

RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND ITS HUMANITARIAN CONSEQUENCES

THEIR CULTURE, INTERNATIONAL VISION AND PROPAGANDA MACHINE. THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CONFLICT IN UKRAINE.

TRANSLATION FROM THE ORIGINAL VERSION (SPANISH)

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1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to demonstrate the power of a country like Russia, whose government has re-established the imperialist vision of the past. Its propaganda apparatus capable of controlling the public opinion together with the willingness of the government to use military means to defend its interests, provides the Federation with an undeniable power. An essential fact, nevertheless, that may induce other countries to make mistakes even against their own population.

Initially, the research focuses on knowing the mindset of Russian society and the media exert control over it. Next, deciphering the guidelines of its foreign policy and configuration of the world based on their relationships with strategically important territories and the organizations leaded by the Federation. Finally, revealing the causes that led to the conflict in Ukraine as well as the methods used during the fighting by both parties to the conflict.

The issue of Russia is of great relevance nowadays due to the annexation of Crimea and the clashes occurred after the revolution in the Maidan. However the consequences of the policy of "fait accompli" carried out by the Kremlin should not be regarded as a timely matter, but in the medium term. Therefore, keeping track of the Ukrainian crisis may help preventing similar situations and separatist movements in the upcoming future in other areas of Russia's geopolitical influence.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the belief that European *think tanks* err systematically by approaching problems and the actions of the former Soviet republics from a Western point of view, it proves essential to understand their reality.

For this purpose, the media will be intensively analyzed and surveys will be conducted among its population. Additionally the details of Russia's foreign policy will be examined by using the sources of the Russian government itself and the publications of Russian speaking analysts.

Finally, we will learn the truth of the conflict in Ukraine in the field: interviewing political authorities, associations and organizations of all kinds, and especially ordinary citizens. The author has witnessed firsthand the armed conflict and drama of the conflict and captured it into a document of enormous graphic interest.

3. THE RUSSIAN VISION OF REALITY

The American and European centers of analysis, often underestimate the fact that Russian citizens and media have an outstanding national identity regardless of their political ideology. Not so much in the sense of a state or a flag representing them; but in the values, history and culture that unites them with other individuals in the *panrussian* world. This, together with a rooted culture of defense and the view of armed conflicts as an inevitable consequence of human nature; explains the tremendous support that Russia's foreign policy possesses among its citizens.

To understand the vision that the Russian population has on the events taking place in Ukraine and Syria, it is necessary to research on the major media sources of the Federation, and the methods they use.

Naturally, the extraordinary dimensions of the country turn a trip abroad into a luxury item for the people of the interior, which mostly conceive television as the only window to the outside world. This leads to one of the keys of media control: the few stations completely independent of the government are just available in cable TV¹.

"The dream of world domination"

Consequently, out of the circles with high academic training or economic resources living in the cities, the population is extremely alien to events occurring outside the country.



The US, for instance, are displayed as a threat to the independence of any state, which explains the resurgence of anti-American sentiment.

But how has the Russian population, heir to a well educated low and middle class during the Soviet period, arrived to such a limited thinking autonomy?

In 1938, per 10,000 inhabitants of the Soviet Union, 35 students were counted; while in France only 17 or 11 in England². In addition, educated citizens were not over-privileged and isolated from society. On the contrary, most of them belonged to the working class and would invest their qualifications in it. According to the Minister Molotov, the intelligentsia was a 13 or 14% of the population and of them 80 or 90% came from the working class.

Although the proportion of people with higher education has increased since then (6.4%_o in 1940 to 10.04%_o in 2013³), their interaction with social groups lacking such opportunities is much less relevant.

¹ Tihon Dzyadko, "Владимиру Путину не нужны независимые СМИ", The Guardian (10/04/2014). Available in: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/apr/10/russia-europe-news>. Date of query: 05.2014

² Planwirtschaft No 7, 1939, pg 101. Planwirtschaft Nr 5, 1940, pg 23.

³ It has also increased in the other countries of the former USSR to discuss: Belarus: 4%_o → 8,21%_o, Kazakhstan: 4%_o → 10,33%_o, Tajikistan: 2%_o → 3,67%_o, Kirgizstan: 2%_o → 7,23%_o. Except in Uzbekistan: 3%_o → 2,58%_o, due to a much more religious population (Islam) and its isolation from the outer world. In fact, its population has increased exponentially from 6.28 in 1939 to 29,780,000 in 2012. "Tertiary graduates by level of education", Unesco. Available in: <http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?queryid=162>. Date of query: 05.2014

But Russia has still got nonetheless has a concerned an active social stratum, as demonstrated in the "Occupy Abai" movement of May 2012. However, at an even bigger scale than occurred in Egypt, they it consisted of an isolated intellectual minority which did not represent the traditional rural population⁴. This adds up to a formidable nationalism which at least in Russia does not depend on political views.

3.1 EVOLUTION OF RUSSIAN PATRIOTISM

The Russian Constitution begins as follows:

*"We, the multinational people of the Russian Federation,
united by a common destiny in our land, (...)
recalling the memory of our ancestors
who have conveyed to us their love for the Motherland (...)
we adopt the Constitution of Russia "*

This extraordinary emotion, enabling the world's largest country to act more united than most states, is the result of a long process that dates back to the early years of the communist regime.

The young Soviet citizen received a mandatory political education, whose aim was to exalt the individual's devotion to the socialist project. In fact, organizations such as the *Komsomol*, encouraged its members to become an example of discipline and work for their comrades.

The strength of this patriotism lays in the fact that it did not appeal to any kind of racism or prejudices. Instead it was based upon admiration towards other workers in the country and the common progress of all socialist nations worldwide. However, the task of reunifying the communist and atheist Russia with the tsarist and Orthodox remained an issue.

Indeed, the Soviet government was conscious from before the World War Two, that continuing to pursue religious institutions converted them into martyrs. In that sense, the emergence of the fascist enemy that threatened the future of the entire Slavic civilization was the perfect trigger for a new strategy. Not only would it encourage the patriarchies to pray for a Communist victory, but it would also the drive the government to allow the reappearance of uniforms and memorial belonging to the imperial army. In the end, Stalin had consolidated the homogeneous nation he had longed for.

This feeling could not erase, however, the footprint of the past throughout the entire Union. A large part of the Ukrainian and Muslim population was available to the enemy, and this issue would remain unsolved till our days⁵.

⁴ Nikolay Petrov, 2012 "The middle class. Is Russian society waking up?" Vanguardia dossier: Russia changed, vol 45, October / December 2012,40-45.

⁵ A. Guillaume, "Le moral" in A. Guillaume, *Pourquoi l'Armée Rouge to vaincu*, Paris, René Juillard, 1948, 146-149.

However, the end of the *Great Patriotic War* had actually established an homogeneous opinion on the use of military means, which would thereafter become ordinary.

3.2 THEIR NATIONAL DEFENSE CULTURE

Unlike Western society, military uniforms are common in the streets and buses of any country of Soviet descent. The Second World War had forced the active participation of civilians, to the point that, as it is commonly said in Russia, every family experienced the death of at least one of their males.

Consequently, and despite the population's fear of a new global conflict, war is not so much regarded as a misfortune, but as a legitimate tool to resolve political differences. Even for new generations, bombarded by war memories of their predecessors. It is common, therefore, to see children practicing in shooting academies, citizens making use of a quite extensive military vocabulary, and student associations raising funds to support the armed forces (as for example, *Conucrania* association in Madrid).

This culture is well illustrated each year during the grand military parade on May 9, known as "Victory Day".

3.2.1 *Den 'Pobedy* (Victory Day)

The 7th of September of 1967, the Red Square parade celebrated the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution. At the edges of the Moskva, Moscow citizens danced and rejoiced as officers awaited their moment in the stands of the mausoleum, and Communist leaders from the entire world (except China) sat next to the *Politurbo*. Finally, Mariscal Gretchko's speech against the horrors of the American war in Vietnam exalted even more the proud of his compatriots towards the armed forces⁶.

Once the USSR had collapsed, this celebration of patriotism was transferred onto the day in which the Red Army prevailed over the 3rd Reich. Traditionally the *Geroi Gorody* ("heroine cities") display their troops, their weapons and what differentiates them from other military parades, a representation of civilians from each *Microrayon* (neighborhood) to revive the importance of civil battalions during the war.

But it was made clear, nevertheless, that in 2014 we would witness a demonstration of power with a sharp political and deterrent message to the West. A new *Geroi Gorad* had returned to Mother Russia and was to receive its "blessing".

⁶ "Парад Победы. Севастополь (версия полная) "Pervy Kanal (05/09/2014). Available in: <http://www.1tv.ru/prj/9may/vypusk/31283>. Date of query: 05.2014

In Moscow, the public carrying portraits of the deceased constituted an outstanding mosaic that read "*Spasibo za zhizn*" (Thanks for your life)⁷, and 400 other Russian cities joined the celebration. Further to the west, at 16 pm the same day in the port of Sevastopol 10 Russian warships perfectly aligned started the celebration parade in the presence of Vladimir Putin. Led by the missile cruiser "Moscow", the anti-submarine ship "Kerch" and overflown by 70 artifacts from the Russian Air Force⁸; the sixty-ninth anniversary of the liberation of Sevastopol from Nazi Germany was commemorated with the incentive that Crimea had been rescued from the new "fascist claws".



But this explosion of military patriotism in the streets every 9th of May is merely the culmination of a "need for deterrence" that Russian media instigates within its citizens all year long.

3.2.2 The threat in the media

Against this background, it is sufficient to provide the audience with constant war images that arouse their most feared memories. And the fact is that a culture influenced to this extent by armed conflicts, this will suffice for a military intervention to obtain the support of the great majority.

Constantly used, these images easily convince Russian citizens of their enemies' cruelty.



The only task remaining is therefore to find a "perfect enemy" that can relate to historical

ндиозным салютом" NTV (09/05/2014). Available in:

. Date of query: 05.2014

Rossiya 1. Available at:

de_id/976607. Date of query: 05.2014

rivals of the Russian nation. In the conflict of Ukraine, for instance, the appearance and magnification of the phenomenon of *Praviy Sektor* has turned this into a trivial task.

In this case, a Russian family is protected from the Ukrainian army in a makeshift bunker outside Slaviansk

To this purpose, recordings of Adolf Hitler are shown together with those of Ukrainian nationalists in a clear attempt to encourage the audience to see the threat of fascism reappearing⁹. This way, the media success of the intervention is served.

But such an aggressive television campaign is not coincidental. Who is behind these media?

3.3 THEIR MEDIA

From government television to the most progressive stations, they all bind the stability and



health of the Federation above their particular interests. Furthermore, the system has the ability to control the emissions of the media under the ambiguous pretext of "prohibiting the broadcasting of programs that incite violence and exploit base instincts."

We will now analyze the main stations:



3.3.1 Pervy Kanal

It is the national channel par excellence counting on the highest audience rate (19.2%¹⁰). It has similar stations in other former Soviet countries such as *Pervy kanal Evrasia* (First Eurasia channel) in Kazakhstan, or ONT in Belarus.

⁹ "National Security Concept of the Russian Federation", MFA Russia (01/10/2000). Available in: <http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/ns-osndoc.nsf/1e5f0de28fe77fdcc32575d900298676/36aba64ac09f737fc32575d9002bbf31!OpenDocument>. Date of query: 04.2014

Years after the fall of the Soviet bloc, the situation of bankruptcy of the canal forced its dividends to be shared: 51% among state-owned companies, 49% from private companies and banks. In the context of political liberalization, the channel then known as ORT, would join in 1999 the pro-Putin current. Accordingly, that same year, the attacks on opponents of Putin such as Moscow's Mayor Yuriy Luzhkov began.

However, in August 2000 the last signs of criticism towards the administration, displayed during the explosion of the submarine Kursk would force a change in the shareholding turning Roman Abramovich (49%) as the main shareholder. Since then any evidences of objectivity vanished, and the station opts for certain electoral candidates even in foreign elections; as happened with Viktor Yanukovich in the Ukrainian ballots of 2004.

On March 2 this year, for example, the station reported the mass exodus of Ukrainian citizens Russia (about 140,000 in two weeks). But the images used to illustrate this controversial information were allegedly the border crossing L'vov-Pshemsl 'between Ukraine and Polonia¹¹, who daily pass through thousands of citizens for work.

3.3.2 Rossiya 1

This channel has slightly more influence than the previous ones due to its subsidiary stations in each federal district, and other countries as Belarus and Ukraine. After the fall of the Soviet bloc, it became part of the State Broadcasting Company throughout Russia (VGTRK).

