Cooperative Multipolar System:

In Quest of a New World Order

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The Security Dilemma: Examining Russian-Western-Ukrainian Relations

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Introduction

National security is one of the fundamental goals of each state and refers to protecting a person, building, organization or country against threats, such as crime or attacks by foreign countries. In this context, the goal of each government is to ensure the national security (which includes territorial security, economic security, ecological security, as well as social and political security) through detection of prospective threats and the planning of the proper response. Due to this, national security is closely linked to security dilemma. According to the Britannica dictionary, security dilemma is a situation in which actions taken by a state to increase its own security cause reactions from other states, which in turn lead to a decrease rather than an increase in the original state's security.

The study in this paper elaborates the historical aspects of relations between Russia and Ukraine and relationship between Russia and the West (USA and NATO), with purpose to identify if the Russian Ukrainian conflict is related to the Russian-Western security dilemma.

The research aims to analyze how the three parties (Russia, West and Ukraine) perceive and address security challenges. The concept of security dilemma will be elaborated through defensive and offensive realism, helping to explain the challenges states face in ensuring their security.

Historical Overview of Russian-Ukrainian Relations

In the 20th century, relations between Russia and Ukraine began with the foundation of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) on December 30, 1922. The Union was established through an agreement signed by Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and the Transcaucasian Republic (composed of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan), during the union's first congress. This "adventure" lasted until 1991 when three of the four creators of the Soviet Union, Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, signed the

Belovezhskaya Pushcha which abolished the Union and replace it with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

The first significant step toward the dissolution of the Soviet Union was taken by soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, in 1985, with the adoption of a *perestroika* policy which aimed to modernize Soviet communism through economic reconstruction and changes in the political party leadership. Although the Warsaw Pact[1] was renewed the same year, the agreements with the United States on disarmament and redefining relations between the USSR and Europe strengthened the individual aspirations of the member states of Eastern Europe. These aspirations were further encouraged in 1989 by the second pivotal step towards the collapse of the USSR: the abolition of the Brezhnev Doctrine (Glazer 1971).[2] Gorbachev's reforms contributed also to the spontaneous collapse of the Berlin Wall, which subsequently led to the fall of the Warsaw Pact on July 1, 1991, in Budapest.

Based on Article 72 of the Soviet Union Constitution (Supreme Soviet of the USSR, 1982) it was stipulated that each federal state reserves the right to secede from the USSR. Exercising this right, Ukraine declared its independence on August 24, 1991. In December of the same year, along with Belarus and the Russian Federation (renamed on December 25), signed the agreement to abolish the Soviet Union. In the Russia's case, this decision was preceded by *Declaration of State Sovereignty*, adopted by the Congress of People's Deputies on June 12, 1990. The formal dissolution of the USSR occurred on December 21, 1991, with the signing of the Alma-Ata Protocol by all Soviet republics (except Georgia). The Protocol, excluding the Baltic republics of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia, laid out to simultaneous transition to the Commonwealth of Independent States (regional intergovernmental organization in Eurasia). On May 15, 1992, nearly all CIS members (Georgia

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1   The Pact had been created in 1955 as response to the inclusion of West Germany in NAT, which had been established six years earlier.

2   The Brezhnev Doctrine, also known as the doctrine of limited sovereignty, was adopted in 1968 and stipulated that no country should leave the Warsaw Pact or upset the balance of the one-party system in the Eastern Bloc countries. Namely, the policy that emerged from this doctrine authorized the USSR to intervene and interfere in the internal affairs of the member states of this pact, for which prominent examples and evidence are the intervention during the Hungarian Revolution in Budapest in 1956 and the Prague Spring in 1968 in Czechoslovakia.

and Azerbaijan joined in 1996) signed the Collective Security Treaty a defensive military alliance (Commonwealth of indipendent states, 2014).

In 1993 following a national referendum "the multinational people of the Russian Federation, united by a common fate on their land, establishing human rights and freedoms, civic peace and accord, preserving the historically established state unity…recognizing ourselves as part of the world community, adopt the Constitution of the Russian Federation" (Rossiiskaya Gazeta newspaper, 1993). Article 5 of Russian constitution states that the Federation consists of equal federal subjects: Republics (with its own constitution and legislation), territories, regions, cities of federal importance, an autonomous region and autonomous areas (with its charter and legislation). In Article 65, Part 3, titled *Structure of the federation*, all federal subjects are listed, including Crimea (after 2014), among the republics and Sevastopol, among the cities of federal importance. These units were annexed by Russia in 2014, even they are also and still part of the Ukrainian Constitution.

