

2. CLASHES BETWEEN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE: IDEOLOGIES AND POLITICS



This chapter provides insight into the ways in which Russia and Ukraine position themselves in the international arena and how identity influences the way in which each country sees the other. The chapter begins with an overview of the state ideology of Putin's Russia and its historical roots. Prevailing attitudes in Ukraine are then scrutinised against this historical background. Attention is primarily focussed on providing a military-historical retrospective into events that have contributed to the identity of the Ukrainian armed forces. Next, a comparison of the Russian and Ukrainian security narratives is also provided, including the question of whether or not Ukraine is still within Russia's sphere of interest and how this issue is perceived by Russia and contested by Ukraine. Then the chapter turns to Russia's use of international law and the Budapest memorandum to justify its actions. Finally, Russian propaganda tools are considered.

2.1. The Ideology of Putin's Russia and its Historical Roots

Vladimir Sazonov

The Concept of the Russian World

As political scientist Andreas Umland remarked:

*Since coming to power in 1999, Vladimir Putin has purposefully instrumentalized Russian imperial nostalgia, national pride, and ethnocentric thinking for the legitimization of his authoritarian regime. The repercussions of this strategy are becoming a threat to the integrity of the Russian state in the 21st century.*¹⁷

The recreation or re-establishment of the Russian Empire in accordance with the borders of the former USSR is one of greatest ambitions of Vladimir Putin, his *idée fixe*. Kremlin ideologists and political technologists¹⁸ have

¹⁷ Umland, A. 2010. Russia: Nationalism's Revenge. – Foreign Policy Journal, December 17. <<http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2010/12/17/russia-nationalisms-revenge/>> (28 October 2015). [Umland 2010]

¹⁸ A term commonly used in Russia for campaign and PR-managers in the spheres of politics and ideology.

created a new ideological platform, which is now known as *Russkiy mir* (the Russian World or *Pax Russica*).¹⁹

Probably the most fundamental idea of Vladimir Putin's state philosophy is the concept of *Russkiy mir* that he and his ideologues officially introduced in 2006–2007.²⁰ The idea of *Russkiy mir*²¹ has been developed over the past decade, promoted by PR companies and information campaigns for both internal and external Russian-speaking audiences through mass media, social media, and in Russian popular and scientific literature (especially historical, political, economic journals), etc.²²

But what does 'Russkiy mir' mean? How should we understand it? Is it something new?²³ In April 2007, Vladimir Putin said the following:

*The Russian language not only preserves an entire layer of truly global achievements, but is also the living space for the many millions of people in the Russian-speaking world, a community that goes far beyond Russia itself. As the common heritage of many peoples, the Russian language will never become the language of hatred or enmity, xenophobia or isolationism. /.../ In my view, we need to support the initiative put forward by Russian linguists to create a National Russian Language Foundation, the main aim of which will be to develop the Russian language at home, support Russian language study programmes abroad, and to generally promote Russian language and literature around the world.*²⁴

¹⁹ This comes from the idea of Pax Romana (Latin "Roman Peace" or "Roman World"), which was introduced by first Roman emperor Augustus after the end of Roman Republic. Later there were several Pax'is – Pax Britannica, Pax Americana.

²⁰ **Послание Федеральному Собранию Российской Федерации Президента России Владимира Путина.** – Российская газета, 27.04.2007. <<http://www.rg.ru/2007/04/27/poslanie.html>>.

²¹ See more **Сычева, Л.** 2007. Русский мир, русская культура, русский мир. – РФ Сегодня, 14/2007. <http://russia-today.ru/old/archive/2007/no_14/14_look.htm>. In June 2007, Putin founded the Russkiy Mir Foundation (<http://russkiymir.ru/fund/>). See also **Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of the Establishment of the Russkiy Mir Foundation.** <<http://russkiymir.ru/en/fund/decreed.php>>.

See also **Ищенко, Р.** 2014. Русский мир и национальный вопрос. – Эксперт online, 7.09.2014. <<http://expert.ru/expert/2014/37/russkij-mir-i-natsionalnyij-vopros/>>; **Фокина, А. В.** 2014. К вопросу о русском мире. <http://filos.univ-orel.ru/_media/issue/1/2014-01-04.pdf>.

²² For example, see a profound philosophic, but propagandistic book – '**Project Russia**' (**Проект Россия**) – that was published in 2014. This book was recommended by the Administrative Department of the *President* of the Russian Federation to be read by statesmen and politicians of Russian Federation.

²³ See more **Информационный портал фонда «Русский мир».** <<http://russkiymir.ru/en/fund/index.php>> (10.10.2017).

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Dr. Iaroslav Kovalchuk, Head of the Internal Policy Department of the International Centre for Policy Studies in Kyiv, defines Vladimir Putin's state ideology:

*The desire to build the state philosophy on the past, namely the glory of the Kyivan Rus, resulted in the elaboration of the concept 'Russkiy Mir' (the Russian world). 'Russkiy Mir' means an international commonwealth based on affiliation with Russia, the Russian language, and Russian culture. The advocates of the concept believe that it has a right to be treated as a separate civilization space, which includes more than 300 million people. 'Russkiy Mir' was first used in public discourse in 2006 by Vladimir Putin, and ever since it has been gradually adopted as a Russian soft power tool in relations with its neighbours.*²⁵

This fundamental idea of the Russian World is vigorously used by Moscow for imperialistic and expansionistic purposes, especially regarding aggression against Ukraine and its government. The concept of the Russian World is used as an ideological tool by Russian political elites to unite all Russian-speaking people worldwide and to create a powerful and global Russian-speaking cultural, ideological, historical, social, political and informational space as an alternative to the Soviet Union. This concept of the Russian World is closely connected to the compatriots (*соотечественники*) policy of the Russian Federation – Russia declared that her duty is to protect Russian-speaking people not only in Russia, but also abroad.²⁶

Many historical phenomena, ideas, narratives, and historical myths that originated in the 18th and 19th centuries, or from the beginning of the 20th century (e.g. Holy Rus, Greater Russia, the Russian World, the Russian soul) are actively reused by Putin's propaganda machine in their renewed forms. Various historical myths used during the period of Russian Empire before 1917 have been reawakened and mixed with Soviet ideas, narratives, and phenomena. The concept of the Russian World is partly based on the legacy of Imperial Russia (1721–1917) and partly on ideas introduced by the

²⁵ Kovalchuk, I. 2015. Why does Russia want Ukraine? Kyiv: International Centre for Policy Studies.

²⁶ See more **Фонд поддержки и защиты прав соотечественников, проживающих за рубежом**. <<http://pravfond.ru>> (10.10.2017); <<https://interaffairs.ru/news/show/9505>>; <<http://archive.mid.ru/bdomp/sitemap.nsf/kartaflat/03.04>>; <<http://www.russkie.org/?module=interview&action=view&id=18>>.

Bolsheviks (e.g. *the enemy of the people*²⁷, execution squads²⁸, the Nazis, the Great Patriotic War²⁹ (1941–1945), *banderivtsi*, fascists, Western spies). In addition to Soviet narratives and ideas, Russian ideologists introduced some images from the Third Reich in early 2014, such as ‘the national traitor’ (*национал-предатель*) that has its roots in the German term *Nationalverräter*.³⁰

In many cases Vladimir Putin’s national idea does not offer anything new. It copies Count Uvarov’s national idea from the first half of the 19th century, which is based on three ideological concepts – **autocracy**, **orthodoxy**, and **nationality** (*самодержавие, православие, народность*).³¹

Count Sergey Semionovich Uvarov (1786–1855) was a highly influential imperial political leader under Tsar Nicholas I of Russia. He was one of the fundamental ideologues of the Russian Empire and author of the ‘theory of official nationality’ (*Теория официальной народности*), which promoted the famous slogan, ‘*Autocracy, orthodoxy, and nationality!*’ His theory became the basis for Russian imperial ideology and public education.

Today these ideas are reused in official Russian narratives in a revitalised contemporary manner. Already in the first half of the 19th century, Count Uvarov actively accentuated the uniqueness of Russian state, the Russian people, and the Russian-Orthodox civilisation. Uvarov’s theory postulated that Russia is a unique civilisation, different from all others, especially Europe.³² In the 19th century many Russian ideologues (Pan-Slavists) and statesmen already viewed Ukraine as part of Russia. They often refused to accept Ukraine as a separate nation or the Ukrainian language as an independent language. For example, in 1863 Count Pyotr Aleksandrovich Valuyev

²⁷ The term enemy of the people is used in Soviet Period for designation of person or people, who were political opponents for Bolsheviks. This term was first used in Soviet Union already in 1917, introduced by Vladimir Lenin in the decree of 28 November 1917.

²⁸ Execution squads or death squads – armed groups to conduct terror, genocide, mass killing of people (e.g. ethnical, political, religious groups) used in some totalitarian states, e.g. Einsatzgruppen in Nazi Germany.

²⁹ In Soviet and Russian historiography, the term Great Patriotic War is more commonly used instead of WWII. However, it refers mostly to war between Nazi Germany and Soviet Union during 1941–1945.

³⁰ See Павлова, С. 2014. Национал-предатели Путина. – Радио Свобода, 18.03.2014. <<http://www.svoboda.org/content/article/25302687.html>> (10.10.2017); <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJkN76EystU>> (18.03.2014).

³¹ Эйдеман, И. 2014. Проект «Путин». Новая национальная идея Путина. Москва: Эксмо, p. 11.

³² Заичкин, И. А.; Почкаев, И. Н. 1994. Русская история от Екатерины Великой до Александра II. Москва: Мысль, p. 595.

(1815–1890), a Russian statesman, author, and nationalist who served as Emperor Alexander II's Minister of the Interior, declared that a separate Ukrainian language does not exist; it is rather a Russian dialect. In 1876, during the process of the Russification of Ukraine, Russian Emperor Alexander II (1855–1881) forbid in part the publication of books in the Ukrainian language (the Ems Ukaz of Alexander II).³³ Putin's propagandists, Russian politicians, opinion leaders, and authors often recycle this opinion in their declarations that there is no Ukrainian state, nation, or language.³⁴

1) What does the concept of **autocracy** (*самодержавие*) mean for *Pax Russica*? This was a fundamental concept for the Russian Empire and Great Russia and it is used to mean a ruling system in which the leader (dictator or king) has unlimited power. The idea has been very popular among nationalists and monarchists, especially ultra-monarchists, throughout Russian history. It even influenced the Soviet ruling system where some leaders of the Communist party and Soviet Union had unlimited power. This idea is also promoted by Putin's close supporters, whose last ruling years are more similar to the dictatorship of António de Oliveira Salazar (1932-1968) in Portugal.³⁵

2) The second, but no less important basic concept is **orthodoxy** (православие, *ortodoxia* in Latin, *ὀρθόδοξια* in Greek), which means 'right', 'true', or 'straight', and is also a 'religion'. Orthodoxy has played a central role for Russians for more than 900 years – since 988 when Kievan Rus was allegedly Christianised, up until the events of 1917. This idea was reintroduced after the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991) and it has once again become extremely popular, and powerfully reused by the Russian state ideology mostly for propagandistic purposes. Orthodoxy has an important and influential role in modern Russia³⁶, as well as for Putin's national idea (*Pax Russica*).

