

# Situation in Ukraine as a Threat to International Security (Part One)

„(...)without Ukraine Russia is no longer an empire  
but with Ukraine – bribed at first, then  
subordinated – it becomes one immediately<sup>1</sup>”

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Recent events in Ukraine related to Russia's impact on some regions of this country raised concerns in the international security environment, not only focused on this region, but in a broader, international aspect. Complex internal situation of Ukraine, as well as Kremlin's aspirations to constantly strengthen its position as a major player on the international politics stage, caused a stalemate in a resolution of such serious problem as jeopardizing the security of not only Ukraine, but the international one as well.

**Keywords:** International security, military security, armed conflict, Russian foreign policy.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The dissolution of the Soviet Union initiated serious transformations in the international security of both spheres of the global politics, including breakdown of a bipolar world and Central-Eastern and Eastern Europe, which resulted in the creation of many breakaway, independent states, including the independent country of Ukraine.

Unfortunately, such political situation, for many reasons, is not suitable for some countries, and also, in some cases, for various groups within the Ukrainian population. It is therefore necessary to pose the question: Why? During the times of the Soviet Union in its full strength, Ukraine was an essential part of it. Its importance resulted from many aspects, one of which was rich natural resources<sup>2</sup>, and population, which after Russians, was the second largest in the USSR. As a result of changes that took place in the Soviet Union on 16<sup>th</sup>

July 1990, the Supreme Council of Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (UkSSR) adopted *Declaration of Ukrainian National Sovereignty*, but remained a part of the Soviet Union. A year later, on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1991, the Supreme Council of Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic adopted the *Act of Proclamation of the Independence of Ukraine*, which resulted in creation of the contemporary state of Ukraine. The proclamation of independence crowned centuries-old struggle of Ukrainian people for the right to have their own state, freedom, and development of their own culture, thus becoming a competent member of an international community<sup>3</sup>.

## 2. ROUGH BEGINNING AND EVEN ROUGHER AFTERMATH

Unfortunately, from the beginning of its independence Ukraine has had problems with maintaining unity, both in social, political, cultural, and organizational sense.

<sup>1</sup> M. H. van Herpen, *Wojny Putina (Eng. Putin Wars)*, Wydawnictwo Pruszyński i Spółka, Warsaw 2014. p. 377.

<sup>2</sup> Most important ones are deposits of coal and lignite (Donbas Coalfields), and iron, magnesium, titanium, mercury, aluminum and nickel ores. Among other raw materials biggest deposits are: sulfur, potassium salt, phosphates, kaolin, graphite, nepheline (for the production of soda) and alunite (for producing potassium).

<sup>3</sup> Despite that fact, it was also decided, that the will to live in independent state of Ukraine should confirm every citizen of Ukraine. Because of that, on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1991 referendum took place, wherein 90 percent of its participants confirmed that they want their country to be independent. On the next day this fact has been recognized first by Poland, then by Canada and Hungary.

This situation was closely connected with its historical legacy, deep political and cultural division of its population, and tendencies existing within this state. Certain countries consider Ukraine as a “seasonal” state. Moreover, it was blamed for proliferation of atomic weapons<sup>4</sup>, destabilization of the region, and still unsolved the Chernobyl problem<sup>5</sup>.

From the beginning Ukraine proceeded to solve most vital problems regarding its internal and external security. Abidance to imposed limitations, that comes from applying the before mentioned *Declaration of Ukrainian National Sovereignty* regarding weapons of mass destruction (WMD), which allowed to sign, in December 1994, the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances. It established that Ukraine had to return to Russia the nuclear weapons, previously received by Ukraine from the Soviet Union. This way, Ukraine acceded *The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*. Thanks to signing this agreement, in exchange for nuclear disarmament, Ukraine had received an assurance of its sovereignty and territorial integrity<sup>6</sup>. It is worth to mention that in years 1994-1996, under above mentioned memorandum, Ukraine gave away the 3<sup>rd</sup> world's biggest nuclear weapon reserves<sup>7</sup>. Owning such significant reserves, classified Ukraine as one of the major atomic states in the international politics. One might wonder, if situation which has developed in this country, is adequate to international guarantees and benefits, that Ukraine should receive as part of ratification of the Budapest Memorandum of 1994.

<sup>4</sup> The matter of proliferation of WMD was partly included in document from 1990 which is the Declaration of Ukrainian national sovereignty. The mentioned declaration referred to three “iron principles”: prohibition of use, production and storage of atomic weapons.

