Towards a New Cold War?

https://www.e-ir.info/2018/06/23/towards-a-new-cold-war/

TARAS KUZIO AND PAUL D'ANIERI, JUN 23 2018

This is an excerpt from *The Sources of Russia's Great Power Politics: Ukraine and the Challenge to the European Order*. Download your free copy here.

Russia's annexation of the Crimea, hybrid war and military interventions in Eastern Ukraine caused a dramatic transformation of the international landscape, especially in Europe, ushering in what some regard as a new Cold War. In summer 2017, just after new, tougher sanctions against Russia were adopted by the US, the traditionally liberal *Washington Post* ran an editorial entitled 'We're on the road to a new Cold War' which placed the blame for the deterioration in relations entirely on Russia. The article went on to say that: "Twenty-five years after the Cold War ended, relations are back in a deep freeze. What happened? The current tension did not come about because the United States suddenly wanted its old adversary back. What happened is a response to bad choices taken by President Putin of Russia. These choices were made deliberately in Moscow, perhaps for Mr. Putin's own reasons of domestic politics and foreign policy. They are the main reason for the tension that now exists."[1] In Russia, the feeling was mutual.

By summer 2017, Russians viewed the US and Ukraine as the two countries with the most unfriendly relations towards Russia.[2] Similarly, 75–80% of Ukrainians held negative views of Putin, the State Duma and the Russian government. This chapter reviews the international ramifications of Russia's annexation of Crimea and hybrid war against Eastern Ukraine. We begin by surveying the dramatic changes in attitudes prompted by the conflict. We summarise the Minsk I and Minsk II agreements, showing why the Minsk process is needed to manage the conflict, but cannot resolve it. We then examine the politics of sanctions, stressing that the symbolic impact was more important than the economic effects. We then pull back to examine the dynamics of the new Cold War, which includes not only this conflict, but the one in Syria and the broader Russian information and cyber war against the West. Ukraine is the central battleground in this new Cold War, and the weakness of its government's commitment to reform causes difficult dilemmas for its supporters in the West. Finally, we examine the prospects for settling the conflict, concluding that there is little likelihood of an improvement, because the different sides differ so profoundly in their goals.

Changing Attitudes

On top of its intervention in Ukraine, Russia's interference in European and US elections consolidated the view in the West of Russia as an adversary that could not be trusted and needed to be confronted. For Russia, complaining about Western behaviour was replaced with confronting it, and the ostracism that resulted strengthened old fears about Western hostility and consolidated domestic support for confrontation.

These dire consequences did not result automatically from the annexation of the Crimea and interventions in Eastern Ukraine. While those military actions spurred a rapid hardening in the US, Europe remained much more hesitant. In Germany, for example, many across the political spectrum were sympathetic to Russian claims on Crimea[3]. German-Ukrainian relations in the decade prior to the crisis had been poor, largely due to Germany's prioritisation of ties with Russia, such that in 2009, Ukrainian national security adviser Horbulin told the US ambassador that there are two Russian Embassies in Kiev, one of which speaks German.[4] Even after the annexation of Crimea, many German elites supported a pragmatic policy of accommodating a great power rather than sacrificing for a small one

with little independent history.[5] This drew both upon the legacy of West Germany's *Ostpolitik* during the Cold War and upon an earlier German geopolitical tradition of discounting the smaller countries lying between itself and Russia. Germans had a tendency, Timothy Snyder warned the German Bundestag, 'to overlook a people which was not regarded as a people. All of the language about Ukraine as a failed state, or Ukrainians not as a real nation, or Ukrainians divided by culture – in the German language – that is not innocent. That is an inheritance of an attempt to colonise a people not regarded as a people'.[6]

Putin's dissembling and dishonesty regarding Crimea shifted German elite and public attitudes even among many who had been inclined to compromise. In March 2014, Chancellor Merkel, noted for her pragmatic relationship over many years interacting with Putin, described him as 'in another world' after a phone call discussing the Crimea invasion. Merkel now sees Putin as an existential threat to the European and Trans-Atlantic institutions that have constrained German nationalism and made it one of the strongest European supporters of devolving sovereignty to supra-national institutions.[7]

The downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 in July 2014 cemented the change in opinion. Because the flight had taken off from Amsterdam, and because many of the passengers were Dutch, the war was brought home for many in Western Europe. The fact that Russia supplied the weapons and the crew that downed the plane made it much harder to ignore Russia's role in Eastern Ukraine. Putin's implausible denial stoked outrage. In Western Europe, it was now much harder for respectable politicians to counsel compromise with Russia. By autumn 2014, Western Europe and the US were more united on Russia than they had been since the days before West Germany's *Ostpolitik* in the late 1960s.

International Mediation: From Normandy to Minsk

In early June 2014, at a celebration of the anniversary of the D-Day invasion in World War II, Russian, Ukrainian and EU leaders agreed to form a Trilateral Group consisting of Russia, Ukraine, and the OSCE to try to negotiate an end to the violence. The group began meeting within days, but not much progress was made until September, when battlefield developments forced everyone's hands. In August, Ukrainian forces nearly succeeded in separating Russia's Donetsk proxies from those in Luhansk and threatened to completely surround and defeat them. Russia responded by invading with regular Russian army units. The Russian army and its proxies routed Ukrainian forces at Ilovaysk and pushed toward the Ukrainian port city of Mariupol, seizure of which would be a major step in linking Russia with Crimea. When this attack was blunted, the military basis existed for a ceasefire: Russia was ready to consolidate its gains and Ukraine to cut its losses.

The agreement was based on a plan that President Poroshenko had advanced in June, calling for a ceasefire, a buffer zone from which heavy weaponry would be excluded, and OSCE monitoring. Two political provisions were to cause considerable acrimony in the following months. One committed Ukraine to giving the Donetsk and Luhansk increased self-rule. This would require a change in Ukraine's constitution, which Poroshenko could not unilaterally deliver, even if he wanted to. The second was for new elections in the contested regions, which could not be carried out in conditions of war, and which were certain to provoke conflict over what constituted 'free and fair' (elections organised by DNR and LNR leaders in early November 2014 were recognized by Russia but not by Ukraine or the international community). In the short term, however, the priority was to stop the fighting before it got out of control. In this, the agreement was only partly successful, but the international community breathed a collective sigh of relief that the recent escalation had been stopped.

The agreement was violated frequently in the coming months, particularly as Russia's proxy forces attempted to improve their positions. It broke down completely in December 2014/January 2015, when DNR proxy forces waged a new offensive that seized the Donetsk airport from Ukrainian government forces. The offensive effectively killed the first Minsk agreement, but once the insurgents achieved their goal of seizing the airport, there was again potential for a ceasefire, and the Minsk II agreement was negotiated. The terms were largely similar to those of Minsk I, but the ceasefire would be based on the new territorial reality. The negotiations were challenging in part because Russia claimed no control over the DNR and LNR forces, and therefore said it could not be a party to the agreement (taking instead the position of an external mediator). The fact that Russia has continued to claim the role of mediator rather

than party to the conflict continued to hamper efforts to negotiation a solution, but that claim was central to Russia's disinformation campaign and allowed it unusual leverage: when convenient, it could control forces on the ground, and when convenient, it could disown them. This was Soviet-style *maskirovka* in a contemporary setting.

The Minsk II agreement has been in place formally since February 2015, though violations continued to occur on a daily basis, along with a public relations war in which each side tries to draw attention to the other's violations. It is difficult to tell how much effect the Minsk process has had. The fact that Minsk I was jettisoned when one of the actors saw a military advantage indicates that its power to restrain the actors is weak. At the same time, as a way of signalling a willingness to accept the prevailing lines of control, it may have some stabilising effect. Politically, there appear to be costs for being seen as violating the agreement. In particular, Ukraine is constrained from abandoning Minsk, even if it is widely viewed as dead, because doing so would likely trigger a move among some in the EU to remove sanctions on Russia.

