Ukraine’s Strength Of Liberal Democracy: The Strongest Solution To Deal With The Global Consequences Of The Battle For Ukraine

Lopamudra Ghosh

ABSTRACT
This research paper entitled “Ukrainian Ethos of Liberal Democracy: A Threat to Russian Geopolitics” analyses the situation in Russia and states that Ukraine’s acceptance of democratic principles could be a geostrategic threat to Russia. This paper offers little suggestion of Ukraine’s integrative processes within the EU and NATO, and argues how this measurement process is being opposed by Russia, which wants Ukraine to return to its influence. The Crimean occupation by Russia has violated international order, opening the way for unstructured international relations with UN agencies. Russian leaders and Western analysts have fuelled a series of controversies that justify or even explain Russia’s 2014 invasion of Ukraine. Understanding the motive for Russia’s actions is important in the short term because efforts to anticipate a conflict of interest depend on understanding Russian principles. In the long run, however, finding a stable place to live will depend on understanding what Russia hopes to achieve. In addition, the strategy of many provinces in the region, the US, and NATO relies on understanding the scope of Russia’s ambitions. Much debate in the West has focused on the question of whether Russian actions should be considered aggressive or defensive. Both of these ideas see such motives as geopolitical. For post-revolutionary Ukraine to thrive as a stable, prosperous, free democracy held close to Europe will undermine the claim that Russia will not succeed as a free democracy. Putin’s legitimacy depends heavily on that claim. If Ukraine can succeed as a democracy, the Russian people may reasonably wonder why Russia cannot do the same. Moreover, the success of the “dignity reform” will show how to bring about such a change in Russia. This definition does not directly contradict geopolitical ideas. It highlights the basic geopolitical motive that determines Ukraine’s effect on Russia’s domestic politics. Research has found that Russia’s future moral implications are different. Any geopolitical explanation could lead us to expect that Russia will seek to stabilize the revised status quo. The domestic statement is that Russia will seek to curb any level of stability that allows a pro democratic Ukraine to continue domestic reforms and closer ties with Europe.

KEYWORDS: Crimea; Europe; Geopolitics; Liberal Democracy; NATO; Russia; Ukraine.

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I. INTRODUCTION
Examining the current geopolitical situation of Ukraine, we see that the country is divided between two centrifugal forces; on the one hand, we have Russia representing the East, on the other hand, we have the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) representing the West. The political end of Ukraine will depend on the split of centrifugal tensions between East and West. Russia is trying to
suppress Ukraine’s proximity to Western institutions and also to compromise Russia’s influence. This is not possible since Ukraine has accepted membership in Euro-Atlantic institutions.

This paper reveals documents and agreements signed by Ukraine as EU partners with NATO. The question of Ukraine’s geopolitical status is important in the world of education, because this research question is still young; and the ongoing conflict is ever-changing. The problem of Ukraine’s geopolitical situation is developing in an unknown way; no one can predict what kind of future is recorded and what can happen.

Russia’s annexation of Crimea and its annexation of Ukrainian territories have linked such Ukrainian territories to the protection of the United Nations. Even though the UN is influential in international relations, it still has the potential to solve the 21st-century political and security problems. It is clear that the conflict in Ukraine will always be a major challenge for the 21st-century Europe.

My hypothesis is that Ukraine will aspire (for the possibility of future membership) to the EU and NATO, as its main strategy for becoming a Euro-Atlantic country, and at the same time to overthrow Russian rule in the country. This will be difficult to achieve considering the current conflicts and separatist movements that could easily undermine the government’s political climate.

However, there is no going back at this time. Ukraine will no longer be under Russian political control; Russia’s goal of changing Crimean citizenship will not go unnoticed by the international community, and Ukraine’s efforts to crack down on rival Russian groups will gain growing Euro-Atlantic support.

By researching this conflict, we as political scientists are entering a “new era of research in international relations”, which is left to fend for itself (and lack structure) without the right of the United Nations to prevent conflict or build peace. The UN will need major reforms to meet the geopolitical challenges of the 21st-century, while member states must renounce more sovereignty when it comes to preventing war. Until this change takes place, major powers will pursue their geopolitical projects, and conflicts will arise when these projects start contradicting with each other.