At first, its independence of power was such that during the bombing in 1993 of the Russian White House, the head of the TV channel violated the order not to issue live images. The building of *Rossiya 1* was violently assaulted, although the popular program *Vesti* could continue broadcasting the conflict.

However, the arrival on the scene of Vladimir Putin would put an end to impartiality. In fact, the allocation in 2005 for issuing the presidential address to the nation, or the transmission of the official annexation of Crimea to Russia in the Parliament on March 18 2014, consolidated *Rossiya* as the principal means of government.

As for the Ukrainian crisis, the station supports the theory, also supported by some German tabloid media¹², that the US Embassy in Kiev funded unrest in Maidan, and caused the provocations.

¹⁰ "Channel One in Russia" Pervy Kanal. Available in: <http://eng.1tvrus.com/russia>. Date of query: 04.2014

¹¹ "" Первый канал "рассказал о массовом бегстве украинцев в Россию, показав польский КПП" Newsru.com (03/02/2014). Available in: <http://www.newsru.com/russia/02mar2014/tv1tv.html>. Date of query: 04.2014

¹² "Terroristische Aktionen" Medien Klagemauer (03.06.2004). Available in: <http://www.klagemauer.tv/?a=showportal&keyword=russisch&id=2421>. Date of query: 04.2014



Furthermore, it blames their representatives for allegedly training agitators in their facilities¹³ and even participating in the altercations.

On June 13, pro-maidan snipers speaking English, and carrying similar emblems to those of the US military were displayed.

The methods used by the channel are of little ethical and professional rigor:

Personal data of enemies to the pro Russian forces are displayed. For instance, on April 20, a business card supposedly belonging to the head of Praviy Sektor, Dimitro Anatoliovich, was shown:



- On March 1, in "Vesti v subbotu" images of pro Russian soldiers shot down by Ukrainian militia were displayed. However, the GM-94¹⁴ grenade launchers that the murderers were carrying are currently in hands only of the Russian army¹⁵.

¹³ "Россию-1» уличили в фальсификации сюжета про Евромайдан "Lenta.ru (11.27.2013), available at: <http://lenta.ru/news/2013/11/27/Maidan/>. Date of query: 04.2014

¹⁴ "Блогеры разоблачают ложь" Вестей ":" бандеровцы »вооружены новейшим российским оружием" Nasha Niva (02/03/2014) Available in: <http://nn.by/?c=ar&i=123861&lang=ru#!nn>. Date of query: 04.2014

¹⁵ Russia has the AK-100 series: "List of firearms," Wikipedia. Available in: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_firearms. But Ukraine has only got the AK-74. "Ukrainian ground forces", Wikipedia. Available in: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainian_Ground_Forces. On the other hand, only Russia, India and Kazakhstan have the GM-94: "Grenade Launchers" Weaponsystems.net. Available in: <http://www.weaponsystems.net/weapon.php?weapon=BB02+-+GM-94>. Date of query: 06.2014



3.3.3 Ntv

Unlike its predecessors, it was founded as a private station in 1993 by Vladimir Gusinsky.

Its impartiality was out of question in the beginning, strongly criticizing the Russian administration regarding the 1st and 2nd Chechen war, and even interviewing the Chechen leader Zemlihan Yandarbiev¹⁶. But as for any other Russian media, in 1999 the time would come for NTV to be with Putin or against him.

During the elections of that year, they satirized the future president making a puppet out of him on the program *Kukly*¹⁷. This aroused the anger of the pro-Putin community at such a high level¹⁸ that the station was almost doomed to extinction.

Indeed, in May 11 2000, the headquarters of the station were occupied by the police. Its director arrested for possible fraud and forced to sell the major shares' package to *Gazprom*. The broadcast of the kidnapping resolution at the *Dubrovka* Theater in October 2002 would be the last sign of opposition.

Nowadays, the practices of this channel are as questionable as those of its predecessors. On April 10, for example, an interview with a wounded German citizen, Andrei Petkov, alleged Western mercenary joining the *Maidan* in support of *Praviy Sektor* was published. That same day, *Rossiya 1* told the story of a pro Russian citizen of the same name attacked by Ukrainian radicals. In both cases it was the same person¹⁹.



3.3.4 Radio Ekho Moskvу

¹⁶ "С эфира НТВ сняли интервью с вдовой Зелимхана Яндарбиева" *Nasha Niva* (02.06.2004) Available in: <http://www.newsru.com/russia/31may2004/zelim.html>. Date of query: 04.2014

¹⁷ "Кто вы, господин Путин?", NTV (12/10/2000) Available in: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SY_NaEZ_tdo. Date of query: 04.2014. The satire in this chapter, triggered the reaction of the executive.

¹⁸ "The rectors of several universities in the Federation wrote a letter in the Sankt-Peterburgskie *Vedomosti* demanding the criminalization of the authors. Подавление СМИ "Kasparov.ru (05.03.2010) Available in: <http://www.kasparov.ru/material.php?id=4B90C4CFD6E25>. Date of query: 04.2014.

¹⁹ "Российские телеканалы уличили в искажении информации о событиях на Украине" *Ekho Moskvу* (11/04/2014) Available in: <http://echo.msk.ru/blog/echomsk/1298010-echo/>. Date of query: 05.2014.

The main independent Russian radio station, and broadcasted even in the USA, opposed from the beginning to the GKCP committee²⁰ which refused to accept the *Perestroika*. In 2010 it emerged as the most popular station in the capital, a success that would turn it into the next target of *Gazprom*²¹ and set its impartiality at stake.

Nevertheless, the mass media analysis (*SMI*)²² who published the most relevant stations contrary to the regime's policy during the current crisis Ukraine placed *Ekho Moskvy* on top of the list. The reason: its "negative relationship to Russia and its support for the US position"²³.



interview with Hillary Clinton in 2009

Indeed, articles such as "Putin-treacherous and cunning-Vladimir?"²⁴ Where the president of the Federation was fiercely attacked with rhetoric questions such as "Are you actually going to step back?, Are you afraid of the sanctions?" for instigating the referendums in eastern Ukraine without legitimizing the results. And others highly irreverent for Russian standards, as "Obama joked about Putin's naked chest"²⁵; still prove the anti-government nature of the station.

Albeit this criticism at a political level, its defense of the Russian nation and its citizens is even more blunt to that of pro state broadcasters, in accordance with the fact that Russian media is a reflection of an extremely homogeneous society around the national question.

The distribution of state media in countries with Russian speaking majorities would be as follows²⁶.

²⁰ The State Committee for Emergency Situations was a group of 8 senior Soviet officers who attempted a coup against Mikhail Gorbachev on August 18, 1991.

²¹ "Gazprom took 66% of the shares. Эхо Москвы "Vedomosti Kompanii Available at: http://www.vedomosti.ru/companies/az/5664/Эхо_Москвы. Date of query: 05.2014.

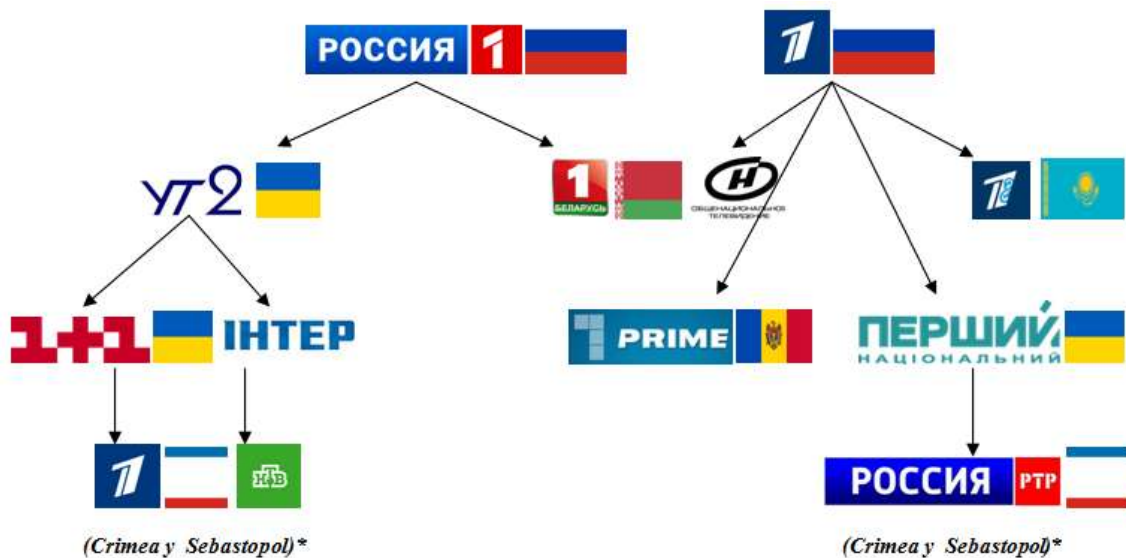
²² Бесстыдство некоторых российских СМИ поражает воображение "Ekho Moskvy (20.07.2012) Available in: <http://www.lawinrussia.ru/node/141758>. Date of query: 04.2014.

²³ "Антироссийски настроенные СМИ расставили по местам" Politonline (03/31/2014) Available in: <http://www.politonline.ru/comments/15966.html>. Date of query: 05.2014.

²⁴ "Путин-предатель или хитрец-Владимир?" Ekho Moskvy (05/08/2014) Available in: <http://www.echo.msk.ru/blog/oreh/1316146-echo/>. Date of query: 05.2014.

²⁵ "Барак Обама пошутил о голом торсе Владимира Путина" Ekho Moskvy (05/05/2014) Available in: <http://www.echo.msk.ru/blog/echomsk/1313638-echo/>. Date of query: 05.2014.

²⁶ "В Крыму почти все украинские телеканалы заменили российскими" Unian (03/09/2014) .Available in: <http://www.unian.net/politics/894670-v-krymu-pochti-vse-ukrainskie-telekanalyi-zamenili-rossiyskimi.html>. Date of query: 04.2014



3.4 WAR IN UKRAINE IS EARNED IN THE MEDIA

The media control in countries with limited access to internet population acquires even greater relevance. Russia, with an internet impact of 53.3% and especially Ukraine with 33.7%²⁷ are far from western percentages, turning television stations into a fundamental tool for controlling public opinion.

The Ukrainian crisis has been distorted and used ad nauseam by both Russian and Ukrainian media, as illustrated by the slaughter of Odessa occurred on May 2nd.

Supposedly that day, a pro-Russian contingent attacked a group of Ukrainian nationalists in the streets of the city. After the attack, they burned the trade union house in which separatist units had long found shelter. 40 people perished agonizing.

From there on, the media strategy of both parties was to seize the pain of the victims and deny the involvement of its compatriots in any of the events. *Rossiya 1* exalted alleged Russian survivors²⁸ while *Pervy Kanal* issued news denouncing that the Russian provocateurs were in fact Ukrainian agents²⁹.

²⁷ "Internet users (per 100 people)," World Bank (2013), available at: http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.P2?order=wbapi_data_value_2012+wbapi_data_value+wbapi_data_value-last&sort=asc. Date of query: 06.2014.

²⁸ "Майская Одесса: Хатынь XXI века" Rossiya 1 (03/05/2014) Available in: http://russia.tv/video/show/brand_id/5169/episode_id/985531. Date of query: 05.2014.

²⁹ "Deconstructing the fallacies of the Board of Kiev about Odessa" Rossiya 1 (05/06/2014) Available in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkv4MFEyQH4>. Date of query: 05.2014.

In support of this hypothesis, anything is valid. Whether the similarity of a bracelet worn by the Ukrainian authorities and the provocateurs, the complicity of local police towards them or the appearance of fake agents shooting both ways. Any proof is useful however immoral or doubtful it may be: passports shown on television, Facebook comments, conversations between politicians and protesters, soldiers carrying the flag of the enemy to cheat the audience, etc. When it comes Russian and Ukrainian speaking national TV channels, one has the impression that any both parties would end up sacrificing their own compatriots, provided this could simulate the brutality of the enemy.



But does all this propaganda obtain the desired impact on the citizens' opinion?

3.5 WHAT DO FORMER SOVIET CITIZENS THINK?

A survey was launched (see Appendix I) to assess Putin's foreign policy among Russian speaking populations in collaboration with students participating from the Central Asian Seminar "CAYN" organized by the OSCE. For this purpose, the social group with higher studies (5 years of in university) or in means of completing them was targeted. The study included nationals from Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan; while Ukraine was discarded due to the subjectivity of the responses received.

