced nearly quarter of the whole Soviet Union agricultural output. The natural resources of Ukraine included large coal and iron ore deposits which had accounted of one fourth and one half of the Soviet Union production. The most valuable quality was the human capital, Ukraine was fully literate and almost 90 percent of the employed population had secondary or

higher education. Ukrainian scientists were considered amongst the world's greatest, especially in natural sciences. At that time Ukraine was the most powerful country between Berlin and Moscow. (Motyl, 1993)

The economic ties between Russia and Ukraine have stayed relatively strong since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Ukraine is one of Russia's main export partners with 5 percent of goods manufactured in Russia go to Ukraine. Ukraine exports 23 percent of goods to Russia, that's nearly five times more goods that the opposite way. Russia imports the same amount of goods from Ukraine, but Ukraine itself imports nearly 29 percent of goods from Russia. These figures give an example of how dependent the Ukraine economy is from the Russian economy (OEC, 2014) (CIA, 2016).

The relations and collaboration between Ukraine and Russia could be viewed from the eras of different Ukrainian Presidents. Throughout Ukrainian independence, Russia has actively supported a candidate that holds pro-Russian views, usually this candidate collects the votes of the eastern and southern areas of Ukraine. The relations of Russia and Ukraine and the economic collaboration has been also much more "healthier" during the pro-Russian presidents like Kuchma or Yanukovich. Yet a more pro-European or pro-Western candidate like Yushenko has been publicly criticised by the highest Russian officials. Economic collaboration, during the presidency of a pro-European candidate has been more difficult than during the presidency of a pro-Russian president. Russia has also used its economic power to pressurize Ukraine during the pro-European president like Yushenko.

3.1 Leonid Kravchuk

The last Head of State of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic – Leonid Kravchuk, also became the first president of Ukraine. Kravchuk had been a member of the Communist party for more than 20 years, until 1990 when he announced that he will step out from the Communist party. Under the presidency of Kravchuk from 1991 – 1994, Ukraine placed great emphasis on the nation, state building and the security of the state vis-à-vis Russia. Much needed economic reforms were left unmade. One of the reasons for that was that Kravchuk himself did not have a clue of what to do with the economy, since he himself had studied Marxist-Leninist economy which did not provide knowledge of how market economy would

work. He did not receive help from his prime minister Vitold Fokin either because he had worked nearly twenty years in the soviet state planning committee which did almost the opposite of the market economy (Motyl, 1993). The fact that president Kravchuk intended to keep the nuclear arsenal of the former Soviet Union under the control of the Ukrainian state, left Ukraine with relative poor relationship with the west and neutral relations with Russia – since Russia, under presidency of Boriss Yeltsin, was interested in political and economic reforms (Kuzio T. , Ukraine's Relations with the West: Disinterest, Partnership, Disillusionment, 2003).

Under the administration of president Kravchuk, Ukraine declared to claim the entire Black Sea Fleet as Ukrainian, this claim but a lot of heat to Russia – Ukraine relations. Russia gave signals that this claim could be countered by Russia claiming the Crimean Peninsula. Ukraine later reduced its claim to 30 only percent of the whole Black Sea Fleet, this improved the situation, although damage to the relations had been done. On the same topic Boris Yeltsin made a statement that: the fleet “has been, still id, and will remain Russian” this statement was linked with the statement of the Russian Interior minister Pyotr Valuev in 1863. He had said that there “has not been, is not, and will not be” a Ukrainian language (Motyl, 1993). This expresses the Russian unfavoring attitude against the Ukrainian claims, and against Ukraine as an independent state. With this statement the president of Russia could have suggested that Ukraine still is greatly influenced by Russia and Ukraine officials should be careful.

Later breakthroughs to these relations came from the meetings in Dagomys and in Yalta. During these meeting both sides did not address Crimea, which meant that Russia had acknowledged that Crimea would be a part of Ukrainian domestic politics. Second breakthrough came when both presidents agreed that Russia as a successor state of the Soviet Union would give part of all Soviet property to Ukraine, that property included former Soviet Union embassies and other similar properties. This helped Ukraine to set up it representatives in former Soviet embassies in foreign countries. Also by doing that Russia conceded that Ukraine was also a successor state of the Soviet Union. (Motyl, 1993).