II. UKRAINE’S STRENGTH OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY AND RUSSIAN GEOPOLITICS: AT CROSSROADS

An aggressive or opportunistic view sees Russia as holding on to instability in Ukraine to seize the place it has long dreamed of. Since taking over the presidency, the main goal that inspired and guided Vladimir Putin was the desire to reclaim most of the important assets – political, economic and geostrategic gains lost through the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The defensive view sees Russia, alarmed by the rise of the European Union and NATO in the East, as it responds to the threat that the Ukrainian revolution will lead to an increase in European hostility in the formerly Russian territory, and where Russia has repeatedly been attacked: “The United States and its European allies share a large part of the responsibility for this crisis. At the root of the problem is the expansion of NATO, which is the cornerstone of a major strategy to remove Ukraine from the Russian route and integrate it with the West” (Mearsheimer, 2014).

“Twenty years of NATO expansion in the east has caused Russia to close down. . . . The Ukrainian crisis stemmed from an attempt by Western nations last November to smuggle the former Soviet Union into NATO’s territory” (Van den Havel and Cohen, 2014).

This debate between the invasion and the defence, which echoes the debate between the “traditional” and “revised” definitions of the Cold War, is based on the basic consensus that the conflict is really about geopolitics – about whether Ukraine will be part of the East or the West, about whether Russia will accept or reject the remaining borders after the breakup of the Soviet Union, and whether we are entering a new civil war. On the contrary, many western literatures in recent years have looked at the spread of democracy through popular reforms without much reference to national politics – democracy simply represents the spread of the world-famous value of “democracy”.

The “third wave of democracy” has produced many books on the spread of democracy internationally. Many of these letters focused on the EU’s role in promoting democracy in post-communist Eastern Europe. Following the “Colour Revolution” in Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, many are analysing the prevalence of sedition. In its simplest form, it seemed that there was a recipe for the overthrow of a corrupt regional empire.

At least since the 2004 Orange Revolution, we have seen the combined response of Russia and other independent states. Internally, dictatorial governments, not only in Russia but also in Central Asia and Latin America as well, put pressure on NGOs and opposition politicians and formed pro-government groups, such as the “Russian Nazis”, which could be called to deal with street protesters.

In addition, these governments are working together to combat the spread of democracy internationally. Democracy and egalitarianism can spread, and Russia among others has continued to seek to promote it. By looking at each other’s examples, they copied effective home strategies. Through mass propaganda, they have sought to refute the idea that one social system is the best. By forming their own monitoring groups, they have given international authority in elections that other parties will not authorize.

Corresponding Author: Lopamudra Ghosh
From this perspective, the geopolitical lines between domestic and international politics appear to be different. Because changes in the form of government can have a profound effect on a country, the spread of certain forms of government, or resistance, becomes a political strategy. If the West, in viewing democracy as a global issue, undermines this, Russia clearly does not.

Putin sees the spread of democratic promotion aimed at Russia’s interests. Putin, therefore, pointed to what he saw as the hypocrisy of the American position in the Crimea. In the case of Kosovo, Putin disputes, the US stated that partition would be legal and even opposed to the state from which it came (Putin, 2014). By blaming the double standard, Putin hopes to show that the USA’s viewpoint on international law and democracy is a national weapon, not a real system.

III. UKRAINE-RUSSIA RELATIONS AFTER RUSSIAN TAKEOVER OF CRIMEA

Relations between the two countries have not been so bad, legally or illegally, the two warring nations – depending on how we see it. Moscow sees Ukraine’s ratification of the EU and NATO as a geopolitical threat to its national and international interests, especially after the expiry of the first Yanukovych government.

According to Russian representatives, NATO violated its mandate in the Ukrainian case. They are of the opinion that the relocation of NATO troops near Russia’s borders would lead to instability. We now clearly know that Putin is making a Moscow plan to increase Russia’s influence without borders, which would be in jeopardy in part if Ukraine were to avoid Moscow’s territorial influence. The common view is that Putin will start a conflict in other states; rising economic pressures and declining oil prices may push Putin to seek foreign interference (Newton, 2015, pp. 7-9). The most vulnerable are the Baltic States (Evans-Pritchard, 2015).