3.5.1 Accuracy of the results

The number of people with university studies in Russia is 1,442,857³⁰, of which consider one third as having an advanced degree³¹. The 38 responses give us a percentage of 0.0039% of the sample space, which is sufficient for our purposes³².

³⁰ "Tertiary graduates by level of education", Unesco, Available at: <http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?queryid=162>. Date of query: 05.2014.

Regarding other countries, the figures are as follows:

Bel: 78,658 Kaz: 181.155 Kirg: 41,811 Tady: 28,004 Uzb: 76,379

Obtaining a 0.014% of the sample space for the whole of these countries.

3.5.2 Analysis of the survey

-Russian citizens:

Despite the university education received, support towards Putin's administration is highly remarkable. The truth is that critical thinking is mainly visible among individuals residing abroad, far away from the atmosphere of opacity and propaganda that prevails along the Federation. Thus we see that half of citizens would consider the using Russian forces in other countries to defend the rights of their countrymen. In accordance, 68% of the respondents agree with the performance of the Russian executive.

With respect to Crimea, respondents prove to be aware of the importance of the military base in Sevastopol and, superficial as they may seem, the touristic needs of an almost ground-locked³³. In addition, several of them claim that the issue of Crimea should not be considered as an annexation, but as a reintegration in the country of origin³⁴. It is obvious that the main

³¹ no data existing to differentiate between graduate and master students.

³² Considering a survey on the intervention in Crimea ("КРЫМСКИЙ ВОПРОС" VCIOM (03.11.2014), available at: [Http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=459&uid=114736](http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=459&uid=114736) Date of query: 04.2014) along the whole Russian territory, and using the method of confidence intervals for pivots:

Let \hat{p}_1, \hat{p}_2 be the estimated proportions for a positive answer towards the intervention in our survey and the official survey respectively; m, n the number of people surveyed in each one; Z_{90} the value of the normal distribution at 90%. Hence the difference between the real proportions (p_1, p_2) remains within the values A and B with 90% probability:

$$Z_{90} * \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}_1 \hat{q}_1}{m} + \frac{\hat{p}_2 \hat{q}_2}{n}} + \hat{p}_1 - \hat{p}_2 > p_1 - p_2 > \hat{p}_1 - \hat{p}_2 - Z_{90} * \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}_1 \hat{q}_1}{m} + \frac{\hat{p}_2 \hat{q}_2}{n}}$$

A B

$$Z_{90}=1.64 \quad \hat{p}_1 = 0.68 \quad \hat{q}_1 = 0.32 \quad m=19 \quad \hat{p}_2 = 0.71 \quad \hat{q}_2 = 0.29 \quad n=1600$$

A= 0.14 B= -0.2 Which is acceptable for our study

³³ The touristic needs in in an extremely ground-locked country influences the Foreign Russian policy, for example, signing agreements for tourist visas with countries such as Turkey. In the case of Crimea, it has always been the vacation destination par excellence: "В Крыму отдыхаем" ("In Crimea rested") is a typical sentence in Russian society, reflected in the popular Soviet film "Москва слезам верить не верить" ("Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears")

³⁴ This information is also reflected in another survey to random Russian citizens (not only those with university studies), where 86% responded that Crimea belongs to Russia. Naturally, support to the Kremlin's policy is higher even than in our study, since the impact of state media among respondents is

beneficiary has been president Putin, whose reputation has improved among 78% of the participants.

On one hand, they all deny the possibility that the strengthening of Russian troops on the peninsula could condition the results of the referendum and they do defend the celebration of a similar query in eastern Ukraine. In particular, they advocate for the civil rights of these citizens to use their mother tongue against the impositions of the Ukrainian executive³⁵.

On the other, Ukraine remains a controversial issue in economic terms. Thus all respondents who opposed to the intervention based their opinions on the social benefits that the government is providing in Crimean residents with, to the detriment of other depressed areas of Russia. Even positive respondents set economic limits to the annexation of the provinces. In addition, 94% reported that Ukrainians currently pay less than Russians in the gas bill³⁶, and may still be able to criticize their "motherland".

As for the war in Syria, are they really conscious of the reasons behind the administration's decisions? Most citizens agree with the executive government's decision of applying a veto to the intervention of foreign military forces, even though just a small minority of them knew about Russia's naval base in Tartus. They admitted, as well, that the influx of TV news about Syria has decreased since the media are leery of any information that may have a "negative" influence on the audience.

In fact they strongly believe that a possible intervention would be part of a US strategy to expand its domination in the Middle East. In that sense, the degree of mistrust towards this country has returned to Cold War levels counting a 94% of the respondents, for instance, who warn of alleged American funding of the mass unrest in the *Maidan* Square. And as in the other republics, they all denounce the illegality of the American intervention in Iraq.

-citizens other Russian speaking states:

Unlike Russia, these countries count on an educated class that distances itself from, in general, both of Russian and American politics; adopting a nationalist position in defense of their local culture. Thus, none of the respondents communes with the use of military means to defend Russian citizens abroad, with the exception of those who support the defense of a military base such as Sebastopol.

greater. "КРЫМ И РОССИЯ: ПОРОЗНЬ ИЛИ ВМЕСТЕ?" VCIOM (17.03.2014), available at <http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=459&uid=114746>. Fecha query: 04.2014.

³⁵ The Ukrainian government wanted to pass a law mandating the use of Ukrainian language in the country. In Donetsk, it is said, that when buying a drug, the recipe is provided in Ukrainian. "На Украине отменили закон о региональном статусе русского языка" Lenta.ru. 23.2.2014. Available in: <http://lenta.ru/news/2014/02/23/language/>. Date of query: 04.2014

³⁶ "Пресса России: Украина начала платить за газ", BBC (02/06/2014) Available in: http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/russia/2014/06/140602_russian_press.shtml. Date of query: 06.2014.

Indeed, the educated class of these republics is usually a strong advocate for statehood, and that is why all readers claim against the Russian intervention, defending Ukraine's sovereignty and supremacy of international law. However, the citizens of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan do not share this view and, in this line, deny the influence of the military deployment in the election results³⁷.

Perhaps the figure which better opposes to the Russian vision, is that 94% rejects the possibility of a referendum in East Ukraine, as all feature a large Russian population in their states and fear the spread of the uprisings. On the contrary, the UN is also seen as an American instrument of control, although only citizens of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan support the theory of Obama's administration funding the disturbances in *Maidan*.

- Russians citizens in Crimea:

Ukraine was a relatively wealthy country in Soviet times, mainly due to the mass production in which each republic specialized in a certain section manufacture. But its economy today has become quite ineffective, with a production cost several times higher than that of the EU. Furthermore, from the over 50 billion cubic meters of gas consumed per year almost 20 are imported from Russia³⁸, despite the modernizations introduced in the country to mitigate dependence on foreign resources.

From an economic point of view, as surveys pointed out, citizens of Crimea believe they have much to gain with the annexation. However, this belief may not be truthful.

Unemployment benefits, for example, range between 12 and 178 euros in the Ukrainian Crimea³⁹, while in Russia oscillates from 17 to 103 euros⁴⁰. In summation, only once we have fully acknowledged how Russian citizens perceive reality we can understand the large room for manoeuvre enjoyed by Moscow.

4. THE INTERNATIONAL VISION OF RUSSIA

³⁷ It should be noted that Uzbekistan is the least Westernized of the above, due to the tight regime of Islam Karimov while Tajikistan is heavily dependent on Russia due to the emigration of their workers.

³⁸ "Kiev gas strategy: a closer cooperation with Gazprom". Osrodek Studiow Wschodnich (15/07/2013) Available at: <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2013-07-15/kyiv-gas-strategy-closer-cooperation-gazprom-or-a-genuine-div>. Date of query: 08.2014

³⁹ "Social Security Programs throughout the World: Europe, 2010. Ukraine", USA Social Security Administration, Available at: <http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/ssptw/2010-2011/europe/ukraine.html> .. Date of query: 06.2014

⁴⁰ "Social Security Programs throughout the World: Europe, 2010. Russia", USA Social Security Administration, Available at: <http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/ssptw/2010-2011/europe/russia.html> . Date of query: 06.2014

Throughout modern Western history all dominating movements as European colonialism, American military supremacy or even Israel's aggressiveness have always responded to territorial or economic needs. But how does the world's largest country, awash in energy resources, come up systematic ally with the need of developing into an empire?

"Nation states have clearly defined boundaries, while empires consist of centers and peripheries vaguely defined"

For it is perhaps in the characteristics of the Russian giant where the answer is found. A land of unimaginable extensions, ruled by one or more cities thousands of miles far from each other, and unable to restrict its influence to its borders.

This obsession for controlling does not respect artificially established boundaries, and it may indeed be regarded as a logical human reaction where fear grows in proportion to the distance. In other words, worries over Eastern Europe exceed those over Kamchatka.

The issue of the integrity in such a vast territory is managed by making neighboring regions "allied shields" against external threats. Whereas in the event that one of such regions may not accept this role, only their own territorial instability will serve to calm the Russian authorities' darkest fears.

4.1 THE GUIDELINES OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY⁴¹

Despite the fact that the intervention in Crimea came as a surprise for the international community, the documents published by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the events following WW2 could foresee some of the future decisions. This is of great interest in relation to the future of East and South Ukraine, Transnistria and even the Caucasus conflict.

It is not to mention that the administration of the peninsula was ceded by Nikita Khrushchev to the Ukrainian authorities during the Soviet period, in a gesture of "cordiality"⁴². Consequently, the incidents occurred along the former Soviet country have done nothing but speeding up the expected reentry of Crimea into Russia, hence suppressing at last the high rates it that were paid in order to keep the fleet in Sevastopol⁴³.

Russia's geopolitical decisions are based on the exchange of energy resources or economic assets. In this regard, Belarus and Ukraine have remained under the control of the Federation,

⁴¹ MFA Russia, Available at: <http://www.mid.ru>. Date of query: 05.2014

⁴² Nikita Khrushchev married for a second time (or third, according to some sources) to the Ukrainian partisan Nina Petrovna, who she flattered by "giving away" Crimea to the Ukrainian administration during a dinner in a drunken state. "50 назад лет Хрущев подарил Крым Украине". Komsomolskaya Pravda (02/18/2014) Available in: <http://www.kp.ru/daily/23219/26731/>). Date of query: 05.2014

⁴³ "Дмитрий Медведев: Плата, которую Россия заплатила за присутствие своего флота в Севастополе, большая, но не запредельная" Finam (27.04.2010) Available in: <http://www.finam.ru/analysis/newsitem4A718/default.asp>. Date of query: 06.2014

in exchange for risible gas and electricity invoice prices. Yet this barter policy is not without contingency for its citizens, as evidenced by the cut in the water supply of Crimea executed by the authorities in Kiev⁴⁴.

4.1.1 The Russian diaspora and disputed regions

Russia's foreign policy clearly shows how its citizens living abroad always remain under the motherland's tutelage. It actually states that "rights of expatriates will be protected *"based upon international law and treaties signed by Russia"* and considers the Russian diaspora as *"a way to expand their culture"*. In that sense, it encourages the creation of a network of Russian scientific centers abroad.

Moreover, it rules on the issue of disputed regions. Firstly in relation to Transnistria, claiming respect for the sovereign integrity of Moldova while granting a *"special status"* to this province. Secondly, explicitly stating that assistance will be provided to the emergence of two new states, namely the Republic of Abkhazia and the Republic of South Ossetia.

4.1.2 The spiritual renewal and the integrity of the state

Vladimir Putin is fully aware that a society without a homogeneous ideology and values is hard to control. In fact if there is something that disturbs the implacable president, is the possibility of an "Arab Spring" in Russia.

The National Security Strategy remarks this and therefore emphasizes the growing economic inequality within Russian society⁴⁵. In particular, it claims against its evolution towards *"a small clan of rich people and a mass of poor people"*, while calling for the revitalization of the traditional humanistic and patriotic Russians values to offset the depreciation of moral principles.

To this end, and despite the theoretical secularism stated in the Constitution, the president and former KGB agent publicly demonstrates his late "Christian devotion". Similarly to other leaders of the post-Soviet space, he believes in the need to counter the *"negative influence of foreign religious organizations"*⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ "Крым нашел замену днепровской воде" Vsglyad (23/04/2014) Available in: <http://vz.ru/news/2014/4/26/684117.html>. Date of query: 05.2014

⁴⁵ According to the World Bank, Russia is already the eleventh country with the highest poverty gap; close niches of the capitalist ideology like the USA and Switzerland. The World Bank. Available in: <http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/index.htm?2>. Date of query: 05.2014

⁴⁶ State media in countries like Russia and Kazakhstan, and even the Orthodox Church, ridicule and criminalize what they call "sects" as Jehovah's Witnesses. "Из всех тоталитарных сект, действующих на территории нашей страны, секта" Свидетелей Иеговы »более всего напоминает компартию"



As a result he is often shown being to be blessed by Orthodox priests, even though it is sometimes themselves who revere the president.

