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The Vector of Political Relations between Russia, Ukraine and European Union: What Reasons Led to The Crimean Issue?

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Abstract

The current Ukrainian crisis and the “Crimean issue” are both the result of domestic political struggle and regional alienation, and the product of external forces competing for their geopolitical advantages. There are complex historical roots as well as tough practical interests. Internal and external factors interact and cause conflict. The harm of the political crisis in Ukraine and the impact of this crisis on the international community is more than the effect of the “Orange Revolution” that occurred more than ten years ago. This crisis not only worsened the Ukrainian economy, but also undermined the country's international reputation. The dispute about the ownership of the Crimea further aggravated the crisis. In order to stabilize the situation in Ukraine, all parties must remain calm and restrained and seek a political solution through dialogue and negotiations within the framework of the rule of law.

The goal of the study is to determine the vector of relations between Russia, Ukraine and Europe during the crisis and to present a probable explanation of decision making process within Russia's actions, which led to the accession of the Crimea. The principal results that achieved in this paper is that the accession of Crimea to Russian Federation, in fact is the reaction to the European integration processes that out of its sphere of influence. Therefore, it was imposed sanctions on Russia by G7 and other states, so it should be engaged some other steps further to settle this dispute and find solutions to restore relations between European countries and Russia.

Keywords: Ukrainian crisis, geopolitics, “Orange Revolution”, Crimea

1. Introduction

On November 21, 2013, the Ukrainian government announced the suspension of the signing of the country's association agreement with the EU and the preparation of a «Free trade Agreement» which caused strong protest from the people. This decision angered many Ukrainians who wanted to live better after joining the European Union. The protesters not only camped on Independence Square in Kiev, but also besieged and attacked the presidential palace, government and parliament palace, demanding the resignation of the government and the holding of premature presidential and parliamentary elections. The government entered into a dialogue with the opposition and tried to restore order. In clashes between police and protesters, more than 90 people were killed and hundreds were injured. Under pressure at home and abroad, President Yanukovych on February 21, 2014 signed a peace agreement with the opposition. However, on January 22, Yanukovych was expelled from the parliament. And on January 26, Yanukovych was

wanted. On January 28, Yanukovich held a press conference in Rostov that he was still the legitimate president of Ukraine and that the resolution passed by the parliament about his resignation was illegal. On the same day, the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine officially launched the procedure for extradition of Yanukovich. After Yanukovich resigned, with the intervention of Russia and the United States, three dramatic changes occurred in the political crisis in Ukraine: 1) The "central scene" of the crisis was moved from Independence Square to the Crimea. 2) The crisis has transformed from confrontation between protesters and Yanukovich to confrontation between Russian President Putin and Western countries. 3) The crisis has led to the "Crimean issue" and possible military conflicts.

2. Research question and methodology

March 18, 2014 is the official accession of the Crimean Peninsula to the Russian Federation. This accession is based on the results of the Crimean referendum. As a result of the referendum, two new subjects were formed - the Republic of Crimea and the city of federal subject significance - Sevastopol. This was preceded by the political crisis that began in November 2013 in Ukraine.

Nowadays the problem of belonging to the Crimea peninsula is one of the stumbling blocks in relations between Russia and Ukraine. The annexation of the Crimea led to the imposition of sanctions on Russia by the United States, Japan, Canada, the G7 countries, NATO member states and European Union. And therefore the settlement of the "Crimean issue" is extremely relevant for further relations of Russia with these states, and shaping the future vector of international relations. And this settlement is difficult to implement without an understanding of the status of relations between Ukraine, Russia and Europe.

The subject of the research is the Crimean issue in modern relations.

The research methodology is based on the principles of objectivity and historicism, as well as research methods: historical-comparative method (the Crimea in Ukraine and the Russian Federation); historical-genetic method (analysis of the evolution of the status of the Crimea and the reasons for its change); system method (analysis of the status of Sevastopol and the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation).

The author has used the works of a wide range of scientists on issues both directly related to the topic of the article, and on more general issues. In the course of work on the article the author used the works of such scientists as: S. Yu. Glazyev ^[1]; V. G. Pavlov ^[2]; A. A. Grigoryan ^[3]; N. K. Galitsky ^[4]; G. Z. Mettan ^[5]; K. O. Volgin ^[6]; K. P. Kurylev ^[7]; N.Y. Azarov ^[8]; A. R. Manchuk ^[9]; V.D. Malinkovich ^[10]; Yu. N. Shevtsov ^[11]; A. V. Kochetkov ^[12]; A. R. Manchuk ^[13]; S. D. Sidorenko ^[14] ect. The article also analyzes a wide range of international documents of a universal and regional nature, such as international treaties, UN resolutions, documents of international conferences, reports and other documents adopted under the Minsk Agreements.

