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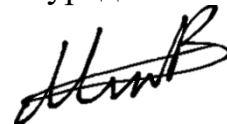
«Роль міжнародних акторів у війні Росії проти України»
(Role of the International Actors in the Russia's war against Ukraine)

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Significance of the Study

In connection with the recent events, the entire population of Ukraine has come to the conclusion that it is up to Ukraine only to fight Russia's aggression. No one is able to cope with the occupier, except Ukraine. However, many states support us, to a greater extent, economically.

Having chosen this topic, I decided in the most objective way to investigate who in the international arena provided us with assistance and what kind, and who, in turn, supported Russia.

1.2. Literature Review

At present, one can talk a lot and for a long time on the topic of Russian aggression, so it is not surprising that in electronic resources we can find a lot of information from different authors on this topic. In my thesis, a lot of official news was taken as a basis, but the most extensive, in my opinion, works should be noted.

So, for example, as many as 2 articles were taken from Maxim Yali: "The Black Swan of World Geopolitics" [3] and "Why Doesn't Putin Attack?" [14], which describe the problems of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict in modern realities, which include the coronavirus.

In his first article, M. Yali examines the situation in Russia from the economic side. He argues that by annexing Crimea, Russia was trying to destroy the so-called uni-multipolar world order under the influence of the United States, however, from an economic point of view, the venture failed due to the fragility and dependence of the Russian economy on oil prices, which in a few weeks hit market.

The second article is "Why doesn't Putin attack?" - is also of an economic nature, but considers Russia's economic difficulties through the prism of an attack on Ukraine. It tells what economic difficulties the aggressor is experiencing and why they prevent him from attacking right now?

To provide the basis for the topic of this dissertation, a series of articles, books and other relevant material on the role of international actors (states: Germany, France, USA,

China and international organizations: EU, NATO and OSCE) in the war between Russia and Ukraine. I would like to note the works of such researchers: Yakymenko Y. "Diplomatic prospects for resolving the conflict in the Donbass." [2], A. I. Shevtsov, "Ways to Settle the Conflict in Donbass." [26], Radkovets Y. "Germany is a stabilizing and driving force in the formation and development of European democratic Ukraine." (all 3 parts of the work) [27]. All these articles complement each other perfectly, as each of the authors explores their topic in detail.

So, Yakymenko considers all possible options to resolve the conflict in Donbas peacefully, tells what each side must do for this, what difficulties both sides may face, why it is extremely difficult to resolve it through diplomacy and, of course, why it is so important.

Shevtsov, on the other hand, decided to reconsider all possible options for resolving the conflict, and not just diplomatic ones - the influence of other states and organizations, internal problems, the role of various types of decisions and actions during the conflict. However, his and Yakymenko's views ran into similar problems.

Radkovets analyzed Germany's contribution in resolving the conflict in the Donbas and a full-scale war later in the most detailed analysis. In his three articles, which are devoted to Germany, he talks about all their actions, up to insignificant ones, but useful in the future. He talks about how Germany helped us then and how it continues to help today, what states and organizations it has led, and why it is so important for Germany to help Ukraine.

1.3. Subject of the Research

The subject of the study is directly the conflict in the Donbas and the influence of other foreign actors, in particular, Germany, the United States, France, China, the EU, NATO and the OSCE, on the resolution of this conflict. Assess their assistance to Ukraine, the restrictions they have imposed on the Russian Federation and how this has affected relations between Ukraine and Russia over time.

1.4. Research Question

This thesis seeks to answer the following question: What are the effects of international actors in Russia's war against Ukraine? In other words, the research aims

to reveal the role of international states and non-state actors in the war between Russia and Ukraine. It attempts to uncover changing positions of international actors towards Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

1.5. Main Argument

This thesis argues that the degree of effectiveness of international actors in the war between Russia and Ukraine has changed significantly since 2014. In this context, it observes that while the positions of Germany, France, and OSCE were stronger between 2014-2021, these actors remained in the background as of 2021. The thesis claims that from 2021 onwards, the US, NATO, and the EU have strengthened their role in Russia's war against Ukraine.

1.6. Methodology

- Search for relevant literature and its further analysis: viewing electronic resources and searching for suitable books.
- Selection of the received information through the prism of the chosen topic: the actions of foreign states and organizations in a given situation and their impact on Russia, Ukraine and the war as a whole.
- Formulation of conclusions - who, how, with what and when supported Ukraine and helped in the fight against the aggressor.

1.7. Structure of the Work

The work includes:

- Content (title of section, subsection and links to their pages in the work);
- Introduction (definition of the topic, formulation of the question, the main argument for answering it, the object of study, consideration of the methodology for writing a dissertation and a brief description of the literature used);
- 3 chapters (A detailed review of the conflict itself and the subsequent war, the impact that international actors had in the form of countries, as well as in the form of international organizations, their position and relations with the aggressor country);
- Conclusions made on the basis of each of the chapters and subsequently the entire dissertation;
- List of used literature.

CHAPTER 2

2. OVERVIEW OF DONBAS CONFLICT

2.1. Military-political confrontation in the case of the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict

It's been long time after Russia take control of the Crimea and the subsequent outbreak of war activity in Donbas. Now it could be called as a "frozen conflict" on the post-Soviet space. The situation in Donbas become more similar to situation in Moldova, Georgia and Armenia/Azerbaijan, where was an intensive war actions in time of Soviet Union's collapse.

The local population and the economy in the Donbas itself have been hit hard. During this armed conflict, as often happens, people with good education went abroad or to more protected regions of Ukraine, leaving behind a more vulnerable part of the population, unable to restore the economic component of the region. [1]

The restoration of the economy and infrastructure of the region as a whole should fall on the shoulders of local authorities, who, in turn, should work with donors and international experts. However, most of the world has not held internationally recognized elections, which indicates their rejection of the Donbas government. Also, this economic instability in the region creates ideal conditions for black market traders, who make huge profits from trading at least cigarettes and medicines, and at most weapons.

It should be noted that the task of the state authorities and the expert community in Ukraine is to immediately end the so-called "hybrid" war (for that time and full-fledged war for now) with Russia and in particular to establish the foundations of a new system of national security of the Ukrainian state. Thus, the starting point of the process of destruction of the geopolitical status quo that emerged after the end of the Cold War was the statement of Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2000: "The collapse of the Soviet Union is the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the twentieth century." [59] In addition, Putin's "Munich Speech" is the starting point of the military-political confrontation. Speaking at the Munich Security Conference, Putin criticized the world's unipolarity, US and NATO policies toward Russia. [59] It was then that his speech was

called the proclamation of the so-called Second Cold War. Today, 14 years later, the consequences of such views and division of the world are palpable. Even then, the Russian president was convinced that an independent foreign policy was not a natural consequence of a country's sovereignty, but a privilege of the elect.

The course of the Ukrainian-Russian confrontation, from the de facto bloodless annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea to the positional confrontation of the parties (with the slogan "No War, No Peace") in the Donbas conflict zone as part of attempts to gradually implement the Minsk agreements, illustrates the Kremlin's losing geopolitical strategy. In general, Russia's military invasion of Ukraine primarily violates the provisions of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act on the inviolability of borders in postwar Europe and a number of other international and bilateral legal acts. [60] However, the Kremlin at the UN and OSCE levels defines its own actions as a kind of support for the right of the population of Ukrainian territories to self-determination, based on the international legal "Kosovo Precedent". But the events in Ukraine are not adequate to the situation in Kosovo. At the same time, in 2014, immediately after the annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Russian President Vladimir Putin stated: "Nothing else has been done in Crimea except what was done in Kosovo. I am deeply convinced that Russia has not committed any violations of international law." [2]

It is worth noting that the global economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic is making adjustments to the hierarchy of global players. Thus, the Russian Federation, which annexed Crimea and started the conflict in Donbas, intended to destroy the previously fragile world order under US leadership that emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union, has every chance to overshadow the world geopolitical arena. Thus, with a smaller margin of safety in the long run, the leaders of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia managed to skillfully take advantage of the coronavirus pandemic, which has already crippled demand for oil on world markets. As a result, the Kremlin was forced to sign a new agreement. In any case, Russia will soon be limited in resources for active geopolitics. As the results of previous waves of the global economic crisis show, the gap between Russia, China, the United States and the EU in economic potential has only grown in Moscow's favor. However, despite this, instead of the

desired multipolarity, where Russia is the global center of power, Russia can be pushed to the periphery. [3]

At the same time, full implementation of the Minsk agreements by the parties to the conflict translates the "hybrid" war into a plane of political and diplomatic coordination of the whole complex of problematic issues. And the ultimate goal of this process should be to restore the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Ukrainian state, including resolving the issue of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. After all, annexation of ARC is a violation of the MP and a blow to the world order. Since 1991, the world order has been different because the Soviet Union has disintegrated, and the change of post-war borders is an attempt to destroy the world order that was formed in 1991.

It is essential to draw your attention to the fact that so far we are only looking at the events that preceded the declaration of war.

Thus, analyzing the main stages of events in eastern Ukraine after 2013-2014, which became a prerequisite for the Minsk agreements, it is worth noting the most resonant events that forced Ukraine to sign these agreements.

- On May 24, 2014, a Ukrainian AN30 plane was shot down near Slovyansk, killing five crew members.
- June 14 - Terrorists fired on an IL-76 military transport plane, killing 40 paratroopers and nine crew members;
- June 24 - A Ukrainian Mi-8 military helicopter is shot down by terrorists near Slovyansk, killing nine servicemen.
- On July 10-24, systematic shelling of the Armed Forces units by GRAD systems from the territory of the Russian Federation took place.
- July 17 - a civilian plane Boeing777 with 298 people on board was shot down in the sky over Donbas. It is this tragic event that has shown that the conflict in eastern Ukraine is of a different nature than the imposed fake image that Russian propaganda has tried to show to the world.

Because in order to shoot down a passenger liner at an altitude of 10 km, it was necessary to use appropriate heavy weapons and the ability to control them. This event

forced Western countries to react to the conflict and reject the Russian version of the so-called "internal coup carried out by miners." [4]

- On August 28 - the Ilovaysk tragedy took place, where hundreds of Ukrainian soldiers were killed, wounded and taken prisoner - and all this as a result of direct intervention of Russian troops in the conflict in Donbas.

At the same time, Russia was in a hurry to force events and then dictate its own conditions, so Kyiv had to maneuver based on available forces and means.

- On August 29, the UN Security Council held a meeting in connection with the Russian aggression against Ukraine, at which the Ukrainian delegation stated: "Russia has launched a direct military invasion of mainland Ukraine using its own regular armed forces."