3.2 Leonid Kuchma

Leonid Kuchma had been the Prime Minister of Ukraine from 1992 until his resignation in 1993 due to the lack of power of the Prime Minister as an institute. Kuchma ran for presidency against the former president Kravchuk in 1994. Kuchma was at first considered as a weak candidate, although later he emerged as a strong opposition candidate against Kravchuk in the presidential run-off. The vision that Kuchma provided for the future of Ukraine consisted of multiple economic and political reforms, like having closer ties with Russian Federation and also to change the constitution of Ukraine so that the President would have greater power (D`Anieri, 1999). Kuchma was at first considered as a very pro-Russian candidate for leaving an impression that Ukraine should set its sights on Russia not Europe. By doing that Kuchma received most of his votes from the eastern and southern part of the country while Kravchuk received the votes from the western part of the country. This was the first time that the divide was seen by the Ukrainian voters. During Kuchma presidency Ukraine developed and improved relations with Europe and especially with Central and Eastern European countries. He also was able to stabilize the Ukrainian economy, by introducing a new currency – hryvnia (Pavliuk, 2000). Kuchma`s presidency was also fuelled with big corruptions scandals. In 1999 during the presidential elections a journalist named Gyorgy Gondgadze asked Kuchma questions about the former prime minister is believed to receive millions of dollars of bribes from different schemes of gas trading. A year later, headless body of this journalist were found from the Kiev suburb. Four month later Kuchma`s, bodyguard emerged with an audio recording that showed similar voices of President Kuchma and his interior minister talk about “taking care” of this journalist. After Gondgadze, three other journalists were killed for asking the “wornng” questions (Pirani). The killings have been linked with Kuchma or his associates, it is though that Kuchma knew about the corruption of his officials, and that the Russian state and private companies benefitted from it.

During Kuchma`s second term he focused more on building closer relationship with Russia. In 2001 the energy girds of the two countries were linked to each other. Russian companies started to gain control over compelling amount over Ukrainian gas and oil transit. With the elections of new president in Russia – president Putin. Russia started to have even more forceful foreign policy towards Ukraine (Mossessian). Kuchma`s first and the first part

of the second term was notable for trying to increase the power of the President as an institution. Although on the second part of his second term, Kuchma came out with completely new proposals of transforming Ukraine, where prime minister and his cabinet would have greater power and President as an institution would be weakened (Protsky, 2003). This was supposedly done, because new president was considered to be Viktor Yuschenko, who views were very pro-European and opposite from Kuchma`s or his policies.

3.3 Orange revolution

Orange Revolution was the name that was given to the sequel of events that happen after the announcement of the first results of the 2004 Ukrainian Presidential elections. Like in the presidential elections of 1994, there were two major candidates, one who posed more pro-Russian views - Viktor Yushchenko, and Viktor Yanukovych - who posed more pro-European views. The presidential campaign proved to be a very harsh battle, when Yushchenko got poisoned with dioxin and the results were forged to leave an impression that Yanukovych won. Orange revolution took off when the results of the presidential elections were made public and it reflected that Viktor Yanukovych won. Although the other candidate Yuschenko being the favorite. Yuschenko declared the results of the elections as false and urged people to gather in the Independence Square in Kiev to protest against these results. Massive, yet peaceful protest took place around Ukraine, while the biggest in Kiev held nearly up to one million people. Emphasis of the protest were similar to the upcoming Euromaidan protest with few examples, Yuschenko urged not to take actions against government building or in any way be violent. This prevented the large use of force by the government forces and negative image for the opposition.

Leaving president Kuchma, who was supporter of Yanukovych, met with president Putin, where they discussed the crisis in Ukraine (Yablokova & Saradzhyan, 2004). They came up with a suggestion that Ukraine should held completely new elections – despite Yuschenko only protesting against the presidential run-off results. The fact to hold completely new elections would have meant that Kuchma could be in power for more time, and it could mean that the opposition forces could have lose their support in that time. Ukraine declared the second re-run of the presidential elections run-off which, at the end Yuschenko won 52% percent against 44% percent of Yanukovych. These elections also reflected the divergence of

the Ukrainian people with the eastern and southern part of Ukraine electing Yanukovich and western and central part electing Yushchenko. The fact that President Putin met with Kuchma, raises questions about the righteousness of the whole procedure. The involvement to the Ukrainian elections and suggesting not to hold another round of voting was met with criticism from states like America, Uzbekistan, and others. Yushchenko went as far as to criticize President Kuchma for going to Russia for “help”, Yushchenko said that: "The source of power is located in Ukraine - it's the Ukrainian people" (Yablokova & Saradzhyan, 2004). Russias involvement and support for candidate Yanukovich has been one of the most visible usage of soft power. Russian president showed support for the candidate, which had falsified the results of the elections, therefore Russia openly showed that it would support even dishonest methods to have a president in Ukraine that would be more beneficial to Russia.

3.4 Viktor Yushchenko

When Yuchenko took Presidency of Ukraine, the country had already enjoyed rapid economic growth from the year 2000, the yearly average growth was 7,4 percent. This economic boom lasted until 2008, when the global financial crisis hit Ukraine. Ukraine economic decline was much worse than other countries, the main reason for this would be that Yushchenko inherited an oligarchic country from Kuchma, were there was a big dominance of a narrow group of large firms, which prevented the emergence of small and middle sized companies. A large part of this narrow group was Russian and pro-Russian businessman (OECD, 2011).

