

war against Russia, part of which was the charge that Russia was engaging in a propaganda war of its own. Lavrov noted:

Our Western partners, without batting an eyelid, keep demanding that Russia cease interfering in Ukraine. To withdraw troops and pull out agents allegedly caught in the south-east commanding the whole process. [...] I have spoken with John Kerry on this subject over the past two weeks now, and many times I have told him that if the Ukrainians have Russian agents in custody, show them to the people on TV.

He went on to complain that 'we are being addressed with slogans':

If you think that when I get a call from John Kerry, William Hague, or Laurent Fabius, they express themselves differently on the phone and explain their reasoning, then you don't realize that they use exactly the same slogans even without an audience: 'Sergei, you need to withdraw your troops, pull out your agents - no one in the world believes that this is not Russia's doing in the south-east'. It's very difficult to respond to that.³⁴

Former prime minister Sergei Stepashin argued that US actions are

a consequence of [Obama's] hurt ambitions, which have remained hurt since the Russian president saved the US president from public loss of face in front of the whole world by suggesting the introduction of international control over chemical weapons to prevent military intervention in Syria.³⁵

The aim appeared not to be to reduce the suffering of Ukraine but to punish Russia and in particular Putin for his impudent assertion of independence, however ill-advised. The aim had thus become to lever Putin out of power and to isolate Russia on the international stage. If the sanctions had been intended to change Putin's policies, force regime change or alienate popular support, then on all counts they were a spectacular failure. Indeed, many commented that 'the country feels more united than it has done for many years'.³⁶ But these issues are the least of it. Europe demonstrated that it had not vanquished its demons of war. It was incapable of mastering the very basic principle of modern statecraft - the independent solution of problems. Worse, by simply laying all responsibility on Russia - the classic externalisation of responsibility - recognition that the roots of the conflict lay in Europe's own contradictions was avoided. As a result, the response to the Ukraine crisis saw the intensification of policies that had provoked the conflict in the first place.

CHAPTER 9

FRONTLINE POLITICS

The Ukraine crisis threw the deeper patterns of Russo-Western interaction into sharp relief. The misperceptions and alternative representations of reality on display will keep scholars busy for decades to come. As the two worlds moved apart, the divisions within Ukraine were sorely exposed. External interventions in the affairs of Ukraine became part of the currency of internal debate, including the fierce media war to advance particularistic perspectives. The struggle in the information sphere used to be called propaganda, and it is appropriate to use the term to describe much of the partisan reporting on both sides. This was already in evidence at the time of the Russo-Georgian war in 2008, and if anything intensified in this new round of the same confrontation. At the same time, one of the novelities of great-power conflict in the early twenty-first century is the intensity with which political leaders of countries are demonised. An unholy alliance of opportunist politicians and subservient media traduce their opponents, ignoring the views of experts and scholars, to portray them as mendacious and untrustworthy. The basis for treating the other as a legitimate political subject is undermined and in the end justifies political and military intervention. The Ukraine crisis once again demonstrated the decay of contemporary diplomacy. Abusive and condemnatory rhetoric took the place of rational debate.

RUSSIAN LOGIC AND RATIONALITY

One of the most contentious issues is assessing Russia's motives and ambitions in the Ukraine crisis. The task is made all the harder since the goals have undoubtedly shifted over time, and there was no unity within the Russian elite on what, fundamentally, it was trying to achieve in Ukraine. Policy has changed and evolved in response to

the dramatic events. Nevertheless, a number of entrenched views – some would call them myths – need to be examined. The idea that Russia opposed Ukraine's association with the EU needs to be modified by an understanding that the struggle prior to the planned signing of the Association Agreement sought to align Ukraine with the EEU, but not necessarily to force Ukraine to join it. In part, the campaign was an attempt to get the EU to engage in a genuine dialogue about the conditions on which Ukraine would sign up to association with the EU, including security issues. This campaign was conducted in a typically heavy-handed and alienating manner, with bans, boycotts and the like accompanied by some ferocious rhetoric from Sergei Glazyev and others, but some genuine issues were raised. Above all, Russia repeatedly warned that it would take measures to stop poor-quality Ukrainian and relabelled EU goods flooding into the Russian market once better-quality EU goods had free access to Ukraine. The compatibility of two free-trade areas is a matter that should, and could, have been sorted out calmly by technocrats on both sides but instead became politicised.

Further, there is the view that Putin's policy reflected 'Russia's imperialist ambitions and aspirations to restore the former Soviet empire'. These assessments are quite simplistic and often erroneous regarding the interpretation of the sources of Russia's behaviour and intentions.¹ There is a pervasive myth that Russia from the first sought to place Ukraine under its direct control, rather than merely trying to influence its decisions. If this were indeed the goal, then the moment following Yanukovych's ouster on 22 February would have been ideal. The Ukrainian military reforms between 2010 and 2012 left the armed forces in a state of disarray, and defence of a legitimately elected president could have acted as the rallying call. On 22 February, at a meeting in Kharkov, the PoR called on local councils to take power. Yanukovych had rather unwisely left Kiev to attend the conference, and soon after fled to Rostov, from whence he urged intervention to crush the Maidan revolution.² If Russia really did want to place Ukraine under Russian control, then there could have been no better time than this.

Third, there is little evidence that the annexation of Crimea followed by unrest in the east and the south was part of a long-established plan to separate 'Novorossiya' from Ukraine. Russia undoubtedly probed and exploited Ukrainian vulnerabilities, but its end goals were not clear. Once Crimea was taken, there was every incentive to stop there, but the movement within Ukraine for 'federalisation' gathered pace, raising genuine concerns about the imposition of a narrow form of monist nationhood on the rest of the country. There had already been the aggressive, and incompetent, Ukrainisation experience of the Yushchenko period following the Orange Revolution, and the early acts of the February regime raised fears, intensified after the 2 May Odessa massacre, of an even more militant version coming to power. As Andranik Migranyan argues: 'if Russia preserved Crimea and the rest of Ukraine fell under the control of

anti-Russian nationalists in Kiev, under the command of Washington, the outcome of the fight for Ukraine would obviously be serious defeat for Russia.' The Russians would be forced out of the country, and the rest would be 'forcefully "ukrainianized"'. No one has any illusions about the national-linguistic policy of the incumbent powers in Ukraine, should they prevail in the South and East of the country.³

The terrible point was that Russia was not a challenger at all. It was certainly an awkward neighbour, a difficult friend, testy and insecure, and beset by myriad internal difficulties and dreadfully unsure of its place in the world. But it was not a challenger in anything like the way that the Wilhelmine Reich had become in 1914, let alone Hitler's Third Reich in 1939. It was a conservative and defensive power, in thrall to an increasingly traditionalist domestic ideology and certainly not challenging the bases of international law. Indeed, the very essence of its neo-revisionism was the proclaimed defence of the international law that it believed the Western powers regularly flouted. In his *Direct Line* session of 17 April, Putin insisted that Russia 'had never intended to annex any territories. [...] Quite the contrary, we were going to build our relations with Ukraine based on current geopolitical realities.' It was only when the situation changed that the Russian Security Council agreed to support the 'self-determination' of the Crimean people. Putin insisted that the Crimean takeover had not been 'pre-planned or prepared', but he now admitted that 'Russian servicemen did back the Crimean self-defence forces', drawn from the 'more than 20,000 well-armed soldiers stationed in Crimea'. He also noted that in addition to the strategic importance of the Sevastopol base, there were '38 S-300 missile-launchers, weapons depots and rounds of ammunition. It was imperative to prevent even the possibility of someone using these weapons against civilians.' In broad terms, he argued: 'The intention to split Russia and Ukraine, to separate what is essentially a single nation in many ways, has been an issue of international politics for centuries.'⁴ Of course, it was precisely this sort of 'Malorussian' thinking that so enraged the 'Ukrainisers', and one can see why.

On the other side, as Dmitry Trenin puts it:

The Kremlin absolutely could not ignore the developments in Ukraine, a country of utmost importance to Russia. The armed uprising in Kiev brought to power a coalition of ultranationalists and pro-Western politicians: the worst possible combination Moscow could think of.

Responding to the challenge entailed long-term conflict with the US, with Ukraine 'the main battleground of that struggle. The main goal is to bar Ukraine from NATO, and the US military from Ukraine. Other goals include keeping the Russian cultural

identity of Ukraine's south and east, and keeping Crimea Russian.⁵ Putin repeatedly returned to the strategic challenge posed by developments in Ukraine. Meeting the press on 24 May, for example, he stressed:

Some of the events in Ukraine directly threaten our interests, first of all with regard to security. I'm talking about Ukraine's potential accession to NATO. As I said earlier, such an accession could be followed by the deployment of missile strike systems in Ukraine, including Crimea. Should this happen, it would have serious geopolitical consequences for our country. In fact, Russia would be forced out of the Black Sea territory, a region for legitimate presence in which Russia has fought for centuries. And those who started the coup in Kiev – if they are indeed experts – should have thought about the consequences of their unlawful ambitions.

He rejected the notion that the breach over Ukraine represented the beginning of a new Cold War, arguing: 'No one is interested in that and I don't think it will happen.'⁶

Addressing the Russian Security Council on 22 July, Putin reprised the standard Russian account:

Today we hear of ultimatums and sanctions. The very notion of state sovereignty is being washed out. Undesirable regimes, countries that conduct an independent policy that simply stand in the way of somebody's interests get destabilised. Tools used for this purpose are the so-called colour revolutions, or, in simple terms – takeovers instigated and financed from outside.

In his view, this was the case with Ukraine: 'People came to power through the use of armed force and by unconstitutional means.' He admitted that an election was held, but,

for some strange reason, power ended up again in the hands of those who either funded or carried out this takeover. Meanwhile, without any attempt at negotiations, they are trying to suppress by force that part of the population that does not agree with such a turn of events. At the same time they present Russia with an ultimatum: either you let us destroy the part of the population that is ethnically, culturally and historically close to Russia, or we introduce sanctions against you. This is a strange logic, and absolutely unacceptable, of course.⁷

There is little to suggest that there would be an attempt to 'destroy' the Russophone population, but after the ill-fated first acts of the February regime and the Odessa

massacre there were undoubtedly increased concerns that, at the minimum, political and cultural marginalisation would be intensified.

By mid-May 2014 it looked as if the Ukrainian state was on the verge of collapse. At that point there was a clear retrenchment in the Russian position, usually attributed to the sanctions but more likely reflecting domestic struggles within Russia. Putin denounced the independence referendums in Donetsk and Lugansk held on 11 May, and Russia withdrew its forces from the Ukrainian border, then went on, albeit grudgingly, to accept the legitimacy of the presidential election on 25 May. Moscow had a clear strategic objective in taking over Crimea, above all the retention of the Sevastopol naval base, but this was lacking in the Donbas. Although Putin mentioned Novorossiia in his televised dialogue with Russian citizens on 17 April, he recognised the complexities of Ukrainian society, where even the predominantly Russian-speaking parts maintained an allegiance to Ukrainian statehood (although of a more pluralist sort), while the mixed Russo-Ukrainian Surzhyk-speaking regions had their own traditions that were distinct from Russias. If there had been a plan to create a Novorossiia dependency, then it would have appeared in speeches and policy statements earlier, if only to gather support for such a project among the relevant Ukrainian and Russian publics. Russia, quite simply, lacked any official plans to create such an entity, although of course it was part of the rhetoric of the roiling mass of domestic nationalist movements.

The federalisation of Ukraine was certainly a Russian goal, to temper the monism of the Ukrainisers, but breaking up the state was not part of the agenda. General Philip Breedlove, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR) suggested that Russia's strategy was to re-establish parts of the pre-revolutionary Novorossiia territories arching across from the Donbas to Odessa, and then to link up with Transnistria, which would be definitively torn from Moldova. Fantasies of dismembering Ukraine and gaining either a friendly protectorate state on its borders or even the outright annexation of territories were certainly played out in the Russian media, but did not gain official support. If indeed Ukraine had collapsed, then Russia would undoubtedly have moved in, as would other states, to protect civilians, installations (especially nuclear power plants) and to re-establish order. Instead, Russian actions were an angry and ad hoc response to Yanukovich's overthrow and the installation of an anti-Russian nationalistic government in Kiev, but rooted in a swelling tide of neo-revisionist sentiment. Cost considerations alone would have deterred all but the most intrepid of imperial expansionists. Russia could have done more to calm the situation in the Donbas, but the early actions of the Maidan government were no less inflammatory, and indeed genuinely threatening to many of Ukraine's pluralists. The killings in Odessa on 2 May and Mariupol on 9 May stand as a stark warning of

what could have happened elsewhere. As Mary D. Crowley points out, fear rather than aggression was the most plausible driver of Russian actions. Even Obama after the annexation of Crimea noted that the move reflected weakness rather than strength, accompanied by Russia's 'centuries-old fear of encirclement'.⁸

In the longer term, Russia's strategic goals have been remarkably consistent, reaching back into the 1990s and certainly encompassing the Orange Revolution. The aim was to keep Ukraine out of Western security structures (above all NATO). The promises made at Bucharest in April 2008 were not rescinded but only placed on hold, despite the war in Georgia that summer. In the Medvedev years there was plenty of cooperation with Obama within the framework of the 'reset', and the issue of NATO enlargement was barely mentioned, although it simmered away in the background as more immediate contentious issues (notably missile defence, occupied the centre ground. Equally, from at least 2008 Russia became more suspicious of EU enlargement. All the new EU members were also members of NATO and, at the same time, the Association Agreements had a profound security dimension. On the purely economic front, the 'Wider Europe' agenda repudiated the models of mutually negotiated and compatible free-trade areas, and instead sought recent partner countries firmly to the West. There were some good reasons to fracture the associations in this way, since the aim was to achieve genuine reformations of governance relations that would establish more competitive market economies compatible with the EU's own system. This model had worked well in Eastern Europe, but the incentive structure there had been much stronger – namely the promise of EU membership. Accession was not even part of the medium-term agenda for the 'A2' countries, so a more gradual approach would have been wiser, building on existing bilateral links on the east while supporting the transformation of regulatory and governance structures. A free and prosperous Ukraine was certainly not something opposed by Russia, but Moscow simply did not understand why this had to be couched in anti-Russian terms and threaten its economic interests.

