

SECURITY COUNCIL
Topic C: Deciding upon Measures to Stabilize
the Ukrainian Territory

Chair Elen Bianca Souza
Vice-Chair Camila Rocha
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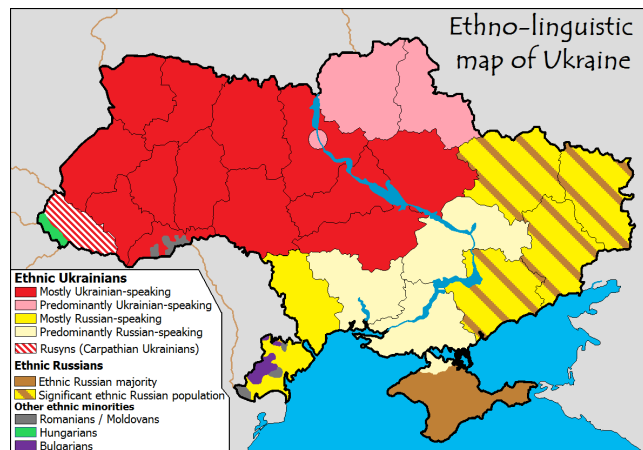
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Background information

In order to understand the current crisis in Ukraine, it is important to notice how its history has influenced its demographics. In the 18th century, after the partition of Poland, most of the current Ukrainian territory fell under the Russian Empire, while the extreme west fell under Austrian rule. In order to unify its empire, Russia established policies that limited Ukrainian culture and language and promoted Russification. As a result, many Ukrainians escaped Russian oppression towards the west, initiating the Ukrainophilia, while the ones who stayed in Eastern Ukraine and accepted the imposition of Russian culture experienced Russophilia, dividing the Ukrainian population culturally.

With the First World War and the Russian Revolution, Ukraine declared autonomy in 1917 and independence in 1918. In 1922, Ukraine's territory became part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and



underwent intense Russification. Under Stalin and the temporary Nazi rule during World War II, there were massive purges, executions and exiles. In 1944, a significant portion of the Crimean population of indigenous population, known as Tatars, was deported to Asia while many ethnic Russians moved into Ukraine, especially into Crimean peninsula, which was transferred to the Ukrainian SSR in 1954. As a result, currently, 17% of people living in Ukraine identify themselves as ethnically Russian and 30% speak Russian as their native language. In regards to the Crimean peninsula specifically, 60.4% of the population is Russian, while 24.0% Ukrainian and only 10.2% Crimean Tatar.

In 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed, granting Ukraine the right to determine its future. The parliament decided for independence from Russia, and the nationwide referendum indicated that 90% of the population agreed. Nevertheless, Ukraine maintained strong ties with Russia. Regardless of the struggling economy, Ukraine enjoyed a period of stability from independence until 2004, when the Orange Revolution broke out.

Orange Revolution

In the 2004 presidential election, there were widespread reports that Viktor Yanukovich, who was supported by Russia, only won due to vote-rigging and voter intimidation. His opponent, Viktor Yuschenko, who believed Ukraine should strengthen ties with Europe, led to massive



protests in Kiev's Independence Square. The movement that became known as the Orange Revolution gained momentum. There were thousands of protesters daily in Kiev, while throughout Ukraine, there were acts of civil disobedience, sit-ins and strikes. As a result, on December 26, Ukraine's Supreme Court canceled the results of the previous election and ordered another election. The revote was deemed fair by domestic and international observers, and Yuschenko received 8% more votes than Yanukovich. In January 2005, Yuschenko started his term and the Orange Revolution ended.

As promised, Yuschenko implemented policies to strengthen ties with Europe. However, such actions didn't help improve the Ukrainian economy, which faced rising debt and other difficulties. On top of that, Ukraine increasing relations with Europe was received with disapproval by Russia, which cut off gas supplies in 2006, further deteriorating the

situation. The economic scene was worsened by the 2008 international crisis. In the 2010 presidential elections, Viktor Yanukovich ran against Yulia Tymoshenko. Yanukovich once again campaigned closer ties with Russia and won. During his term, there were many scandals of corruption and cronyism. In addition, Yulia Tymoshenko, a major opposition leader, was imprisoned on baseless charges of abuse of power.

Initially, as president, Viktor Yanukovich pursued better relations with both Europe and Russia. In 2013, he was negotiating a trade association agreement with the European Union (EU). However, one of the conditions set by the EU was the release of Tymoshenko. Russia pressured Yanukovich, and in November he announced Ukraine would abandon such partnership deal and would be a closer ally with Russia.