Russia thinks of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) will promote economic growth; although in some cases it has to adjust its energy policy to new realities in order to earn western money, the EEU offers Putin more profits and confidence to pursue national interests. The US, NATO and the EU expect Putin to act as a “partner” when it comes to international relations, they have praised him many times, and now they are confused about how to treat him.

The West strives to understand Putin’s tactics (Roxburgh, 2013, pp. 253-272), viewing him as a partner, and as a major threat at the same time; some even argue that the West has lost Putin’s relationship (Neil Buckley, 2015). The most pressing question is: Have they ever, had it? Putin was always ready to oppress neighbouring countries in the name of Russian interest; has promised to restore Russia as a key player in global politics. Putin pulls extra strands into Ukraine: Moscow (citing Aleksander Mazur) recently announced that it had suspended its participation in the Joint Consultative Group on the Treaty on the Convention of the ArmedForces in Europe on 11th March 2014 – using NATO extensions as a reason for this.

Ukrainians recently reported on the deployment of Russian troops in Ukraine; weapons depot (T-64 and T-72 tanks and armoured vehicles), armaments, Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS) as missiles, and sophisticated air defence systems have been identified.

Ukrainian reports estimate more than 250 tanks, 800 armed personnel carriers, while other Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) for surveillance and targeting purposes were also reported. The situation is not improving; reports indicate that Russian troops are increasing in size, which means Putin is not backing down.

Putin provides material for researchers (especially those studying political science), which are scientifically “informed”, but at the same time questions any hypothesis and possible consequences a person may have; in the case of Ukraine, we will wait and see what the future holds for us.

Clearly, we cannot predict Putin’s movements as his strategic plans will not be in line with the strategic plans the West has for Ukraine. Putin is currently building a 19-mile [19 km] bridge to link Crimea with Russia, as part of his ambitious return plan as a major international player.

IV. UKRAINE’S STRENGTH OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY: THE STRONGEST SOLUTION TO DEAL WITH THE GLOBAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE BATTLE FOR UKRAINE

Ukraine threatens Putin’s claim that the western style of democracy is not appropriate for Russia. In this case, the widespread Russian view that Ukraine is “part of Russia” is indeed very dangerous. If Ukraine cannot be separated from Russia, and Ukraine can establish a European style of democracy – and even if, albeit unreasonably, EU membership – why could Russia not?

While Western-backed Viktor Yushchenko was opposed to a possible Russian victory in the 2004 Ukrainian presidency, Russia severely backed Viktor Yanukovych’s campaign. The ensuing Orange Revolution expressed Russia’s fears: in Ukraine, a pro-revolutionary and anti-Russian government began to rule instead of a pro-Russian man.

In Russia, people are angry over the reduction of public benefits and their protests took to the streets. Although Putin’s government was able to withstand the protests, it led to several new initiatives, including the formation of the Nashi Pro-Government Youth League and the spread of “Communist” ideology.

However, when Putin directed fraud in the 2011 parliamentary elections, protests reverted to a much larger scale. By setting aside Dmitry Medvedev in 2012, for Putin to run for president again, Putin left no doubt
as to who was in charge, regardless of his position. The point was not just about the monarchy, but about Putin’s dominant role in it. In both cases, Putin seemed to understand that unless his regime was fully understood, there was a risk that some senior members of the public would challenge his role.

However, lying in the 2011 election brought its own problems, which are protests in the streets like the protests that overthrew the Orange Revolution in Ukraine and the Rose Revolution in Georgia. These protests, which were accepted and encouraged by the United States, represent a real challenge to Putin’s power, and while he is able to strike, he seems to continue to see such a threat in Communist Russia.

Events in Ukraine in 2013-2014 reinforced that threat. It is unclear whether Putin really believes what he is saying about the EU and the US’s role in promoting the overthrow of Viktor Yanukovych (2014b) – despite the presence of Senator John McCain and the thenSecretary of State Victoria Nuland in Maidan where the geopolitical case sounds louder.

The hope was that Ukraine, with the help of the EU, would begin to change. If so, Ukraine may be an attractive model for the Russian people, and a very different model than Putin has always emphasized.

According to Russian separatist groups, in today’s world extremism is used as a geopolitical and reorganization tool of influence. Russia will see what the sad consequences of the so-called “colour change” will lead to. In Communist Russia this is a lesson and a warning. Russia must do everything in its power to ensure that nothing like this happens in Russia (quoted in Krupskaya, 2014).