³³ **Rudnykyj, B.** 1976. The Ems Ukase of 1876 and the problem of linguistic. – Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity, Vol. 4, Issue 2, pp. 153–155. <https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http%3A%2F%2Fshron.chtyvo.org.ua%2FRudnytskyi_Yaroslav%2FThe_Ems_Ukase_of_1876_and_the_problem_of_linguicide__en.pdf>.

³⁴ See e.f. **Вассерман, А.** 2009. Украинский язык – диалект русского. – Взгляд. Деловая газета, 16 марта 2009. <<http://www.vz.ru/news/2009/3/16/265622.html>>.

³⁵ See **Piirsalu, J.** 2015. Former Kremlin Official: Putin's Russia Moving Towards Salazar's Portugal. – Diplomaatia, No. 139, March 2015. Russia. <<http://www.diplomaatia.ee/en/article/former-kremlin-official-putins-russia-moving-towards-salazars>> (15.07.2015).

³⁶ See **Riistan, A.** 2015. Ukraina konfliktid teopoliitikast: Moskva patriarhaadi perspektiiv. – Kirik ja Teoloogia, 20.03.2015. <<http://kjt.ee/2015/03/ukraina-konfliktid-teopoliitikast-moskva-patriarhaadi-perspektiiv-2/>> (5.06.2015).

The so-called ‘orthodox fascism’ – a radical form of orthodoxy grounded in orthodoxy, anti-Semitism, and chauvinism – is relatively popular among certain Russian groups.³⁷ This extreme ideology is strongly based on the views of the Black Hundreds (*Chornaya sotnya, chernosotentsy*) – an ultra-nationalist, radical movement of imperial Russia in the early 20th century before the Revolution (1917) and the Civil War (1917-1922/1923). The Black Hundreds supported the legacy of the House of Romanovs, and their ideology drew on xenophobia, anti-Semitism, ultra-monarchist views, imperialism, Russo-centrism, Pan-Slavism³⁸ and, last but not least, chauvinism. This movement became very popular in Russia in the early 20th century, as did many other similar ultra-monarchist movements such as ‘*Soyuz russkogo naroda*’ (Union of the Russian Nation), ‘*Soyuz russkikh lyudey*’ (Union of the Russian People), ‘*Russkaya monarkhicheskaya partiya*’ (Russian Monarchist Party), and ‘*Belyi dvuglavyi oryol*’ (White Two-headed Eagle). Later, after the Revolution in October 1917, these ideas spread among the Russian emigrants.³⁹

For example, the Black Hundreds were devoted to the support of the Russian Tsar, the Orthodox Church and, of course, the motherland (the Russian Empire).

Their ideas were expressed by Uvarov’s imperial motto, ‘*Autocracy, orthodoxy, and nationality!*’ At the beginning of the 20th century, the Black Hundreds carried out a masterful propaganda campaign against socialists, anarchists, and Jewish people during church services, community meetings, academic lectures, and public demonstrations. This propaganda caused large-scale anti-Semitic hysteria and a patriotic fever among the Russian people, and was used by many ideologists and orthodox clerics to promote their ideas. These attitudes led to pogroms and waves of terror against Jewish people,

³⁷ E.g. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rHvt199fKc>> or <http://news.eizvestia.com/news_politics/full/726-russkij-pravoslavnyj-fashizm-vo-vsej-krase-video>, last visited 10.10.2015.

³⁸ This ideological movement became popular in Russia in the middle of the 19th century. The main idea of this ideology was to unite all Slavic peoples under the Russian dominance. As a political movement it started after Crimean War (1853-1856) that Russia lost. After their defeat, the Russian elite started to cultivate hatred and labelling of the Western countries (e.g. Great Britain, France, etc.) and West in generally. This idea is still alive and popular in Putin’s Russia and actively used by Russian propaganda machine also today (see e.g. Report about the XII. Pan-slavic congress in Moscow, May 2015 – **Славянский дух подпитал Путина и нас**, 22.05.2015. <<http://lenta.ru/articles/2015/05/22/slavesobor>>).

³⁹ E.g. Стефан, Д. 1992. Русские фашисты. Трагедия и фарс в эмиграции 1925–1945. Москва: СП Слово.

especially those living in Ukraine, and, at times, against Ukrainians, revolutionaries, socialists, anarchists, other national minorities, homosexuals, and certain key public figures.⁴⁰ Russia is now actively promoting Pan-Slavism, chauvinism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism as it did two hundred years ago. Traditions originating in the 19th and early 20th centuries such as blaming the West (since the Crimean War 1853–1856), promoting the uniqueness of the Russian soul and Russian civilisation, chauvinism, nationalism, Russo-centrism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia are once again being followed by Russian nationalists and ultra-nationalist, radical fascist movements are on the rise again in modern Russia. Andreas Umland writes:

*Racially motivated hate crimes are frequently presented as outcomes of mere ‘youth hooliganism’ while the manifestly neo-Nazi skinhead mass movement has, until recently, often been dismissed as a marginal phenomenon. In fact, the overwhelmingly ultra-nationalist Russian skinhead movement has been estimated to have between 20 and 70 thousand members – depending on the definition of such membership. This would seem to make the Russian skinheads the largest informal, openly neo-Neo-Nazi youth movement in the world.*⁴¹

*For several days now, Russia has been haunted by nationalistic demonstrations, violent ethnic brawls, and the resulting mass arrests. A series of inter-related events was triggered by the death of a Russian soccer fan in a scuffle between an ethnic Russian and a north Caucasian youth in Moscow, on 6 December 2010. International media has focused on the following violent clash between neo-Nazi demonstrators on the one side and Russian policemen on the other, in Manezh Square in the Moscow city centre, on 11 December 2010, as well as on subsequent clashes in the Russian capital. Prior to this confrontation there were several other, less spectacular, but impressively massive public gatherings of Russian nationalist youth in Moscow, as well as more in other cities including Rostov-on-the-Don and St. Petersburg.*⁴²

This attitude is not limited to radical youth. According to Levada Tsentr, more than fifty per cent of Russians support the slogan ‘Russia for Russians’.⁴³

3) Count Uvarov’s third important idea was that of **nationality** or **national character** (народность). Russian nationalists and chauvinists have

⁴⁰ See e.g. **Black Hundreds**. – Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Hundreds> (10.10.2017).

⁴¹ **Umland** 2010.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ See **Гудков, Л. Д., Пипия, К. Д.** 2015. Ксенофобские и националистические настроения россиян. – Левада-центр, Анталитический центр Юрия Левады. <<http://www.levada.ru/cp/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/STS.pdf>> (10.10.2017).

been exploiting this idea since the beginning of the 20th century and it is still reflected in the Russian ideology of the 21st century.

Today, the concepts of **autocracy**, **orthodoxy**, and **nationality** are being re-appropriated by Putin's Russia. Lectures, demonstrations, and sermons organised by Kremlin propagandists during the Ukrainian conflict were often directed against Western countries, homosexuality, and certain nationalities while, at the same time, Russia was pictured as the defender of traditional values against the immorality encroaching from the West.



Picture 1. 'For Fatherland, For Putin!'⁴⁴

(Source: http://ic.pics.livejournal.com/tov_ignat/27119593/5816/5816_original.jpg)

⁴⁴ For example, a military slogan used by the Soviets '*For the Fatherland, for Stalin!*' (За Родину, за Сталина!) or sometimes '*For the Fatherland, for Stalin, for the Communist Party!*' (За Родину, за Сталина, за Партию!) appeared in the Russian press for the first time in September 1938 in articles of Pravda and Krasnaya Zvezda (Красная Звезда). On 1 September 1938, a politruk's deputy G. Sazyskin wrote about the battle for lake Hasan (29.07–08.08.1938): «Вперед, за Родину, за Сталина! – кричим мы с командиром во весь голос» (Pravda, article «За родину!»). The slogan '*For the Fatherland, for Stalin!*' (За Родину, за Сталина!) was nothing more than a modification of a military slogan used by Russian soldiers and officers during 19th and at the beginning of 20th century – '*For the Tsar, for the Fatherland, for Fate!*' (За царя! За родину! За веру!). Interestingly, many people in Russia have started to use a new slogan '*For Putin, for the Fatherland!*' (За Путина, за Родину!) or modifications like '*For Putin! For Great Russia!*' (За Путина! За Великую Россию!) or '*For Fate, for the Fatherland, for Sovereignty!*' (За Веру, Родину, Суверинетет!). Therefore, this old idea from the Russian imperial period is still very well usable in Putin's Russia. Patriotic and military songs and marches have always been in service of Russian propaganda – e.g. the famous '*Farewell to Slavyanka*' (Прощание славянки). This extremely patriotic Russian march, composed by Vasily Agapkin in 1912 (ideologically connected directly to the Balkan wars), was

The Idea of Moscow as the Third Rome

In addition to the Russian World, another significant concept used by Moscow's politicians and ideologists is based on the ancient ideological dogma originating from Late Middle Ages – the concept of the Third Rome. This idea helps justify Russia's foreign policy of expansionism and to legitimate Russia's imperialist claims in the Eurasian region. The idea of Moscow as the Third Rome is skilfully exploited for propagandistic means.

The concept of Moscow as the Third Rome is more than 500 years old. It is related to the continuity of the Roman Empire. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 A.D. and the Byzantine Empire (or Eastern Roman Empire) in 1453, Moscow took advantage of the political and ideological vacuum and began to ascribe itself the role of sole legitimate successor of the Eastern Roman empire and the rulers of the Grand Duchy of Moscow were successors of Byzantine (or Roman) emperors.⁴⁵ Even today, the state symbol of Russia is the Byzantine double-headed eagle to show that Russia is the new Byzantine Empire and Moscow is the successor of Constantinople (Byzantine) in terms of orthodox religion and state ideology. It is neither accidental nor surprising that in modern Russia Vladimir Putin is often compared

still popular after the 1917 Revolution and it was not forbidden during the Soviet period when it retained its amazing popularity. Putin's propaganda and Russian military forces still use it very actively. One of many such examples is 'God is with us!' referring to the war in Donbass (**Трофимов, С.** 2014. С нами Бог. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGQyRsnU3Y&feature=youtu.be>> (9.07.2015)). The phrase 'Gott mit uns' (God is with us) was used in the German military during the 19th and at the beginning 20th of century and later in the Nazi Germany. It also included the imperial Russian motto «Съ нами Богъ!», the idea of which comes from Late Roman Empire (Byzantine Empire) and was used as battle cry (Nobiscum deus).