Russia had previously been engaged in Ukrainian election in a great scale. President Putin openly supported the candidacy of Yanukovich, and even fuelled money into his campaign, while Russian spin-doctors made sure of Yanukovich victory. Despite the fact that Vladimir Putin had openly supported the candidacy of Viktor Yanukovich, Yushchenko chose Russia as the destination for his first official state visit as president of Ukraine, this was intended as a sign of respect for Russia. Although this gesture did not improve the relations between these two leaders mush. On the contrary, Putin reminded Yushchenko that his predecessor Kuchma had signed several binding energy deals with Russia, upon which Yushchenko replied that he and his cabinet would review a number of energy deals signed by Kuchma. (Wolczuk, 2005). Russia also cancelled the visit of Ukraine Prime Minister Yulia

Tymoschenko who was at that time a very close ally to Yuschenko and a co-leader of the Orange Revolution. She was considered as to be persona non grata from the Russian side (Kuzio T.).

Yuschenko tried to steer Ukraine to Europe by claiming that he would reduce corruption in the country and set European values that could lead the country to European Union. Europe itself welcomed Ukraine aspirations to ultimately become a member state of the European Union, although excluded the chance of Ukraine getting a candidate status without implementing all of the requirement for it. Yuschenko was not able to achieve good relationship with Russia either.

During Yuschenko`s presidency Ukraine faced many oil and price gas increases, which cumulated with the gas cuts in 2006 and 2009. During Kuchma presidency Ukraine enjoyed a large amount of very cheap natural gas from Russia. Ukraine paid about 50 dollars for thousand cubic meters although Western European states at the same time paid 235 dollars for thousand cubic meters, more over despite the relatively low price Ukraine was allowed to generous credits to cover these costs. (Newnham, 2012). These deals ended with Kuchma presidency, the newly elected president Yuschenko was in a very difficult situation. In 2006 Russia cut the gas to Ukraine for three days, Ukraine then was forced to sign an agreement of 95 dollars per thousand cubic meters. Throughout his whole presidency every year gas topic was one of the main topics to discuss, the prices went higher every year, in 2008 Ukraine was forced to agree on a 160 dollar deal per thousand cubic meters. In 2008 when Yuschenko openly backed Georgian president Saakashvili, Russia completely cut the gas to Ukraine and through Ukraine the European countries. (Newnham, 2012) This kind of pressuring made Yuschenko`s term very difficult, from the gas issues, domestic political problems emerged, as well as Yuschenkos own popularity declined. The methods that Russia used could be considered as one of the main methods of Hybrid warfare. The economic means, in this case natural gas and fuel was used to create difficulty amongst Ukrainian people and the Ukrainian authority. Thus Russia succeeded in showing Yuschenko as failure on the position of President. By doing this Russia hoped to affect the Ukrainian politics and people so that they would elect a pro-Russian candidate during the next Presidential elections. This campaign from the Russian side was successful. In 2010 Yuschenko`s popularity had declined to five percent (Britannica, 2016). The most popular candidate was Yanukovych.

3.5 Viktor Yanukovich

During the Presidency of Yushenko, Yanukovich became a frequent guest in Russia, from where he received substantial diplomatic and financial support, in order to build up his campaign for the next presidential elections. Yanukovich's whole presidential campaign was estimated to have cost over 600 million dollars which is equivalent to the sum of U.S presidential candidate campaign, however this number is not official rather it is an estimated sum, because the Ukrainian law prohibits the campaign to cost over 2 million dollars (Global Security, 2004). During his election campaign he promised to Ukrainians that under his presidency Ukraine would improve relations with Russia, this included, extending the lease of the Russian Black Sea fleet in Crimea, and also that Ukraine would have free trade and membership with the EU (Fraser). When Yanukovich became president there was a common understanding that Ukraine would shift from Yushenkos NATO aspirations seek closer ties with Russia (Dubovyk). Although at first Yanukovich conducted a very diplomatic line. He at first visited Brussels and then visited Moscow, also he said that Ukraine future lies in the European Union and under his presidency Ukraine will become a proud member of the European Union (Yanukovich, 2011).

In 2010 president Medvedev and president Yanukovich agreed in Kharkiv to extend the lease of black sea fleet to 2042, for this Ukraine would receive 30 percent discount for the Russian gas. Yanukovich, also during his presidency was the supporter of giving Russian language the official language status in Ukraine, this was viewed very controversial by the pro-European citizens and in the Kiev Rada (Paul). This also played in the hand of Russia, they could now use the base to maintain its influence in Crimea and also effect the Ukraine future aspirations regarding European Union and NATO (Dubovyk). Yanukovich – although a pro-Russian was not the easiest ally for Russia, he was unpredictable. Russian could have expected more cooperation and integration between Russia and Ukraine under Yanukovich, but the Ukrainian president also seek tie with the European Union with which he agreed to sign an Association Agreement.

