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## The Russian-Ukrainian Crisis: A Study of Political and Legal Considerations

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### **Abstract**

*This research examines the Russian-Ukrainian crisis and its political and legal implications, aiming to study the pressures generated by this crisis on the global stage. The research seeks to provide an overview of this crisis, from its inception to the significant outcomes, developments, and escalations. Russia's unlawful annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and its destabilization efforts in eastern Ukraine have compelled the United States and its European allies to reassess their approach towards Europe. The study employs a descriptive-analytical methodology and is divided into three sections. The first section explores the origins of the crisis and Ukraine's significance to Russia. The second section discusses the repercussions of the crisis on Europe and the Middle East, covering two aspects. Finally, the third section examines the future trajectories of the international order following the Russian-Ukrainian war. The first aspect explores the future paths of international units, while the second aspect investigates the future paths of international systems.*

**Keywords:** *Russian-Ukrainian crisis, political considerations, legal considerations.*

### **Introduction**

The roots of the contemporary Ukrainian crisis can be traced back to 1991 with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Ukraine's subsequent independence. In 1994, the Budapest Memorandum was signed, in which the Russian Federation pledged to guarantee Ukraine's borders in exchange for Kyiv relinquishing its nuclear arsenal inherited from the Soviet Union. However, with the rapid geopolitical calculations imposed on Eastern Europe, particularly NATO's expansion eastward, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland joined the alliance in 1999, followed by nine Eastern European countries between 2004 and 2009, some of which were former Soviet republics (Abidin et al., 2022).

The uneasy and unstable relationship between Russia and Ukraine is not new, with several sub-crises leading up to the current main crisis. Since 2014, when Russia asserted its control over the Crimean Peninsula, tensions have been present between the two countries. Specifically, after Russia's annexation of Crimea, it was assumed that the Ukrainian capital would adapt to the control over the peninsula's territories. However, Russia did not step back and granted Russian citizenship to the Crimean population. In addition to the Crimea crisis, there is the

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Donbass conflict, where there is a war in the Donbass region between Ukrainian forces and pro-Russian separatists (Nafieh, 2022; Wang, 2022).

When we observe all these escalations in the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, we know that it is not a crisis with simple repercussions, but it will extend to affect many countries. Specifically, when the core parties to the crisis are major countries of strategic, economic, and global importance, it requires considering the regions that some might not notice and may believe that the crisis will not reach them. Therefore, the aim of this research is to analyze the implications of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis and its political and legal ramifications (Al-Aqrabi, 2022; Adjie, 2023).

### **Importance of the Research**

The study aims to analyze the international and local situations in the context of the war between Russia and Ukraine. The extensive damage inflicted on Ukrainian cities due to the Russian invasion takes us back to the impact of World War II battles and their repercussions on Europe. Additionally, the significant support from NATO and the United States harks back to the war policy between the two camps that prevailed in January 1991. Therefore, during the Cold War period, and as a result of its consequences, such as the dissolution of the Soviet Union, it becomes necessary to study the essence and outcomes of the war on a global scale. Moreover, it is crucial to understand the major issues accompanying this war and their long-term implications. This study holds global value as the crisis in question has captured the attention of the entire world.

### **Research Objectives**

The study aims to identify the key issues that have emerged and influenced the global and regional situation in the context of the Ukrainian crisis.

Shedding light on the essence and beginnings of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis.

Highlighting the strategic importance of Ukraine for the Russian state.

Understanding the future repercussions of the Ukrainian-Russian war on Europe and the Middle East.

### **Research Hypothesis**

The research is based on the main hypothesis that the Russian-Ukrainian crisis represents a conflict and war between major powers in the world, manifested in maneuvers, escalations, and wars between Russia and the world. The more the parties seek to balance their interests in Ukraine and their relationships with each other, the more stability and security can be achieved in the region and the world.