⁴⁵ For promoting the imperial idea and accentuation of 'Roman (Byzantine) origin' of his dynasty Ivan IV the Terrible (ruled 1533–1584) was crowned as Tsar of Russia (1547). Ivan, who wanted to become a new Caesar – completed the centralisation of his state and tried to create a powerful empire. His grandfather was Ivan III or Ivan the Great (1462–1505) who became a ruler of a vast territory and was married to Sophia Paleologue, who was a daughter of Thomas Palaeologus, a ruler of Morea. Thomas was brother of the last Byzantine emperor Constantine XI. Ivan III was influenced by Byzantine imperial traditions due to Sophia's imperial origins. From this time Moscow began to promote the idea of legacy of Roman Empire. Ivan the Terrible was a grandson of Ivan III and Sophia and he had the blood of Byzantine emperor. He introduced a new title for himself, which originates from Rome – the title 'Tsar' (meaning 'Caesar'). So Ivan IV became 'Tsar of all Russia' in 1547 and used this title until his death in 1584. He conquered Kazan, Astrakhan and Siberia, etc. and under his rule Russia became an influential regional power. Style of Russian diplomacy and ruling system became more and more similar to Late-Byzantine style. However, it seems that elements of the old ruling system of the Golden Horde were more widespread in Moscow even in 16–17th centuries or even later.

to Roman emperors and pictured as Julius Caesar or Octavian Augustus, who were the first emperors and created the ‘Roman world’ (*Pax Romana*).⁴⁶

Modern Russia often turns to the old ideological software of the Third Rome and the so-called ‘Byzantine type of diplomacy’⁴⁷, which in some cases drastically differs from that of Western democracies.

Conclusion

While Western media and politicians often regard Putin’s national idea (*Pax Russica*) as a new phenomenon, it is actually not new. Russia’s ideology is, to a great extent, an irrational mix of older systems – i.e. Byzantium, the Golden Horde, the Grand Duchy of Moscow, the Slavophile legacy from the beginning of the 20th century, the Soviet system and its ideological elements, and some ideas from Orthodox Christianity.

Nevertheless, Putin’s state philosophy is strongly influenced by nationalism, chauvinism, clericalism, orthodoxy, xenophobia, imperialism, and autocracy. In addition, the whole concept is decorated with ideological inventions and myths from the ‘glorious’ Soviet times. The Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian state are both playing the same game as they share an important role in all spheres of modern Russian society – education, science, media, warfare (e.g. justification of wars, aggression), politics, economy, culture, etc.

Although Putin’s ‘new’ ideology, which has been developing in Russia over the past decade, makes effective use of modern technologies for influencing people, the Kremlin’s propaganda machine is still mostly built on

⁴⁶ See **Sharkov, D.** 2015. Russia unveils bust of Putin as Roman emperor. 18.5.2015. <<http://europe.newsworld.com/russia-unveils-bust-putin-roman-emperor-327425>> (15.07.2015); **Koreneva, M.** 2015. Russia unveils bust of Putin as Roman emperor. 17 May 2015. <<http://news.yahoo.com/russia-unveils-bust-putin-roman-emperor-175036497.html>> (15.07.2015).

⁴⁷ In his article ‘The Return of Byzantine Diplomacy’ historian Mart Nutt remarked: One might argue whether there even is such a thing as a particular, clearly distinct Byzantine diplomacy that differs from every other type. However, particular characteristics manifest themselves during different civilisations, cultures and eras that make it possible to group and distinguish between them, which is why I now take the risk of limiting Byzantine diplomacy to being a phenomenon. In doing so, I do not view Byzantine diplomacy as the diplomacy of Byzantium, but rather as a tradition of diplomacy whose legacy continues today, in the first decades of the 21st century (Nutt 2014). We agree with the following opinion proposed by Nutt: However, Byzantine diplomacy did get a foothold in Russia. Ivan III wanted to make Russia the Third Rome and the legacy of Byzantium was part of this. Despite Russia’s backwardness in other fields, its diplomacy had attained a high level of professionalism in the Tsarist Empire (Nutt, M. 2014. The Return of Byzantine Diplomacy. – *Diplomaatia*, No. 130/131, June/July 2014. Foreign policy concepts, Russia).

old traditions. It is flexible and adapts to each new situation, but has certain weaknesses. Using a mixture of contradictory phenomena and ideas may be an effective tool in information warfare for those who have mastered the art, but it can easily backfire, for example, when two historical enemies – Communist ideology and Orthodox religion – are branded as twin brothers (see the picture below).



Picture 2. The text on poster reads: “Merry Christmas! Jesus Christ is with us! Ideas of Communism, spiritual freedom, equality, brotherhood lived already among followers of Christ. Whoever is against Communism, is against Christ and against peace on Earth.”⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Source <https://scontent-ams.xx.fbcdn.net/hphotos-xft1/v/t1.0-9/10386398_1189434491082802_7565534049252295534_n.jpg?oh=0360a7e96addfbca28eeb4adceca604b&oe=55C56756> (10.06.2015).

2.2. A Military-Historical Retrospective of the Identity of the Ukrainian Armed Forces

Igor Kopõtin

One characteristic of the organisational culture of the armed forces is the collectivist disciplinary model. This model is based on values that have developed by the officers' corps as 'experts of violence'. Military professionalism is considered to be the main value-based concept and is shaped by military, instrumental, nationalist, and traditionalist aspects. A military (self-)identity based on the above aspects can be seen as a type of formalism that is the sum total of other values of individual and collective (including the unconscious) identity. In other words, a serviceman, especially an officer, may also be influenced by the elements of his other non-military identities, e.g. ethnic, religious, political, sexual, or other value-based identities.⁴⁹

During the civil war (1917–1921), a number of armed groupings emerged, the most powerful of them being the Red Army, South-Russian Armed Forces (Russian White Army), the UNR⁵⁰ army, and the Galician Army. From 1991 onwards, a committee of historians formed by order of the Ukrainian President began studying the historical and political significance of the activities of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and their Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). The present-day Ukrainian armed forces share a number of controversial military-historical traditions that have been influenced by the historical narrative of the Red Army and the narrative of the Great Victory of the Soviet Union in World War II (1941–1945). This is reflected in the way military personnel are educated, military history is approached, military symbols are used, and in the work of military museums.⁵¹

Historical myths and elements of historical political discourse designed by pro-Russian separatists and Russia are actively used in the Donbass

⁴⁹ **Weber, M.** 2002. *Võimu ja religiooni sotsioloogiast*. Tallinn: Vagabund, pp. 97–98; **Huntington, S. P.** 2013. *Sõdur ja riik. Tsiviil-militaarsuhete teooria ja poliitika*. Tallinn: Riigikaitse raamatukogu, pp. 18–22, 92–93.

⁵⁰ The Ukrainian People's Republic or Ukrainian National Republic (Ukrainian: Українська Народна Республіка, Ukrayins'ka Narodna Respublika; abbreviated UHR, UNR).

⁵¹ **Политична система для України: історичний досвід і виклики сучасності**. 2008. Київ: Ніка-Центр, pp. 920–922; **Слободянюк, М.** 2012. *Сухопутні війська України. Історія та символіка 13-го армійського корпусу*. Львів: Астролябія, pp. 6–15; **Слободянюк, М.** 2011. *Сухопутні війська України. Історія та символіка 8-го армійського корпусу*. Львів: Астролябія, pp. 7–18.

conflict. These concepts coincide to some extent with Ukrainian ideas of their common (Soviet) past with Russia. A central question is to what extent can Russia's historical and political measures damage the image of the Ukrainian armed forces by taking advantage of the weaknesses of the Ukrainian military and national identity?

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, a significant number of Russian Army assets remained in Ukrainian territory, e.g. army units (over 700 000 soldiers), as well as significant numbers of weapons (6500 tanks, 7000 armoured vehicles, 7200 pieces of artillery, 2500 tactical nuclear weapons). The process known as Ukrainisation started with the units located in Ukraine, especially those located in the defence command of Kyiv, Odessa, and Carpathia. For the most part this meant the promotion of Ukrainian symbols, and did not involve manning or training armed forces personnel. By 2014 the Ukrainian army had lost not only its combat capability, but also its popularity and respect in society.

A significant issue was the subdivision of the Black Sea fleet, which was finally resolved in 1997.⁵² Out of the 43 warships given to Ukraine, only four ships were combat-ready by 2014. During the annexation of Crimea, the majority of Ukrainian ships, as well as naval officers and the commander of the Ukrainian Navy, deserted to join the Russian army. Ukraine also lost the Naval Academy located in Sevastopol named after famous Russian Naval commander Admiral Pavel Nakhimov.⁵³

Historically, the Ukrainian armed forces were established during the Revolution of 1917, followed by the Ukrainisation of the southwestern Russian front, the Romanian front, and the Black Sea Fleet.⁵⁴ This process was led by Simon Petlyura and coordinated by the Central Rada of Ukraine.⁵⁵ The Ukrainisation of the military forces was synchronised with political developments in Ukraine and followed a decrease in the military morale of the Russian army. Many soldiers preferred Ukrainisation over going to war and thus it mostly served its formal purpose. After the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Hetmanate led by Pavlo Skoropadski was established in Ukraine, which was

⁵² Федоровых, А. 2007. Раздел Черноморского флота в цифрах и фактах. 02.11.2007 <<http://fondiv.ru/articles/3/193/>> (15.07.2015).

⁵³ Военный флот Украины в Крыму перешел на сторону Автономной Республики.

⁵⁴ Тинченко, Я. 2010. Новітні Запорожці. Війська Центральної Ради, березень 1917 р. – квітень 1918 р. Київ: Темпора, pp. 4–5.