<sup>5</sup> In the matter of a Chernobyl accident, biggest ever accident in a history of a nuclear energy, which took place on 26<sup>th</sup> of April 1986, which occurred as a result of an explosion of hydrogen in nuclear reactor in Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

<sup>6</sup> At first, the agreement has been signed by three nuclear powers: Russia, United States of America and United Kingdom. Later on it has been also adopted by China and France

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-ze-swiata,2/memorandum-chroni-ukraine-to-niestety-tylko-teoria-rosja-wykorzysta-luke-prawna,403945.html>, [access: 20.01.2015].

Unfortunately, as a result of misguided internal and external politics, young independent country quickly started to submerge itself in destabilization and deal with enormous problems, decreasing its potential.

One of the main reasons causing this condition of a state was the major turn by Leonid Kuchma, the president of Ukraine at the time, in Ukraine's external politics, which by resignation from aspirations to become a NATO and the European Union member, outlined the perspectives for the state.

One of the first attempts to heal the condition of the state was the Orange Revolution in 2004<sup>8</sup>. Ruthlessly approaching social storm was an enormous hope for society for a better future for a state, as a result of a promises given by its political leaders. All promises were to come true by conducting essential reforms. Unfortunately, taking time as a determinant, revolution did not even bring Ukrainian state closer to changes in the functioning, to call them revolutionary. Ukrainian struggle to move away from post-soviet patterns of governance allowed only to slow down authoritarian system, but taking into account faulty reform of a constitution, it contributed to stagnation of Ukrainian state bodies. For the western neighbours, Ukraine once again lost its credibility in the subject of European integration. By trying to find positive aspects of the Orange Revolution one has to note that the media indoctrination had decreased significantly which resulted in weakening state control over the means of social communication<sup>9</sup>.

In the following years even deeper destabilization of a state took place, due to corrupted politics, abandoning a series of economic reforms and giving up on a breakthrough in a process of getting Ukraine closer to the European Union or NATO. Among these factors, Russia strengthened its impact on Ukraine. Its activity increased in direct proportion to time spectrum and it concerned both bilateral relations between Russian and Ukraine but also in arena of international politics.

<sup>8</sup> Por. A. Eberhardt, *Rewolucja której nie było (Eng. Revolution that did not happen)*, (online) [http://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/punkt\\_widzenia20.pdf](http://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/punkt_widzenia20.pdf) [access: 13.01.2015].

<sup>9</sup> Por. A., Kaniewska, *Ukraina - trudna droga do demokracji (Eng. Ukraine - difficult road to democracy)*, (online) <http://www.psz.pl/127-unia-europejska/agnieszka-kaniewska-ukraina-trudna-droga-do-demokracji>. [access: 13.01.2015].

Ukraine was consumed by a powerful political crisis which over the years led to Wave of manifestations and protests all over the country, which in November 2013 reached their apogee on Maidan Independence Square, and have been referred to as Euromaidan<sup>10</sup>.

Since Ukraine achieved its independence, there were never such consolidated and intensified social mutiny. The hotspot took place at the end of 2013, when the president Viktor Yanukovich did not personally sign the Ukraine–European Union Association Agreement<sup>11</sup>. Not signing such an important document resulted in the fact that opposition demanded his resignation. In short period of time the opposition stand on that matter divided society, which resulted in real revolution<sup>12</sup>.

The first attempt to solve this out-of-control situation was using Berkut special police units<sup>13</sup>. Fierce methods used by specialized police units, instead of suppressing the protest has led to exacerbation of the situation and spreading it across the country. The breakthrough happened at the beginning of 2014, when the aftermath of the protests was a tragic for the demonstrators but fruitful for the revolution. The result of the social turbulence, in the country and abroad, was forcing Yanukovich, the president of that time, to restitution of a previous constitution from 2004 and to lead to an earlier election. Only a few days later, the president Viktor Yanukovich was removed from the office and probably fled the country<sup>14</sup>.

The aftermath of the events connected with the situation after the Kiev revolution and Yanukovich fleeing from the country, was a coup in Crimea in March 2014.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.polskatimes.pl/artykul/1049426,euromajdan-nowa-pomaranczowa-rewolucja-trwaja-protesty-w-kijowie-zdjecia-video,id,t.html?cookie=1> [access: 21.01.2015].