3. Relations between Ukraine and the European Union: variables of bilateral relations

After independence on August 24, 1991, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, P. Dankert officially recognized Ukraine's independence on behalf of the European Union. In 1992, the European Union adopted a plan to assist Ukraine. In October 1993, the representation of the European Union in Kiev began work.

EU eastward expansion is an important part of its global strategy. On July 1, 2013, Croatia joined the European Union and became the 28th member of the EU family, thanks

to which the EU partially achieved its geopolitical goal. On November 28, the 3rd EU-Eastern Partnership Summit took place in Vilnius. One of the main events of the summit was the signing of the Agreement between the European Union, Georgia and Moldova. On the eve of this meeting, Ukraine announced that it did not intend to sign the relevant agreements with the EU. At that time, the position of Ukraine was due to the containment of Russia. Therefore, on September 12, 2013, the European Parliament adopted a resolution demanding a ban on Russia to exert pressure on the countries of the Eastern Partnership. European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and European Council President Van Rompuy also indicated in a joint statement released on November 25 that the "EU expressed strong dissatisfaction with Russia's "position" and "behavior" regarding EU-Ukraine relations". [1]

The EU's strategy for Ukraine's accession to the union consists of the following aspects:

1) The geopolitical conditions of Ukraine are extremely special. Ukraine is located in Eastern Europe, bordered with Belarus in the North, with Russia in the Northeast, with Poland, Slovakia and Hungary in the West, as well as with Romania and Moldova in the South. Due to the territorial factor, population size and geographic location, Ukraine has the advantage and potential to become a "geostrategic axis". After the beginning of the EU expansion to the east, the distance between Ukraine and the EU is getting closer. After the EU launched the Eastern Partnership program in 2009, Ukraine's position in the EU's eastward expansion strategy has further increased. As the former president of Ukraine Kuchma said: - "Ukraine is located in the geopolitical center of Europe and has the weight of a large European country" [2]; "Ukraine not only has an important geopolitical significance for the security, stability and development of the Commonwealth of Independent States, but also plays an important role in the security, stability and development of Europe".[2] Former US Secretary of Defense Perry also stressed that "Ukraine's independence cannot be overestimated because of the importance of security and stability throughout Europe".[2]

2) The advantages of Ukraine in the economic sphere cannot be ignored. Ukraine has advanced military technology, rich agricultural resources, large market size and high-quality workforce left over from the former Soviet Union. In addition, Ukraine is an "energy corridor" connecting Russia and European countries. Half of Russian gas exports to European countries must be transported through Ukrainian pipelines.

3) In the military sphere, the strategic importance of Ukraine is also obvious. If Ukraine joins NATO, the border of European security will be moved to the eastern border of Ukraine. NATO weapons will actually be located on the threshold of Russia.

After the approval of Ukraine's accession to the EU, Ukraine also expressed a desire to join the European Union. Ukraine hopes to join the EU to achieve the following goals:

- 1) Access to EU financial assistance and a huge market share.
- 2) Using EU power to balance Russia's position.

There is no doubt that young people in Ukraine prefer Ukraine to join the EU as soon as possible. This is due to the fact that the EU has a high level of economic development, people's life is better, and the democratic system is more mature. The youth of Ukraine hopes that in the future their children will find it easier to study in European schools and it will be easier for them to work in the rich member states of the European Union.

The evolution of the EU policy in Ukraine represents the characteristics of both "one-sided" and "bilateral" policies. However, it should be noted that the consistent motives and goals of the Ukrainian government for joining the EU largely coincide. For example, the first president of Ukraine, L. Kravchuk, focused on Europe, the goal of a diplomatic strategy is to integrate into Europe and become a member of a European family with equal rights. Ex-president L. Kuchma maintained a balance between the EU and Russia. This

meant strengthening relations with Russia while integrating into Europe. Under the Kuchma administration, Ukraine and the EU created regular exchange mechanisms in various fields and at different levels, the most important of which was the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which entered into force in 1998. Its purpose is to promote comprehensive cooperation in the political, economic, social and cultural fields. The parties even began negotiations on key issues such as the status of the Ukrainian market economy, simplified visa procedures and market access.

