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UKRAINE'S EUROINTEGRATION CHOICE AS ONE OF THE CAUSES OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR

Стаття присвячена розумінню політичних процесів як важливого інституту громадянського суспільства, що відіграє помітну і вагому роль в житті українського соціуму.

При цьому, у науковій розвідці, наводиться стислий опис подій, що передували нинішній ситуації в українсько-російських відносинах. Згадано заходи до яких вдавалася Росія з метою запобігання підписанню Угоди про асоціацію між Україною та ЄС. Окреслюються витоки та характеристики нинішнього російсько-українського конфлікту.

Ключові слова: зовнішня політика України, Європейський Союз, російсько-українська війна євроінтеграційна політика України.

Стаття посвящена пониманию политических процессов как важного института гражданского общества, которое играет заметную и весомую роль в жизни украинского социума.

При этом, в научной разведке, наводится сжатое описание событий, которые предшествовали нынешней ситуации в украинско-российских отношениях. Упомянуты меры к которым прибегала Россия с целью предотвращения подписания Соглашения об ассоциации между Украиной и ЕС. Очерчиваются истоки и характеристики нынешнего российско-украинского конфликта.

Ключевые слова: внешняя политика Украины, Европейский Союз, российско-украинская война, евроинтеграционная политика Украины.

January 27, 2015. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the Resolution "On appeal of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to the United Nations, European Parliament, Parliamentary Assembly, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of GUAM, parliaments of the world on the recognition of RussianFederation as the state-aggressor." The document stresses that "Ukraine is the object of military aggression carried out by the Russian Federation, among other things, by supporting and providing large-scale terrorist attacks. ... taking into account the norms of the UN Charter and General Assembly resolution №3314 "Definition of aggression" of December 14th, 1974, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine declares the Russian Federation as the state aggressor ... "[9]. This Appeal determines the state and nature of the long Russian-Ukrainian conflict, the cause and source of which is the Russian expansionist policy in the post –soviet space which the Russian Federation, represented by its current leadership considers its zone of "privileged interests." Hence – there is a rigid forcing of Ukraine to the Eurasian integration under the auspices of the Russian Federation and blocking Kyiv course towards European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

This policy of Russia, which has been carried out from early 2000's, did not provide formation of truly equal, partnership and equal relations between Moscow and Kyiv and was aimed at transforming Ukraine into controlled state, which would move in the wake of Russia's policy. Russia's geopolitical plans as for Ukraine were destroyed in February 2014. In response, Putin's regime has resorted to outright aggression against Ukraine - in March 2014 Crimea was annexed, later military expansion in Eastern Ukraine began. For two years already the "undeclared" or "hybrid" war of Russian Federation against Ukraine continues, because of which Ukraine had suffered the biggest human, territorial, economic losses. A critical consequence of this war is mutual alienation of societies of both countries. Russian-Ukrainian conflict is not "local," "peripheral" event - it has a regional and global dimension and provides challenges and threats to

global security. Annexation of Crimea, the situation in Eastern Ukraine turn into a large-scale "frozen conflicts" that threaten security and stability not only in Europe but also in the whole world. Leading Western countries, international organizations did not recognize the annexation of Crimea, demonstrated political and diplomatic solidarity with Ukraine, supported Ukraine in its fight against Russian aggression in Donbas. Ukraine has received substantial external financial, material and technical assistance. "Dissuasive" sanctions were imposed against Rassia. External support is crucially important for Ukraine, which, being in different "weight classes" with Russia has limited internal resources to counter Russian aggression.

Currently, Ukraine is in the midst of an acute confrontation between the West and Russia, which is characterized by an unprecedented loss of mutual confidence. Ukrainian-Russian relations remain in a critical and unpredictable condition. Political and diplomatic confrontation continues; basic agreements and arrangements are being violated; the institutional system of international relations is actually destroyed; economic and energetic confrontation aggravates, informative aggression from Russian still takes place. In general, the current realities make it hard to talk about changes for the better in Russian politics towards Ukrain in the foreseeable future. Thus, the current situation in relations between Kyiv and Moscow needs a fundamentally different concept formation, strategic approaches to coexistence with Putin's Russia, a review of the international contacts, implementing specific measures in relations with Russia [10].

Russian aggression against Ukraine radically changed the situation in Europe and the world, it has become a challenge to global security, for which the adequate response is currently not found. The effectiveness of international mechanisms to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons is violated (Budapest Memorandum), mutual trust is lost and there is an acute political and diplomatic confrontation between the West and Russia. Acts of the Russian Federation create a precedent for the use of force in resolving disputes between states –and this is extremely dangerous because an example has submitted by the state - a permanent member of the UN Security Council, a member of the global "nuclear club", guarantor ofsecurity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of states, which voluntarily gave up ownership of nuclear weapons.