### **Research Problem**

The research problem lies in the fact that the Russian-Ukrainian crisis has imposed itself on the global level, leading to political and legal considerations. In the context of the international intervention in the Ukrainian crisis, the study aims to answer the following problematic question: To what extent can the Ukrainian crisis reflect on the foundation of the international system, particularly in terms of the form and shape of international relations post-war, the

existing balances of the international system, and its future trajectories? The problem manifests in this research in that despite the fact that this crisis primarily involves two parties, its impact extends beyond the borders of Russia and Ukraine. Therefore, the main research question is: What is the nature of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, and what are its main political and legal implications at the local and global levels?

## **Research Methodology**

The research utilizes a descriptive-analytical methodology, which combines two methods: the descriptive method and the analytical method. The descriptive method is the primary method employed in the research to comprehend the nature and dimensions of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, uncover its causes and factors, while the analytical method is used to explore the scientific literature related to the crisis.

## **Previous Studies**

A study by Safiya (2019) titled "The Reflections of the Ukrainian Crisis on Russian-Western Relations: 2013-2018." This study aims to highlight the significant reflections of the Ukrainian crisis and the political effects on the relations between Russia and the West during the period from 2013 to 2018. The deductive method was used, relying on literature analysis and practical analysis of the phenomenon, along with the use of interviews and questionnaires. The study concluded that Ukraine's position between Russia and the West creates a space for conflict and competition due to the lack of agreement on strategic, economic, and political issues.

A study by Abdul Qader (2022) titled "Expected Results of the Russian-Ukrainian Crisis on the Egyptian Economy." The research aims to study the reflections of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, which began in February 24, 2022, on the Egyptian economy. The quantitative analytical method was used, analyzing international trade data, food and energy prices. The study found several results, including the negative impact of the crisis on the Egyptian economy, particularly in the areas of food, energy, and tourism. It also noted an increase in budget deficit, trade deficit, income decline, currency devaluation, and inflation rates as consequences of the war.

A study by Abda (2022) investigates the dimensions of Russian military intervention in Ukraine, which is considered one of the most dangerous international crises on a global scale since the end of the Cold War. It includes the threat of a large-scale conflict in Europe between the Russian Federation on one hand and the United States, European Union, and NATO on the other. The study specifically examines the features, determinants, and characteristics of US policy towards Russian military intervention in Ukraine. It followed a descriptive and deductive methodology and arrived at several results, including that Russia cannot retreat from Ukraine or leave it to become part of the European Union or NATO. Moscow will not cease its military operations in Ukraine.

## **First Topic: Main Dimensions of the Ukrainian Crisis**

Europe in 2008 witnessed a significant crisis similar to the current Ukrainian crisis, when Georgia, a country adjacent to the Russian state, expressed its desire to join the European Union and the (NATO) alliance (Al-Sharif, 2022; Alsenani & Afaneh, 2022). In August 2008, clashes erupted between Georgian forces and pro-Russian separatist forces in the autonomous region of South Ossetia, which has autonomous rule. Subsequently, Russia sent military equipment, including tanks, to the region, stating that it aimed to protect its citizens, many of

whom held Russian passports. Within days, Russian forces gained control and influence over South Ossetia, and expelled Georgian forces from the region (Haddad, 2017; Ratna, 2022).

### **First Matter: Essence and Outbreak of the Ukrainian Crisis**

The Ukrainian crisis erupted on November 21, 2013, when the Ukrainian authorities close to Russia announced that they would not sign the partnership agreement with the European Union. This led to massive pro-European Union demonstrations in the city of Kiev, supporting Ukraine's accession to the European Union. On February 22, 2014, the Ukrainian Parliament removed President Viktor Yanukovich in a revolution known as the "Revolution of Dignity" by Ukrainians. On February 28, 2014, Russian authorities asserted their control over the Crimean Peninsula, which Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev had annexed to Ukraine in 1954. Elections took place on March 16, 2014, indicating that the majority of people in Crimea, who predominantly spoke Russian, agreed to join Russia (Ali, 2017; Lee et al., 2023).

European countries imposed economic sanctions on Russia, and supporters of Russia proclaimed the establishment of the self-proclaimed republics of Donetsk and Luhansk in the Donbas region. Clashes occurred between pro-separatist forces and the Ukrainian army on May 25 (Welt, 2022).