On the meeting with president Putin in Sochi and Valdai, Yanukovich was influenced to drop the agreement with the European Union and to keep closer ties with Russia. It is thought that Putin persuaded Yanukovich with the fact that the Russian leader had sensitive materials, which showed Yanukovich as the informer for the Russian KGB, reporting of

crime groups in Donetsk (Agnieszka & Sakwa). Yanukovich on the eve before the third Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius in the end of 2013, declared that he will not sign the partnership agreement. This brought out massive protests, that started to demonstrate against Yanukovich and his politics. These protests grew ultimately up to one million people and turned violent. Yanukovich was forced to leave the capital Kiev and the country. Russian president Putin later admitted that he helped Yanukovich to escape from Ukraine into Russia (BBC, 2014).

4. UKRAINE CRISIS

The Crisis in Ukraine started on the final months of 2013, the crisis started out as a small student protest in the Independence Square in the capital of Ukraine – Kiev. The students in the Independence were protesting against the decision of the President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich of not signing the European Association Agreement (EAA)¹. Soon after, the students were joined by tens of thousands of people mostly from Kiev and close neighbouring areas.

The protest what at first demanded the signing of EAA, also started to demand President Yanukovich and his corrupt government would have to resign (Sim, 2014), the fact that people wanted Yanukovich to resign even more grew the popularity of these protest that were starting to happen in every city across Ukraine, especially in Western- and Central Ukraine (Richard, 2013) (Euronews, 2013).

In the heart of these protests, in Kiev, police started to arrest people who were present and who were leading these protest and even more the police tried violently to tear apart the barricades and camps that the protesters had built in the Independence Square. This act from the police fuelled the event so much that even more people started to show their support for the people in Independence Square, and number of protestors had grown at that time to nearly 500.000 people. The people started to stand up against the Kiev police and started to fight back at them, the fighting between the police and these protestors had reached to the point where police had nothing to do against the people. The protesters begun to take control over government buildings that were in Kiev (Walker, Kiev protesters occupy government building amid uneasy truce, 2014).

¹ European Association Agreement:

Agreement between the European Union and third countries with the aim of setting up a framework of being in the EU sphere, conducting bilateral agreements, These agreements normally provide for the progressive liberalisation of trade, as free trade, customs union etc.(EU External Action)

At first the protest in the Kiev Independence Square and in other cities around Ukraine, were very similar to the Orange Revolution. The difference was the protest, that were held during the Orange revolution were headed by Yushchenko and other members of the Orange block, the anti Yanukovych protests that were held in the end of 2013 and in the beginning of 2014 how ever did not seem to have a one united leader who could speak and guide these protests. During the Orange Revolution, Yushchenko managed to address and convince the people that were protesting to not take any radical measures or take action against any government buildings, although they were blockading them. In 2014 the protesters started to take more radical measures by fighting back to the police, building barricades, and ultimately taking over and damaging government buildings.

President Yanukovych, out of fear, escaped from Ukraine on the night of 21-st of February, the escaping from Ukraine took place with the assistance of Russian authorities, and with the help of President Putin personally (BBC, 2014). On the next day, the Ukrainian parliament votes for the removal of Viktor Yanukovych from the post of President of Ukraine, about 73% vote for removal (Higgins & Kramer, 2014). Two days earlier former Prime minister of Ukraine and an opponent of Yanukovych, Julia Tymoshenko were released from penitentiary hospital, where she had been sentenced in 2011. The release of Julia Tymoshenko was also one of the main demands from the people that were protesting against Yanukovych and he`s policies.

One could make a conclusion from it that it was not the will of the Ukrainian people as a whole to force president Yanukovych out of the country, but it was the will of pro-European people living in Kiev and neighbouring areas. On the fact that during 2010 presidential elections the country basically was divided into two sides, one voting for Tymoschenko and the other voting for Yanukovych, one could also make a conclusion that the people who were supporting Yanukovych could felt disappointed and cheated on by these events, because they had elected their candidate for president and the opposition by force took him down. For the people that had supported Yanukovych this could have seen as illegal, and with the help and encouragement from the Russian television and other media providing encouraging coverage and narratives, it was easy to fuel these people to rally their own pro-Russian, anti-Kiev protest. These protest quickly took extreme edge as the protestors did the same that their opposition protesters did in Kiev – they started to took over governmental buildings in

Donetsk, Lugansk, Sevastopol etc. and quickly held so called elections and formed their own government and ultimately declaring themselves “independent” from Ukraine.

4.1 People`s Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk

April the 7th 2014, contrast to the protest that were taking place in the Independence Square (Maidan) in Kiev, people in Donbass area, mostly men, with masks, clubs and different type of body armour started suddenly to take control over local administrative buildings. The people were waving Russian flags and shouting “Referendum”, “Referendum”, they started to force themselves through riot police into the local administrative building which they took over completely, the same system was used in Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv and in other cities. (Akinyemi, 2014). “If the guys on the Maidan could revolt, why can’t we?” was the motto of these pro-Russian people (Kim, 2014). One vital thing that was different between the protest in Eastern Ukraine and in Kiev was that, in Kiev the protest started out as peaceful, but in Eastern Ukraine these movements were only aimed at taking control over the administrative building and declare a new state and government. The people that were attending these so called demonstrations were old people “babushkas”, young aggressive men who were armed with house held items and conspiracy theorists – in other words the losers of the Ukraine`s transition to capitalism (Kim, 2014).