Article 133 of Ukrainian constitution (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 1996) explains that the system of the administrative and territorial structure of Ukraine is composed of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, oblasts (24 total, including Donetsk Oblast, and Luhansk Oblast), districts, cities (the cities of Kyiv and Sevastopol have special status, which is determined by the laws of Ukraine), city districts, settlements and village. The tenth chapter is dedicated to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, which is an inseparable integral part of Ukraine with its own constitution adopted by the Verkhovna Rada of the Autonomous Republic and approved by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (Article 134). Article 17 stipulates that protecting the sovereignty and territorial indivisibility of Ukraine and ensuring its economic and informational security are the most important functions of the state and a matter of concern for the entire Ukrainian people. Further, the Constitution stipulates that Ukraine is a unitary state, that the territory within its present border is indivisible and inviolable, that the sovereignty extends throughout its entire territory (Article 2), and that the territorial structure of Ukraine is based on the principles of unity and indivisibility of the state territory and the combination of centralization and decentralization in the exercise of state power (Article 132, Chapter IX, titled *Territorial structure of Ukraine*).

As we mentioned previously, in 1992 after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, nearly all CIS members signed the Collective Security Treaty which represents a defensive military alliance. However, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan left the alliance in 1999, followed by Ukraine in 2018. On the other side Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia and Moldova became part of the GUAM Consultative Group, which in 2006 led to formation of Organization for Democratic and Economic Development (ODED), based on the idea of a common path towards the structures of Euro-Atlantic cooperation. In this context it is significant to remark that during the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, a notable statement arose in international discussions. In 1990 U.S. Secretary of State, James Baker asked Gorbachev whether he would prefer a united Germany outside of NATO, independent and without American armed forces, or a united Germany within NATO, with a guarantee that NATO's jurisdiction would not move even one inch (2.54 centimeters) to the East? (Il silenzio di Puskin, 2022).

After this discussion, the first member of the Eastern Bloc to join NATO was East Germany, followed by other former Warsaw Pact members in 1999 and 2004. In 2008 US President George W. Bush Jr. extended an invitation to Georgia and Ukraine to join NATO, provoking a sharp reaction from Russia, which openly opposed (and continues to oppose) their potential membership in the Alliance. In terms of cooperation with the European Union, Georgia began association negotiations in July 2010, and three years later in July 2013 Georga signed a Free Trade Agreement. In November of the same year, during the EU Eastern Partnership Summit held in Vilnius, Association Agreements was signed with Georga and Moldova, but not with Ukraine. The signing of the Association Agreement with Ukraine was canceled, but took place the following year, in 2014, after the outbreak of the protests known as *Euromaidan*[3] and the removal of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych. The same year, the European Parliament adopted a resolution confirming that Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine, and any other European country with European aspirations, can submit their application for joining the

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3   The Euromaidan crisis began with thousands of people gathered in independence Square Maidan Nezalezhnosti in Kiev to protest the Ukrainian government's decision under Prime Minister Mykola Azarov to suspend the Association Agreement with the Europea Union and the President Viktor Yanukovych's refusal to sign the agreement at Vilnius Summit

EU. The new Ukrainian government signed the Political EU Accession on March 21, 2014, followed by Association Agreement signed by the new President Poroshenko on June 27 of the same year. Meanwhile on March 16, 2014, a referendum in Crimea – claimed to have over 83% voter turnout – resulted in a majority supporting reunification with Russia. Two days later the Russian president Putin requested the Federal Assembly to review the constitutional law for the inclusion of two new subjects in the federation - Crimea and Sevastopol - and to prepare an agreement for their entry into the Russian federation.

Following the Euromaidan protest, the demonstration also began in the Donbas region, where the separatist groups declared Donetsk and Luhansk oblast as People's republics. Two protocols known as Minsk 1 and Minsk 2 were signed, with the aim of bringing a permanent solution. However, the agreements failed as the conflict continued. In February 2022, Russia signed a decree recognizing the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics based on a resolution adopted by the Duma on February 15, 2022. Shortly after, Russia announced its intention to send the troops to the region citing art. 51 (Chapter VII: Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression) of the UN Charter (United Nations, 1945) and the treaties of friendship and mutual assistance with the two republics (ratified by the Federal Assembly on February 22). Russia subsequently launched a "special military operation". A few days later, on February 28, Ukraine submitted its application for EU membership alongside Georgia and Moldova (March 3). The European Parliament adopted by 529 votes to 45, with 14 abstentions, a resolution on the candidate status of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia on June 23, 2022.