There was also a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission, where NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen described the invasion of the Russian Armed Forces across the eastern and southeastern Ukrainian-Russian state borders as a "serious escalation of Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine." [5]

- July 5 - a very active phase of the anti-terrorist operation on the positions of "DPR" and "LPR" began. It was then that positive changes were achieved:

liberated from the separatists of the city: Lyman, Mariupol, Slovyansk, Kramatorsk, Druzhkivka, Kostiantynivka, Bakhmut, Toretsk, Avdiivka, Krasnohorivka, Marinka. [6, p.46]

Back in August, the pace of the Ukrainian offensive allowed us to expect that the strategic goal of regaining control of the entire border, as well as cutting the territory of the LPR and DPR, further encirclement and in particular the elimination of separatist forces will be achieved in the near future. However, on August 28, the Ilovaysk tragedy took place with the active participation of Russian troops. And after losing control of rather strategic highways and heavy costs near Ilovaisk, the land corridor to the Crimea was captured by Russian troops, and Mariupol and Zaporozhye were also threatened with capture.

It should be noted that despite the allegations of "betrayal of national interests", according to V. Gorbulin, it should be clearly understood that Ukraine objectively

needed a cessation of hostilities at this stage of the military-political situation. [7, p. 9] And at least the country needed time to build a more effective Armed Forces, restructure the security and defense sector, update strategic documents in the field of national security and defense, and receive foreign security and financial assistance in particular.

Already in September 2014, and then in February 2015, the Ukrainian authorities, with the active support of Western countries (USA, France, Germany) and NATO's political leadership, managed to reach political agreements in Minsk on successive steps towards a political and diplomatic normalizing situation at East of Ukraine.

The Minsk Agreements are a package of documents adopted in 2014-2015 to resolve the conflict in the south-east of Ukraine, including the following acts:

1) Minsk Protocol (full title - "Protocol following the consultations of the Tripartite Contact Group on joint steps aimed at implementing the peace plan of President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko and the initiatives of Russian President Vladimir Putin"), signed on September 5, 2014 in the Belarusian capital. as well as the heads of pseudo-state formations of the so-called "DPR" and "LPR";

2) A set of measures to implement the Minsk agreements (the so-called "Minsk2"), agreed in Minsk on February 12, 2015 by the leaders of Germany, Russia, France and Ukraine at the summit in the "Norman format" and signed by the contact group to resolve the situation in Ukraine.

In June 2014, President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko (2014-2019) presented his own peace plan, which provided security guarantees for all participants in the negotiations, amnesty for those who laid down their arms and did not commit serious crimes, the conclusion of illegal armed groups and more. Thus, the first consultations between the representatives of Ukraine, the OSCE and the self-proclaimed "DPR" and "LPR" to discuss the peace plan took place on June 23 and 27 in Donetsk. At that time, Russian Ambassador to Ukraine Mikhail Zurabov was also present at the meetings. [8]

I want to pay your attention that exactly after the Ilovaysk tragedy happened, and through it Minsk-1 was signed. Thus, in late August - early September 2014, in particular, after the Russian artillery shelling of Ukrainian units (according to evidence of international organizations), the invasion of Russian regular units in Ukraine near

Ilovaisk (according to foreign researchers, the Military Prosecutor's Office, General Staff and eyewitnesses) , fighting for Savur-Mohyla, there was a critical situation that could turn into a large-scale aggression of the Russian Federation and threatened the loss of Ukraine's own sovereignty and independence. It was then that the EU leadership gathered in Minsk and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Catherine Ashton arrived to meet Poroshenko and Putin. [9]

The process of signing the Minsk Protocol took a long time, as each side defended its interests. Thus, on September 5, 2014 in Minsk, the members of the contact group, taking into account the proposals to resolve the crisis of the Presidents of Russia and Ukraine, agreed on a peace plan and reached a ceasefire in southeastern Ukraine. The both sides signed a protocol providing for the immediate cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of armed forces and military equipment from Ukraine, the OSCE monitoring of the situation on the Russian-Ukrainian border, the release of all hostages and more. The obligation of the Kyiv authorities to decentralize power and hold early local elections was also stipulated separately.

This is how the ceasefire came into force on the same day. [10] Later, on the night of September 20, 2014, the contact group, and in particular the representatives of the DPR and LPR, Oleksandr Zakharchenko and Ihor Plotnytsky, signed a memorandum on the implementation of the ceasefire (the document itself was dated September 19). The Memorandum itself provided for the implementation of paragraph 1 of the Protocol, in addition to other measures aimed at consolidating agreements on the bilateral cessation of weapons, as well as the withdrawal of heavy weapons (over 100 mm caliber) 15 km from the line of contact. the security zone itself, bans on combat aircraft and UAV flights and the installation of minefields in the security zone. However, this "line of contact" was defined by the signatories "as of the date of signing the memorandum", ie on September 19, 2014. Therefore, during these two weeks of September 5, the line of contact changed significantly in Ukraine's favor, as much territory was lost. We have lost a considerable amount of territory during this time, although agreements were already in place at that time. [11]

So, as we can see, despite all the agreements, the fighting in the south-east of Ukraine continued, and in January 2015 the situation worsened again. The battles for the Debaltseve bridgehead are one of the biggest clashes in the Donbas. Thousands of fighters, hundreds of units of equipment and heavy artillery took part in it from all sides. And the most acute phase lasted almost a month - from January 25 to February 18, 2015 - and included both massive artillery shelling and short-range shootings with small arms and even tank battles. And in parallel with this conflict in the capital of Belarus was a negotiation process, which ended on February 12 with the signing of the so-called "Minsk-2". Since after the withdrawal of anti-terrorist operation forces from Debaltseve and its environs in the Donbas there was still a truce, then at least a significant decrease in combat activity (fighting in Maryinka or Shirokin on its scale was quite inferior to the events of February 2015), and the front line hardly changed. [12]

Thus, on February 11, 2015, participants of the Quartet of Normandy gathered in Minsk, this meeting was preceded by the visit of Angela Merkel and Francois Hollande to Kyiv and Moscow, where they prepared a certain basis for reaching agreements. In total, the talks in the Belarusian capital lasted 16 hours, and later in his memoirs Hollande wrote that Putin threatened Poroshenko to "crush the Ukrainian army" and tried to gain an advantage. [13]

As early as February 12, 2015, the document was signed by the same people who signed the Minsk Protocol in September 2014. And on February 17, 2015, the UN Security Council adopted a set of measures to implement the Minsk agreements as a kind of matrix for settlement in Donbas. The United States to this document, which became a prime example of hybrid diplomacy. [6, p. 49]

Thus, at the time of coordination and signing of the "Package of Measures" the situation in Donbas was very tense, and although the parties agreed in September to cease hostilities and withdraw some weapons from the line of contact and even agreed on September 19, 2014 such a line of contact (from which they were guided, taking away large calibers). The whole situation is again not in favor of the Ukrainian side, although Russia and the militants controlled by it have promised to abide by their ceasefire commitments. [11]

Unfortunately, by the middle of the summer of 2020, the situation on the map did not look the same as at the time of the signing of "Minsk-1". Again, not in favor of Ukraine, which has lost some territories and settlements, including Debaltseve. [11]

This once again shows that even by signing agreements and treaties, Russia has no intention of fulfilling them. Although, for his part, he always appeals to these documents, trying to gain his political benefit, and often accuses Ukraine of violating and failing to comply with these commitments. For example, the reluctance to hold local elections in uncontrolled territories and the lack of changes in the Ukrainian Constitution to give them a special status.

Thus, the historical significance of the Minsk agreements lies in the fact that they sharply reduced the intensity of hostilities in the Donbas, as well as allowed the Armed Forces of Ukraine to gain time to strengthen its position. Although three and a half years after their signing, there have been several outbreaks of hostilities in eastern Ukraine, but the Ukrainian military has regained control of a number of settlements. And both sides of the conflict have not started implementing the Minsk agreements, and have failed to achieve a more stable ceasefire. However, the Ukrainian units no longer suffered such losses in the clashes as they had before February 2015. There was also some risk of the Russian units returning to the line of demarcation.

As of April 2021, there was a sharp escalation in the Donbas, especially near Horlivka, as well as the concentration of Russian troops on the border with Ukraine. In a sense, Russian propaganda is also playing into the hands of the authorities, not to mention the propaganda of the occupation administrations, which reports daily on the increase in provocations by the Supreme Soviet and is preparing a full-scale offensive in the occupied territories. According to domestic scientist Maxim Yali, the task here on all sides is common - to divert the attention of its citizens from the constant deterioration of living conditions and problems with overcoming the coronavirus epidemic. [14]

According to M. Yali, Russia does not attack Ukraine (at that time) for several reasons. First, the Kremlin now needs to complete the construction of Nord Stream2, which is already 95% complete. And its main goal is to get rid of minimal dependence on Ukraine as a transit country for its gas in the EU. Second, the new wave of

coronavirus and the emergence of more aggressive strains of the virus, and vaccination problems around the world, carry the risk of new hard lockdowns globally, which will inevitably lead to lower oil demand and a sharp drop in oil prices. This will have a significant impact on the Russian economy, even more than EU sanctions, which is a deterrent. Third, it is now irrational to start a full-scale war when "vaccine diplomacy" brings the first tangible successes. Thus, during Putin's video conference with Merkel and Macron, one of the main issues discussed was the acceleration of the certification process for the Russian Sputnik V vaccine and the possibility of even producing it in the EU. [14]

This is how Russia pays considerable attention and resources to this issue, because it will not only improve its own image in the world, but also strengthen relations with the EU as a whole, which will be a good way to lift sanctions that really hurt the Russian economy.

Of course, there are always risks, of course. After all, in 2014, no one could have imagined that Russia would attack Ukraine, occupy certain territories and resolve the conflict in Donbas.

It is worth mentioning the interview of the President of Ukraine to the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on May 29, 2021, which addressed issues of aggression in the east. The situation of concentration of Russian troops in the east and in the occupied Crimea at sea was discussed. The president assured that when Europe and the United States began to put pressure on Russia - the Ukrainian authorities called on it to do so - due to such joint pressure, the probability of escalation decreased. [15] Also, according to the President of Ukraine, for the successful annexation of Crimea to continue to be able to trade, and the war was launched in eastern Ukraine. And over time, the issue of Crimea is "forgotten." As this issue has been raised even in the Normandy format, all parties are of the opinion that Crimea is currently not on the agenda of these talks.

Thus, the geopolitical dimension is that Russia seeks to return Ukraine to its sphere of influence and prevent its membership in NATO. And for this, Russia uses the

Minsk agreements as a lever of influence. In the case of granting Ukraine a "special status" ORDLO, it will put an end to its Euro-Atlantic integration.

