

JOMUN XIV

Forum:

Issue: Situation in Ukraine

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction: In November 2013, the Prime Minister of Ukraine refused a trade deal with the EU and accepted the Russian deal instead. Various people protested the decision in the central square of Kyiv as they viewed the deal with the EU economically beneficial. The government responded truculently. 70 Ukrainian deaths by February 2014. Yanukovich removed from power, Poroshenko takes power. This could have been the end of the conflict if not for the regional and identity division in Ukraine. The East of Ukraine associates itself more with Russia and has kept its cultural and historic ties with the Soviet Union since 1991. However the opposite region, the West of Ukraine associates itself as more Ukrainian and European. Russia didn't want to lose its influence in Ukraine. With Poroshenko in power this became a serious threat for Russia as they have a lot of economic power in the Ukraine but Poroshenko was very willing to distance himself from Russia and approach himself to the EU.

The first process in Putin's withhold of the Ukraine was Crimea, Eastern Europe where 77% of the population associates itself with Russia. Pro-EU protests in Kyiv, pro-Crimea protests in Crimea. Russian soldiers and officials start flooding into Crimea. Crimea put a referendum based on joining Russia. 90% of Crimeans voted yes. Vladimir Putin declared that Crimea's annex had resulted in Crimea becoming part of Russia. EU and US imposed sanctions.

Russian troops start fighting into more of Eastern Europe in order to annex those locations as well. Ukraine fights back. Mid-April and Mid-July more than 1000 deaths. Basically Russia invaded Ukraine, they just refuse to admit it, Eastern Ukraine is at a divide. This now means that since early 2015 various sanctions have been placed on Russia such as an arms-trade embargo by the EU and the United States, however Eastern Ukraine is suffering the consequences of it as well. The closing of almost all Coal mines in the region has resulted in the creation of illegal coal mines used to salvage the coal in the region and to render it profitable. The coal mines were closed as they were owned by Ukrainian Businesses. The media is unable to describe what is occurring in order to protect Russia's political status and in order to ensure that no information is revealed.

Now the nation remains unstable specifically due to the fact that its territorial integrity has been completely shattered and because Russia is able to dominate the conflict due to their military power and has been able to exploit Eastern Ukraine until reaching complete annexation. Western Ukraine still believes it is worth fighting back for especially because various nations and the West of Ukraine strongly believe that the referendum held in Crimea was forged. The topic and concerns remain ongoing and threatening to the diplomatic stage.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Terms:

Media Oppression: *Any situation in which the media doesn't have the ability to portray their ideas freely. This can also be referred as the limiting of free speech. Free speech is very regulated in Eastern Ukraine especially Crimea due to the Russian influence and the danger the Russian army*

possesses. This regulation of free speech is really damaging to the media as they are only able to portray the ideas that the government allows them to discuss and reveal to the public.

Sanctions: *A threatened penalty for disobeying a rule or law. Sanctions can vary from leaders to sports to economic sanctions. The sanctions that are most often conducted by opposing nations are Economic sanctions to prevent expansion of the opponents economy. Economic sanctions can change whether it is from imposing import duties on goods from, or disallowing the exports of goods to a full naval blockade of the target's ports in an effort to verify, and change or completely obstruct specific goods There is also the ability to conduct military sanctions which have been discussed by various nations on being deployed amongst Eastern Ukraine to liberate the Russian rule. Military sanctions are used in order to destabilize nations with either the use of conventional or non-conventional weapons.*

Flight MH17: Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 (MH17/MAS17) was a flight departing from Amsterdam and due to arrive in Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, which crashed on the date of the 17th July 2014 after being gunned down, which ended up killing all the 283 passengers and 15 crew on board. The airliner lost contact about 50 km from the border with Ukraine and Russia and suffered by crashing near in Donetsk, Eastern Ukraine, 40 km (25 mi) from the border. The crash site and the location of the shooting has sparked major controversy as many blame it on the Russians. The crash occurred as part of the Conflict of Donbass.