In many respects, the West was a peripheral actor, with much of the impetus for ceasefires being driven by the interests of Russia and Ukraine. Prior to both Minsk agreements, Russian proxy forces were making gains at the expense of the Ukrainian government. When those gains had been achieved (saving the DNR in summer 2014 and seizing the Donetsk airport in January 2015), the Russian side was willing to consolidate its gains via a ceasefire. The West's role was to encourage the ceasefire, to help broker the deal, and probably most important, to disabuse the Ukrainian leadership of the hope that significant Western military assistance would be forthcoming.

The OSCE also played an important role, providing the observers who were meant to report on whether heavy weapons had been pulled back in accordance with the agreement and whether the ceasefire was being followed. It is important to recognise that these were observers, not peacekeepers, and they struggled to do their job effectively and safely. Especially in Russian held areas, they repeatedly found themselves denied access and in some cases detained.

Sanctions

The most notable Western response to the conflict has been the sanctions enacted against Russia by the EU and the United States. The diplomacy around the enacting and maintaining of the sanctions has been complicated, and the fact that a relatively far-reaching regime of sanctions was enacted and has been maintained is testament to the breadth and strength of feeling in the West concerning Russia's actions. While the general consensus is that the sanctions have had only a modest effect on the Russian economy, we contend that symbolically the sanctions have been very important. As much as Putin and Russia sometimes seem to relish being cast as outlaws in the West, their reaction to the sanctions shows that they are very sensitive about their perceived international legitimacy.

The sanctions enacted over the Russia-Ukraine conflict were narrowly targeted on specific individuals in the Russian government and on three sectors of the Russian economy: finance, oil and gas, and defence.[8] They identified specific entities in these sectors for whom access to Western capital was limited, and placed travel bans and asset freezes on specific individuals identified with the annexation of Crimea. These sanctions were the result of considerable bargaining within the EU and between the EU and the United States.

Most analysts agree that the effects on Russia's economy have been limited[9], and that the decline in the Russian economy in 2014–15 was driven primarily by decreases in global petroleum prices, not by the sanctions. As Richard Connolly notes, measures aimed at the energy sector were not intended to have a short-term effect, but rather to deprive Russia of the capital and technology it will need to bring new sources of oil and gas on line in the long term.[10] Obviously, the sanctions have not compelled Russia to withdraw from Crimea or from Eastern Ukraine. Whether they have deterred other actions by Russia – such as further intervention in Ukraine, is a matter of speculation.

In some respects, the sanctions may strengthen Putin's grip on Russia. Russia's countersanctions, which focused on food imports, may make Russia more self-sufficient and boost prices for domestic producers at the cost of increased prices for consumers. To the extent that trade decreases, Russian oligarchs will be more dependent on the Russian

economy, and therefore on Putin. For particular individuals, the effect might be larger. Those officials no longer allowed to travel to Europe or to buy property will find it much harder to develop a 'Plan B' in case they fall out with Putin, leaving them more dependent on him. Moreover, many have argued that the sanctions have actually helped Putin by providing an excuse for the economic stagnation that has resulted from the absence of reform in the Russian economy. Oddly, both Western governments and the Russian government have incentives to exaggerate the impact of the sanctions. Connolly concludes that the likely long-term effect of the sanctions will be to turn Russia further away from a Western-style (market oriented and open) economy to one that is more closed and statist.[11]

This does not mean that the sanctions have not had an important impact. Because they have incurred significant costs for some Western businesses (both directly and as a result of Russian counter-sanctions), they are a 'costly-signal', which is taken more seriously because it has been expensive to send. While simply declaring opposition to Russia's actions is inexpensive ('talk is cheap') the sanctions signal both to Russia and within the West the seriousness with which Russia's actions are regarded, and provides a message that more actions might be taken if the situation worsens. Economic sanctions thus represent a middle point between 'cheap talk' and a military response, which would be a costlier signal. Most importantly, the sanctions demonstrated that the West would come together rather than fragmenting. Whether that unity can be maintained is a question, and for those reasons the symbolic importance of the sanctions will endure.

Finally, it is important to recognize what has been left out of the sanctions. The German government has continued to support the Nordstream-2 gas pipeline project, which is wholly owned by Russia's Gazprom, despite the impact it will have on EU and NATO members Poland and the three Baltic States as well as on Ukraine's energy security. When completed, Nordstream-2 will allow Russia to completely circumvent the Ukrainian pipeline network for its gas deliveries to Germany and much of Western Europe, thus removing the only lever Ukraine has against Russia in general, and making it possible for Russia to shut off gas to Ukraine without harming its customers further west. Nordstream-2 will achieve a strategic goal that Russia has sought since the early 1990s. This project demonstrates the strong interest that Germany and other European states still have in commercial relations with Russia, and the strong incentive they have to sacrifice Ukraine's interests for their own. In one of the earliest and most successful efforts by Putin to gain influence inside Western governments, he established a very close relationship with Merkel's predecessor, Gerhard Schroeder, and then hired him to lead the original Nordstream project. Schroeder's Social Democratic Party, Merkel's coalition partner, has continued its support for Nordstream despite opposition from both Merkel's Christian Democratic Union and the Green Party.[12]

A New Cold War?

There is no agreed definition for a 'cold war', but the application of the label to the current era seems appropriate, despite the differences between the present era and that between 1945 and 1991. The change is in large part one of perceptions: in both the West and Russia, the perception is now widely shared that, at the strategic level, the contest is a zero sum game: what is good for Russia is bad for the West, and vice versa. A report from the UK's Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) captured a typical Western view:

Until 2003, it was widely believed that a modernising Russia might be accommodated into the international system as a constructive and benign actor. Variations on this view have given way to the realisation that Russia, on its present course, cannot be a partner or ally, and that differences outweigh any common interests.[13]

Similarly, the Russian analyst Dmitri Trenin states:

The change that the Ukraine crisis has brought about is not territorial, but rather strategic and mental. Russia has finally quit its policy of trying to integrate into the West and become part of the Euro-Atlantic system. It has returned to its home base in Eurasia and has prioritised links to non-Western countries.[14]

That does not mean that there are not issues on which collaboration will be mutually beneficial, as with the extensive array of arms control and crisis prevention efforts during the first Cold War. It does mean that rather than agreeing on the basic norms and rules of the game, and assuming that at the strategic level the two sides' goals are compatible –

the assumption that prevailed prior to 2014 – leaders and citizens on both sides now advance incompatible norms and believe that at the strategic level, the two sides' interests conflict. One wonders whether in the future the period from 1991 to 2013 will be regarded not as a period between two cold wars, but as a temporary lull, analogous to the era of détente in the 1970s, in one long cold war.

The dynamics of the present era resemble those of the first Cold War in other respects as well. The West is widely seen as defending a status quo that, depending on one's view is either beneficial to international security and democracy or represents a US effort to maintain its hegemony at the expense of others. Russia once again is seen by many as a revisionist power seeking to overthrow widely accepted norms, and by some as a threatened state trying to defend its security. Again, the conflict has a strongly domestic and normative component, with the West claiming that the conflict is in large part about the battle between democracy and autocracy, while Russia points at various elements of hypocrisy in the West's position.

In another sense, the current era shares a dynamic not only with the post-World War II era, but of the much deeper history of politics in Central and Eastern Europe. At the end of World War II, as at the end of World War I and as during the era of Catherine the Great, the question was where the line between Russia and the West will be drawn. In each of those cases, it was determined by primarily troops on the ground. A Russian commentary published in 2017 took the positive position that 'Russia used a favourable situation to launch an active policy and thereby moved the frontier of its confrontation with the West further away from its border'.[15] Geography offers few natural borders in this region, and bounded by the powerful states of Germany (Prussia) and Russia, the in-between states have struggled for centuries to maintain their independence. Unsurprisingly, each side tends to see as normal or as the status quo the dividing line that best serves its interest today. When Russia invokes distant history, it focuses on the period *after* Russia seized Crimea in the late eighteenth century, not before (and in this context, it is worth noting that from 1815 until World War I, the Russian empire included Warsaw and much of present day Poland). The West focuses on the status quo post-1991, when Russia was pushed from territory that it had held since the 17th century. From the realist perspective, all the rhetoric about self-determination and history is simply ammunition in a contest for territory.