It also should be noted how important the OSCE played in the conflict in the Donbas and how useless it turned out to be in the full-scale war with Russia:

The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) began its work on March 21, 2014 in connection with the appeal of the Government of Ukraine to the OSCE and the consensus decision of all 57 OSCE participating States. The SMM is an unarmed civilian mission that operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in all regions of Ukraine. Its main tasks are to impartially and objectively observe and report on the situation in Ukraine, as well as to promote dialogue between all parties to the conflict. [61] However, after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the OSCE was forced to curtail its monitoring mission in that country. [62]

In the same way, Germany and France lost their influence when it came to a full-scale war with Russia, while the US, on the contrary, began to play a key role in the war between Russia and Ukraine, declaring Russia "their enemy." [63]

But the actors who did not have much influence in resolving the conflict in the Donbas are now playing a major role in the Ukrainian-Russian war. These include the US, NATO and the EU. Thus, after the outbreak of hostilities, the United States, Canada and a number of European countries announced the supply of weapons and military equipment to Ukraine (in addition to those volumes that were supplied even before the start of the conflict) - first of all, we are talking about anti-tank weapons, man-portable anti-aircraft missiles complexes, small arms and ammunition, helmets, body armor. [64] According to IfW Kiel, a research organization, between January 24 and April 23, 2022, the United States provided Ukraine with military assistance in the amount of 3.99 billion euros. In April 2022, during a meeting at Ramstein Air Base, a pro-Ukrainian coalition of 40 countries was formed, including NATO and EU countries. [65]

2.2. Ukraine's policy to overcome Russian aggression

The Russian-Ukrainian conflicts - economic, energy, information, military-technical, etc. - were endured patiently with the hope of establishing and restoring the so-called fraternal relations between the two peoples. Thus, Russian armed aggression

has radically changed the entire military-political situation both around Ukraine and on the European continent as a whole, as well as within the Ukrainian state.

After all, the illegal annexation of Crimea, the occupation of some districts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and the retention of Transnistria under Russian control have formed a kind of "triangle" of real threats to Ukraine. Which after a while led to a large-scale, ongoing war. And each of its "peaks" plays a specific role in the Kremlin's anti-Ukrainian policy. Together, they can provide Russia with a long-term negative impact on the formation and implementation of both Ukraine's domestic and foreign policies, in particular on European and Euro-Atlantic integration. And if Russia intends to deploy its own air base on the territory of Belarus, such a "geometry" of military threats to Ukraine will be supplemented by the northern "top", - said V. Gorbulin. [7]

Nevertheless, the rest was used quite effectively, and on January 18, 2018, the Verkhovna Rada adopted the Law "On the peculiarities of state policy to ensure the state sovereignty of Ukraine in the temporarily occupied territories in Donetsk and Luhansk regions." [16] This document calls the Russian Federation an aggressor, and as an occupier it is responsible for what is happening in the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine.

This is how the Joint Forces operation was replaced by the Joint Forces operation, and the rights and capabilities of the military in the immediate vicinity of the area of conflict with the militants have significantly expanded. It should be noted that if the anti-terrorist operation restrained the enemy, the goal of the Joint Forces operation is to liberate the territory of Ukraine from the Russian occupation forces and protect the territorial integrity of the country. "Operation Joint Forces, which began on April 30, differs from the anti-terrorist operation in that it is a military operation to stabilize the situation in Donbas and its social revival," said Joint Forces Commander Lieutenant General Sergei Nayev. [17]

Thus, all control of military units passed from the SBU to the General Staff, which heads the Armed Forces. And all decisions in the area of OJF in Donbas are approved by the commander of the Joint Operational Staff of the Armed Forces. Also, the area of OJF, where a special procedure will be introduced, is the territory of Donetsk and

Luhansk regions to the administrative borders with Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhia regions, as well as the Sea of Azov. [18]

Thus, assessing the facts about the situation in Donbas, it should be noted that the Minsk Agreements (Minsk Protocol of September 5, 2014, Minsk Memorandum of September 19, 2014 and Minsk package of measures of February 12, 2015) were continue to serve as a basis for Normandy format, Member States are loyal to their full implementation. But this agreements lost their meaning when Russia recognized LPR and DPR and initiated a full-scaled war against Ukraine.

It should be noted that taking into account the urgency of the problem of implementation of the Minsk agreements, as well as the search for new approaches to their implementation, there are currently different positions on these issues. Ukraine is in favor of holding primary elections in Donbas only after a ceasefire, withdrawal of military equipment and armed formations, and the return of 408 km of the Ukrainian-Russian border to its control. Russia demands first elections in Donbas, and then the withdrawal of troops to return the Ukrainian-Russian part of the border.

It should also be noted that on September 16, 2014, the fifth President Petro Poroshenko signed the Law of Ukraine № 1680-VII "On the special order of local self-government in certain districts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions." [18] It was the result of the first Minsk agreements, at a time when the Ukrainian side was forced to make concessions to stop the bloodshed in Donbas. It was envisaged to introduce a special procedure of local self-government for a period of 3 years for some districts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. These were territories that were not controlled by the Ukrainian authorities at the time. At the same time, elections are possible only after the withdrawal of all illegal armed groups, their military equipment, and in particular militants and mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine. Subsequently, the law became a formality that allows to continue the Minsk format. Although in 2014 the law caused a significant flurry of discontent, especially regarding the amnesty for participants in hostilities on the side of the proclaimed republics, and in particular the legalization of so-called "people's militia units" in these territories.

Confrontations also intensified at the end of August 2015, when Poroshenko amended the Constitution on decentralization of power, stating that "the peculiarities of local self-government in some districts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions are determined by a separate law." We will note that on the day of voting in the first reading on August 31, 2015 protesters gathered near the Verkhovna Rada. And when it became known that this first reading was successful, activists began quite active clashes with law enforcement officers, in which a grenade flew. The blast killed four National Guardsmen and injured several dozen people. [19]

On October 1, 2020, the sixth President V. Zelensky announced that Ukraine had agreed on the so-called "Steinmeier formula", according to which elections in the occupied Donbas will be held only if all troops are withdrawn and in accordance with current Ukrainian laws. [20]

At the same time, in connection with the aggravation of the situation in eastern Ukraine, the Verkhovna Rada on March 30, 2021 adopted a statement on the escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict. Thus, the Council demanded that Russia immediately cease hostilities and adhere to the ceasefire, called on the world to increase pressure on the aggressor and supports President Zelensky's initiatives for peace talks in the Normandy format. [21]

Today's escalation in the Donbas and the situation in Ukraine as a whole show that Russia continues to boldly ignore its own commitments to a peaceful settlement of the conflict, including the Minsk agreements and, in particular, the Normandy-style agreements. And as a result, we see the intention of the Russian Federation to prevent the stabilization of the situation in the conflict zone and to achieve some progress at all stages of the negotiation process.

In addition, Russia still continues to assure the entire civilized world that Russia does not seem to be a party to the conflict. Although the direct role and participation of the Russian Federation in this long-lasting armed conflict in eastern Ukraine is documented and well known to the international community.

That is why the relevant legislation is aimed at legally consolidating the process of escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict. Therefore, Russia, as a party to the

international armed conflict, must recognize its own responsibility for resolving the armed aggression against Ukraine and, in particular, make every effort to resolve it. International legal acts adopted in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine were also adopted. Thus, on March 27, 2014, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 68/262 "Territorial Integrity of Ukraine", which confirmed the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine and the absence of any legal grounds to change the status of the Crimea and Sevastopol. [22]

Thus, one of the most effective political and diplomatic measures of Ukraine on this path could be obtaining the status of "US major ally outside NATO." Japan, Israel, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other American allies (15 in all) have been given a status at some stage of their own geopolitical positioning that has made it possible to realize opportunities that are important for national security and defense. [23, p.11]

In order to give Ukraine the status of "The main US ally outside NATO", the US Congress prepared a bill "The Ukraine Freedom Support Act of 2014 (S.2828)", adopted by both houses of parliament, but US President B. Obama imposed veto. [24]

Unfortunately, despite the agreement of the tripartite contact group within the framework of the current ceasefire agreements, the violation of the silence regime continued, which caused victims on the line of contact. Thus, the American think tank RAND pointed out that Russia has deployed three mechanized groups along the Russian-Ukrainian border, which poses a real threat of escalation of the conflict in the East. [25] For example, experts from the Washington Institute for Military Studies believed that the threats of de-escalation were in the nature of a sham arms race, while the main challenges were hybrid in nature - realized through the media space, and the simmering conflict in Donbas.

Thus, in view of this, the choice and development of tactics and strategies to counter the plans of this geopolitical "reset" are extremely important for Ukraine's foreign policy leadership.

Based on the above, the armed intervention of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine was called a "hybrid war". And experts define hybrid warfare as a kind of "stage of conflict escalation, in which diplomatic arrangements are quite

possible, and full-scale war can still be prevented." [26] However, this was the case only at that time.

CHAPTER 3

3. IMPACT OF OTHER ACTORS

3.1. Germany

The most active in supporting Ukraine among EU member states is Germany, and personally German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Germany was one of the first countries to support Ukraine in its quest to become an integral part of the European and Euro-Atlantic community during the Revolution of Dignity, initiated the unification of EU and NATO member states in a common position condemning Russian aggression against Ukraine, and was the first European country to significantly reconsider its foreign policy in the post-Soviet space in general, and bilateral relations with Russia in particular. Germany has repeatedly initiated negotiations for a peaceful settlement of the conflict, in particular playing a key role in organizing negotiations in the "Geneva" and "Norman" formats, signing the Minsk Agreements, imposing and continuing economic sanctions against Russia by the EU. In addition, Germany, together with the United States, actively supports Ukraine within NATO. It should be added that it was the Russian-Ukrainian conflict that led to a significant change in NATO policy, which began to strengthen its defense capabilities throughout the eastern and southern directions, as confirmed by the Welsh (2014) and Warsaw (2016) NATO summits. In addition, at the initiative of Germany, these summits officially expressed support for Ukraine, which with its geopolitical position and economic potential can play a key role in ensuring European security in the future.

An important role in the common position condemning Russia's aggressive policy and the unification of the EU states on this issue was played by Germany, and personally by German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Moreover, it can be assumed that it was the Russian aggression in Ukraine that was the decisive factor that forced the German leadership to significantly reconsider its policy in the post-Soviet space. To date, Germany has actively cooperated with Russia in many areas, including energy. But after Russia's annexation of Crimea and the occupation of part of Donbas, Germany has significantly reconsidered its bilateral relations with Russia. In particular, Germany refused to work with Russia in the security

sphere in a format that was beneficial to Russia, namely, to participate in the "European Security Treaty" proposed by Russia in 2009 (immediately after its aggression against Georgia). [27] Instead, Germany began to more actively support Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova, countries for which the European vector in foreign policy has become decisive. And it is thanks to Germany that this format of EU cooperation with Eastern European countries (which later evolved into the Eastern Partnership policy) has become a priority for the Union as opposed to the same Mediterranean Union, which was actively supported by France.