The storm in the 2004 presidential election turned into the "Orange Revolution". Behind this were the forces of the "big" powers. The EU plays a very important role in this event. The European Union actively intervened in elections in Ukraine through international organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. It is precisely because the EU and the United States have questioned the legitimacy of the second round of elections in Ukraine and supported V. Yushchenko. Yanukovich's presidential throne was taken away by Yushchenko. President Yushchenko sought to get close to the EU. He stressed that "the direction of Ukrainian foreign policy should be to integrate into Europe and join NATO".^[3] Thanks to the efforts of the Yushchenko government, the EU officially recognized the status of Ukraine's market economy in 2005, and since then bilateral economic and trade relations have developed more rapidly. It was during the reign of Yushchenko that Ukraine and the European Union initiated the negotiation process on the association of Ukraine and the EU.

Compared to Yushchenko, a representative of more-less pro-Russian politics, Yanukovich, who assumed office in 2010, paid more attention to the development of relations with Russia. In order to restore relations with Russia, which were destroyed during the Yushchenko era, in July 2010, the Yanukovich government adopted a law on the principles of domestic and foreign policy, which excluded the possibility of Ukraine joining NATO through legislative procedures. Yanukovich pursues a balanced diplomatic policy between the East and the West, at the same time he did not abandon the main goal of joining the EU. He repeatedly stressed that "integration with Europe is a constant and priority task of Ukraine's foreign policy".^[3] On March 30, 2012, Ukraine and the main participants of the European Union signed a cooperation agreement. On July 18, 2012, both parties also signed an agreement of free trade zone. At a summit on February 25, 2013, President Yanukovich told EU leaders that "Ukraine will try to fulfill EU requirements and will seek to sign an integration agreement".^[3] However, on the eve of the summit, Ukraine unexpectedly changed its decision. The internal political factors of Ukraine will undoubtedly have a certain impact on its relations with the EU. For example, J. Tymoshenko is a landmark figure of the "Orange Revolution" in Ukraine, and is considered to be the representative of the West in Ukraine.

On August 5, 2011, Tymoshenko was arrested for allegedly signing a contract for the sale of Ukrainian and Russian gas in 2009. On October 11, the Kiev-Pechersk district court sentenced Tymoshenko to 7 years in prison. The EU felt that this was a "tool for Yanukovich's suppression of political opponents"^[4]. This is a political retribution and regress of the Ukrainian democratic process. The case of Tymoshenko led the relationship between Ukraine and the EU to a crisis. The EU is extremely concerned about Tymoshenko's experience and even about whether she can be released from prison as a prerequisite for signing an agreement with Ukraine.

It should be noted that, although Ukraine hopes to accelerate the pace of European integration, the EU is also trying to fight for European integration because of fears that Ukraine will return to Russia's control zone. However, due to the heavy burden of the Ukrainian economy and the fact that it is far from EU standards, in terms of the legal system and human rights, the progress of cooperation between two countries is small. For the EU, it is impossible to lower the threshold to accept Ukraine.

4. The origins of the "deep" relations of Ukraine and Russia

Ukrainian-Russian relations are closely related and have a long history. Both nations belong to the East Slavic nation and inherit the historical past and cultural traditions of ancient Kievan Rus. However, the invasion of the Mongolian military in the 13th century put two nations on different paths of development. In 1654, Russia and Ukraine signed agreement, implementing the reunification of two peoples. Russia has achieved its goal and strengthened ties with Europe in the economic and cultural fields. At the same time, economic ties between Ukraine and Russia are becoming stronger, and cultural integration is deepening.

The February and October revolutions in Russia in 1917 had a huge impact on the future of Ukraine. On December 30, 1922, Ukraine, Russia, the South Caucasus and Belarus formed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The status of Ukraine as a republic of the Soviet Union was maintained until August 24, 1991, when Ukraine became independent.

After independence, Ukraine became an important new direction in the Eurasian strategic "chess game" with the role of a geopolitical key state. Ukraine is not only an important part of the traditional geopolitical space of Russia, but also a strategic support for Russia in disputes with Western countries.

The eastern and western parts of Ukraine have long been divided. Influenced by historical factors, cultural factors and geographical factors, the Eastern regions is strongly influenced by Russia because of its proximity to Russia, and relations with Russia are very strong. The Western regions is close to the European Union, and it is easier to approach in all respects. For a long time, especially after the "Orange Revolution", such a regional barrier not only did not close, but expanded.

Undoubtedly, since independence, subsequent Ukrainian governments have taken a series of measures to eliminate the imbalance between regional development and reduce ethnic differences, but the results have been minimal. Such disharmony created serious restrictions for the political stability of Ukraine and had a profound influence on the choice of foreign policy. For example, residents of the eastern and western regions are differently related to the entry of Ukraine into the EU and the Customs Union. According to some public opinion polls, residents of the Eastern regions attach great importance to traditional close relations with Russia and hope to join the tripartite Customs Union headed by Russia. Residents of Western regions agree that Ukraine will join the EU. Thousands of Ukrainians on Independence Square were ready to endure the cold and all the excesses, because they did not want Ukraine to be in the sphere of Russian influence.