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.euronews.com/2013/11/29/ukraine-fails-to-sign-landmark-deal-at-eu-summit/> [access: 23.01.2015].

<sup>12</sup> As a result of political pressure from Russia towards Ukraine, the most important political plan of Kremlins has succeeded, Viktor Yanukovich in exchange for a 15 billion dollars and lowered gas prices, did not sign an association agreement with EU, which met with social dissatisfaction, and in a result the breakout of a protests.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.gp24.pl/apps/pbcs.dll/article?> [access: 23.01.2015].

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.rmfm24.pl/raport-ukraina/fakty/news-wiktor-janukowycz-poszukiwany-listem-gonczym,nId,1111121#> [access: 24.01.2015].

### 3. RUSSIAN FEDERATION ACTIONS TOWARDS UKRAINE

Over the past decade Kremlin politics has been constantly moving towards strengthening its position, so that it will always be seen as the prime player in the arena of international politics. In its imperialistic aspirations, Kremlin does not forget about an important place which is taken by Ukraine, thanks to which it will be able to realize all its plans towards reintegration of the post-soviet space<sup>15</sup>. All those activities are being conducted so that it will be possible to come back to the years of the great glory and power which was during the times of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics. Not without the reason, Russia is conducting so called “Ukrainian policy” which is based, among others, on controlling both Ukrainian territory and its economical capabilities. The result of this policy and undisputed hegemony could be establishing a south-west border on a Carpathian Mountains<sup>16</sup>. Unfortunately, this vision is highly probable and its finale might lead to a civil war and in the result, complete collapse of the state.

According to M. H. van Harpen “during NATO-Russia Council in April 2008 Putin called Ukraine “complex state formation”. If NATO issue is added there,” he said, “along with other problems, this may bring Ukraine to the verge of existence as a sovereign state. Later during the same summit, in a discussion with the US President George Bush, Putin said that Ukraine was “not a real country”<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Por. <http://politykawschodnia.pl/index.php/tag/geopolityka-rosji/> [access: 24.01.2015r].

<sup>16</sup> Por. T. Ołowski, *Konflikt na Ukrainie – aspekty geopolityczne (Eng. Ukrainian Conflict – geopolitical aspects)*, FAE Policy Paper no 4/2014, (online) <http://fae.pl/faepolicypaperukrainaaspektygeopolityczne.pdf> [access: 24.01.2015].

<sup>17</sup> Van Harpen M. H., *Wojny Putina (Eng. Putin Wars)*, Wydawnictwo Pruszyński i Spółka, Warsaw 2014, p.370.

