INTEGRATION OF UKRAINE INTO NATO AND ITS GEOPOLITICAL
IMPLICATIONS

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SEVSU ÖNDER

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Prof. Dr. Tülin Gençöz
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

———————————————

Prof. Dr. Pınar Köksal
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

———————————————

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Işık Kuşçu Bonnenfant
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tuba Ünlü Bilgiç	(METU, IR)	———————
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Assist. Prof. Dr. Yuliya Biletska	(Karabük Uni., IR)	———————

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ABSTRACT

INTEGRATION OF UKRAINE INTO NATO AND ITS GEOPOLITICAL
IMPLICATIONS

ÖNDER, Sevsu

M.S., Department of Eurasian Studies

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Işık Kuşçu Bonnenfant

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This thesis aims to analyze NATO integration process of Ukraine with its geopolitical causes and consequences in the context of annexation of Crimea and military conflict in Eastern Ukraine. This thesis claims that Ukraine's NATO integration is driven by several geopolitical concerns of actors involved in the process and has serious geopolitical consequences for the parties. Accordingly, Ukraine's NATO integration is a product of the US geopolitical interests identified over Eurasian region in order to take the lead in the global geopolitical struggle. However, annexation of Crimea and military conflict in Eastern Ukraine are the direct consequences of Ukraine's NATO integration and represents the contradiction of Ukraine's integration goal with Russian geopolitical interests. From the perspective of Ukraine, NATO integration is simply a civilizational choice between Russia and the West to leave Russian geopolitical axis. This thesis aims to bring a multi-faceted approach covering geopolitical priorities of Ukraine, Russia and US-led NATO. In order to reflect this versatility study focuses on the NATO's post-Cold War geopolitics, Ukraine's NATO integration process and internal and external geopolitical dynamics affecting this process, and Russia's influence on the integration process as a result of its geopolitical interests over Eurasia. This thesis uses documentary research method involving review of the official documents. Thus, it is aimed to reflect how the geopolitics as a legitimization practice is shaped by the key actors in the domestic and foreign policy environment.

Keywords: Geopolitics, Ukraine, NATO integration, Russia, annexation of Crimea

ÖZ

UKRAYNA'NIN NATO ENTEGRASYONU VE JEOPOLİTİK ÇIKARIMLAR

ÖNDER, Sevsu

Yüksek Lisans, Avrasya Çalışmaları

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Bu tez Ukrayna'nın NATO entegrasyon sürecini ve bunun jeopolitik neden ve sonuçlarını Kırım'ın ilhakı ve Doğu Ukrayna'daki askeri çatışmalar bağlamında analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu tez Ukrayna'nın NATO entegrasyon sürecinin entegrasyon sürecine dahil olan aktörlerin birtakım jeopolitik kaygıları tarafından yönlendirildiğini ve bunun taraflar için ciddi jeopolitik sonuçlar doğurduğunu iddia eder. Buna göre, Ukrayna'nın NATO entegrasyonu ABD'nin küresel jeopolitik mücadelede liderliği ele geçirmek amacıyla Avrasya bölgesi üzerinde tanımladığı jeopolitik çıkarlarının bir sonucudur. Ancak, Ukrayna'nın NATO entegrasyonunun doğrudan sonucu olarak Kırım'ın ilhakı ve Doğu Ukrayna'daki askeri çatışmalar entegrasyon hedefinin Rus jeopolitik çıkarları ile çatışmasını temsil eder. Ukrayna açısından bakıldığında ise NATO entegrasyonu basitçe Ukrayna'nın Rus jeopolitik ekseninden ayrılmak amacıyla Rusya ve Batı arasında yaptığı "medeniyetsel" bir tercihtir. Bu tez Ukrayna, Rusya ve ABD destekli NATO'nun jeopolitik önceliklerini yansıtan çok yönlü bir yaklaşım sunmaktadır. Bu çok yönlülüğü yansıtabilmek adına bu çalışmada NATO'nun Soğuk Savaş sonrası jeopolitiği, Ukrayna'nın NATO entegrasyon süreci ve bu süreci etkileyen iç dış jeopolitik dinamiklerle, Rusya'nın Avrasya üzerindeki jeopolitik çıkarları sonucu entegrasyon sürecine etkisine odaklanılmıştır. Bu tez resmî belgelerin gözden geçirilmesini kapsayan doküman incelemesi metodunu kullanır. Bu sayede aynı zamanda bir meşrulaştırma pratiği olarak jeopolitiğin temel aktörlerin iç ve dış politika ortamlarında nasıl şekillendirildiği de yansıtılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Jeopolitik, Ukrayna, NATO entegrasyonu, Rusya, Kırım'ın ilhakı

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introducing the Study

Geopolitics as a relatively new discipline refers to the power struggles in different forms, of states and various political actors on the physical geography. Geopolitics is not a purely geological concept, but it encompasses many elements such as territory, boundary, nation and identity that are shaped by human communities and refers to the unique relations that these elements establish with the physical geography. As argued by Flint modern geopolitical literature, which concentrates on the adaptation of conceptual framework of geopolitics to the world map, is a discursive construction practice that legitimizes the political aims of geopolitical actors on a designated region. [1]

According to Agnew and Corbridge modern geopolitical literature provides an insight into geopolitical objectives. Geopolitical objectives are designed in a discursive manner in accordance with the intended outcome in the political conjuncture. Geopolitical designs that can be seen in the statements of geopolitical actors are not only verbal but also seen in written forms such as laws, policy papers, treaties, declarations, communiqués.[2] Consequently, modern geopolitics is a discursive legitimization practice that explains the power struggles of political actors, mostly identified as states, over physical geography, by using the elements of modern geopolitics.

As a geopolitical region, Eurasia forms one of the main fields of study of the modern geopolitical literature. The geopolitical studies have emerged since the early 1900's has designated Eurasia as the pivot region in the world map, that would take the states a step forward in the power struggle and lay the groundwork for the formation of developments that deeply affect world politics. Eurasian region was on the agenda at different times for different reasons such as to provide a balance of power before First World War, to create a "living

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[1] Colin Flint, *Introduction to Geopolitics* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

[2] John Agnew and Stuart Corbridge, *Mastering Space: Hegemony, Territory and International Political Economy* (London: Routledge 1995).

space" for German expansionism before the Second World War, and to contain the Soviet ideological expansion parallel to the developments in the Cold War period.

The Cold War period, characterized by the ideological differences of the US and the Soviet Union, was originally a reflection of a geopolitical struggle. While the Soviet Union, deemed equivalent to Eurasian political borders by the 20th century geopoliticians, aimed to establish political regimes under its control in East, Central and Southeast Europe near its borders, the US aspired to halt the ideological spread of the Soviet Union by containing it. The establishment of NATO, which constitutes the military aspect of containment, aimed to legitimize the American military presence on the European continent, to unite European states in a military alliance and to balance against the military strength of the Soviet Union. NATO, based on the idea of balancing the Eurasian land power with the Atlantic maritime power, became the symbol of geopolitical struggle by expanding its borders in the Cold War era.

The end of the Cold War led to a debate on NATO's reason of being, an institution which was originally established due to the Cold War dynamics. However, under the influence of geopolitical designs based on the necessity of America's military presence in Europe in the post-Cold War posture, NATO redefined its reason of being according to international environment under the guidance of the US. NATO tended to expand toward Russia, by including the eastern bloc and the post-Soviet countries with its new structure. This move was encountered with the Russian objections concerning that the geopolitical struggle, embodied in the containment, continues in the post-Cold War period. Russia, which consolidated its regime during the Putin era, endeavored to prevent the eastward expansion of NATO by undertaking its own geopolitical spatial construction. In addition to geographical proximity, geopolitical spatial construction based on socio-cultural history has been embodied in the writings of Russian geopoliticians and in the discourses of the Russian statecraft after the Cold War.