After independence, Ukraine and Russia have repeatedly come across issues such as the possession of the Crimea, the demarcation of the Kerch Strait, the possession of the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol. In connection with the expansion of NATO to the East, Russian-American relations in recent years have added a new problem for geopolitical safety. Russia cannot impede the expansion of the EU and NATO to the East, so measures can only be taken to minimize the process or minimize the side effects of various adverse factors. Under the efforts of Russia, Yanukovich soon declared that "Ukraine would no longer join NATO".^[5] This greatly improved relations between Ukraine and Russia.

Of course, the relationship between Ukraine and Russia is not an equal partnership. Especially in the economic sphere, Ukraine is highly dependent on Russia. In some areas, the Ukrainian economy is fully subordinate to Russia. Ukraine imports Russian gas. Ukraine's coal resources are rich, but production cannot meet domestic energy demand, and Russian gas must be imported in large quantities. Both sides often have disputes over gas prices. Most Ukrainian products are sold to Russia. Thus, Russia can easily control

the amount of Ukrainian products imported to Russia. Ukraine's domestic capacity is weak, which requires a large number of Russian loans and investments.

In addition to the "influence" in the areas of energy, market and capital, Russia also tried to draw Ukraine into the Eurasian Union, which is Russia's priority. On October 4, 2011, Prime Minister Putin wrote that "Russia hopes to create a Eurasian Union from the former Soviet Union". [6] In this article Putin criticized Ukraine, which is least willing to participate in the Eurasian Union. He said that some of Russia's neighbors do not want to join the Eurasian Union, and the plan to create alliances in the post-Soviet space seems to contradict the readiness of these countries to join the EU.

The "prelude" of the Eurasian Union is a Customs Union created by Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan on January 1, 2010. Ukraine's interest in this organization of economic cooperation is also very small, although Russia claims that if Ukraine joins the Customs Union, Russia can lower the price of gas exported to Ukraine.

Undoubtedly, without the support of Ukraine, the effect and role of the tripartite Customs Union created will not be significant. The Eurasian Union created on this basis will also be incomplete. This is one of the reasons why Russia does not agree with the policy of Ukraine. If Ukraine does not participate in the Customs Union and the Eurasian Union, this will be a serious challenge to the interests of Russia.

This shows that relations between Russia and Ukraine are special relations. On the one hand, due to the influence of historical grievances, real interests and contradictions, Ukraine is very wary of Russia, which hopes to "revive" the Russian empire. On the other hand, Ukraine is inseparable from Russia, a strong neighbor, which has a restrictive influence on it in both the economic and political spheres. These relations have made the two countries "very distant neighbors", sometimes capable of helping each other, but more often harming each other.

5. Crimea: crisis and difficulties of internal and external order

The Crimean Peninsula with its pleasant climate, beautiful landscapes and convenient transportation is the most prestigious tourist and health resort in Ukraine.

On February 4, 1945, the leaders of the three countries of the Soviet Union, United States and United Kingdom held the famous Yalta Conference in Yalta, a coastal city known as the "Pearl of Crimea". The agreement of the post-war world order reached by the three main countries at the meeting had a tremendous impact on the post-war world. Today, Crimea is another "main battlefield" of the Ukrainian crisis.

On February 27, 2014, a group of unidentified armed people suddenly occupied the building of the Parliament of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. On the same day, the Crimean parliament held a special meeting and S. Aksenov was elected the new head of the Crimea. In addition, the Parliament also decided that a referendum on the issue of expanding the powers of an autonomous republic will be held on May 25.

The situation was aggravated by the fact that on February 28 the Russian Black Sea Fleet was mobilized on the Crimean Peninsula to ensure security. On March 1, the Federation Council of Russia held an extraordinary meeting to resolve the issue of the use of armed forces on the territory of Ukraine.

But a spokesman for President Putin said that "although president has the right to send troops to Ukraine, he has not yet made a decision". [6] On the same day, Aksenov announced that due to the deterioration of the situation in Crimea, the referendum scheduled for May 25 would be postponed to March 30. On March 6, the Crimean parliament decided to merge Crimea with Russia and postponed the date of the referendum to March 16.