Various forms of information allowed them to reach these conclusions but the United States has always blamed Russia for incidents where they might have been involved. On 13 October 2015, the Dutch Safety Board released a final report discussing how the plane was shot down and which weapons had been used to gun the plane down, based on the reports it was assumed that only Russian militants would have access to those weapons.

The governments of both nations involved blamed each other for the incident. Arguments that were used, were that it was Ukraine which was responsible for the crash seeing as it had been shot down on Ukrainian territory. Shortly after the occurrence of the crash, a post appeared on a profile attributed to the leader of the Donbass separatists, who claimed responsibility for the incident, however after it was found that the aircraft was carrying civilians, the separatists denied any involvement, and the post was removed. Various differing stories emerged based on the incident and which nations had ability to do what based on their resources. No final conclusion has been reached.

Malaysia suggested a United Nations resolution to create an international court in which prosecutions of the parties suspected would occur. The resolution acquired a majority vote in the UN Security Council vote (11 countries voted for it, 3 abstained), and it was vetoed by Russia.

Territorial Integrity: Territorial integrity is a principle under international law by which it is stated that nations should not withdraw from a group of a larger entity or to promote a border-change in a nation. Conversely it describes that an attempt amplified by force from a nation onto another nation to change their borders is an act of aggression and is condemnable by international law. It basically recapitulates the whole Russian invasion into Ukraine in one word.

BACKGROUND ON THE ISSUE

Russia has annexed Ukraine because Eastern Ukraine prefers associating itself as Russian however the invasion and the exploitation of Ukraine's power has been a real cowardly move. Russia once had very good ties with Ukraine especially during the period of the USSR, historically Ukraine remains

very similar to Russia. The influence of the USSR has maintained a Russian association with a part of the Ukrainian which sparked the conflict.

This starts with a major decision that had to be made by Yanukovich. The choice was between a long-term deal which was initially painful with the EU to deal with integration and trade and improve in the long term, the second option perhaps a bit more appealing was a \$15bn deal offered by Russia that came with the consequence of joining a "Eurasian Union," between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia. The deal proved too tempting for Yanukovich who ended up rejecting the diplomatic European Union deal and elected to choose the loan.

The decision was controversial and sparked protests as Kyiv's population protested, Yanukovich exerted his power to control them. Under Yanukovich's orders 100 people were killed by the snipers and riot police. After this, Yanukovich lived too dangerously in Ukraine and he fled to Russia. The 25th of May 2014 marked the day that the new elections were to be held.

Crimea (Territorial Integrity)

Whilst everyone was distracted with what was occurring in the capital, Putin decided to hold surprise military drills in the Eastern part of Ukraine specifically in Crimea. At the same time, Russian forces were seizing government buildings and airports. This was Putin's first step to annexing Ukraine, the instability in the nation made it incredibly easier.

Crimea plays a major role in Russian demographic and political possibilities and abilities, acquiring the geographic location of Crimea has always been seen as an asset for the Federation of Russia. A referendum occurred on the 16th of March after being criticized by the Ukraine, the US and EU as illegal, however, officials reported a 97% vote for Crimea to become part of Russia. The only two options were to either join Russia or enhancing the integrity with Ukraine, many Western sources believe that the results were forged. Days later, Putin signed an agreement to formally declare the annexation of Crimea.

Sanctions

After various weeks of warning from the rest, especially from the EU and the US based on the events linked in Crimea. The sanctions were imposed on various Russians and Ukrainians especially against businessmen.

The sanctions ordered included the freezing of assets and revoking of visas. Russia's participation in the G8 in the European Council were also revoked. The EU and US then went on to promise Ukraine a \$16bn loan as part of an effort to rescue its economy after the fall of the Ukrainian Economy primarily due to reasons of war.

Ukraine as it currently stands

Ukraine and Eastern Ukraine remain at a huge divide, the impact of Russia has been immense and has led to the conquest of almost all of the Eastern Ukraine. Russia clearly never had the right to annex Ukraine but they did and the West continues to impose and increase sanctions but they don't seem to have such a large effect.