Several important dynamics of the Cold War have returned, even if the boundary between Russia's 'sphere of influence' and the West has moved eastward several hundred kilometres. First, NATO is once again a very important organisation. Russia complained bitterly about NATO's eastward movement, and some Western authors blame NATO expansion for Russia's military intervention in Ukraine. That remains in dispute, but it is clear that Russia's actions in Ukraine have ensured a renaissance of NATO and the deployment of more NATO forces to regions closer to Russia's borders.[16]

Second, as was the case in the Cold War, Western strategy today is based largely on the assumption that in time, Russian autocracy will be replaced by democracy, and a less aggressive regime will come to power. While there may have been good reason to assume that a post-Soviet regime would be less implacable that the Soviets were, there is less reason to be optimistic that a post-Putin government will be friendlier. The available evidence is that Russia's actions in Ukraine, and especially its annexation of Crimea, are highly popular in Russia, and not merely the project of an unpopular and autocratic government. The majority of Russian opposition leaders and groups, including Alexei Navalny, support the annexation of the Crimea. In a summer 2017 television debate with proxy leader Igor Girkin, Navalny did not criticise Putin's military policies towards Ukraine on principle but only in terms of the cost to the Russian economy.

More broadly, nationalism appears to be genuinely popular in Russia, as it is in many other states. Thus, many have asserted that one reason for Russia to annex the Crimea was that doing so bolstered Putin's popularity in anticipation of the 2018 presidential elections. 'Russia's longer-term interests would best be served by structural reforms at home and mutual accommodation with outside powers, small as well as great. But such policies would threaten the ability of Putin and his circle to hold on to power'.[17] Moreover, with Putin's power relatively well consolidated, he probably has more room to manoeuvre and to make deals with the West than would a successor seeking to build popularity and defend him or herself against nationalist challengers. Overall then, given what has happened in post-Soviet Russia, we may have less reason to believe now than we did during the first Cold War that a change in regime will be

sufficient to improve relations between Russia and the West. Putin's view that Ukraine is 'Russian' and is rightfully part of the *Russkii Mir* and Eurasia Union – rather than Europe – reflects a broad consensus among Russians. NATO and the West may therefore need a long-term strategy that does not depend on Russian democracy solving the problem.

The EU Response

The EU was inadvertently at the epicentre of the Ukraine conflict. The EU's offer of an Association Agreement to Ukraine was seen in Brussels as a benign engagement with an important neighbour, but this ignored how Putin had come to view EU enlargement into Eurasia, like NATO expansion, as creating a potentially irreversible loss in the geopolitical contest in Central Europe. It is worth noting that the Eastern Partnership did not envision offering its participants EU membership, and indeed was seen as an alternative to it.[18] The same norms that blinded European diplomats to the danger Russia saw in Ukraine joining an Association Agreement led EU leaders to be outraged that Russia deployed naked force to seize Crimea. '[T]he EU brought a low-politics toolbox to a high-politics construction site'.[19]

The EU was the central arena through which the West discussed economic sanctions and efforts to broker a resolution to the conflict. These two issues were linked in a March 2015 resolution making the implementation of the Minsk II agreement a prerequisite for lifting economic sanctions. While the measure was intended to promote Minsk II, the fact that Minsk II is widely viewed as dead means that the sanctions now look semi-permanent. This is especially the case following the adoption of tougher US sanctions in summer 2017.

Arkadiy Moshes argues that the reason that the EU rejected a Georgia-style response ('complain and then move on') is not because of Ukraine's particulars, but because Russia's behaviour in this case appears to be a much more fundamental challenge to the European order. 'There is currently a much better understanding that the era of Yalta-type partitions of Europe is long gone and that Ukraine is no one's to 'give away', whatever classical *realpolitikers* may say'.[20]

Despite broad agreement on the unacceptability of Russian conduct in Ukraine, Europe is not entirely unified on how to approach Russia and Ukraine going forward, and considerable effort has been expended finding positions that can obtain consensus. In part this is about Russia, because there is considerable opposition in some quarters to entering a long-term conflict with Russia, which so recently seemed like a partner. At the extreme, sympathy for Putin's style of rule among the left and populist nationalists in various countries engenders opposition to sanctions and other measures. Latent anti-Americanism probably contributes to that sentiment. In part, however, scepticism about a hard line is about Ukraine, for which many Western Europeans are disinclined to sacrifice.

The NATO Response

The annexation of Crimea and hybrid warfare in Eastern Ukraine prompted European leaders to take a fresh look at their militaries, and to think about how to strengthen them. Much of that conversation has naturally focused on NATO. The end of the Cold War and the presumption of a new order in which violence was 'off the table' in Europe allowed European states to focus on the non-military aspects of security, such as migration. That changed rapidly in 2014, in particular for those states directly bordering Russia. In response to the Ukraine conflict, NATO and its members have rededicated themselves to strengthening the organisation and to reinforcing the part of its mission that consists of 'keeping the Russians out'. As NATO itself has acknowledged, while NATO sees its response to the Ukraine crisis as just that – a response, Russia is likely to see it as further proof of a Western plan to expand NATO at Russia's expense.[21]

Russia's use of 'little green men' in Crimea prompted an immediate concern about what could happen in the Baltic States, which had small armies, large Russian-speaking populations, and NATO Article 5 security guarantee. Were Russia to engineer a rapid invasion in this region, NATO would be hard pressed to defeat it with conventional forces. That reality had led many to oppose membership for those states to begin with, and the fact that they were admitted shows again the extent to which Western leaders believed the rules of the game had fundamentally changed. Now,

they had to face the imminent possibility of being unable to resist Russian invasion and hybrid warfare against a NATO member state. Such a scenario was played out in a 2016 BBC drama where NATO forces responded to Russian hybrid warfare in Eastern Latvia.[22] A 60-mile-wide stretch of rural land called the Suwalki Gap between the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad and Russia's ally, Belarus, is NATO's weakest spot. From the Russian perspective, the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad is isolated being surrounded on all sides by NATO members.

The first major NATO response (after the suspension of collaboration via the NATO-Russia Council in April 2014) was the adoption of a series of 'assurance measures' beginning in May 2014 that evolved into a broader 'Readiness Action Plan' adopted at the September 2014 Wales summit. The assurance measures were aimed at convincing allies in the East, as well as Russia, that NATO could and would defend all of its members, including the three Baltic States. In the immediate aftermath of the Crimea annexation, there was a particular fear that Russia might not take the Article V commitment to the Baltic States seriously, which could lead to a major war. NATO increased fighter jet patrols, naval patrols, and training exercises in the region. The Readiness Action Plan added a set of 'adaptation measures' intended to materially improve NATO's ability to provide the defence to which it has committed. This envisioned expansion of the NATO Response Force, a rapid-deployment force, from 13,000 to roughly 40,000 troops, and creation of a new 'Very High Readiness Joint Task Force' of roughly 20,000 troops, intended to be capable of deploying a brigade of 5,000 ground troops within a few days.[23] Critics pointed out that the force was small and lightly armed compared to what Russia could rapidly deploy (for example, from Kaliningrad) and that more broadly, the gap between NATO's deterrent posture and its actually military ability to counter a Russian attack was growing, not shrinking.[24]

In the longer term, further actions are being contemplated. Among the proposals has been Germany's 'Framework Nations Project', an idea which predated Russia's military actions but has become much more relevant because of them. The idea is to strengthen the relationships by which the smaller militaries in Europe, many of which have specialised in particular missions, could be operationally integrated into the larger ones, which have a broader range of capabilities but are thin in many specific areas.[25] The centrepiece of this more coordinated army would be Germany's *Bundeswehr*. If these proceed, Russia's military interventions in Ukraine would have undermined a key Soviet and Russian goal in place since 1946, namely to limit the military power of Germany.