On March 15, 2014, the UN Security Council voted on a draft resolution on Ukrainian issues prepared by the United States. The draft resolution was not adopted due to the

Russian veto. V. Churkin, the Permanent Representative of Russia to the UN, stated before the vote that "Russia respects the will of the inhabitants of Crimea".^[7]

Crimea is the only autonomous republic in Ukraine, located in the Southern part of Ukraine, to the East of the Azov Sea and the Southern Black Sea Region. Crimea is a multi-ethnic region dominated by Russians: Russians account for about 60% of the total population, and Ukrainians for about 24%. 97% of Crimean residents use Russian. About 77% of Crimean residents consider Russian their mother tongue, about 11% of residents consider Crimean slang as their mother tongue, 10% of residents consider Ukrainian their mother tongue.^[8] Most Ukrainians and Russians are Orthodox, and the Crimean Tatars are followers of Islam. The remaining minority religions are Judaism, Catholicism, and Catholics.

Historically, the Crimea was inhabited by different nations. Since the mid-18th century, Crimea was inextricably linked with Russia. In 1954, on the day of the 300th anniversary of the reunification of Ukraine and Russia, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR ordered the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine. The issue of ownership of the Crimea is one of the most sensitive issues in the Ukrainian-Russian relations. After the independence of Ukraine, the inhabitants of the Crimea always had the political power to return the Crimea to Russia.

Ukraine is certainly not ready to abandon the Crimea. If Crimea is lost, Ukraine's geopolitical status will be significantly reduced. The Constitution of Ukraine, promulgated in June 1996, clearly states that "the territory of Ukraine within the existing borders is complete and inviolable".^[8] Protection of national sovereignty and national security, as well as ensuring the integrity of territorial integrity and borders are the main issues of Ukraine's foreign policy after independence.

It is difficult for Russia to abandon the Crimea, because it has a very important military significance. Crimea has always been a battleground for the military, and the Russian Black Sea Fleet is deployed in the coastal city of Sevastopol in the Crimea. On May 28, 1997, the prime ministers of Russia and Ukraine signed the Agreement on the delimitation of competencies of the Black Sea Fleet and Agreement on the status and conditions of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation deployed in Ukraine. A consensus was reached on the Russian lease of the port of Sevastopol for the Black Sea Fleet. According to the aforementioned agreements, Sevastopol was rented for 20 years. On April 21, 2010, the presidents of Ukraine and Russia in Kharkov reached a consensus on issues such as the length of stay of the Black Sea Fleet in Ukraine and gas prices. Ukraine agreed to extend the lease of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol for 25 years starting from 2017. The price of gas exported from Russia to Ukraine is reduced by 30%. This agreement significantly improved the Ukrainian-Russian relations.

It should be noted that, until Yanukovich resigned, US participation in the Ukrainian crisis was secretive, but when the situation in the Crimea escalated, the shadow of the United States became increasingly noticeable, and the degree of "anti-russism" continued to grow.

On February 28, President Obama reversed his planned route and met with the media at the White House, saying that "the United States is deeply concerned about the military movements of Russia in Ukraine".^[9] Obama said that "the stability and unity of Ukraine is in the interests of the international community and the interests of Russia".^[9] He said that "the destruction of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine will aggravate unrest, not only harm the interests of Russia, but also violate Russia's commitment to respect the sovereignty and independence of Ukraine; Russia will pay a higher price for any military actions in Ukraine".^[9] On the same day, the White House press secretary also stated that "any intervention by Russia will lead to a big mistake".^[9]

US Secretary of State Kerry issued a warning to Russia. On March 2, he told the media that "Russian President Vladimir Putin invaded another country with a completely

fabricated excuse; In addition to the boycott of the G8 summit held in Sochi in June 2014, the United States will also take measures such as a ban on entry visas, freezing of assets and economic and trade sanctions against Russia".^[9]

March 4, Kerry made a visit to Ukraine. He praised the Ukrainian people for striving for freedom through peaceful demonstrations and criticized Yanukovich and condemned Russia for supporting the former Ukrainian government. He also said that "if Russia refuses to resolve the issue of resolving the crisis by diplomatic efforts, the United States and its allies will have no choice but to isolate Russia politically and economically".^[9]

Before the worsening situation in Crimea, on March 1, three former presidents of Ukraine (Kravchuk, Kuchma and Yushchenko) made a joint statement. They called on the authorities to cancel the agreement signed by V. Yanukovich and D. Medvedev in 2010 to expand the presence of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Crimea. They noted that "for the first time, the Ukrainian people faced a crisis that threatened national unity, sovereignty and survival, and faced a catastrophic threat that could destroy the country; Ukraine is currently on the verge of escalating the conflict, and all signs indicate that the country may be subject to military aggression".^[9] Three former Ukrainian presidents stressed that "Crimea is the territory of Ukraine and no one has the right to use this topic for political speculations or even to violate the integrity of Ukrainian territory"^[9]

On February 26, 2014, Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sidorsky after a meeting with Czech Foreign Minister Lubomir Zalek declared that "currently the main task is to preserve the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine".^[10] The separatism that arose in Ukraine is a very serious mistake. Russia signed the Budapest Memorandum guaranteeing the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The international community reminds and will remind Russian partners of this.