⁵⁵ Заява С. В. Петлюри про вступ на посаду генерального комісара військових справ України 02.11.1917. – Укряїнська Центральна Рада. Документи и матеріали. Т. 1. Київ: Наукова думка, pp. 385, 393.

occupied by Germany and Austria-Hungary at the time.⁵⁶ The officers serving the Ukrainian army and fleet formed during that time also preferred service in the Ukrainian army to service in a Russia that was governed by Bolsheviks. In the chaos of World War I, the defeat of Germany and Austria-Hungary, and the withdrawal of occupation forces from Ukraine, the Hetmanate's rule in Ukraine ended as it lacked the value-based link with a national ideology. Approximately one quarter of the Ukrainian officer corps and a few units joined the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) led by the Ukrainian Directorate. When the Bolsheviks invaded Ukraine, the majority of the Hetmanate's forces dissolved and joined the Russian White Guard.⁵⁷

The clash of the Ukrainian unit formed from university and secondary school students with the Red Guard units invading Kyiv near Kruty⁵⁸ in January 1918 represents a special myth of Ukrainian military history. This showed clearly that neither the regular army of the UNR nor the regular army of the Hetmanate were morally prepared to defend Ukraine as a nation-state, so patriotically-minded students started fighting for Ukraine instead.⁵⁹

During the civil war, a number of armed groupings emerged, the most powerful of them being the Red Army, South-Russian Armed Forces (Russian White Army), the UNR army, and the Galician army. In addition to these, several spontaneous Hetman gangs emerged, the biggest of them undoubtedly being Nestor Makhno's anarchist army with more than 100 000 soldiers (also known as the Ukrainian Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army and the Gulyai-Pole Republic). A significant military force were the insurgent units led by Otaman Nikifor Grigoryev. Grigoryev, a former Tsarist army officer, led a division of the UNR. Afterwards he started supporting the political ideas of Borotbists⁶⁰ and changed sides, joining his division with the Red Army. In April 1919 his division organised an anti-Communist revolt, but was defeated

⁵⁶ **Реснт, О. П.** 2013. Укрїїнська Центральна Рада і Тимчасовий уряд. УНР. Гетьманат Павла Скоропадського 1918 р. Велика Війна 1914–1918 рр. Україна. Київ: Кліо, pp. 654, 666–372; **Дерябин, А.** 1998. Гражданская война в России 1917–1922. Национальные армии, Москва: Аст, pp. 12–13.

⁵⁷ **Тинченко, Я.** 2014. Війська ясновельможного пана гетьмана. Армія Української держави, травень-грудень 1918 року. Київ: Темпора, pp. 62–66; **Пиріг, Р.** 2011. Українська держава 1918 року. Київ, pp. 256–257.

⁵⁸ The Battle of Kruty (Ukrainian: Бій під Крутами) took place on January 29 or 30, 1918 near Kruty railway station, about 130 kilometres northeast of Kyiv. Battle of the military units of the UNR Army against the Red Army.

⁵⁹ **Бойко, О. Д.** 2008. Бій під Крутами: історія вивчення. – Український історичний журнал, № 2 (479), pp. 43–53.

⁶⁰ Borot'ba (Struggle) – Ukrainian Communist party, founded in 1918.

by the Red Army. Grigoryev was shot dead by Makhno's army. The activities of Otaman Zelyonyi (Daniil Terpilo) were similar to Grigoryev: he also changed sides between the UNR and the Red Army.⁶¹

In different parts of Ukraine, semi-independent republics were formed to support different parties of the conflict. At one point the Makhno units allied with the Red Army fought against the Whites, while somewhat later they fought with the UNR against the Red Army. The Hladnyi Jari Republic should be highlighted as one of the biggest 'republics' supporting mostly the UNR and the Donetsk-Krivoy Rog Republic (DonKrivBas) in the Donbass region, founded by Comrade Artyom⁶². Sometime later DonKrivBas joined the Russian SFSR. In order to politically divide Ukrainians, Russia founded the Ukrainian Red Army. The involvement of the Ukrainian socialist 'Borobists' in the activities of the Red Army during 1919–1920 was an important political step.⁶³

It should be noted that during the civil war the UNR Army had control over no more than 1/4 to 1/6 of the territory of the Ukrainian Hetmanate, the exact size of it being extremely unclear. In addition, a relatively numerous Galician army was formed in the territory of former Austria based on local Ukrainians and officers of the former Austrian-Hungarian army.⁶⁴ The Galician army operated in cooperation with the UNR, but also with Russian White, and for some time even as part of the Red Army. It is important to highlight that the Galician army did not consider the Russian Red Army or Whites as its main enemy, but Polish and Romanians, having constant ethnic fighting with them.

Throughout the year 1920 General Baron Wrangel's White army was located in Crimea. As it is known the White forces fought for the 'united

⁶¹ Солдатенко, В. 2012. Гражданская война в Украине 1917–1920. Москва: Новый хронограф, pp. 314–315 [Солдатенко 2012]; Серебряков, Г. И. и др. 1979. Краснознаменный Киевский. Очерки истории Краснознаменного Киевского военного округа (1919–1979). Киев: Издательство политической литературы Украины, с. 23, 25–27, 35.

⁶² Fyodor Andreyevich Sergeyev (1883–1921), better known as Comrade Artyom (товарищ Артём), was a Russian revolutionary, organizer of a military coup-d'état in Kharkiv and the whole Donbass region. At the 1st congress of Soviets in Ukraine he was elected to the Central Executive Committee of Ukraine. Comrade Artyom was a chairman of the Sovnarkom (Soviet narodnykh kommissarov or Sovnarkom – the Council of People's Commissars) of the unrecognized Donetsk-Krivoy Rog Soviet Republic (1918) in Ukraine.

⁶³ Солдатенко 2012, pp. 123–124, 260.

⁶⁴ Монолатій, І. 2008. Українські легіонери. Формування та бойовий шлях українських січових стрільців 1914–1918 рр. Київ: Темпора, pp. 80–81.

and undivided Russia' and therefore they had conflicts with the nation states emerging in the periphery, in this case with Ukrainian and Polish people.

In conclusion, the Ukrainian revolution with the Civil War (1917–1921) was an armed conflict between different political powers, which could be addressed from completely different viewpoints.

After the Treaty of Riga in 1921, the current territory of Ukraine was divided between Poland and Soviet Russia. In order to counterbalance the Polish areas inhabited by Ukrainians, the Ukrainian SSR⁶⁵ was created within the Soviet Union. The purpose of creating the Ukrainian SSR was to organise diversionary attacks to the areas of Poland in the 1920s and thereby attract patriotically minded Ukrainians to cooperate with the Red Army. Indeed, many Ukrainians, after being under pressure from Poland, fled to the Soviet Union, among them Mikhailo Grushevsky, a former chairman of the Central Rada. As part of the policy called *korenizaciya* for the first time the use of the Ukrainian language was promoted in Kharkiv, Zaporozhye and Dnepropetrovsk (Yekaterinoslav) regions and elsewhere in the Ukrainian SSR. The *korenizaciya* ended in 1929 with collectivisation and Holodomor followed by political terror and repressions by the civil guard.⁶⁶

At the same time several ethnic Ukrainian centres emerged in Poland and Germany with the aim to organise armed resistance to Poland and Russia and re-establish the Ukrainian Republic. The Ukrainian nationalists' organisation OUN was among the most powerful of them, organising terrorist attacks in Poland and cooperating with German intelligence units. USSR leaders considered the activity of the OUN extremely dangerous, and therefore the Foreign Department of GPU⁶⁷ organised several large-scale actions against the Ukrainian nationalist movement, including the assassination of their leader Konovalysh. After that, the OUN split into two parts: supporters of Stepan Bandera OUN (b), and supporters of Andrii Melnik – OUN (m). With Germany's attack on the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, Ukrainian nationalists became more active. Two Ukrainian intelligence battalions participated in warfare, and with their support the Ukrainian National Republic was declared

⁶⁵ The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (Ukrainian SSR or UkSSR; Ukrainian: Українська Радянська Соціалістична Республіка, Українська РСР; Russian: Украинская Советская Социалистическая Республіка, Украинская ССР).

⁶⁶ **Екельчик, С.** 2012. История Украины. Становление современной нации. Киев: КИС, pp. 129–173. [Екельчик 2012]

⁶⁷ The State Political Directorate (also translated as the State Political Administration) of the Russian SSR during 1922–23. Russian abbreviation GPU, (Russian: Государственное политическое управление при НКВД РСФСР, Gosudarstvennoye politicheskoye upravlenie under the NKVD of the RSFSR).

in Lviv that time controlled by Germany. As a result of that the Gestapo arrested Bandera and other leaders of the OUN (b) and put them to concentration camps. The OUN (b) formed the groups of partisans in western Ukraine, which started working against Germans and later on against the Red Army. The OUN (m) continued active collaboration with Germans and formed the Waffen-SS Division “Galicia” in 1943–1944, which was defeated in heavy combat against the Red Army in Brody.⁶⁸ The OUN (b) continued fighting as a guerrilla army called the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) led by Roman Shukhevych.⁶⁹

Starting from the Civil War many Ukrainians served in the Red Army, made career and received recognitions, among them Stepan Saenko, the murderer of the State Commission of Kharkiv: he murdered several hundreds of people and afterwards was responsible for the upbringing of Soviet youth; the USSR Marshal Semyon Timoshenko; General Chernyakhovsky; an outstanding fighter pilot Ivan Kozhedub; General Kovpak, a well-known leader of red partisans, and many others. There were lots of Ukrainians among the organisers of Holodomor and among those fighting against the UPA or collaborating with the NKVD. Bohdan Staszynski, a NKVD agent and murderer of Stepan Bandera was also a Ukrainian by nationality.

In the newly independent Ukraine, the attitude toward its 20th century history was extremely controversial and complex. Over years different approaches to history were developed in Ukrainian schools depending on the region. Relatively little attention has been paid to the history of the Ukrainian National Republic – one of the central themes of Ukrainian history. Instead, the Ukrainian revolution and the activities of the Central Rada preceding the Republic are researched. The era of the UNR is addressed relatively briefly in grade 9. A clash of different discourses with regard to the 20th century Ukrainian history can be witnessed in Ukrainian historical research. For example, the attitude toward the events of 1917–1920 as a civil war and intervention of foreign countries, the invasion of Soviet Russia to independent Ukraine, and many other.

The history of the present-day Ukrainian army is generally divided into five stages: 1991–1996 – formation, 1997–2000 – further organisation, 2001–

⁶⁸ **Гайке, В-Д.** 2014. Українська дивізія «Галичина». Історія формування і бойових дій у 1943-1945 роках. Тернопіль: Мандрівець, pp. 75–83.

⁶⁹ **ОУН в 1941 році.** 2006. Документи. Частина 1. Київ: НАН України, pp. 273–274; **Патриляк, І.** 2015. Перемога або смерть. Український визвольний рух у 1939–1960 роках. Харків: Часопис, pp. 444–448.