Ukraine, located in a critical geopolitical position between Russia and NATO member states within the post-Cold war expansion of NATO, constituted one of the most important elements of the Russian geopolitical construction. In response to NATO's enlargement efforts over Ukraine, Russia tend to strengthen its economic, political and socio-cultural partnerships with Ukraine inherited from the Tsarist and Soviet periods to protect its geopolitical interests. At

this point the annexation of Crimea and the current instability in Eastern Ukraine took place in the context of the power struggle of Russia and the US-led NATO over Ukraine. Under the US initiative, NATO struggled to create an allied Ukraine that can follow independent policies from Russia, while Russia tried to prevent Ukraine from pursuing independent policies by using its economic and political influence in the Eurasian region. Nevertheless, annexation of Crimea and conflict in Eastern Ukraine, which are the basically products of the geopolitical struggle of the US and Russia, are also the result of the national identity and geopolitical orientation problem of Ukraine.

Following its independence, Ukraine, located in a critical geopolitical position between the European states and Russia, faced the task of state and nation building as the other post-Soviet states. However, multiple identities inherited from the Tsarist and Soviet periods, which were subjected to Pan-Slavism, Russification, Sovietization and displayed regional characteristics, as well as the geographical, cultural, religious and historical proximity with Russia, made nation building particularly challenging in Ukraine. Elimination of the Russian political and economic pressure and solution of the national identity problem in Ukraine were the preconditions for the Ukrainian state and nation building. In these circumstances, Ukrainian governments oriented to Western geopolitical vector and valued integration with Western institutions such as NATO as an opportunity for reforming military, economic, political structures, inherited from the Soviet Union, and to strengthen Ukrainian national identity, which had not been able to develop separately from the Russian influence. However, NATO integration efforts, revived by the pro-Western Ukrainian governments, could not find public support due to the hostile vision of NATO in the minds of the Ukrainian people, who were still attached to their pre-independence identities. The geopolitical features of the country, notably the identities, constituted one of the main pillars for the election of pro-Russian governments and Ukraine's drift into the current political crisis by embodying Russian geopolitical spatial construction in various policy implementations.

In this study I aim to analyze the geopolitical implications of Ukraine's NATO integration. In the light of given information, understanding the implications of NATO integration in the Ukrainian case, requires a multi-dimensional approach that covers the geopolitical calculations of the US and Russia on NATO enlargement and the geopolitical tendencies of Ukrainian governments driven by the Ukrainian national characteristics. I will primarily attempt to explain the geopolitical causes that have led the US to lead the post-Cold War

NATO enlargement and to give particular importance to Ukraine in this process. Furthermore, the historical background of Russia's opposition to the post-Cold War expansion of NATO and geopolitical vector change in Ukraine will be elaborated through this study chronologically. In this study, I will present that the current political crisis in Ukraine is a product of a geopolitical struggle between Russia and the US, transpired with the Ukraine's NATO integration. But in doing so, I will not solely focus on geopolitical cause and effect relations, rather I will try to illustrate through examples how geopolitics as a discursive legitimization practice was built on the Ukrainian example. Therefore, this study aims to explain the geopolitical struggle over Ukraine with its historical background, as well as the domestic political and social processes of Ukraine and how they are manipulated to legitimize the geopolitical spatial construction by parties.

1.2. Methodology

In this thesis, documentary research method is applied. Documentary research method covers the use of books, articles from scientific periodicals, weekly newspapers, online news sources, reports, statistical data, archival materials, official and legal documents. Books, articles from periodicals, statistical data, newspapers and online news sources are used to represent the conceptual framework of the geopolitics, NATO enlargement, domestic and social processes of Ukraine while, archival materials, official and legal documents, such as laws, charters, communiqués, declarations, statements, memorandums, letters, reports, verbatim records, are used to illustrate the discursive characteristics of geopolitics in the case of NATO integration of Ukraine and the current political situation in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. The sources are mostly English; however, official translations of Russian and Ukrainian sources are used in certain chapters of the thesis.

The documentary research method, which creates the problem of objectivity, is functional in this thesis, because it is applied in a multifaceted way to reflect the legitimization practices of the parties involved in this study. The type and the distribution of the sources used in this documentary research method allows to reflect the geopolitical approaches of Ukraine, Russia and NATO on Ukraine's NATO integration, in a manner consistent with the discursive and constructional nature of geopolitics. In this sense, legal and official documents, archival sources used outside the theoretical framework constitute the strengths of this thesis in terms of the subjects of study and purpose.

1.3. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis composed of seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the subjects of study, the methodology and the organization of the thesis. The second chapter gives theoretical information about geopolitics and the concepts that are in use of geopolitics, presents the historical context of modern geopolitics and the literature on the geopolitical significance of the Eurasian region. Third chapter is designed to give a general overview of the post-Cold War NATO geopolitics by explaining the institutions and factors that make the post-Cold War NATO enlargement possible, based on the geopolitical importance of Eurasia and political developments in Europe. In the fourth chapter, the motives and the processes of Ukraine's NATO integration in Ukraine's domestic and foreign policy context are examined. In addition to addressing the integration of Ukraine into NATO structures in parallel with the internal and external policy environment of Ukraine, this chapter also examines the geopolitical calculations of the US, which encouraged Ukraine for NATO integration and strategic partnership with the US. Chapter Five chronologically examines the implications of the post-Cold War NATO enlargement on Russian foreign policy and aims to explain the current political situation in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine as a consequence of the Russian reaction to NATO enlargement. This chapter also aims to illustrate how Russia legitimized its geopolitical spatial construction. Chapter Six, presents the geopolitical outcomes of the annexation of Crimea and conflict in Eastern Ukraine affecting Ukraine and NATO. Seventh chapter designed as the concluding part of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Analyzing the geopolitical causes and effects of Ukraine's NATO integration primarily requires a careful identification of the components of geopolitics and the practical use of these components in the execution of various political purposes. Primarily, current international system is mainly composed of nation states and this fact designates nation states as the main actors of geopolitics. In addition, multinational corporations, terrorist organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations, which emerged as a result of the globalization, are the geopolitical actors in the international system. Geopolitical actions, aimed at specific political goals, pertains to subjective constructions, rather than objective situations defined by the geography. Every geographical place has a value assigned by certain ideological views in every period of history. These values manifest itself in the literature on geopolitics, which are directed by political calculations or direct the certain political actions. The desire to compete and control the various geographical places may vary according to the conjuncture, however, the importance attributed to the places may remain constant. In this case, the forms of expression of geopolitical designs is updated in accordance with the changes in the place and world system in relation to the previous designs.

The way of attachment between geographical places and geopolitical actors is also crucial while making geopolitical assessments. As the basic geopolitical actor, state consists of a nation, a national identity, which unites a nation in the common ground, a territory, which nation lives on it, and boundaries that separate the lands of the state from the territory of other state, physically and emotionally. These elements, which legitimize the existence of the state, are subjective and have been constructed, as the importance attributed to the physical geography in the historical process. Thus, a state must establish the kind of relation that it established with its own nation and national territory, to legitimize its interest on certain physical geography. The value attributed to the physical geography by a geopolitical actor and its historical background, as well as the legitimization of these values, constitute the subject of geopolitics.

Consequently, understanding the geopolitics literature in company with the basic geopolitical concepts provides a better understanding of geopolitical processes. In this sense, a review of Eurasian geopolitical literature in company with the geopolitical components would contribute to the drawing of the geopolitical framework of the study.

2.1. Definition and Components of Geopolitics

Geopolitics is a concept emerged in Europe through the influence of political, social and economic developments in the late 19th century. Although, it can be simply formulated as an effect of the physical geography on international relations of states, there is no fixed definition agreed upon. Beyond the understanding and explaining the role of geographical variables on international politics, geopolitics is often regarded as a scientific way to describe and pursue the national interests of states in various aspects. Pertaining to human geography, geopolitics uses the components of human geography, which is shaped by various geographical perspectives, to analyze state practices to compete and control for the territory.[3] This definition of geopolitics implied a competition over territory and at the same time embodied the practice of legitimization of the state actions.