Hence Moscow fought long and hard to convince the EU and Ukraine to change the Wider European model, and then in the months before November 2013 it applied all the crude tools in its armoury to convince Yanukovich to step back from the brink. He is typically portrayed as 'pro-Russian' in the Western media, but, as I have argued earlier, Yanukovich was neither pro-Russian nor pro-Western, but a rather degenerate representative of the bureaucratic-oligarchic order, largely concerned with his personal aggrandisement. He did receive support from Moscow, but personal relations with Putin were very poor. Putin found it more congenial to do business with Tymoshenko, but he was forced to deal with Yanukovich as the democratically elected leader of Ukraine. The argument that Putin and Yanukovich were in a defence

Sergei Karaganov argues that the West failed 'to give up the "velvet-gloved Versailles" policy towards Russia, i.e. abandon its policy of systemic encroachment on spheres of Russia's vital interests'. He notes that a similar policy against Germany earlier provoked a predictable surge of revanchist sentiments and ultimately led to World War II, and: 'Now we have the tragedy of the Ukrainian people whom this policy has turned into the cannon fodder of geopolitical strife.'¹² It was precisely Russia's refusal to accept subordination and its advancement of the greater Eurasia' plans for integration that provoked the Ukraine crisis. America's refusal to accept Russia's 'alterity' and independence, in Migranyan's view, is the essence of the Ukraine crisis. It made no difference who ruled Russia or what views they had on Ukraine:

If US strategy seeks to limit Russia's sovereignty and subordinate it to Washington's diktat, use Russia's resources in the future collision with China and not allow any closer cooperation between Russia and China, then this strategy will continue no matter what compromises Russia is ready to make on the current stage of the Ukraine crisis.¹⁴

Thus, in addition to Russia's goals of keeping Crimea, achieving international agreement that NATO would not enlarge to Ukraine, and ensuring that adequate pressure was placed on Kiev to create a more inclusive political order, including genuine decentralisation, there was the global issue of a rising power seeking to find its place in the sun. Quite how much Russia was 'rising' is another matter.

Both Ukraine and Russia face the challenge of creating pluralist democracies and establishing the rule of law, and it is not clear that the 'revolutionary' path pursued by Ukraine is any more effective than the 'evolutionary' one asserted by Putin. One of the dominant monist narratives is that Putin's aggressive actions, in the words of Alexander Motyl, one of the most ardent exponents of this line,

forced Ukraine to become independent, democratic, and pro-Western. He's forced it to develop an army and security apparatus. He's forced the population to take sides and discover its Ukrainian identity - and pride. He's forced the government to streamline the state apparatus. He's forced the elites to embrace democracy. And he's forcing them to embark on radical economic reform and administrative decentralization.¹⁵

If Putin did indeed force Ukraine to democratise, modernise its bureaucracy and genuinely devolve power to the regions, then he would really deserve to be called father of the Ukrainian state. Instead, a negative consolidation had taken place - against Russia, against Eurasian integration, against 'separatists' - which fanned a

virulent monism that assumed some of the hues of the integral nationalism of the interwar years.

Although the Donbas insurgents were portrayed as Putin's puppets, this was far from the case. They were mostly drawn from the local communities, although support did come from across the border, most of which was spontaneous and voluntary. While the crisis may have forged a new Ukrainian identity, its pluralist and civic elements were balanced by darker features. The crisis also strengthened the nationalist wing in Russian politics, and Putin's soaring popularity suggested a no less strong wave of patriotic consolidation. The opposition leader Boris Nemtsov warned that a Russian Maidan is inevitable, but there was little evidence of this.¹⁶ On 15 March over 30,000 people joined the 'Peace March' ('*March mira*') through the centre of Moscow in protest against the deployment of Russian forces in Crimea, and a second demonstration on 21 September gathered much the same number, but liberal opposition to Putin's Ukraine policy was remarkably weak. The main danger instead came from the nationalist right. The failure to give concrete form to the Greater European project inspired the advocates of one form or another of 'Greater Russia'. At the head of the reinvigorated traditionalists were ideologues such as Alexander Dugin and Alexander Prokhanov, and field commanders such as Igor Girkin. Their spiritual home was the *Zavtra* newspaper and the Izvorsky Club, which brought out a glossy monthly journal. Their ideal of an authoritarian Eurasian state was very different from the relatively liberal model of integration instantiated in Putin's EEU. Prokhanov asserted that his 15-year long dream of a return to the Cold War had now been fulfilled.¹⁷

Putin's leadership acted as the regulator of factional and institutional conflict, guaranteeing elite interests while managing relations between the state oligarchy and society. He was the supreme arbitrator, drawing strength from all the factions and society but remaining independent of all. This system satisfied all to some degree, but none to the full. It delivered significant public goods in the short term, but was unable to guarantee a strategy for long-term development, increasing the modernisation blockage and political stalemate. It was vulnerable to external shocks and internal disintegration.¹⁸ This does not mean that Ukraine would be Putin's undoing. His return to power in 2012 alienated the liberal intelligentsia, but Crimean reunification brought back some of the radical nationalists to his camp. Putin's mention of 'Novorossiia' in his broadcast on 17 April raised expectations and inspired many to believe that he supported separatism, but soon after he distanced himself from the independence referendums of 11 May. The perceived betrayal of the insurgency in the Donbas threatened once again to alienate the nationalists and the Eurasianists, splitting Putin from his 'patriotic' base, but the regime by now was well practised in the art of societal management. Already in June 2014 Dugin, the ideologist of neo-Eurasianism,

was dismissed from his post as director of the International Sociology department of Moscow State University, a move that he described as 'political repression'.¹⁹ Dugin was undoubtedly disappointed: 'Before, we could have an illusion that Putin himself is a Eurasian patriot. [...] His hesitation now is a sign that he has followed this line by some pragmatic calculations, by some realistic understanding of the politics.²⁰ Despite the disappointment of the patriots, there were few organised challenges to Putin's regime internally, while his foreign-policy stance was supported at home.

The ethno-nationalists call for solidarity with the ethnic Russian diaspora of some 25 million people, who suddenly found themselves 'abroad' when the Soviet Union broke up in 1991. In his 18 March Crimea speech Putin appealed to this community, with over 20 references to 'Russkii' (which carries an ethnic connotation, unlike the more inclusive *Rossiskii*). Putin referred to the Russians as a *divided people*, appealing to national values, but there was no consistent programme to 'reunite' these patriots with Russia by making claims on such areas as northern Kazakhstan or Narva in Estonia. Putin was even hesitant to recognise the entities in eastern Ukraine that appealed to Russia for help. Thus Andrei Tsygankov is right to argue that

Putin is not a nationalist. While appropriating key concepts from the nationalist vocabulary, he alternates them with ideas that nationalists may find objectionable. [...] By doing so he preserves the flexibility that he needs to preserve the power of the state, which is his true priority.²¹

Equally, the Ukraine crisis only reinforced Putin's turn away from what used to be called the First World, the West, towards a vague new Second Worldism, comprising countries that were also critical of the existing distribution of world power. The sanctions accelerated Russia's own pivot to the east, and intensified the strategic partnership with China. However, this shift should be kept in perspective. In his speech to the biannual gathering of ambassadors and diplomats on 1 July, Putin called on them to improve the relationship with Europe, despite American attempts to destabilise that relationship.²² In other words, Ukraine was not such a game-changer after all, and Russia had certainly not turned its back on Europe, although it did seek to strengthen its more enduring relationships in Asia.

Putin, whatever his failings, is not an ideologue. Although passionate in his views and loud in his condemnation of the failings of other states, he remains rational and pragmatic. He was well aware that the US had lured the Soviet Union into the Afghan quagmire, precipitating its collapse. The architect of that strategy was Zbigniew Brzezinski, who even before the Soviet invasion of December 1979 had talked President Carter into arming the mujahideen. Later, drawing on Halford

Mackinder's heartland theory, Brzezinski argued that it was essential to prevent a single power dominating the Eurasian land mass and thus challenging America's global pre-eminence. His formulation of America's Eurasian geostrategy entailed keeping Russia weak, preferably, as he notoriously argued, divided into a number of smaller states; and certainly prevented from exerting any influence on Ukraine. His book *The Grand Chessboard* has been translated into Russian and is part of everyday political discussion.²³ Flushed with the 'success' of his Afghanistan strategy, he now argued in favour of the West arming forces within Ukraine capable of resisting the Russian 'occupation'. Putin was well aware of the dangers of being sucked into a war over Ukraine, which would be unwinnable and disastrous. The costs of maintaining even the two regions of the Donbas would be far beyond Russia's limited capacities, while a full-scale occupation of Ukraine was inconceivable. In short, a 'hybrid war' was one thing, but the dangers of escalation and 'mission creep' were well known. Although the Kremlin could only wonder at how it could be accused of acting in a nineteenth-century manner when the US has been ruthless in the exercise of authority, it understood the limitations of its own power.

THE TWO UNITED STATES

US global policy remains at war with itself. On the one side, it is the arch-exponent of a liberal trading order and with it the whole ramified architecture of liberal internationalism. This is a vision of world order that has predominated since World War II and triumphed with the dissolution of its main ideological competitor, the Soviet Union, in 1989–91. It is a system based on competitive and open economies, stable borders, open seas, free trade and sound money. It is a model of 'globalisation' that most countries of the world have accepted, including Russia and China, although with their own specific caveats. This system has brought unprecedented peace and prosperity to large parts of the world. The US has worked hard to expand that order – for example, by supporting Russia's accession to the WTO, which was finally achieved in August 2012. However, on the other side, the US remains the centre of a vast geopolitical power system in which its claims to lead are challenged today by the so-called rising powers.²⁴ We have noted some of Brzezinski's thinking, which is ruthlessly realist and geopolitical and has little time for the niceties of dialogue and compromise unless they serve the cause of Atlanticism. Ukraine was to act as the eastern anchor of an Atlanticist Europe.²⁵ For liberal universalists and geopolitical realists alike, the Ukrainian crisis of 2013 offered an opportunity to complete the 'unfinished revolution' of the Orange administration from 2004, pushing aside the

more cautious Europeans to consolidate US hegemony ('leadership') and to punish Russia – for its temerity in upstaging the US over the Syrian chemical weapons crisis in mid-2013, for giving refuge to the whistle-blower Edward Snowden (reluctantly, since the US had cancelled his passport), and in general for its refusal to kowtow in the appropriate manner. Glazyev reflected what had effectively become the orthodox in Moscow when he argued that the US 'is essentially provoking an international conflict to salvage its geopolitical, financial and economic authority', and he advocated a 'global anti-war coalition' with Russia at its head.²⁶ Above all, those with a strategic sense argued that the US had to challenge Russia over Ukraine as a warning to China over its possible ambitions in the South China Sea and Taiwan.

As argued above, Russia's neo-revisionism does not challenge the fundamentals of liberal internationalism (what we can call the 'first' US), but its striving for parity of esteem and diplomatic equality inevitably brought it into conflict with the security order centred on the US (that is, the 'second' US). The genius of this US global dualism is that it can pursue traditional geopolitical goals of great-power maximisation (the nineteenth-century model) while claiming to be serving the dispassionate interests of the liberal-internationalist order (the claimed post-Westphalian, twenty-first-century globalised system).²⁷ To outsiders, and to Putin's great chagrin, this looks like a double standard. Hence the endless imprecations by Moscow of *tu quoque* ('look at yourself'), otherwise known as 'whataboutism', whenever Russia was criticised, but this rather misses the point. Hegemonic powers will always couch their global goals in the language of a civilising mission, and apply selectively the international law that they impose on others.²⁸ Equally, rising powers will invoke the universalism of international law to constrain the dominant state.

Russia cooperated with the US in Afghanistan and to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, but its criticism of the Iraq war of 2003 and its support for the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad increasingly alienated the Western power, and in particular the most aggressive exponents of US leadership, many of whom were found in the State Department. On coming to power in 2009, Obama had favoured Medvedev over Putin, and Putin's return to the presidency in 2012 soured their personal relations further, exacerbated by the Snowden affair. On the other side, Russia was alarmed by the relentless advance of the 'second' US, with its ideology of democratism that implied regime change through subversive political intervention rather than allowing the transformative power of liberal internationalism to do its work. Relations were further strained by the installation of missile defence systems in Eastern Europe, within a rocket's throw from Moscow, and NATO enlargement, urged on by militant 'new Europe' states. As with the US, there was a growing gulf between the first Europe of peace and genuine economic

interdependence, and the second Europe of swelling, although inchoate, geopolitical ambitions. This set the scene for a perfect storm of mutual recrimination and distrust over the Ukraine crisis.

Perceptions are everything in international politics, as are the mental maps of the participants. Obama himself was a remarkably disengaged president: 'Absent and *not* accounted for was the general view of him as the crisis in Ukraine built up in January and February.'²⁹ Hillary Clinton packed the State Department with 'Democrat' neo-conservatives with a messianic and Manichean view of the world. Clinton herself had few achievements in her four years as the American foreign minister, and has since concentrated on positioning herself as a potential candidate in the US presidential election of 2016 by scoring easy points – and there are no easier points than Russia-bashing. Obama's second-term Secretary of State, John Kerry, has already run once for the presidency, in 2004, when he lost to George W. Bush, and clearly is not going to try again. He showed notable commitment to pushing forward the 'peace process' in Palestine, but he had a clearly articulated, hostile stance towards Russia, although on occasion accepted that Russia had some legitimate interests in Ukraine.