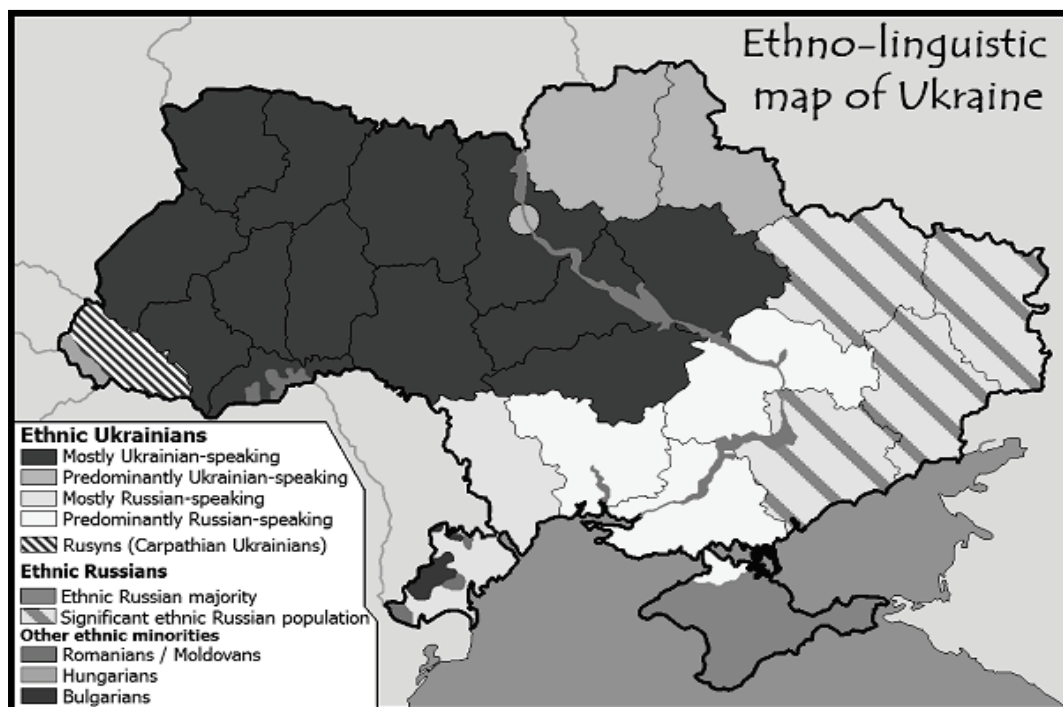


Fig. 1. Ethno-linguistic map of Ukraine.

Source: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/12/09/this-one-map-helps-explain-ukraines-protests/> [access: 29.01.2015].

The consequences of Putin's words were other official actions taken by him and others Russian representatives. They had huge impact on how the Russian politics would be conducted and its aftermath towards Ukraine, especially towards upcoming events that were soon to begin on Crimean peninsula. Among those representatives were mainly most influential personalities from Russian political circles, as well as other non-political ones.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> It is, inter alia, about visit of a Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Cyril, whom between 27<sup>th</sup> July and 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2009 remained in Ukraine. The purpose of visit was to silence pro-independence sentiment among Ukrainian clergy. After his visit, the next step of an official Russian representatives in this "war of nerves" has been publication by president Medvedev an open letter and media coverage to the Ukrainian president Yushchenko. Rhetoric contained therein pointed out a thread from the sender of this message towards Ukrainian nation. The key element in this game, was declaration from Russian Federation that it will introduce since 2015 passports for citizens of member states of CIS, who want to cross Russian border. The bargaining in this game was of course about Russian gas. Firstly the favorable offer of selling the Russian gas with better prices, then postponing the Jamal-Europe 2 project, concerning the gas main, which was planned to bypass the territory of Ukraine. Thread, which Putin gave by phone to Ukrainian representatives,

"Ukrainian topic" has been realized not only in an area of international politics by Russian Federation. It is worth to mention in a few words about its security policy towards a neighbour which Russia was looking at with anxiety. Records on that matter, included in the most important state documents regarding security policy of Russian Federation, concerning, among others, defence of the interests of its citizens abroad, in case of life-threatening danger<sup>19</sup>. The meaning of this record, taking into account cultural and ethnic conditions of Ukraine, clearly testifies about Russia approach towards Ukraine and, what is worse, about its potential outcome. Information shown in Fig. 1 confirms the taken course in Russian security document.

Upon the information provided by the map, it can be stated that Ukraine, as far as its citizens are

concerned potential limitation or liquidation of industry in many branches of Ukrainian economy. This situation might have happened if Ukraine would not agree to join the Eurasian Union. More on this topic in: Van Herpen M. H., *Wojny Putina (Eng. Putin Wars)*, Wydawnictwo Pruszyński i Spółka, Warsaw 2014, p.271-275.

<sup>19</sup>A. Łomanowski, B. Musiałowicz, *Kierunki rosyjskiej polityki zagranicznej (Eng. Directions of Russia's foreign policy)*, p. 36 (online) <https://www.bbn.gov.pl/1/kierunkirosyjskiejpolitykizagranicznej.pdf>. [access: 24.01.2015r].

concerned, is divided mainly into two parts. The western part – strongly ethnically connected with Ukraine and the eastern part, where ethnical relations and other determinants may not positively affect its national unity. Its eastern side is definitely more in the circle of interests of the Russian Federation. It is not only about the ethnic tendencies. It is a part of Ukraine with many natural resources and mineral deposits, which caused it to be more developed in terms of heavy industry. Adding geopolitical aspect to those two arguments that have been presented, clearly gives us an answer why the Russian Federation might be so much interested to exercise full authority over this region<sup>20</sup>. The entry in current doctrinal documents<sup>21</sup> might be easily applied to any kind of military actions that the mentioned state is taking or might take in a future.

The Security Council of the Russian Federation commented signed in December 2014 *The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, that “firstly it concerns new threats to the Russian Federation, which appeared due to the situation in Ukraine, and events in Africa, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan”<sup>22</sup>.

It is written in this document that “in order to protect interests of the Russian Federation and its citizens and maintaining international peace and safety, formations of the Russian Federation Armed Forces may be used, according to generally accepted principles and international law, international agreements of the Russian Federation and the federal legislation”<sup>23</sup>.