Euromaidan (active phase: Nov 21 - Feb 23) and Ukrainian revolution (Feb 18-23)

On November 21, there were demonstrations in Kiev's Independence Square for alignment with Europe and against corruption, initiating the Euromaidan. The intense protests continued for months. When the police tried to remove protesters, these resisted, leading to mutual aggression. Three months after the beginning of the protests, the government crackdown spurred violence, resulting in Ukraine's bloodiest conflict since its independence from USSR. In February 20, protesters were killed by military and police, and in February 21, Yanukovich left Kiev. The protesters considered his fleeing to be Yanukovich's resignation, and so established a transitional government, whose President was Oleksandr Turchynov. The interim government prepared for new elections, which

were held in May 25, 2014 and elected Petro Poroshenko. While the European Union and the United States recognized the elections, Russia claimed it was illegal as it was a result of a coup d'état. According to Russia, Yanukovych remained president.

One of the results of the Euromaidan was the Crimean Crisis. In late February, unmarked, armed soldiers arrived in Crimea. According to many, they were Russians, claim that was initially refuted by Putin. On March 1, exiled Yanukovych requested that Russia use military forces "to establish legitimacy, peace, law and order, stability and defending the people of Ukraine". In response, Putin officially marched into Crimea to protect ethnic Russians and military installations.



Additionally, pro-Russian forces seized government buildings, including the Parliament, raised Russian flags, and there were marches in support of Russia.

On March 6, the Crimean parliament voted to join Russia. Accordingly, on March 16, 96% of the Crimean population also chose to join Russia through a referendum, which was considered unconstitutional and illegal by the US, EU, Ukraine, Crimean Tatar representatives , but fair by Putin. On March 17, the Crimea declared independence from Ukraine and asked to join Russia, and on the following day Putin and the separatist government of Crimea signed a treaty to make Crimea, including Sevastopol, part of Russia. On March 27, the United Nations General Assembly resolution 68/262 stated that the referendum was invalid and the annexation illegal. The United States, United Kingdom, France and the whole European Union claimed Russia was violating Ukrainian territorial integrity, which is against international law, and imposed sanctions on Russia and Russian individuals and companies.

Tensions in Eastern Ukraine

At this point the status of Crimea as a federated region of Russia is perceived as a fait accompli while the situation in Eastern Ukraine is still very much subject to change. The conflict is established between pro-Russian separatists supported and armed by Russians and the Ukrainian government



in Kiev. Exceptional scrutiny has been directed towards these groups after the shooting of Malaysian Airlines Flight 77 over disputed Eastern Ukraine territory. In order to deescalate the conflict, another ceasefire was attempted, starting on September 5. As the West continues to apply economic sanctions and political isolation to punish Russia, the fate of Ukraine's territory remains unpredictable.

Timeline

- 1921 - most of Ukraine is taken over by the USSR
- 1944 - ethnic cleaning (Crimean Tartars were deported)
- 1991 - dissolution of the USSR; national referendum in support of Ukrainian independence from Russia
- 2004 - **Orange Revolution** leads to a re-run of the presidential elections, which Viktor Yushchenko wins instead of the previously elected Viktor Yanukovich
- 2006 - Russia cuts off natural gas supplies to Ukraine shortly in response causing gas shortages in Europe
- 2010 - Viktor Yanukovich was elected President; his main opponent, Yulia Tymoshenko, is arrested
- 2013, November - **Euromaidan** started in response to Yanukovich announcing Ukraine would abandon an agreement that strengthened ties with EU

2014

- February 18-20 - around 100 protesters are killed by military
- February 21 - Yanukovich flees Kiev
- March 1 - Russian parliament authorizes Putin to use force in Ukraine to protect ethnic Russians and military installations
- March 6 - Crimean parliament voted for independence from Ukraine
- March 15 - Russia vetoed a UN resolution criticizing Crimea's referendum
- March 16 - results of Crimean referendum indicate 96% of voters chose to join Russia
- March 18 - The Treaty on Accession of the Republic of Crimea to Russia was signed