As the most fundamental but ambiguous element of human geography "place" derives its character from its position and function on the world map (location), its internal organization, identity and politics (locale) and collective identities such as race, gender, social class, nationality attached to this space (sense of place).[4] In simpler terms, besides expressing the physical location, place represents location of people and social groups with their cultural, social economic and political relations that shape their identities, a context in which events, objects, actions and relations attached to the place. The characterization of the place expressed in this manner ensures continuous interactions between place and its components, provides a dynamic and socially constructed definition for place.[5] While physical location and social formation makes place unique and interdependency provides a dynamic and

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[3] Flint, *Introduction to Geopolitics*, 1-13.

[4] John Agnew, *Place and Politics: The Geographical Mediation of State and Society* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 28.

[5] Lynn A. Staheli, "Place," in *A Companion to Political Geography,* ed. John Agnew, Katharyne Mitchell and Gearóid O'Tuathail (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 159-165.

changing social constructions for place, place is a geographical scale varies from individual to global.[6]

As different actors aim to achieve geopolitical goals, geopolitical agents represent a variable scale just like place. While these geopolitical agents were primarily designated as nation states in earlier periods, the influence of globalization has expanded the geopolitical architecture including non-state actors, networks, regional and global organizations, transnational corporations, international governmental organizations.[7] Despite the new geopolitical actors emerged in geopolitical architecture as a result of the dynamics of globalization, nation states continue to be the linchpin of the world geopolitical system.[8] In the era of globalization, the nation state determines the limits of the authority to be transferred to international organizations and regulates the commercial activities of global companies with quotas and tariffs at national level.

Geopolitics, in fundamental terms, represented the power struggle of geographical agents over various geographical scales and its components.[9] Demonstrated by the states, which are the main geopolitical agents in the world system, power consists of military, economic, ideological and political aspects. Military aspect of power is expressed in terms of quantity and quality of military strength and willingness to use it. In this sense, military power implies the defense and attack capacity required for a state to start a war with another state or geopolitical actor. Economic aspect expresses the position of the state in world economic system, ability to fight against global crisis and dominate trade relations. The ideological aspect is based on the ability of state to impose its own ideals, cultural, political, religious concept to other states.[10] Expressed as "soft co-optive power" by Joseph Nye, this form of power manifested itself towards the end of the Cold War, with transformation of traditional power relations, economic interdependence, emergence of transnational actors and spread of technology. According to this view, soft co-optive power assists states to legitimize their

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[6] Flint, *Introduction to Geopolitics*, 8-11.

[7] Klaus Dodds, *Geopolitics: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 55-64.

[8] Saul Bernard Cohen, *Geopolitics: Geography of International Relations*, 3rd ed. (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 49.

[9] Flint, *Introduction to Geopolitics*, 28.

[10] Cohen, *Geopolitics*, 2.

actions in the presence of other actors by establishing internationally accepted norms through cultural attraction, ideology and international institutions.[11]

Every state has geopolitical codes, that allow it to adapt itself to world in the geopolitical context resulting from the representation of power. Furthermore, they represent a changeable scale just like places, and vary in local, regional and global scales in respect to power and influence of a state, in accordance with the dynamic nature of human geography.[12] These geopolitical codes embodies the calculations on identification and sustainment of potential allies, counter current enemies and growing threats, and their legitimization in the presence of public and international community.[13] Each state possesses the ability to influence a certain proportion of the geopolitical developments according to their capacity and reach. Therefore, in a hierarchical order, some states can only influence their neighbors in the world map with their limited influence in geopolitical context, regional powers have the capacity to influence major events in their region and to become the regional leader while the major powers or world leaders have global reach and capacity to expand their influence beyond a limited territory.[14]

Independent from the order in the hierarchy of power, states need domestic and international support to legitimize their geopolitical actions, as the fundamental actors in geopolitical architecture.[15] Nevertheless, the ability of states to influence events and processes in geopolitical architecture is closely related to the concept of sovereignty. It is possible to make sense of this process by approaching the different interpretations of the concept of sovereignty. Sovereignty is primarily defined as the capability of the state to perform international relations, based on the principle of international legal recognition of the state by the other states. International recognition provides an infrastructure to conduct

[11] Joseph Nye, "Soft Power," *Foreign Policy*, no.80 (Autumn, 1990):160-167, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1148580.

[12] Flint, *Introduction to Geopolitics*, 55-59.

[13] Colin Flint and Peter J. Taylor, *Political Geography: World Economy, Nation State and Locality* (Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2000), 62.

[14] Cohen, *Geopolitics*, 51-55.

[15] Flint, *Introduction to Geopolitics*, 101.

international relations, while in some cases the states transfer some of their sovereignty to the supranational structures with the effect of globalization and interdependency.[16]

In terms of the geopolitics, the most complicated interpretation of sovereignty is the sovereign rights of the states over the territory and people living on the territory. The territory mentioned here is a dynamic and socially constructed place, that is the subject to the physical and ideological power relations by the states, defined as the national territories. The sovereign rights of states arise from the power relations on territories and they are protected by the international law. However, as the premise of sovereign rights of the states, nation ensures the dynamic character and social construction of the state, as well as the legitimate basis for territorial control.[17] It is defined by Anderson as a limited, sovereign and imagined political community; the nation refers to the group of people who came together in a historical and cultural partnership as an expression of a collective existence. Although this community called as a cultural and historical partnership, members of this community does not really know or meet each other. The nation, which has formed an "imagined community" with this aspect, has created the source of legitimacy for the sovereign rights of the states by emerging in the period of Enlightenment.[18]

The territory inhabited by the nations and used by the state to grant sovereign rights is called national territory. The presupposition that the territories are socially constructed dynamic formations, requires examining the practices used in the formation of the national territories. Constituting the main component of the state's geopolitical code, modern geopolitics described as the politics of boundary construction.[19] The limited character of nation in the definition of Anderson is an expression of boundaries, which distinguishes different national territories. Boundaries have a geopolitical function as separating different political entities.[20] Boundaries shape the territory by creating "lines of inclusion and exclusion" between social

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[16] Dodds, *Geopolitics*, 57-59.

[17] Anssi Paasi, "Territory" in *A Companion to Political Geography*, ed. John Agnew, Katharyne Mitchell and Gearóid O'Tuathail (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 110-114.

[18] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso 2006), 57.

[19] Flint, *Introduction to Geopolitics*, 132.

[20] David Newman, "Boundaries" in *A Companion to Political Geography,* ed. John Agnew, Katharyne Mitchell and Gearóid O'Tuathail (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 123.

groups, become a part of the daily life of the citizens and determine the limits of the national territories by penetrating into society through cultural, economic and administrative means.[21] Boundaries demarks the national territories where the states exercise their sovereignty rights. Demarcation and protection of boundaries represent mutual understanding between states, while the violation of them by other political entities often constitute the basic motivation for the state of war.

These components of nation bring about the issue of national identity. According to Smith, national identity is a complex and multifaceted concept consists of the nation, which is expressed as a common cultural and historical partnership, the territory, where the nation lives, and the rights that the nations have possessed on the certain territories. National identity enables economic and political self-sufficiency of states, while plays an important role in strengthening ties among the members of nation. National identity, which is consolidated with the imposition of public mass education, is conveyed to the members of nation as a common heritage and is remined continuously through symbols, flags, anthems, monuments, ceremonies.[22] As an inclusionary concept, national identity enables the idea of nation by transferring ethnic, regional, religious, generic affiliations to the nation. National identity pursues a clear distinction between inside and outside, while removing the differences among the citizens, in order to ensure the continuity of the national territory within the boundaries. The symbols used in the territory formation, provide a collective identity to individuals, who attach their loyalty to the territory, while not knowing each other.[23] Unlike ethnicity, national identity with its subjective and pragmatic characteristics is not a fact, it is rather a perception, which is built by the states or cultural mainstream to legitimize strategic interests of states.[24] In this sense, geopolitics, which is described as boundary construction or territory formation, also means the construction of national identities within boundaries.

The boundaries as the essential component of the territory formation, define the limits of the territories, while in a sense they also define the limits of the national identities formed within

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[21] Paasi, "Territory," 113.

[22] Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 14-17.

[23] Paasi, "Territory," 116.