Obviously, the Ukrainian internal political ground that was so intensely "handled" by Russian informative, cultural, religious, political and economic expansion, was still not quite suitable for the construction thereon of Russian geostrategic springboard. However, not being entrenched in this strategic bridgehead, Russia has no chance to achieve their ambitious goals in its relations with Europe. So, building its strategy in the geopolitical triangle Russia - Ukraine - EU, Putin was aimed at a number of strategic objectives concerning Ukraine through the relationship with both Brussels and official Kyiv. The main objectives of these foreign Russia's relations with the EU were:

- discredit Ukraine in the international environment, first of all in the US and the EU for its disability as a state;
- Insulation Ukraine and Yanukovych regime by the West;
- prevent the signing of the Association Agreement and Deep Free Trade Zone between Ukraine and the EU.

Through the relationship with the official Kyiv Russia set itself the following strategic objectives of geopolitical nature:

- turn away Yanukovich from signing the Association Agreement with the EU;
- homogenize political regime in Ukraine with the Russian authoritarian regime;
- homogenize Ukrainian society with Russian civilizational spaceof by turning it into a "Little Russian" society;
- deprive Ukraine of economic resources and proper motivation which is necessary for the implementation of European integration course;
- deprive Ukraine's economic independence by cutting the trade and economic relations with Russia and by closure of the Russian market for Ukrainian producers;
- Creation by Russia of the system of direct and immediate management of domestic political and economic processes in Ukraine.

All these tasks are subordinated to both internal and external vital interests of Russia. The main domestic concern of Russia is the need to preserve and consolidate the post-Soviet authoritarian model of development based on authoritarianism of personalized power and paternalist society. The viability of such a model is built on the exploitation of natural mineral resources and the vestiges of the old Soviet economy, 25 years of life of which had actually dried up, as well as on the stereotypes of Soviet Russian public consciousness. Despite the wealth of natural and energetic resources, the economic and demographic potential of Russia has limited capacity. The inclusion of Ukraine in the Russian imperial and geopolitical projects provides additional resources to preserve such a model of development [4, p. 203].

Trends in the global system of international relations towards multipolarit opened a window of opportunity for Russia to get back its status as a world power, without which the Russians do not imagine the future of their country. The first step in restoring this status had to be the reintegration of the former Soviet Union and its complete absorption by Russia. Without Ukraine solving of this strategic task had no sense. At a time when Ukraine refused reintegration projects and expressed its intention to sign the Association Agreement with the EU , the military - power scenario was the only way of implementation of the Russian such a strategic task. Military occupation of Ukraine and liquidation of its statehood solved hands to absorb the entire post-Soviet space. Russian-Ukrainian war exposed deep crisis of European security in general and the security of the European Union in particular. Inadequate perception of the war led to the fact that the credibility of the EU as a crisis center has been put into question, and the impact of regulatory, economic, political and diplomatic measures to resolve this crisis appeared to be negligible [5, p. 7].

It can be noted that all the years of independence Ukraine pursued a policy which can be called a policy of maneuvering between the two great centers of gravity - the European Union and Russia (or between the integration associations initiated by Russia). The uncertainty of the future vision hindered the development of state and society. The consequences of such policy are obvious. International credibility of Ukraine is undermined, the Ukrainian economy

actually survives by exploiting outdated enterprises and cheap labor. In international rankings Ukraine is in many ways on the lowest steps. Meanwhile, European countries of the former "socialist camp", which in the early 1990s were even on weaker position than Ukraine, has long ago joined the EU, and their current economic indicators are higher and public welfare is better than in Ukraine. Ukraine also declared and legislated intentions for European integration. The first step to their implementation had to be the signing in November 2013 Association Agreement, which also provides creation of free trade zone between Ukraine and the EU [16].

In November 29, 2013 the summit of "Eastern Partnership" washeld in Vilnius, where the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union was planned to be signed. However, the President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovych on the eve of the summit said that Ukrainian side would not sign the Association Agreement as Ukrainian business was not ready for that. He also stressed that Ukraine needed the EU to "take decisive steps towards Ukraine in the development and implementation of the program of financial and economic assistance using all available mechanisms and resources of both institutions and countries - EU members." Viktor Yanukovych also proposed to launch a trilateral dialogue EU - Ukraine - Russia. As a result of the summit in Vilnius a common declaration was adopted, in which an "unprecedented public support" of political association and economic integration of Ukraine with the EU was stated [14].