In general, Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine, the change of borders in Europe by force, the de facto armed conflict in Europe - all this provoked an extremely negative reaction from international organizations and all leading countries. It was Germany's active position in support of Ukraine that greatly influenced the positions of other EU countries on Russia. And Angela Merkel's position was consistent. Since the beginning of Euromaidan, Germany has advocated a peaceful settlement of the conflict between peaceful protesters in Kyiv and the authoritarian regime of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych. At the initiative of Germany, on December 7, 2013, the European Parliament called on Viktor Yanukovych not to use punitive measures against peaceful demonstrators. It was the representative of Germany E. Brock who spoke most actively at the meeting of the European Parliament. [27] At that time, the Ukrainian authorities did not heed these calls and continued to use force to suppress the protests. And since the protests did not stop, the next address of the European Parliament mentioned for the first time the possibility of sanctions. However, this time against Ukrainian officials suspected of involvement in the violent suppression of protests. So, on December 12, 2013, the European Parliament adopted a special resolution on the expediency of holding early presidential elections in Ukraine. [27] Unfortunately, this did not have any effect: the clashes continued, and on January 18, 2014, they escalated into armed confrontations. The ambassadors of Germany and Great Britain to Ukraine, as well as the Vice President of the European Parliament, warned Yanukovych that if the use of firearms against the protesters, the EU could terminate official relations with Ukraine altogether. [27] For a while, the situation stabilized, but tensions remained. Therefore,

the Ukrainian issue was one of the key ones at the Munich Security Conference held in Germany in early February 2014. During the conference, many European leaders supported Ukraine in their speeches. It is worth noting the speeches of German Chancellor Angela Merkel and US Secretary of State J. Kerry. For its part, Russia has not only launched a full-scale information campaign in support of the Yanukovich regime, but has also begun to provide very real support by supplying finance, weapons and people. European states reacted immediately to Russia's direct interference in Ukraine's internal political processes. And again the leading role was played by Germany.

Ukrainian opposition leaders A. Yatsenyuk and V. Klitschko held a personal meeting with A. Merkel on February 17, 2014, at which she once again expressed her support for Ukraine. This only intensified the degree of opposition. The Yanukovich regime, with the full support of Russia, made the last attempts to keep power in its hands, so on February 18, hostilities resumed, and on February 19, an attempt was made to storm Euromaidan by force. As all Merkel's previous attempts to reach an agreement with Viktor Yanukovich failed, she decided to try to talk directly with Russian President Vladimir Putin to stop interfering in Ukraine's domestic politics and called on Viktor Yanukovich to stop violence in central Kyiv. Unfortunately, even then Vladimir Putin began active preparations for the military invasion of Ukraine and, accordingly, did not respond to A. Merkel's call. At that time, Russia had already deployed units of its regular army along its western border with Ukraine, including Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv, Sumy, and Chernihiv oblasts, mobilized the Black Sea Fleet in Crimea, and began actively creating illegal armed groups to annex Crimea and begin eastern occupation regions of Ukraine. [27]

In her address to the Bundestag on March 13, 2014, Angela Merkel strongly condemned Russia's actions, in particular, its provocations in eastern Ukraine and the violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity. [28] Despite this, the Russian occupiers held a so-called "referendum" in Crimea on March 16, 2014, the Verkhovna Rada of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea voted for "independence" on March 17, the Treaty on the Accession of the Republic of Crimea to the Russian Federation was signed on March

18, and March 21. Russia has ratified the treaty. In response, with the active support of Germany, the EU Council of Foreign Ministers voted to strengthen sanctions against Russia. However, this did not stop Russia from actively pursuing its aggressive policy against Ukraine. In particular, in April 2014, Russia launched the next stage of aggression against Ukraine: launching the Novorossiia project, trying to establish control over Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv, Odessa, Zaporizhia, Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolaiv and other regions and cities of Ukraine. However, thanks to the heroism of the Ukrainian army, newly created volunteer battalions, the support of the local population and international support, Russia failed to establish control over them, but only over part of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Later, Germany and the United States initiated the negotiations for a peaceful settlement of the conflict, which later became known as the "Geneva format". The first such talks took place on April 17, 2014, but unfortunately did not yield visible results. So, in June 2014, at the initiative of A. Merkel and F. Hollande, another attempt was made to hold talks on resolving the conflict: on June 6, 2014, during the celebrations in Normandy, an informal meeting was held between the newly elected President of Ukraine Poroshenko and V. Putin. On this day, Putin also met with Merkel. It is from this moment that the so-called "Norman format" of negotiations on resolving the Ukrainian crisis with the participation of Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France begins. However, negotiations were unsuccessful, Russia did not stop its aggression, and Western countries continued to expand sanctions. [28]

After active hostilities in the summer of 2014, a certain de-escalation of the conflict began in the autumn of 2014. With the support of Germany, on September 5, 2014, the Protocol was signed following consultations of the Tripartite Contact Group on joint steps aimed at implementing the Peace Plan of President Poroshenko and the initiatives of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Already on September 19-20, 2014, a Memorandum was signed, which together with the above-mentioned protocol became known as the Minsk Agreements (later - Minsk-1). [29]

Despite this, the fighting did not stop. Then Germany, along with other Western partners, began to put active pressure on Russia to fulfill its commitments under the

Minsk agreements. At the same time, Germany has become the main initiator of economic assistance and support to Ukraine from the EU and other international organizations. The EU's unwavering position was reaffirmed during the second meeting of the Quartet of Normandy on 16-17 October 2014 in Milan, Italy. Then Russia tried to change its strategy and, in addition to constant hostilities in Donbas, launched a full-fledged campaign to legitimize the so-called DNR and LNR, where on November 2, 2014 the so-called "presidential and parliamentary elections" took place the next day. The EU has declared it illegal and illegitimate, by the Merkel's initiative. [29]

It is worth noting that at the NATO Summit in Wales, held on 4-5 September 2014, at the initiative of Germany, the United States and Poland, an active policy of NATO adaptation to new realities was launched. This policy was continued at the next NATO Summit, held on 8-9 July 2016 in Warsaw. Once again, the same countries, Germany, the United States and Poland, have initiated changes in the Alliance's policy. An important point for Ukraine was that the Organization officially supported the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, as well as the right of Ukraine to decide its future and foreign policy policy, free from outside interference. [30]

Germany is actively trying to resist these processes, at least in Europe. That is why Germany, like France or the United States, is equally interested in resolving the Ukrainian issue as soon as possible. This is primarily due to the fact that in France, the presidential election in 2017, and the same year in Germany, parliamentary elections. The Ukrainian issue is quite important for these countries, as its successful resolution or, conversely, failure to resolve it may have a direct consequence for the upcoming elections in these countries.

Thus, the role of Germany in trying to resolve the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is extremely great. Not only did Germany take an active part in the negotiations in various formats, but it was also able to consolidate all EU countries and come to a common position on Russia's aggressor state. In particular, Germany has played a key role in imposing and continuing sanctions against Russia. In parallel with such a policy,

Germany itself has modified its foreign policy, in particular, its eastern policy and bilateral relations with Russia.

3.2. USA

The United States and the European Union are also involved to varying degrees in dialogue and negotiations on conflict resolution. In general, since the introduction of Russian troops in the Crimea in March 2014, there have been attempts to organize negotiations in several international formats:

- consultations of the participants of the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 (USA, Great Britain, Russia, Ukraine), which proved to be ineffective due to Russia's refusal to participate in them;

- Geneva talks of the foreign ministers of the United States, the European Union, Russia and Ukraine (April 17, 2014);

- episodic negotiations at various levels in the "Norman format" (Ukraine, France, Germany, Russia);

- permanent mechanism of negotiations and consultations in the Tripartite Contact Group (the so-called "Minsk" process with the participation of representatives of Ukraine, Russia and the OSCE, with the involvement of delegates from the separatist groups "DPR" and "LPR").

As we can see, in almost all these combinations, the representatives of the US and EU governments directly or indirectly played an important role.

The basic approach of Ukraine's political leadership to the Donbas conflict and Russia's response to it is determined by the US and EU requirements to maintain sanctions against Russia until the terms of the Minsk agreements are fully met. In this sense, the results of the visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine P. Klimkin to the United States in September-October 2015, during which representatives of the US administration reaffirmed the need to comply with sanctions against Russia and strengthen them "in case of violation of the Minsk agreements and continued Russian aggression". [31] Important that, in addition to US State Department officials, the US President's National Security Adviser, S. Rice, the most influential figure in the US administration's foreign policy, was involved in agreeing on these criteria.

Despite the rather sluggish nature of the discussion on the political settlement of the conflict, the dialogue between the US administration and the EU leadership on Ukrainian issues continues. During a telephone conversation (November 4, 2015), US Vice President Biden and European Commission President Juncker agreed on some aspects of the joint US-EU approach to the Ukrainian issue, including:

- stimulating the acceleration of economic reforms and the fight against corruption in Ukraine;

- confirmation of the provision that sanctions against Russia are related to the implementation of its Minsk agreements must be continued until the full implementation of the Minsk agreements;

- the need to diversify the sources of energy supply to the EU and full compliance with EU standards in the field of competition, which provides for compliance of the new project of the Nord Stream-2 gas pipeline with the requirements of EU energy directives.

[32]

It is clear that the strategic dialogue between the United States and the EU is not limited to Ukraine and Syria and extends to other important aspects of international relations. At the same time, it should be noted that in some respects this dialogue boils down to formal declarations, such as EU-US cooperation in overcoming the migration crisis in Europe, which is situationally limited by assurances from US from Syria.

No less important is the motivation of US and EU policies towards Russia. Although US and individual EU policies are based on a combination of national interests, government policies and the demands of leading business campaigns, Western policy on Ukraine can be determined by a balanced line that is generally maintained despite dissatisfaction with anti-Russian sanctions by business circles. Also, from time to time the subject of discussion in the information field are internal discussions, differences in the approaches of individual governments and démarches of political parties, including Germany, Finland, Greece, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Italy and others. [33]

With a cautious approach, the United States and the EU are agreeing on further steps toward Russia's gradual economic weakening, but are avoiding demonstrations that

could provoke the Kremlin to intervene militarily in Europe, particularly in the Baltics or the Balkans. For its part, Moscow is actively cooperating with right-wing nationalist and left-wing political movements in the EU, whose actions are clearly aimed at undermining EU unity.

The Obama administration's position is determined by a conscious reluctance to contribute to the escalation of hostilities in the Donbas in any way, including the supply of modern anti-tank and other high-tech weapons to Ukraine. In order to establish its own channel of political contacts with Moscow, the US State Department has established direct consultations between US Assistant Secretary of State Nuland and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Karasin. [33]

Characterizing the forms and methods of harmonization of US and EU positions on Ukraine, it is advisable to pay attention to the following aspects:

- The US administration remains the initiator and coordinator of the sanctions regime against Russia, which, along with a significant reduction in crude oil prices, should stop economic growth in Russia, reduce its military budget and modernize the defense industry.

- The main tools for coordinating US and EU positions remain joint meetings of US leaders and key EU officials, G7 summits and meetings of finance ministers, led by US Treasury Secretary J. Lew. [34]

The US-EU official line is based on the need for political and diplomatic pressure on all parties who may be considered parties to the conflict to persuade Russia and the separatists to refrain from hostilities, cooperate with the OSCE in disarmament and complete the exchange of prisoners.