[24] Allen Chun, "On the Geopolitics of Identity," *Anthropological Theory* 9, no.3 (November 2009): 337, https://doi.org/10.1177/1463499609348245.

the territory. In this sense, there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between boundaries and national identity that, boundaries as part of the geopolitical codes of states provide a territory for national identity, where the states maintain their sovereign rights taking their legitimacy from the nation.[25] A territory surrounded by boundaries and identity attached to the territory are of foremost importance for the sovereignty claim of a state. Often associated with security related concepts, boundaries display the geographical spread of states with their physical existence. States have control and justification over all components of territories within these boundaries. Physical breach of boundaries, efforts to engage an area or an attempt to access a natural resource on the territory creates a direct cause of war between states or different geopolitical agents and constitutes a subject of geopolitical studies.

The role of the identity should not be ignored when making geopolitical assessments. Considering the structure of the international system, boundaries and nation states play a dominant role. However, while the national expression of identity is important for the continuity of the nation state, identity is not always affiliated with the national territories.[26] In some cases, identity may deliberately or inadvertently extend beyond its national boundaries, or representation of regional identity of subnational groups prevails over the national identity, and so, undermines the national sovereignty.[27] In such cases the territorial uncertainties over international borders imperil the state's allegations on the national identity, the geopolitics of national identity steps in and identity may form a geopolitical struggle between political entities at various levels.[28]

Separatist movements embodied in self-determination claims of sub-national groups perceived as a threat to the sovereignty claims and the national identity of the states, emphasizes the importance of the consolidation of national identity for the state existence and legitimization of the geopolitical actions of the state.[29] In these cases, both self-determination struggles of separatist groups and the struggle of states to preserve their

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[25] Newman, "Boundaries," 132

[26] Dodds, *Geopolitics*, 96.

[27] Dodds, 96-103.

[28] Dodds, 93.

[29] Dodds, 106-107.

geopolitical interests derive its legitimacy from the concept of national interest. The identities that extend beyond the territorial boundaries of another state sometimes violate the principle of non-intervention which constitutes another meaning of sovereignty and turn into an identity based geopolitical struggle between two different geopolitical agents. In some cases, this may lead to the annexation or destabilization of a region, exhibiting distinctive characteristics from the national identity of the state, by another state.

With reference to the socially constructed nature of territory and identity, and the fact that these two components of human geography constitute the core of the geopolitical actions of the states, it can be indicated that geopolitics is closely related to the constructed features of the places as well as the physical features. Assigning certain values to the components of human geography, gives them a strategic meaning in the presence of geopolitical agents and compose the subject of geopolitical reasoning. According to this, geopolitical reasoning ensures geopolitical agents to assert claims over territory and identity and these claims produced by the state organs and distribute by the popular cultural circles progressively.[30] Termed as geopolitical discourse, this phenomenon is a representation of places that can be seen in "written and read" foreign policy practices. Discourse does not purely express 'textuality' it is rather a context which is only meaningful representation of geopolitical space for certain historical period, created by the political elites, includes political figures, government officials or foreign policy experts to mobilize public opinion via texts, speeches, foreign policy documents.[31] In this sense, contrary to the traditional geopolitics, modern geopolitics is not a separate field from politics and ideology based on physical facts, it is rather a discursive practice involves efforts of statecrafts in the field of international politics based on the construction of geopolitical reasoning concretized in the foreign policy documents, speeches and written statements.[32]

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[30] Dodds, 112-113.

[31] Agnew and Corbridge, Mastering *Space*, 46-47.

[32] Gearóid O'Tuathail and John Agnew, "Geopolitics and Discourse: Practical Geopolitical Reasoning in American Foreign Policy," *Political Geography* 11, no.2 (March 1992): 192-193, https://doi.org/10.1016/0962-6298(92)90048-X.

2.2. Historical Context of Geopolitics and Eurasia in the Geopolitical Literature

Many scholars working on the field of geopolitics have not only influenced other scholars, but also influenced different currents of thoughts and state policies by exceeding their time. Therefore, the presentation of important theorists worked primarily on the field of geopolitics has great significance in terms of understanding the concept in its historical context.

Its origins based on Aristotle, Strabo, Bodin, Montesquieu, Kant and Hegel; the modern era geopolitics is examined through five different stages: imperial hegemony, German geopolitik, American geopolitics, the Cold War and the post-Cold War period.[33] Geopolitics, while reflects the desire to acquire new territories of European imperial powers in the beginning of the 20th century, formed the scientific basis for German "lebensraum" policy after World War I, the US doctrine of containment of the Soviet Union after World War II and critical approaches in the post-Cold War period. Although, prevalent geopolitical literature has legitimized national interests in different geographies, the importance of controlling Eurasian land mass and balancing dominant Russian power in the continent through forming alliances in Europe has remained in the core of geopolitics up to the present.

Known for his geopolitical works on Eurasian land mass, British geographer Halford Mackinder drew a parallelism between geographical causation and universal history argued the Asiatic conquests made it possible for European civilizations to develop in his article the Geographical Pivot of History.[34] According to this, European and Asian civilizations are in a great geographical contrast, as demonstrated by the vast area covered by Russia and small territories occupied by Western powers in the political map of Europe. Mackinder indicated that, maritime power and the progress of the Western Europe in the seas is important in terms of political history, however, horseman and camel mobility as a natural rival of mobility in the oceans has not yet lost its significance. Land power was still important in the case of the 21 million square miles Euro-Asia, whose core is the pivot region in the world, covered with railways and permits the sea power penetrating inside and suitable for the nomad

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[33] Cohen, *Geopolitics*, 16.

[34] Halford Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History," *The Geographical Journal* 23, no.4, (April 1904): 423, https://www.jstor.org/stable/1775498.

operations.[35] Outside this pivot area, there are inner crescent consists Germany, Austria, Turkey, India and China, and outer crescent consists Britain, South Africa, Australia, the United States, Canada and Japan.[36] Mackinder thought that the pivot state Russia was not equivalent to the peripheries and so that France needed to be as an equilibrant. Revising his views in Democratic Ideals and Reality in 1919, Mackinder explained the importance of the region using the term heartland. He considered of the progress in transportation, increase in population and industrialization expand the borders of his map to include Eastern Europe from the Baltic through Black Sea as inner Eurasia's strategic annex.[37] The following dictum was a warning to the European states against the future political developments:

> Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland
> Who rules the Heartland commands the World Island
> Who rules the World Island commands the World.[38]

On the other hand, the heavy defeat of the Germany after World War I and arrangements on German territory led to the increased popularity of the organic state concept primarily put forward by Friedrich Ratzel. The view that states need a living space and resource in order to survive provided an intellectual basis for Nazism in Germany whose territories was apportioned among the European states after the Treaty of Versailles. Being influenced by Ratzel's argument that state as super organism, required territorial expansion and secure its own "living space; former military commander Karl Haushofer shaped the intellectual basis of German expansion in Europe. Haushofer believed that if Germany desired to have prosperity beyond survival it would be necessary to conquer a living space towards the east with the help of potential allies like Italy and Japan. Haushofer proposed a rapprochement with the Soviet Union in the short and medium term to reinforce its position on the Euro-Asian landmass.[39]

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[35] Mackinder, 436.

[36] Mackinder, 436.

[37] Cohen, *Geopolitics*, 19.

[38] Halford Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (Washington DC: National Defence University Press, 1996), 106.

[39] Dodds, *Geopolitics*, 32.

For Germans geopolitics served the purpose of acquiring a living space in the east, while Americans used their unique geopolitical location to become the strongest power in the world. In contrast to Mackinder's attributed importance on land power and impenetrable Eurasian heartland, the US naval historian Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan argued that the geographical position gives the states strategic advantage, made historical assessments on the use of sea power and America's strategic position between two oceans. Recognizing the sea power as an important geopolitical factor, Mahan saw the necessary American expansion in the seas.