The leader of the Donetsk Peoples Republic, Alexander Zakharchenko has told before the so called elections in Donetsk, that his aim "is to build a new state that will become legitimate after elections and get back the territories in the east (of Ukraine) that are now under control of the Ukrainians" (Miletitch, 2014). He has also said that the aim of the Donetsk Peoples Republic is to capture all of the Ukrainian Donetsk Oblast, he referred to Ukrainians as occupiers of his land and emphasizes that according to the so called referendum, Ukraine forces are in Donetsk Oblast illegally, despite that the voting did not take place on the whole are of Donetsk Oblast (Neef, 2015). He has also said that: “We (Donetsk Republic) are like the United Arab Emirates. Our region is very rich ... the only difference is that they don't have a war and we do" (Weaver, 2014). These narratives that he uses and provides show the Donetsk People`s Republic as an independent state that has a historic or a cultural right to the land they are occupying. These narratives also provide the impression that the Donetsk oblast is very rich, but under the Ukrainian authority it has served

the interest of the capital Kiev, and that the local population has been somehow stolen from the righteous richness of the land.

Since the pro-Russian rebels declared control over the Donbas territory the commercial banks that operated there, were forced to close their offices, and the Ukrainian government stopped the payment of the pensions and subsidies. The pro-Russian rebels demanded that the Kiev government starts to pay pensions to the pensioners, although Kiev said that it physically cannot do it, because the lack of control over the banking system in Donbas. The rebel then announced that they themselves would start to pay pensions to the Donbas citizens. On the end of that same month they even declared that the pension would be increased over the next months (RussiaToday, 2015). The fact that the article was produced by the relatively famous international Russian propaganda media channels, shows how the Russian side is trying to win the sympathy of both the international community and the conflict population. The international community should start to doubt the sustainability of the Ukrainian government and their officials, and the local population should start to feel sympathy for the local pro-Russian government over the kindness of them to take care of the elderly and the non-working pensioners.

One assumption could be made. With the Minsk agreements reached in 2015, one of the points on these agreements was that the Ukrainian government should restore full subsidy programme in the affected areas (BBC, 2015). The assumption would be that the pro-Russian separatists deliberately would prevent Ukraine from achieving this in order to show the incapability of the Ukrainian government, especially in the Donbas region. In addition to that the Russian side could project the Ukrainians as not implementing the Minsk agreement, and demonstrate Ukraine as a failed state as they are incapable of paying pensions to their own people. These pensions and subsidies could then be payed with the support of the Russian Federation. This would show the Donetsk and Luhansk People`s Republic as a successfully operating state, thus would create false impressions to the local, home and international population.

4.2 Referendum

The separatists organized a referendum on the 11th of May 2014 which was two weeks earlier than the 2014 Ukrainian Presidential elections were held. The Referendum was organized while completely neglecting the Constitution of Ukraine.² The Separatist announced that the turnout in the “referendum” was at all time high nearly 75 percent in Donetsk and in Luhansk the turnout was even higher 81 percent (BBC, 2014). The leader of the new Donetsk “republic” Denis Pushilin said after the elections: "All military troops on our territory after the official announcement of referendum results will be considered illegal and declared occupiers,". "It is necessary to form state bodies and military authorities as soon as possible". (Walker, Ukraine: pro-Russian separatist set for victory in eastern region referendum., 2014) After these elections “Donetsk peoples republic” asked Moscow to consider its accession into Russia, “Given the will of the people of the Donetsk People's Republic, and in order to restore historical justice, we ask Russia to consider the issue of our republic’s accession into the Russian Federation,” - Deniss Pushilin (Russia Today, 2014). However, Moscow press service responded “Moscow respects the will of the people in Donetsk and Lugansk and hopes that the practical realization of the outcome of the referendums will be carried out in a civilized manner.” Later President Putin added that the Crimean-style accession of Donetsk and Luhansk people republic will not happen (Russia Today, 2014).