Security Dilemma in the Russian-Western Relationship and the Russian-Ukrainian Case

The security dilemma is a key concept in international relations, rooted in structural realism, also known as neorealism. Scholars such as Kenneth Waltz, (in his book "Theory of international politics"), argue that the international system lacks a central authority, creating an anarchic environment where countries are responsible for their own security. As representative of defensive realism, Waltz focuses on survival and

stability. In his opinion the states prioritize self-defense and maintaining a balance of power, forming alliances to deter aggression. On the other hand, John Mearsheimer, the representative of offensive realism, views states as inherently aggressive, seeking to maximize power for security, even if it destabilizes the system. Both as representative of neorealism assert that the anarchic system shapes the behavior of states, which act in their own self-interest to survive and protect their sovereignty. Considering that the uncertainty and fear of states regarding the intentions of other states lead to a vicious circle of accumulation of power, and in certain cases to military conflict, this section attempts to detect the pitfalls in Russian - Western relations and the impact to Russian - Ukrainian conflict.

Russian perception and reaction to NATO actions

The establishment of NATO occurred in 1949 through alliance of Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, France, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Portugal, Italy, Norway, Denmark and Iceland, with West Germany joining in 1955. This move prompted the Soviet Union to form the political and military coalition known as the Warsaw Pact, on May 14, 1955, in Poland. Members of the Warsaw Pact included the USSR, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Albania (which later withdrew). The Pact was dissolved soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall and formally ceased to exist on July 1, 1991. The first member of Eastern block to join NATO was East Germany, followed by other former Warsaw Pact members starting in 1999. This initiative of NATO's expansion eastward, as well as NATO's activities in countries bordering Russia, represented the main drives for development of the political relationship between Russia and the West and their relationship with Ukraine.

NATO began its eastward expansion in 1999 with the accession of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to the alliance, and continued with the British proposal in 2002 for the membership of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania (former Soviet republics), Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania (former Soviet satellites). These countries along with Slovenia became members in 2004, and in 2008 a new proposal arrived, this time from US President Bush, for the membership of Georgia and Ukraine in

NATO (which was not supported by France and Germany). Subsequently, Albania and Croatia became members in 2009, Montenegro in 2017, N. Macedonia in 2020, Finland in 2023, and Sweden in 2024. The latter two members decided to take this step due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine that began in February 2022.

With the eastward expansion NATO began to accomplish certain actions in the territory of the formerly members of the Warsaw Pact and started to increase the Russian concern about the security. Namely, in 2004, US President Bush proposed the installation of a NATO anti-missile defense system in the Czech Republic and Poland. Although this proposal was withdrawn by Obama, did not mean giving up the idea of strengthening defense against missile attacks from countries such as Iran (as had been argued during the Bush administration). Obama's new proposal consisted of placing SM-3 interceptor missiles in Poland and Romania and installing a computer room in the Czech Republic (Hildreth, 2010). Subsequently, in 2016, a NATO anti-missile system was put into operation in Romania to detect attacks with short- and medium-range missiles as well as to destroy missiles outside the Earth's atmosphere, which was later supplemented by an anti-missile system in Poland, a radar station in Turkey, a command center in Germany, and warships with missile defense and radar systems.

NATO's actions on the territory of the new NATO members, was considered a direct threat to Russia. Immediately after the proposal to install an anti-missile system in Poland and the Czech Republic, the Russian newspaper *Izvestia* published an article stating that there was a possibility of returning Russian strategic bombers to Cuba (Harding, 2008). On 12 December 2007 Moscow suspended implementation of Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) and announced that if parts of U.S. missile defense system will be stationed in Poland, Warsaw would be the target of Russian nuclear weapons (Kamp, 2015). One year later, after proposal for Georgia and Ukraine to become members of NATO, Russia "responded" with a five-day war in South Ossetia, and the adoption of a decree recognizing the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Although the independence of these countries is recognized by only a few countries, the existing border disputes would prevent Georgia's eventual entry into NATO (Kuchins A. C., 2022).