6. The entry of the Crimea into the Russian Federation

The annexation of the Crimea to Russia in 2014 can be called the withdrawal of the autonomous republic of Crimea from Ukraine, followed by its adoption into the Russian Federation and the formation of a new subject of the Russian Federation. The reason for the inclusion of the Crimea in the Russian Federation was a referendum of residents of the autonomy, almost 97%^[11] voted for joining Russia. This was the first case of the formation of a new subject of the Russian Federation in the modern history of Russia.

The first three months of 2014 can be called a series of political crises in Ukraine. First, a series of popular indignations shook the Kiev authorities, then, peaceful demonstrations turned into a constitutional coup and a revolution, and later unrest began in the regions of the country. The completion of the first stage of the Ukrainian conflict was the annexation of Crimea to the territory of the Russian Federation. This fact caused a whole squall of political and near-political debates.

For 23 years, Kiev has not built a clear policy on autonomy. For 23 years, Kiev subjected Crimea to forced "Ukrainization" and no matter how much they talked about the "annexation of the Crimea" it all began with an appeal from the Crimean parliament, which asked Russia to protect the peninsula from the new Kiev "gangster authorities". Russia provided this protection, despite the expected complications in the international arena. The following backgrounds for this event can be highlighted:

1) Ethnopolitical background. The fact that Crimea chose to join another country immediately after the declaration of independence really has no precedent in the latest world political practice. When the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic merged, one state swallowed up another, but it was a takeover of an established state, and not a transition from one jurisdiction to another. Although in the world politics of the XIX century the precedent was already happening. The United States carried out significant campaigning in Texas, when it still belonged to Mexico and after the

referendum joined the state to itself. The right of peoples to self-determination, including separation, leads to ethnic or regional separatism, but in some cases the right of peoples leads to the reassignment of territories from one state to another.

2) Ideological background. If the collapse of the Soviet bloc created the illusion that “Western style” liberal democracy would eventually conquer the whole world, then the actions of the American military in Afghanistan and Iraq undermined such confidence ^[12]. Of course, democracy as an institution does not exclude the possibility of warfare, but the defeat in the information war has become a painful event for the United States and other Western countries. If at the beginning of the 90s, many residents of the post-Soviet space were convinced of the superiority of “Western values” and “Western democracy”, then, after joining the European Union and a sharp drop of living standards, the focus on traditional values became relevant not only in the post-Soviet space. Nowadays, the Ukrainian national identity with the desire to join NATO and build democracy on the “Western model” is perceived not only pro-Russian, but also neutral-minded citizens of Ukraine as dangerous and destroying the country. In this context, it is clear why Crimea chose accession to Russia. This showed the whole world that democracy is still the most common political regime, but its historical time is running out.

3) Theoretical background. If a state was created artificially or federalized as a result of historical development, the ruling elites of such a state should develop a common model of values. But the Ukrainian ruling elites have done nothing to create the unity of the people and the country ^[13]. Each president of Ukraine spoke not as a national leader, but as a pro-Eastern or pro-Western politician ^[14]. For a quarter of a century, and especially of the last decade, the East and West of Ukraine were engaged in weaving a political blanket. There was no common national leader, and there could not be. The national leader is needed to unite the nation into a “single organism”. In the absence of a leader, the national state expects a series of instability or even a political collapse.

4) Geopolitical background. If a country owns an island or a peninsula connected to the mainland by a narrow isthmus, the leadership of that country should strengthen this most vulnerable linking zone. And not only by military means, but also by infrastructure. For 23 years, the central government in Kiev has done nothing to develop the infrastructure of the Crimea. In fact, the Crimea as a geopolitical unit has always been the most vulnerable point of the Ukrainian statehood. Despite the natural separation of the Crimea, one geopolitical challenge for the Ukrainian government has become less. The territory of mainland Ukraine is more compact and easier to control. In the case of stabilization of power, Kiev has every chance to save most of its territories. In the event of a conflict with Russia, Ukraine is surrounded on three sides and cut off from the sea.