2005 – reforms, and 2006–2011 – development. The processes initiated in the Ukrainian armed forces in 2012 are called a new stage of development and reforms. Soon after the takeover of the Soviet Army units on the 24th of August 1991, a large-scale downsizing of the armed forces started. By 1994, 12 thousand active servicemen left for former Soviet republics. 33 thousand active servicemen of Ukrainian nationality returned to Estonia. By 1996 Ukraine eliminated nuclear weapons from its territory, the size of the active force was cut by 410,000 men, 850 aircrafts and 4400 armoured vehicles were written off. Shrinking the army continued, and by 2011 there were only 192,000 servicemen in active service. In the 1990s, there was the lack of laws and legal acts regulating the work of armed forces. In 1997–1999, relevant legal acts were passed, tasks of the ministry of defence and headquarters, as well as issues of strategic planning, and the territorial subdivision of the armed forces at defence command level were specified. The problem of the Black Sea fleet was resolved. By 2005 the structure was approved and organised into three defence commands: western, northern and southern defence commands with their tasks and structure. Western and southern commands are tasked with operational command.⁷⁰ The underfunding of the Ukrainian armed forces⁷¹, not much respect of the armed forces in society, inefficient conscript service, and aging of weapons, equipment and vehicles became the main concerns.⁷²

⁷⁰ Міністерство оборони України.

⁷¹ **Мунтіян, В.** 2002. ФІНАНСУВАННЯ ЗБРОЙНИХ СИЛ УКРАЇНИ: ПРОБЛЕМИ ТА ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ. – Дзеркало тижня. Україна, 06.09.2002. <http://gazeta.dt.ua/POLITICS/finansuvannya_zbroynih_sil_ukrayini_problemi_ta_perspektivi.html> (14.07.2015).

⁷² See more **Контрактную армию отодвинули еще на три года.** 27 февраля 2013. – Украинская правда. <<http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2013/02/27/6984502/>> (5.06.2015); **Армия будет покупать более дешевые танки ради экономии.** 30 августа 2012. – Украинская правда. <<http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2012/08/30/6971702/>> (14.07.2015); **Через пять лет армия будет в 2,5 раза меньше?** 24 марта 2012. – Украинская правда. <<http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2012/03/24/6961367/>> (15.07.2015); **Аргат, О.** 2012. Утрачена армія здобутої держави. – Українська правда, Історична правда, 23.02.2012. <<http://www.istpravda.com.ua/articles/2012/02/23/74241/>> (13.07.2015); **Шеляженко, Ю.** 2011. «Модернизация», армия чайников и эрозия культуры. – Украинская правда, 19 апреля 2011. <<http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/columns/2011/04/19/6120997/>> (15.07.2015); **Максименко, Р.** 2011. Украинская армия: операция «Самоуничтожение». – Украинская правда, 31 мая 2011. <<http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/columns/2011/05/31/6179727/>> (15.07.2015); **Армии недодали более 4 миллиардов.** 09 января 2010 – Украинская правда. <<http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2010/01/9/4597352/>> (15.07.2015).

2.3. A Comparative Analysis of the Development of Security Narratives in Ukraine and Russia

Holger Mölder

Introduction

Contemporary security narratives reflect the public understanding of security matters and expectations and the best way to translate this information to a wider audience.⁷³ Arun Kundnani writes: “*Narratives are the stories we tell ourselves and others about the world in which we live.*”⁷⁴ Shaul R. Shenkiv adds: “*Examinations of political discourse show that it relies extensively on narrative patterns. This is partly the result of the human tendency to rely on narrative as a way of understanding the world and endowing it with meaning.*”⁷⁵ Conflicting narratives can cause status conflicts between international actors, especially for rising powers that want to ensure a good position in the international system. Rationalist theories have often marginalised questions of perceptions, beliefs, and identity that may impact narratives in a unique, unexpected, and uncalculated way.⁷⁶

The end of the Cold War changed the dominant ideas about security.⁷⁷ The Kantian security culture became a major driving force for the international community of states, especially in the 1990s. The post-Cold War concepts of security governance have broadened institutional and cooperative security options, moving on from the simplifying framework of the Westphalian nation-states and their search for military security. There are significant cultural divergences between Russia and the West, including their definition of liberal democracy. Russia’s definition of democracy differs to some degree from the standard Western ideal of liberal democracy. The question the extent to which Russia shares Western democratic values is still highly contestable as they tend to define international policy in the traditional West-

⁷³ **McLeod, L.** 2013. Back to the future: Temporality and gender security narratives in Serbia. – *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 44 (2), p. 166.

⁷⁴ **Kundnani, A.** 2012. Blind Spot? Security Narratives and Far-Right Violence in Europe. – ICCT Research Paper, June 2012. <<https://www.icct.nl/download/file/ICCT-Kundnani-Blind-Spot-June-2012.pdf>>.

⁷⁵ **Shenhav, Sh. R.** 2006. Political Narratives and Political Reality. – *International Political Science Review/ Revue internationale de science politique*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (July, 2006), p. 246.

⁷⁶ **Williams, M.** 2007. *Culture and Security. Symbolic power and the politics of international security.* New York: Routledge, p. 44.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. ix.

phalian terms⁷⁸, emphasising availability of spheres of influence in their security policy narratives.

The post-Cold War environment strengthened nationalist sentiments in former Communist countries by becoming a driving ideological force for post-Communist societies, including Ukraine and Russia. The latest challenge to the Kantian international system initiated by Russia is manifest through the status conflict between Ukraine and Russia in the Eastern part of Ukraine accompanied by a value-related internal conflict between pro-Western and pro-Russian identities in Ukraine.

The Russian narrative

Although on some counts it may be considered a democracy, Russia can hardly pretend to be a stable liberal democracy. Authoritarian tendencies in the country have strengthened during the second presidency of Vladimir Putin. During that time the economic situation in the country was notably improved due to high oil prices, and Russia has clearly demonstrated its willingness to restore the position it once held as a superpower. The Russian security narrative increasingly follows the spirit of Cold War competition between the East and the West, where Russian ambitions require the country to position itself as a competing power with the United States and the West in the polarised world. Russia tries to overcome its international isolation by attempting to build a Russian world that consolidates its initiatives in the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Eurasian Economic Union. Unlike China, which is gradually spreading its economic influence around the world and becoming active in Latin America and Africa, Russia's main concern seems to be with its neighbours. Russia is promoting the concept of the 'near abroad', which is closely related to the concept of 'legitimate sphere of influence'.

Russian narratives often evoke messianic goals that contain strong moral judgement and opposition to what it calls 'American imperialistic expansionism'. Marcin A. Piotrowski identifies three competing geopolitical

⁷⁸ The Westphalian system was established with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, after the Thirty Year's War (1618–1648) in Europe, which recognised that every state has sovereignty over its territory and domestic affairs, and all states are equal under international law. Since the 1980s and early 1990s the processes of globalization, institutionalization, and enhanced interdependence between states have led to international integration and the erosion of Westphalian sovereignty.

narratives concerning Russia.⁷⁹ The Westernizers give priority to Russia's modernisation and its cordial relations with Europe. They believe that the West is inherently a partner of Moscow and its newly independent neighbours against the Islamic world and China. The Great Russians base their arguments on the ideology of the nineteenth-century Slavophiles. They believe that the main goal of the state is the rebirth of Greater Russia and they idealise a common eastern-Slavic state of Russians, Byelorussians and Ukrainians. The Eurasianists base their ideology on the ideas developed by Lev Gumilev and the post-revolutionary emigrant movement. They believe that Russia should build a bloc of Eurasian countries that are dissatisfied with American dominance and globalisation, and establish a partnership with countries such as China, India, and Iran.⁸⁰

Vladimir Putin does not have clear ideological preferences, besides of being the leader of a great power. His ideology⁸¹ includes elements of all three aforementioned narratives. He wants to cooperate with the West, to establish the glory of the Russian Empire, and to be respected as a Eurasian regional power.

Andrew Monaghan describes his ambitions: "*Moscow thus considers Russia to have a right to sit among other leading powers and have its interests and views considered, even when they differ from those of the West.*"⁸²

Conclusively, Russia does not have permanent friends in foreign policy, but rather relies on strategic partners that are revealed by their response to Moscow's proposals and initiatives.⁸³ Along with other regional powers China, India, South Africa, and Brazil, Russia has been able to raise its status vis-a-vis US primacy within the international system and can now be identified as a rising power – a state that intends to gain recognition as a great power in the eyes of its contemporaries.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ **Piotrowski, M. A.** 2002. Russian Security Policy. – Bugajski, J.; Michalewski, M. (eds.). *Toward an Understanding of Russia: New European Perspectives*. New York: Council of Foreign Relations Press, pp. 60–61.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ See more in Chapter 2.1.

⁸² **Monaghan, A.** 2009. Russian Foreign and Security Policy – A Strategic Overhaul? – *Panorama*, No. 2, p. 88.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁸⁴ **Lebow, R. N.** 2010. The Past and Future of War International Relations. – *International Relations*, Vol. 24, Issue 3, p. 243.

<<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0047117810377277>>.

Timothy Frye examines two of the most popular explanatory narratives, which have spread in the West concerning Russia's attack on Ukraine. The first one explains the hostilities with the sluggish Russian economy and declining public approval ratings. The second narrative emphasises foreign policy concerns that Ukraine will align itself with the West, and is becoming an ally of the United States and NATO.⁸⁵ During the last several years, Russia has been facing heightened nationalism as it attempts to establish a patriotic spirit to fight against its foreign and domestic foes. Putin's foreign policy goals are closely aligned with the postulates of US neo-conservative foreign policy – patriotism is a necessity; world government is a terrible idea; statesmen should have the ability to accurately distinguish friend from foe; the protection of national interests both at home and abroad; and the necessity of a strong military.⁸⁶ Russia attempts to increase its role in world affairs on the basis of its national interests in a way that is reminiscent of George W. Bush's foreign policy doctrine.⁸⁷

The Ukrainian narrative

It is more difficult to identify a single narrative for Ukraine, because the competition between different orientations is stronger than in Russia. The post-Cold War Ukrainian narrative manifests a pro-statehood and anti-statehood cleavage between Ukrainophones and Russophones. Ukrainophones favour state- and nation-building that rely on economic and political reforms. Russophones support the policies of returning to Eurasia.⁸⁸ Currently, there are Westernizers (Arseniy Yatsenyuk and the People's Front, Vitaliy Klichko), Russophiles (the Party of Regions and its spin-offs), and Ukrainian Nationalists (Svoboda, the Right Sector). President Petro Poroshenko is pro-European, but holds more pragmatic positions towards Russia than Prime Minister Yatsenyuk. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the country has been split between Western Ukraine and its more western orientation and Eastern

⁸⁵ Frye, T. 2014. A Tale of Two Russian Narratives. <<http://perspectives.carnegie.org/us-russia/a-tale-of-two-russian-narratives/>> (29.06.2015). [Frye 2014]

⁸⁶ Kristol, I. 2003. The Neoconservative Persuasion. – The Weekly Standard, August 25, 2003. <<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/003/000tzmlw.asp>> (30.06.2015).