Despite the relative good turnouts that the Donetsk and Luhansk people republic reported, there was allegations of fraud to these elections for example The Security Service of Ukraine released an audio recording that they say was a phone call between a Donetsk separatist leader and the leader of the far-right paramilitary Russian National Unity group Alexander Barkashov. In this recording the separatist leader wants to postpone the referendum

² Ukraine Constitution:

„Article 2. Sovereignty of Ukraine spreads on all its territory. Ukraine is the unitary state. Territory of Ukraine within the limits of existent border is integral and inviolable.“ – Constitution of Ukraine (Constitution of Ukraine 2004)

“Article 72. An allukrainian referendum is appointed by Supreme Soviet of Ukraine or President of Ukraine in accordance with their plenary powers set by this Constitution. An allukrainian referendum is proclaimed on folk initiative on call more no less as three million which have voice citizens of Ukraine, on condition that signatures in relation to setting of referendum are collected more no less as in two third of regions and more no less as on one hundred thousand signatures in every region.” (Constitution of Ukraine 2004)

due the DNR-s lack of control over it region, but the leader of the Paramilitary group suggested to wright 99 or 89 percent in favour of the autonomy (Ukrainian Policy , 2014).

The acting President of Ukraine Oleksandr Turchynov said that only 24 percent residents of Luhansk Oblast and 32 percent of residents from Donetsk Oblast voted on this referendum according to the information from the Interior Ministry and experts (Press, 2014). More over an opinion poll conducted in Donetsk and Luhansk region at the time of the mass protests in Kiev, showed that only 27 percent of people wanted to join Russia and only 5 percent of people wanted to become independent (Luhn, Ukraine crisis strains family ties in divided Donetsk, 2014). There was also a claim by a Swiss newspaper that the people participating in these elections could vote as much as they wanted, therefore the group that organized these elections clearly could not ensure the righteousness of these elections. All these facts and allegations leave an impression that the elections and referendums held in either Donetsk or Donbass had little to do with actual fair elections that will represent the true will of the people living in this area (Webb, 2014).

Quickly organizing a referendum could also suggest to the use of hybrid war. The small states – DNR and LNR by declaring elections, clearly send out a message that they are capable of conduct elections on their territory, thus sending out a message that they control their territory and thus sending out a message that they have enough (military)power to act like a state. The aspect of the quick state building is what Colonel John J. McCuen has emphasised, that presumably the state institutions and essential governmental institutions have been destroyed. So the side who quickly creates the operation of these institutions and essential services would win the sympathy of the local population. By declaring the referendum, the population is given seeming choice to elect new people who would do that, this already creates some sympathy towards the pro-Russian separatists. Although these elections probably did not reflect the will of the people living in eastern Ukraine, the change in the people mindset could have been changed by this, Eastern-Ukrainians could have felt that their opinion is taken into consideration and that they are electing a leader/government that would pursue only the interest of the small state not the as the small part of the Ukrainian state. Moreover the international audience that witnesses these elections through media, could start to question about the Ukrainian capability in these regions and could even start to take the side of the separatists. These explanations also are in line with Lt Col Daniel T. Lasica`s theory of hybrid war, where he suggested that the hybrid war takes mostly place of the

cognitive

and

moral

grounds.

4.3 Donetsk and Luhansk People`s Republics Military Resistance

The leaders of the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk republics deny that they have ever been armed by the Russian forces or that the Russian regular troops have been fighting in Donbass area, nor has the Russian side confirmed that they are arming or supporting the separatist in their military actions. The separatists themselves declare that all of the weapons that they have and are using are the weapons that they have collected as war trophy`s from the Ukrainian military forces or what the volunteers have brought along with them.

Although it is difficult to believe that the separatist fighting in Ukraine have managed to out-power the Ukrainian army so much. That they have managed to take control over several tanks, armored personnel carriers, different kinds of artillery and not to speak about the large amount of small arms, different kinds of rifles and different supply and manpower to keep on fighting against state backed army. One could consider that the Donetsk and Luhansk regions are very heavily controlled by Russian regular and special forces. Also, that the Russian military is providing the separatist with training, knowledge, equipment, and even money.

There was surface-to-air rocket storage in Moscow on the last days of May in 2014, the rocket had been storage there for almost 20 years, only to be taken out for regular test to ensure its readiness for combat. The logbook for this rocket was found in Ukraine, the logbook showed that the surface-to-air rocket was designated to a military base in Rostov – some 50 km from Ukraine. The U.S officials have said that there is also a camp for Ukrainian separatist fighters (Grove & Strobel, Special Report: Where Ukraine's separatists get their weapons, 2014). This is just one example of how a weapon from Russia could turn up in or near Ukraine. There are also thought that the Malaysian plane MH17 was actually shot down by Russian rocket system BUK (Irish Times, 2014), experts say that the BUK fired the rocket from the Separatist area (BBC). One possibility of how the separatist could have got their hands onto a BUK missile system is that in the separatist took over a base near Donetsk where the Ukrainian army had stationed a BUK missile system (Patin, 2015). However, it is highly unlikely that the separatist had the knowledge and capability to operate this system

independently at that time. Which leads to the point, that either it was the Russian BUK missile system that had been used by Russian military men, or if the separatists really did operate it, they had to have had some training from the Russian military first. An independent Russian military analyst said that “It would be stupid to deny that Russia supports the separatists. The main question is only the scale of this support.” And added that “There was a serious escalation in the middle of June, when heavy weapons began to appear among the separatists, including tanks and artillery in such quantities that it would be hard to attribute it to seizures from Ukrainian stockpiles”. (Grove & Strobel, Special Report: Where Ukraine's separatists get their weapons, 2014). Some Ukrainian journalists have made their own research and compared the data of Luhansk and Donetsk military to European states military. The outcome is that the DNR and LNR have more tanks than Germany, France and Czech Republic combined. It is very unlikely that the separatist who supposedly are just “ordinary” men have the capability to use, maintain and fight with this amount of tanks without outer help (Shandra, 2015).