Kerry made little attempt to create his own team in the State Department. The president was 'disengaged' and Kerry was still smarting from Russia's *démarche* over Syria in September 2013, allowing policy to be made by relatively junior officials: 'The overthrow of Yanukovich and seizure of power by a provisional government in Kiev had been anticipated and indeed encouraged by the European and Eurasian desk of the State Department.'³⁰ The department is headed by Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland, who as we have seen was an active and engaged participant on the Maidan. She has successfully made the passage from Dick Cheney's staff to Hillary Clinton's team, and now boasted, as mentioned, that the State Department had invested some \$5 billion in civil society and democracy promotion in Ukraine, an enormous sum by the standards of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Cheney had been Bush's vice president from 2001 to 2009 and a noted advocate of US interventionism in Iraq. Nuland's husband is Robert Kagan, a co-founder of the think tank Project for a New American Century and one of the leading advocates of the 2003 Iraq war. At the heart of Kagan's extraordinary notion that 'Americans are from Mars, Europeans are from Venus' is the idea that the former stand above international law and the normativity that the latter endlessly proclaim.³¹ This is an exceptionalist ideology that riled Putin, notably in his op-ed piece in the *New York Times* in September 2013:

I would rather disagree with a case he [Obama] made on American exceptionalism, stating that the United States' policy is 'what makes America different. It's what makes

us exceptional.' It is extremely dangerous to encourage people to see themselves as exceptional, whatever the motivation.³²

Thus, in the words of David Bromwich:

Obama ceded control of America's public stance to his Secretary of State, John Kerry. The result with Ukraine in 2014, as with Syria in 2013, was to render a critical situation more confused, and bristling with opportunities for hostility between the US and Russia. Eventually, in late March, Obama gave a speech to the EU in Brussels that dressed up the debacle as policy.³³

The study goes on to note: 'His [Obama's] obliviousness to the Cheney weeds in his policy garden is characteristic and revealing.' Nuland was not the only one. Samantha Power represented Obama in the UN and was a persuasive advocate of humanitarian interventionism who advised Obama on the whole range of foreign-policy issues. The State Department now funded not only peaceful but also coercive foreign engagement, although the latter was traditionally the preserve of the Department of Defence. The advocacy of humanitarian war, combining normative and realist assumptions, created a powerful dynamic in favour of intervention in the domestic affairs of other states. Traditional Westphalian respect for state sovereignty was eroded. This would prove a combustible mix in Ukraine.

American dualism is evident at the operational level. The Ukraine crisis demonstrated a division between what F. B. Ali calls the 'war party' and the 'resolution party'.³⁴ There is in addition a third category, those who lacked an intellectual compass to navigate the complexity of Ukrainian events; into this 'clueless' group Ali places John Kerry, Catherine Ashton, and even Susan Rice and Samantha Power, whose 'ideological mindset causes them to seriously misjudge the situation'. The 'resolvers' were unable to impose a sensible policy, and instead the running was left to warriors: 'The real reason behind the West's policies in Ukraine and Eastern Europe is that there is a strong faction among its policymakers that fully understands what is going on but has deliberately chosen this course of action.' This was certainly the case with Senate bill S.2277, the 'Russian Aggression Prevention Act 2014', which outlined a frighteningly comprehensive and detailed range of actions against Russia. It included a military component (the strengthening and advancement of NATO to Russia's borders); the full-scale deployment of a missile defence system in Europe; full-scale military cooperation with Russia's non-NATO neighbours; the end of space, defence and intelligence cooperation with Russia; the mobilisation of the whole gamut of global financial institutions to suffocate Russia financially; rapid development of

an energy-pipeline system bypassing Russia, and support for the end of the energy dependence of countries such as Ukraine on Russia; the abrogation of all arms-control treaties with Russia; full-scale personal sanctions against Russian officials; the launching of an intense information war, including beefing up media instruments beaming into Russia; and massive support for activists and dissidents within Russia. It prohibited any federal department or agency from doing anything that could be interpreted as recognition of Russian sovereignty over Crimea or approval of the 'illegal annexation' of the region.³⁵

According to the bill's sponsors, all this would cost a mere \$200 million a year, which undoubtedly is a small price to pay to save the world from the Russian threat. Such militancy is hardly surprising from a Congress that had prevaricated for decades over repealing the 1974 Jackson-Vanik amendment imposing trade sanctions on the Soviet Union because of its restrictions on Jewish emigration. Following its repeal Congress promptly adopted the Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act in December 2012. The new Senate bill authorises the US to grant Ukraine the status of an 'allied nation' independently of NATO membership. Washington would be empowered to send troops to Ukraine, thus committing NATO to war with Russia. It is unlikely that the bill will be passed into law, even with a 'bipartisan' majority comfortable with scapegoating Russia, but it demonstrates that the US is ready to position itself for the long-term containment, if not destruction, of Russia as an independent and alternative pole in world politics. This ambition will not change even when Putin leaves office; hence confrontation is likely to continue until a new generation comes of age. Russia has fallen out of love with the West, accompanied by mutual distrust. The battle against the West has now given Russia a new purpose that will be enduring.³⁶ Stabilisation of the situation over Ukraine represents a truce with the West, not peace.³⁷

There is undoubtedly a powerful Wilsonian strain of liberal interventionism in Washington today, ready to ally with the hawks to advance a genuinely idealist programme of democratic advancement. This is the ideology of democratism, advanced by such figures as the US ambassador to Moscow, Michael McFaul. His residency in January 2012 began with a scandal, when he met oppositionists at a time of intense political tension in the city following the mass demonstrations in protest against the flawed parliamentary elections, and ended in tears two years later amid the Ukraine crisis.³⁸ McFaul has a deep understanding of Russian politics, albeit filtered through a thick ideological lens, and his resignation in February 2014 left America without an ambassador in Moscow at a crucial time. For others in the hawkish camp the explanation of the Ukraine crisis was reduced to a single proposition: Putin's 'aggression'; and this in turn was located in the narrative, assiduously amplified by the

mainstream media, of Russia's inherent proclivity for expansionism, which was now buttressed by an inferiority complex and *ressentiment* against the West. This was the line predominant in Saakashvili's Georgia, which in 2008 had provoked war, and was now the predominant narrative of the February revolution. As Stephen Cohen warns: 'The new cold war may be more perilous because, also unlike during its forty-year predecessor, there is no effective American opposition – not in the administration, Congress, establishment media, universities, think tanks, or in society.'³⁹ Alternative voices are silenced or discredited, provoking a dangerous cycle of reinforcement of what is at best a partial view of a complex situation.

Thus the future of Ukraine and of relations between Russia and the West depends on the struggle between these two groups. The war party (the 'second' US) believes that the West won the Cold War, and that its victory should not be challenged. This is precisely what Russia is considered to have done by advancing the idea of 'Greater Europe', and intervening in world politics, notably in Syria in September 2013, as an independent actor. Russia needed to be taught its place. At the head of this faction are the neocons and right-wingers, deeply entrenched in the State Department (led by Nuland), reinforced by the virulent Russophobes in Congress (notably John McCain and Lindsey Graham), the think tanks and the media. The *Washington Post* made little attempt to maintain journalistic integrity and balance in the Ukraine crisis; *The Economist* gave free rein to its 'New Cold War' agenda, and even the *New York Times* faltered. On 21 April, for example, a front-page story in the latter argued that 'photos link masked men in East Ukraine to Russia', but in fact the blurred photographs of some bearded individuals were taken in Russia, and three days later the story had been thoroughly discredited, shaming the paper for failing the basic test of checking the facts. In years to come the unabashed militancy of these papers will undoubtedly become the subject of many an intriguing academic study. Their partisanship and profound lack of historical understanding would demean a Third World dictatorship, let alone a country that claims to be the 'essential nation'. This irresponsibility reached the highest echelons of power. In an extraordinary interview with the *Wall Street Journal* on 28 April 2014, Kerry admitted that the Obama administration and security establishment were 'fully aware' that the escalation of the crisis in Ukraine could lead to nuclear war, but he was remarkably insouciant about humanity's imminent destruction. There was no limit to the 'impassioned lunacy' in Washington during the crisis.⁴⁰

The domestic basis of the war party is reinforced by other groups. At their head is the NATO lobby, led by militant Atlanticists like Bruce Jackson, the founder and president of the Project on Transitional Democracies. For them, in both the US and Europe, the Ukraine crisis was a heaven-sent opportunity to revive the organisation

and to give it a new mission for the twenty-first century. The summit in Newport, Wales, on 4–5 September 2014 was a festival of the war party. The invitation to Poroshenko to attend ensured that the rhetoric remained at a high level. There was much chest-thumping by the British and Americans about the Russian threat, but in the end the European nations refused to ramp up the threat of war. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, typically, made a range of unsubstantiated assertions, but the rise of Islamic State in the Levant served to divert attention from what ultimately at the international level was an artificial conflict over Ukraine to what was an immediate and genuine threat. The Newport meeting signalled the remilitarisation of world politics but only the partial repudiation of the informal commitments given to Gorbachev at the end of the Cold War and of the 1997 agreement not to station forces permanently in Eastern Europe, although that pledge was conditional as long as there was no security threat to the region. The summit adopted a 'Readiness Action Plan' to establish 'spearhead' military bases in the eastern marches and create a rapid-reaction force headquartered in Poland, although the 4,000 troops assigned to it would be based elsewhere. Military bases would be created in Poland, the Baltic republics and Romania with a permanent deployment of 600 servicemen each. Despite Yatsenyuk's announcement on 29 August that Ukraine would scrap its non-aligned status and resume his country's course for NATO membership, the 2008 Bucharest declaration was not revived. Tymoshenko announced that her *Batkivshchyna* party would initiate a national referendum on Ukraine joining NATO, but the summit leaders agreed that membership was not on the cards. Even they understood that it would only pour fuel on an already raging fire.

Rather than turning itself into a collective security institution encompassing Russia after the Cold War, NATO had given itself a new 'out of area' mandate to wage 'expeditionary' wars in Afghanistan and Libya. By contrast, the new post-Communist member states wanted NATO to retain its traditional role as a territorial defence organisation, committed to its core Article 5 collective defence mission. As Eric Kraus puts it: 'No sane person truly believes that Russia is about to invade the Baltics, neutralise Finland, or retake Poland. It is, however, convenient to publicly pretend to fear these eventualities.' After listing the economic and other woes in Europe, Kraus makes the crucial argument that underlies much of the thinking in this book:

With no vital interests at stake in Ukraine, in a rational world the Europeans would be even-handed, leaning on both sides to find an accommodation – federalisation, independence or unification with Russia – probably on the basis of an internationally supervised referendum in the Eastern provinces. Instead, the diplomacy of the founding EU states has been hijacked by Washington and the ex-Soviet Republics. It is Europe, not Washington, which stands to pay the price.

This was not a 'new Cold War', a war of ideologies, but a 'classical, 19th-century-style war for imperial domination'.⁴¹ The US urged its allies to increase defence spending, while Russia's \$700 billion defence build-up continued, to be completed in 2020. In September Russia successfully tested its Bulava SLBM, a long-range nuclear missile designed to hit targets in the US. At that time the defence minister, Sergei Shoigu, warned about the increased presence of foreign military forces along Russia's borders, and deployed the first of six stealth submarines to the now-permanent home of the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol. George Kennan's warning that NATO expansion would herald a new Cold War was on the optimistic side, and a hot war is no longer inconceivable.

As one commentary put it:

It's not necessary to have any sympathy for Putin's oligarchic authoritarianism to recognise that Nato and the EU, not Russia, sparked this crisis – and that it's the Western powers that are resisting the negotiated settlement that is the only way out, for fear of appearing weak.⁴²

Military spending had been declining across the NATO alliance, and apart from the US only three states met the 2 per cent of GDP defence-spending goal: Britain, Estonia and Greece. On the other side, Russian defence spending had increased by 14 per cent in 2012 and 16 per cent in 2013, while Chinese defence spending in those years rose by 14 and 9 per cent respectively. At Newport, the voice of the wiser generation of leaders, like the former NATO Secretary General Lord George Robertson, was signally absent. As if to rub salt in the wounds, NATO staged the Rapid Trident military exercise on Ukrainian territory on 15–26 September. In anticipation of NATO's stance, Russia on 2 September announced that it would amend its military doctrine to address the 'external threats' created by the advance of NATO's infrastructure to Russia's borders. Too involved in locking horns, Russia and the West were unable to work together to deal with the growing challenges in the Middle East, including the bioterrorism threat from Islamic State. Rather than focusing on Article 5 of the 4 April 1949 North Atlantic Treaty, guaranteeing collective defence, all sides would have benefited from revisiting Article 1:

The Parties undertake, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, to settle any international dispute in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered, and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

The US war party is reinforced by the former Soviet bloc members in the EU and NATO. They are far from united in their views, but as we have seen there is a group of militantly revanchist powers, with Lithuania and Poland in the van, for whom Russia's strategic expurgation from the map of Europe would barely be enough. In a rather vulgar leaked recording of an alleged conversation between Polish foreign minister Radosław Sikorski and the former Polish finance minister Jacek Rostowski, published in the Polish magazine *Wprost* on 23 June, the former warned: 'The Polish-American alliance is not worth anything: it's even damaging, because it creates a false sense of security for Poland', suggesting that Washington had been too weak in the conflict with Russia.⁴³ This scaremongering creates precisely the effect it is ostensibly intended to avert, amplified by the new militant regime in Kiev just as it had been earlier by the Saakashvili leadership in Georgia. These representatives of the 'new Europe', allied with traditional British suspicion of European integration, inhibited the EU's ability to moderate and mediate in world politics. They were far from a united group, however, and also changed policy over time. The elevation of the Polish prime minister Donald Tusk to the presidency of the European Council in October 2014 meant that the new prime minister, Ewa Kopacz, was able swiftly to distance herself from the aggressive policy of her predecessor, while the replacement of foreign minister Sikorski by Grzegorz Schetyna brought an end to a divisive period in Polish, and European, history.