While Russia's military interventions in Ukraine have increased a sense of urgency within NATO, they have not solved the long-standing problems that have eroded the alliance's military capabilities. Two essential weaknesses interact. First, many of the member states spend relatively low shares of GDP on defence, an issue that has been raised in visibility by US President Donald Trump. Until the crisis, only five out of 28 NATO members spent two percent of GDP on defence. German social democrats are opposed to increasing German military spending to reach the goal of two percent.[26] Second, because NATO consists of over two dozen separate militaries, the whole is less than the sum of the parts. That is a major reason for the Framework Nations Project, but the issue, which has been salient since the 1960s, will not be resolved any time soon.

Russia's Policy

Russia has met the West's outrage over the Ukraine conflict with defiance. It has continued to maintain the legality of the annexation of Crimea, its non-involvement in what it terms a 'civil war' in Eastern Ukraine, and the fault of the West for both conflicts. It has also continued to sustain the conflict in Eastern Ukraine and to increase its capacity to act elsewhere. Moreover, it has upped the stakes by increasing the extent and transparency of its influence campaign in Western capitals and by seeking to interfere in several Western elections. From Russia's perspective, its interference in Western politics is no different than the transnational support for democracy promotion in the post-Soviet region, including the colour revolutions, but this initiative has galvanized resolve in the West and contributed to the further deterioration in relations between Russia and the West.

Russian scholars and leaders focused for years on Joseph Nye's concept of 'soft power', but interpreted it differently than did Nye. Whereas Nye conceived of 'soft power' largely as a resource that increased one's prestige and attractiveness,[27] Russian thinking on the topic tended to focus on it as an instrument, to be deployed to advantage in a conflict. Therefore, rather than increasing Russia's prestige or raising the likelihood that others would choose the

policies that Russia wanted without being coerced, Russia's deployment of its version of soft power has had the opposite effect. Russia's and Putin's standing in the international community have been weakened, not augmented by its deployment of 'soft power'.[28]

Two important questions about Russian policy require some speculation, because the policy itself is not transparent. First, what is Russia's envisioned strategy concerning Ukraine? What are its ultimate goals, and how does it believe it will achieve them? Second, to what extent does Russia consider the new status quo – in which Russia has gained a slice of Ukraine but is isolated from and opposed to the West – to be a favourable outcome that it is content to prolong and defend?

One of Russia's central assertions that continues from the Soviet period is that as a great power it expects to have a veto on major international questions. That helps explain its outrage at cases (such as Kosovo and Iraq) where the US and NATO deployed force without UN Security Council approval. In the Ukraine conflict, Russia has the *de facto* veto it seeks. Any solution, or any change from the status quo, must be something that Russia considers an improvement, because Russia has a great deal of ability to maintain the current situation, or to respond to something it cannot control by making things much worse.

On Crimea, there appears to be no room for bargaining. Russia's annexation of the territory and its rhetoric indicate that Russia intends to retain the territory permanently. It is hard to imagine what would convince it to change its mind, or how Crimea's status could change over Russia's objections. If there is to be normalisation at some point, it will almost certainly have to come via a Western and Ukrainian willingness to accept that.[29] Ukraine has tacitly admitted the weakness of its position by not fighting to reclaim the territory.

On Eastern Ukraine, it is much less clear what Russia's preferences are. The status quo, that of a low-level conflict that can be escalated at any time provides Russia much leverage, and prevents Ukraine from tackling many of its domestic issues. The Minsk provision that Ukraine's constitution would be modified to provide for extensive regional autonomy and local elections also appears very good for Russia, as this would keep the most-pro Russian regions of Ukraine, over which Russia could likely retain extensive influence, within Ukraine. The insistence upon autonomy for Ukraine's Eastern regions has been one consistent aspect of Russian policy. Either way, Ukraine would be prevented from doing anything to which Russia strongly objects. But it is not clear whether Russia prefers a (mostly) 'frozen conflict' or a reintegration of the territories into Ukraine with a high degree of autonomy and Russian influence.

Similarly, if the justification for the conflict was the possibility of Ukrainian membership in NATO or the EU, would some formal agreement for Ukraine to remain outside of one or both of those organisations be sufficient? In the short term, it does not appear that Ukraine, NATO, or the EU would agree to this, but it may be possible in the future to include such a provision in a deal. Several Western commentators have recommended such a move.

Michael O'Hanlon has proposed the creation of 'permanent neutrality'[30] for countries currently not in NATO stretching from Finland and Sweden through Ukraine to Serbia. While an interesting proposal, it relies on the questionable assumption that Russia views all of its neighbours in a similar manner. While Russia does not contest Finnish or Serbian sovereignty, this is not true of Ukraine, making it highly unlikely that Putin would withdraw from the Crimea and abandon the Donbas. O'Hanlon believes that in return for Ukraine dropping the goal of NATO membership, Russia should acquiesce in it joining the EU. That does not address the problem that joining the DCFTA with the EU would rule out joining the CIS Customs Union. In 2014, Russia intervened in Ukraine when only this EU 'enlargement-light' was on offer. A completely different problem with proposals to make Ukraine neutral is that doing so would rewrite the norms of European politics in a way that the EU has staunchly opposed. Europe would be accepting a return to a world in which 'great powers' imposed rules and territorial revisions on the smaller states.

A third problem is that 'non-bloc' status is economically unviable in a globalised world economy. After 1945, free trade areas were not so important, but in the last two decades, with the EU on one side and Eurasian Union on the other, the countries in the middle would be left in an untenable economic position. Switzerland and Norway are members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) while the UK maybe seeking to remain in the EU's

customs union after it has withdrawn from the EU. All recognise that access to reduced barriers to trade is essential, even if they do not want to participate in the deeper integration of the EU.

A reasonable conjecture is that the Russian leadership has a better sense of its tactics than of its goals. Both in Crimea and in Eastern Ukraine, Russia played a long game, waiting and preparing until the time was right to move. That tactic may continue to be attractive. In this view, even if Russia does not have a specific strategy, it may have a belief that with time, a more favourable settlement will be possible than now. In terms of resolving the Ukrainian conflict, this may mean that Russia sees no need to make concessions. In terms of conflict management, this would be beneficial, because an actor that believes the tide is turning in its favour has less incentive to disrupt the status quo than one who believes that its chances are eroding.

The larger question for Russian strategy is whether another several decades of cold war is in its interest. Is there a viable strategy in building an alliance with others who reject the status quo in international affairs? Do those actors have much in common other than a desire to disrupt what they see as US hegemony in the world? In particular, one wonders whether, as China's power continues to grow, Russia will perceive as much threat from China, with which it shares a very long border, as it does from the US and Europe. Currently, and most likely for the indefinite future, Russia needs China more than China needs Russia.[31]

According to prominent Russian scholars and commentators, Russia indeed has a strategy based on and supported by broad changes underway in international affairs. Andrei Kortunov elaborates a new era in world politics, which he calls 'neo-modern', in which older tenets of international politics, such as nationalism and the focus on the nation-state, are replacing 'global universalism'.[32] A similar conception of the changed world guides the 2016 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation: 'The world is currently going through fundamental changes related to the emergence of a multipolar international system. The structure of international relations is becoming increasingly complex. Globalisation has led to the formation of new centres of economic and political power. Global power and development potential is becoming decentralised, and is shifting towards the Asia-Pacific Region, eroding the global economic and political dominance of the traditional Western powers. Cultural and civilizational diversity of the world and the existence of multiple development models have been clearer than ever'.[33]

While some of this rhetoric may be aimed at convincing various domestic audiences of the rightness and the likely success of Russian policy, there is no reason to think that many Russians (and many outside Russia as well) do not believe the basic outline of the argument. The notion that the US and the West are declining relative to Asia, and that the liberal agenda of democracy and free markets is on the wane, is not limited to Russian thinkers. As a result, it appears likely that Russia, believing that it holds a hand that is strong and growing stronger, does not feel much urgency to resolve the Ukraine crisis.