American scholar of international relations Nicholas John Spykman, who inspired by Mahan and Mackinder's theories, confirmed that geography is the most permanent factor in the foreign policies of states.[40] Among the five continental islands described by Spykman, the relations between North America and two sides of Eurasian continent dominated the world politics while South America, Australia and Africa were relatively unimportant.[41] In respect of post war order, Spykman clearly considered the necessity of the US presence in Europe for the establishment and protection balance of power. He pointed out that the US presence in Europe would be cheaper in the long run as the third-party strength and suggested a regional league of nations that US existed as an extra regional member in order to achieve European balance of power.[42] With the emphasis given to the European shore of the Atlantic, Spykman developed the rimland theory (Mackinder's inner crescent encircling the heartland), against the dominance of heartland in world politics. According to this, the heartland of the Northern hemisphere was the USSR- the largest state in the world, encircled by the concentric buffer zone covered, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Tibet, China, peninsulas of Arabia, Burma and India. This buffer zone separated the heartland from the maritime highway of the world comprising the marginal seas in Western Europe, the Baltic and North Sea, European Mediterranean and Indian Ocean.[43] Spykman claimed that the geopolitical tendency of the period indicated the expansion of these buffer zones to the heartland, as in the case of German approach from west and Japan from east, and this fact consequently

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[40] Nicholas John Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1942), 41.

[41] Spykman, 178.

[42] Spykman, 465-468.

[43] Spykman, 180-182.

proved the importance of regions surrounding the heartland and dominance of sea power.[44]

Mackinder combined his interests on Eurasian geopolitics with his post war projections by publishing Round World and the Winning of the Peace in 1943. If the concept of heartland does not express precise definition on the map due to geographical reasons, Mackinder approved that borders of heartland almost overlaps with the borders of the Soviet Union. According to Mackinder, if the Soviet Union succeeds in defeating Germany, it will prove to be Heartland's strongest defensive position, greatest fortress on earth.[45] Furthermore, to balance the German expansionist ambitions in the future, laying the foundation of North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Mackinder recommends Midland Ocean (North Atlantic) alliance between the US, Britain and France. Thus, Germany always will be in between the two superpowers: the heartland representing the land power in the east and North Atlantic representing sea power in the west. [46]

American Cold War strategy was extensively affected by the ideas on Eurasian geopolitics of Halford Mackinder and Nicholas Spykman. Their projections provided a useful model for the American foreign policy implementations in the Cold War period. As the initiator of American Cold War policy, American diplomat George Kennan warned the American government about the components of Soviet ideology and its capability to spread to the world and suggested that the US should guide the people in war torn Europe to avoid Soviet ideological influence, based on its political and military achievements during the Second World War.[47] According to Kennan, the way to prevent spread of Soviet ideology, which Central and Eastern Europe has been exposed, was to implement "long term, patient but firm and vigilant containment" to Soviet Union.[48]

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[44] Spykman, 183.

[45] Halford Mackinder, "Round World and the Winning the Peace," *Foreign Affairs* 21, no.4 (July 1943): 601, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20029780.

[46] Mackinder, 601.

[47] Telegram, George Kennan to James Byrnes "Long Telegram," 22 February 1946, Harry S. Truman Administration File, Elsey Papers, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/index.php?documentid=6-6&pagenumber=1.

[48] George Kennan [X, pseud.] "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 25, no.4 (July 1947):575, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20030065.

Following the recommendations of George Kennan on the containment of the communist heartland, containment became the subject matter of the US foreign policy during the Cold War. Influenced by Mackinder's heartland and Spykman's rimland concepts, American containment policy was primarily aimed at preventing the spread of communism outside the Soviet Union and China and provided the US a suitable basis to advocate freedom and democracy to the peoples in the world. Along with George Kennan, numbers of the US policy makers such as Dean Acheson, Paul Nitze, William C. Bullitt, John Foster Dulles, Dwight Eisenhower, Henry Kissinger, Richard Nixon and Zbigniew Brzezinski endeavored to materialize various aspects of Soviet containment during the Cold War.[49]

Zbigniew Brzezinski, who started his career in the Cold War period, used the concept of geopolitics to represent the American strategic interests in the era of geostrategic challenge between the Soviet Union and the US.[50] According to Brzezinski, the US and the Soviet Union are in a long-term power struggle that the control of the linchpin states, such as Germany, Poland, Iran or Pakistan, Afghanistan, South Korea and Philippines, is vital to fulfill the US geostrategic game plan, notably in Eurasia.[51]

The end of the Cold war commenced a renewed the debate on the form of the world system, with the introduction of the critical approaches in the field of geopolitics in the post-Cold War period. Critical scholars like John Agnew and Gearoid O'Tuathail, advocated that the east-west struggle, which constituted the general characteristics of the Cold War, lost its significance and the discourse in geopolitics should be revised. Agnew and O'Tuathail argued that geopolitics is a field of study, which comprised of discursive practices of statecraft in order to accomplish reasoning some political action, and they exemplified their argument over the American geopolitical reasoning. According to that American statecraft has been exercising geopolitical reasoning strategy in American foreign policy for problem in international politics that believed to be required American intervention; thus, the creation of new enemies by means of reasoning was continued in the post-Cold War period.[52]

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[49] Cohen, *Geopolitics*, 29.

[50] Dodds, *Geopolitics*, 39.

[51] Cohen, *Geopolitics*, 30.

[52] O'Tuathail and Agnew, "Geopolitics and Discourse," 195-202.

Indeed, geopolitics proceeded to reflect on the US state centered line in the post-Cold War period and Eurasia did not lose its strategic importance in the discourse of American global primacy. The pioneer of this discourse was the new world order speech of George Bush, that foresaw new and historic partnership among nations established under the America's world leadership and aspired to live in prosperity, freedom and justice, without distinction between east and west; north and south.[53]

Brzezinski explained the strategic requirements of the US in this new world order, attributing significant importance to Eurasia resembling Mackinder's works. In the Grand Chessboard, Brzezinski referred that the Cold War was the first strategic test to control eastern and western bridgeheads of the grand Eurasian continent and that the Eurasian continent did not lose its significance after the Cold War.[54] Accordingly, Eurasia is a chessboard on the way to global primacy as the largest continent in the world.[55] In the middle of the chessboard, Russia located as the former most powerful opponent of the US. West is occupied by the Western European states, where American power directly deployed. In the south energy rich and anarchic Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia and in the east populous and energetic rival China and its southeastern neighbors existed.[56] Europe, represents the western part of the Eurasian chessboard, has vital importance for the strategic needs of the US in terms of ensuring the democratic progress of the US towards the middle space of Eurasia.[57] As long as the middle part was pulled to the western orbit, the eastern part was not unified in the sense that threatened the US offshore bases and southern part was not dominated by single power, the US could declare its global primacy.[58]

From the imperial hegemony to the post-Cold War era, geopolitical literature has emphasized the importance of Eurasia in continuity and formed the ideological basis of political

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[53] George Bush, "Toward a New World Order," in *The Geopolitics Reader,* ed. Geroid O Tuathail, Simon Dalby and Paul Routledge (London: Routledge, 2003), 131-134.

[54] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1998), 6.

[55] Brzezinski, 31-34.

[56] Brzezinski, 34-35.

[57] Brzezinski, 57.

[58] Brzezinski, 35.

developments, that deeply affected the environment of international relations. As one of these developments, foundation and enlargement of NATO, under the leadership of the United States, was a geopolitical phenomenon, closely related to the power struggle in Eurasia. In this sense, a careful examination of NATO geopolitics, facilitates the understanding of the logic of NATO enlargement and the current situation of Ukraine in this process.

CHAPTER 3

THE GEOPOLITICS OF NATO ENLARGEMENT

NATO, as a military alliance, derived its characteristics from the dynamics of the bipolar world system, established after the colossal economic, military and humanitarian destruction brought by World War II. This bipolar system began when political developments in post-war Europe such as unification of German occupation zones, the political and economic structures of German state, establishment of communist governments throughout Eastern Europe and liquidation of local communists revealed the ideological divisions between war time allies: the US and the Soviet Union. The geopolitical consequences of this ideological difference became the basic concern of the Cold War era as indicated in the foreign policies of the US and the Soviet Union.