With respect to the territorial integrity, the executive fears that each Oblast may implement its Federal Law over the Constitution. And in such a vast and multi-ethnic country like Russia, where the capital lays thousands of miles of other metropolises, the tendency to do this becomes irremediable.

But it is common knowledge that in order to unite a population, no way is better than to come up with a common enemy. Thus, perhaps the crisis in Ukraine has not damaged all parties to the conflict.

4.1.3 The figure of Vladimir Putin

As shown in the polls, with the annexation of Crimea the president reached great popularity in the only place he is concerned about: Russia. A trend that had already been fostered by his role as a defender of sovereign regimes, including those of Viktor Yanukovich and Bashar Al Assad.

Conversely, Putin's reputation has not been without political lurch. The bourgeois educated social bloc who had applauded his neoliberal reforms had progressively diminish its backing; so that returning to its traditional electorate suffering from a chronic Soviet nostalgia seemed obvious.

In the early 90s, at a meeting of Russian political youth, an assistant denounced the ease with which the USSR had released the previously conquered territories. That young man was Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, and that is exactly what he represents to the social mass backing him up: the return to the Great Russian nation. Pro-Russian individuals from Lugansk and Donetsk Popular, the "boys of *Uralvagonzavod*"⁴⁷ or millions of citizens who are unable to live

Russian Orthodox Church. Available in: <http://lib.eparhia-saratov.ru/books/05d/dvorkin/sects/44.html>. Date of query: 05.2014. In addition, the executive in Moscow besieges not only religious associations, but also foreign NGO's under the aegis of the "Law on foreign agents". "Russia: Foreign Agents Law Hits Hundreds of NGOs: Updated May 29, 2014," Human Rights Watch (05/29/2014). Available en:<http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/29/russia-foreign-agents-law-hits-hundreds-ngos-updated-may-29-2014>. Date of query: 05.2014

⁴⁷ Alexei Malashenko, "Central Asia: the lessons of the Arab Spring," Carnegie Moscow Centre (11/07/2013). Available in <http://carnegie.ru/eurasiaoutlook/?fa=52363>. Date of query 09.2013.

with the moral vacuum that brought the fall of communism as well as the individualism inherent to the capitalist system, they all share this feeling.

But the truth is that devoid of any moral evaluation, the figure of the Russian president is fascinating. His leadership and long-term vision, is sublimely reflected in the policy pursued over the last decade in Ukraine. The last 2 Ukrainian defense ministers having a Russian background (Dymitro Salamatin and Pavlo Lebedyev), a total impairment of the Ukrainian Army (UA from now on) whose tragic consequences have come to light after the uprising in the Donbass was consummated. Certainly, who could foresee a war in Ukraine against their "Russian brothers"? Putin could.

If we add up to the president's qualities his coldness and the maneuverability that his inhumanity and a submissive public opinion provide, it seems that his determination has no limits. In fact, is there anything that can scare Putin?

Yes, the possibility of an "Arab Spring" in Russia does. Only then Russia's policy in the Ukrainian Donbass, providing weapons and units not seeking to prevail but to prolong the humanitarian disaster, can be explained.

The massacres in Egypt, Libya and Syria after popular revolts calmed the desire for democracy in the former Soviet population, "*Is that what you want?*" asked a leader of the Russian propaganda machine pointing to the massacres in Egypt. "*That is what democratic games lead to.*"⁴⁸ However, the Russian audience would not feel identified with these Arabic nations, concluding that there was no real threat for the regime.

In contrast to the events in the *Maidan* which could definitely threaten Putin's reign. The most similar country culturally and socially speaking (after Belarus) had seen the riots in the streets overthrew a governor and its apparatus. Therefore, it was necessary to show the Russian people the humanitarian tragedy that these riots would bring to Ukraine.

4.2 GEOPOLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Russia stands up for a multipolar world in which non-Western emerging powers (namely the BRICS) may play an important role on the international stage, and thus strengthen Russia's position against the United States. This policy includes Iran, whose attendance at the Geneva 2 Peace Talks was imposed by Minister Sergei Lavrov as an indispensable condition to negotiate about Syria.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin praises the status of UN as the highest organism in what relates to international law, since the veto balances its forces against the Americans'. Securing nonetheless the interests of the Russian diaspora from a "*Russian point of view of human*

⁴⁸ "Armenia To Join Russian-Led Eurasian Economic Union In October", Radio Liberty (07/09/2014). Available in <http://www.rferl.org/content/armenia-russia-kazakhstan-belarus-eurasian-economic-union/25461445.html> Date of query 07.2014.

rights", always suspicious of Western bias that hosts this organization. And appeals to unilateral sanctions and even armed attacks outside the framework of UNSC excused by the "responsibility to protect" as the main threat to peace.

In defiance of all this, the double standards employed by the Russian Federation have been demonstrated by the unilateral referendum in Crimea. According to Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Charter of the United Nations, *"it is obliged to respect the sovereign equality of all member states"*. Furthermore, point 4 explains that *"the use of force against the political independence of a state is prohibited"*.

4.2.1 Russia and the former Soviet Republics

The Kremlin's strategy regarding the ancient republics is to retake the political and economic control of yesterday. Its philosophy of "faits accomplis" always emerges during times of doubt in the West, such as what to do with the Syrian or the Iranian issue.

Despite the openness and optimism shown by the West towards Russia in recent years, it is now much more nationalist, autocratic and aggressive than before. European politicians mistakenly congratulated themselves believing that the Federation would never defy the Western world due to the growing economic ties.

Specifically, regarding the former Soviet republics, Putin offers among others, economic pacts to regional governors so as to strengthen their power as well as military support. But first and foremost, no concern at all for the crimes committed against their population. Meanwhile, European leaders struggle between their energy needs and the moral weight of human rights promulgated by the Union.

Through the propaganda apparatus of the Kremlin, citizens of Russian origin based in other countries are convinced about the violation of their rights, and the need to revolt against local governments. This occurred in Riga and Tallinn, and has now happened in East Ukraine. Citizens become puppets of a Kremlin which advocates fighting for their interests.

The desire to include Ukraine in the Eurasian Economic Union vanished with the signing of the European Free Trade Agreement in June 27th 2014 by President Poroshenko. Hence the Kremlin was driven into the use of military force, a purpose for which they do not need excuses as NATO did in Iraq. Russia does not hesitate to use it, aware that no country will dare to stand on its way for fear of a new global confrontation.

4.2.1.1 The Eurasian trade agreement

Former Soviet countries are torn between signing the European agreement and joining the Eurasian Union. This decision will determine their roadmap for years to come, and what seems more important today, the fact of being with Putin or against him. So much so, that the cancellation of the agreement with the EU by Viktor Yanukovich sparked the coup, and its signature by Petr Poroshenko accelerated the Russian aggression in the Donbass.

Incorporating later on the other Central Asian countries will not be a problem. In fact, Kyrgyzstan is planning its entry by the end of 2014. However, the Caucasus countries are divided: after the loss of Georgia, Armenia⁴⁹ seems to be on the Russian side and the rich Azerbaijan⁵⁰ is torn between securing its energy contracts with the EU or seeking refuge under the Russian military umbrella.

-Features

The sum of its founders (Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia) does only count on the 2.5% of the world's population. Albeit, this comprises 15% of its territory, which translates to 15% and 20% of oil and gas reserves respectively.

In addition, the foundation responds to a financial need as a result of a trade increased by 50% during the past 3 years between these countries, placing Kazakhstan and Belarus on the 3rd position in terms of volume of Russian foreign trade. With this agreement, citizens have additionally the right to work freely in the whole area.

-Competences

This economic union aims however to learn from the mistakes of its counterpart, the European Economic Union. Members keep economic independence to prevent a financial crisis in one country from dragging all the others. There will not be a supranational institution that controls the agricultural or industrial production, and therefore countries can operate at full capacity.

Although Russia provides the great majority of the budget, the vote of the 3 participants will allegedly have the same validity. Nonetheless, it is not expected that anyone will challenge the Federation.

The focus and position in this picture of each of the presidents, represents its relevance in the agreement, where the contribution of Belarus is merely anecdotal.



4.2.2 Russia in the Middle East

⁴⁹ "Armenia To Join Russian-Led Eurasian Economic Union In October", Radio Liberty (07/09/2014). Available in <http://www.rferl.org/content/armenia-russia-kazakhstan-belarus-eurasian-economic-union/25461445.html> Date of query 07.2014.

⁵⁰ Alexei Malashenko, "Azerbaijan Receives informal invitation to Customs, Eurasian Union - FM Lavrov," The Voice of Russia (06.18.2014). Available in http://voiceofrussia.com/news/2014_06_18/Azerbaijan-receives-no-formal-invitation-to-Customs-Eurasian-Union-FM-Lavrov-5744/ Date of query 07.2014.

In addition to the naval base at Tartus established in Soviet times, the traditional sale of weapons, and the great number of citizens holding a Russian passport in Syria; Moscow's unconditional support to the regime responds to two global issues.

First, the need to have robust allied dictatorships which can configure the multipolar map previously mentioned. Second, its abiding inferiority complex relative to the USA on the international stage, leading Russian diplomats to block systematically any UN initiative.

But Moscow is not eager to have news bulletins covered in the blood of Syrian civilians. It is preferable to draw the attention to completely secondary issues such as the elimination of Assad's chemical weapons, or the entry of Iran in the Geneva talks. Or prompting the focus on the Ukrainian crisis, where victims have a stronger ideological "excuse". Meanwhile, this provides Hezbollah and Iran with a priceless time to contribute with units and weapons to the Syrian army.

For the Kremlin its base in Tartus is nonnegotiable, and therefore any international proposal which does not fully guarantee the continuity of it will be unsuccessful. Furthermore, if it becomes necessary to defend the base with military means, Russia will. Indeed in June 2012, the TV station *NTV*, confirmed the delivery of a Russian warship based in Sevastopol to Tartus. Soon after, the morning paper *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* reported on the government's intention to send troops from the *Vostok* and *Zapad*⁵¹ units located in Chechnya, in alignment to the *modus operandis* used in East Ukraine.

The fall of the Shiite regime would jeopardize the ultimate niche of Russian supremacy in the Middle East, and therefore a geopolitical victory for America. Thus, indifferent to the massacres and a negligible social pressure, Moscow keeps its right to veto resolutions in Syria as the most precious hostage to extort the West. But even if the time came for Assad, Russia would already have organized the political groups among which new power will be distributed.

In this regard, Russia and China have a very clear attitude towards the internal problems of a country even if they have a dictatorial origin, provided they do not interfere with their interests: "*The problems of Syria must be solved by Syrians*". Such an immoral policy that provides high economic returns, as uncontrolled exploitation of African resources by Chinese companies, or the sale of Russian military equipment in Central Asia. But this is not to say that a comparable strategy by states of a presumably higher moral standards, including Spain.

⁵¹ Aleksander Shumilin, "A Ship Leading to Escalation in Syria" ME-Journal.RU (19.06.2012). Available at: <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/a-ship-leading-to-escalation-in-syria/460472.html>
Date of query: 05.2014



Naval base in Tartus, Syria

4.2.3 Regional security organizations

Even more relevant for Russia than to lead an economic organization capable of controlling the commercial relations of its neighbors is the fact of leading a regional military organization to set up the aforementioned “allied shield” and enable its military stock to be disposed of.

4.2.3.1 Cooperation Organization Shanghai

This organization includes the two military powers of the non-Western world, Russia and China, as well as the Central Asian republics except Turkmenistan.

Compiling 20% of the world’s land area and 22% of its population, the objectives of the SCO are to neutralize NATO’s military power, compete with the EU’s political power, and above everything control separatism and internal revolutions.



-Origin: The need to control Central Asia

Two factors led to Russia's need to group the Central Asian republics in a security organization. To begin with, the necessity to control the northern border of Afghanistan after the Taliban

fled to this region. Next, the tendency of Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to seek a strategic alliance with the US.

But let's recall, that Russia offers complete indifference to the crimes committed by the authorities to a larger extent than Western democracies. Indeed, after the slaughter of Andijan (Uzbekistan, 2004), Uzbek relations with America cooled to the point that its President Islam Karimov insisted on the closure of the military base at *Karshi-Khanabad*.