According to the second doctrinal document, *The National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation until 2020* it might be assumed, that year 2020 will be the key year to the military security matter. Colossal armament modernization program of Russian Federation Armed Forces is scheduled for completion and in a result giving the Russian Federation real military force, putting

Russia among the biggest military powers in each and every aspect.<sup>24</sup>

In this very moment, the Russian Federation Armed Forces are in the middle of its modernization program, and its results are giving more and more clear and more impressive results for their use. According to A. Wilk “Seeing Russian army – so as Russia in general – is no longer an evaluation (often based on poorly congruent facts), and became a category of confection of faith. It would be truism, to state, that truth lays somewhere in the middle. From one year to another more and more points suggest that Russia is becoming once again a military superpower. The open question remains its ability as a state to financially bear the military potential which has been and still is created”<sup>25</sup>.

By making attempts to compare military strength potentials between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, it has to be stated that at this very moment, the Russian Federation has bigger potential – Fig. 2.



Fig. 2. Comparison of military strength between Russian Federation and Ukraine.

Source: <http://www.libertynews.com/2014/03/video-report-on-the-ground-ukrainian-footage-shows-a-fraction-of-the-russian-military-might-being-brought-to-bear-on-the-people-of-ukraine-while-the-russian-president-says-he-has-no-intentio/> [access:29.01.2015r].

Because of that, if making considerations over some issues in current Russia - Ukraine relations and resulting tense situations, one can notice some similarities with David and Goliath story.

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.forbes.com/sites/dougschoen/2014/11/10/war-continues-in-eastern-ukraine-and-makes-it-to-the-west/> [access: 29.01.2015].

<sup>21</sup> It is mainly the Military Doctrine of Russian Federation and National Security Strategy of Russian Federation until 2020.

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-ze-swiata,2/nowa-doktryna-wojskowa-rosji-co-sie-w-niej-zmieniło,501897.html> [access: 29.01.2015].

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.3obieg.pl/doktryna-wojskowa-rosji-3> [access z 29.01.2015].

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.konserwatyzm.pl/artykul/11950/obraz-sil-zbrojnych-federacji-rosyjskiej-po-przylaczeniu-kry> [access: 29.01.2015].

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.wiecz.pl/czasopismo/s,czasopismo\\_szczegoly,id,583,art,16184](http://www.wiecz.pl/czasopismo/s,czasopismo_szczegoly,id,583,art,16184) [access: 29.01.2015].

Not only the numbers represents full capabilities, but also many factors may decide. It all could only settle in real conditions, in particular if we take into account a modern warfare model, especially in its irregular form.<sup>26</sup>

Assuming that full confrontation would begin and last, its consequences would be irreversible, not only in the aspect of both states safety, but also in regional dimension, and one might assume that would grow to global matter.

#### 4. CRIMEA CRISIS – THE FIRST PHASE

Among all Ukraine regions, Crimea is characterized by the highest individual nature. Most of the region is inhabited by Russians, representing fifty-nine percent of whole inhabitants of the peninsula. As national group Ukrainians rank only second, with twenty four percent. Another national group in terms of numbers are Tatars who used to be landlords of the Crimean land, and represent twelve percent of the whole inhabitants. The last five percent is occupied by Armenians, Greeks, Karaits and Bulgarians.

One of the most typical quality of this region is its ethnical diversity. The history of Crimea affiliation to Ukraine is also particular. When Russians conquered Crimean Khanate in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, they incorporated Crimea into the territory of the Russian Empire, afterwards the Soviet Union.

Ukraine in 1954 received peninsula from the Soviet Union in recognition for bicentennial anniversary of signing the Pereyaslav Agreement, under which it was once taken under subject to the authority of Russia.<sup>27</sup> First voices undermining the legitimacy of the transfer of Crimea and pressing towards the actions to detach it from the state of Ukraine appeared in Russia after 1991.<sup>28</sup>

Russian majority living in Crimea demanded that peninsula would be attached to its native motherland or regaining complete independence from Ukraine. The compromise that could be reached in the dispute was to establish that

territories of peninsula will be the Autonomic Republic of Crimea.