As the product of geopolitical rivalry in the bipolar system, NATO is a successful military implementation of American idea of containment of Eurasia, where spatial expansion covered with the ideological constituents of the Cold War. In this sense, the establishment of NATO provided defense cooperation based on American military supremacy in Europe, which was an experience that intersected the global geopolitical codes of the US with the geopolitical literature. NATO would serve as the military guarantor of freedom, democracy and common defense principles that the US intend to spread over Europe and control the Soviet ideological and military expansionism by containing the Eurasian land mass.

Nevertheless, establishment of NATO and its enlargement by acquiring new members were not primarily aimed at promoting democracy and good relations among the people in Europe. As the desirable but complementary elements, these were coming after the prior military and geopolitical considerations during the Cold War.[59] In the Cold War environment, where the conventional weapons lost its significance, proliferation of nuclear weapons increased and created security dilemma. NATO made clear distinction between its boundaries and the Soviet Union, and most importantly legitimized the US presence in Europe. The North

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[59] Strobe Talbott, "Why Should NATO Grow," *The New York Review of Books* (August 10, 1995), http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1995/08/10/why-nato-should-grow/.

Atlantic Treaty, which signed by 12 founding members in April 1949, later incorporated Turkey, Greece, Federal Republic of Germany and Spain into its structures, under the favor of open-door policy and exhibited prioritization of strategic considerations during the Cold War enlargement. [60]

3.1. Geopolitics of the Post-Cold War NATO Enlargement

In the post-Cold War era, NATO's future became the subject of the widespread debate. It was claimed that NATO's existence based on collective defense and containment of the ideological expansion of the Soviet Union had ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Although, east-west division, which characterized the Cold War began to cease with the collapse of Berlin Wall and the reform movement of Gorbachev, the Soviet Union was still posing a threat to the Euro-Atlantic zone, due to its nuclear and conventional capacity.

As of 1990, the basic strategies of NATO allies under the US leadership were managing arms and force reduction of the Soviet Union, providing stability in Central and Eastern Europe and preparedness for new threats that could arise from outside the Euro-Atlantic zone with the influence of current Gulf Crisis.[61] As a visible reflection of the US interests and NATO geopolitics, arms and force reduction issue resolved in the dominant dialogue and cooperation environment, immediately after the Cold War. Military balance achieved by the US, by removing the Soviet forces from Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the reduction of armed forces of the Warsaw Pact countries carried out in the framework of Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and the nuclear balance redressed by setting equal ceilings on nuclear forces, in order to minimize the risk of nuclear war in times of crisis with Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). The US subsidized and assisted removal and disablement of weapons of mass destruction to prevent possession of them by third parties in the course of process with Nunn-Lugar Act. Nevertheless, as the reform movements of the Soviet Union progressed, Soviet nuclear capacity halted, Soviet conventional forces were pulled from Europe, the states in Central and Eastern Europe began to transform their communist structures, the threat perception generated during the Cold War lost its solid foundation.

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[60] "Enlargement," NATO, accessed January 28, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49212.htm#.

[61] James Baker, "Challenges Facing Atlantic Alliance" (Excerpts from North Atlantic Council Intervention, Brussels, Belgium, December 17, 1990), *US Department of State Dispatch* 1, no.17 (December 1990).

While this situation led to the question of NATO's reason of being based on collective defense and expansion, the US intended to transform NATO's strategic thinking instead of putting an end to NATO's existence, which previously suggested by Gorbachev.

Reformulation of NATO's strategic thinking would have ensured the adaptation of NATO to the post-Cold War environment. The first strategic concept after the Cold War adopted collective defense and deterrence as principles acknowledged the multifaceted and multinational nature of new threats. In order to counter these threats and legitimize the reason of being, NATO should improve its capabilities to engage crisis management and peacekeeping operations, and to develop close cooperation with former adversaries to ensure stability in Europe.[62] Accordingly, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were the missing pieces of transatlantic community in which NATO constitutes an essential part. Moreover, the involvement of these countries into the new security environment in Europe should have been the most important goal for allies.[63]

This goal undoubtedly related to the geopolitical interests of the US. Instead of terminating NATO's existence, allies expanded NATO's area of influence and acquired new missions to protect the US geopolitical interests, by maintaining the US military presence in Europe.[64] A safe and stable Europe under the auspices of NATO facilitated the access of the US to the strategic locations such as the Middle East and Persian Gulf and consolidated the economic ties on both sides of Atlantic.[65] The leadership mission of the US, which ensures European security and NATO's adaptation, has gained momentum with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the outbreak of the Bosnian War.

The US, who desire to reduce its defense spending to ensure NATO's partnership with former adversaries and NATO's involvement in Bosnian War by bringing peacekeeping and crisis

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[62] Manfred Wörner, "A New NATO for a New Era" (Address at National Press Club Washington DC, October 6, 1993) , NATO, accessed February 10, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_24171.htm?selectedLocale=en.

[63] James Baker, "The Euro Atlantic Architecture from East to West", (Address at Aspen Institute, Berlin, June 18, 1991), *US Department of State Dispatch* 2, no.25 (June 1991).

[64] Thomas Szayna, *NATO Enlargement, 2000-2015: Determinants and Implications for Defense Planning and Shaping* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001), 10.

[65] Wörner, "A New NATO for a New Era."

management functions, came up with the idea of NATO enlargement in this context. In the period of following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US managed to prepare the necessary foundation for a possible NATO enlargement discursively and organizationally. Nevertheless, the question of why NATO, which does not have the capacity to participate in the Bosnia problem, should be enlarged, made it difficult for the US to legitimize the NATO enlargement. At this point NATO enlargement was presented as a complementary process to the post-Cold War transformation of NATO and enhancement of the overall security in Europe.[66] Accordingly NATO enlargement brought to the agenda by the US, would assist to the new democracies in Europe in an environment, where new threats may arise, become an incentive for Eastern European and the former Soviet Union states for their transformation of their communist structures, and strengthen cooperation between the aspirant states in order to engage in peacekeeping operations in Europe.[67]

NATO's post-Cold War enlargement was initiated in accordance with the geopolitical motives, rather than technical assessments and effectiveness in peacekeeping operations. In the first place, the US initially aimed to establish the eastern border of NATO by integrating the most developed post-communist states closest to Germany, which was the center of NATO in Europe.[68] This initiative was strongly encouraged by the Eastern European states, who was seeking to overcome the insecurity created by their tragic communist past, and Germany, who was aspiring to minimize security risks from the east.[69] Nevertheless, the integration of the states of Eastern Europe and the former members of the Soviet Union into NATO, as a requirement of Europe's new geopolitics, had to be rearranged in a way not to create the new east-west disintegration.[70] In this case, the most fundamental problem of NATO enlargement was to engage Russia, who was the key element in European stability and comprehended NATO enlargement as a threat.[71] In order to overcome Russian involvement, NATO allies have provided financial and technical assistance to the reform

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[66] Szayna, *NATO Enlargement*, 15.

[67] Talbott, "Why Should NATO Grow."

[68] Szayna, *NATO Enlargement*, 18.

[69] Szayna, 18-19.

[70] Strobe Talbott, "The New Geopolitics: Defending Democracy in the Post-Cold War Era" (Address at Oxford University, England, October 20, 1994), *US Department of State Dispatch* 5, no.46 (December 1994).

[71] Szayna, *NATO Enlargement*, 22-23.

movements in Russia and enabled Russia to establish constructive relations with NATO allies and aspirant states in the framework of NATO activities.

3.2. Factors and Instruments Contributing to the NATO's Post-Cold War Enlargement

3.2.1. The Transformation of NATO

The transformation of NATO in the post-Cold War era began with the London Summit in 1990, which was called a "turning point" in the east-west relations. Since the 2+4 negotiations has not yet concluded with the German Treaty, this summit was a symbol of good intentions of NATO members towards the Soviet Union and countries of the Central and Eastern Europe. Cooperating with the Soviet Union, Central and Eastern European countries and including them into NATO structures formed the main goals of Allies to reach out all adversaries after the Cold War.[72] To reflect the political change within NATO, allies invited the Soviet Union, the Czech and the Slovak Federal Republic, the Hungarian Republic, the Republic of Poland, the People's Republic of Bulgaria and Romania to establish regular diplomatic liaison with NATO. As expressed by George Bush, liaison idea would present a link between NATO and Eastern European countries without inciting Soviets and would eventually put aside the enemy image of NATO in the minds of the Soviet people.[73] With the London Declaration, NATO officially initiated its own transformation. This transformation besides overcoming the old hostilities, anticipated a revision of defense, force planning, reducing nuclear reliance and the reconstruction of forces of NATO members as smaller, mobile and flexible to engage in possible crisis.[74] In order to achieve these goals, the reduction of nuclear and conventional weapons was prioritized by NATO and the Soviet Union.