After the appointment of the “new” Kiev authorities, the first in the Crimea flatly refused to submit to the new leadership of Ukraine - Sevastopol. A massive rally was held on Nakhimov Square, which was attended by about 30,000 people ^[15]. Sevastopol has not remembered such a large number of people at the rally since the 90s. Sevastopol was removed from power by the mayor of the city, Vladimir Yatsuba, and chose a mayor from Russia, a local entrepreneur, Alexei Mikhailovich Chaly. The ex-mayor recognized his authority, explaining that “the authority that appointed me is no more”. ^[16] It was decided not to execute the orders of Kiev, not to recognize the new government and not to pay Kiev taxes. Following Sevastopol, the authorities of Crimea refused to submit to the new leadership of Ukraine. The new Prime Minister of Crimea, Sergey Aksenov, turned to Vladimir Putin with a request for help in securing peace. Soon after, the Federation Council of the Russian Federation allowed the use of Russian troops on the territory of Ukraine. Against this background, the new authorities of Ukraine accused Russia of provoking a military conflict and an attempt to annex Crimea. Armed people in military uniforms without identification marks, along with the self-defense detachments of the Crimea, captured one military unit after another, without firing a single shot or spilling a

single drop of blood. In the end, all significant objects of the Crimean infrastructure were controlled by self-defense units. Ukrainian Rear Admiral Denis Berezovsky was removed from the command of the Ukrainian Navy and on the same day took the oath of allegiance to the people of Crimea. Before the Ukrainian military was a choice: either to take the oath of the Crimean people, or they were given the opportunity to freely go to Ukraine, but they were abandoned. None of the leaders of the Ukrainian General Staff even tried to contact the commanders of military units on the peninsula. Of the 19 thousand who served, only 4 agreed to remain in the Ukrainian army. ^[17]

The Crimean referendum did not receive recognition in the European Union and the United States, as well as its results. The referendum is the starting point, not the end of the struggle for the Crimea. Now the irreversibility of this decision must be protected at the international level, made final and not subject to revision. It will be very difficult to do, because Moscow is practically alone. In the international arena to its actions at best a neutral position. The whole “Western world” is against. In the forefront, of course, the United States and Eastern Europe, led by the Baltic countries. For Ukraine, the bitter and difficult truth is that its two millionth regions simply did not want to live with Ukraine anymore. Any reasoning that the leadership of the Crimea had no right to appoint a referendum is a reasoning from impotent jealousy. Kiev considered that Ukraine is unpromising and not capable of becoming different. For the years of independence, the country has become increasingly degraded, losing the potential of a great power at the time of secession from the USSR.

It is completely obvious that we are witnessing only the first act of the Ukrainian tragedy. A failed state, a national currency on the verge of default, a divided people, where one part of it hates another, different traditions and different interpretations of historical events, the absence of even a common language. The desire to forcibly implant the norms of language and culture has never ended well for those who acted with these methods. The fact that Crimea seceded from Ukraine and became part of the Russian Federation is an important legal and political precedent, but it is only the beginning in the new redistribution of the post-bipolar world.

7. Results

International views on the nature of the Ukrainian crisis and its various names such as “Ukrainian Revolution”, “Ukrainian Spring”, and the Ukrainian version of the “Arab Spring” are different.

The expression “Arab Spring” is also anti-government, which is similar to the Ukrainian crisis. But the content of the two definitions is not the same. In the “Arab Spring”, the interests of the people are democratization, anti-authoritarianism and anti-corruption. In the Ukrainian crisis, protesters opposed the suspension of the government signing an agreement with the EU. In other words, democratization, the fight against corruption and anti-authoritarianism are not the main goal of Ukrainian protesters. This is the biggest difference between the “Arab Spring” and the Ukrainian crisis. Of course, if the “Arab Spring” is viewed as an anti-government action, in a general sense, and political instability caused by provocation, the current Ukrainian crisis can be called the Ukrainian version of the “Arab Spring”.

It should be noted that the Ukrainian crisis is not just a dispute, but a confrontation between protesters and President V. Yanukovich. As the situation developed, “new Nazi” members and extremists significantly crossed the borders of peaceful demonstrations.