Despite having huge dose of freedom and actual governance over the territory, on no account it could satisfy the Russian side. In many aspects Ukrainian government had its supremacy and it has been the bone of contention to this day.<sup>29</sup>

In the beginning of 2014 Crimea became the object of the biggest East-West crisis since the Cold War. By the decision of the Supreme Council of Ukraine, the bill which could give a number of privileges to national minorities in Ukraine was cancelled. It was a prelude to intensify the increasingly growing aversion to both Russian and Ukrainian side of a conflict.

The series of protests began, in which participants demanded convincing emergency session of the Supreme Council of Crimea, in order to hold a referendum regarding the region's independence. The situation started to develop dynamically when the Russian soldiers deployed in Crimea and also armed representatives of a pro-Russian minority started to participate in manifestations. The aim of such actions was most of all to manifest the strength and attempt to show who truly controls the peninsula.<sup>30</sup>

The Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs and the armed forces were put in a state of increased readiness, which was a perfect excuse for the Autonomic Republic of Crimea to ask Kremlin for help in securing peace and safety for its citizens.

The chain of events led to a very controversial actions from the Russian side, namely the assembly of the Supreme Council of Crimea and the City Council of Sevastopol, who took steps towards passing the declaration of independence of the Crimea Republic, thereafter, initiated referendum regarding incorporation of Crimea to the Russian Federation, which ended in nearly hundred percent endorsement for incorporation of Crimea peninsula into the Russian Federation. In the light of the public opinion, the very process of the referendum as well as its results left a lot to be desired, which meant it was different than it was expected to be.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Por. T. Szczurek, *Konflikty Zbrojne (eng. Military Conflicts)*, WAT, Warsaw 2009, p.141-174..

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.swiat.newsweek.pl/o-co-chodzi-w-konflikcie-na-krymie-kompendium-newsweek-pl,artykuly,2816.html> [access: 02.02.2015]

<sup>28</sup> Por. *Achillesowa pięta Ukrainy (eng. Achilles heel of Ukraine)*, „Nowa Europa Wschodnia”, no 1, 2009, p. 22-30 (online) [http://www.new.org.pl/23, numer \[access: 02.02.2015\]](http://www.new.org.pl/23, numer [access: 02.02.2015])

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.swiat.newsweek.pl/o-co-chodzi-w-konflikcie-na-krymie-kompendium-newsweek-pl,artykuly,2816,1.html> [access: 02.02.2015]

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.edition.cnn.com/2014/03/31/politics/crim-ea-explainer/> [access: 02.02.2015]

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.swiat.newsweek.pl/prawdziwe-wyniki-referendum-na-krymie-wpadka-rosjan-newsweek-pl,artykuly.html> [access: 02.02.2015]





Fig. 3. Crimea in a historical and political perspective.

Source: <http://www.interaksyon.com/article/82811/infographic--why-do-moscow-and-kiev-covet-crimea> [access: 02.02.2015].

The entire event led to the ratification of a completely new constitution by the Crimean parliament, as well as the set of new enactments, under which the Crimea Republic is a legal and democratic state included in the Russian Federation.<sup>32</sup>

### 5. DONBAS SITUATION – THE SECOND PHASE

The Donetsk Coalfield, often referred to as the Donbas, is a vital region of Ukraine due to its richness and variety of ores such as coal, mercury and salt. Without any doubts, it is one of the most important economic regions of Ukraine, which makes it very attractive for the Russian Federation.

The events from the beginning of 2014, which have been mentioned earlier in this article, had a direct impact over the escalation of the conflict in the eastern part of Ukraine. Waves of protests, organized by pro-Russian and anti-governmental groups, in a short period of time turned into full scale armed conflict in which sides are the

Ukrainian government and separatist forces of self-proclaimed republics of Donetsk and Lugansk. The separatist forces consisted of not only the ordinary Russian citizens, but above all Russian paramilitary groups, which in considerable part consisted of veterans of latest armed conflicts in which they had taken part as citizens of the USSR or the CIS.

The Donbas separatism is a conglomerate of various groups of interests which fulcrum is the Russian Federation – its representatives are settings main tactical and strategic targets and have deciding impact over the situation in the region. Among various separatists groups the conflicts arose, the oligarchs connected with the former Region Party have also been trying to keep some influence. The fights among particular groups of interests are becoming more intensive as the situation on the front is becoming calmer.<sup>33</sup>

The Russian side has been prepared very well to conduct the conflict in such dimension. Even crossing the Ukrainian border was not a problem,

<sup>32</sup> Por. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/04/11/us-ukraine-crisis-crimea-constitution-id> [access: 02.02.2015]

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/komentarze-osw/republiki-wojenne-w-donbasie-rok-po-wybuchu-konfliktu> [access: 15.06.2015]

as demonstrated by Kremlin in August 2014 and the “humanitarian convoy” case. The route of the convoy was both in an area under pro-Russian separatists control, as well as in the area that was never under their control. The Russian Federation under the counterfeit excuse of helping their own citizens that qualified as a national minority could without any major problems supply the separatists.