Since the fall of 2014, a certain division of roles in the Ukrainian issue has taken place between the US administration and the leaders of the leading EU countries. Created on the initiative of A. Merkel and F. Hollande, the "Norman" negotiating format has taken over the functions of a permanent mechanism for monitoring the conflict in eastern Ukraine. [33]

Despite the harmonization of the general framework conditions for settlement, there are some significant differences between the positions of the United States and the

European Union. For example, the position expressed by the US Permanent Representative to the OSCE D. Bayer (November 12, 2015) highlights the support for Ukraine's demands for local elections in the non-government controlled territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. According to him, it is time for Russia and the separatists it supports to make direct commitments to hold local elections "in full compliance with Ukrainian law and international standards," including free participation in elections of Ukrainian political parties and civil society. Media, as well as OSCE / ODIHR observation. If these conditions are not met, it will mean "non-fulfillment of the Minsk agreements, which are directly related to sanctions against Russia." [34] At the same time, Russia, which has signed the Minsk agreements, must "remove obstacles to the work of the OSCE SMM in order to implement the agreements and monitor their implementation," and ensure safe access to humanitarian assistance to conflict-affected areas.

The expected changes in Russia's relations with France, the United States and other leading Western countries could significantly affect their attitudes to the conflict in Donbas and the general context of Ukrainian-Russian relations. Anticipating speculation that Russia's involvement in the Middle East war will push Ukraine to the margins of world politics, US and EU officials have been quick to say they will be autonomous. Leading EU officials Juncker and Tusk confirmed that the prospect of lifting sanctions against Russia will be determined by the implementation of the Minsk agreements. [34] Similar theses were expressed by members of the EU Foreign Affairs Council and Adviser to the US Secretary of State W. Nuland.

The vast majority of US media support Ukraine in its confrontation with Russia. This is primarily due to the democratic traditions of the state and the geopolitical struggle for supremacy between Washington and Moscow. Authors of articles on the events in Ukraine condemn the annexation of Crimea and the invasion of Donbas, and some even criticize the policies of their government officials, stressing the need for more concrete steps towards restoring Ukraine's sovereignty and implementing democratic reforms. [35]

Thus, the editors of The Washington Post have repeatedly called the Russian army a direct participant in the armed conflict in the Ukrainian Donbas, and the beginning of the war in 2014 - the Russian invasion. A 2016 article by the editorial board on the damage to Ukraine said that in recent times, while the West's focus has been on other issues, Russia and its representatives have steadily intensified shelling, leading to an increase in civilian and military casualties. With reference to the well-known analyst P. Goble, who believes that the Putin regime has its agents who follow the directives given from Moscow, in military units, political organizations, newspapers, radio stations, and other institutions. The newspaper came to the conclusion that there are many common features between the military conflicts between Russia and Ukraine and Syria. The publication criticized President Obama's administration for continuing to negotiate with Putin. [35]

British analytical publications pay a lot of attention to the political situation in Ukraine, especially after the Revolution of Dignity and the beginning of the undeclared Russian-Ukrainian war. After pro-Western leaders came to power in Ukraine, Russia, in addition to economic and energy pressures, resorted to punitive action and seriously encroached on Ukrainian statehood. The most dramatic manifestation of this was the annexation of Crimea in March 2014. After that, Russia tried to repeat a similar scenario in the south-east of Ukraine. But it worked only in the Donbas, where the Kremlin supported separatist forces, portraying them as a manifestation of a local mass uprising, denying its own involvement. According to the author, this hybrid war is purposefully blurring the line between Russia's regular armed forces and local mercenaries, said BBC journalist Ian Bateson. [36]

The attitude of the United States and the governments of the leading EU countries towards Russia and the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is measured mainly by security considerations and intentions to oppose Russia's policy of revisionism in the post-Soviet space. Given the measures taken by the United States and the EU after the Crimean incident, the main role was played by the US and Germany reaffirming security guarantees for Eastern NATO members, strengthening military infrastructure in the

Baltic States, Poland and the Balkans, intensifying military exercises, developing and modernizing rapid deployment forces.

2.3. France

Relations between Ukraine and France have long been limited, as French foreign policy priorities have focused more on the southern rather than the eastern neighborhood, and the East has focused primarily on Russia. And Ukraine, for its part, has been inconsistent in developing its relations with EU countries, including France, since independence. However, over the past two years, both countries have developed new areas of cooperation, especially in the "Norman format". Thus, a side effect of the conflict between Ukraine and Russia was the intensification of cooperation between Ukraine and France. Despite Paris' concentration in the South, Ukraine is among the top 10 foreign policy priorities, forcing France to deepen its knowledge of Ukraine.

The importance of France for Ukraine is difficult to overestimate, as France is an ardent defender of Ukrainian sovereignty and a key player in European security, in particular the role of Paris in the "Norman format". However, France's policy towards Ukraine remains limited due to a lack of expertise on Ukraine and a pro-Russian political and business lobby. Paris really lacks an independent voice on Ukraine-related issues; France usually follows Germany and remains in its shadow within the framework of Minsk-2. [37]

Like many other EU member states, France's foreign policy towards Ukraine fluctuates between two options: either to create a separate direction or to subordinate it to Russia's foreign policy. France's position on the "Russian-Ukrainian" dilemma is that Paris sees Moscow as an EU competitor in the East, but as a partner in the South. Due to the conflict in Ukraine, the "Russia first" approach has been seriously questioned, but the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels, as well as the refugee crisis, have shifted the focus of public opinion towards the Syrian conflict.

Ukraine can increase its authority in France if it positions itself as a "decision-making country" rather than a "defender of European identity from Russia." A positive message should become an integral part of the Ukrainian government's communication

efforts at a time when it is being criticized for its slow pace of reforms and modest results in the fight against corruption. [37]

France's interests in Ukraine are determined by political and economic factors, as well as, to some extent, its relations with Russia. French interests can be summarized as follows:

1. An end to the conflict in eastern Ukraine, which could undermine stability in other parts of the country, and the return of Ukrainian sovereignty over Crimea;
2. Prevention of destabilization and disintegration of Ukraine and deterioration of the socio-economic situation;
3. Strengthening Ukraine both in the political sense and through a wide range of reforms;
4. Support for Ukraine's transformation in line with the European model, although this does not necessarily mean calls for new EU enlargement in the coming years. [38]

France shares the view of many of its EU partners that Ukraine's economic, social and political transformation is taking place in the framework of the European integration process. However, the debate over Britain's exit from the EU and the strengthening of the anti-EU movement shows that today the idea of EU enlargement is much harder to "sell" to the public than before. From this point of view, the referendum in the Netherlands on the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU (April 6, 2016), which ended in a small victory for opponents of the Agreement (61.6%), with low but sufficient voter turnout (32.2%) , can be an obstacle in this way. Although the referendum is consultative, its results are likely to affect the ratification process, which is blocked by political circumstances. The referendum is another example of how the irreversibility of the European integration process may be threatened. Moreover, opinion polls show that a majority of French citizens (63%) would also support the idea of holding a referendum on the Association Agreements that the EU signs with its neighbors, as well as Germans (63%) and Italians (66%). [37] The French understand European integration as a modernization project, not a geopolitical one. More precisely, France is more concerned with the idea of a "balance of power" in Europe than with the

goal of reducing Russia's influence, as long as Moscow's actions do not run counter to Paris' interests.

Euromaidan in 2013 created new opportunities for cooperation at the level of both government and society. French elites tend to be much more concerned about events in the EU's southern neighbors than in the east, for historical and political reasons. However, Euromaidan, which symbolized the desire for Europe, received a positive response in the media and among the public. The question is, how far is France ready to go in its support of Ukraine's European integration efforts?

Opportunities are also accompanied by risks. France's attention, like that of other European countries, is distracted by other priorities, notably the Syrian crisis and the refugee problem. In addition, France is working with Germany to improve the functioning of the European Union, which is experiencing bad times due to the Dutch referendum and the debate on Britain's exit. Finally, in 2017, France is facing presidential and parliamentary elections, and the fact that some right-wing and left-wing politicians appear more pro-Russian in their orientations may affect the further deepening of relations between Kyiv and Paris. [38]

In the medium term, France's interests in Ukraine depend on two factors. First, it is the security situation in eastern Ukraine, which may worsen. In the event of an escalation and further escalation of the conflict, Ukraine may once again attract the attention of the French public. The second factor is Ukraine's political and economic transformation, including the fight against corruption and stability. In the absence of a new escalation of the military situation in eastern Ukraine and slow progress towards reforms, Ukraine risks being at the bottom of the European security agenda unless certain common interests that require collective action are identified. [38]

In assessing France's position on the conflict in eastern Ukraine, its involvement in resolving regional conflicts must be taken into account. Yes, France has mediated several conflicts in the post-Soviet space: Nagorno-Karabakh, Georgia and now Ukraine. France is part of the OSCE Minsk Group, established in 1992 to promote a peaceful solution to the conflict between Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, and co-chairs the negotiating team with Russia and the United States. During the 2008

Russian-Georgian war, President Nicolas Sarkozy, as the current EU president, took the lead in developing a six-point peace plan. The EU presidency was more influential then than it is now after the signing of the Lisbon Treaty. Today, France, along with Ukraine, Russia and Germany, is participating in the "Norman format". [38] The only exception is the conflict in Moldova: France, like other EU member states, is not involved in resolving the Transnistrian conflict. In this conflict, the EU is an observer in the OSCE-led talks.

In all these processes, French diplomacy advocated decisions and negotiation processes with two main characteristics: stability and balance.

France's involvement in resolving the Ukrainian crisis is the result of its commitments within the European Union, the G7, the UN Security Council and its own security interests in the European neighborhood, rather than bilateral relations with Ukraine. First, Paris was involved in resolving the Ukrainian conflict through its participation in the Weimar Triangle, which also includes Germany and Poland. At the end of February 2014, in the midst of the crisis in Kyiv, Warsaw took the initiative to organize a visit of three foreign ministers (Laurent Fabius, Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Radek Sikorski) to Ukraine. The visit ended on February 21 with a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ukrainian authorities and the opposition, signed by Laurent Fabius. Secondly, in early March 2014, France hosted an international conference on Lebanon's security in the context of the Syrian crisis. [37]

French diplomacy planned to raise the issue of Ukraine at this conference, but, unfortunately, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov refused to meet with Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Andriy Deshchytsia. Two days later, two leading opposition leaders, Vitaliy Klitschko and Petro Poroshenko, arrived in Paris. In addition to meeting with the Ukrainian diaspora, the key moment was their meeting with President Francois Hollande. The meeting was organized with the mediation of the French philosopher Bernard-Henri Levy, a fierce critic of the Kremlin and a lobbyist for military intervention in Libya in 2011. [37]

Third, France took a very active part in the negotiations on the Minsk Agreements, both the first (September 2014) and the second (February 2015). The

"Norman format", which includes representatives of Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France, was established during a meeting of four heads of state on June 6, 2014 at the Chateau de Benoville in Normandy. It should be noted that in most cases, and especially in the Minsk process, Berlin insisted on the involvement of France, which wanted to act together with Paris so that it would not be perceived as a German initiative. Some Ukrainian officials openly say that if it were not for Germany's position, it is very unlikely that France would be part of the process.