The US and the EU

For much of the post-Soviet era, the United States has been more active in supporting Ukraine than has been the EU. As noted above, however, progress toward an EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and a DCFTA placed the EU in the key spot in the run-up to the crisis. During the Euromaidan itself, the US and EU struggled, generally successfully, to adopt common positions regarding a resolution of the crisis.

Both the EU and the United States sought an outcome to the protests that maintained constitutional and legal processes in Ukraine. The EU, represented by foreign ministers from Germany and Poland, brokered a deal at the height of the crisis on 21 February that appeared to deescalate the crisis, as Yanukovych agreed to restoration of the 2004 constitution and holding of early presidential elections in December 2014. The US supported that deal, but opposition leaders on the Euromaidan (in contrast to the leaders of opposition political parties) rejected it, insisting that after the killings of protestors Yanukovych must leave office. When Yanukovych subsequently fled and was stripped off his office, both the US and EU accepted the act, rather than insisting on obeying the 21 February deal, a decision that Russia saw as evidence of bad faith.

Generally, the US has supported a more strident response than has the EU. This is consistent with the long-term

differences in policies and with the fact that the EU had to find a solution amenable to its 28 members. Thus, the US supported further-reaching sanctions than did the EU, although the differences were not insurmountable, and the two sides were able to agree on a common front. Similarly, the US and EU were able to arrive at common positions on economic and financial support for Ukraine.

Following the imposition of sanctions, discussion in the US turned to what kind of military assistance the US should provide Ukraine. Some policymakers and think tank experts supported supplying military equipment to Ukraine, in order to counter the advantage in weaponry that the Russian military was deploying and making available to its proxies in Eastern Ukraine. Lethal weaponry might directly support Ukrainian fighters on the ground, and indirectly raise the costs of Russian intervention, making it less sustainable. Such a policy would echo US support for the Afghan resistance after the 1979 Soviet invasion, leading to high casualties and eventually forcing the USSR to withdraw. While the annexation of Crimea boosted Putin's popularity, the intervention in Donbas is much less popular, and devoting more soldiers and money to the conflict might be unpopular.

Many others in the US opposed providing military assistance to Ukraine. Russia, it was argued, could match any increase in the quality or quantity of weapons being deployed in the conflict, so the only result of providing weaponry would be to increase the number of casualties from the conflict. Many felt that increased US involvement would validate Putin's arguments about US aggression and increase, rather than decrease, Russian resolve. Moreover, opponents argued, Ukraine and the United States had to accept that Ukraine did not have a military path to resolving the conflict, but instead would have to rely on diplomacy. On this question, the US ended up choosing a policy that matched where the EU already was.

For the US, the Ukraine conflict became subsumed in a much larger set of conflicts with Russia, which together constituted the new Cold War. Even before 2014, the US and Russia were supporting opposite sides in the Syrian civil war, and that disagreement only worsened. Then, Russia's actions surrounding the 2016 US presidential election toxified the relationship dramatically. Ukraine was increasingly a battleground in a larger conflict, rather than an objective of policy in itself. Most important, perhaps, was the belief that Russia's support for Trump's election made it politically very dangerous for his administration to do anything that might be seen as a concession. The US Congress, generally bitterly divided along party lines, nearly unanimously passed a law requiring Congressional approval to lift sanctions. Trump was reportedly inclined to veto the law as an encroachment on executive prerogatives, but feared being seen as soft on Russia. Bipartisan support in the US for a hard line on Russia is stronger than it has been in many years, perhaps since the divisions that emerged in the 1970s over détente.

Ukraine and the West

If the conflict began in part because of Ukraine's pivotal position between the West and Russia, the war has only increased Ukraine's salience. Perhaps the most dramatic impact has been on the EU. For many years, the EU took a back seat to the United States in dealing with Ukraine, but following the Orange Revolution and the launch of the Eastern Partnership in 2009 it took a greater role. In particular, the EU began more seriously applying in Ukraine the same strategy it had applied in the remainder of post-communist Europe; namely, using the attractiveness of a closer relationship with the EU as a means of promoting and consolidating democratic transformation. For the EU, Russia's opposition to the agreement contradicted a dearly held belief, namely that no other country could veto the independent choices of a European state. This notion was crucial to European notions of the post-Cold War order in Europe. Russia's insistence on this point, and its subsequent military intervention, therefore provoked opposition in Europe even among those generally sceptical about Ukraine's European credentials and supportive of good relations with Russia. As a result, following Russia's military intervention, the EU became more committed to Ukraine's success than it had been previously.

The US position was compatible to that of the EU, though with different emphasis. The US was less focused on the principle of Ukraine's freedom of choice, and more focused on the broader challenge that Russia's action appeared to present. The result was largely the same: both the US and the EU, along with NATO, have made the success and stability of Ukraine a high priority. 'The critical element in the new geo-economic competition between the West and Russia is the extent of Western economic support for Ukraine'.[34]

The West's efforts have continued to be undermined by the same patterns of backsliding on corruption and the rule of law that have characterised Ukraine since the early post-Soviet period, led to 'Ukraine fatigue' after the Orange Revolution and could happen again. In short, Western efforts to bolster Ukraine domestically have run into a huge moral hazard problem: because they are so dedicated to combatting Russia's efforts to undermine Ukraine, the West feels compelled to sustain the Ukrainian economy. However, that aid has likely helped the Ukrainian government to persist in power without seriously tackling either the general problems of corruption and the rule of law or the specific commitments it has made to its donors. Under normal circumstances, donors, represented by the IMF, would stop aid programmes on the grounds of non-compliance. The West has hesitated to do this in the case of Ukraine for fear of the government collapsing.

In 2014, there was some hope that the threat from Russia would change the political game in Ukraine and some promising steps were taken, including the appointment of Mikhail Saakashvili as governor of Odesa *oblast* and the formation of new anti-corruption bodies, such as the National Anti-Corruption Bureau. But Saakashvili did not last and the anti-corruption bodies have been prevented from prosecuting high-level officials. More progress has been made on economic, social, fiscal-monetary and energy reforms. Efforts are underway to transform the Soviet-era *Militsiya* into a European-style *Politsiya* and Interior Ministry Internal Troops into a National Guard. President Poroshenko has presided over the creation of a powerful army. Nevertheless, Ukraine continues to lag in the fight against corruption.

A crucial question for the future is whether Ukraine fatigue will resurge to the point where it seems more pragmatic to write off Ukraine than to continue an open-ended commitment to keeping it afloat. A related question is whether a new round of protests might again induce turmoil in Ukrainian politics.

Prospects for Settling the Conflict

The prospects for peace in Ukraine appear to be dim. The minimally acceptable outcomes for the various sides are too far apart to bridge until something significant changes. Moreover, the Ukrainian conflict is now subsumed in the broader cold war between the West and Russia, making it even harder to address. None of the actors can reach a better solution without the acquiescence of other parties who have different preferred outcomes. In such a situation, only the exercise of greater power, and the inflicting of higher costs, might persuade one side or another to change courses.

For Russia, the optimal solution appears to be that the DNR and LNR are re-joined with Ukraine, but with a high degree of autonomy, and with a political leadership controlled by Russia. Russia seeks a kind of 'federalisation' in which the regions would have extensive veto powers over the country's domestic and foreign policies, including the power to block Ukraine joining NATO and the EU. At a minimum, this would provide Russia with a direct and legitimised way to interfere in Ukrainian politics, which Ukraine would see as a threat to its sovereignty. Moreover, any such deal would encounter stiff resistance from Ukrainian public opinion, including veterans of the war and their families and friends, who are growing in number. In August 2015, violent riots broke out outside parliament when it discussed the question of autonomy for the DNR and LNR. Barring Ukrainian capitulation to this regional autonomy plan outcome, Russia appears to be well served by a conflict in which it can ratchet up or down the level of violence as it pleases, without having to take any responsibility for results, claiming the DNR and LNR are breakaway regions of Ukraine over which Russia has no control.