In September 2014, an agreement was reached in the city of Minsk, the capital of Belarus, between the governments of Russia and Ukraine, the separatist forces in Donetsk and Luhansk, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in order to stop the crisis and reach a political solution to the dispute in eastern Ukraine (Al-Sharif, 2022). However, the provisions of that agreement remained unimplemented. On January 23, 2015, the President of the self-proclaimed Donetsk Republic declared that he was not bound by the Minsk agreement, followed by the approval of the Minsk II agreement on February 12, 2015, which stipulated the establishment of a decentralized system in Donetsk and Luhansk. This proposal was rejected by the central government in Kiev. As a result, preparations were made for a protracted civil war, which resulted in approximately 14,000 deaths and a resurgence of the Cold War, especially after the West showed a lack of interest in studying Russia's strategic interests. This was evident after the newly elected Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who was elected in May 2019, declared his intention to maintain his country's orientation towards the West (Arifat, 2022; Gojali, 2023).

On November 10, 2021, the United States requested clarification from Russia regarding "unusual" movements of its forces on the Ukrainian border. However, the Russian president claimed that the West had been supplying weapons and sending military forces to Kyiv. He also cited "provocative" military maneuvers in the Black Sea and near Russian borders. On January 10, 2022, there were concerned talks between representatives of the Russian leadership and potential representatives of the U.S. leadership in Geneva. Subsequently, a meeting took place between representatives of the Russian government and NATO, but NATO representatives did not agree to Russia's proposal to prevent new members from joining the alliance and to not establish military bases in any country that joined NATO after 1998. As a result, Russia deployed some of its forces in Belarus in January 2022, which indicates that a resolution to the Ukraine crisis is unlikely to be reached and the crisis will persist (Haneya, 2022).

Furthermore, on February 21, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin delivered a speech in which he condemned the majority of the Security Council members following an urgent meeting. He acknowledged the independence of the separatist republics in eastern Ukraine. In

response, U.S. President Joe Biden immediately announced the suspension of any funding or investment by Americans in the pro-Russian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. The following day, the United States imposed financial and economic sanctions on Russia. French President Emmanuel Macron, representing the European Union, called on EU member states to impose "targeted European sanctions" on Russia (Hussein, 2022; Shang & Zhang, 2022).

The second issue is the strategic importance of Ukraine from the Russian perspective. Ukraine holds immense strategic value for Russia due to several key factors. Firstly, many Russian military equipment, including aircraft engines, naval ship engines, and missile components, are manufactured in Ukrainian military factories. Additionally, Ukraine imports oil and gas primarily and serves as a crucial energy resource for Russia. The Russian fleet is stationed in the Sevastopol naval base in Crimea, which holds significance in controlling the Black Sea and its adjacent regions. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in January 1991, Russia sought to keep its fleet in the Black Sea by signing treaties with Ukrainian authorities. Consequently, Crimea possesses geostrategic importance and falls within Russian interests that cannot be relinquished (Masters, 2022).

Moreover, the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine have a significant Russian population, accounting for approximately 18% of Ukraine's population. This has affected the Russian identity and is considered a vital base for protecting Russian interests and securing the state's main port. Ukraine also plays a crucial role in Russia's political, military, and economic expansion into Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and the Black Sea. It is a critical link in the Russian energy security system, as it facilitates the transit of Russian natural gas to Europe and supports most of Russia's industrial infrastructure through pipelines and railways (Welt, 2021).

The Russian calculations in the Ukrainian war have raised concerns for NATO and the European Union, as it has become a proxy war reaching their vital areas and potentially leading to a political siege. Russia views its security presence as a threat to the expansion of NATO eastward, and it will never accept Ukraine's accession to Western political, economic, and military institutions. Thus, Russia considers the war a sufficient reason to obtain Western guarantees against Ukraine's NATO membership and to cease military escalation in eastern Ukraine. Russia wants Ukraine to abandon its desire to reclaim territories occupied by pro-Russian separatists in the Donbass region, which were supposed to have autonomous governance according to the Minsk Protocol in 2014 and Minsk II in 2015 under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (Haddad, 2022; Fauzan, 2022)