Coal Mines

The illegality of coal mines has also been a major problem within Ukraine. 70% of the coal mines have officially closed, only 24 remain in the whole of Ukraine but various coal mines continue to run illegally. Due to the poverty that has emerged in the Eastern Ukraine because of the civil war, coal mines are actually often regarded as a lifeline as even if run illegally, it gives local villages electricity which is considerably cheaper than the other provided. Coal mines are one of the larger forms of employment in Eastern Ukraine but they are normally worked between 3 to 4 people and they need to be operated by the workers. There are virtually no health or safety standards, the coal mines or "kopankas," which has led to Ukraine being the nation with the second highest mining fatality rate. Various miners are interesting for fighting for the independence of Eastern Ukraine and its joining of Russia but miners are often very concerned of dying for the separatist movement. The major concern with the illegal coal mines have been the fatalities that have resulted from running the coal mines illegally and have also been fought over by separatists and arisen more conflict in an already conflict-torn zone.

Free Speech and the Oppression of media

Another problem that exists due to the situation in Ukraine is the difficulty to receive information on the war-torn conflict due to the simple fact that the government has very easily manipulated local media sources within Eastern Ukraine with threats which has resulted in an incongruous amount of information exiting Eastern Ukraine. It's very simple to manipulate the media especially because often Ukrainian laws don't apply in various cities of Eastern Ukraine. This therefore means that the unveiling of Russia's crimes in Ukraine are often hidden by the media.

TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

2014 March - Russian forces annex Crimea after an increase in Russian involvement in the Crimea and raises tensions between the East and the West

2014 April - Pro-Russian separatists annex various Ukrainian territories. The Ukrainian Government is forced to respond by sending its own militants.

2014 July - The downing of MH17 in territory which had been recently annexed by separatists, resulting in the killing of 298 people, with strong evidence suggesting that it was shot down by pro-Russian forces although denied by Russia.

2014 August - Russia sends various unauthorized convoys to Eastern Ukraine claiming they are there to aid.

2014 September - Government sign Minsk treaty with pro-Russian leaders in eastern Ukraine. Two opposing groups reach agreements to hold elections.

2014 September - November - Cease-fire is violated by both separatist forces

2014 November - Donetsk and Luhansk separatists hold elections not included in the Minsk treaty. Ukraine revoke pledge to keep its independence in those regions .

2015 January - Separatist forces are able to abduct the airport of Donetsk increasing their already vast territory in Ukraine specifically Eastern Ukraine.

2015 February - Germany and France hold Ceasefire talks in Belarus after Russian forces had driven out the Ukrainian military out of the transport hub of Debaltseve

2015 June - Ukraine stops most purchases from Russia.

2015 October - Ukraine bans Russian commercial flights from entering into the country, Russia responds by doing the same. Local elections are held in the Ukraine in order to hold a referendum. Voting does not take place in Eastern Ukraine.

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

17 FEBRUARY 2015 SC11784	The press statement suggests deep concerns over the violations of the ceasefire conducted by Russia and the persistent fighting in Debaltseve
22 JANUARY 2015 SC11749	The press statement criticizes the killing of 15 civilians

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE

The Minsk Protocol created by the Organization for Security and Cooperation within Europe to address the issues of:

1. To ensure the agreement to a truce
2. To make sure of the patrolling of a ceasefire by external committees.
3. To provide more humanitarian resources in the area of Donbass.
4. To withdraw armed groups and mercenaries from the Ukraine in order to prevent more conflict
5. To embrace a scheme of economic recovery in the Donbass region in order to carefully reconstruct the region.
6. To vote as a nation prior to the annexation of Crimea on all decisions made by the Nation of the Ukraine

1. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Checking validation of referendum

2. The complete divide between Ukraine and Russia with the agreement that every large city wishing to stay in Ukraine shall have a vote as well as the cities wanting to become Russian

3. The restitution of Ukrainian businesses to previous owners and financial aid by Russia.

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