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[72] "Verbatim Record of the NATO London Summit" (1990), NATO, accessed December 20, 2017, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_archives/20141218_C-VR-90-36-PART1.PDF.

[73] NATO, "Verbatim Record of the NATO London Summit."

[74] "20 Years Ago, London Declaration Marks Birth of New NATO," NATO, accessed January 2, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_64790.htm?selectedLocale=en.

3.2.2. Dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organization

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the communist systems in Eastern Europe, the decision of the unification of the two German states and the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from the region gave the Eastern European leaders the opportunity they had been waiting for years: dismantling the Warsaw Treaty Organization and integration with the West. Acknowledging their cultural, historical and political similarities, leaders of the Czech and Slovak Republic, the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Hungary issued a joint declaration to seek for the elimination of social, economic aspects of the totalitarian system and full involvement in the European political, economic and security system in 1991.[75] Thus, the Visegrad Group established by Vaclav Havel, Lech Walesa and Jozsef Antall on February 15th, 1991 to intensified their efforts for NATO integration after the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organization on March 31st, 1991.

The reason of the Visegrad Group's request to join Euro-Atlantic structures was hidden under their views on their own countries. As the victims of Nazism and Communism, they formed "the western frontier of the Soviet Empire" and "potential theatre of an apocalyptic nuclear war".[76] For the first time for years, they got an opportunity to take their "wrath of European states- so recently colonized by the Soviet Union".[77] Under the structure of the Visegrad Group, which was not imposed by Moscow, Brussels or Washington, these countries would accelerate their transition "from Soviet orbit to Euro Atlantic structures" in order to re-align themselves with the west.[78] Therefore, became parts of the Euro-Atlantic community through NATO was a conscious decision aimed at changing the geopolitical map of Europe.[79] The August Coup and the pursuing collapse of the Soviet Union formed a second belt of

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[75] "Declaration on Cooperation Between the Czech and Slovak Republic, the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Hungary in Striving for European Integration" (February 15, 1991), Visegrad Group, accessed January 2, 2018, http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/visegrad-declarations/visegrad-declaration-110412.

[76] Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz, "The Visegrad Declaration 15 Years Later" in *The Visegrad Book: A Central European Constellation*, ed. Andrzej Jagodzinski (Bratislava: International Visegrad Fund, 2006), 18.

[77] Vaclav Havel, "Address Given to the Polish Sejm and Senate" (Warsaw, January 25, 1990), CVCE.eu, accessed December 6, 2017, https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2006/3/27/d639c9ab-79ce-41d9-8767-4a9bd804ec35/publishable_en.pdf.

[78] Géza Jeszenszky, "The Origins and Enactment of the Visegrad Idea" in *The Visegrad Book: A Central European Constellation*, ed. Andrzej Jagodzinski (Bratislava: International Visegrad Fund, 2006), 61.

[79] Marcinkiewicz, "The Visegrad Declaration 15 Years Later," 18.

independent states between NATO and Russia, thus, the Visegrad Group held the realm to make the geopolitical maneuvers that they were seeking for.[80] At a meeting in 1992, the prime ministers of the Visegrad Group officially declared their aspiration for membership to the NATO, the European Union and the Western European Union. However, the reluctance of the Alliance and the lack of structural capabilities of NATO prevented the debate on enlargement after the US presidential elections in 1993.

3.2.3. The New Strategic Concept and North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC)

The disintegration of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and the independence of Baltic States in 1991 provided a solid basis for the decision to place Central and Eastern European states at NATO's table. The Rome Summit in November 1991 incorporated NATO's transformation issues, in the manner that it approves London Summit decisions.

The New Strategic Concept presented at the Rome Summit underlined the rejection of ideological hostility of the former Warsaw Pact members with the West and caused the reduction of the risk of a major conflict in Europe. The commitment towards the European security remained constant. NATO predicated that the new security environment of Europe should be reflected in the relations with non-NATO countries in the manner of dialogue and cooperation and European security depends on the integrity of all of these countries.[81]

In the Declaration of Peace and Cooperation, member countries of NATO announced their encouragement on the development and democracy in the Soviet Union, Central and Eastern European countries.[82] In the framework of the dynamic process designed to foster security and confidence in those countries, NATO announced its intention to build closer ties at a new level. Thus, the foreign ministers of the countries were invited to issue a joint statement to launch North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) at the Ministerial level and to have

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[80] Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2002), 16-17.

[81] "The Alliance's New Strategic Concept" (Agreed by the Heads of State and Government participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, November 7-8, 1991), NATO, accessed December 8, 2017, https://www.nato.int/cps/ua/natohq/official_texts_23847.htm.

[82] "Rome Declaration on Peace and Cooperation" (Issued by the Heads of the State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council, November 8, 1991), NATO, accessed December 8, 2017, https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c911108a.htm.

annual meetings to develop more institutional cooperation on political and security issues. The foreign Ministers of Bulgaria, the Czech and Slovak Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and the Soviet Union were invited at the Rome Summit to issue a joint declaration to launch NACC in December 1991. During the inaugural meeting, the Soviet representative announced the dissolution of the Soviet Union and confirmed the participation of the Russian Federation only. [83] By providing ministerial level annual meetings with the North Atlantic Council (NAC), NACC acted as a multinational forum for the resolution of the post-Cold War security issues, such as the withdrawal of Russian troops, solving regional conflicts in parts of the former Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia with the participation of former Warsaw Pact members and the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union.[84] However, as NACC was not designed to allow members countries to develop bilateral relations with NATO, it was not conducive to creating membership opportunity desired by the Visegrad Group.

3.2.4. Partnership for Peace (PfP)

Through facilitating the necessary infrastructure for transformation and enlargement of NATO, Partnership for Peace (PfP) was closely related with the foreign policy objectives of the Clinton administration. After his election, President Clinton removed the clear distinction between domestic and foreign policy, in accordance with the requirements of the post-Cold War era.[85] In the diplomatic environment such distinction is not available, Clinton has formulated three main elements of the US foreign policy as follows: active economic contacts with foreign countries after sustained sound economy in the country, modernization of the armed forces and security arrangements of the US to meet new threats in order to achieve security interests and international peace, spread of democratic values to promote democracy and human rights.[86]

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[83] "North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC)," NATO, accessed December 11, 2017, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_69344.htm.

[84] NATO, "Rome Declaration."

[85] Bill Clinton, "A Strategic Alliance with Russian Reform" (Address before the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Annapolis, Maryland, April 1, 1993), *US Department of State Dispatch* 4, no.14 (April 1993).

[86] Bill Clinton, "A New Era of Peril and Promise" (Address before the Diplomatic Corps, Georgetown University, Washington DC, January 18, 1993), *US Department of State Dispatch* 4, no.5 (February 1993).

The highest foreign policy priority and the greatest strategic challenge was to bring these three elements of the US foreign policy together to assist Russia in the reform process.[87] This policy was mainly aspired to reduce the US military expenditure financing the Cold War and to invest more the future of the US.[88] With the positive impact of the Russian reforms, the US aimed to annihilate nuclear arsenals, to reduce the conflict risk in Europe and to scale back the US troops, to modernize the US armies pursuant to the peacekeeping operations.[89] Development of peacekeeping capabilities intended to strengthen the US intervention capabilities as well as the UN and NATO structures, in order to implement and enforce peace agreement to end ethnic cleansing in Former Yugoslavia. However, while accepting the validity of American leadership in the post-Cold War era, Clinton tended to adopt a multilateral approach instead of "bearing the world's burden alone".[90] To completely solve this problem, the US had to promote democratic transformations in the former Warsaw Pact states, in addition to engaging in the existing problems in the former Yugoslavia.