## **Second Topic: The Implications of the Crisis on Europe and the Middle East**

The Russian-Western confrontation following the Ukrainian crisis and Russia's invasion of Ukraine is just one stage in a continuous confrontation. The groundwork for this stage was laid with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Most of the independent republics that emerged from the Soviet Union, or those aligned with the Western camp, either joined NATO or the European Union. After Putin came to power in 1999, he gained control over all aspects related to the Soviet Union, whether in the economic, political, or military spheres. He sought to elevate Russia's status and considered the United States a threat to his country's position. Therefore, he tried to regain respect and value for his country (Mujahid, 2022).

In mid-2021, Russia began assembling its military forces on its western borders, while there was also a US-European military buildup in Ukraine. Washington provided Kyiv with \$5.2 billion worth of military equipment since 2014 and allowed the deployment of its missiles on Ukrainian soil, as well as a significant number of US troops to enter its territory. This prompted

Russian President Putin to demand on multiple occasions a reduction in the US military buildup in Ukraine because there was no justification for it (Sulaiman, 2022).

### **First Issue: Implications of the War on European Defense Policies**

After the escalation of the Ukrainian crisis in 2022, the Netherlands decided to reintroduce heavy tanks, and Germany increased its defense spending to 100 billion euros. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz stated before the German parliament, "We are in a new situation after the occupation of Ukraine." He expressed the current challenge by asking, "Should we allow Putin to turn back the clock, or should we gather enough strength to establish the foundations for crisis management, such as Putin?" In reality, the German leadership abandoned the principle of "not rushing to enable its military capabilities," which led to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. With the sanctions and restrictions imposed by Germany, weapon exports reached war zones. The German government announced on February 27, 2022, that it aimed to provide Ukraine with a thousand anti-tank missiles and 500 "Stinger" missiles from the German stockpile. Germany also reinforced its forces deployed eastward within the context of NATO, especially in Slovakia. The German problem is not limited to its own vision but also to how Europeans perceive German power. In 2012, Radosław Sikorski, former Polish Minister of Defense and Foreign Affairs, said, "My hunch is that Germany's power is much weaker than its reluctance" but Putin's invasion of Ukraine became the historical point where Europe began to feel reassured about German military power (Sudha Davi, 2022).

The German-European problem is evident in the significant adverse consequences imposed by the sanctions on Russia, compared to their impact on the United States due to geographical, demographic, economic, and security relations. Consequently, the Ukrainian crisis has achieved many strategic goals for the United States, such as exacerbating relations between Russia and EU countries and reevaluating Russian-European relations. The crisis has hindered President Vladimir Putin's external expansion and control over Europe through gas diplomacy. This crisis represents a crucial turning point and a turning point for Europe's security, resulting in a fundamental shift in European security planning. As the crisis continues and the number of Ukrainian refugees increases in EU countries, the EU's resources and energies are increasingly invested. Europe is not prepared for the implications of a protracted crisis in energy, economy, and refugees (European Centre for Counterterrorism and Intelligence Studies, 2022).

The Russian-Ukrainian war and the Middle East quagmire both reveal important consequences. It clarifies the competition between two empires: the dissolved Soviet Union, which Russia, the successor state, fears to further disintegrate, and the United States, aiming to reverse its decline (Abdelhaleem, 2022). Both powers seek to secure strategic territories in their favor. Russia aims to halt internal disintegration and strengthen its presence in Europe, while the United States seeks to halt its rapid retreat and enhance its presence in Europe. However, political entities in the Middle East increasingly perceive the United States' policy weakness, as evidenced by Joe Biden's strategic plan. With the ongoing Ukrainian crisis, this retreat is being activated, which will impact the relationships of regional entities and their response to U.S. demands related to the Ukrainian crisis (John J. Mearsheimer, 2019; Mulawarman, 2022).