Russian commitment in the conflict is a primary guarantor of the Donbas separatism. The strategy adopted by Kremlin, skilfully powered and has been still powering, among others, the logistics of DPR<sup>34</sup> and LPR<sup>35</sup>. In a short interval of time, the separatists could recreate their combat ability, recapture most of the lost territory, lost before as a result of fights with governmental forces. The key element which guarantees the so called republics the survival is an open border on the stretch of 400 km – this is where money, materials, ammunition and personnel flows.<sup>36</sup>

It was a huge blow for Ukraine, especially because the whole world could only watch Kremlins actions and do almost nothing about it.

The hope to stabilize the situation in eastern Ukraine took place at beginning of September 2014. Both sides of the conflict signed the Minsk Protocol, which was an attempt to cease fire.<sup>37</sup>

Unfortunately with the beginning of 2015 the truce was broken and the military actions alongside the whole Donetsk front were resumed – Fig.4.

The Russian side benefited from such situation, continuously conducting transfer of troops and military equipment. Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko, during the World Economic Forum in Davos, on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015 stated that in Ukraine, over 9 thousand of Russian troops were deployed. He summoned the Russian Federation to withdraw its troops and close the border between them.<sup>38</sup>

Nonconformity to bequests in the Minsk Agreement, and the attempt to force to accept the conditions of conducting conflict imposed by Kremlin is the current policy imposed by Moscow.



Fig. 4. Current borderline of eastern Ukraine.

Source: <https://news.pn/en/RussiaInvadedUkraine/124801> [access: 03.01.2015r].

<sup>34</sup> DPR - Donetsk People's Republics

<sup>35</sup> LPR - Lugansk People's Republics

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/komentarze-osw/republiki-wojenne-w-donbasie-rok-po-wybuchu-konfliktu> [access: 15.06.2015]

<sup>37</sup> <http://rt.com/news/185700-lugansk-donetsk-special-status/> [access: 03.02.2015r]

<sup>38</sup> <http://glosmawiekszosc.pl/pdf/eskalacja.pdf> [access: 03.02.2015r]



## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The situation which has developed in Ukraine and is still evolving towards dangerous direction, in a wider perspective might endanger regional safety, and some people even point out to the even broader impact of this phenomenon. With such military and political activity, the lack of actions taken by international institutions and organizations might arise concerns.

According to K. Sobczak “the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, and the Russian-Ukrainian war in Donbas that followed it, re-evaluate the safety environment in Europe. The need to enhance the military security dimension has been reflected in recent actions taken by bodies of key importance for Poland – NATO and the United States. In this context the European Union attitude arouses questions, especially in the dimension of the Common Security and Defence Policy. The UE answer to the actions taken by the Russian Federation was inadequate to the ambitions of the occurrence as an important factor in the field of security (*security actor*) and was limited to the diplomatic pressure, visa sanctions, as well as financial and economic sanctions. However, in the face of increase of conventional military threats, the question how should the UE security policy change arises”.<sup>39</sup>

D. Boyd in his book wrote that “Lavrov states, that Moscow does not control separatist movements in Ukraine. Kiev states quite the opposite. What does Putin think about it, nobody knows, because Russian president took Sun Zi advice, to keep your opponent guessing, to heart. One can only guess if he had listened to Ivan the Terrible whispers, that he should focus on the situation in his own Russian backyard, by using a sudden and overwhelming annexation of eastern Ukraine, if Europeans and Americans didn't get involved in the Ukrainian crisis”.<sup>40</sup>

It is hard to point to the specific solution in what way and how the current situation will develop, especially in eastern Ukraine. On the one

hand, the activity of separatist forces is increasing, with greater military involvement of the Russian Federation. On the other hand, Ukraine should define itself in its endeavours, primarily in the sphere of its internal functioning.

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Date submitted: 2017-11-29  
Date accepted for publishing: 2017-12-04

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