A special French initiative in resolving the conflict, which is being noted in Ukraine and has received considerable media and expert attention, is the "Morel Plan", named after veteran French diplomat Pierre Morel. The plan was developed as a compromise between Ukraine and Russia on the organization of elections in the occupied territory of Donbass. It provided for elections under a special law, but without the complete withdrawal of armed units and the withdrawal of foreign forces, as well as with other deviations from the original plan. Kyiv was very skeptical about Morel's plan: President Poroshenko called it "Mr. Morel's personal opinion," although Pierre Morel was instructed to prepare the plan after discussing the issue, including with Victoria Nuland and Grigory Karasin. Morel's plan was also skeptical at the level of experts, who generally agree that Russia is trying to "Chechenize" the problem, and the implementation of the plan will mean that Donbas will have only a formal connection with Ukraine, while de facto control of the region Moscow through Kremlin-controlled puppet regimes. Ukraine could reject this plan based on the Minsk agreements, which are the main document in the settlement process and recognized by all parties. However, given the economic and political situation, as well as its dependence on the West, Kyiv generally agreed with some elements of the plan during a meeting in the "Norman format" in Paris last autumn. [38]

Within the European Union, France is generally more balanced with Russia than Germany or Italy, and softer than Britain or Poland. France sees Russia as a competitor in the East, but as a partner in the South, particularly in the Middle East. Although French and Russian diplomats have in the past taken opposing positions on Iran and the Syrian crisis, the November 13, 2015 terrorist attacks have led to some rapprochement

between the two countries. In France, it seems that such "180-degree turns" occur from time to time when such force majeure situations as the terrorist attacks in Paris take place. Some see such a change in France's position as undermining unity within the EU, and Ukraine may, as a result, fall victim to these decisions. [37] At the same time, France, a founding member of NATO, insists on the importance of the Alliance in the context of its collective defense mission, in accordance with Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. France did not hesitate to become one of the first European countries to announce on March 2, 2014 the suspension of its participation in the G8 summit in Sochi, which was eventually canceled. [38]

In this context, it is easy to see why the key word for Paris is "désescalade" and why the French authorities were ready to support Merkel's idea of setting up a "contact group". Given the relatively good personal contact between the German Chancellor and Russian President Vladimir Putin, the French supported the position of their German counterparts to work together to resolve the conflict. This differed from examples of military cooperation such as joint operations with the United Kingdom in Libya.

And in the last two years, France has probably spent more political resources in Ukraine than in the previous decade. However, Ukrainian-French relations still depend on Russian-French relations in the context of the crises in the Middle East, which currently dominate France's security agenda. Yes, France terminated its military contract with Russia in 2010 for the construction of two universal helicopter landing craft (known as the Mistral), but it is far from curtailing all political and military cooperation with Russia. France is in favor of the full implementation of the Minsk agreements, although there is a political consensus that resolving this conflict could take years, even decades, as in other "frozen conflicts" in which France (and Russia) have been involved.

Even a dubious peaceful settlement of the Donbas conflict could minimize Ukraine's geopolitical importance to French rule. Indeed, Ukraine is becoming a hot topic of public debate in France, especially in times of crisis, when Ukrainian sovereignty is under threat, Russian authorities are openly hostile to Ukrainian, and the number of civilian casualties is growing. In other words, Ukraine is less concerned when the crisis turns into a "frozen conflict". [38]

Thus, with the start of the Russian military operation in Syria, announced by President Putin at the United Nations on September 28, 2015, the Ukrainian crisis remained in the shadows. The French media (usually quite hostile to the Putin administration) were shocked. Ordinary French people are now more concerned about terrorist threats and are beginning to forget about the situation in Eastern Europe. The French political elite (divided into pro- and anti-Russian groups) has begun discussing a new alliance with Russia against international terrorism. Those who, like Elizabeth Giga, continue to be interested in Crimea and Donbass are in the minority.

The migration crisis and the November 13 terrorist attacks changed public opinion about Russia's perception. French far-right politician Marine Le Pen is probably the most dependent on ties with Russia, in part because of financial relations, but other conservative parties are also increasingly pro-Russian. Among the candidates for the "primary elections" Francois Fillon from the right-wing party "Les Républicains" is probably the most pro-Russian and prevails in this sense, Nicolas Sarkozy; on the other hand, Fillon has only the fourth rating among all presidential candidates. Russia has strong supporters among a small group of deputies from the National Assembly to the Senate. Among them, ten (mostly right-wing) took part in a visit to Russia in July 2015 with a tour of the Crimea: Thierry Mariani, Yves Pozzo di Borgo, Nicolas Duik, Claude Gozgen, Jacques Miar, Patrice Verscher, Gavolfi-Scheit, Marie-Christine Deleuze and Jerome Lambert (left-wing parliamentarian). It is important to note that these "pro-Kremlin deputies" effectively use institutional procedures to lobby Russia's position. This applies to resolutions recently adopted by the French Parliament. Thus, on April 28, 2016, French lawmakers in the lower house of parliament adopted a resolution calling for the lifting of sanctions against Russia. The document was adopted only by a small group of deputies (55 out of 577), who took advantage of the absence of a majority of deputies at the meeting. But already on June 8, 2016, a similar resolution was voted in the upper house of parliament (Senate) with the support of an absolute majority of deputies (302 votes "for" and 16 votes "against"). Both resolutions are not binding on the government, but the political significance of the documents, including in the context of the election campaign, cannot be underestimated. [37]

The position of French publications on the events in Donbass is extremely important for Ukraine.

«Le Figaro» states that the annexation of Crimea and the invasion of Donbas have shown that the use of force can work by sending a dangerous message to the rest of the world, the potential consequences of which will be felt in the coming decades of the XXI century. In addition to setting a dangerous precedent, Russian aggression will lead to a resumption of violence, increasing risks on the periphery of Russia and in other regions where territorial disputes also exist. [39]

Thus, Paris is inclined to compromise with Moscow on this issue, in particular on the presence of separatists in the occupied territories. This position is synchronous with Moscow, which does not want to allow any surprises in the local elections and will not agree to "free and fair" elections, risking losing control over the separatist leaders. Moreover, Francois Hollande did not put his name under the Minsk agreements, as did Angela Merkel, Petro Poroshenko and Vladimir Putin - their representatives did. Whether this legal formality will help France get out of Minsk's political stalemate after all the diplomatic investment in the Normandy format talks remains to be seen. After all, as the Budapest Memorandum has shown, not all international alliances stand the test of time, and Minsk will be neither the first nor the last in this category.

2.4. China

It is not easy to write about China's foreign policy, because sometimes a lot depends on the nuances and subtleties, because Beijing often, in the words of one publication, "follows a fine line", balancing ... China is also said to base its foreign policy on non-interference. in the internal affairs of others. Among the characteristics is that China relies solely on national interests and is indifferent to values. China's attitude to certain issues is also affected by its relations with the United States and Russia. [40]

China has paid tribute to Ukraine's territorial integrity, such as Chinese Premier Li Keqiang at a news conference after the 2015 session of the Chinese (one-party) parliament.

«In case of Ukraine, China has taken an objective and fair position. We respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine,» - the Chinese prime minister said at the time.

In 2017, during a bilateral meeting with his Ukrainian counterpart in Davos, Chinese President Xi Jinping said that China was ready to help resolve the Ukrainian crisis. [41]

China considered Ukraine as one of the main partners of its flagship initiative «One Belt. One way.» Because Ukraine is already geographically almost the European Union, very profitable logistics. And the conflict in Donbass is more of an obstacle for China because it hinders the direct tracking of goods... Therefore, we can see an increase in investment in Belarus, Georgia and other alternative routes.

World agencies have previously noted that China has followed a "thin line" since the Ukraine crisis, saying it respects Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, but «that Western nations must take into account Russia's legitimate security concerns,» - according to Reuters. [41]

The agency added that China and Russia view many international diplomatic issues equally.

«And Beijing has been careful not to get involved in the struggle between Russia and the West over Ukraine's future, not wanting to reject a key ally in Moscow.» [40]

The agency also said at the time that Beijing had previously shown little interest in joining diplomatic efforts to end the crisis in Ukraine.

However, in 2017 - when the possibility of sending international peacekeepers to Donbas was actively discussed - some analytical reports wrote that Chinese soldiers could also appear among the peacekeepers. [40]

It was noted that peacekeepers could not be from NATO countries (not satisfied with Russia) and could not be from post-Soviet countries, members of the pro-Russian bloc (not satisfied with Ukraine), and that peacekeepers from Asia could be an acceptable solution. One of the analytical reports was even entitled: «How China and India can maintain peace in Ukraine.» [40]

At that time, India was actively talked about, and China was mentioned in pairs. What can be said for sure is that China then supported the very idea of peacekeepers for Donbass.

Last year, China's official state-run Xinhua news agency reported that Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov had called for a direct dialogue between Kyiv and Donbass separatists to resolve the conflict.

Earlier this year, Xinhua, considered the mouthpiece of China's ruling Communist Party, wrote that Ukraine would equip Javelin missile systems with its troops on the Donbass front line, moving away from the previous principle of keeping Javelins out of the conflict zone. [41]

Among the aspects of coverage of the conflict in Donbass, it was possible to notice that the official Chinese media also wrote about the exchange of prisoners in Donbass.

On another aspect of China's involvement in the Donbas conflict, there were analytical reports that China could take a financial part in the post-war reconstruction of eastern Ukraine after the war. [40]

This is where, according to Irwin Studin, editor of the Canadian Global Brief Magazine, China could play a leading role. [41]

«The real reason why the Chinese are talking about Donbas is that China wants to make significant investments in key Ukrainian industries and that's why they don't want to anger Kyiv so that it doesn't look like China is on Russia's side in this war,» - he said in an interview with Radio Freedom Gary Schmitt, an expert at the American Enterprise Institute in the United States.

«China wants to buy Ukrainian companies and invest in Ukrainian infrastructure, and they see Ukraine as a possible source of technology for themselves. The Chinese want to buy Ukrainian companies for relatively little money, which would help them militarily and technically. That's why they don't want to anger Kyiv at this stage,» - added the American expert, who writes on Chinese issues. [41]

The situation with Crimea is as difficult as with Beijing's position on Donbass, although the motivation is more dictated by domestic Chinese considerations.

During two key votes in the UN Security Council in March 2014, first condemning the annexation of Crimea and then refusing to recognize the so-called "referendum" on Crimea's accession to Russia, China abstained. This did not go unnoticed, as China is a permanent member of the Security Council.