-Aims:

Multipolarity: to this end, the SCO plays an important role since it incorporates all major Asian military powers as observer states, namely Iran, India and Pakistan.

In particular, Iran is a Russian ally whose presence in international forums is a key issue, given the military threat that permanently lies over this country. A systematic strategy that Russia carries out perfectly: to defend the causes of the "weaker" regions against the imperialist West, as currently in the Donbass.

To impede popular revolutions: in order to counter the "color revolutions" in 2003, the SCO emerged as an effective mean.

In general, any suspicious popular movement is framed by the organization as "*one of the three evils of modern society: separatism, extremism and terrorism.*"⁵² These accusations are often ambiguous⁵³ and presented to society as a guarantee for their welfare. In fact, the organization allows 1000 names list of dangerous individuals.

In June 2012, for instance, the declaration of the Beijing summit expressed the determination to control information technology and establish a "*safe environment information.*" Among other purposes, this serves as an excuse to censor facebook portals in China or religious societies in Kazakhstan.

To counterbalance NATO: the goal is to gather the most robust militarily set of states possible that, according to the statutes of the organization, may be able to "*break the supremacy of the use of force against international law imposed by the US*".

Specifically, the factor that worries the most about the Atlantic alliance is the "*uncontrolled deployment of a missile defense global system*", which they could bring out missile systems in different parts of the world.

4.2.3.2 Organization of the Collective Security Treaty

With a more local character within the former USSR, it included all Caucasian and Central Asian republics (except Turkmenistan which remains isolated). However, Georgia, Azerbaijan and

⁵²Convention of Shanghai for the fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism, June 2001. This contrasts with the pro-Russian separatism in Ukraine supported by Moscow.

⁵³ In Kazakhstan, for instance, after the slaughter of Zhanaozen committed by the military police, many civilians were imprisoned for participating in a lasting labor strike under article 164 of the penal code: "incitement to national, tribal, racial or religious social animosity".

Uzbekistan would subsequently separate from the organization signing economic treaties for a rapprochement with the West. Iran, meanwhile, could become a member state.

-Implementation:

The present association has a considerably more practical nature than the SCO, with armed forces at their service and executing military exercises. In 2010 it counted on 20,000 rapid deployment units and 3,500 for "peacekeeping missions" whose principal goal is to quell domestic mass unrest, in the style of those which overthrew in 2005 and 2010 both governments in Kyrgyzstan.

In military instruction "Tsent-2011", for example, the Russian military units trained Central Asian troops for a week aiming to prevent popular uprisings.

-Relations With the West

Notwithstanding that the CSTO calls in its charter for collaboration with Euro Atlantic organizations, unlike the SCO, the fact is that the confrontation with NATO is evident in practice. In 2003, for example, Russia opened on behalf of the treaty the *Kant* airbase in Kyrgyzstan, only 30 km from the US base in *Manas*.

5. THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CONFLICT IN UKRAINE⁵⁴

After achieving its independence in 1991, Ukraine has lived uncomfortably between Russia and the European Union. The instability of its institutions, together with a network of oligarchs who control the economy, has led a part of its population to idealize a possible entry into the EU, while the other has been anchored in the memory of a better Soviet past.

This facts had transformed the country into a ripe for the US and Russia to fight over supremacy without getting their hands dirty.

5.1 THE REVOLUTION IN MAIDAN

The protests in Maidan were a logical consequence of the barriers placed a largely Ukrainian-speaking youth, away from Russia's influence which they identify as the "dark past" of their country and seduced by the possibilities of Europeans.

⁵⁴ For this section interviews were conducted, among many others, with volunteer UA, Alina Bondarenko (member of the group in the Maidan "Women 100"), Yarina Kurivchak (founder of an association for the collection of funds in favor of the UA), relatives of a former Soviet official kidnapped in Lugansk, Aleksei Svetikov (journalist), Vadim Suhonos (candidate for mayor of Slaviansk), refugees from Lugansk, Gorlivka and Pervomaisk; Petro Gnatovich (Mayor of Severodonetsk), Liudmila Viktorovna and Andrei Kobaliev (heads of the Red Cross in Lugansk and Kharkov), Guiver Rafatian (director of the ICRC office in Kharkov), multiple members of the mission of the OSCE and the chief of police (NVD) in Severodonetsk.

The tension exacerbated by the corruption of the past years⁵⁵ erupted when Yanukovich's executive passed two highly controversial laws. The first, on November 26 2013, when the President rejected the trade agreement with the EU⁵⁶. The second, on January 16 2014 when a restrictive anti-protests decree was passed, outlawing the events having already occurred; and criminalizing foreign NGOs as 'outsiders' in the style of Russia⁵⁷.

In this context, the streets would soon become a battlefield.



5.1.1 Events and methods

Citizens from all over Ukraine, especially from the western part, came to Kiev to help fighting against riots police (*Berkhut*). In particular Lviv, the pro Ukrainian city par excellence, played a key role.

Indeed the first victim of *Maidan*, Yuri Verbetski, was original from there. His story shocked the public opinion after being abducted, tortured and found dead in a forest. And it was there that the passage of troops from the military base in Yavorivskiy (near Lviv) called to Kiev to fight protesters was blocked.

⁵⁵ It should be mentioned that corruption in Ukraine, as in many former Soviet countries, is omnipresent. Including universities where students are "encouraged" to pay in order to pass certain exams

⁵⁶ "Yanukovich CONFIRMS refusal to sign Deal with EU" Kyiv Post (11/26/2013). Available in <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/politics/yanukovich-confirms-refusal-to-sign-deal-with-eu-332493.html>. Date of query 08.2014.

⁵⁷ "Ukraine's president signs anti-protest bill into law." BBC News (01/17/2014). Available in: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25771595>. Date of query 08.2014.



This picture shows the distribution of Ukrainian victims in the Maidan, clearly reflecting the two Ukrainian.

However, the subsequent commemoration of the "Nebesna Sotnia" ("the 100 victims of the Maidan"), especially during the Soviet "Victory Day"⁵⁸, set even greater distance between Kiev and the citizens of Donbass affected by the ATO operation who see the hundreds of victims among them not even recognized.



Reminder of the "Nebesna Sotnia" in the Maidan

While it is not necessary to recount the episodes in January and February 2014, it is on the contrary necessary to analyze the special methods protesters and authorities used in the fight.

5.1.1.1 Protesters

In Kiev, protesters were organized as a true guerrilla counting on information centers, barricades, hunting weapons and preparing homemade neutralizing substances to fight for pepper and mustard gas. Many of them even took days off from their jobs. The calls were not only carried out by social networks, but also by the bells of some Orthodox churches belonging to the Patriarchate in Kiev⁵⁹.

⁵⁸ "Ани Лорак пиарится на Небесной сотне" The Kiev Times (10/05/2014). Available in: <http://thekievtimes.ua/society/371746-ani-lorak-piaritsya-na-nebesnoj-sotne.html>. Date of query: 08.2014

⁵⁹As will be discussed below, the Orthodox Church in Ukraine is extremely politicized existing a fierce rivalry between Kiev's and Moscow's Patriarchate.

On January 16, after the approval of the aforementioned law, the *Ukrainski Dom* (House of Ukraine) occupied and the police blatantly attacked for the first time. Following hence, violence escalated and protesters come to use real guns at police, whose bodies were hidden by the more restrained social groups to avoid public humiliation.

5.1.1.2 Authorities

The brutality and procedures used by the *Berkhut* are shocking. According to witnesses, protesters were shot with rubber bullets on their faces face causing blindness to several, gas grenades were surrounded with metal parts creating a “cluster” effect, and even first aid personnel properly identified were shot.

On January 19, the first civilian victim by live ammunition was recognized, marking a turning point, and giving carte blanche to violence. This allowed the police, for instance, to use BTRs in order to overcome roadblocks and shoot from them; or would place snipers on *Kazacskiy* and *Ukraina* hotels to avoid the seizure of the town hall. But undoubtedly the most striking method was the use of so-called "*Titushky*".

According to respondents, these consisted of criminal, unemployed men or employees of the *Ohrana* (security) in factories; in good physical shape and brought as mercenaries from eastern Ukraine to provoke, and later attack demonstrators.



In the image, Vadim Titushka, first individual of these characteristics to be identified, and who later give name to the collective

Men without training and exhibiting an irrational and unprecedented brutality, for which the authorities allegedly provided accommodation in the hotel *Slavotich*, and a salary ranging between 200 and 500 UAH / day. Dressed in sportswear, they roamed the city consuming large amounts of alcohol to violent behavior, posing as participants in the *Maidan*. Following their appearance, groups like "*Automaidán*" were created with the purpose of protecting the population, since the police attended no calls regarding these groups.

But as of February 18, these individuals were armed with clubs, knives and even guns⁶⁰ to use their ferocity against demonstrators.

⁶⁰In the following video, multiple armed individuals without a police uniform and not attacked by the Berkhut can be identified: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jplruDVyqk> and the even using guns: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WC8PwDJRfKE>



Memorial to the victims of Marinsky Park

5.1.2 American Financing

The hypothetical funding of the coup by the USA has been used ad nauseam on Russian television. While these accusations lack all kind of rigor, it is true nonetheless that the US AID programs developed on Ukrainian territory have undoubtedly contributed to the revolts.

To mention a few⁶¹:

- "Strengthening civil society in Ukraine": October 1, 2008-30 September, 2014. Under the command of UNITER (Ukrainian National Initiatives to Enhance Reforms), civil activism and NGO's who can provide leadership and references for society are encouraged. It instigates citizens to participate in politics and establish a legal framework to improve the economic viability of the country.

Also, given the fragmentation and fragility from which Ukrainian civil society suffered until the revolution, it has invested in creating social networks that could transform ideas into action. And as seen in the *Maidan*, this strategy has succeeded. It managed to gather a number of groups with "*democratizing*" proposals at a local level having a national impact.

- Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening: October 1, 2009 – April 1, 2016
- Responsible Assembly Program, accounting and Democratic (RADA): November 25, 2013 - November 24, 2018. It aims to promote a legislature much more independent from Russia and increase citizen participation in politics. In particular, the RADA program helps parliamentarians to improve their representative function.
- Collaboration with associations such as the the UCIPR (Center for Research Ukrainian Independence Policy) to campaign against Putin.

⁶¹"DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE" USAID. Available in: <http://www.usaid.gov/where-we-work/europe-and-eurasia/ukraine/democracy-human-rights-and-governance>. Date of query: 08.2014



In these posters placed in the *Maidan*, one can advert the financing of the American Fulbright scholarship program



All these initiatives seeking democratic stability of a young country seem legitimate and harmless. However, it opposes to the low volume of USAID programs conducted in other former Soviet countries with more autocratic regimes than Yanukovych's and Lukashenko's. For example in Kazakhstan, rich in natural resources and with a government that meets American interests, it is not carried out at present any program for political democratization⁶².

5.2 SEPARATISM ORIENTAL IN UKRAINE

The economic issue in the purely Russian-speaking regions of Lugansk and Donetsk has been on the table for over 20 years, and only a government controlled by Russia, as Yanukovych's, was able to mitigate it. Coming from Donetsk, the ousted president implemented a preferential policy towards pro-Russian regions, constituting a Cabinet with his countrymen.

However, this was only a temporary solution, which together with the executive's corruption⁶³ would make the situation unbearable after the incidents in the *Maidan*.

Graffiti protest in Sloviansk, during the early days of the uprising: "The Donbass is not Lvov, the Donbass is Russia!"



5.2.1 Economic Reasons

⁶²"DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE" USAID (03/01/2014) Available at: <http://www.usaid.gov/kazakhstan/democracy-human-rights-and-governance>. Date of query: 07.2014

⁶³President Viktor Yanukovych and the Prime Minister during his last term, Mykola Azarov, came to possess great wealth, including many utensils in gold. "Золотой туалет у Януковича - это полная ложь-Азаров" Gazeta.ua (03.05.2013) .Available in: http://gazeta.ua/ru/articles/politics/_zolotoj-tualet-u-anukovicha-eto-polnaya-lozh-Azarov/ 495,907. Date of query: 08.2014

According to the government's official data, in 2013 the *oblasts* of Donetsk and Lugansk were in 1st and 2nd position on the balance of exports / imports⁶⁴. Whereas in terms of contribution to GDP, 1st and 7th respectively⁶⁵. Specifically Donbass region⁶⁶ contributes with the 16% to the national GDP. Furthermore, 8 of the 15 largest companies in the country have their headquarters there⁶⁷ and still infrastructures are much poorer than in Kiev or in western Ukraine.