⁸⁷ Frye 2014.

⁸⁸ Moroney, J. D. P.; Kuzio, T.; Molchanov, M. 2002. Ukrainian Foreign and Security Policy: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives. Westport: Praeger Publishers, p. 205. [Moroney, Kuzio, Molchanov 2002]

and Southern Ukraine, which are interested in retaining friendly relations with Russia. There are historical reasons for this split; for centuries western Ukraine was aligned with Poland and the Austrian Empire, the eastern and southern parts were under the Russian rule and Russian language and culture attained primacy, even among ethnic Ukrainians living in these areas. The separatist republics of Donetsk and Luhansk identify themselves through their special relationship with Russia and their adherence to the aforementioned Russian world.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Ukraine's security policy did not adopt a strict Western orientation, but rather intended to build a bridge between the West and Russia. Russia was not treated as a security threat by the Ukrainian political elites, which is characteristic of the Baltic States or of Georgia during the Saakashvili period, and it was generally recognised as a friendly partner nation to Ukraine. The two countries conducted intensive security- and defence-related cooperation. Personal contacts between Ukrainian and Russian military personnel and Army units were maintained after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Before the current crisis, Ukraine was passive in regard to enhancing its political ambitions towards the West and the Western institutions, and never officially aspired to EU accession and NATO membership.

However, Russia uses Eastern Ukraine as a stronghold for destabilising the country and moving it away from ties with Europe. Therefore, Russia is probably more interested in maintaining Ukraine as a satellite state in its sphere of influence than in restoring the greater Russian Empire. Russia produces narratives about Ukraine that are not objective and do not foster crisis management. On June 24 2014, US Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power claimed:⁸⁹

...Time and again – at least 17 times since February – we have gathered here to discuss the situation in Ukraine. And time and again, we've had to dedicate significant amounts of time to reviewing the efforts of Russia to destabilize its neighbor and to refuting the bald misinformation and outright fiction about what is happening on the ground in Ukraine. /.../ Russian rhetoric has been inaccurate, inflammatory, and self-justifying. On June 17, just last week, Foreign Minister Lavrov accused Ukrainian military authorities of carrying out 'ethnic cleansing'. Days earlier a leader in the Duma accused Ukraine of committing 'mass genocide'.

⁸⁹ **Countering Russia's False Narratives on Ukraine.** – DipNote, U.S. Department of State Official Blog. <<https://blogs.state.gov/stories/2014/06/24/countering-russias-false-narratives-ukraine>> (29.06.2015).

The escalation of tensions certainly makes an impact on Ukrainian narratives. On February 5 2015 the Verkhovna Rada imposed a decree that restricts the distribution of movies and TV series about the Russian armed forces that have been released after 1991, because it calls them a threat to Ukrainian national security.⁹⁰ Ukraine's return to Europe signifies a rejection of imperial rule and Soviet totalitarianism. But, if Ukraine is fully integrated into the so-called Eurasian space⁹¹, becoming a part of Europe (including the European Union and NATO) is impossible. The civil war prompted by Russia pushed Ukraine more strongly in the direction of Europe.

Another important issue not sufficiently covered in the analysis is Russia's hidden support for extremist and nationalist movements in Ukraine (e.g. the Right Sector). The political positions of the Right Sector and the representatives of so-called 'Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk' towards crisis management in Eastern Ukraine tend to converge, since both groups reject the Minsk Agreements. Russia's connection with far-right nationalist movements in Europe tends to be obvious.⁹²

Conclusion

The analysis is based on a comparative inquiry into Ukrainian and Russian political narratives and it examines which perceptions have influenced the formation of their security positions. During the crisis, the Great Russian and Eurasianist narratives grew stronger in Russia and the Westernizers started to lose their influence. In Ukraine, the Russophiles were gradually downplayed after the fall of President Yanukovich and his government. The parliamentary elections of 2014 indicate that Westernizers had significantly more public support than Russophiles, but Ukrainian Nationalists also received marginal support from society.

Russia is developing a particular nationalist state narrative that relies on the country's glorious past and its claims to become a leader of the Eurasian nations. The Russian security narrative is a product of the aforementioned state narrative, which prepares the nation to face military threat from the

⁹⁰ **Mashable:** Ukraine is banning films and TV shows that glorify Russia's military. – Kyiv Post, April 02, 2015. <<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/lifestyle/mashable-ukraine-is-banning-films-and-tv-shows-that-glorify-russias-military-385189.html>> (30.06.2015).

⁹¹ **Moroney, Kuzio, Molchanov** 2002, p. 202.

⁹² **Polyakova, A.** 2014. Strange Bedfellows: Putin and Europe's Far Right. – World Affairs. September/October 2014. <<http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/strange-bedfellows-putin-and-europe%E2%80%99s-far-right>> (30.06.2015).

West and consequently identifies Ukraine as a battleground in the value-based conflict between Russia and the Western civilisation. Russia identifies itself as the holder of traditional values facing Occidental decadence. While previously Ukraine preferred to stay in the grey zone between Russia and the West, the anti-Western attitudes have encouraged Ukraine to adopt a more rigorous Western orientation and have actually forced the country to distance itself from Russia's sphere of influence. Through the destabilisation of Ukraine, it is likely that Russia intends to cause massive discontent with Ukrainian authorities, and thus, sooner or later, return the country to the Russian sphere of influence.

Up to the current crisis, Russian and Ukrainian security narratives were close, or at least did not contradict each other. However, they rapidly started to diverge during the crisis. The Western influence has grown in the Ukrainian narratives and dramatically weakened in the Russian narratives. Nationalist narratives have started to play a more important role in shaping national consciousness for both nations. In the long run, social-economic factors may cause changes for both nations – the Westernizers will return to the Russian political landscape and the Russophiles will get more support in Ukraine, as we saw after the Orange revolution. The worst-case scenario may lead to the strengthening of even more extremist forces. If the West intends to maintain its influence in Ukraine, it has to offer large-scale development assistance, similar to the Membership Accession Plan it provides for potential NATO candidates. Social reforms are necessary to avoid a social-economic catastrophe, otherwise Russia will achieve its political goals in Ukraine, and Ukraine will return to the Russian sphere of influence.

2.4. Ukraine in Russia's Sphere of Interests

Vladimir Sazonov, Holger Mölder, Kristiina Müür

Before going any further in-depth with analysing the current Ukrainian crisis⁹³, it is essential to understand the underlying reasons for its outbreak. Russia's painful reaction to the events in Ukraine unfolding with the Euro-Maidan of December 2013⁹⁴ is well explained by Zbigniew Brzezinski⁹⁵ who already two decades ago described Ukraine as an 'important space on the Eurasian chessboard', the control over which is a prerequisite for Russia "to become a powerful imperial state, spanning Europe and Asia".

Ukraine's independence in 1991 was a shock too hard to swallow for the patriotically minded Russian political groups as it meant a major defeat for Moscow's historical strategy, which attempts to exercise control over the geopolitical space around Russia's borders. According to Brzezinski⁹⁶, losing Ukraine decreases Russia's ability to rule over the Black Sea region. Crimea and Odessa have historically been important strategic access points to the Black Sea and even to the Mediterranean through the Bosphorus strait. Throughout history, Ukraine has always been essential to Russian nation-building narratives.⁹⁷ Ukraine holds a special place in Russian national myths as Kyiv has traditionally been regarded as the 'mother of all Russian cities' – also brought out by Russian President Vladimir Putin in his 18 March 2014 address to the members of State Duma and Federation Council.⁹⁸ Therefore, Ukraine does not only play a pivotal role in Russian geopolitical strategic thinking, but also holds a symbolic value as the homeland of the Russian civilisation that should not be underestimated.⁹⁹

⁹³ Тымчук, Д.; Карин, Ю.; Машовец, К.; Гусаров, В. 2016. Вторжение в Украину: Хроника российской агрессии. Киев: Брайт Стар Паблишинг.

⁹⁴ See e.g. Кошкина, С. 2015. Майдан. Нерасказанная история. Киев: Брайт Стар Паблишинг.

[Кошкина 2015]; Мухарьский, А. 2015. Майдан. Еволюція духу. Київ: Наш формат. [Мухарьский 2015]

⁹⁵ Brzezinski, Z. 1997. The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives. New York: Basic Books, p. 46. [Brzezinski 1997]

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁹⁷ E.g. Екельчик 2012.

⁹⁸ President of Russia 2014.

⁹⁹ E.g. Грушевский, М. С. 1891. Очерк истории Киевской земли от смерти Ярослава до конца XIV столетия (Очерк истории Киевской земли отъ смерти Ярослава до конца XIV столѣтія). Киев: Тип. Императорского Университета Св. Владимира В. И. Завадского; Гайда, Ф. 2013. Кто придумал Киевскую Русь и чьим учеником является Филарет

In addition to Ukraine, Russia sees Belarus and the Baltic States as part of the Russian World (*Pax Russica*). However, from the Russian point of view, the Baltic States have chosen the wrong side in the clash of civilisations.¹⁰⁰ This is another reason why Russia perceives the Baltic States as geopolitical puppets of the West, the civilisation that ‘dreams’ of annihilating the so-called unique Russian Orthodox world.

After the fall of pro-Russian President Yanukovich on 22 February 2014, the Kyiv government set on a more determined path towards integration with the West. In Moscow, the possibility of losing Ukraine from its geopolitical sphere of influence was seen as a catastrophic defeat¹⁰¹, probably even more so than the collapse of the Soviet imperial system in 1991. In order to prevent that from happening and to keep Ukraine, or at least part of Ukraine, under its control, Russia occupied Crimea in March 2014¹⁰² and destabilised the predominantly Russian-speaking Eastern Ukrainian regions by means of asymmetric warfare¹⁰³ – information operations, economic measures, cyber warfare, psychological warfare, etc. on all levels. Russia has not taken any initiative favouring international or regional crisis management, though it would have had good tools for mediating between the Ukrainian government, recognised by Russia, and unrecognised People’s Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, had those in charge so wished. Russia’s behaviour during the crisis indicates that Russia is not interested in peace and is trying to use the current crisis to advance its national interests by increasing its political influence as an alternative power to the West. By destabilising Eastern Ukraine and undermining the peace processes, Russia also avoids taking any responsibility for the security and well being of the mostly Russian-speaking people living in the conflict area.