The fierce artillery battles that have been going on between the separatist forces and Ukrainian forces do not leave any doubt that the separatist are being armed and equipped by Russian forces. These battles could have not lasted so long without outer support for the separatists, firstly they would have run out of ammo to use and second supposedly is the separatist forces are consisted of ordinary “miners and plant workers” they do not have enough knowledge to keep fighting against professional military units let alone the knowledge to maintain its own weaponry. The seemingly unending supplies of Grad rockets, tanks, armoured vehicles and artillery leave no doubt that the separatist are not using pilfered Ukrainian stocks but are continually re-stocked by the Russian military (The Interpreter, 2015). One of the reasons why Russia is fighting and/or supporting the battles that take place in Donbass area, is that the it could keep Ukraine as unstable and with an ongoing war. Ukraine would not be able to join European Union or NATO, by not having control over its borders. Also this could send a message to western countries not to try to integrate with countries that Russia considers its.

4.4 Russian Humanitarian Convoys

Without the approval of the Ukrainian government or the Red Cross, The Russian Federation has sent already over 50 convoys with “humanitarian aid” to Ukraine and is about to form its 51-th convoy to be deployed, every one of these convoys consists of nearly 100 truck and supposedly 1000 metric tons of humanitarian aid like such as medical supplies, food, baby food, sleeping bags and other basic necessities. The first humanitarian convoy entered the territory of Ukraine on the 23-th of August 2014, the convoy entered Ukraine from the rebel held border checkpoints, the Ukrainian government did not give any clearance or approval that these trucks may enter the sovereign territory of Ukraine (Luhn, Russia to send humanitarian convoy into Ukraine in spite of warnings, 2014).

The leaders of Ukraine saw this as a clear violation of Ukraine sovereignty, the Ukrainian side condemned it. The first convoy which entered Ukraine consisted of 260 trucks, some of them which were shown of television were half empty, the Russian side said that they were half empty because they were using new trucks and they were not sure of their reliability, although some experts though that these trucks are actually ex-military trucks that were just painted white to look like civilian machinery. Of all the 260 truck the Ukrainian official accompanied by Russian official examined only 34 trucks, the rest of the convoy was unexamined by the Ukrainian official or the Red Cross official (Luhn & Roberts, Ukraine condemns 'direct invasion' as Russian aid convoy crosses border, 2014). The trucks that entered into Ukraine were escorted by the pro-Russian separatist of Donetsk and Luhansk, they guided where these convoys must go. This is a clear violation of the Red Cross principles, that a humanitarian convoy should be neutral, that means that the convoy must help the people that are in the need, not the people that one or the other side feels worthy of helping. The Ukrainian Government was not against the first humanitarian convoy from Russian to the Donbass area, but the Ukrainian government set three core conditions. First of all, the convoy must be accompanied by International Red Cross Committee, secondly it should clearly state its destination and route and what it is carrying and finally the most important point, it should cross the border at a post controlled by the Ukrainian State Border Guard (BBC, 2014).The first convoy did not follow any of these three conditions, they deliberately crossed the border at the point where it is controlled by the pro-Russian separatists nor did they follow the instructions of the Red Cross.

Since then the Russian federation has sent 50 convoys to the occupied area of Ukraine. These “humanitarian convoys” are thought to be vital for the separatist to survive, because with these convoys it is thought to be that the Russian side brings goods what are needed for fighting against Ukrainian forces, like fuel, ammunition, different oil and lubricants, medicine etc. (UNIAN, 2015). The suspicion grows with the evidence that the pro-Russian separatists are dictating where a convoy must head to. These convoys have thought to be the “Trojan Horse” which portrays that is bringing humanitarian goods, but actually is bringing different necessities in order to keep the war going (Luhn, Russia to send humanitarian convoy into Ukraine in spite of warnings, 2014).

These convoys are thought to be used to mask and hide the fact that Russian Armed Forces soldiers are fighting in eastern Ukraine. Officially Russian Government is declaring that there are no Russian Armed Forces member fighting in Eastern Ukraine, although in media it is considered as a public secret that, in fact the Russian soldiers are the one and only reason behind the Donetsk and Luhansk military success (Ostrovsky, 2015). There is one speculation that the Russian soldiers that have been killed in these fighting`s are being transported back to Russia by these so called humanitarian convoys. Be doing that the Russian military can declare the soldier “killed” in an exercise in Russia, otherwise the Russian military would be forced to declare the person “missing” which would raise questions that no Russian official would want to answer (UNIAN, 2015).