Ukraine's government holds to the implausible position that it is going to retake control of the Donbas and Crimea as well. Both politics and principle prevent Ukraine from dealing with the situation realistically. Politically, the notion of recovering the territory is popular, and leaders cannot admit that the territory is lost. In terms of principle, it seems wrong to acquiesce in what was a clear violation of international law. However, Russia is exceedingly unlikely to give back Crimea, and Ukraine has never shown any inclination to fight for it. The prospects in the Donbas are better, in that Russia has not formally annexed them. But while Ukraine's army is now much stronger than in 2014, Ukrainian officials and think tank experts are concerned that in the event of an outbreak of full hostilities, Russia might annex its two Donbas proxy enclaves – as it did with the Crimea and *de facto* has undertaken in South Ossetia and Abkhazia after its 2008 invasion of Georgia. Two other long-debated scenarios have been that Russian forces might seek to

forge a 'land bridge' from Russian territory east of Mariupol to Odesa, which was widely discussed by Western commentators in 2015-2016, or that Russian forces invade Ukraine from Belarus.[35] The latter scenario was widely discussed in Kiev and the West before and during the September 2017 *Zapad* military exercises in Belarus, one of the largest held by Russia since the disintegration of the USSR in 1991.

An increasing number of commentators within and outside Ukraine have recommended that Ukraine adopt what former US Secretary of State Colin Powell, in a different context, called the 'Pottery Barn' policy: 'you break it, you own it'. The idea would be for Ukraine unilaterally to acknowledge the separation of the DNR and LNR from Ukraine, which would allow Ukraine to move forward with a much more cohesive polity and would leave Russia to deal with the mess in the Donbas. This policy has been repeatedly advocated by Alexander J. Motyl.[36] Some steps were taken in this direction in early 2017, when trade between the occupied regions and the rest of Ukraine was significantly diminished, forcing Russia to step in. Similarly, the cutting off of water to Crimea forced Russia to come up with a plan to address the peninsula's water supply. Such a strategy would include changing the legal definition of the war from that of an ATO to recognising the Crimea, DNR and LNR as 'temporarily occupied territory' with the concept of Russia as the 'aggressor' state introduced for the first time. The new approach will permit the Ukrainian authorities to use the army in the ATO outside anti-terrorist legislation. Defining these three regions as 'temporarily occupied territories' provides the legal basis for Kiev to be not held responsible for the political, economic and social situation in the Crimea, DNR and LNR.

From this perspective, for the same reason that Russia would like to see the Donbas reintegrated into Ukraine, Ukraine would be better off without it. In particular, the loss of Crimea and the Donbas dramatically shifts the balance of electoral politics in Ukraine away from Eastern Ukraine and Russia and toward Central Ukraine and Europe. Again, however, both politics and principle make such a strategy implausible. Therefore, Ukraine is in a position of pursuing a strategy of reintegration which cannot possibly succeed and would weaken Ukraine and its European foreign policy vector if it did.

A variety of other possible settlements have been put forward by commentators in Ukraine and elsewhere in the West. Many include a similar set of pragmatic proposals, such as a cease-fire that freezes the existing lines of control, the delaying of consideration of the permanent status of occupied regions and Crimea into the more distant future, and the neutralisation of Ukraine, in some form. [37] The first of these makes sense, and has been embodied in both Minsk agreements, but has so far been impossible to make stick. The second of these seems inevitable, but on both sides, there are strong feelings that these questions are already answered and are non-negotiable. Russians tend to believe that the annexation of Crimea is an established fact while many in Ukraine and in the West cannot accept the idea of legitimising it. The third suggestion is potentially most interesting because it exposes a profound divide within the West about how to approach the problem, and because, oddly, it is an issue on which many in Europe are more intransigent about than many in the US.

Former US Ambassador to Ukraine Steven Pifer has argued that one danger for Ukraine is that Russia will actually implement its side of Minsk II, withdrawing heavy weaponry and returning the border to Ukraine's control. This would obligate Ukraine to fulfil its side of the deal, including revising the constitution to greatly increase regional autonomy. If the Ukrainian government could not deliver on that, Ukraine would be in breach of the agreement while Russia was not. This might tip support in Europe toward normalising relations with Russia. Pifer speculated that Russia has not chosen this gambit because it may get what it wants without any concession, given that US President Trump seemed favourably inclined, that the EU would likely be occupied with Brexit, and that Marine Le Pen was expected to do well in French presidential elections in 2017. [38] With Le Pen having lost to Emmanuel Macron, and Trump constrained from making concessions to Russia, this strategy is unlikely but will depend on how much Russians become dissatisfied with the current level of conflict.

Ukrainian oligarch Viktor Pinchuk suggested that Ukraine commit to not joining the EU or NATO, separate the issue of Crimea from the Donbas conflict (acquiesce for the time being in Russian control of Crimea) and allow local elections in the occupied regions, even if they cannot be free or fair.[39] He also suggested that Ukraine support the removal of sanctions on Russia. What is less clear is whether all of those steps, which are not politically viable in Ukraine, would prompt Russia to withdraw and stay withdrawn. A major pitfall of Pinchuk's proposal is that Ukrainian

distrust of Russian leaders is at an all-time record high.

A complicating factor for Ukraine is that its position is heavily dependent upon economic and financial support from the West, which may not last forever. The West has a wide range of interactions with Russia, and it is not beyond the realm of possibility that Russia could offer something to the West that it wants more than Ukraine. For example, credible and meaningful help with Iran's latent nuclear programme or North Korea's active programme, or support for ousting Bashar al-Assad in Syria would be tempting to US leaders in particular. Russia has numerous possibilities to foment new problems, which it can then offer its help in solving. So far, the heavy-handed way that Russia has played its cards, especially in interference in Western elections, has made a deal between Russia and the West at Ukraine's expense unlikely, but that could change.

Because it seems inconceivable that Russia will return Crimea to Ukraine, a difficult diplomatic task for the various players in the coming years will be to find a way to accept Russia's ownership of Crimea while not seeming to reward its aggression or undermine the principle that invading one's neighbours and changing borders by force is not acceptable. Put differently, if Russia, Ukraine and the West are ever to move beyond the Crimea annexation, some means must be found to legitimise what seems entirely illegitimate. One alternative would be to follow the policy that the US took relative to the Baltic States during the Cold War. The US never recognised the annexation of the three Baltic States by the USSR, and therefore treated their looming independence differently in the waning months of the Soviet Union. At the same time, the US did not allow the illegality of the Soviet annexation of the Baltic States to block normal relations with the USSR on a wide range of other issues.

Finding a solution of this nature will be much harder on the Donbas question, in large part because Russia, which can veto any arrangement, appears to want neither to annex the territory nor to completely give up control. In other words, Russia's preferred solution is not to have a solution. Trans-Dniestr, the status of which has been in limbo since Russia assisted its proxies to separate it from Moldova in 1991–1992, may be a precedent. Similarly, Russia supported the *de facto* independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia for several years before recognising their independence after it had invaded Georgia in 2008.

Russia's policy of supporting proxy dependencies around its borders is in some respects reminiscent of the Cold War, in which nominally independent governments in Eastern Europe were wholly or largely controlled from Moscow. As that example shows, it is sometimes hard to sustain that control over time. In other respects, Russia's policy represents a throwback to a much earlier period, before the twentieth century, when sovereignty was often incomplete and contingent on deals with great powers, and the borders of states like Poland were revised repeatedly according to the shifting balance of power and the diplomatic needs of more powerful neighbours. It is precisely that system that the EU rejects, and that Russian scholars believe is returning.

Ukraine in the New Cold War

Perhaps the best reminder we can apply from the first Cold War to the second is that it endured for 45 years. The dividing line between East and West was determined largely by the disposition of forces in May 1945. Regardless of whether anyone regarded that line as fair, legitimate or ideal, it endured because no one could change it unilaterally, and the changes that one side would have preferred were unacceptable to the other. A major difference between the Cold War and the new Cold War is that there is no 'iron curtain' separating the sides. Information, cyber and to some extent hybrid warfare can be conducted in the 'enemy's' territory much more easily than when the Warsaw Pact faced NATO in Central Europe.