Денисенко? – Ostkraft. Восточное агенство, 15.04.2013. <<http://ostkraft.ru/ru/articles/514>> (12.11.2015).

¹⁰⁰ See **Huntington, S. P.** 1993. The Clash of Civilizations? – Foreign Affairs, Summer 1993, Nr. 72.

¹⁰¹ **Brzezinski** 1997, p. 92.

¹⁰² Concerning the annexation of Crimea see **Mölder, H.; Sazonov, V.; Värk, R.** 2014. Krimmi liitmise ajaloolised, poliitilised ja õiguslikud tagamaad. I osa. – Akadeemia 12/2014, pp. 2148–2161. [**Mölder, Sazonov, Värk** 2014]; **Mölder, H.; Sazonov, V.; Värk, R.** 2015. Krimmi liitmise ajaloolised, poliitilised ja õiguslikud tagamaad. II osa. – Akadeemia 1/2015, pp. 1–28. [**Mölder, Sazonov, Värk** 2015]

¹⁰³ See, for example, **Rosin, K.** 2015. Hübriidsõda Ukrainas. – Eesti Kaitsevägi. 2014 aasta-raamat. Tallinn: Kaitseväge peastaap, pp. 33–39.

2.5. The Legal Narrative: Russia's Claims that Its Actions Are Lawful and Legitimate

René Värk

Russia continuously makes use of international law in order to justify its actions and to legitimise the breakaway regions in Ukraine, but it also claims that Ukraine violates the terms of international law. The Concept of the Foreign Policy of Russian Federation (2013) emphasises that the consistent application of international law is indispensable for orderly and mutually beneficial international relations, and that Russia conducts its foreign policy in accordance with international law.¹⁰⁴

Russia often portrays itself as a guardian of international law. The message is that only Russia understands the original meaning of central legal instruments, notably the United Nations Charter, and general principles of international law. According to Russia, others misinterpret and misuse the rules of international law and therefore destabilise international relations, e.g. the on-going conflict in Eastern Ukraine was begun and continues to be fuelled by the support of the European Union and the United States.

Russia focuses on the rules that regulate and safeguard inter-state relations, e.g. sovereignty, prohibition of the use of force, prohibition of intervention in internal affairs, and respect for territorial integrity. Russia often adheres to an overly conservative understanding of these rules that avoids the discussion of the rights and interests of individuals, and in many ways, it shares the opinion that these rules were carved in stone (e.g. in 1945 with the adoption of the United Nations Charter) and should not evolve over time. In other words, when Russia and other states discuss these issues, they may be using the same terms, but have a different understanding of them.

Although Russia's Foreign Policy Concept gives the international law a prominent role, it is not the only factor that governs Russia's actions. 'Russia pursues an independent foreign policy guided by its national interests and based on unconditional respect for international law'.¹⁰⁵ It is true that a given state's national interests can override its obligations under international law and the state can make a conscious choice to ignore international law when considering its course of action – this is the inescapable reality of international relations.

¹⁰⁴ The role of international law is discussed in different paragraphs of the Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation 2013.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 24.

Russia acknowledges that the fundamental legal instrument of international law is the United Nations Charter (1945). Additionally, Russia likes to refer to such well-known documents as the Friendly Relations Declaration (1970)¹⁰⁶ and the Helsinki Final Act (1975).¹⁰⁷ These sources contain universally endorsed principles such as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-use of force, inviolability of borders, non-intervention and peaceful settlement of disputes. Although Russia stresses the importance of these principles, it has blatantly violated them in connection with Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. When challenged by others, Russia simply denies that it has done anything unlawful (e.g. there are no Russian armed forces in Ukraine, Russia is not providing any assistance to ‘self-defence forces’), or tries to distract others by repeating its propaganda narratives (e.g. someone has to support the people who are mistreated or threatened by the pro-Western regime in Kyiv). Such narratives carry powerful historical connotations and therefore should hopefully end the discussion about the lawfulness of Russia’s conduct by justifying, at least morally, the necessity to fight against extremism and its equivalents.

Russia skilfully uses the mistakes of other states to defend or to justify its own actions. Domestic discussions and textbooks of international law focus and repeat certain events, which show how the West disrespects international law, likes to act unilaterally (outside the authoritative collective mechanisms, foremost the United Nations) and, as a result, is not trustworthy. Most notably, these events include the NATO military operation in Kosovo (1999), the United States invasion of Iraq (2003)¹⁰⁸, and the Western intervention in Libya (2011), which eventually exceeded the Security Council’s mandate. These actions are taken as precedents and used to defend Russian interests, despite arguments to the contrary made by the West. However, it is no problem for Russia to abandon its long-term positions in favour of Western positions, if these serve its interests better. In the case of Crimea, Russia abandoned its conservative position on self-determination, presented to the International Court of Justice in 2009 in connection with Kosovo’s unilateral

¹⁰⁶ **GA Res 2625 (XXV)**, 24 October 1970.

¹⁰⁷ **Final Act, Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, 1 August 1975.**
<<http://www.osce.org/mc/39501?download=true>> (30.06.2015).

¹⁰⁸ See more **Sazonov, V.; Mölder, H.; Värk, R.** 2013. Kümme aastat operatsioonist “Iraagi vabadus”: ajalooline, poliitiline ja õiguslik ülevaade ning Iraagi tulevikuperspektiivid [Ten Years Since the Operation “Iraqi Freedom”: Historical, Political and Legal Overview, and Future Perspectives for Iraq]. – *Ajalooline Ajakiri* [The Estonian Historical Journal], Vol. 3, pp. 405–418.

declaration of sovereignty¹⁰⁹, and adopted the liberal position by emphasising that the United States had put forward the position in the same proceedings.

When Russia claims that its actions are in accordance with international law and the actions of other states are in violation of it, it makes no reference to specific legal sources that explain its position. Instead Russia makes general statements that they act in accordance with international law or that other states violate international law. It is more difficult to provide specific rules, which actually support or prohibit particular actions. There are reoccurring concepts, e.g. the protection of nationals abroad, intervention by invitation, and providing 'humanitarian' assistance, but such concepts are either questionable by nature or implemented controversially by Russia. When states provide genuine humanitarian assistance, it is done openly; often in co-operation with IOs/NGOs (e.g. the International Committee of the Red Cross) and in a way that allows others to verify the nature of the assistance. States are certainly free to offer humanitarian assistance, but other states are not obliged to accept such assistance, especially if the delivery is not co-ordinated with them and they cannot verify the contents of the humanitarian convoys, as was the case with Russian 'humanitarian assistance' to Ukraine.

Even if Russia puts forward specific legal arguments to justify its actions, they are used in a twisted way. The regions in Eastern Ukraine should have the right of self-determination and potentially secede, but Ukrainians did not have the right to force the president, who had lost people's confidence, to step down. Likewise, Russia claims that it respects the territorial integrity of Ukraine, but at the same time intervenes in Eastern Ukraine, destabilises the situation in Ukraine, and legitimises the so-called 'People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk' by recognising elections in these regions.

When it comes to sanctions against Russia, it maintains that the sanctions are unlawful, as the Security Council does not impose them.¹¹⁰ The latter has a legitimate right to impose general sanctions binding for all states, but the United Nations is not the only mechanism to impose sanctions. States and international organisations have also such rights, although not unlimited, including retorsions and reprisals. Nevertheless, Russia strives to portray states that have imposed sanctions against Russia as violators of international law, and itself as the innocent victim who is subject to unfair and unlawful coercion by the West.

¹⁰⁹ Written Statement of the Russian Federation, para. 88. For more discussion, see Värk, R. 2014. The Advisory Opinion on Kosovo's Declaration of Independence: Hopes, Disappointments and Its Relevance to Crimea. – Polish Yearbook of International Law, Vol. 34, pp. 111–127, 123–125.

¹¹⁰ E.g. News conference of Vladimir Putin. 18.12.2014. <<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/copy/47250>> (25.06.2015).

2.6. The Budapest Memorandum (1994)

René Värk

The Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances was signed on 5 December 1994. It was done in connection with Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and it provides security assurances by the United States of America, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom. The signatories promised to:

- Respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine in accordance with the principles of the Helsinki Final Act (1975);
- Refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, except in self-defence or otherwise in accordance with the United Nations Charter;
- Refrain from using economic coercion to subordinate Ukraine to their own interests;
- Seek immediate United Nations Security Council action to provide assistance to Ukraine, if it becomes a victim of an act of aggression or an object of a threat of aggression in which nuclear weapons are used;
- Not to use nuclear weapons against Ukraine, except in self-defence;
- Consult with one another if questions arise regarding these commitments.

It is debatable whether the memorandum is a political document or a legal treaty.

When considering the statements made by the signatories during and in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis, it seems that the signatories do not strictly consider the memorandum to be a binding legal treaty. Furthermore, they disagree on what the exact purpose of the memorandum is. For example, United States Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt claimed that the memorandum was not an agreement on security guarantees, but an agreement to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.¹¹¹ If so, it means that no one can accuse the United States and the United Kingdom of not fulfilling their obligations towards Ukraine.

Russia denies that it has violated the memorandum. Firstly, the crisis in Ukraine is a result of complex international processes, which are unrelated to Russia's obligations. Secondly, due to the anti-constitutional coup, Ukraine is

¹¹¹ **Ukraine's forgotten security guarantee: The Budapest Memorandum.** 2014. – Deutsche Welle, 5.12.2014. <<http://www.dw.com/en/ukraines-forgotten-security-guarantee-the-budapest-memorandum/a-18111097>> (29 October 2015).

'a new state with which we have signed no binding agreements'.¹¹² By using this argument, Russia is claiming that agreements are not concluded between States, but between governments, and agreements lose their meaning when governments change. This is not a sound position under international law.

The memorandum speaks mostly about 'commitment' and only once mentions 'obligation' (the *'obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force'* against Ukraine). The wording is not of the strongest kind. But, even if the signatories did not intend for the memorandum to have the same effect as a traditional legal treaty, the memorandum reaffirms matters that are otherwise legally binding. For example, States are obliged to respect the independence and sovereignty of other States in any case. When it comes to providing tangible security and defence assistance in case of an attack against the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine, the memorandum is of little use.