According to IDPs interviewed in the *Krasikova* Center in Konstantinovka arriving from Gorlivka and mostly employed in the coal mines, a miner earned from 250 to 300 euros. While the pensions rise up to about 113 euros. Therefore, they supported a revolt by means of which they sought, not a political independence of Kiev, but an economic federalization.

The longing of the Soviet Union, during which miners obtained good wages thanks to the premiums proportional to the physical risk involved in the job, was catalyzed by the acquisition of mines by the oligarchs. These register their companies in other *oblasts* (offshore policy) where they enjoy tax benefits, thus distorting economic data in Donbass.



Slaviansk, March 20: "Pro Ukrainians make contact with pro-Russian"

The *Maidan* revolution was considered as an insult to a great number of Eastern citizens, since they had long been protesting against corruption and living conditions in their region. They regard it as an attack by the US and EU, which is perceived not so much as a threat but as something distant and unknown.

⁶⁴ "Объемы экспорта-импорта товаров по регионам Украины за 2013 год" Ukrainian State Statistics Service (02.21.2014). Available in:

http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2013/zd/oet/oet_r/oet1213_r.html. Date of query: 08.2014

⁶⁵ "Объемы Валовой региональный продукт" Ukrainian State Statistics Service (07.15.2014). Available in: http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2008/vvp/vrp/vrp2008_r.htm. Date of query: 08.2014

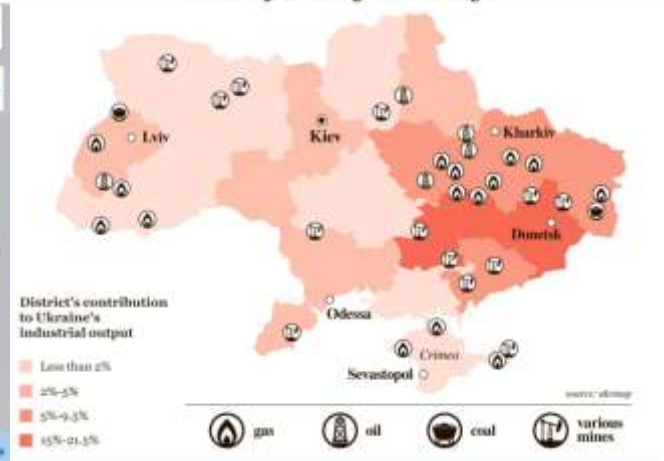
⁶⁶ Depending on the author, the Donbass region extends to Rostov in Russia. Here we will take it how it is used in Ukraine: Lugansk and Donetsk Oblast.

⁶⁷ "Economy of Ukraine" Wikipedia. Available in: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Ukraine. Date of query: 08.2014

Crisis in Ukraine



Centers of industry and mining



The abundance of energy resources is remarkable along the Russian-speaking area, which turns out to be decisive in the origin of separatism.

5.2.2 Ideological reasons

The Soviet nostalgia is evident among large social groups in the Donbass. The feeling that, in the past, the entire society worked together in defense of certain ideals and the problems of an individual were those of the whole neighborhood. The People's Republic of Donetsk and Lugansk represented a moral oasis for many citizens in a desert that lasts more than 20 years, but it was in fact an idealistic project without any economic or legal basis.



May 1: "Political hear the protests in Donbass!"

Life had a meaning for them since there was a vital established path: from pioneer to *Komsomol* member, then *partizan* and the most talented to *rukovoditel* (leader). Every citizen enjoyed the same opportunities, and although decisional capacity was certainly limited, they did not suffer from the frustration of having fewer opportunities due to economic reasons.



"Ukraine must remain united". One of the latest attempts by the pro Ukrainian press to prevent uprisings.

But what is it that the Russian Federation offers them today that Ukraine cannot? To begin with, leaders like Putin. Someone they can rely on to feel that the country has a certain course. Next, the communist legacy which presumes prevails in Russia, to the extent of thinking that prices are equal from Moscow to Vladivostok. And finally, the total break with the *Banderovce*⁶⁸, citizens from western Ukraine who helped German troops during WW2.

5.2.3 Construction process of the People's Republics

This section aims to analyze the methods used in a separatist process, from the first social outbreaks, setting up a military force.

-Demonstrations:

In cities like Severodonetsk, the Communist Party organized pro-Russian demonstrations that gathered several hundred people, both local and coming from Russia. Moreover, with the will



to combat the passive nature of society in the Donbass, several cities saw buses arriving from Russia with female contingent singing Soviet songs on the street so as to encourage citizens.

Pro-Russian rally in the city of Slaviansk in April.

In other metropolis as Kramatorsk, movements were more intense, with the arrival Russian paramilitary groups claiming to be Cossacks (*"My kossaki!"*). These men are professional fighters and many do not know another job, as General *Kazichkin* who served in SeveroDonetsk⁶⁹.

-Social support:

a separatist movement of comparable scale would not have been possible if not for the great social support that the uprisings enjoyed before the war began. Much of the population there have a Russian origin, or have relatives there. As far as they are concerned, it is the same land which has been divided artificially.

⁶⁸ This term comes from Stepan Bandera, a Ukrainian activist contrary to the Soviet regime that collaborated with German troops during WW2.

⁶⁹ Information obtained in an interview with the mayor of SeveroDonetsk.



In the early days it was common to see children photographed with tanks and weapons carried by the militants. Or the support that citizens provided in cities like Kramatorsk, where residents would take food to the rebels holed up in the building of the SVU (Military Academy).

In order to increase social support in many cities Ukrainian TV signal was cut, even by pulling down the antennas⁷⁰. However, apart from the support of the working class, the Red Army veterans marginalized by Kiev, unemployed citizens looking for easy money, or even criminals (as Aleksei Mosgovoi or Sergey Pak in Severodonetsk,); the LNR and DNR have also been supported by educated inhabitants having even studied abroad.

But why did this happen? Among other reasons, for the fear of suffering from a cut-off of Russian gas which would imply huge economic losses⁷¹.



March 13: "Slaviansk retransmits Russian TV channels"

-Referendum:

Opinions differ according to the ideology of the respondent. The pro Ukrainians claim that the passport was not required at the moment of voting, and therefore electors could vote multiple times. They also indicate that the choice was demanded before casting the vote, and the people voting against were even registered in a list.

⁷⁰ В Донбассе избавились от российского ТВ, The Kiev Times (04/18/2014). Available in: <http://thekievtimes.ua/politics/360696-v-donbasse-izbavilis-ot-rossijskogo-tv.html>. Date of query: 07.2014

⁷¹ Ukrainian gas only serves to supply the citizens, and the companies that supply it usually deliver in delay. In Shebedinka, the main gas plant in the country, remodeling is needed in order to extract deeper gas. However, business owners prefer to buy import from Russia rather than making long-term investments.



April 10: "In Slavyansk Putin's intervention and a referendum were requested"

It seems truthful that the counting of votes and the process was relatively legal, but the high turnout illustrated in the media with long queues to vote, was part of the propaganda mechanism consisting of opening only a small number of polling stations.

Moreover, in the presidential elections of May 25 that gave power to Petro Poroshenko, separatist regions under control is not held the national elections. Resulting from this, they do not recognize their results thus depriving the ATO operation from any sort of legitimacy.



-Financing and origin of arms



The seizure of weapons was conducted in 2 phases: the looting of small arms to the Ukrainian forces and the entry of heavy weapons from Russia. The first was perpetrated looting SVU stores in the capital to take rifles and grenade launchers, spreading them throughout the region⁷². The second, benefited from the extensive section of the border with Russia (100 out of 763kms) that the Ukrainian authorities did not control for lack of need.

Public opinion suggests that Yanukovich and his allies funded the uprising⁷³.

Further, vehicles resistant to the sand were plundered and the nationalization of *Privat Bank* was considered in order to address public spending⁷⁴.

⁷² Separatists stormed outlets selling weapons. On one occasion, the owner called the police, but this declined to intervene. At first, weapons were delivered without much control civilians, but later on the procedure to enlist in the militias was formalized.

⁷³ Yanukovich: "Ja skoro vernus'v Donbass". ("Soon I will return to Donbass"). According to the mayor of Severodonetsk, Cossacks from Rostov region in Russia received about 100 USD / day to enlist, and up to 1000 USD participate in the combats.

⁷⁴ Public subsidies were not paid from the rise of the republics

Extortions and kidnappings:

Despite this, the economic needs of the separatist groups have become apparent during the uprising, and as in the Basque separatist movement, the response varied from the voluntary donations to the extortion of entrepreneurs.



Members of the Protestant Church in Slaviansk killed after refusing to pay "revolutionary taxes"

In the LNR, for example, journalists and pro Ukrainians were the first to be fired and young people were forced to enlist in the militias.

The answer of politicians and law enforcement:

Why did the police not stop the seizure of weapons and the proclamation of the republics?

On the one hand, the lack of means made available for the officers, which in words of the commissar in one of the rebels municipalities, just had two Makarov pistols each. And the fear of confronting militiamen ready to open fire was too big.

Furthermore, the legal vacuum in which they were. The *modus operandi* of the separatists was to take the courthouse of each municipality by force. Once done so, the police could not cram any offenses since their *codex* forbids any legal action without the permission of the courthouse. Only under these circumstances could the referendum be hold⁷⁵.



Slaviansk on the front line "it is not 1941, it's April 2014"

The police forces did not flee from the cities, and sometimes they even patrolled together with separatist forces. Relations were cold but cordial nevertheless, though many citizens denounce their support for the uprisings.

⁷⁵ Information extracted from the interview with the chief of police (NVD) in Severodonetsk



22 April, first clashes: "Slaviansk gives the last farewell to the deceased heroes of Donbass"

As for the political authorities of the liberated cities, they show nowadays a sudden Ukrainian patriotism that did not exist earlier. They deny any link with the separatists, and claim having been extorted due to their stubborn defense of the national constitution.

The case of Slaviansk, one of the most affected cities, serves to illustrate this. Its former mayor, Neila Shtepa, serves a sentence in prison for financing the DNR.

However, the number 2 and future mayor, Vadim Suhonos, claimed to be hijacked by the terrorists accused of belonging to *Praviy Sektor* and the "Board of Kiev". (See Annex II)

April 24. "Shtepa resignes"



5.3 UKRAINIAN FORCES: THE SCARCITY OF NON-PROFESSIONAL FORCES

The military question has never been a priority for this country, which on the day of its independence was the third world power with respect to nuclear weapons. On the contrary, since then there has been an adaptation of the potential to the capabilities of the new independent state, from 800,000 to 65,000 units⁷⁶. In fact, various military publications already warned in 2013 about the weakness of the Ukrainian forces, whose main function was to maintain the territorial integrity of a politically unstable country.

Indeed, the armed forces had suffered from inadequate funding from 2006 to 2011, and defense programs were established without funds. Although the government had launched a reform plan until 2017 vising to increase the number of professional soldiers, Soviet inherited material had become outdated, and air availability remained low, with 40h / year of flight.

⁷⁶ ISIS (07.03.2012), "The Military Balance 2014". London, Routledge. Available in: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/04597222.2012.66321>. Chapter 4: Europa, 112: 1, 71-182 Date of query: 09.2014

All this agrees with the most widespread opinion in Ukraine, denouncing the deliberate weakening of the national army during the mandates of Yanukovich theoretically in order to facilitate control of the country from Russia.

5.3.1 Scarcity on the front

And as if it were an NGO, efforts to raise funds for the military campaigns range from sms to charity matches; while food, tobacco and even toilet paper is collected to be sent to the front⁷⁷.

Ukraine-Paraguay, Ukraine-Slovakia. Buy a ticket to help the army!



Neither the 30.9% increase approved by the Rada in 2014⁷⁸ was enough to improve the situation. This resulted on the proposed resignation of Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk when he called for a radical increase in the military budget at the expense of social spending.

5.3.2 Recruitment



In pursuance to cope with the increase of personnel needed, especially to control the innumerable checkpoints, the government carried out the following recruitment campaign: (see Annex III)

⁷⁷ Some soldiers report that they themselves have had to build helmets, and there are various associations that deal with foreign collaborators buying military helmets to be passed through the border with Poland.