In the absence of some new disruption, the current division of territory could last a very long time, with Ukraine playing a role roughly analogous to that of Berlin. Trans-Dniestr has already persisted for a quarter of a century, and could not be resolved even when Russia and the West were at the height of post-Cold War comity or when Moldova elected a communist president.

However, just as the Hungarian revolution in 1956 and Prague Spring of 1968 threatened to undo the post-World War II status quo, the situation in Ukraine could still be disrupted, perhaps suddenly. Among the possible scenarios

are these: A new contest for power in Ukraine could lead to the fragmentation of the Ukrainian state, as in the Euromaidan Revolution. Poor economic performance or disgruntlement at high casualties on the frontlines could trigger a new political crisis, and military veterans and nationalists might seek regime change through another Maidan.

Protests in Russia could give Russian leaders increased incentives to pursue a new adventure in Ukraine to rally domestic unity. Alternatively, the growing popularity of the opposition could lead to declining support for Russian military involvement in Eastern Ukraine. Russian efforts to foster separatism and terrorism in Ukraine beyond the Donbas could be renewed with the aim of pressuring Ukraine to acquiesce to changing the constitution to provide the DNR and LNR with special status and the holding of elections in Russia's two proxy republics. The DNR and/or LNR could unilaterally restart full-scale hostilities, dragging Russia with them. This scenario would be similar to that in Georgia where provocations from South Ossetia led to Georgia's attempt to militarily return South Ossetia to Georgian sovereignty. Georgia's leadership wrongly believed in the likelihood of US military support, failed to appreciate Tbilisi had weak support within the EU and did not foresee that its actions would trigger a Russian invasion.

Western governments (either some or all) could move towards tacitly acknowledging Russian sovereignty over Crimea, as Trump hinted at during the 2016 election campaign. The West could seek to broker a deal whereby Ukraine drops its claim to sovereignty over the Crimea in return for a deal on the Donbas. Having claimed that there are no Russian forces in the Donbas, Putin could quietly withdraw them without being publicly backing down. Putin might be threatened by a nationalist backlash from nationalist groups who already believe that he 'betrayed' *NovoRossiya*.

What we should probably not expect is a repeat of 1991, which was a historically unique event. Even if Russia were to have an anti-authoritarian revolution, it does not necessarily follow that a pro-Western government would result, and it is just as likely that Russian nationalists would take power. One major difference between the first Cold War and this one is that in the first Cold War, the conflict appeared to be inexorably linked with communism as an ideology and form of government, so that leaders on both sides could assume that with communism gone, the grounds for conflict were gone. Putin's government is pragmatic rather than ideological; or rather its ideology is that of power politics. There is therefore less reason to hope that a new Russian regime would want to give up territory that Russia has long claimed.

Moreover, we should also remember that Ukraine became independent not because Soviet or Russian leaders acquiesced, but because they could not prevent it. While such weakness in Russia could emerge again, there is no good reason to expect it. Moreover, in contrast to 1991, there is no obvious reason to expect that Crimea or the occupied parts of the Donbas would seek to return to Ukraine, even given the opportunity. The longer they remain outside Kiev's control the more difficult it will be to re-integrate them. A strong, prosperous Ukraine closely connected with Europe might be more attractive, and that provides additional incentive for Russia to stymie progress that could someday emerge in Ukraine's domestic politics.

Further Reading

Allison, Roy, 'Russian 'deniable' intervention in Ukraine: how and why Russia broke the rules', *International Affairs*, vol. 90, no.6 (November 2014), pp. 1255–1297.

Averre, Derek, 'The Ukraine Conflict: Russia's Challenge to European Security Governance', *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 68, no. 4 (June 2016), pp. 699–725.

Daalder, Ivo, Michele Flournoy, John Herbst, Jan Lodal, Steve Pifer, James Stavridis, Strobe Talbott and Charles Wald, *Preserving Ukraine's Independence, Resisting Russian Aggression: What the United States and NATO Must Do* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution and Atlantic Council of the US, 2015). http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2015/02/ukraine-independence-russian-aggression

Davies, Lance, 'Russia's 'Governance' Approach: Intervention and the Conflict in the Donbas', *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 68, no. 4 (June 2016), pp. 726–749.

Delcour, Laure, 'Between the Eastern Partnership and Eurasian Integration: Explaining Post-Soviet Countries' Engagement in (Competing) Region-Building Projects', *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol.62, no.6 (November 2015), pp.316–327.

Einhorn, Robert, 'Ukraine, Security Assurances, and Non-Proliferation', *The Washington Quarterly*, vol.38, no.1 (January 2015), pp.47–72.

Fitzpatrick, Mark, 'The Ukraine Crisis and Nuclear Order', *Survival*, vol. 56, no. 4 (August–September 2014), pp. 81–90.

Freedman, Lawrence, 'Ukraine and the Art of Crisis Management', *Survival*, vol. 56, no. 3, (July 2014), pp.7–42.

Götz, Elias, 'Russia, the West, and the Ukraine crisis: three contending perspectives', *Contemporary Politics*, vol.22, no.3 (July 2016), pp.249–266.

Grant, D. Thomas, *Aggression against Ukraine Territory, Responsibility, and International Law* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

Haukkala, Hiski, 'A Perfect Storm; Or What Went Wrong and What Went Right for the EU in Ukraine',*Europe-Asia Studies,* vol. 68, no. 4 (June 2016), pp.653–664.

Kriskovic, Andrej, 'Imperial Nostalgia or Prudent Geopolitics? Russia's Efforts to Reintegrate the Post-Soviet Space in Geopolitical Perspective', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, vol.30, no.6 (November 2014), pp.503–528.

Kundnani, Hans, 'Germany Looks East', *Foreign Affairs,* vol.94, no.1 (January/February 2015), pp. 108–116.

Kuzio, T., 'Ukraine between a Constrained EU and Assertive Russia', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol.55, no.1 (January 2017), pp.103–120.

Nitoiu, Cristian and Monika Sus, 'The European Parliament's Diplomacy – a Tool for Projecting EU Power in Times of Crisis? The Case of the Cox-Kwasniewski Mission', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol.55, no.1 (January 2017), pp.71–86.

Orlov, Vladimir, 'Security Assurances to Ukraine and the 1994 Budapest Memorandum: from the 1990s to the Crimea Crisis', *Security Index*, vol.20, no.2 (April 2014), pp.133–140.

Ropcke, Julian, 'How Russia Finances the Ukrainian rebel territories', *Bild*, 16 January 2016. http://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/ukraine-konflikt/russia-finances-donbass-44151166.bild.html

Ropcke, J., 'Putin's shadow government for Donbass exposed', *Bild*, 29 March 2016. http://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/ukraine-konflikt/donbass-shadow-government-45102202.bild.html

Rynning, Sten, 'The false promise of continental concert: Russia, the West and the necessary balance of power'. *International Affairs*, vol.91, no.3 (July 2015), pp.539–552.

Siddi, Marco, 'German Foreign Policy towards Russia in the Aftermath of the Ukraine Crisis: A New Ostpolitik?' *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 68, no. 4 (June 2016), pp. 665–677.

Wolff, Andrew T., 'The future of NATO enlargement after the Ukraine crisis', *International Affairs*, vol.91, no.5 (September 2015), pp.1103–1121.