Militancy is further fostered by a range of politicians and public activists who continue the 'Russophobe' tradition of the nineteenth century, when the Polish question after the failed uprising of 1830 allowed Russia to be framed as an irredeemable despotism. The role played by Poland in the nineteenth century now looks set to be taken by Ukraine in the twenty-first. Let Saakashvili speak for this group, since he distils the essence of the axiology of the war party. In an article in the *Wall Street Journal* he argued:

He [Poroshenko] can deal with Russia only with Western help. What we have observed recently is a major international discrepancy: Russia is weak, but it has a strong will to pursue adventurist policies. The West is much stronger but cannot agree on a unified response, and thereby is projecting weakness. Mr. Putin knows he is vulnerable, and that makes him even more willing to exploit to the max his window of opportunity. The West knows well what Mr. Putin's vulnerabilities are, but the European Union and the US have been unwilling to endure even a minimum of pain to exploit them.⁴⁴

Here is the voice of war to the end of time to bring Russia to heel, irrespective of the cost. Such a policy, whose discourse is redolent of the dangers of

appeasement, standing up to bullies and other anachronisms, threatens to turn the eastern part of Europe into the wastelands already created in the Middle East and North Africa.

Countering the fears, phobias and global ambitions of the war party is the 'resolution' party, trying to resolve the Ukraine crisis through sensible discussion, dialogue and engagement, all words that the war party seeks to discredit. Instead of the ceaseless escalation of the crisis, the resolvers look to international mediation and a halt to military action. For them, Russia can undoubtedly be part of the solution, although many understand it is also part of the problem. Thus the resolvers are not necessarily willing to give the pass to Russia, but at least they seek to provide honest information. Even General Breedlove, whose comments on the crisis at the beginning were characterised by wild surmise and exaggerated threats, soon came to temper his views, unlike his NATO boss, Rasmussen, who left office on 1 October 2014, consistently ramped up the tension based on often flawed information. He accused Russia of waging 'hybrid warfare, a combination of military action, covert operations and a media campaign of disinformation'. His language was described as 'blunt', while others would call it aggressive.⁴⁵ Even the American intelligence community, embarrassed earlier by Colin Powell's presentation to the UN based on obviously fake information about Iraq's alleged possession of WMD, sought to distance itself from the irresponsibility of the war party. Martin Dempsey, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called for objectivity in the crisis.⁴⁶ Assessment of responsibility for the MH17 disaster by American intelligence officials were more measured than those coming from the State Department. The veteran CIA officer Robert Baer, who had earlier served in Tajikistan and thus knew the region well, conceded to John Humphrys on the BBC's *Today* programme on 28 July that Washington in the person of Nuland was inflaming the conflict and failed to take Russian perspectives into account. The US business community also sought to restrain the war party. The classic realist Henry Kissinger warned from the very beginning that discussion over Ukraine was unnecessarily polarised:

Far too often the Ukrainian issue is posed as a showdown: whether Ukraine joins the East or the West. But if Ukraine is to survive and thrive, it must not be either side's outpost against the other – it should function as a bridge between them. [...] The West must understand that, to Russia, Ukraine can never be just a foreign country. [...] For its part, the United States needs to avoid treating Russia as an aberrant to be patiently taught rules of conduct established by Washington. Putin is a serious strategist – on the premises of Russian history. [...] For the West, the demonization of Vladimir Putin is not a policy; it is an alibi for the absence of one.⁴⁷

The diplomatic skills that Kissinger had deployed during the Cold War were sadly lacking in this crisis.

In Europe, the position of the resolvers was greatly weakened by the MH17 disaster. The European war party used the tragedy to advance its goals, including the interperate imposition of sanctions. Whereas the Lithuanian president Dalia Grybauskaitė argued that 'the sanctions are necessary, but long overdue and inadequate', the German foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier worked tirelessly to moderate the response, arguing that 'sanctions are not a policy, that's why we still need to look for ways to defuse the political conflict'.⁴⁸ Merkel as usual sought pragmatic policies within the framework of domestic political realities, but as the crisis developed German policy as a whole lost some of its independence and swung behind Washington. Merkel, nevertheless, was one of the few European leaders who maintained a dialogue with Putin. The outgoing president of the European Commission, Barroso, had urged demonstrators to 'have the courage and go out and fight' in December 2013,⁴⁹ and throughout only exacerbated tensions. Putin had long shunned his telephone calls, and with good reason.

In all of this Obama appeared to be little more than a referee, laying down red lines and issuing vacuous statements that helped neither war nor peace. His presidency began in anticipation of a continued shift towards a post-Atlanticist stance, marked by the 'pivot to Asia' and global concerns, but the Ukraine crisis returned European issues to the forefront of US policy. Obama's natural instincts were clearly aligned with a traditional US pragmatism and realism, with a turn away from messianic conceptions of US world leadership, but his more ideological stance in the Ukraine crisis was prepared by disappointment over the failure of the 'reset'. His personal relations with Putin were very poor, in part because of his misjudged partisanship for Medvedev earlier, accompanied by some ill-judged personal comments about Putin and Russia. He had won the 2008 nomination because of his criticism of the 'dumb war' in Iraq, but he was now excoriated for his alleged passivity: 'Every advance by Islamists in Iraq, and every missile fired by Russian separatists in Ukraine, is taken as an indictment of his caution. A window may well be closing on the brief era of US restraint'.⁵⁰ Obama began as one of the least interventionist US leaders in decades, yet was forced to intervene in the Middle East and Europe.

Obama resisted the extremism of the war party, but his 'restraint' was at best relative. It was his administration that encouraged the overthrow of a democratically elected president, launched an economic war against Russia and impeded the peaceful resolution of the civil conflict in the Donbas – these would not be classified as examples of 'restraint' in normal language, but for the war party this was only the beginning. Edward Luce, the author of the above quotation, for example, goes on to

argue: 'In recent months it would have been smart to beef up the US presence in the Baltic states and other NATO members bordering Russia. Instead, he kept them to a minimum. That may have only emboldened Vladimir Putin.'⁵¹ In other words, the recipe of advancing the Euro-Atlantic security system to Russia's borders that provoked the crisis was now advocated as the response to the crisis. Of course, the US could with relatively little effort bring Russia to its knees – if the economic sanctions really did go for the jugular and destroy whole sectors of the economy while encircling the country with US forces. There is very little that Russia could do in response, but it would have made almost no difference to events in the Donbas, which as we have seen were not something simply directed from Moscow nor easily resolved by external interventions. In short, the war party exploited the Ukraine crisis to cut Russia down to size and to achieve its strategic isolation and diplomatic marginalisation. Russia certainly will not succumb to the pressure, since it is operating within the rationality of a very different paradigm. This is the road not so much to a new Cold War as to Armageddon.

In an important analysis, Stephen Cohen asks a fundamental question about the goals of the US. He succinctly sums up the ambiguities in US behaviour:

In fact, from the onset of the crisis, the administration's actual goal has been unclear, and not only to Moscow. Is it a negotiated compromise, which would have to include a Ukraine with a significantly federalized or decentralized state free to maintain longstanding economic relations with Russia and banned from NATO membership? Is it to bring the entire country exclusively into the West, including into NATO? Is it a vendetta against Putin for all the things he purportedly has and has not done over the years? (Some behavior of Obama and Kerry, seemingly intended to demean and humiliate Putin, suggest [sic] an element of this.) Or is it to provoke Russia into a war with the United States and NATO in Ukraine?⁵²

The last of these possible motives is unlikely, given the threat of nuclear escalation, although the US was closely involved in the ATO. The CIA director John Brennan visited Kiev in secret in mid-April, just as the military campaign was beginning. Biden also visited on at least two occasions, followed apparently by a steady flow of senior US defence officials. However, despite pleading from Kiev, Washington refused to supply heavy weaponry.

David Bromwich notes that an accord in US politics has developed 'which unites the liberal left and the authoritarian right [...] The state apparatus which supports wars and the weapons industry for Republicans yields welfare and expanded entitlements for Democrats.'⁵³ In his West Point commencement address on 28 May, Obama

asserted that the US would engage in more military actions than ever before, but with fewer US casualties.

Here's my bottom line: America must always lead on the world stage. If we don't, no one else will. The military that you have joined is and always will be the backbone of that leadership. But US military action cannot be the only – or even primary – component of our leadership in every instance. Just because we have the best hammer does not mean that every problem is a nail.⁵⁴

America would lead the world but not necessarily police it to defend 'international norms', a key concept of the Obama administration. In Bromwich's words: 'International norms split the difference between international law, which the US reserves the right to violate, and the new "world order" of which the US was the maker and must remain the guardian.' This is a perfect statement of the ambiguities generated by the interplay between the two versions of the US. The spirit of the speech was in keeping with that of Madeleine Albright, the Secretary of State in Bill Clinton's second administration and a noted proponent of NATO enlargement: 'If we have to use force it is because we are America; we are the indispensable nation. We stand tall and see further than other countries into the future.'⁵⁵

THE NEW SUICIDE OF EUROPE

On hearing of the outbreak of World War I, Pope Benedict XV declared that it represented 'the suicide of Europe'. One hundred years later we can talk of a 'new suicide', as the idealism associated with a whole era of European integration has been revealed as nugatory and an illusion. At the heart of the EU is a peace project, and it delivered on this promise in Western Europe before 1989. However, when faced with a no less demanding challenge in the post-Communist era – to heal the Cold War divisions and to build the foundations for a united continent – the EU has spectacularly failed. Instead of a vision embracing the whole continent, it has become little more than the civilian wing of the Atlantic security alliance. Even its increasingly limited commitment to social and cross-national solidarity is jeopardised by the putative Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). Atlanticism is becoming increasingly ramified, while Russia is increasingly left out in the cold.

Ukraine exposed the crisis in the EU's development. As an institution, it struggled to make itself relevant in devising policies that could provide solutions to fundamental international problems. The drift towards a merger with the Atlantic security system

left it bereft of autonomy and policy instruments when it really mattered – maintaining peace on the European continent. As Lukyanov puts it, the EU was preoccupied with its own survival and

internal disagreements caused by the conflict over Russia constitute no less of a risk than the losses Europe will suffer as a result of downgrading its ties with Moscow. The question of which risk is more dangerous will be answered by the EU in due course.⁵⁶

It is easy to argue that the EU as an institution was marginalised as the crisis developed, and this was indeed the case, but its performance was even worse: it failed to restrain the war party in Washington or to articulate a strategy that was more nuanced and in keeping with its proclaimed normative values. The EU proved desperately inept as a conflict regulator.

More than that, its lack of strategic perspective and dismissive attitude to Russian concerns reflected the absorption of the US culture of hegemonism. As David Habakkuk, drawing on the work of Hew Strachan, notes regarding British policy on the eve of the Great War, instead of committing to a strategy of ‘containment’ of Germany in alliance with France and Russia it may have been wise to seek some sort of compromise with Germany. Habakkuk goes on:

If [...] one looks at recent Western policy, what is evident is a complete lack of any serious attempt to ‘calculate at least a step ahead’. That an attempt to wrest the whole of Ukraine away from Russia, and incorporate it in ‘the West’ would produce essentially the kind of crisis that has developed was obvious to any reasonably rational being years ago. We have here, not simply a crisis of Western foreign policy, but a crisis of our whole system of government, and faith in ‘democracy’.⁵⁷

Critics of the failure of the EU to adopt severe sanctions more swiftly complained that this was because of the high level of dependency on Russian energy imports and the intense ties in some countries between their corporations and Russia. This is undoubtedly a factor shaping national policy making and the EU leadership as a whole, but there is also another explanation – there were still a few leaders in the EU who realised that the Ukraine crisis was not simply the outcome of Putinite Russia’s alleged malevolence, but was born out of a complex set of interactions, perceptions and fears. Critics of the rush to sanctions and other coercive measures understood that sooner or later a negotiated exit from the crisis would have to be found, and condemned the failure to seize the opportunities as they emerged, for example after Poroshenko’s election and after the MH17 tragedy.

The EU of course is not a state but an ensemble of complex institutions, processes and member states, and thus the expectation that it can act with the purpose of a state is ill-founded. Nevertheless, the Ukraine crisis posed a fundamental existential choice before the EU, the answer to which would determine its fate. On the one hand, the EU could try to refine its continental vocation and find mechanisms and means to avoid the imposition of a new Iron Curtain that would doom the continent to a renewed period of militarisation and confrontation. The economic platform for renewed continentalism, whether called ‘Greater Europe’ or something else, has already been laid. The opportunities offered by interdependence could be used to shape behaviour on all sides. Russia is highly sensitive to threats to its valuable economic partnerships with countries such as Germany, France, Italy and Holland, and throughout the Ukraine crisis sought to protect them. The politics of Greater European interdependence are based on diplomacy and negotiation, and seek to find ways in which contesting parties can retreat with dignity and compromise in an environment where the language of threats is constrained.

On the other hand, although elements of this approach were not entirely stilled, the predominant stance was drawn from the playlist of the hawks, the path of sanctions and confrontation. For a number of ‘new’ European states, although not all of them, the Ukraine crisis was used to vindicate their stance of irreconcilable hostility to Russia, arguing that the country was a threat to be countered rather than an opportunity to be exploited. In the Ukraine crisis it was the turn of Lithuania to be in the vanguard of anti-Russian sentiments. The ferocity of President Dalia Grybauskaitė’s onslaught on Russia was matched only by that of Georgia under Saakashvili. The Polish president, Bronisław Komorowski, even called for Russia to be deprived of its veto power in the UN Security Council:

We know this is not the right time to reset relations with Russia. This is not the right time to limit any commitment to Euro-Atlantic relations. No, just the reverse. This is an important moment to contain Russia from any dangerous expansion in order to pursue its neo-imperial vision.⁵⁸

This is not a policy but an attitude. It is immune to rational argument or the practices of diplomacy. Based on an essentialist reading of history, it treats Russia as the eternal enemy. This is a stance that in its very essence is axiological – assuming that certain postulates are axiomatic and unquestionable – and anyone who raises questions is condemned as a ‘Putin apologist’, a ‘useful idiot’, a ‘stooge’, and worse. This is a dangerous fundamentalism, masquerading as the defence of the ‘European choice’ and the avoidance of ‘another Munich’.