In fact, regarding NATO enlargement, Russia felt betrayed since by the first eastward expansion in 1999, referring to the "promise" that NATO would not move eastward "not even an inch"[4]. The American response to this was that in fact, in the talks between Gorbachev and Baker, this referred to East Germany (Gordon, 1997). The second enlargement (which took place in 2004) was seen as the completion of Russian encirclement from the north to the southeast (Mini, 2022, p. 209), while the proposal for Georgia and Ukraine to become members of NATO was "the straw that broke the camel's back". After these events the Russian's arsenal of nuclear weapons has been increased and improved, and the new ballistic missile system have been introduced and equipped with greater numbers of warheads. The additional concern for the Russian security came from Ukrainian intention to become part of European Union. Putin openly expressed the Russian dissatisfaction about the ouster of pro-Russian President Yanukovych in 2014 and Ukraine's intention to sign an Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union (declaring it to be against Russian interests). The next Russian step was done by providing support to Russian separatists in Donbas region (i.e. in the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk Republics inhabited by Russians) and by stationing thousands of people on the Ukrainian border, with which it seized Crimea in 2014. Putin's explanation about Russian act was that the possible signing of the Association Agreement was contrary to Russian interests, considering the Russian - Ukrainian economic cooperation and the fact that Russia cooperates with 245 Ukrainian enterprises in the field of defense industry. Additionally, he stated that it is incapable to imagine that they would travel to Sevastopol to visit NATO marines, and in that context says that: it is still better for them to come to us than for us to come to them (Владимир Путин, Зборови што го менуваат светот [Vladimir Putin, Words that change the world], 2017, стр. 237, 285, 290).

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4   During the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, a famous sentence that has been mentioned in international discussions over the years, and especially recently, is referred to soviet President Gorbachev by Secretary of State James Baker, in 1990 whether he would prefer to see a united Germany outside of NATO, independent and without American armed forces, or a united Germany tied to NATO, with the guarantee that NATO's jurisdiction would not move even one inch (2.54 centimeters) to the East. (Il silenzio di Puskin, 2022, p. 16)

This act was also response to eventually Ukrainian intention to join NATO and from March 2015 Russia had stopped attending the weekly treaty implementation meetings of the Joint Consultative Group and announced its withdrawal from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), calling it worthless. Alexei Arbatov, head of the Center for International Security at the Institute for World Economy, in an interview with "Russian voice in Macedonian" called Russian step "a demonstrative gesture in response to the increase of NATO forces (American tank brigade in Latvia) along the Russian border" (Тимофејчев, 2015).

Regarding the anti-missile plant in Romania, which Putin also considered a threat, Stoltenberg stated that missile defence programme represents a long-term investment against the long-term threat, that NATO ballistic defence was purely defensive and not directed against Russia (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2016). However, Russia did not remain indifferent and in 2016 responded by deploying the Iskander-M missile system in the Kaliningrad region, while in 2018 it deployed operational-tactical missile systems (OTRK) capable of carrying nuclear warheads. This Russian act was explained by Russian foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, being caused by NATO's destructive actions and therefore Russia has been forced to take an appropriate set of measures to strengthen its defensive capabilities and national security (Corriere della Serra, 2016)[5].

Regarding the transfer of missile troops to Kaliningrad, as part of the plan for combat training of the Russian armed forces on Russian territory, the American side (by deputy secretary general Rose Gottemoeller), stated that "this threatens the member states of the alliance" (МИД РФ: Россия продолжит перебрасывать ракетные войска в Калининград [Russian Foreign Ministry: Russia will continue to transfer missile troops to Kaliningrad], 2017), while the placement of the OTRK was rated (by spokesman for the Ministry of defense Johnny Michael) as a destabilizing move, considering the potential of this weapon and the proximity of several NATO allies (Пентагон отреагировал на размещение в Калининградской области «Искандеров» [The Penta-

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5   Lavrov said: "Let me note that we take these steps on our own territory, unlike the United States and other countries, which move their troops to the states that border on Russia and conduct provocative shows of force near our borders.

gon responded to the deployment of Iskanders in the Kaliningrad region], 2018). The Lithuanian foreign minister Linas Linkevichius, on other side, indicated that the deployment not only increases tensions in the region, but also possibly violates international treaties which limit deployment of ballistic missiles of range of over 500km (Reuters, 2016).

The uncontrolled possession of non-strategic nuclear weapons, as well as the development of new types of intercontinental nuclear weapons that are not subject to START, were considered a threat by the West as well. NATO allies have expressed concern about Russian efforts to increase the size and diversity of its nuclear arsenal, as well as the deployment of dual-use missiles and non-strategic nuclear weapons on NATO allies' borders (Iacchi, 2022).