⁷⁸ ISIS (02/05/2014), "The Military Balance 2014". London, Routledge. Available in: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/04597222.2014.871878>. Date of query: 06.2014

5.3.3 Paramilitary troops

This lack of personnel and material led the army to allow paramilitary forces join the war against the separatists. They are in fact recognized by the government and the media as legitimate fighters. Some are organized by the authorities, and others are independent armed groups that fought in the *Maidan*, and now offer support to regular forces in the front.

The "*Batalion Donbass*", for example, depends directly on the Ministry of Defense which supplies volunteers and is commanded by a former colonel in the reserves, known under the pseudonym of Semion Semionchenko. It is based in Dnipropetrovsk funding by the patriotic governor Igor Kolomoisly⁷⁹.

And "*Natsgardia*" which depends on the Ministry of Interior, is the reformation of the former Ukrainian National Guard reinforced during the term of Yatseniuk with volunteers and militia of nationalist political parties. This military formation counted 39,900 men as in February 2014⁸⁰.



Other less known battalions such as Azov and Aidar, have a much more amateur character. They drive cars of dubious origin under the influence of alcohol listening to American music and raising their arms.

This results from the youth of most fighters, their little or inexistent military experience, and their heightened adrenaline in response to the fear of being in an armed conflict for the first time. With the authority that weapons provide to non-professional soldiers and the exalted ego for "liberating the country."

Together with them stands the controversial political party *Praviy Sektor* (Right Sector)⁸¹ led by Dimitro Yaros. Certainly, it has made a great

⁷⁹ 'Batalion Donbass ». Available in in <http://www.batalion-donbass.com>

⁸⁰ ISIS, "Military Balance 2014" (2014). Chapter 5: "Russia and Eu

⁸¹ Although its name suggests a fascist ideology, pro Ukrainian citizens of the name relates to the sector of Maidan Square where they fought. Many protesters decided to leave because of the violence of the fighting, but some remained



favor for Russian propaganda, helping to convince many citizens of a real fascist threat, which has immeasurably harmed the Ukrainian state.

And many residents of Donbass truly believed that the EU would provide accommodation in the liberated cities for militants of *Praviy Sektor* in order to propagate fascisms.

Sektor Praviy commonly used German emblems on their bases

5.3.4 Technical means⁸²



Nevertheless, despite the precarious living conditions of the soldiers, the Ukrainian army still holds in its hands some large caliber weapons like the *Buk* system (SA-11 *Gadfly*), also in hands of Russia, which became infamous after the MH17 was taken down.

EU MRL theoretically captured by the separatists

The UA has 2 armored brigades, 8 brigades and one mechanized regiment, and 3 air regiments; supported in combat by 3 artillery brigades, 1 surface-surface missiles unit, 3 regiments of multiple rocket launchers, and 3 air defense units.

As for the technical characteristics, the ground army infantry has 10 tanks T-84 *Oplot* and 1,100 T-64; 30 cars with ballistic missile defense (BMD-1.2) and 1300 chariots (BMP-1.2); and 450 BTR (models 60, 70, 80) used primarily to guard the *blokposts* (checkpoints).



Old checkpoint of DNR captured by the EU

⁸²ISIS (02/05/2014), "The Military Balance 2014". London, Routledge. Available in: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/04597222.2014.871878>. Date of query: 06.2014



It seems clear that rebel forces are nurtured with local citizens, as well as Russians and Chechens. However, the percentages vary according to the ideology of the source (the greater the feeling of affiliation to the Ukrainian regime, the higher the number of foreign soldiers declared). But how can we confirm the arrival of these forces?

It is trivial to verify the presence of Chechen units⁸⁵ that bear heavy beards and dress in "arafatkas", driving top-range cars, and according



to local storekeepers they pay with large-denomination notes. Moreover, OSCE observers have reported on the arrival of buses loaded with Chechen militants.

But with respect to Russian units, it is certainly much more complex to identify them due to their physical similarity.

Conducive to do this, we can examine the language used: expressions such as "porebrik" to mean "border", while Ukrainians do only use "bordiura".

This confusion of nationalities makes some foreign subjects are considered as spies: "Graham Phillips, spyware and criminal"



5.4.1 Weaponry⁸⁶

-Light weaponry⁸⁷:

⁸⁵In the area called "Kadirovce", in honor of President of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov. In some videos, it is possible to see units from other Slavic republics, as this Serbian sniper: http://sirgis.info/2014/07/22/russion_invasion_video/ or Spanish volunteers. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFjewRKzsVc>

⁸⁶ Information about the arming of the separatists is very difficult to obtain. Therefore data from secondary sources was verified with testimonies of displaced persons and OSCE observers.

Besides automatic rifles (*avtomat*), *Makarov*, grenade launchers (*granatamioty*), mortar, etc., the rebels own MRO-A thermobaric missile launchers, which were seized by the 95th Ukrainian Air Brigade, together with *Dragunov* sniper rifles (SVD), while reconquering Slaviansk. They also have GM-94 grenade launchers and AK 100 rifles, while the UA has only the 47 series.



Heavy arms⁸⁸:

Rebel forces have equal or greater technology to that of the UA. As for armored combat vehicles, separatist battalion *Novarossiia* has, for example, BTR 70 and 80 APCs (seen in Marianovka) the same as the UA, which has 150 BTR 80; in addition to MRLS and anti-aircraft missiles "*Wasp*".



Furthermore, T64-B tanks have been seen in Donetsk. To this respect, Russians have about 2000 T64-A and B, while Ukrainian troops do only own the A version.

It is suspected that these specimens are the same as those seen a few days earlier within

Russian territory, carrying boxes with jet explosives in unconventional locations (in the turret and armor)

⁸⁷ "War in the South-East Online 8/8/2014 chronicle" Voice of Sevastopol (09/08/2014). Available in: <http://en.voicesevas.ru/news/yugo-vostok/2782-war-in-the-south-east-online-08-08-2014-chronicle.html>. Date of query: 08.2014

⁸⁸ "NSDC: Last night terrorists received 10 tanks from Russia", Inforesist (08/03/2014). Available in: <http://en.inforesist.org/nsdc-last-night-terrorists-received-10-tanks-from-russia/>. Date of query: 08.2014.



As for ballistic arsenal, the DNR and the LNR forces feature *Igla MANPADS* missiles from Russia (which have models SA-16 *Gimlet*, -18 *Grouse* and -24 *Grinch*). Finally, concerning the infamous "*Buk*" system, it appears that they have access to it, but there is still no supporting evidence.

5.4.3 The third party to the conflict

From the technical and tactical point of view, this conflict is unique among other reasons for having a third side in the combat. This is known as "*Zelenye chilovicheskyi*", a Russian-speaking minor (but extremely qualified) side which feared by all. Its mission is to instigate the fighting, shooting Ukrainian soldiers to simulating a separatist attack and vice versa, creating chaos and confusion.

5.5 THE CONFLICT

5.5.1 Russian humanitarian aid

The *Novarossiya* battalion, for instance, constantly advertises on social networks humanitarian aid shipments from Russia: "*14 tons of vegetables from the region of Ulyanovsk. Thank you brothers and sisters do not forsake us aside in difficult times!*"

The same as with Syria, Moscow manages to divert the attention to highly superfluous issues. By sending humanitarian aid to the Donbass, Ukrainian society and Western media will steadily comment on the inherent hypocrisy of the aid. This strategy is not aimed to obtain a rapprochement of the international public opinion to Russia. Instead, it simply buys time to rearm pro-Russian militias.

5.5.2 The fighting

As it is usual in asymmetric conflicts, the fighting can erupt anywhere, and the location of enemy troops is difficult to predict. This is illustrated by the presence of Ukrainian snipers by the entrance of the cities as reported by OSCE observers.

The consequences are highly paid by civilians, who often find themselves trapped in their vehicles amid gunfire, isolated in their neighborhoods due to the placement of anti-personnel mines by separatists, or even surrounded by happenstance by convoys of the UA.



Convoy of T64A tanks of the UA in Donetsk.



Neighbor from Gorlivka caught in a gust of separatists



Missile explosion near in the liberated city of Konstantinovka

5.5.3 The hell of wounded soldiers

The extremely precarious circumstances in which the clashes are held condemn the wounded soldiers to terrible sufferings. Both for separatist militants, whose health infrastructures are at their lowest ebbs, and Ukrainian soldiers whose financial means are so poor they have to rely on the generosity of citizens to stay alive.

Advertisements as the following are common in social networks:



"Funding for the treatment of paraplegic injured of the 25th paratrooper promotion are needed. Kalituk Sergey, Dnepropetrovsk, 21 years"



"Shot in head and back. Costly surgery and rehabilitation, please make transfers to the following account".

Скардиук Вольдемар Михайлович
ПриватБанк 8108 7555 4122 2507 - МДМБ
Гарбачук Оксана Гарбулівна



Public services and critical infrastructure have suffered greatly during the blitz. Starting from top left: a bridge, a power station a school and a hospital ravaged by the war.

5.5.4 Did the downing of the MH77 mean the internationalization of the conflict?

In its day, it was believed that the downing of the Malaysian passenger plane would mark a turning point in terms of the involvement of the international community. But it certainly was not so..

Its authorship is an irresolvable issue on which all kinds of strategies would be designed to blame the other side. For example, videos filtered by the intelligence services of the UA, with alleged talks between militants reporting the error, which appeared so quickly that its truthfulness is at stake.





Meanwhile Russian television, reproduced statements Aleksander Borodai, Prime Minister of the DNR, which described the flight as a provocation and wondered why did Kiev not close the airspace. But Rossiya 1 went further and claimed that the DNR had only 5,000m range missiles, while Ukraine has the *Buk* system.

5.5.5 Violations of military law in armed conflicts (MLAC)

As is typical of an asymmetrical conflict, violations of MLAC are constant. Not only by the illegitimate fighters (the militia of the DNR and the LNR), which could be blamed for the use of anti-personnel mines contrary to the 1997 Ottawa Convention ratified by Ukraine on December 27, 2005, but also by the legitimate Ukrainian armed forces.

Separatists installed bases in schools, hospitals and residential areas (*chastniy sektor*), to challenge the strength in the response of the UA. But MLAC violations by the enemy, do not justify your owns. The UA's strategy of attacking the separatists from the outskirts of cities to minimize the number of casualties is causing nonetheless hundreds of avoidable civilian casualties.



Attacks in the town of Slavyansk, Donetsk province. In the first picture, the slogan that the UA placed in each city liberated "Slavyansk is Ukraine!"

The projectiles widely used in populated areas, the Grad BM-21 with caliber of 122mm⁸⁹, no guidance system and are launched massively (40 tubes shuttles) to secure the objective. Between 12 and 21 July for example, the city of Donetsk suffered 16 civilian casualties due to this practice.

Although the government and the *Natsgardia* reject the accusations, there is reliable some evidence on these attacks:

- the impacts are typical of missiles, not artillery
- the angle and shape of the craters, and the fact that the facades faced the front line of the UA
- in 2 of the attacks against civilians, a base and a rebel *blokpost* were hit

Why are these missiles particularly indiscriminate?

Grad missiles usually carry a 6.4 kg explosive load which is fragmented into over 3000 pieces reaching within 28 m to the epicenter. The most widely used model, the 9M22U with an explosive warhead M-21-OF and maximum range of 20 km has cannot provide a better accuracy than 336mx160m. Hence, collateral damage is almost inevitable. (Read Annex IV)



Civil damages in the city of Donetsk as shown in social networks.

However the MLAC clearly states that “*when the information available in the execution phase foresees that an attack will cause excessive damage among civilian population in relation to the military advantage to be achieved, that it will be suspended or cancelled*” (principle of proportionality, art. 57.2.b GPI). Also, 'military means used should be limited in order to protect civilian population' (generic Limitations, art 57 and 58 GPI).

5.6 THE PROPAGANDA WAR

⁸⁹ "Ukraine: Unguided Rockets Killing Civilians" HRW (07/24/2014). Available in: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/07/24/ukraine-unguided-rockets-killing-civilians>. Date of query: 08.2014e

As we have mentioned earlier, the media have good share of blame for the outbreak of the conflict⁹⁰. And not only Russian stations⁹¹, but Ukrainian likewise, denying at all times the impact of their missiles on civilian houses⁹²; and concealing their own number of military casualties so as not to inflict fear among Ukrainian soldiers.

5.6.1 The pro Ukrainian side



1.2. Russia, terrorist country 3. The Donbass is Ukraine; Do you love your Ukraine? Then learn how to defend it! 4. USA, Israel and Ukraine are one! (it is necessary to remember the great number of Jewish citizens living in Ukraine, or having relatives in Israel) 5. Let's suffocate the Russian aggression! 6. Let's stop fascism in Russia!