It should be noted that during the month before the summit three meetings of Yanukovych with President of Russia Vladimir Putin were held, all outside the territory of Ukraine. Revealing that the Ukrainian diplomats were not present at the negotiations between Yanukovych and Putin on the 9th of November, and merely stated that during the meeting the presidents discussed issues of trade and economic relations between the two countries in the context of the Vilnius summit. Neither was accepted the proposal for Tripartite Consultation EU - Ukraine – Russia. As a result, Viktor Yanukovych, despite a still demonstrative readiness of the EU to sign the initialed and agreed in negotiations with his own government agreement, refused to sign it himself. Consequently, the decisive factor that influenced this decision and further development of the situation in Ukraine was Russian pressure. Note that, according to the new Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, adopted on February 12th, 2013, Ukraine is a key CIS partner for Russia. According to the same concept, Russia will try to encourage in every way the integration processes in the post-soviet space with the involvement of Ukraine [2]. Prime Minister of Ukraine Mykola Azarov repeatedly said that the European direction of foreign policy remained unchanged. However, it is clear that the political elite of the Ukrainian ruling Party of Regionsconstantly flirted with both Brussels and Moscow. [10]

Thus, on May 31st, 2013 a memorandum "On Deepening Cooperation between Ukraine and the Eurasian Economic Commission" was signed, under which Ukraine agreed to "adhere to the principles set forth in the documents of the Customs Union ..." [13].

On the other hand, On the 18th of September 2013, the Ukrainian government decided to prepare for the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU. Representatives of the Party of Regions Viktor Muntiyan and B. Kolyesnichenko in their statements and comments tried to convince the citizens in theexpediencyof rapprochement with the Customs Union, and Foreign Minister of Ukraine Leonid Kozhara said that the Customs Union and the EU should be united. However, the principles of the common market and customs union is fundamentally different and they can not be reconciled. Potential losses of the Ukrainian economy as a result of pressure from Russia wereannounced as the main reason for not signing the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine. Dimension losses, that were initially voiced by highest Ukrainian officials, could be 165-500 billion Euro. This does not have any justification. Instead, according to the estimates of Russian experts, such losses could be 37 billion Euro. Subsequently, after discussions between representatives of Brussels and Kyiv, Ukrainian officials has made a reassessment of potential losses for Ukrainian economy. Finally, it became clear that Russia joined the struggle for the decisive influence in Eastern, Central and most of South-East Europe. But no one dared to admit it in public. For the Brussels the Association is an alternative to EU membership, while for Moscow this is enlargement of EU by alternative methods. From the point of wiew of European Commission President J.M. Barrozu the Association of Ukraine with the EU will not have negative consequences for Russia, but in the long run even will bring the last much good. In terms of Vladimir Putin, in this case the EU interferes in the region that Putin himself calls a "zone of special interests" and part of the so-called "Russian World". EU attempts to "interact" with these questions have no meaning [4].

Almost immediately after this "integration reversal" of Ukraine to the East, a clandestine manner by Parliament and the public, based on unofficial agreements with Russia, a package of Ukrainian-Russian agreements on the 17th of December 2013, was signed, in particular –it had to grant Ukraine a short-term loan of \$ 15 billion and lower prices for Russian gas. De facto, it was Kremlin's "fee" for refusal of Kyiv from European integration.

Thus, the refusal of top officials in November 2013 from the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU caused the beginning of the mass peaceful protests in Ukraine to protect European aspirations of Ukrainian people, called "euromaidan." The situation has deteriorated due to rigid power disperseof "euromaidan" in Kiev in November 30, 2013, which caused a sharp negative reaction both in Ukraine and in Europe and the world, and eventually led to a military confrontation of citizens and government, to overthrow the regime of Yanukovych and his escape from Ukraine at night in February 21, 2014 [12].

It is clear that 2013 has become crucial in the Ukrainian-Russian relations. The Russian side has involved all the political and economic leverage, on the one hand – to involve Ukraine into the process of Eurasian integration, on the other - to block the European integration course of official Kyiv.

On the 22d of February 2014 the Parliament adopted a Resolution "On withdrawal of the President of Ukraine from fulfillment of constitutional powers and appointment of special presidential election in Ukraine", O. Turchynov, a representative of the united parliamentary opposition was elected as a chairman of the Parliament; special presidential election were appointed on May 25, 2014 and O. Turchynov assumed the duties of the President till the election [7].

After Revolution of Dignity won in Ukraine, on March 13th, 2014 the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the Resolution "On confirmation of Ukraine's course toward integration into the European Union and immediate measures in this direction" [8], which confirmed the irreversibility of Ukraine's European integration, the aim of which is to acquire membership in the European Union. It was also noted that Ukraine as a European country which shares a common history and values with the European Union, has the right to apply for membership in the European Union in accordance with Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union. By this Resolution Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine recommended the Acting President of Ukraine and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine a number of immediate steps for European integration, especially in the context of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU [3].

The political part of the Association Agreement was signed on the 21st of March 2014, the economic part – on the 27th of June, 2014. On September 16th, 2014 the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and the European Parliament ratified the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EUsimultaneously.