In practice, relatively normal relations were soon established between Russia and Georgia when the axiological stance of Saakashvili gave way to the more measured and intelligent policies of his successor, Bidzina Ivanishvili, demonstrating that there is no 'eternal essence' to Russian policy but pragmatic (although in the late Putin years increasingly emotional) responses to changing circumstances. Any state in Russia's position has certain security and other concerns, and as long as they are respected, normal business can be conducted. Instead, it appeared that the war party sought to provoke and exploit conflicts between Russia and its neighbours, threatening to lay waste the whole post-Soviet region. Ukraine was in danger of becoming another Afghanistan, Iraq or Libya. This was certainly not the intention of Obama, but the failure to rein in the inflammatory statement of Kerry and his team in the State Department had that effect. In all of this, the independent voice of the EU was missing, and instead Catherine Ashton effectively became little more than Nuland's accessory.

The crisis did provoke some rethinking of EU management. There had already been attempts to improve the EU's foreign-policy efficacy, above all by the creation of the post of 'high representative' at the head of the EEAS and the establishment of a permanent president of the European Council. There were also new procedures, including the introduction of the 'constructive abstention' mechanism, the introduction of qualified majority voting (QMV) and the intensification of cooperation within the CFSP by the Lisbon Treaty. None of these mechanisms prevented what has often been perceived to be a 'race to the bottom for the lowest common denominator' in policy making during the Ukraine events. The crisis provoked an extensive discussion of remedial actions but lacked strategic depth, and hence assumed an axiological character. In the words of Steven Blockmans:

After the illegal annexation of Crimea and Russia's indirect responsibility for the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in eastern Ukraine, what will it take before the EU can confront a conflict on its borders and prove to both its own citizens and third countries that it has a meaningful role to play in foreign policy?²⁹

Blockmans argues that the EU needed to enhance its ability for collective action by the better use of existing institutions, above all by activating the 'Crisis Platform' of the EEAS, and in general the EEAS should have the authority to coordinate better the actions of individual member states. Above all, he proposed that strategy towards Russia should be adopted by a European Council decision taken by QMV, although allowing that when national interests are considered to be

important but not vital, the constructive abstention mechanism should be invoked by those member states that, for diplomatic reasons, object to the partial or full interruption or reduction of economic and financial relations with Russia, but that at the same time do not wish to derail consensus in the Council on the adoption of a CFSP decision.

In other words, the council would adopt policy by majority voting, and it was assumed that in the case of Russia these would be 'restrictive measures'. It would be the task of the high representative, as chair of the Foreign Affairs Council (made up of member states ministers responsible for foreign affairs, defence and development), to

remind individual member states of their duty of loyal cooperation under the CFSP and nudge them towards constructive abstention from decision-making. This would allow solidarity among member states and collective action by the EU to prevail over internal divisions.³⁰

In the past these measures may have been considered no more than sensible adjustments to improve the efficacy of foreign-policy making. But the Ukraine crisis demonstrated that ultimately the EU was not an instrument to unite the continent and to overcome the logic of conflict in its community of nations, but another institution born in the Cold War that in the end was destined to perpetuate the Cold War in new forms. It was unable to act as an interlocutor between the contending parties or even to act as 'honest broker' between Washington and Moscow, and encouraged a conflict to concentrate into war in its heartlands. Uncritical alignment with the 'Atlantic' community, in other words with Washington's policies, deprived it of credibility with Moscow. Instead, the honest-broker role was taken by Germany, although even here the Atlanticists used the Ukraine crisis to attack the traditional moderation of the Social Democrats (see below).

The continued crucial role of the member states in conducting their own foreign policy has been accentuated. The divergence of national views in the EU remains one of its characteristic features, and while calls for more centralisation are understandable, given the experience of the Ukrainian crisis it is now clear that this would be extremely dangerous. Better to have 28 voices pulling in different directions than one voice making crucial and dangerous mistakes. The Poles and the Lithuanians did little except to amplify the crisis, while the British only added fuel to an already raging fire. As for France, under Sarkozy the country had swung into alignment with US global positions, and this trend was reinforced by his successor. Nevertheless,

echoes of the proud tradition of Gaullist independence remained, as in President Hollande's invitation to Putin to attend the D-Day commemorations in June 2014, at which time he facilitated the meeting with the newly elected Poroshenko.

The Ukraine crisis divided Germany like few other international issues. With its deep involvement in the Russian market, the business community was obviously leery of imposing damaging sanctions. As I argued earlier, this was not a matter of venality trumping principle, but the very idea of sanctions as a mode of regulating international conflict was contested. The new foreign minister of Angela Merkel's restructured Christian Democrat-Social Democratic coalition government, formed in late 2013, was the veteran Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who helped broker the 21 February deal. He was under no illusion about the dangers facing Europe, arguing that it was 'the worst crisis since the end of the Cold War'. He warned that Russia was 'playing a dangerous game with potentially dramatic consequences', not least for Russia itself. When asked about the need for NATO to revisit its strategic defence planning, he insisted: 'There is no military solution to the conflict in Ukraine. Even if it can sometimes be frustrating, I am firmly convinced that only tenacious diplomatic work can bring us any closer to a solution.'⁶¹

The long-term 'special relationship' between Russia and Germany faced unprecedented strain, especially since much of the discourse hit a sensitive spot by drawing the false analogy between pre-war Nazi German behaviour and Putin's alleged 'expansionist' ambitions. A three-page letter to parliamentarians on 18 August revealed how the Ukraine crisis forced Germany to make a choice between Atlanticist – including Wider European – commitments, and its traditional role as mediator between Russia and Europe. Sigmar Gabriel, leader of the Social Democratic Party and minister for economic affairs and energy, Wolfgang Schäuble, federal minister of finance, and Christian Schmidt, food and agriculture minister, repeated the State Department line that Putin was in full control of the 'separatists', and that he failed 'to use his clearly existing influence [...] to convince them of moderation and to secure the borders in Europe that are accepted through international law'. The letter exposed the tension between Germany's commitment to 'European' positions and its ability to act as an independent arbitrator:

From the very beginning, we pursued a common European position in order to meet this challenge. It is also thanks to our efforts that Europe has found a clear, common position. We want a political solution to the conflict in Ukraine. Yet this also means that we are ready to take all necessary steps, together and in solidarity – including all sectors and member states – to lend weight to our position.⁶²

Germany's special understanding of and responsibility to temper conflict in the East through intelligent engagement and dialogue was questioned. The German Atlanticists used the Ukraine crisis to consolidate their position, not only attacking the pragmatism of the Steinmeier line but more fundamentally repudiating the long German tradition of 'special relations' with Russia, in a line from Bismarck through Ostpolitik, the peace movement of the 1970s and 1980s, and on to the contemporary business leaders for whom Russia is not just a market but an active partner in a European developmental project.

The Poles also demonstrated their distrust of European institutions in their desire to gain US security guarantees. As a perceptive commentary noted:

I have no doubt that Polish foreign minister Radek Sikorski's recent lament that the alliance with the United States is 'worthless' is driven by his despondency that the United States is not sending greater quantities of men and materiel to further his pet project, the [...] Eastern Partnership. Sikorski has many admirable qualities, not least his willingness to act as the EU's principal booster [...] but his perhaps entirely understandable Russophobia has caused him to act in ways that are contrary to the [European] Union's well-being, to say nothing of its longevity.⁶³

The destructive Russophobia of new Europe undermined the credibility and coherence of the EU as a whole. It had been anticipated that the new members would be 'socialised' in the ways of the EU, but, instead, the EU was in danger of reverse socialisation – incorporating the axiological dynamics and virulent neo-liberal free marketism of some new members, accompanied by their prioritisation of Atlantic security over EU social solidarity.

The Ukraine crisis has created a new and irreparable dividing line across the heart of the continent. In the words of a recent study: 'The idea of co-operation in the region is dead – at least for the foreseeable future.'⁶⁴ What had once been described as the 'common neighbourhood' now became the 'contested neighbourhood'. Almost universally the proposed remedies only deepen the tensions that provoked the crisis. The EaP had indeed been 'an exercise in ambiguity', a relatively low-cost effort that was 'neither a substitute for EU membership nor a prelude to it', condemned as being too technocratic and failing to 'do enough to protect the countries caught between Brussels and Moscow'.⁶⁵ More accurately, the EaP was both too bureaucratic and too axiological, setting up a structure of competition with Moscow grounded in the belief that it was axiomatic that the advance of EU governance and trade to the East was of unquestionably benign and progressive purport, irrespective of historical context. The ENP now needed to be rethought to create stronger bilateral political partnerships

combined with functionalist multilateral strategies to cover sectoral issues, such as energy security, visa-free travel and judicial reform.

Compromise and balancing are the essence of EU politics, but the Ukraine crisis undermined its credibility as an international actor. It failed to enunciate a European perspective and instead was reduced to no more than a junior partner of the Atlantic alliance, which in turn had become little more than an extended platform for the Washington hawks. The EU's normative agenda was inverted, and instead of bringing peoples and nations together, it acted as yet another instrument of discord. The EU is all about dialogue or else it is nothing, yet as the Ukraine crisis dragged on the EU simply imported the language of sanctions, threats and warnings, even after a ceasefire was agreed on 5 September 2014. The EU allowed the very notion of 'dialogue' to be discredited and, indeed, to become a dirty word. Critics of the EU who had considered it to be just another expression of Cold War politics were vindicated, while those who believed that it could pursue a transformative agenda for continental peace were left disappointed.

THE COLD PEACE

Norman Angell in *The Great Illusion* (1909) argued that war between the industrial powers would be futile and economically disruptive, although he did not argue that such conflict was impossible. On all counts he was proved right. In the post-Cold War era the highly contested 'democratic peace' thesis has gone one step further to argue that *democratic* states do not go to war with each other, an argument that hinges on how one defines a democratic state. In short, a great range of literature suggests that in one way or another classical geopolitics and the realist appreciation of world politics as the endless struggle for power, status and recognition have given way to a liberal-internationalist system in which institutions will mediate conflict and trade will temper national rivalries. This was another great illusion, but it would be a mistake to suggest that the Ukraine crisis signalled the 'return' of geopolitics: that had never gone away. The reality of great-power politics is at the very heart of Atlanticism, although couched in the language of universalism and cloaked in the benign practices of global governance. For its allies and associates the *pax Americana* delivered massive public goods in the form of peace and trade (the 'first' US), albeit riven by inequality and policing operations to avoid defections from within and to pacify outliers (the 'second' US).

Ultimately, the Ukraine crisis was about Russia's refusal to submit itself to Atlanticist hegemony and global dominance. As I argued earlier, the challenge was at most partial,

and certainly not intended as a frontal challenge. Russia's neo-revisionism sought to negotiate a path between classical notions of sovereignty and great-power status and adaptation to the norms of a globalising world and the realities of the global balance of power. This balancing act has catastrophically failed in 2014. Russia's neo-revisionism assumed that there was space in which it could sustain its 'quiet rise', on the Chinese model; but Europe is not Asia, and instead Russia has found itself on the frontline of the Atlantic system. Assuming that the EU could police its own borders, the US had begun to 'pivot to the East' to confront China. Instead, the Ukraine crisis drew it back sharply to confront the challenger on its borderlands in Europe.

However, this is not a second Cold War. Russia is neither a consistent ideological nor strategic foe. Instead, cooperation has continued over Afghanistan – the Northern Distribution Network across Russia continued to channel 40 per cent of supplies and personnel to and from Afghanistan throughout the Ukraine crisis – and in the Middle East, and there have even been signs of cooperation over Syria in the face of the Islamic State threat. But the structural cold peace remains unresolved. A cold peace is an unresolved geopolitical conflict that retains the potential to become a full-scale war or to be resolved through some process of negotiation. The dynamics of the current cold peace are vividly described by John Mearsheimer, an international-relations scholar in the realist tradition. He notes that imposing sanctions and increasing support for the new Kiev government were a mistake and were 'based on the same faulty logic that helped precipitate the crisis. Instead of resolving the dispute, it will lead to more trouble.'

Mearsheimer excoriated Washington's attempts to absolve itself of responsibility for provoking the crisis by placing all the blame on Putin and claiming that his motives were illegitimate: 'This is wrong. Washington played a key role in precipitating this dangerous situation, and Mr. Putin's behaviour is motivated by the same geopolitical considerations that influence all great powers, including the United States.' For Mearsheimer: 'The taproot of the current crisis is NATO expansion and Washington's commitment to move Ukraine out of Moscow's orbit and integrate it into the West.' The US then made the 'fatal mistake' of backing the protesters when Yanukovich had decided to accept the better deal on offer from Russia. Mearsheimer understood Putin's concerns about the new government in Ukraine, which he viewed as

a direct threat to Russia's core strategic interests. Who can blame him? After all, the United States, which has been unable to leave the Cold War behind, has treated Russia as a potential threat since the early 1990s and ignored its protests about NATO's expansion and its objections to American plans to build missile defense systems in Eastern Europe.

He called on Obama to think more like a strategist than a lawyer, and to acknowledge Russia's security interests by recognising that Georgia and Ukraine would not become NATO members, and that 'Ukraine should become neutral between East and West'.⁶⁶

In a later article, in *Foreign Affairs*, Mearsheimer developed his argument, now including America's European allies in the circle of blame. They were 'blindsided by events' because 'they subscribe to a flawed view of international politics', believing that the logic of realism was no longer relevant and that Europe could be 'kept whole and free on the basis of such liberal principles as the rule of law, economic interdependence, and democracy'.⁶⁷ These principles have indeed gained added weight in the era of 'globalisation', but, as I have argued, realpolitik and geopolitics remained relevant and represents the other half of the walnut of American hegemony. With the EU's enlargement to the contested frontier zone of Eastern Europe, it had also inadvertently become an adversarial geopolitical player, even though it lacked the language and the means to manage such a role. Mearsheimer argues that the Ukraine crisis demonstrated that realpolitik remains relevant, but also exposed the contradictions between the two aspects of Western power – liberal universalism and hegemonic geopolitical power – which are particularly acute in the case of the EU. The enlarged EU simply had no way of dealing with the aggressive geopolitical stance adopted by some of its newer members, and this then spectacularly blew back to destroy the credibility of the EU's normative proclamations. The more the contradiction was exposed, the more aggressive it became in advocating sanctions and Russia's punishment.