⁹⁰ In an interview with mineworkers from Gorlivka, they claimed that PM Arseniy Yatseniuk had called the inhabitants of Donbass as "3rd class citizens". However, these statements do not appear implausible by any means, so they seem unfounded

⁹¹ Even comparing the videos from Nazi attacks with the intervention of the UA in Donbass:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzLsyzgjGeY>

⁹² "NSDC: Ukrainian military do not shell Ukrainian towns" inforesist (17/08/2014). Available in
<http://en.inforesist.org/nsdc-ukrainian-military-do-not-shell-ukrainian-towns/>. Date of query: 08.2014



1. Boycott to fascism. Boycott to elections. 2. No one except us!.3. 9 May (Victory Day) Popular militias of Donbass. 4.Participate in the elections! Chose your fascist!

5.6.3 The role of the church

But in this particular war there is much more unexpected actor: the Orthodox Church. Its power in Ukraine is divided between Moscow's Patriarchate (which prevails in southern and eastern Ukraine) and Kiev's Patriarchate in the rest.



According to several witnesses, the propaganda of the Moscow branch urging separatism in the Donbass has been running for several years. Meanwhile religious leaders from Kiev organize rallies in the *Maidan*, and participate passionately on the political debate.

Image of a confrontation captured in the Maidan between a member of the Orthodox Church and a citizen.

5.7 THE DRAMA OF DISPLACED CITIZENS

On July 18, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees had registered 15,134 IDPs from Crimea, and 80.339⁹³ from East Ukraine .Many of them fled in tragic conditions (often by foot), which in many cases have had to leave part of their families in their hometowns refusing to leave their houses.

5.7.1 Life under the bombs

The routine of living under heavy bombing is reflected in the testimonies of IDPs, who are able to classify all the armor used: *ustanovki Grad* (the name given to the Soviet BM 21 missiles), *Pushki* (artillery guns), *avtomati* (assault rifles), *minometnaya mina* (air mines), *uragan Smerch* (BM-27 *uragan*, 16 projectiles with caliber 220 mm), *protivotankovaya mine* (antipersonnel mine), *protivopehotnaya mine* (mines), etc.

Before fleeing, many of the displaced spend a few weeks in the bunkers that the buildings are provided with, affected from a humidity that causes respiratory problems for many.

In the town of Schaste 20 kms from Lugansk, for example, to the psychological burden of the flight, IDPs suffered from the psychological stress if witnessing the missile launching by the UA which can reach their relatives or acquaintances.



Life under siege: entrenched houses and public warnings of mine attack.

5.7.2 Economic factors

⁹³ "Internally Displaced People", UNHCR. Available in <http://unhcr.org.ua/en/who-we-help/internally-displaced-people>. Date of query: 08.2014

Cities under control of the separatist forces suffered a big rise in prices, stoppages in water supply and electricity shortage, scarcity in basic commodities, etc. In addition, non-payment of public subsidies in the cities where the republics were established added up to the destruction or near total paralysis of local industry.



For example, the chemical plant which employed more than 8,000 workers in the city of Severodonetsk, whose activity was suspended during several months to prevent a tragic explosion. Or coal mines, whose inactivity will leave many people without heating in winter.

The aforesaid led many displaced to choose Russia as a destination. According to witnesses, representatives of Russian companies offered employment to miners, in cities like Taganrot and Neftinogansk; or even employees of the chemical plant in Gorlivka to be transferred to Mendeleevsk. This proved quite beneficial for Russian businessmen, who obtains high qualification for wages that Russian workers would reject (about 45,000 rubles/year).

5.7.3 The role of the administration

The Ukrainian government of Petro Poroshenko, focused on the financing the war, has avoided in most cases its obligations towards the displaced. Indeed, it is usual that in such conflicts governments can regard IDPs as "enemies of the state", because of the social support that enjoyed the uprising.

Respondents among the IDPs declare they have not received government support of any kind, neither for their evacuation or subsequent accommodation. They do not receive, in fact, any information on public bodies at their disposal in spite of the laws passed by the RADA⁹⁴.

In the MLAC manuals, it is explained that *"the CIMIC / Civil Affairs section will coordinate with Logistics the assistance to be furnished to refugees, evacuees, patients and other civilians. (...) And it will be necessary to establish Meeting Points to control displaced civilian personnel"*.

⁹⁴ State Law to "guarantee the rights and freedoms of citizens and the legal status in Ukrainian temporarily occupied territories." Adopted on May 6, 2014. Order No. 588-r of the Cabinet of Ministers on "public services for citizens of the area temporarily occupied area and ATO zone" adopted on June 11, 2014.

In this context the survival of the displaced is fully dependant on the assistance provided by religious groups⁹⁵ and volunteers. Nevertheless, it is true that regional authorities have also worked hard to transfer public aid and relocate children in schools⁹⁶.

5.7.4 Problems inherent to displacement: distribution, occupation and post conflict

-Relocation:

It is strictly necessary not to create ghettos, as for example in the Palestinian refugee camp of Shatila, in Lebanon. Violence can sprout in them, and occasionally encourage prejudices among local citizens will be encouraged.

Nor it is advisable to disperse them in excess along the host region, since isolation of other refugees can foster a sense of loneliness and misunderstanding. Therefore, the ideal solution is to create multiple cores of IDPs along the city, where their association does not interfere with their integration in the local community.

-Reoccupation:

It is extremely necessary that adults have access to a professional occupation that can deprive them of the feeling of inefficiency and confusion after having held the same job for many years. In addition, many disburse much of their savings in order to leave, and need to find lasting solutions.

Although the optimal answer is to employ them in their domains of origin, this is rarely possible. Therefore a desirable alternative is to employ them in the sector derivative of the needs of the displaced: from dwelling construction to psychological support of the victims. In that sense, they will also manage to face the conflict in a constructive way and help alleviate the economic needs of humanitarian organizations like the Red Cross.

⁹⁵ In particular, in the Donbass region, the Protestant church runs a refugee center in Konstantinovka, evacuates IDPs from Gorlivka, and helps rebuild homes in Slaviansk; among other activities.

⁹⁶ From 1st to 15th July, for example, 8,330 pensioners Lugansk and Donetsk demanded the transfer of benefits to the administration of Kharkov. Additionally 6,545 children and adolescents demanded the continuation of their studies in this province, of which 3,553 were transferred during in this period.



*Displaced center of the Red Cross
in Severodonetsk*

Likewise with the children, whose insertion into local schools is imperative, as it reduces their exposure to the mentioned violence. Only in Kharkiv, for example, more than 6,500 children from the Donbass demanded registration.

-Postconflicto:

in general once the conflict ends, there are 3 alternatives for refugees:

- a) Voluntary Return to the former conflict area
- b) Durable Integration in another location within the country
- c) Admission to another country

Due to the location of the conflict in a small area of Ukraine, the third option is only considered for the IDPs relocating in Russia by virtue of ideological, professional or family reasons (much of the population in Donbass is of Russian descent). However, this is a party to the conflict, and refugees benefiting refugee status there cannot, among others thing, return to Ukraine during the next five years⁹⁷.

The best option is the first, but the return should be staggered to prevent the decimation social and economic system collapses.

6. CONCLUSIONS

In this study we confirmed our point of departure, in which we noted the extraordinary leeway that the government of Vladimir Putin is acquiring. In particular, the following assumptions have been demonstrated in the text:

⁹⁷ For instance, in many European countries hosting refugees from Iraq or Afghanistan, living conditions are quite good, but the reduced number of working hours allowed is a permanent source of conflict within the shelters.

- The propaganda machine is able to keep public opinion under control. In fact, it has been proven that the most important national is controlled by the administration, even those who initially were critical of the president.

Additionally, the extraordinary nationalist sentiment promulgated by ideologically opposite media any encourage a quite homogeneous public opinion, as we have corroborated with the survey.

- The defense culture and a willingness to use military means provide the Kremlin with an incontestable power. We explained how war is an omnipresent phenomenon in the culture of these countries, and military means are certainly accepted by the society as legitimate. The vocabulary used by citizens or paramilitary groups are a good proof of this.
- International Opposition against US: the study on Russian foreign policy shows how the Federation tries to lead organizations of non-Western states aiming to counter NATO's supremacy. Let's recall that the Russian Foreign Ministry points to this organization as one of the main threats for their territorial integrity.
- Russia induces other countries to make mistakes: scarce of military resources available in the Ukrainian state to face a militia armed by Russia, results in constant violations the Geneva Convention in pursue of offsetting this disadvantage. The context is even more critical for Ukraine, as it is now facing a non-state actors who is not accountable to any international obligation, but with the military technology of the 2nd world's most powerful army.

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8. ANNEXES

ANNEX I-SURVEY

Исследование о внешней политике России

- 1- Думаете ли вы, что Россия должна использовать военные средства для защиты прав
- 2- Как изменилось ваше мнение о Путине после аннексии Крыма?(В худшую или лучшую 3- Вы согласны с политикой правительства России в Крыму?
- 4- Думаете вы, что референдум в Крыму было обусловлено из-за отношении русской
- 5- Думаете ли вы, что США финансировал протестантов на Майдане (именно, "Правый 6- Думаете ли вы, что Восточной Украине тоже нужен референдум?
- 7- По вашему, если бы Украина вступила в Европейский Союз, то должны ли были они
- 8- Согласны ли вы с решением российского правительства в ООН о невмешательстве 9- Знали вы , что в Сирии находится русская военная база?
- 10- Когда вы смотрите новости по русскому телевидению, как часто слышите (сейчас или
- 11- По вашему, вторжение Америки в Ирак было легальным?

Survey on Russian politics

1-Do you think that Russia should use military means to defend the rights of its citizens in other countries?

2-How has your opinion changed about Putin after the annexation of Crimea?

(On Ukraine)

3-Do you agree with the policy of the Russian government in Crimea?

4-Do you think that the referendum in Crimea was influenced by the participation of the Russian army?

5-Do you think the US funded protests in the Maidan (specifically *Praviy Sektor*)?

6-Do you think that a referendum is necessary also in East Ukraine

(On Syria)

7-In your opinion, if Ukraine joined the EU, should it pay for Russian gas at European prices?

8-Do you agree with the decision of the Russian government to veto any UN resolution aiming to send international troops to Syria?

9-Did you know that Syria hosts a Russian military base ?

10-When you watch the news on Russian television, how often do you listen about victims in the Syrian war?

11-In your opinion, was the American intervention in Iraq legal?

ANNEX II-KIDNAPPING

According to his testimony, he was kept tied and blindfolded for 10 days without eating at the offices of SVU, along with other 20 or 25 individuals, including one of the OSCE observers. During this time people came voluntarily to help the militia, thinking that they had arrested the saboteurs from Kiev.

He reached an agreement for his liberation with the governor of the DNR, in exchange for not granting any interviews after liberation. At 10 pm, two armed militiamen came and ordered him to go home, but he feared being shot when starting to walk. Only DNR authorities could declared to the media (only to Russian media since Ukrainian TV was closed) explaining the good conditions in which they victims abducted.

He explained that among his abductors there were no mercenaries (they arrived a month later), only Ukrainian soldiers including Crimean, under the name of *stormoviy group*. From 5-10 well qualified crews, hence they could be people related to the NVD. Then there were the "local bandits" from Slaviansk: individuals with little training that would carry out the most "dirtiest" duties and be in charge of *blockposts*.

ANNEX III-RECRUITMENT



Would mobilize up to 60,000 men within 45 days:

- Boys up to 40 years,
- officers and sergeants in reserve to 45
- senior officers to 60

That would enjoy all the benefits of military service contract:

- social and legal guarantees stipulated by military law.
- leave from their jobs, regardless of the business owner.
- a single payment on the day of demobilization.

• Enlisted employers retain their tax rights and retirees will continue collecting the pension during this period.

The following will not be mobilized:

- military reserved in advance by the public authorities for the period of mobilization
- Women with children under 16 years in charge
- people who are off work for medical reasons will have a grace period of of six months
- men in charge of 5 or more children under 16 years or invalid persons, providing there was no one to replace them
- National MPs

Recruitment was carried out in 4 phases:

1st phase: volunteers, officers and reservists (highly qualified: communication units, reconnaissance, artillery, etc.) up to 45 years; and private reservists to 40 years.

2nd phase: officers and reservists of all specialties to 45 years; and senior officers to 60 years.

3rd phase: during the start of the fighting. Women who have completed military service, and men who have not done so but who do not hold a medical certificate to restrain them.

4th phase: during the critical phase of the fighting. Anyone who can use a gun.