According to Article 486 of the Agreement, starting from the 1st of November, 2014 its provisional application is being carried. Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU enters into force in full after its ratification by all member states, in the first day of the second month that followes the date of deposit of thelast instrument of ratification or last document of approval to the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union.

Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU is an international legal document which reinforces the transition between Ukraine and the EU from partnership and cooperation to political association and economic integration on contractual and legal level [11]. It contains provisions for the establishment of a deep and comprehensive free trade area (FTA). The agreement creates conditions for further Ukraine's accession to the EU, but - it is neither a guarantee from the EU or obligation on the part of Ukraine.

Terms of signing the Agreement put forward by the EU:

- elimination of selective justice in Ukraine;
- creation of sustainable electoral legislation;
- real reforms (fight against corruption, judicial reform, improving the business climate and so on.).

The agreement covers various aspects of cooperation, in particular:

- making Ukraine closer to European standards in law and home affairs, democracy and human rights, fighting corruption, functioning of justice;
- rapprochement between Ukraine and the EU based on common values, increased participation of Ukraine in EU programs;
 - establishing new formats of cooperation, providing financial assistance to reforms in Ukraine.

Deep and comprehensive free trade area includes:

- free (excluding duties and quantitative restrictions) trade in goods and services, reduce barriers to the movement of people and mutual investments (including labor);
- adapting Ukrainian regulations in areas related to trade, to the relevant EU standards (including safety and quality of products);
 - cooperation in about 30 sectors (industry, agriculture, energy, space, etc.).

Overall, DZFT should ensure the gradual integration of Ukraine into the EU internal market and joining the development programs undertaken by it [16].

Implementation of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union is based on the action plan for its implementation for 2014-2017, approved on the 17th of September, 2014 by the Cabinet of Ukraine Minnisters [3].

Speaking at the XVII Ukraine - EU Summit held in Kiev, in April 27, 2015, President of Ukraine Poroshenko said that the EU membership perspective is a strategic guideline of Ukrainian aspirations for transformation and a key goal for which the reforms are being carried out. For the first time Ukraine has participated in the summit in the status of a State which has signed the Association Agreement with the European Union [1].

Among the main objectives of the Strategy of National Security of Ukraine, approved by the Decree of the President of Ukraine on May 26, 2015, providing of Ukraine's integration into the European Union has been defined [6]. According to the Strategy, the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU defines strategic guidelines for the system of political and economic reforms in Ukraine, a large-scale adaptation of Ukraine to EU standards and regulations [3].

Thus, the state policy of Ukraine's integration into the European Union and the formation of a new EU policy towards Ukraine meet the vital interests of the Ukrainian people. European integration is a determining factor for the international activities of Ukraine as well as for its domestic policy for the long term, it strengthens security and has positive impact on Ukraine's relations with all countries of the world, especially - neighbors. The steady implementation of integration course into the European Union provides a guarantee of the rule of law, pluralistic democracy, human rights, development of civil society in Ukraine, construction of a socially oriented market economy.

As for the development and implementation of foreign policy as a whole, it must be understood that Ukraine is being at "hybrid" undeclared war now. Under such conditions, its foreign policy should be formed, conducted and closely connected with the security policy - both in its domestic dimension as well as in regional and global. All government's actions in all other spheres - economic, energy, humanitarian, information and more shoul be submitted to only onething – providing security. Effective reform and productive daily activities of the State in these areas - is a prerequisite and guarantee of strengthening security (defense) capabilities of Ukraine and also strengthening of its international support.

In foreign policy the political leadership has difficult tasks:

- promoting initiatives and solutions in the global arena that would meet the national interests of Ukraine;
- maintaining and strengthening of international solidarity and support in the confrontation with Russia, including continuation of sanctions against Russia, expansion of the partner countries;

- the widest professional supplying of the world community with the real information about crimes and the consequences of Russian aggression to weaken the influence of pro-Russian lobby in the Euro-Atlantic (primarily Western Europe) camp;
- energetic activities in the relevant international institutions with the aim to obtain compensation from Russia for damages caused by annexation of Crimea and Donbas aggression. [15]

Therefore, under conditions of "hybrid" war, Ukraine's foreign policy should be focused on: the effective "conversion" of the international political and diplomatic solidarity with Ukraine in practical action of stopping Russian aggression and active participation of leading Western countries - partners of Ukraine and international institutions- in resolving the Russian- Ukrainian conflict; on involvement of military, financial, economic, scientific, technical, expert and humanitarian aid. The Ukrainian policy towards Russia should be strictly pragmatic, aimed at protecting its interests and confrontation to Russian influence. Its content and character should be determined by new conceptual approaches and principles laid down in the basic documents adopted by Ukrainian authorities during the Russian aggression.

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