In Mearsheimer's view, the march to the East of NATO and the EU was perceived as a threat of the first order to Russia's strategic interests. As he puts it: 'The West's triple package of policies – NATO enlargement, EU expansion, and democracy promotion – added fuel to a fire waiting to ignite'.⁶⁸ The fundamental point for Mearsheimer is that 'Washington may not like Moscow's position, but it should understand the logic behind it'. As he and so many others argue: 'the United States does not tolerate distant great powers deploying military forces anywhere in the Western hemisphere, much less on its borders'.⁶⁹ Washington's rhetoric in favour of 'sovereign' choices of independent countries rings rather hollow in light of the 60 years of sanctions it has imposed on neighbouring Cuba, and the use of the Guantánamo naval base it seized from the country to conduct extra-legal activities. As Mearsheimer remarks, most realists were opposed to NATO expansion, and he recalls George Kennan's strictures on the folly of enlargement.

The standard response is that the West went out of its way to assuage Russian concerns. It denied that enlargement had anything to do with containment, and sought to engage Russia in multiple formats. The Permanent Joint Council of 1997 had been enhanced by the establishment of the NATO–Russia Council (NRC)

in 2002. No permanent military forces were deployed in the post-Communist member states, and in 2009 the planned missile defence system was reoriented away from Poland and the Czech Republic to Romania and warships, and its fourth array redeployed to Alaska. In addition, as we have seen, the commitment in early 1990 not to enlarge NATO concerned only the military status of the eastern part of Germany after unification, although it was agreed that the united Germany would be in NATO. It is also argued that any commitments given in 1990, when the USSR and the Warsaw Pact still existed, were somehow voided by their disintegration the following year, but all commitments given by and to Russia, as the 'continuer' state, remained in force. This is tacitly accepted by initial American resistance to accede to the demands of the newly liberated Eastern European countries to join NATO. Thus the West, rather than aggressively expanding, had in fact been remarkably restrained and had resisted some of the more extreme demands of its new Eastern European members. Indeed, they complained long and hard about being neglected, especially when America allegedly adopted a post-Atlanticist stance with its 'pivot' to Asia. In any case, Russia's nuclear weapons gave it a certain security, since, irrespective of how many neighbours joined, a NATO attack is almost inconceivable. None of this was enough to allay Russian fears, to the great frustration of the partisans of the 'reset' and other attempts to 'engage' Russia on Western terms.

However, as Mearsheimer puts it: 'it is the Russians, not the West, who ultimately get to decide what counts as a threat to them'.⁷⁰ While indeed there were attempts to mitigate the consequences of the asymmetrical end of the Cold War, the brute fact that one side was consolidating its victory could not be avoided. Engagement ultimately meant co-optation, which in turn meant that to join the victorious alliance Russia would have to lose elements of its autonomy. For two decades Russian appeals to multipolarity were code for the attempt to 'democratise' the structure of hegemonic power. Thus neither side was willing to change in ways that would have allowed a genuinely new cooperative community to emerge. Russia remained distrusted as long as it demanded changes to the system that it was being invited to join; and the West was distrusted as long as the terms of engagement meant a transformation of Russia itself. In the Cold War this had ended in a stable compromise known as 'peaceful coexistence', the uneasy acceptance of difference and the devising of means to manage the conflict. These were dismantled at the end of the Cold War, while the sustainability of difference was questioned. This was the impasse that gave rise to confrontation over Ukraine.

mechanism for the dissolution of parliament came into play. The departure of UDAR and Svoboda broke up the ruling coalition, and if another one was not formed within 30 days then the president had the right to dissolve parliament. Poroshenko welcomed the move, noting that it would open the door to new elections: 'Society wants a full reset of state authorities.'¹ Yatsenyuk's resignation was prompted by parliament's failure to pass legislation to increase military expenditure and to regulate the energy sphere amid the collapse of the governing coalition. In early July parliament had rejected a bill that would have lifted restrictions on the UGTS leasing out its underground gas-storage reservoirs. The cabinet had earlier agreed on the possibility of establishing two public joint-stock companies – 'main gas pipelines of Ukraine' and 'underground storage facilities of Ukraine' – which would be fully owned by the state. The reform also allowed the government to establish a gas-distribution system operator that could be 49 per cent owned by investors from the US or the EU.

On 25 August Poroshenko dissolved the Rada and announced that new parliamentary elections would be held on 26 October, and that local-government elections would be held on the same day (in the event, the latter were postponed to 7 December). Poroshenko argued that the existing Rada was 'Yanukovich's pillar' for a year and a half, and accused the MPs of being responsible for the Euromaidan tragedy and the killing of the 'heavenly hundred'.² He insisted that it was 'no secret that there is a fifth column comprising dozens of MPs'. There had been a plan for the election to be held through an open proportional system, but the mixed electoral system was retained since it suited Poroshenko. Half the 450 MPs were elected through a closed-list proportional system with a 5 per cent threshold, and the other half in single-mandate majority seats – a group who would undoubtedly tend to gather behind the president. Poroshenko was clearly looking for a support base in parliament. However, in ridding himself of MPs who were previously loyal to Yanukovich, Poroshenko created a whole new set of problems, above all the election of a bloc of populist nationalists. With the rise of a militant Ukrainian nationalism, the new Verkhovna Rada found itself populated by anti-liberals of various stripes. The almost 8 per cent won by the militant populist Oleg Lyashko in the presidential election was a harbinger of what was to come.

Social tensions were rising as conditions deteriorated. The government was shedding state employees, utility costs were rising, power cuts were becoming more frequent and hot-water supplies were reduced as municipalities tried to save natural gas, and the economy in general was in deep difficulty. The IMF loan of \$17 billion was only a drop in the ocean of the support Ukraine needed, but it was clear that the EU would not bail out Ukraine – Germany was not even prepared to fund other Eurozone members. The US planned to spend \$1 trillion on modernising its nuclear arsenal in response to the non-existent threat from Russia, although just a small

CHAPTER 10

THE FUTURE OF UKRAINE

What was it all for? This is the question that faced Europe in 1918, and does so once again. One hundred years ago Europe 'sleepwalked' into war, and now a century later comfortable illusions that 'globalisation' would render another major international conflict of that sort impossible were nullified. Instead, the architecture of European and global security was found to be wanting. The obvious response was simply to blame Putin and Russia, and thus obviate the necessity of examining the foundations of a system that had provoked the most dangerous confrontation since the end of the Cold War, if not since the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962. I have argued that the heart of the conflict was the coming together of two major processes: the 'Ukraine' crisis as a particular manifestation of the inadequacies of the structure of international politics; and the 'Ukrainian' crisis, the domestic contradictions that had been bubbling away since independence in 1991 but with roots that go all the way back to the emergence of Rus and the division between its Kievan and Muscovite manifestations, between Ukrainism and Malorussianism. These two crises combined, with devastating effect.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

Poroshenko promised early elections, but with the restoration of the 2004 constitution he no longer has the power to dissolve parliament and has been forced to work with a rump assembly elected in very different circumstances. Filled with former supporters of Yanukovich, the regime has had to fight hard to get its legislation adopted. With the formal resignation of the Yatsenyuk government on 24 July, the constitutional

portion of that would make a big difference to Ukraine. Frustration at the slow pace of change prompted the resignation of the economy minister, Pavlo Sheremeta, on 21 August, warning that the government acted 'like a predator towards business'.³ Successive waves of the mobilisation of army reservists were becoming increasingly unpopular, sparking protests in many regions. The war in the Donbas had ended in stalemate, amid a catastrophic loss of life, widespread destruction and enduring recriminations.

The civil-society bodies spawned by the protest movement, notably the Maidan Public Council, the Maidan All-Ukrainian Union, the Civic Sector of Maidan and the Reanimation Package of Reforms, continued to monitor the work of the new authorities. On the whole they remained aloof from formal politics, and few set up parties themselves. When they did, success was far from guaranteed. The Democratic Alliance won just two seats on the Kiev city council in May.⁴ Right Sector continued its struggle with the interior ministry, making demands in August for the ministry to be purged and for all criminal cases against its own members to be closed. Dmytro Yarosh's demands were met in part, and thus he agreed to continue fighting in the east and not to march on Kiev. This was a foretaste of the threat that the armed militias could pose to the Kiev administration. Battle-hardened and angry, a new and more violent 'Maidan' was a permanent threat.

This spilled over into the violence during the parliamentary campaign. On 16 September the MP Vitaly Zhuravsky, a member of the Economic Development Party, was seized as he left parliament and placed in a rubbish bin. In Odessa on 30 September the former PoR MP Nestor Shufrych was beaten by activists carrying the Bandera flag, in an action that was repeated with others and came to be known as 'people's lustration'. The election campaign has been accompanied by an atmosphere of intimidation, but ultimately reflects Ukraine's deeply democratic, although increasingly polarised, culture. The 12 majoritarian seats in Crimea have not been contested, and another 15 (of 32) in the insurgent-controlled parts of the Donbas have also not been represented. The insurgent-controlled part of the Donbas held its own legislative elections on 2 November.

At 52.4 per cent, turnout was lower than for the 2012 parliamentary elections and the presidential elections earlier in the year, with voters from Crimea and Donbas missing. In the event, only six parties of the 29 contesting the election crossed the 5 per cent threshold (Table 10.1), and once again there was clear division in preferences between the west of the country and the south-east. Poroshenko's party, Solidarity, was the core of the Petro Poroshenko Bloc, which allied with Klitschko's UDAR. In an echo of the personal feuds that had torn the Orange government apart in the mid-2000s, Yatsenyuk refused to join Poroshenko's bloc. The president refused to place

TABLE 10.1 Parliamentary election of 26 October 2014

PARTY/ GROUPING	VOTE (% AND TOTAL)	PV SEATS	CONSTITUENCY SEATS	TOTAL SEATS
Narodny Front (People's Front)	22.14% (3,488,144)	64	18	82
Arseniy Yatsenyuk/ Alexander Turchynov				
Blok Petra Poroshenka (Petro Poroshenko Bloc)	21.82% (3,437,521)	63	70	132
(Solidarity and UDAR)				
Samopomoch/Samopomich (Self-reliance)	10.97% (1,729,271)	32	1	33
(Andriy Sadovy)				
Blok Oppozitsionyi (Opposition Bloc)	9.43% (1,486,203)	27	2	29
(Yury Boiko)				
Radikalnaya Partiya (Radical Party)	7.44% (1,173,131)	22	—	22
(Oleg Lyashko)				
Batkvishchyna (Fatherland)	5.68% (894,877)	17	2	19
(Yulia Tymoshenko)				
5% THRESHOLD				
Svoboda (Freedom)	4.71% (742,022)	—	6	6
(Oleg Tyagnybok)				
Komunistichna Partiya Ukrainy (Communist Party of Ukraine)	3.88% (611,923)	—	—	—
(Petro Symonenko)				
Sylha Ukraina (Strong Ukraine)	3.11% (491,471)	—	—	—
(Sergei Tigipko)				
Grazhdanskaya Pozitsiya (Civic Position)	3.11% (489,523)	—	1	1
(Anatoly Grytsenko)				
Agrarian Party 'Zastup' (Vira Ulianchenko)	2.65% (418,301)	—	1	—
Pravy Sektor (Right Sector)	1.8% (284,943)	—	1	1
(Dmytro Yarosh)				
Independents	—	—	94	94
Unfilled seats	—	—	27	27
Others	3.91% (506,541)	—	2	4

him in the number-one spot or to change the name of his bloc to include Yatsenyuk's grouping. Instead, Yatsenyuk, with Alexander Turchynov, campaigned at the head of the People's Front. Reflecting his hard-line position, Yatsenyuk allied with militia leaders and included Andriy Biletsky, leader of the Azov battalion and the far-right Patriots of Ukraine, and soon became known as 'the party of war' because of its criticism of Poroshenko's Donbas peace plan. The Petro Poroshenko Bloc benefited from the presidential effect, but its hopes of being able to govern on its own were disappointed, coming a close second in the poll. The People's Front did remarkably well, winning over a fifth of the vote, reinforced by a sizeable contingent of constituency MPs. This group would be an uncomfortable ally for Poroshenko, and its strong showing forced the president once again to appoint Yatsenyuk as prime minister and accept much of their programme as the basis of the coalition agreement. The Christian Democrat Samopomich (Self-reliance) party, headed by the mayor of Lviv Andriy Sadovy, did remarkably well, coming third with 11 per cent. The party attracted businesspeople and professionals from western and central Ukraine. Tymoshenko had lost much of her political lustre, and her Batkivshchyna party was clearly a waning force. To compensate, Tymoshenko cranked up the populist rhetoric and condemned the Donbas peace plan, arguing that it represented capitulation to Putin. The party now squeaked in with just 5.7 per cent of the vote. These four parties are considered to be 'pro-European', and despite their differences offered a solid bloc in support of pro-European reform.

Lyashko's Radical Party benefited from the polarised atmosphere in the country, and figured prominently on the Inter television channels owned by Firtash and Yanukovych's former chief of staff, Sergei Levochkin. Lyashko absorbed much of the populist vote that would otherwise have gone to Yarosh's Right Sector and Tyagnybok's Svoboda. Several prominent paramilitary commanders entered the lists, including Semen Semchenko, the commander of the Donbas battalion. Given the plethora of choice on the nationalist wing, Svoboda lost ground and it failed to cross the 5 per cent threshold.