### **The second demand: The Russian-Ukrainian war and the Middle East quagmire**

Regarding the challenges facing the United States in the region, the Russian leadership faces another challenge, namely its ability to reconcile regional actors in the Middle East. This is evident in the contradictions between Russia's interests and those of Iran and Israel, as well as the Gulf-Iranian contradictions. Additionally, Russia is expected to address the security

demands of Israel and the security demands of the Syrian state. Furthermore, the Russian state is required to address the Palestinian-Israeli issue. Moreover, there are contradictions in the network of relations between Russia and Arab countries. Arab countries can be divided into two categories: those that import Russian civilian goods (Egypt, Morocco, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Jordan, and Qatar) and those that import Russian military goods. Syria tops the list of countries importing Russian weapons, accounting for 90% of its arms imports, followed by Algeria with 77%, then Iraq with 40%, Egypt with 38%, and the UAE with 4%. Russian arms sales to Arab countries between 2017 and 2021 exceeded 24% of its total sales (Statista, 2022). Although economic sanctions on Russia may impact civilian goods more than military goods, Russia's need for Arab countries as importers of civilian goods is greater than its need for countries that import military goods. This could influence some of its future objectives in the region (Abdelhaleem, 2022).

### **The third topic: the future paths of the international arrangement after the Russian-Ukrainian war**

The Russian-Ukrainian crisis is one of the longest and largest wars in contemporary times after World War II. It is apparently a conflict taking place within two countries, coinciding with the military vision, but it has turned into a global war in terms of its consequences on global politics, the balance of power and international units. This crisis over Ukraine dates back to ten years ago. The war line and the Russian steadfastness, which surprised all parties, strengthened the fears of America, along with NATO countries, of Russia turning into a second pole in the world, especially since some believe that Ukraine and the Baltic countries will collapse when Putin achieves his goal. With regard to international units, the Ukrainian crisis showed the limits and structure of the impact exercised by the main parties in the current system, such as the Russian Federation, which moved events and was the main actor in many of its transformations, whether in the pre-war or during the war. The role of America and its allies was reflected in that it saw the war as a major obstacle to many of its bases and civilized model (Kasir, 2023).

### **The first requirement: the future paths of the international units after the war**

In the context of these lines, we can distinguish between a number of basic levels, based on the four elements on which the international context is based: the Russian-Ukrainian war and the future of international units. The Russian-Ukrainian crisis had determined the future of the Russian state in the face of many options, although there are many of the great losses attributed to it are due to President Putin's decision to intervene in the Ukrainian state, the possibility of the dissolution of the Russian regime, with its steadfastness and survival, is not easy in the short time and the difficulty of the dissolution of the Putin regime through a palace coup, and because it is not easy to dismantle the elite immediacy through mass protests, within the framework of the violent and repressive policies practiced by Russian President Putin at home and abroad in support of which he did not ally himself in Russia, Kazakhstan and Syria (Abdul Halim, 2022)

On the other hand, about Russia, the state, not the system, John Mearsheimer says that Russia is a great power, although it is a country that supports China at the present time, it is possible to change its revenues and support with time and ally with America because China's great power is considered the most important threat to Russia because of its relatives in terms of geography, and if Russia and America go to form close relations, because of their mutual wariness of China, there will be a slight dyeing of the Russian state in the limited system led by

America, but if Russia remains in maintaining friendly ties with China, because of its wariness of America more than its wariness of China, will easily integrate Russia into the limited system led by China, but there is still another option that is evident in that Russia will not stand with one of the two parties and remain on the sidelines and is based on benefiting from their competition together from By collecting factors that strengthen its capabilities in competition and negotiation with them together, in an effort to complete its polar base (Mearsheimer, 2019).