Another concern came from the mobilization of 100,000 Russian troops along the Ukrainian border in the spring of 2021, which continued in October and intensified in January of the following year. When asked, by US President Joseph Biden Jr., about the purpose of Russian's mobilization, President Vladimir Putin replied that it was merely a routine winter exercise. In this context, despite Biden's warning of economic sanctions should an invasion of Ukraine occur, Russia responded, by presenting two draft treaties (on December 17, 2021) as part of effort to address its stated security concerns and reshape its relationship with NATO and USA.

The first document outlined several key provisions among which: a commitment from NATO members to cease any further enlargement of the alliance, particularly with regard to Ukraine; a restriction preventing NATO from deploying forces weapons in countries that joined the alliance after May 1997; a prohibition on the deployment of intermediate-range missiles in regions where they could reach the other side's territory; a ban on NATO military activities in Ukraine, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia; proposal for consultative mechanisms, including the NATO-Russia Council and the establishment of hotline for direct communication. The second treaty proposed additional measures that included: a stipulation that both counties refrain implementing security measures that could undermine the core security interests of the other; a requirement for the USA to prevent further NATO expansion; a ban on the deployment of U.S. intermediate- range missiles in Europa; limits on the operation of heavy bombers and surface I international wa-

ters within range of the opposing side; a mandate for nuclear weapons to be deployed only within the national territories of each party (The Ministry of the foreign affairs of Russian Federation, 2021). In a speech a week later, Putin asked the West to provide security guarantees to Russia, emphasizing that the United States had placed missile systems on the border with Russia.

The intensity of the crisis occurred because of the buildup of Russian troops on the border with Ukraine, and Putin blamed Ukraine and NATO for the same. On December 26, the United States rejected the draft agreements proposed by Russia and allowed the Baltic countries to transfer weapons to Kiev. NATO sent ships and warplanes to protect the Eastern European countries that are part of NATO. Subsequently, in February, Russia sent 30,000 troops to Belarus under the pretext of joint exercises, and in Transnistria, it deployed the 41st Russian Army. A threat, directed at the West, also came from Aleksey Zhuravlyov, the vice-chairman of the Duma's defense committee, who in a commentary to Daily Storm, said that NATO's "flirting" could lead to nuclear weapons appearing in Ukraine or Georgia and in this case, Russia could respond symmetrically by placing its weapons in Cuba or Venezuela (Депутат Журавлев объяснил свои слова о ракетах на Кубе и в Венесуэле [Deputy Zhuravlev explained his words about missiles in Cuba and Venezuela], 2022). Throughout January and February, Russian troops were stationed along the Russian border with Ukraine, and on February 22, 2022, Russia recognized the independence of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk. After receiving authorization from the Duma for the use of weapons abroad, Russia officially entered the Donbass region with an action called "denazification" to save Russians from genocide. A few days later, on February 26, it attacked Kiev, and on February 27, Putin decided to alert the Russian forces to a nuclear deterrent, accusing the West of an aggressive policy towards Russia. Regarding the latter, Germany declares that the Budapest Memorandum, signed in 1994 by the nuclear powers the United States, Great Britain and Russia, which pledged to defend the territorial integrity of Ukraine, to which France and China also joined, has no legal force, because Russia bombs and China watches, and under Russian pressure, France and Germany prevented Ukraine from receiving its roadmap for NATO in 2008 (Pachlovska, 2022).

The impact of Russian-Western relationship to Russian - Ukrainian case

From above analysis we can identify that even NATO's enlargement was justified by intention to provide democracy and stability with secure eastern borders, the NATO enlargement was seen as threat for Russian security, and the potential Ukrainian Euro-Atlantic integration was considered the last bastion that shouldn't be lost. In response to Putin's speech, regarding the statement that the eastern NATO expansion poses a threat to Russia, one of the interlocutors states that in this way the eastern borders have become stronger and safer, asking Putin why he is afraid of democracy. Putin responds to this that NATO is a military-political bloc and that ensuring its own security is the privilege of every sovereign state, but the question that is now and constantly being asked is why the military infrastructure during the expansion must necessarily move towards the Russian borders? (Владимир Путин, Зборови што го менуваат светот [Vladimir Putin, Words that change the world], 2017, p. 100)

To show its concern for NATO's action and at the same time to demonstrate its power, Putin reacted twice, with and without use of force. Trough military action in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, he responded to the proposal for Georgia to become part of NATO, and by annexing Crimea in 2014, responded to the EU invitation, this time addressed to Ukraine. Putin clearly emphasized that Russia is not against cooperation with NATO, but against a military organization showing its forces next to their fence, next to their home or on their historical territories.