Electoral support for the old governing group, the Party of Regions (PoR) and the Communists (CPU), collapsed. The CPU's faction put up some candidates, despite having lost its status as a faction in parliament, but in the event, the party failed to clear the 5 per cent threshold. More than half of the PoR's former 207 MPs had migrated to various centrist groupings or became independents. The rump PoR, now headed by Mikhail Chechetov, did not run a party list but put up some candidates in individual constituencies. A number of successor parties emerged, including the Economic Development Party, which hoped to pick up the 'pro-Russian' vote in the south and east. There were attempts by Medvedchuk to forge a new 'pro-Russian' party, led by Shufrych, but progress was halting. The Opposition Bloc headed by former fuel and energy minister Yury Boiko, who is considered to be close to Dmytro Firtash, brought

together some of these groups and won nearly 10 per cent. The group represented the only real opposition to Orangist forces in the new parliament.

The new Rada had only 423 members, instead of the stipulated 450, because no elections were held in Crimea (10 seats), Sevastopol (2 seats), or the 'special zone' parts of the Donbas (9 from Donetsk and 6 from Lugansk). Over half (55 per cent) of the MPs were new to the Rada, an unprecedented turnover for the house. Parliament as a whole was more pro-European, with an influx of journalists, civil-society activists and commanders of the volunteer battalions. The vote was generally recognised as free and fair, although interpreted in different ways. For Barroso the election was considered a 'vic-tory of democracy' and a vindication of a pro-European agenda, while Lavrov stressed:

It is very important for us that Ukraine finally will have authorities which do not fight one another, do not drag Ukraine to the West or to the East but which will deal with the real problems facing the country.⁵

No single party could govern on its own, and even before the final tally had been announced, Poroshenko and Yatsenyuk began coalition negotiations. The radical tone of the new assembly rendered it as intractable as the one it replaced, while the influx of a mass of uncontrollable independent MPs from the single-mandate seats added to the fluidity, prompting speculation that the new convocation would be unlikely to see out its four-year term. The prime minister had an extensive range of powers at his disposal, but lacked the legitimacy enjoyed by the president through national direct election. In late November a five-party coalition comprising the Petro Poroshenko Bloc, the Popular Front, Samopomich, the Radical Party and Batkivshchyna was created, controlling 288 of the 423 seats in the Rada. Yatsenyuk was once again appointed prime minister. The coalition agreement was expansive on its geopolitical ambitions, including NATO membership, but short on concrete economic reform plans. The new parliament overwhelmingly reflected the views of western Ukraine, eliminating the prospects for the adoption of a more pluralistic model of state development. Instead, the monist impulse would be strengthened.

The success of the People's Front reduced the chances for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the south-eastern part of the country or for a decrease in tensions with Russia. On 2 November the breakaway regions of the Donbas held regional elections of their own. At the time of the Minsk accords the two Donbas republics controlled a territory of 16,000 square kilometres with a population of 4.5 million, out of a total population of 6.5 million in the Donbas. Their territory included the two regional centres of Donetsk and Lugansk as well as the important towns of Makeevka, Gorlovka and Novoazovsk (Map 6). The 5 September Minsk agreement had suggested that these

elections would be held 'according to Ukrainian legislation', but the Kiev government had then unilaterally decided that they would be held on 7 December. The insurgent regimes argued that elections needed to be held earlier, to provide them with the necessary popular legitimacy in negotiations. Alexander Zakharchenko easily won the election in Donetsk region with 79 per cent of the vote, while in Lugansk Igor Plotnitsky won over 63 per cent. Russia 'respected' the outcome of the elections, despite protests from the West, which considered the ballot illegitimate. In a furious reaction, Poroshenko denounced the ballot as an 'electoral farce' and announced that he would scrap the law that offered areas in the east, including those controlled by the rebels, 'special status'. Soon after, the government announced that it would withdraw all state services in 'occupied' areas, including social welfare and pension payments and state salaries for teachers and doctors. On 15 November banking services were cut off, accompanied by warnings that gas supplies could also be stopped. The Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics began to develop the sinews of statehood, although there was little chance of them being recognised. Kiev's refusal to hold direct talks with the separatists, who they called 'terrorists' and 'bandits', stymied the development of the peace process and even the basic normalisation of daily life. Kiev refused to recognise negotiating partners in the Donbas. The ceasefire was looking increasingly shaky, and with the victory of the more militant parties in the national election, the resumption of full-scale hostilities was possible at any time. Neither side was ready to commit to a genuine dialogue.

On 20 November the UN reported that 4,132 civilians and over 1,100 servicemen had been killed and over 9,000 injured since the fighting in the Donbas had begun, with on average 13 killed every day since the ceasefire. The stand-off with Russia would also continue. The sanctions regime institutionalised a pattern of Western pressure that exceeded even the practices of the Cold War. Their implicit goal was not simply to modify Russian policy but to achieve regime change. Russia was held hostage to developments in Ukraine for which it was at most only tangentially responsible. It was clear that Putin sought an end to the conflict in the Donbas, but it was equally clear that the situation had developed to a point where the military defeat of the insurgency was a red line that Russia would not allow to be crossed. Russian nationalists condemned the Minsk accords and viewed Novorossiia as a model for the future of Russia. The EU geared up for a long-term competition with Russia for cultural and geopolitical hegemony over the European 'borderlands', while in Washington pro-war sentiments were further strengthened by the Republican victories in the mid-term Congressional elections in November 2014. The Western leaders refused to accept that the conflict was an internal one and required domestic dialogue to be resolved. Until they did so, Ukraine was doomed to further conflict and economic decline while the world headed towards a period of intensified global confrontation.

UKRAINIAN OPTIONS

The Ukrainian crisis is multifaceted and complex, and is certainly far from over. I have focused on the political aspects, above all the tension between monist and pluralist models of state development, but these were accompanied by deep-rooted economic and social problems. The IMF loan of April 2014 was little more than a sticking plaster on a gaping wound. The country would need at least \$35 billion in 2014–15 just to bridge the immediate funding gaps. Ukraine is a country of enormous potential, with a talented, dynamic and educated people and rich natural resources, yet for over two decades, since independence, it has been effectively locked in a developmental stalemate. Both the Orange and February revolutions were attempts to break out of the deadlock, but they only exacerbated the problems and further destabilised what was already a weak state. The economy would need massive external support to survive, let alone to restructure, while the polity was eroded by corruption, arbitrariness and state capture. Rather than acting as an independent adjudicator ruled by law, the state became an instrument in the struggle for the right to determine what it is to be Ukrainian and to redistribute property, resources and rents.

The system of oligarchic power in itself did not prevent development, although plutocratic struggles, which typically assume political coloration, certainly did impede rational economic policy making. The opening up of the Ukrainian market to foreign capital could break the stranglehold of the oligarchs, but would bring in its train a new set of problems, above all associated with equality, inclusion and independence. The 700 pages of the EU Association Agreement outlined a roadmap for economic and social modernisation, but it did not resolve the fundamental question about the nature of the polity. The political crisis could only be resolved through a synthesis of the Ukrainising and Malorussian traditions, taking the best of monism and pluralism to renew the Ukrainian state. For this to be achieved, contradiction would have to give way to dialogue, and everyone would have to give up a little in order to create a lot. Dialogue in this context is not a vacuous word but represents a substantive programme of reconciliation and development. It entails a positive commitment to compromise for the greater good of a country in which everyone could feel comfortable. Various federalist or consociational models have been advanced, but the February revolution only intensified monist paradigms.

This was resolutely impeded by the Ukraine crisis, the endlessly unresolved problem of the country's international status and orientation. The asymmetrical end of the Cold War endowed European international politics with a competitive dynamic, at times hidden and managed, but by the late 2000s assuming an increasingly conflictual character. Ukraine was torn between two increasingly hostile poles, which only

exacerbated its internal divisions. The 'multi-vector' policy was one way of managing the tension, but at its heart this approach was a negative one. Equally, the attempt to insulate Ukrainian national capital from Western and Russian corporate interests was insular and short-sighted, and did little to enhance the competitiveness of the country's economy. The Chinese gambit only illustrated how desperate things had become. Both Moscow and Washington sought to align Ukraine with their respective axes, while the failure of Brussels to enunciate a genuinely continental vision meant that ultimately its Wider European policy collapsed into a crude Atlanticism, and thus lost its political and security autonomy. Support for the Greater European vision would have offered Ukraine a way to reconcile its diverging orientations (as it would have for Europe as a whole), accompanied by a greater confidence in asserting a positive vision of neutrality (as Austria and Finland had done earlier). A substantive stance of non-alignment (working with countries such as India and Indonesia) would have enhanced Ukraine's international status as the voice of the developing world. Instead, by 2013 the choice was reduced to the primitive one: between EU-style Atlanticism and a greater Russian inflection of Eurasian integration. Caught between the hammer and the anvil, a new revolution was forged.

Lacking was a genuinely Ukrainian voice in the country's destiny. Its voicelessness derived from the factors just discussed, and the country became a bit player in its own drama. The events of 2013–14 have only made everything worse, and it is not clear if the developmental path outlined above can be retrieved. For the great powers Ukraine was just a pawn on Brzezinski's infamous chessboard, and too many of Ukraine's leaders simply aligned themselves with its simplistic black-and-white arrangement, whereas an infinity of options lay in the field of grey. The internal division between East and West is real, but only one facet of a highly complex pattern of regional, class, ethnic and cultural interactions. The various political traditions were inflamed by the events after November 2013 and exacerbated by the Maidan revolution. The seizure of power by radical nationalists was considered not only unconstitutional but also illegitimate by one group, while for others it represented a new founding moment of the state. Ukraine will only have a stable future if its complex reality is mediated through a domestic constitutional settlement that incorporates diversity within the framework of a viable state aligned with a regulated international status.

Instead, the country was faced with internal disintegration and acted as the spark for a new international conflagration. The chair of the Federation Council, Valentina Matvienko, warned that Ukraine was in danger of turning into a Middle East in Europe, a permanent source of instability.⁶ Too many problems were externalised, and thus the path to their resolution blocked. The Ukrainian media came together, if only on one thing – the denunciation of Putin and Russia. Much of this was greatly exaggerated,

although in conditions of conflict in part understandable. However, anyone who has followed the Ukrainian media over the years will have noticed a proclivity for blaming Russia for any misfortune, and after the Crimean events this was given free licence. This included a rather crude campaign of personal denigration of Putin, which was demeaning for all concerned and avoided asking hard questions about the country's own failures. Much has been made about the way that Ukraine came together in the face of adversity, and how even many traditionally Russophone Ukrainians now made a point of speaking in Ukrainian to signal their newly reinforced solidarity with the fate of the nation. This, too, is understandable, and in many cases signalled a new sense of civic responsibility and a revived patriotism, as well as engagement in civil-society activism. This activism also took the form of volunteering to join battalions that went to kill other Ukrainians. Once again, this was simply another form of externalisation – blaming some 'other' for the self-inflicted woes of the country. The reinforcement of a monist, Ukrainising vision of nationhood only exacerbated the tensions that provoked the deep crisis of statehood, while the ostensible pluralism of those in the Malorussian tradition increasingly assumed retrograde imperial forms as the idea of *Novorossiya* took hold.

Equally, Ukraine needed to insulate itself from great-power conflicts: to move from being a pawn to a player. Washington, in thrall to its nineteenth-century geopolitical representations but tempered by twenty-first-century liberal universalism, had consistently impeded the formation of some substantive Ukrainian–Russian alliance, which would have created a powerful market of some 200 million people and harnessed the dynamism of the two countries to purposes that may not always have served the interests of the Atlantic alliance. There were powerful domestic constituencies who also defined Ukraine's future in terms of a negation – the reduction of Russian influence. The consequences of such policies were obviously suicidal, as long recognised by pragmatists and 'resolvers', while ideological representations of democratism posed their own dangers. The triumph of liberal aspirations and Atlanticist orientations now blocked the path of dialogue, reconciliation, neutrality and non-alignment. Instead, the drive was in the opposite direction. On 28 August the NSDC approved the cancellation of Ukraine's non-aligned status, while at the same time restoring conscription across the country. The next day Rasmussen stressed that Ukraine was free to pursue NATO membership, even though polls still showed that a majority, despite all the tribulations and the upsurge in patriotic sentiments, still opposed joining.⁷ Although accession was not immediately on the cards, it was clear that territorial disputes would not be an insuperable obstacle.

A minor industry has developed proposing various plans to resolve the crisis. The task of recuperation will involve repairing many damaged relationships, but there

(1) A commitment, embedded in the constitution, by Ukrainian political leaders to power-sharing that prevents the domination of one sector of the country by the other (2) A federal structure in function that is not necessarily in name (3) Acceptance of Russian as an official language along with Ukrainian in regions with a significant number of Russian speakers - ideally in the entire country; and (4) A credible assurance that Ukraine will not become a member of a military alliance hostile to Russia, perhaps by requiring the vote of a supermajority as a prerequisite to joining any military alliance.¹¹

The mask is coming off. In these acts - these recent acts [the alleged movement of Russian forces into the Donbas] - we see Russian actions for what they are: a deliberate effort to support, and now fight alongside, illegal separatists in another sovereign country.

She warned that if unchecked, the damage that Russia's blatant disregard for the international order poses is much, much greater, and insisted: "How can we tell these countries that border Russia that their peace and sovereignty is [sic] guaranteed if we do not make our message heard on Ukraine?" This was not the voice of a diplomat but that of an ideologue who failed to understand even the very basic elements of what had provoked the crisis, and instead called for a war until the end of firm against Russia. It also pushed Ukraine to the brink of political, economic and social collapse.

Kiev sought to reassert its control over the national territory, but the military operation undermined what was already limited trust in the new Kiev authorities in the region. The mayor of Donetsk, Alexander Lukyanenko, had run the city from Kiev during the war and measured the scale of the damage: 'Over 900 buildings in Donetsk have been damaged or destroyed, including 35 schools, 17 kindergartens and many enterprises, especially mining [...] and a number of energy facilities - electrical power sub-stations - for good'. It was particularly hard to ensure the regular payment of pensions.⁹ Equally, the virulent language applied against the insurgency alienated much of the rest of the country from the region, seeing it as troublesome and in need of pacification. From the other side, the Ukrainian events forced Russia to reassess relations with what had long been considered a 'fraternal' neighbour. Polls suggested that a large proportion now considered Ukrainians as enemies. This was a shocking and tragic outcome. Not only was Europe divided, but relations between two countries that shared a long although troubled, history had soured in a spectacular manner. This rests on the shoulders of the current generation of Atlantic and Eastern European leaders.