«The Chinese have a notion of state sovereignty, but when Russia annexed Crimea - it was already a violation - the largest in Europe since the end of World War II... So, instead of saying 'yes' or 'no', China abstained,» - says Gary Schmitt. [40]

He added: «The Chinese are very sensitive and believe that no one has the right to interfere in their internal sovereign affairs. But this contradicts the fact that the Russians are very active in interfering in the sovereignty of Ukraine, having their regular troops and supporting the militants in the Donbass and generally waging war against the sovereign state of Ukraine. The Chinese are again pursuing a double line - so that there is no interference in their own internal affairs, and on the other hand, taking a tolerant position on Crimea.» [41]

In November 2014, Gui Tsung, then head of China's Euro-Central Asia Department, told Russian media: «We are against independence by any nation through referendums. As for the Crimea, it has very special features. We are well aware of the history of Crimea's affiliation... China responds with full understanding of the challenges and threats facing Russia in connection with the Ukrainian issue and supports Moscow's approach to a solution.»

«We can see that China is increasing investments in Crimea, creating joint ventures, creating business platforms, creating some Crimean-Chinese associations... That is, the de facto Chinese presence in Crimea is growing,» - Natalia Galugan said in an interview. [41]

«China is also promoting its policies through soft power and economic leverage. From this point of view, we can see that China de facto recognizes the current regime in Crimea, the regime there. Therefore, the position is ambiguous and it is not enough to judge only from official statements of Beijing,» - she said, adding that Crimea is also of interest to Beijing in terms of increasing influence in the Black Sea region, which is important for China. [40]

On the second day after the referendum in Crimea, the BBC's English-language website ran a blog on March 17, 2014, entitled *The Crimean Dilemma of China*.

It said that «the call by the Crimean people to secede challenges China's often-declared reluctance to be involved in what it considers to be the internal affairs of other countries. China's response to Crimean separatism also reflects Beijing's reluctance to recognize similar demands for political autonomy in its own backyard. If China respects the Crimean demands for its own political future, why not in Tibet, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region or Taiwan? Beijing's decision: diplomats pave the way for formal calls for dialogue and restraint.»

«China has not openly praised the annexation of Crimea, but neither has it condemned it. The reason for this is that Russia's arguments about Crimea are historically Russia, that the people there are Russians in their hearts, and so on.» - explains the logic of Beijing's actions Gary Schmitt. [40]

«Because Taiwan, from China's point of view, is a lost province, and Hong Kong was taken away by the British Empire. And the Chinese live there and there, and Hong Kong and Taiwan should belong to China. They don't use the term "homeland» - but that's what they mean, «the American expert added in an interview.» - Somewhere in the air is the idea of a Greater China and that Taiwan should be incorporated into China. That is why there was such a moderate Chinese reaction to what the Russians did in Ukraine.

CHAPTER 4

4. INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

4.1. European Union

Ukraine is a priority partner for the European Union. The EU supports Ukraine in ensuring a stable, prosperous and democratic future for its citizens and unwaveringly supports Ukraine's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty. The Association Agreement, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, signed in 2014, is a key instrument for bringing Ukraine and the EU closer together, promoting deepening political ties, strengthening economic ties and respecting common values.

From the first days of the conflict in Donbas, the EU has supported the territorial integrity of Ukraine, condemning the clear violations of Ukrainian sovereignty by acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces. He fully supported all initiatives aimed at achieving a lasting political solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine, using all available means. [42]

The European Union has taken some steps to establish contacts between the parties to the conflict. The EU welcomed and supported the ceasefire agreements and further steps to stabilize the situation in eastern Ukraine. He also took part in the Geneva talks between Russia and Ukraine on April 17, 2014, as a result of which a Resolution on the settlement of the conflict was signed. [43]

An important step was that the EU offered Ukraine financial assistance, set up a support group for Ukraine with the European Commission and signed an Association Agreement with Ukraine, which includes provisions on security and human rights cooperation. [44, p.206]

During the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, the European Union provided active and consistent political, diplomatic and financial and economic support for Ukraine. For the period 2015-2017 The total amount of financial assistance to Ukraine amounted to € 12 billion, of which € 3.4 billion was macro-financial support. In July 2018. The 4th € 1 billion macro-financial assistance program for Ukraine has started (in December,

Ukraine received the first tranche of € 500 million). At the same time, «Horizon 2020» projects are being funded. [45, p.13]

The European Union, as one of the largest donors of humanitarian aid in eastern Ukraine, provided more than 154.8 million euros in emergency assistance, of which 13 million euros were allocated in 2020. The EU has additionally contributed € 49 million to stabilizing and normalizing the situation in Ukraine. In addition, the EU provided training and donated 40 unarmored and 44 armored vehicles, as well as 35 injury kits. [46]

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The EU provides active humanitarian support for the restoration of the livelihoods of the liberated territories and assistance to temporary migrants from the occupied territories and areas of environmental protection. This assistance is targeted at the most vulnerable sections of the population, including households headed by women, the elderly, children and people with disabilities. [47, p.2]

So far, the EU has managed to unite member states, provide political and economic assistance to Ukraine and impose sanctions on Russia. In particular, the leaders of the European Union on September 10, 2020, decided to extend the current sanctions for another six months - until March 15, 2021, against individuals and organizations that continue to undermine the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine or threaten them. The list of persons and institutions covered by these restrictive measures is constantly reviewed and updated by the EU Council, which periodically decides on the extension of sanctions. [48]

Some EU restrictions have been introduced without a time limit. These include diplomatic measures, such as the cancellation of the EU-Russia summit in 2014, the suspension of negotiations with Russia on a visa-free regime and a new EU-Russia

agreement, the exclusion of Moscow from the informal «G8» and return to the «G7» without the participation of Russia.

On March 16, 2017, the Head of the EU Delegation Hugh Mingarelli announced that Ukraine would receive the second tranche of macro-financial assistance from the European Union in the coming weeks. According to him, Ukraine has fulfilled almost all the conditions for the allocation of the next part of macro-financial assistance in the amount of € 600 million. The EU did not wait for Ukraine to meet its requirements - "forest" and "pension", in fact, giving them to Kiev. In other words, it can be concluded that EU assistance may be detrimental to Ukraine. [46]

On January 16, 2017, the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine announced that Portugal will allocate € 200,000 in assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine for the purchase of non-lethal equipment and weapons. [46]

The Portuguese Minister of National Defense also stressed the readiness of further support by Portugal for the desire of Ukrainians for independence and territorial integrity of their country.

The European Commission has provided € 18 million in additional immediate assistance to victims of the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine. The funds will be allocated to cover the costs of emergency medical care, temporary housing, water, as well as sanitary needs.

Therefore, the EU's role in resolving the situation in the East is important. Because, without financial and humanitarian assistance, Ukraine simply would not be able to restore macroeconomic stability. After all, the changes that have taken place over the past two years are very noticeable and irreversible, Ukraine is unlikely to lose these positive changes that have already been made.

4.2. NATO

NATO-Ukraine relations and the attitude of Ukrainian society towards the Alliance were not easy, but the situation began to change radically with Russia's launch of aggression against Ukraine.

From the very beginning of the aggression against Ukraine, the Russian Federation tried to absolve itself of responsibility for the outbreak of the bloody war and

actively disseminated its contrived explanations for the reasons for its actions. One such reason was that Moscow declared "NATO's hostile behavior" and blamed the Alliance for everything, while trying to increase the negative attitude of the people of Russia and Ukraine (especially Crimea and Donbas) towards it. Moscow has intensified propaganda in this direction. The lack of a meaningful alternative to Russian and pro-Russian media in eastern Ukraine has led the majority of the region's population to continue to view NATO as an aggressive military bloc. [53]

At the same time, even many supporters of Ukraine's membership in NATO are unaware of the Alliance's non-military activities, including: political cooperation; development of the values of democracy, individual freedom, rule of law and internal reforms; counteraction to emergencies; scientific and technical cooperation; development of civilian security sector personnel; countering cyber threats; energy security. NATO's non-military activities were initiated almost sixty years ago in 1956 by the so-called Committee of Three, which recommended that they be developed to strengthen the Alliance's internal solidarity, coherence and unity. The Welsh NATO Summit in September 2014, given the nature of Russia's hybrid war, highlighted the importance of a non-military component of the Alliance that "contributes to the effectiveness of common security". [49]

In the face of Russian military aggression, Ukraine has not received direct military support from the Alliance in the form of intervention, as it is not a member of NATO and therefore not part of its security system. Such military intervention, even without an international mandate that will undoubtedly be blocked by Russia, could provoke a military confrontation between NATO and Russia and pose a real threat to global security and a precondition for the Kremlin to justify its aggressive actions. This danger keeps Brussels from taking such a step, but Moscow is constantly proving by its actions that it does not care about world stability. Moreover, NATO members have not supported the decision to provide Ukraine with weapons, and this issue should be resolved exclusively on a bilateral basis, "because the Alliance's armed forces belong to specific states," - NATO Chief of Staff General Knud Bartels said in an interview with Ukrainian newspaper. People's Army "in November 2014. [50] The main reason for the

refusal is again the fear that Russia will escalate the conflict in Donbass. However, during a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission on 25 June this year, Allied defense ministers announced the possibility of reconsidering the issue of providing Ukraine with lethal weapons if the Minsk agreements continue to be violated by the aggressor country.

All this testifies to the actualization of the development of Special Cooperation between Ukraine and NATO in the non-military dimension. The latter, along with indirect military assistance in the form of training Ukrainian servicemen by NATO instructors, conducting joint exercises such as Rapid Trident and Saber Guardian, and supplying equipment and gear, is extremely important for both our country's development and countering the Russian military threat. Four of the five NATO Trust Funds to assist Ukraine, namely in cyber defense, logistics, the transition from military careers and medical rehabilitation, relate to non-military cooperation. Developing them, Ukraine receives strong international support, assistance in health care, domestic reforms, overcoming the consequences of natural disasters, energy and information security. [53]

At the political level, from the very beginning of Russia's aggression, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization condemned Moscow's actions and fully supported Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, according to a statement issued by the North Atlantic Council on March 2, 2014 and then-NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh during a meeting with the Prime Minister of Ukraine Arseniy Yatsenyuk on March 6, 2014. [51] Subsequently, such signals of support were heard at various levels, but the Alliance did not limit itself to declarations.