The Russian fear increased when Ukraine in 2019 adopted the constitutional amendments (Art. 85, 102 and 116) by which the *state agrees to provide a strategic path for Ukraine to gain full membership in the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty*. At the same time to counter Russia's actions in Ukraine, NATO has stepped up its political and practical support to Kiev, helping to modernize its force structure, command and control arrangements, reform its logistics system, defense and capabilities (Kovac, 2019). Such interventions directly and openly placed Ukraine at the center of relations between Russia and the West. This meant that Western support for Ukraine simultaneously intensified the security dilemma between the West and Russia. In response, Russia

continued with an uncontrolled increase in nuclear weapons, causing concern among NATO allies, and further escalating the security dilemma. This was particularly evident with the deployment of dual-use missiles and non-strategic nuclear weapons along NATO allies' borders.

Regarding Ukraine, in the spring of 2021, Russia began mobilizing thousands of soldiers along the Ukrainian border, a situation that persisted until January of the following year. When questioned by Biden about the reason for this mobilization, Putin claimed it was for winter exercises, justifying a defensive realist perspective. However, after Russia's attack on Ukraine in February 2024, the true justification aligned more with offensive realism – seeking power's sake rather than security. Despite, Russia not being under attack, Putin blamed Ukraine and NATO for buildup of Russian troops along the border. He asserted that Russia's demands for security guarantees from the West, particularly concerning US missile system near Russia's borders, had not been met. Putin's concern over Russian security prompted the attack on Ukraine, although it was clear that Russia sought to demonstrate power even using the protection of Russian population as a pretext for intervention.

Conclusion

The war between Ukraine and Russia is still going on with thousands and thousands of casualties. Considering the neorealist statement that the behavior of countries is shaped by the structure of the international system, which is inherently anarchic without a central authority, each country is responsible for their own security and well-being, contributing to development of international policies in a manner aligned with its own interests. We can suppose that all three parts has the same interest and that is the security: Ukraine aspire to gain it through NATO/EU membership, Russia through keeping Ukraine neutral and hold NATO far from the Russian borders, while the West argues that stability in Europe depends on NATO enlargement. In this context, Ukraine and the West are on one side, while Russia is the opponent. Having the same interest, both choose to maintain it through power. The question is: whether they are power maximizers or security maximizers?

According to neorealist, living in an anarchic system the countries can never be completely sure about the intentions of other countries

towards them, because in an anarchic system, it is impossible to accurately predict the intentions of other countries and for this reason every country must always be prepared for potential threats. Acquiring weapons for defensive purposes may not be perceived as purely defensive; rather, it could be seen as an aggressive move with hostile intentions. Consequently, any expansion of military capacities prompts suspicion about the country's motives. Considering this Waltz's claim that states are not maximizers of power, but of security (prepared for the worst-case scenario, arming themselves for defensive reasons), the same can be recognized specifically in the Western response: that the missiles in Romania and Poland are not aimed at Russia, but to preserve security that can be violated by Iran. But considering the essential elements of the security dilemma, that the uncertainty and fear of states regarding the intentions of other states lead to the accumulation of power, in the Russian case it turned out that this uncertainty stems first from distrust of the West, and then from the movement of NATO forces towards the Russian border. The Russian act confirms the offensive perspective according to which states will seek to aggressively expand their influence and power through military means and offensive actions, even if it risks destabilizing the international system. In response to this perception, the neighbor also escalates military capacities and so on. The reciprocal escalation of actions leads both countries into a full-scale arms race and increases the influence of the military in shaping national decisions. In the Ukraine case, they focus on securing their borders, forming alliances, and maintaining a balance of power to deter potential aggressors, confirming once again the defensive perspective. But even Ukraine has Western support, they should guarantee its survival, fighting by themselves. In defensive perspective, there can be no expectation of mutual trust between nations in an anarchic international system; instead, each country will work to guarantee its safety and survival due to the ongoing threat posed by other countries (Jervis, 1985). This thesis once again seems to be confirmed in the Ukrainian case.

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