The removal of Yanukovich from the presidency by the parliament has also caused controversy both inside and outside Ukraine. On February 23, 2014, the head of the

Ukrainian Progressive Socialist Party, Natalya Vitrenko, made a statement. She said: "On February 22, under the gun of soldiers and terrorists on Independence Square, the parliament launched a new Nazi coup. Washington and Brussels told the world that the demonstrations on Independence Square are a peaceful act, the goal of which is to choose Europe and protect democracy and European values. However, Washington and Brussels must recognize that this is not the case. The following evidence is irrefutable: illegal changes in the state system, illegal appointments of officials, such as the Minister of the Interior, the illegal removal of President Yanukovich, and the illegal pardon of criminals. Washington and Brussels should be responsible for the Ukrainian Nazi regime, which they support". [18]

Russia also did not recognize the provisional Ukrainian government, which was created after Yanukovich's dismissal. For example, at a press conference on March 4, 2014, President Putin said that "an unconstitutional coup is taking place in Ukraine, so the current regime in Ukraine has no right to determine the future of Ukraine on behalf of the people". [19]

In any case, the current Ukrainian political crisis is more harmful, and its international influence is greater than the influence of the "Orange Revolution" that erupted in this country ten years ago. This crisis not only worsened the Ukrainian economy, but also undermined the country's international reputation.

The Ukrainian crisis is not only the result of domestic political struggle and regional alienation, but also a product of external forces competing for its geopolitical advantages; it has both complex historical roots and tough practical interests.

The dispute over the ownership of the Crimea further aggravated the crisis. On March 16, a referendum in Crimea was held in accordance with the plan, and the majority of voters in Crimea voted to leave Ukraine and join Russia. On March 17, the Crimean parliament declared that it was independent of Ukraine and submitted an application to join Russia. On March 18, Russia officially signed an agreement with the Crimea on joining the Russian Federation. Russian President Vladimir Putin made a speech that "Crimea is an integral part of Russia" [12]

Since then, the United States, the European Union, Japan, Canada and the United Kingdom have imposed sanctions against Russia. Obama threatened to introduce new sanctions and isolate Russia. Obama said that "the United States and the international community will never recognize the results of the referendum". [20]

Russia has always taken a tough stance on major issues related to its national interests, and dared to compete with the West. In the face of threats, Putin said in a speech on March 18 that "in the Ukrainian internal crisis, Western countries went too far and crossed the red line" [12]. Putin warned the West that "you should not make Russia angry; Western countries are trying to push Russia into a corner; Russia does not want Ukraine to split and always respects the territorial integrity of Ukraine". [21]

There is no doubt that the game between Russia and the West in the Ukrainian crisis will further aggravate in the future, and the Ukrainian crisis will not be satisfactorily resolved in the foreseeable future.

Thus, the Ukrainian crisis has "causes of inevitability". This crisis has caused tremendous damage to the economy of Ukraine, national unity and national image, and

also had a serious impact on the structure of the world and relations between the major powers.

8. Conclusion

The results of the Ukrainian crisis allow us to make some conclusions.

Political crises in power undermine the economy, lead to mass impoverishment, and the deterioration of the social status of the people, social upheaval, revolutionary upheaval and bloodshed. The economic weakness of the state provokes expansion by economically strong states (such as the United States and its allies), leading the struggle to seize markets, dominate the world and financially enslave others. The violent “Ukrainization” of the Russian-speaking population by extremist methods, the persecution of dissent, the revival of Bandera's ideology and the incitement of interethnic relations have necessitated the prevention of a humanitarian catastrophe and the protection of those oppressed, primarily with their own forces. The fact of the separation of the territory from the state in the shortest possible time by peaceful means created a dangerous precedent, as there are currently many disputed territories in the world. The rigid centralization of power in the context of a political, economic, and ideological crisis in the modern era inevitably leads to disintegration, and not always by peaceful means.

The main conclusions from what happened are as follows:

A catastrophic downturn in the economy and unemployment, the prohibition of the Russian language and “Russophobia”, the policy of double standards, vandalism and propaganda of Bandera nationalism, giving a halo of freedom fighters to Ukrainian punishers and persecution of veterans of the war with fascism, persecution of the Orthodox Church, violence and banditry, repression of dissidents - led to the effect of rallying civil society and the opposition of the Ukrainian junta.

The objectivity of the process is expressed in the fact that the Crimean authorities, not recognizing the legitimacy of the new government, not wanting to allow bloodshed, planting Bandera ideology and “Ukrainization” of this kind, turned for help to the Russian leadership and held a referendum on the future fate of the region, in which the overwhelming majority expressed a desire to enter part of Russia, which happened in the end.

Unfortunately, these events did not become a result and the political crisis in Ukraine will not end soon.

The hegemony of dictatorship from the sole world superpower and the striving for American global domination in the post-Soviet era were faced with Russia's firm political will, which declared its desire to take a position above the regional level, which indicates the decline of the unipolar world model.

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