There is a wide external consensus on the rudiments of a solution. A ratoliever puts it well when he argues: 'Ukraine contains different identities and cannot be ruled uniaxially by one of them alone, or pulled in a single geopolitical direction without risking the breakup of the country itself.'¹⁰ He advocated a federal constitution internally and neutrality abroad. Jack Matlock notes the four key elements:

address the fundamental question about the nature of the Ukrainian state. The plan had merit in effectively recognising the substance of the grievances that provoked the rebellion, but not only did its recommendations mean that the conflict would be effectively frozen, it offered no ideas on how to provide for the constitutional reconciliation of the monist and pluralist traditions through some form of consociationalism and federalism.

Instead of using these various ideas as the basis for dialogue, the Western powers increasingly intensified the axiology that lay at the root of the Ukraine crisis. The telephone diplomacy that characterised the crisis largely consisted of Western leaders reprimanding Putin from the comfort of their offices. The aim was to make Putin see reason, as Obama put it on 29 July when announcing the latest round of sanctions. This approach simply ratcheted up tension, and imposed the burden of change on Russia, as if the West's position were axiomatically correct and above criticism. This is what Samuel Charap calls a 'coercion strategy' that was doomed to fail.¹⁴ The West's desired outcome in Ukraine was neither immutable nor inflexible (for example, NATO enlargement to the country after 2008 was effectively put on hold, although not taken off the table), yet with the consolidation of a Western-backed revolutionary regime after February, it looked as if Russia's historic positions would be irrevocably lost. Russia's fears may well have been exaggerated, but they were not illegitimate. This is why the sanctions strategy was both inept and ineffective, and indeed counterproductive since it only provoked a tougher response from Moscow. The battle between the warriors and the resolvers would continue over the lifting of sanctions. Whereas Obama promised that they could be repealed if Russia followed through on the Donbas peace plan, Yatsenyuk urged them to remain until Kiev's control was restored over the whole territory, including Crimea.

Paul D'Anieri traces the filiation between the Orange Revolution of 2004 and the Maidan revolution of 2014, noting that much the same repertoire of protest activities was employed in both cases, and that the second event was a continuation of the struggle for power that had been first rehearsed in 2004. The battle of the oligarchic clans continued in largely similar forms, although in the second event the EU now emerged as a symbolic rallying cry. The Donetsk group was defeated in 2004, but won in a relative free and fair election in 2010, and thus from this perspective the protests from 2013 'were another move by western Ukrainian forces, supported by Western governments, to seize control of the country'.¹⁵ By early 2014, D'Anieri notes, no shared view of governmental legitimacy existed in Ukraine, with the constitution a plaything of opposing groups and the outcome of elections denied when they came up with the wrong winner. To compensate, direct action and street mobilisation gained a degree of legitimacy that would be unthinkable in London or New York. This

was a genuinely revolutionary situation in which the sinews of state power and the ideological props that sustain them had dissolved. When constituted power tended towards the autocratic and popular power towards the anarchic, the Ukrainian state was in deep crisis. The order associated with the bureaucratic-oligarchic system in that context looked like the best option, and was the one overwhelmingly chosen in the 25 May presidential election. However, this could at best only be a temporary reprieve before the forces unleashed by the revolution once again beat at the gates of the temple of state power.

The Ukrainian crisis raises questions about the coherence of the post-Communist democratic paradigm when faced by a country whose societal, economic and political foundations remain so fundamentally in question. Equally, it is an abnegation to externalise the roots of the Ukraine crisis to the 'rogue' behaviour of Russia, but that crisis stemmed from some of the fundamental contradictions in the liberal-universalist order. If Russia had indeed defected from observance of the rules of that order, then the reasons need to be understood and cannot simply be based on essentialist arguments about the Russian political character or Putin's alleged megalomania. If Russia had not defected but simply wished to be part of a more inclusive understanding and the operation of the order, my argument about Russia's neo-revisionism, then the reasons for this also need to be established. The Ukraine crisis, in this reading, was an aspect of the continuing problems stemming from the asymmetrical end of the Cold War, and it may well not be the last. As for the European context, Slavoj Žižek makes the pertinent point:

The issue isn't whether Ukraine is worthy of Europe, and good enough to enter the EU, but whether today's Europe can meet the aspirations of the Ukrainians. If Ukraine ends up with a mixture of ethnic fundamentalism and liberal capitalism, with oligarchs pulling the strings, it will be as European as Russia (or Hungary) is today.

Žižek notes that the EU probably had not given Ukraine adequate support in its conflict with Russia:

But there is another kind of support which has been even more conspicuously absent: the proposal for any feasible strategy for breaking the deadlock. Europe will be in no position to offer such a strategy until it renews its pledge to the emancipatory core of its history.

In Žižek's view, that includes living 'up to the dream that motivated the protesters on the Maidan'.¹⁶

This dream was a reprise of the aspirations of the anti-Communist revolution in 1989 – a 'return to Europe', good governance and integration in Atlantic structures – but in that year there was no substantive emancipatory agenda. The anti-revolutionary of 1989 only confirmed the power of capital and neo-liberal governmentality, which in the Ukrainian context could well be considered progressive but in global context are profoundly retrograde. Žižek was seduced by the neo-Leninist revolutionary romanticism of an armed people seeking to take control of its destiny, but the reality of the Maidan was deeply anti-democratic. This was not another Paris Commune of 1870, but an attempt to wrest the country from one power system to another. It was a popular revolution but not one that had a substantive vision of the empowerment of people at its heart. There was much talk, as there had been in 1989 about the rebirth of civil society, but he ro on both then and now was little more than a cipher, an empty signifier – to use a term of Žižek's Lacan – to occupy the intellectual space where more creative thinking could take place. The real struggle was not for society, civil or otherwise, but for the impartiality of law and the possibility of strong, just and universal institutions accompanied by dialogism in which all citizens could be included as equals, with their various tongues and manners. The contradictions of the February revolution in the end were those of the whole post-Communist era.

DOES THE END OF THE WOLFHOUND CENTURY

Osip Mandelstam described his era a 'his wolfhound century' but the twenty-first is turning out to be the dog-end century with the chewed-over remnants of the twentieth poisoning international society and the quality of political relationships. The Ukraine crisis has revealed the deep schism between Russia and the West and exposed the failure of the post-Cold War settlement. International politics was characterised by a number of problems that provoked and exacerbated the Ukraine crisis. First, there was the tension between 'Wide' and 'Greater' representation of Europe. The idea of a Common European Home as presented by Gorbachev may have lacked substance, but it reflected the powerful aspiration of the Soviet leader for his country to join the European political mainstream as part of a shared civilisation and political community. Although at the end Russia and the other CIS countries pursued a '1991' rather than '1989' developmental path, they all shared a dream to be part of the 'Greater European community'. European international society does exist in the form of the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the myriad links between the EU and non-member countries that has turned out to be a poor substitute for a genuine process of continental unity.

Alexander Lukin outlines the larger picture and the choices facing Russia. The post-Soviet consensus was based on mutual understanding with the West that both sides would move towards closer co-operation, respect each others interests and make mutual compromises. However, these conditions were met only by Russia. This is a struggle with long-standing concerns but not only the asymmetrical nature of the end of the Cold War, but the continuing imbalance whereby Russia is expected to concede while the West gains ground. Lukin notes that it is the West that is the new technological power, far more than Russia.

In the West, practically everyone believes its ideology [...] This ideology of 'democratism' [...] is quite simple: Western society, albeit not ideal, is nevertheless more perfect than all the others, it is at the forefront of public progress, and the rest of the world should try to use the Western model as we know it. In principle, this is primitive cultural chauvinism which is characteristic of many nations and countries from small tribes to large civilizations which considered themselves the centre of the universe, and all the others were barbarians. The West's foreign policy is based on this belief.

The monism espoused by the dominant nationalising elites in Ukraine has been accentuated by this monism of the West. More than that, the West's civilising mission, in Lukin's view, has sought to incorporate new territories, even if they did not meet the appropriate democratic standards. Economic and political engagement was anticipated in due course to come up to the required standards under the West's benign influence. This also explains 'why radical nationalists in Ukraine remain unnoticed: they are the ones who are acting towards progress and from the historical point of view they can be justified and some of their crimes can even be overlooked.' Russia has refused to subordinate itself to this civilising imperative and thus cannot be incorporated into the ideal of Western society. Echoing my distinction between the projects of 1989 and 1991, Dugin notes: 'This is what makes Russia different from Eastern Europe.'

This is not because Russia's leaders are congenitally opposed to the West, but Russia's whole history militates against simply adapting to an alternative 'imperial' project, in this case succumbing to the West's ideological expansionism in the form of democratism:

Countries close to Russia are being torn apart by the West's ideologized expansion which has already led to the territorial division of Moldova and Georgia, and now Ukraine is falling apart in front of our eyes. [...] the cultural border was drawn across their territories and they could stay undivided only if their leaders would have taken into account the interests of people living in both the regions that gravitate towards Europe and those that would like to preserve historical ties with Russia.

Russia's proposals to resolve the Ukrainian crisis – including the formation of a coalition government taking into account the interests of the south and east; federalisation and neutrality; and the granting of official status to the Russian language – could not be adopted: 'Accepting these proposals would be interpreted by Western ideologists not as a solution that satisfies all sides but as an attempt by

"the bad guys" to slow down Ukraine's movement towards progress, and that is an ideological taboo.¹⁸ The US has sought to create a regime in its image, while Russia has sought to prevent the creation of one hostile to its perceived interests. In classic realist terms, the borderlands have become a power vacuum, and thus the site of competing geopolitical projects.

Russia became a bone in the throat of the Atlantic community, while the EU struggled to recognise the enduring multipolarity of European politics. The EU demonstratively refused to engage with the various projects for Eurasian integration, which was clearly a major mistake. No one pretends that there are not serious governance and human-rights issues in the countries comprising the EEU, but these are not the bloody despotisms presented in much of the Western media. An intelligent policy would have been to understand that classic EU methods of extending its normative zone of peace had reached their finality in the borderlands between Europe and Eurasia, and that new approaches were required. This would not be at the expense of the 'sovereign choices' of the relevant countries, but these choices would be mediated by the legitimate concerns of the larger geopolitical environment. It is pure hypocrisy to argue that the EU is little more than an extended trading bloc: after Lisbon, it was institutionally a core part of the Atlantic security community, and had thus become geopolitical. The meeting in Minsk on 26 August of the EU, Ukraine and the Eurasian Customs Union (ECU) should have been held before the crisis, not after. Nevertheless, it is to be welcomed as the beginning of an adjustment of European policy.

At the same time, Russia's stance of resentment and self-exclusion, despite having, as argued throughout this book, a rational and empirical basis, needs to be modified to encompass the fact that neither NATO nor the EU is systemically hostile to Russia's interests. Non-negotiated enlargement and missile defence are perceived as threats by Russia, and this should have been enough to modify Western behaviour, yet none of this has been enough to provoke a confrontation. This was provided by the Ukrainian crisis, where domestic contradictions greatly exacerbated the existing tensions in international politics. The tension between the civic and the ethno-nationalist models of Ukraine state-building, between monist and pluralist representations of the political community, and all the shades in between, remain unresolved. Ultimately both the Ukrainian and the Ukraine crises can only be resolved by imaginative political leadership and a willingness to engage in dialogue on all sides. A constituent assembly would provide a forum for debating how to reconcile the monist and pluralist traditions and begin the process of reconciliation. A European peace conference should examine how the new lines of division could be overcome by reconciling the Wider and Greater European projects, accompanied by commitments to support

Ukraine economically and politically. Above all, Moscow needs to show the courage of compassion towards Ukraine. It is a country that in many respects is another side of Russia itself, while Russia is inevitably part of Ukrainian identity. The crises will only be resolved when 'normal' relations are established between the two countries. The reconstruction of the Donbas will cost billions, but a no less onerous task is the rebuilding of trust between the various communities and states. Otherwise, the Ukrainian state will continue to degenerate; there will be a new popular uprising; the country will be in danger of further division; Europe will once again be torn by a new Iron Curtain, and the dogs of war will be unleashed on a global scale.

AFTERWORD

THE CHALLENGE OF TRANSFORMATION

The crisis in and over Ukraine has reached a stalemate in several respects, each of which will be examined in greater detail below. First, although the post-Maidan leadership of President Petro Poroshenko and the government headed by Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk have been legitimated in democratic votes, elections alone have not been able to create a liberal democracy. This also requires the rule of law, a state monopoly over the means of coercion, judicial independence, a free media, constraints on corruption and a culture of trust and tolerance. Instead, society has become increasingly polarised, including the intensified demonisation of those who have stood up against the narrow monist vision of Ukrainian statehood pursued by the regime.

Second, although domestic reforms have been pursued by the administration, it is not at all clear that they really offer a path out of economic crisis and social conflict. On 11 March 2015 the IMF approved an Extended Fund Facility (EFF) of \$17.5 billion, to supersede the Stand-by Agreement (SBA) of 2014, accompanied by a further \$7.5 billion pledged by the US, the EU and the World Bank. This still fell short of the \$40 billion funding gap identified by the IMF. The IMF insisted that the remaining \$15 billion would have to come from Ukraine's private creditors.¹ The disbursement of \$5 billion a month later bought the government precious time, although the programme required deep structural reforms. The economy has continued to decline, accompanied by bank failures, falling real wages, rising unemployment, increased poverty and intensifying social tensions. Ukraine's debt crisis has only worsened as the country veers towards some sort of default on its loans.

Third, this has only deepened the culture war between the radicalised Ukrainian nationalist elites in control of the Verkhovna Rada and government and those