V. ADDRESSING THE GLOBAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE BATTLE FOR UKRAINE

To the extent that the Russian invasion of Ukraine was driven by the fear of “infection” of popular change, what impact did the future of the conflict have? Contrary to understanding only the geographical conflict, this view will lead us to focus less on territorial questions or on relations with Europe and the US, and more on the internal situation in Ukraine.

If we focus mainly on the region, whether we see Russia’s promotion as aggressive or defensive, then the logical goal is the establishment of a new geographical position in Europe. Whether that means combining the benefits of 2014, or increasing further, the goal will be to gain acceptance at the end of the new frontiers.

With Crimea, that may have already been accomplished. Even the definition of ‘defence’ could expect Russia to seize the corridor between Crimea and Russia, or to travel as far as Transnistria, seize Odessa along the way, and conquer Ukraine by surrounding it by the Black Sea. Any further expansion of the area beyond the September 2014 shooting termination line would further the challenge for Europe, and possibly even show how little it can do to prevent Russia from pursuing its goals.

Mearsheimer (2014) promotes some form of Ukrainian neutrality – citing the Austrian model in the Cold War. If the conflict is completely geopolitical, that may work. But if it is also about Ukrainian domestic politics and its implications for Russia, such an outcome would not be acceptable in Russia.

A deeper problem with neutrality is that it is much harder to preserve it in the post-war world than in the world of the Cold War. Building a free democracy in Ukraine almost certainly depends on close ties with the European Union – both supportive reforms, and strong economic reasons.

Competing in Europe on unequal terms with EU members, Ukraine’s economy will almost collapse – forcing it to sever its ties with Russia. The fragmentation of domestic, international, and political issues will make conflict extremely difficult to resolve. For Russia to feel secure in relation to Ukraine, Ukraine not only needs to be geographically reduced or also politically neutral; it needs to be controlled by Russia – and autocratic – even if it does not work.

If neutrality is not a viable strategy, then renewed stability will depend on allowing the West to control Ukraine’s renewed Russia, or for Russia to accept the loss of Ukraine (excluding Crimea and the Donbas). It is likely that a non-cooperation outcome will arise, with Russia likely to reduce its military activity, but will continue to ensure that Ukraine does not do what’s necessary to protect the interests of Europe, the US and the West.

VI. CONCLUSION

By uniting Crimea, Moscow has violated international law and sovereignty of Ukraine. Even though the players involved in the Ukrainian conflict are members of the UN and have adopted the UN Charter which explicitly defends the sovereignty of member states; there is no UN body that can act as a mediator to resolve conflict or prevent it. There are only UN bodies that will facilitate the post-conflict recovery.

Analysing the conflict in Ukraine so far, we note that the Ukrainian Army does not have the time and expertise to develop its military capabilities, and to end the separatist attacks. Currently the US is advantageous in the geopolitical war between the East and the West, simply because it is geographically far from Ukraine (which puts the US at greater risk in the event of a conflict) and has resources to help Ukraine deal with Russia.

USA aspires for Ukraine to become a stable European state without the influence of Russia. However, that is easier said than done. Delaying Ukraine’s membership in the EU poses a growing risk of losing this...
opportunity permanently; and to make this even more difficult, Putin plans the exact opposite, and his plans go smoothly. Putin has always been one step further as he transcends the international public policy and the international law; he only cares about Russia’s interests, and that is what the EU should do and in the case of Ukraine, it must act responsibly, leaving its authorities alone.

The EU must tighten sanctions against Russia and increase financial aid to Ukraine. Member countries need closer cooperation. Europe will have to work harder and expand its scope of pressure (on economic and communications sanctions), and they need to stand firm in the U.S. and its policies to “act rationally”.

EU countries must send more troops to join US troops in neighbouring Ukraine. The United States and the NATO must continue to participate in this process and provide specific recommendations to the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF) to strengthen Ukraine’s border protection. Western commitment to Ukraine will raise red flags in Moscow; Moscow must feel the pressure of the Western European involvement in the defence of Ukraine.

REFERENCES


Corresponding Author: Lopamudra Ghosh