- March 27 - United Nation General Assembly declared the referendum invalid and annexation illegal
- April 6 - War in Donbass or War in Eastern Ukraine began
- April 15 - Ukrainian parliament declared the Crimea a temporarily occupied territory by Russia
- May 11- Pro-Russian Donetsk and Luhansk declared independence
- May 25 - Petro Poroshenko was elected President of Ukraine
- May 30 - Defense Minister Mykhailo Koval stated Ukrainian forces will continue their offensive against rebels
- June 10 - Poroshenko orders the creation of humanitarian corridors
- June 16 - Russia cut off all gas supplies to Ukraine
- June 25 - Russia's parliament canceled approval of the use of Russian forces in Ukraine
- June 27 - EU signed an association agreement with Ukraine
- July 17 - Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 was shot down
- August - Russia sent a massive convoy carrying aid for Eastern Ukraine
- September 5 - ceasefire agreed between Ukrainian forces and pro-Russia rebels in effect



Key Terms

- territorial integrity - the internationally recognized principle that nations should not promote separatist movements or border changes in other nations; invasions and border changes imposed by force are infractions of this principle and considered acts of aggression.

"All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations". (Charter of the United Nations, Article 2, 4)

- self determination - the right to freely choose one's destiny in the international order, including one's state and territorial boundaries.

"The Purposes of the United Nations are: ... 2. To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace". (Charter of the United Nations, Article 1)

- Crimean Peninsula (Crimea): a major land mass on the northern coast of the Black Sea; connected to the south of the Ukrainian mainland by the Isthmus of Perekop, through which it receives electricity and water; separated from the west of Russia by the 15-km wide Strait of Kerch. According to the 1997 Partition Treaty on the Status and Conditions of the Black Sea Fleet between Ukraine and Crimea, Russia has the right to use the Port of Sevastopol and have limited military in the Crimean Peninsula.

- Sevastopol: a city with special status located in the southwest of the Crimean Peninsula on the Black Sea. Given such location, it is a strategically important naval base.

- Autonomous Republic of Crimea - internationally viewed as an autonomous, parliamentary republic of Ukraine, located in the Crimean Peninsula; capital: Simferopol.



- Crimean Federal District - one of the nine federal districts of Russia since its establishment on March 21, 2014; includes Republic of Crimea and federal city of Sevastopol.
- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) - a single-party Communist state that united several Soviet republics from 1922 to 1991; capital: Moscow. In the Cold War, was the superpower of the European Union (EU) - a political and economic union between 28 European states.

- European Union - a political and economic union of 28 member states mainly located in Europe.



- Eurasian Union (EU) - a planned economic union between Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia. Envisaged as an alternative to the European Union, the Eurasian counterpart is meant to go into effect by January 1, 2015 and is seen by many as an attempt to restore the former Soviet bloc. Russian pressure for Ukraine to join the Eurasian Union became a key motivator for Euromaidan protests in late 2013.



- energy dependency – Russia holds the largest natural gas reserves and the 8th largest oil reserves in the world and supplies Europe with about 24% of its natural gas and 30% of its oil. This dependency has inhibited the EU from taking assertive actions to condemn Russia's interventionism in the Ukraine.
- economic sanctions – sanctions have been the primary manner the West has punished Russia for its transgressions and they are being expanded significantly in recent waves by the US and the EU. The effectiveness of these measures to cripple the Russian economy and function as a deterrent to further aggression have been continuously questioned.

Guiding Questions

- To what extent is the people's right to self-determination a justification for infringing territorial integrity? Is it acceptable for a country to invade another if it claims to help the citizens?
- How does Russia's invasion of Crimea compare to other invasions? What lessons can be learned through this comparison?
- To what extent is it legal for the opposition to protest, hold referendums and call for elections? How and who decides who is the legitimate government? What should be considered a coup d'état?
- The origin of the word "Ukraine" reveals it means borderland. How has Ukraine served as such?
- What is the economical, political and military significance of the eastern Ukraine territory, particularly the Crimean Peninsula?
- Compare and contrast the current Ukrainian crisis to the Cold War. What measures and courses of action might escalate the conflict, and should therefore be refrained?
- To what extent has each of the following factors contributed to the escalation of the Ukrainian Crisis: history, geography, politics, economy, ethnicity?
- Evaluate the impact of the media and propaganda on the Ukrainian crisis.

Further Research

- <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2014/05/timeline-ukraine-pro-russian-unrest-20145912017783471.html>
- <http://edition.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2014/ukraine>
- <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/02/140224-ukraine-protests-president-ousted-history-geography-background/>
- <http://www.summer.harvard.edu/blog-news-events/conflict-ukraine-historical-perspective>
- <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/article/495846.html>
- <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26248275>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2nklduvThs>