Notes

[1] Editorial, 'We're on the road to a new Cold War', *The Washington Post*, 31 July 2017.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/were-on-the-road-to-a-new-cold-war/2017/07/31/213af6be-7617-11e7-8839-ec48ec4cae25_story.html

[2] http://www.levada.ru/2016/06/02/13400/

[3] Esther King, 'Christian Lindner, Germany should accept Crimean annexation as 'permanent provisional solution', *Politico*, 6 August 2017. http://www.politico.eu/article/christian-lindner-germany-should-accept-crimean-annexation-as-permanent-provisional-solution/

[4] 'Ukrainian-German Relations on the Rocks', US Embassy Kyiv, 16 March 2009. https://wikileaksua.wordpress.com/2009/03/16/09kyiv465-ukrainian-german-relations-on-the-rocks/

[5] Spahn, Susanne, 'Ukraine in the Russian Mass Media: Germany as an Example of Russian Information Policy' in Timm Beichelt and Susan Worschech eds., *Transnational Ukraine? Networks and Ties that Influenced(d) Contemporary Ukraine* (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2017), pp.179–202.

[6] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDjHw_uXeKU

[7] 'Germany's establishment once believed in conciliation with Russia. No longer', *The Economist*, 23 April 2016. http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21697236-germanys-establishment-once-believed-conciliation-russia-no-longer-fool-me-once

[8] Richard Connolly, 'Western Economic Sanctions and Russia's Place in the Global Economy', in Agnieszka Pikulicka-Wilczewska and Richard Sakwa eds., *Ukraine and Russia: People, Politics, Propaganda and Perspectives* (Bristol: E-International Relations, March 2015), p.213.

[9] R. Connolly, 'Western Economic Sanctions and Russia's Place in the Global Economy', p.214.

[10] R. Connolly, 'Western Economic Sanctions and Russia's Place in the Global Economy', pp.216–217.

[11] R. Connolly, 'Western Economic Sanctions and Russia's Place in the Global Economy', p.219.

[12] Markus Wehner and Reinhard Veser, 'Widerstand gegen Putins Pipeline wächst', *Frankfurter Allegemeine Zeitung*, 1 November 2016. http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/nord-stream-2-widerstand-gegen-putins-pipeline-waechst-14507991.html

[13] 'Executive Summary and Recommendations', in Keir Giles, Philip Hanson, Roderic Lyne, James Nixey, James Sherr and Andrew Wood, *The Russian Challenge* (London: Chatham House, 2015), p. vi.

[14] Dmitri Trenin, 'Ukraine Crisis Causes Strategic, Mental Shift in Global Order', *Global Times*, 17 May 2015.

[15] Nikolai Silayev and Andrey Sushentsov, 'Russia's Allies and the Geopolitical Frontier in Eurasia', *Russia in World Affairs*, May 2017. http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/valday/Russias-Allies-and-the-Geopolitical-Frontier-in-Eurasia-18718

[16] In international relations theory, the paradox in this instance is simply a case of the 'security dilemma', in which the actions that states take to make themselves more secure often spur a reaction by others that leaves the initiating state less secure.

[17] K. Giles, et. al. *The Russian Challenge*, p.vi. For a nuanced view that treats domestic politics as one among several drivers of Putin's foreign policy, see D. Trenin, *Russia's Breakout From the Post-Cold War System: The Drivers of Putin's Course* (Moscow: Carnegie Moscow Centre, 22 December 2014). http://carnegie.ru/2014/12/22/russia-s-breakout-from-post-cold-war-system-drivers-of-putin-s-course-pub-57589

[18] Nicu Popescu & Andrew Wilson, *The Limits of Enlargement-lite: European and Russian Power in the Troubled Neighbourhood* (London: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2009).

http://ecfr.3cdn.net/befa70d12114c3c2b0_hrm6bv2ek.pdf

[19] Rilka Dragneva and Kataryna Wolczuk, *Ukraine Between the EU and Russia: The Integration Challenge* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p.125.

[20] A. Moshes, 'The Crisis Over Ukraine – Three Years On: Is a "Grand Bargain" Totally Ruled Out?' (Helsinki: Finnish Institute of International Affairs Comment No, 12, May 2017). https://www.fiia.fi/en/publication/the-crisis-over-ukraine-three-years-on

[21] 'The Ukraine Crisis and NATO-Russia Relations', *NATO Review Magazine*, July 2014. http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2014/Russia-Ukraine-Nato-crisis/Ukraine-crisis-NATO-Russia-relations/EN/index.htm

[22] http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/proginfo/2016/05/inside-the-war-room

[23] 'NATO's Readiness Action Plan: Fact Sheet', July 2016. http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_07/20160627_1607-factsheet-rap-en.pdf

[24] Tom Rogan, 'Obama's Plan to Send New Arms to Europe Isn't Enough', *The National Review*, 23 June 2015. http://www.nationalreview.com/article/420162/obamas-plan-send-new-arms-europe-isnt-enough-tom-rogan

[25] Claudia Major and Christian Mölling, 'The Framework Nations Concept: Germany's Contribution to a Capable European Defence', (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik [German Institute for International and Security Affairs], 2014). https://www.swpberlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/2014C52_mjr_mlg.pdf

[26] 'Germany's SPD rejects NATO 2 percent defence spending target', *Reuters*, 6 August 2017.

https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-election-military-spd-idUSKBN1AM001

[27] Joseph S. Nye Jr., 'The Benefits of Soft Power', *Harvard Business School Working Knowledge*, 2 August 2004, at http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/4290.html

[28] http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/08/05/russia-putin-held-in-low-regard-around-the-world/

[29] http://www.politico.eu/article/christian-lindner-germany-should-accept-crimean-annexation-as-permanent-provisional-solution/

[30] Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Beyond NATO: A new security architecture for Eastern Europe* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 28 July 2017). https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/07/28/beyond-nato-a-new-security-architecture-for-eastern-europe/

[31] Fu Ying, 'How China Sees Russia: Beijing and Moscow Are Close, but Not Allies', *Foreign Affairs*, vol.95, no.1 (January/February 2016), pp.96–105.

[32] Andrei Kortunov, 'From Post-Modernism to Neo-Modernism', *Russia in Global Affairs*, 13 February 2017. http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/From-Post-Modernism-to-Neo-Modernism-18578

[33] Paragraph 4, Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation. http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents//asset_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/2542248

[34] K. Giles, et. al. *The Russian Challenge*, p.vi.

[35] See the special issue on Russian-Ukrainian relations of Natsionalna Bezpeka i Oborona (nos. 8/9, 2015) published by the Razumkov Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies. http://razumkov.org.ua/uploads/journal/ukr/NSD157-158_2015_ukr.pdf

[36] See his numerous blogs at http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/blog/100

[37] J. J. Mearsheimer, 'Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault' and M. E. O'Hanlon and Jeremy Shapiro, 'Crafting a win-win-win for Russia, Ukraine and the West' *Washington Post*, 7 December 2014. http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/crafting-a-win-win-win-for-russia-ukraine-and-the-west/2014/12/05/727d6c92-7be1-11e4-9a27-6fdbc612bff8_story.html

[38] S. Pifer, *The Eagle and the Trident. U.S. – Ukraine Relations in Turbulent Times* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 2017).

[39] Viktor Pinchuk, 'Ukraine Must Make Painful Compromises for Peace with Russia', *Wall Street Journal*, 29 December 2016.

About the author:

Taras Kuzio is a Non-Resident Fellow at the Centre for Transatlantic Relations at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Study and Professor, Department of Political Science, National University Kyiv Mohyla Academy. He is the author and editor of 21 books and think tank monographs, including *Putin's War Against Ukraine. Revolution, Nationalism, and Crime* (2017), *Ukraine. Democratization, Corruption and the New Russian Imperialism* (2015), *The Crimea. Europe's Next Flashpoint?* (2010) and *Ukraine-Crimea-Russia: Triangle of Conflict* (2007).

Paul D'Anieri is Professor of Political Science and Public Policy at the University of California, Riverside. In the fall of 2017, he was Eugene and Daymel Shklar Research Fellow in Ukrainian Studies at Harvard University. He is the author and editor of numerous books and articles on Ukrainian politics and Ukraine's relations with Russia and the West, including *Economic Interdependence in Ukrainian–Russian Relations* (1999) and *Understanding Ukrainian Politics* (2006).