**The second requirement: the future paths of the international systems after the war**

The Ukrainian crisis, 2022, was within a conflict from various sides, through many regions, in which Russia aimed to show the challenge of Western countries and stand in the way of NATO's strategy in eastern Europe, and the desire to impose this by military force, to instill its value within the framework of an American strategic repositioning And American military withdrawals from several formations, in exchange for the expansion of China, which has become an effective strategic interest for America and its Western allies in the last ten years, with the aim of strengthening its international position, strengthening its alliances, and forming principles for a new international order in which it constitutes a more effective assistance in managing the international position, specifically With the centrality of China's influence in Russian interactions against the West (Al-Aqrabawi, 2022), Mearsheimer saw that it is likely that there will become three realistic bodies in the near future: a weak international system and two specific strong systems, one of which is administered by China, and the second is managed by one side. America, and the weak international system will be mainly concerned with guiding arms control agreements and keeping the global economy operating actively, and giving serious attention to conditions related to climate exchange, and the bodies that build the international system will seek to facilitate inter-state cooperation. And there will be two main points of the new world with poles that largely express the ascending bodies:

The first point: that with the possibility of China continuing its rise, it will merge into a strong security competition with America, and this will become a basic feature of international politics throughout the twenty-first century. Military alliances will be the main component of these two systems, and they are now in the process of formation and will be similar to the two systems established by the Soviet Union and America during the Cold War, except that China and America will at times have factors that take them to cooperate in specific military issues, and this is a goal that will circulate. within the jurisdiction of the international system, as it was before during the Cold War; Where the focus will be primarily on arms control agreements, and Russia will integrate into this goal as will China and America, and it is likely that the existing charters and agreements that deal with the issue of nuclear proliferation will remain in place, since all major powers seek to reduce the use of nuclear weapons . But the third parties will have to negotiate new pacts that limit their military standing, as the two superpowers did during the Cold War. (Bobush, 2022).

The second point: that there is a large amount of economic communication between China and America, and between China and America's allies in East Asia, and China and America also trade and invest in all the echoes of the world. It is not likely that the movement between the two specific systems will decrease these economic flows. The profits resulting from continuous trade are valuable and required, even if America works to reduce its trade with China. America is able to compensate for that through its trade with other partners. Therefore, Mearsheimer said: It is The future is likely to resemble the situation in Europe before the First World War; There was a strong security escalation between the Third Alliance (Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Italy), and the Third Entente (Great Britain, France, and Russia), but



there was a large amount of economic interaction between these countries in general (Mearsheimer, 2019).

## Conclusion

Within the framework of the axes studied by the research, and in light of the repercussions, results and paths of the Ukrainian crisis 2022, we can stand on a number of characteristics, the most prominent of which is that within the framework and nature of the work that the main parties in the current regime can do, such as Russia, which preoccupied the events and was the one who initiated many Among the developments, before or after the crisis, we find the role of America and its allies, as it saw the war as an obstacle and a barrier standing in the way of its interests and civilizational development and in the field of international units and international systems in the post-Ukrainian crisis. We say: There is a possibility or possibility that new countries will exist and countries that existed before the crisis will disappear, and we may find an effort to establish new alliances that upset the scales and may reach. merger limit

The end result is that the competition between the two limited regimes headed by China and America will be confined to a complete economic and military competition, as was the case with the two limited regimes that Russia and America dominated during the Cold War. The great contradiction here is reflected in the fact that the international system will become firmly integrated in managing the elements of competition in the global economy, a situation that was not the case during the Cold War.

## Results

- 1\_ The strategic geographical location of Ukraine is a double-edged sword, as it is the link between two great countries; Eastern power Russia, Asia and Western powers
- 2\_ The Russian-Ukrainian war brought about fundamental changes in the European security environment. It has attributed the pattern of conventional military wars, and the pattern of military security to the arena, whose importance was in favor of non-traditional security threats and comprehensive security.
- 3- European countries see the Russian "threat" to security in European countries, through Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014, or through its invasion of Ukraine, but it is an internal European threat, which must be dealt with differently if it is A threat to it from outside, which necessitates the need to understand the demands of Russian security.
- 4- There are issues that are considered an obstacle to European security, such as the need for security arrangements and guidance

European in the face of problems and obstacles, and the threat of resorting to nuclear weapons in the continent,

## Recommendations

- 1- The need to search for a peaceful solution that eliminates the crisis and achieves reconciliation and peace between the two countries so that the solution is satisfactory to both parties
- 2- It is necessary for there to be an exchange of opinions, and bless dialogue and not bear arms
- 3- For Russia to submit to economic sanctions in order to reach a peaceful agreement

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