2.7. Tools of Propaganda War in the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict

Viljar Veebel

Introduction

The propaganda war plays a growing role in the confrontation between Russia, Ukraine, and Western countries. However, the criteria and definitions of success in this war have been in constant development during the last two years of the confrontation. The central activities of are based on the same concepts – the demonization and deterrence of the adversary, the legitimisation of one's own activities to the general public, and the mobilisation of the population and promotion of political elites. In the light of public opinion polls on the support to their respective governments and opposition to their adversaries, all three parties have mostly reached their objectives, but should this be considered evidence of tactical success and a sustainable strategy in the longer run?¹¹³

A second important aspect is related to the management of a peaceful exit after participants achieve their goals. Or is an exit strategy part of the success package at all? Maybe success is calculated in terms how the propaganda war contributes to the resolution of traditional conflict.

¹¹² **Vladimir Putin answered journalists' questions on the situation in Ukraine.** 4.03.2014. <<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20366>> (29 October 2015).

¹¹³ **Veebel, V.; Markus, R.** 2015a. Lessons from the EU-Russia sanctions 2014–2015. – *Baltic Journal of Law & Politics*, Vol. 8 (1), p. 191.

To sum up, the main objectives of information campaign are

- to demonise the adversary;
- to deter and demoralise the adversary;
- to legitimize one's own activities to the general public;
- to mobilise target populations;
- to promote one's own political elites.

Despite the cost, it is important to combat psychological attacks for two reasons. First, as the scale and significance of information warfare grows, it draws attention away from the objective circumstances of the conflict, including self-criticism and potential solutions to the conflict. Second, distorted information, initially intended to distract opponents, may eventually come to be believed even by the initial source of the disinformation. Once falsehoods begin to circulate, it is difficult to limit their spread.

The components of propaganda war

A psychological war, waged by experts, can be won – regardless of ideology – by using certain best practices. For example, a democratically elected prime minister is just as eager to climb into a fighter jet for a photo opportunity, as is an authoritarian president. Methods and patterns remain the same as in conventional warfare; no matter how noble and benevolent we are deterring and destroying the enemy is the goal of warfare. Showing empathy to one's opponents scores no points and has no place in history books.¹¹⁴

The processes of competition in an arms race and conflict escalation are similar in both propaganda wars and conventional conflicts.¹¹⁵

The initiatives of one side provide the impetus for the opponent to balance the situation by retaliation. This urges each side to engage in pre-emptive activities to regain the initiative¹¹⁶, which inevitably refuels the confrontation and moves it to the next level. Additionally, while each side tends to see its own actions as defensive, they tend to see the opponents' actions as predominantly offensive, which is the key mechanism of the ever-reactive propaganda war.

¹¹⁴ **Veebel, V.** 2014. Will economic sanctions fulfil Baltic expectations in terms of Ukraine and Russia? – *Baltic Rim Economies*, Vol. 6, p. 42.

¹¹⁵ **Veebel, V.; Markus, R.** 2015b. Wie groß sind die Aussichten auf Erfolg der Russland-Sanktionen? – *Sicherheit und Frieden*, Vol. 33, p. 157.

¹¹⁶ **Veebel, V.; Markus, R.** 2015c. Die Wirtschaftssanktionen als die Mittel der Internationalen Druck. – *Discussions on Estonian Economic Policy*, Vol. 1.

Propaganda wars can be set up initially by an open, balanced, and factual model that reflects the reality and is not prejudiced. In such a case every activity, whether one's own or that of the adversary, is assessed rationally, sensibly, and separately, and communication is not filtered or manipulated. Facts always take precedence in this model, both in shaping positions and accepting alternative explanations. Such a model can work when knowledgeable and educated consumer of information (political elites and interested citizens) refuse to accept simplified or exaggerated solutions without a convincing analysis. The disadvantage of this model is that it is resource-intensive and the information that needs to be understood, and may be massively manipulated by the adversary, can not be analysed with the speed and skill required.

Psychological war in practice: aims and tools

When starting to lose out with the fact-based and open model in propaganda war, a solution is often found in reconstructing (manipulating) the image of oneself and of the enemy, allowing to retake the initiative with less (sometimes limited) resources. As a general rule, replacing an objective image on the media with a distorted (manipulated) one is first justified by the practical need to retaliate in a deserving and operative manner, to mislead the adversary, or with the argument that it's more effective mobilising and motivating the simple-man in the street, and besides, it was meant as a temporary measure anyhow.¹¹⁷

In a constructed field of information during a psychological conflict, it's essential to set a single clear goal. To accomplish that goal, a polarised image is created (the dark enemy vs. the forces of light); attitudes are attributed and, finally, carefully selected facts are served with the 'right' attitudes. Adherence to a clear and confident message is central to the process, as well as keeping the initiative (truth sides with the one who says it first) and quantitative pressure (as many mutually corroborative messages from allies as possible). The methods include presenting true information together with lies, so that the consumer of the message recognises a familiar fact and then is primed to trust the rest, which actually is manipulated information. The reader is patronised (e.g. '*Even a child knows that Putin is insane.*' or '*The Soviet Union liberated Europe from the Nazi terror.*') and the adversary is labelled (e.g. they are 'fascists', 'Nazis', etc.). As a general rule, quantita-

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

tive information is not source-referenced and, in case of conflicting data, a more favourable version is presented – if, later on, one fact or another turns out to have been fabricated, it is suppressed. The main criterion for producing news and press releases is conformity to the ‘right’ ideology with right terminology. One of the keys to popularity is a clear, resolute message and increasing confrontation with the rival parties.¹¹⁸

To sum up, the main components of propaganda war are:

- **Demonise:**
 - Ukrainians deliberately make ‘unimaginable’ excuses, Putin is characterized as insane and not rational, Poroshenko characterized as corrupted;
 - Ukraine has intensified military action in the affected areas;
 - The Ukrainian government wants civilians to suffer as punishment, so the convoy might face further delays;
 - The other side is corrupt.
- **Legitimise, demoralise:**
 - There is a humanitarian catastrophe in UKR;
 - Russia has fulfilled all demands posed by the UKR government;
 - Russia is supported by the Red Cross;
 - Russia fulfils its duty to protect compatriots abroad;
 - Use academic experts to confirm your positions.
- **Mobilise, promote political elite:** Russia acts according to Christian values.
- **Promote political elite, demoralise:** Putin stands above it and is merciful to Ukrainian population; Russia is strong and does what it wants.
- **Confuse:** Mix the precise facts with lies to confuse the readers and abuse their trust.
- **Patronise:** Tell to the readers the ‘respectful’ opinion and positions about the situation.
- **Overload with information:** Give readers so many useless facts that they do not look for additional facts themselves.’

¹¹⁸ Veebel, V. 2015d. From Psychological defence to Propaganda War. Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs.

<<http://liia.lv/en/blogs/from-psychological-defence-to-propaganda-war/>>. [Veebel 2015d]

Outcomes of propaganda war

A reconstructed information field of psychological conflict neither requires nor involves in-depth analysis of the facts or the use of scientific methods, as this would undermine its credibility. Instead, self-legitimising expert opinions, presented by confident government officials or ‘bearded opinion leaders’, glorified with fancy titles, tend to prevail. Propaganda department essayists gather the wind under their wings, while those presenting factual information are forced out of the media as boring sceptics, defeatists, or even influence-agents of the enemy. The hesitant are soon paired with the enemy (*‘You’re either with us or against us!’*), and a difference of opinion in one question is considered a sign of disloyalty in others. Looking for comparative information from alternative sources is seen dangerous and negative (*‘Don’t be influenced by false information.’*). Once labelled as opponents or sceptics, experts and academics that do not agree can be excluded from further debate.¹¹⁹

Political elites, who are able to differentiate between facts and slogans or the reconstructed information field, soon lose interest in facts since slogans facilitate gaining popularity more effectively. As a result, the simple man in the street might easily develop the belief that the information he is given reflects the objective reality and, despite occasional inconsistencies, the constructed images are true. This is especially true when access to information is limited. A reconstructed reality does not pose a problem for the general populace as long as the news remains positive and credible to a certain extent. If there is bread on the table and hot water in the bathroom, there is a decreasing tendency to challenge the logic and plausibility of the news or political elite.

What can the international community learn from Russia’s information warfare techniques in Estonia in 2007 and Ukraine in 2014–2015? Over the past decade, disinformation has become one of the main tools of Russian propaganda during times of conflicts. Russian media sources label their adversaries as ‘fascists’ or ‘criminals’. This is intended to discredit those countries in the eyes of the West and to convince the Russian people that their government’s actions are just. In light of this new reality, providing balanced information sources to Russians is an important policy goal.

Europe needs to devote more financial resources within the framework of European Neighbourhood Policy and Eastern Partnership to create balanced

¹¹⁹ Veebel 2015d.

sources of information that are based on facts rather than prejudice. The EU's recent initiative from March and June 2015 to counter Russian media propaganda with 'positive messages' serves as a first step.¹²⁰

Conclusions

The international community faces serious challenges arising from a new mode of information warfare, which Russia has deployed during the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in 2014–2015. This on-going 'propaganda war' is the most recent and frightening example of information warfare. It reflects a wide array of non-military tools used to exert pressure and influence the behaviour of countries. When skilfully combined, disinformation, malicious attacks on large-scale information and communication systems, and psychological pressure can be even more dangerous than traditional weapon systems, since they are extremely difficult to discover and combat. Today psychological warfare involves certain 'best practices'. Disinformation, media propaganda, threats, and psychological techniques are used to deter or to destroy opponents. Defending against such attacks requires an open and balanced model that is based on facts, reflects reality, and is not prejudiced. The best antidote to information warfare is for the public to assess the conflict situation rationally and individually, and to guarantee that communication is not filtered or manipulated. Facts should take precedence, as should the assessment of alternative viewpoints. Knowledgeable and critical 'consumers of news' do not expect simplified and exaggerated solutions. They expect a thorough analysis of all aspects of the story. But providing this model of careful journalism is resource-intensive.

The main threat of a gripping and gradually deepening psychological war is that it draws attention away from the objective circumstances of a conflict, self-criticism, and solution scenarios. In time it may sever the political leadership from access to objective information or alternatives (Hitler had the same problem with actual precise news from the front during WWII), because bearers of good news, even if calibrated or distorted, are rewarded, but critical experts are ostracised, however reliable.

The second threat of a reconstructed information field is that distorted information meant to deter the adversary, may also be accepted at face value

¹²⁰ Veebel, V; Kulu, L; Tartes, A. 2014. Conceptual Factors Behind the Low Performance of the European Neighbourhood Policy. – Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review, Vol. 31, pp. 85–102.

by the populace and eventually by the political elites. The constructed world-view achieves supremacy over the actual circumstances. Markers to measure information objectivity or avoid manipulated information will be seen as unnecessary, because there is only one truth. Once the construction has been set in motion and the wish for plausibility has been overpowered, every new piece of news seems to drift further from the truth in comparison to the earlier news stories.