On the hybrid war perspective these convoys have a very important aspect. The definition to the theory that was suggested by Colonel John J. McCuen: that hybrid war “...Although conventional in form, the decisive battles in today’s hybrid wars are fought not on conventional battlegrounds, but on asymmetric battlegrounds within the conflict zone population, the home front population, and the international community population. Irregular, asymmetric battles fought within these populations ultimately determine success or failure.”

The humanitarian convoys cloud be the most effective form of hybrid war throughout the whole crisis. These humanitarian convoys, can achieve all three of the aspects that Colonel John J. McCuen emphasised. First by bringing humanitarian aid, Russia would be viewed positively from the local population – thus winning the sympathy of the local population. Russian actions would be also viewed positively by the home population, especially since it is widely televised by the local media. They also achieve the aspect that the international media and population would start to view the humanitarian aid and Russia

differently. If we make an assumption that the ordinary European media consumer has pro-European views. And this media consumer is viewing that the Russian federation is constantly sending Humanitarian Aid with 100 trucks, the viewer might start to doubt on he`s previous views on Russia and might start to think that Russia indeed is having good intentions towards Ukraine crisis. This is the clear form of reflexive control where the Russian side is creating an environment where the viewer is choosing the pro-Russian stance. The same effect could happen with the decision makers in the European member states or in the European institutions or in any world institutions. When Russia is constantly taking humanitarian aid to eastern part of Ukraine, the fact that Russia is operating in a foreign state without permission could eventually cool down, and the decision makers would start to accept this. This then could be the ultimate form of reflexive control through hybrid war that Russian would want to achieve.

CONCLUSION

The described situations and events that have happened before and after the Maidan revolution leave a clear impression that Russia has interest in the Ukrainian region. Also, that Russia is willing use force either hybrid or conventional warfare to achieve its goals. Russia`s fear that Ukraine will choose a deeper integration process with NATO and/or the EU has created a security dilemma between Ukraine and Russia.

The situations and events that have been described in this paper show how Russia is trying to influence the results of Ukraine domestic politics. Also how Russian information warfare is directed in diminishing Ukraine credibility. By analysing these situations one can make a conclusion that these acts from the Russian Federation align exactly with the definition of hybrid war purposed by all of the mentioned authors.

The research question of this paper was: Why Russia uses hybrid warfare against Ukraine in transcending security dilemmas between two countries? The answer to this could be concluded as follows: Russian use of hybrid war towards Ukraine has expressed mostly in counter measures to signal Ukraine, that Russia is not satisfied with Ukraine`s pro-European views. The measures that were used before the Maidan revolution were mostly media-propaganda in Russian media, but also a significant amount of economic and political pressure. After the Maidan revolution, Russia`s hybrid war campaign has taken a whole new level. Russia has annexed a part of sovereign Ukraine – the Crimean peninsula. Also, armed and backed separatist movements in eastern part of Ukraine, this has pulled Ukraine into war with its own citizens.

The annexing Crimea and supporting the separatism movement in eastern Ukraine, also other means of hybrid warfare were the measures to counter Ukraine`s new governments possible integration with the European Union and NATO. The integration between Ukraine and these two organizations could have undermined Russian influence over Ukraine and the Black Sea region. Russia viewed the Ukrainian, European Union and NATO integration

aspirations as a threat to its own economic and military security – thus created a security dilemma between Ukraine and Russia. Russia decided to act in a way which would keep Ukraine as unstable and not eligible to join these two organizations.

Russia most eminent use of hybrid war is the usage of information warfare. Russia`s own state backed television stations produce news that show Ukraine as a failed state and which create instability amongst Ukrainians, ethnic Russians in Ukraine and also in the international sphere.

The crisis has resulted in more than 9000 people killed, amongst nearly 4000 civilians, and with almost 1.5 million people internally displaced (The Guardian Associated Press, 2015). The influence of Russian Federation remains strong to these regions, and especially to the separatist that are in charge of the republics. Although Russia has officially denied of having any direct influence in this region (despite humanitarian aid), the indirect influence is slowly starting to tie the region more and more into Russian sphere of influence, with the measures of Russia paying pensions and subsidises to the people in the Donetsk and Luhansk “republics”.

This also creates an effect that could be useful to the Russian Federation. While Ukraine still considers the occupied areas of Donetsk, Luhansk and the Crimea as Ukrainian, the Ukrainian country faces a situation where it could not be eligible to NATO nor the EU. By this Russia has achieved a goal to keep Ukraine unstable. Although, this influence could backfire in time. While Russia is considered as an enemy for the Kiev government, Ukraine is still looking for more close economic ties with the European Union. Therefore, with the integration process with European Union and the economic feuds with Russian Federation, Russian influence economically and therefore politically could slowly diminish the area of Ukraine as a whole.

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