Since April 2014, the Alliance has suspended the work of the NATO-Russia Council until the full restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity. Does this decision affect Russia? Yes, because Moscow actively coordinated its activities with NATO in countering terrorism, the threat of which has not disappeared for Russia, in resolving the situation in Afghanistan, whose instability primarily threatens Russia's southern borders, and military-technical cooperation, because Russia's military-industrial complex needs Western technology. and some weapons, such as combat helicopters, contain

components made in Allies. In addition, NATO representatives at various international events revealed the truth about Russia's direct involvement in the annexation of Crimea and the fighting in the Donbas, showed their own photos of space reconnaissance confirming the presence of Russian forces on Ukrainian territory. [53]

An important area of NATO assistance to Ukraine was the treatment and medical rehabilitation of the wounded, as well as the provision of equipment to Ukraine's medical facilities and the training of specialized personnel. The Cooperation Agreement signed between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the NATO Support Agency on 27 April this year provided Ukraine with the opportunity to receive assistance from the Alliance's Trust Fund for the physical rehabilitation of servicemen wounded in the anti-terrorist operation in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. About 300 Ukrainian servicemen have already undergone or continue to receive treatment and rehabilitation in medical institutions of NATO member states, in particular, the United States, Germany, Poland and Lithuania. In this regard, it seems promising to increase the capacity of Ukrainian medics to provide medical care to Ukrainian wounded, which provides Ukrainian medical units, hospitals and hospitals with the necessary equipment to save the lives of Ukrainian soldiers. [53]

The Alliance is directly involved in solving one of the most important tasks for Ukrainian society - reforming Ukraine. Thus, at the NATO Summit in Wales in September 2014, support for comprehensive reforms in Ukraine was declared, not only in the field of security and defense, but also in other areas. [49] To this end, it was decided last year to strengthen the NATO Liaison Office in Ukraine with additional experts. In July this year, NATO, with the participation of the representative of Ukraine, developed a draft model anti-corruption training program for the security and defense sector, which will also be implemented in Ukraine under the NATO Initiative for Building Integrity, Integrity, Transparency and Reducing Corruption Risks. security institutions. Strengthening democratic civilian control of the armed forces and security services must continue to be an important element in reforming Ukraine's security and defense sector, as the Alliance points out. Here, parliamentary control, close communication between law enforcement NATO agencies and civil society organizations, and

the already quite active Ukraine-NATO interparliamentary cooperation play an important role. It should be noted that the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine V. Groysman invited observers from the NATO PA to monitor the local elections in Ukraine on October 25, 2015.

Active cooperation between Ukraine and NATO in the field of emergency response allows us to jointly neutralize emerging natural disasters in Ukraine and neighboring Allies in the framework of the NATO-Ukraine Joint Civilian Planning Group in Emergencies, and helps to receive assistance from the Alliance fighting in eastern Ukraine. Thus, at the meeting of NATO defense ministers in June this year, an agreement was reached in principle on the establishment of an additional Trust Fund for Assistance to Ukraine for Demining and Explosive Ordnance Disposal, which will allow Ukraine to receive assistance in clearing explosives already liberated areas. [53]

Following a series of Russian-initiated gas wars, energy security has become one of NATO's areas of activity, a decision approved at the Alliance's Bucharest Summit in 2008. NATO focuses on energy infrastructure security, nuclear security, climate change and energy efficiency. Ukraine is in constant communication with NATO on energy issues, as evidenced by numerous meetings between the leadership of the Ministry of Energy of Ukraine and Naftogaz of Ukraine with representatives of the Alliance's headquarters. Ukraine and NATO signed an agreement, which in June this year. was ratified by the Ukrainian parliament, and according to which NATO will safely rebury the nuclear waste left in Ukraine from the former Soviet Union. In the first phase, the Alliance will carry out work totaling 508,000 euros at one of six facilities in the Zhytomyr region. By the way, three objects are located in the occupied territories (two - in the Crimea, one - in Donetsk). [53]

Given the specifics of Russia's hybrid war, cooperation in cybersecurity and information security is important. The issue of countering Russian propaganda, for example, was discussed at a meeting of the NATO PA Civil Security Committee on May 17 this year, which was attended by a delegation of Ukrainian deputies. The committee discussed Russia's ongoing information attacks on the Euro-Atlantic area, noted the lack of NATO action, which allowed Russia to gain some advantage in the information

space, and proposed a ban on Russian propaganda media and increased aid to the most vulnerable countries. [52] In order to develop cooperation between Ukraine and NATO in this field, an agreement was reached in Brussels on 18-19 June this year between the Ukrainian delegation led by Minister of Information Policy Yuri Stets and NATO representatives to help establish a national strategic communications and anti-propaganda system in Ukraine. The Alliance is already providing advisory and financial support to Ukraine on these issues and, in particular, has supported the Ukrainian Crisis Media Center and the Kyiv Post to publish the real situation in the occupied territories of Crimea and Donbas.

Today, the Alliance is objectively refusing to intervene directly in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and is delaying the provision of lethal weapons to Ukraine. Therefore, the non-military dimension of NATO-Ukraine cooperation is becoming more relevant, especially in the context of Russia's hybrid war, when purely military means play only a limited role. The purpose of such a war is to fight for identity, values, people's minds, spheres of influence and resources. Ukraine is already receiving assistance from the Alliance to win this fight and continues to develop it, as it will be especially needed after the conflict is resolved. [53]

4.3. OSCE

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has made great efforts to monitor and resolve various aspects of the conflict. The OSCE has appointed a special envoy to Ukraine (February 28, 2014), who has visited our country several times. He held bilateral talks with stakeholders, established a national dialogue program, a military observer mission (March 5-12, 2014), a human rights assessment mission in cooperation with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, a presidential election observation mission and a special monitoring mission for Ukraine (decision of the OSCE Permanent Council of 21.3.2014 №1117). [54] In addition, the OSCE also organized military verification visits under the Vienna Document 2011 and called on the parties to consult and co-operate on enhanced military activities in accordance with the above-mentioned document. OSCE officials, including the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and

the OSCE Project Coordinator, are stationed in Ukraine. OSCE Secretary General L. Zannier has contacted all stakeholders and called for a solution to the conflict. The OSCE, together with Russia and Ukraine, is a member of the Tripartite Contact Group on Ukraine. [55, p.12]

It should be noted that the settlement of the conflict in Ukraine was included in the agenda of the annual OSCE Security Review Conference, which took place on June 24, 2014. This conference served as a platform for dialogue between the parties. The OSCE Permanent Council adopted a Declaration on the crash of Malaysian flight MH17 in Ukraine, which called for an investigation into the causes of the tragedy, and called on the parties to a ceasefire and a ceasefire in eastern Ukraine. [56] The OSCE has played an important role in monitoring the situation as a whole, for example, a special monitoring mission is required to report daily on the state of affairs in the East. The OSCE monitoring is recognized as a reliable source of information. [57] This has played and continues to play an important role in resolving the conflict. The OSCE Special Mission named in the Geneva Declaration of 17 April 2014 a key factor in the de-escalation of the conflict. [58] The Minsk Agreement of September 5, 2014 concerns only one organization - the OSCE - and directly gives the right to control and verify both the ceasefire and the Ukrainian-Russian border. Since then, the OSCE monitoring mission at Russia's Gukovo and Donetsk checkpoints has updated weekly information on the transfer of people, vehicles and weapons from both sides of the border.

Thus, despite the repeatedly criticized "soft" approach and the absence of any mechanism for enforcing Russia's commitments, the OSCE has shown an impartial attitude towards Ukraine. The organization monitored and took into account all aspects of the conflict, made every effort to resolve and mitigate the conflict. This has played and continues to play a crucial role in Europe's collective security system.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Based on the questions that my dissertation is intended to answer, namely, what is the impact that foreign states and organizations have had, the following conclusions can be drawn.

The conflict in the Donbas has become one of the most pronounced manifestations of the Ukrainian-Russian confrontation, which has been going on for many years in various spheres of the life of the state.

Russia has put serious pressure on the Donbas. On May 24, 2014, a plane was shot down near Slovyansk, as a result of which 5 passengers died. On June 14, terrorists shot down a military transport aircraft, killing 40 paratroopers and 9 crew members. On June 24, a military helicopter was shot down by terrorists, as a result of which 9 servicemen died. On July 17, a passenger plane was shot down, flying across the sky over the Donbas, in which there were 298 people on board. They all died. On August 28, the so-called "Ilovaisk tragedy" happened, where hundreds of Ukrainian soldiers were killed. It was these events that forced other foreign actors to pay attention to this conflict.

The 2nd part of the 2nd chapter was intended to answer the question of what were the actions of Ukraine, its policy, in order to overcome the actions of the occupier.

Ukraine responded to the aggression of the Russian side of the conflict with the Minsk Agreements - Minsk Protocol of September 5, 2014, Minsk Memorandum of September 19, 2014 and Minsk package of measures of February 12, 2015, which partially tied Russia's hands, but Ukraine did not stop there. On September 16, 2014, the law "On a special procedure for local self-government in certain areas of Donetsk and Lugansk regions" was signed, which became the first result of the Minsk agreements.

International actors played a key role in the conflict in Donbas and continue to play it now – in a full-scale Ukrainian-Russian war. Having analyzed everything that has already been done and is being done right now, one should pay attention to the fact that different actors play a key role in the conflict in Donbass and a full-scale war.

During the conflict in the Donbass, France and Germany made major adjustments, but in the period that begins on February 24, they are losing their influence, the burden

of which is taken into their own hands by the United States. However, it should be said that the role of each of the above countries was an important and integral part of our path.

Regarding the analyzed international organizations, it should be said that their influence is in no way inferior. For example, the role of the EU was to support Ukraine in the form of financial and humanitarian assistance, which should not be underestimated. The OSCE, in turn, provided tremendous assistance during the conflict in Donbas: they created a special monitoring mission, which partially tied Russia's hands. Unfortunately, everything turned upside down on February 24, when the aggressor unleashed a full-scale war, because as a result of this, the OSCE special monitoring mission immediately lost its relevance. However, from that moment on, there is a "tide of strength" for other foreign actors, in particular NATO, which turned out to be quite effective in the current situation.

Summing up all this, it should be said that most of the world stage supported Ukraine both during the conflict in the Donbas and during the full-scale war. And all that help did not disappear without a trace, but only had an impact and "rebuilt" the consequences, because it is not known how everything could have turned out without their support.

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APPENDIX

The thesis which is written by undergraduate student Ten Artur and entitled *The Role of International Actors in Russia's War against Ukraine* provides an excellent starting point to engage the role of international actors in Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The thesis attempts to find an answer to the question of what effects international actors have in the Russia-Ukraine war. To this end, it first provides an overview of the Donbas Conflict. The chapter ensures chronologically the events that took place in the Donbas Conflict. It particularly addresses the Minsk Agreements which established the main framework for the peace process.

Subsequently, the thesis evaluates the role of international actors in Russia's war against Ukraine. In this context, the second chapter focuses on the role of Germany, the USA, France, and China in the war. The chapter shows how Germany and France took the lead to mediate between the warring parties. The third chapter, on the other hand, examines the role of the EU, NATO, and OSCE in ending the war between Russia and Ukraine. After analyzing the actors separately, the thesis argues that the degree of effectiveness of international actors in the war between Russia and Ukraine has altered significantly since 2014. It observes that while Germany, France, and OSCE were the leading international actors between 2014-2021, they remained in the background as of 2021. The thesis reveals that from 2021 onwards, the US, NATO, and the EU have taken the lead in Russia's war against Ukraine.

In this respect, *The Role of International Actors in Russia's War against Ukraine* would be a highly good starting point for those who wish to examine the role of international actors in the Russia-Ukraine war.

Consequently, as an undergraduate thesis, this work is well written and organized. I believe it is a satisfying study that may enable an international relations student to obtain a bachelor's diploma.

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