Spread of democratic values as the third pillar of the US foreign policy was complementing the other two foreign policy elements in every respect. The Clinton Administration assumed that, although the communism had collapsed in Central and Eastern Europe, the security of the Atlantic alliance depended on promoting democratic transformations in the former Warsaw Pact countries. This vision of Clinton government projected the reorganization of European security structures in a way to include the former Warsaw Pact members, which found the best expression in the US Secretary of State Warren Christopher's words:

> There can be no better way to establish a new and secure Europe than to have soldiers from Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, and the other new democracies work with NATO to address their most pressing security problems. We believe NATO and our Eastern colleagues should establish joint planning and training, and joint exercises for peace-keeping. [91]

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[87] Warren Christopher, "Securing US Interests While Supporting Russian Reform" (Address Before the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, Chicago Illinois, March 22, 1993), *US Department of State Dispatch* 4, no.13 (March 1993).

[88] Clinton, "A Strategic Alliance with Russian Reform."

[89] Christopher, "Securing US Interests."

[90] Clinton, "A New Era of Peril and Promise."

[91] Warren Christopher, "NATO and US Foreign Policy" (Excerpts from the intervention ar the Special Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Brussels, Belgium, February 26, 1993), *US Department of State Dispatch* 4, no.9 (March 1993).

The American proposal of Partnership for Peace was designed in such environment where the Visegrad Group desired to join in Euro Atlantic structures, Russia was in the process of democratic reforms, Yugoslavia has suffered from ethnic fragmentation and the US sought affordable ways to transform NATO suitable for US strategic interests after the Cold War. Recognizing the importance of NATO's future role in Europe, Partnership for Peace firstly proposed by Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff John Shalikashvili to the Clinton administration, as a cost-effective way to establish military cooperation with the former members of Warsaw Pact. Shalikashvili's PfP proposal could provide a framework for achieving multiple elements of American foreign policy: close military cooperation with Central and East European armies would enable to evaluate for future membership to NATO, while Russia would not be excluded from European security structures and nationalist designs would not be able to advance if the expected Russian participation occurs.[92] Moreover, joint exercises and training under PfP will eventually ensure NATO's military participation in Bosnian War and NATO's involvement within PfP was intended to compensate the frustrations of the international community created by the ineffectiveness of NATO, UN and EC during the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia.[93]

Partnership for Peace officially presented to allies as an immediate and practical program that would play a significant role in the evolutionary process leading to NATO membership of Central and Eastern European states in NATO Brussels Summit in January 1994.[94] Members of NACC and CSCE were invited to promote close military cooperation with NATO as indicated in the Framework Document. According to the Framework Document, non-member participants was obliged to provide Presentation Document to the NATO authorities to determine steps to achieve political goals of their partnership and their military assets were available for NATO use. Based on the Presentation Document, each state develops Individual Partnership Program and within the scope of this make efforts to develop their abilities in the field of peacekeeping, search, rescue and humanitarian operations by attending joint

[92] "Press Briefing by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General John Shalikashvili" (January 4, 1994), The American Presidency Project, accessed December 10, 2017, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=59884.

[93] "Press Briefing by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff."

[94] "Partnership for Peace Invitation" (Issued in the Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council/ North Atlantic Cooperation Council, NATO Headquarters, Brussels, January 10-11, 1994), NATO, accessed December 11, 2017, https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940110a.htm.

planning, joint exercises and joint training.[95] In order to facilitate Individual Partnership, participating states should establish their liaison office in NATO Headquarters in Brussels and should fund their own participation in their partnership activities. The Brussels Summit, which launched NATO's eastward expansion in the framework of PfP, was an event that all the critical decisions were taken by the US. [96] As an indication of this fact, PfP served most of the US interests: it enabled former Warsaw Pact members to show their readiness and willingness to engage in Euro-Atlantic structures, ensured NATO's transformation for the post-Cold War era by encouraging participation in peacekeeping activities, allowed saving the defense budget through self-funding of participating states, and above all, provided NATO to integrate slowly with the former Warsaw Pact members without inciting Russian anxieties.

Although, it advocated that PfP offered equal military and political opportunities to all participants and final decision on NATO membership would be taken after close consultation with the allies considering the capacities of participants, the actual decision maker on initial NATO enlargement in the framework of PfP was the USA.[97] The headliners of the first post-Cold War enlargement had already been determined by the US without evaluating the abilities and limitations of the PfP participants. In the framework of the NATO Participation Act of 1994, the US has found Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and Czech Republic as eligible for the US security and financial assistance as a result of their democratic transitions and active PfP involvement, while indicated that the active participation in PfP would lead to eventual NATO membership of participants.[98] In this sense, PfP was not only primarily concerned with assessing the limitations of participating states in the peacekeeping missions or limitations of their military capabilities but also served as process designed to prepare both Russia and other NATO members for the new geopolitical reality in Europe emerged after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union. In order to achieve NATO enlargement, on one hand the US took initiative to convince members of NATO, on the other

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[95] NATO, "Partnership for Peace Invitation."

[96] Stephan A. Oxman, "The NATO Summit and the Future of European Security" (Statement Before the Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, DC, February 1, 1994), *US Department of State Dispatch* 5, no.7 (February 1994).

[97] Szayna*, NATO Enlargement*, 2.

[98] NATO Participation Act of 1994, H.R. 5246, 103rd Cong. (1994).

hand would endeavor to intensify relations with Russia through NATO in a more open, more ambitious and more frank direction.[99]

3.2.5. The Study on Enlargement

An affirmative decision made on the enlargement and initialization of PfP in the Brussels Summit in January, left the doubts on NATO enlargement aside and posed a new question of how to enlarge NATO. The first step to answer this question was taken at the ministerial meeting of NATO in Brussels on December 1st, 1994. Allies agreed to draft an "extensive study" with the contribution of the military authorities to determine the principles that would guide the enlargement process and the effect of the participation in PfP on the enlargement decision and to present it in 1995. [100]

Study on Enlargement, which presented in September 1995, was in accord with the US objectives to pre-assess the conditions, timing and military implications of NATO enlargement in order to prevent unexpected results and get in with the NATO member states on the enlargement goal.[101] According to the Study, all the new members should reaffirm their commitment to the provisions of the Washington Treaty.[102] In accordance with the collective defense principle stipulated in Article 5 of the Treaty, contribution of the aspirant country to the collective defense is important criteria in the assessment process for the membership. In order to fulfill collective defense commitment, aspirant states should participate in the command structures and force structures of the Alliance, must be prepared to authorize other Allied forces' presence on their territory and provide support in time of crisis. They should also prepare to deploy their own forces outside their territory as well.

Active participation in the NACC and PfP activities has a key role in the evaluation process for membership; however, it does not guarantee a membership invitation. The activities are

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[99] Bill Clinton, "The US and the Central and Eastern Europe: Forging New Partnerships" (Remarks to Plenary Session of the White House Conference on Trade and Investment in Central and Eastern Europe, Cleveland, Ohio, January 13, 1995), *US Department of State Dispatch* 6, no.3 (January 1995).

[100] "Final Communique" (Issued at Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Brussels, December 1, 1994), NATO, accessed December 15, 2017, https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c941201a.htm.

[101] Clinton, "The US and the Central and Eastern Europe: Forging New Partnerships."

[102] "Study on Enlargement," NATO, accessed December 16, 2017, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_24733.htm.

open to every partner, who requested to pursue cooperation with NATO, and extent of participation is a key factor to distinguish candidates for the membership from the ordinary participants. Assessment for membership depends on the number of minimum standards set by NATO, while the preparation for the selected candidates would be conducted by deepening their Individual Partnership Programs. Although the participation in PfP plays a key role in evaluation of membership, invitations for each candidate will be made by examining their situation case by case. The countries had to meet the certain criteria for membership; however, the geopolitical reality in Europe should be in line with the desire for membership of the candidates. The Study on the one hand attributed a prominent place for Russia in European security, on the other hand considered the possibility of Russian objection to NATO enlargement. Therefore, the Study declared that no non-NATO country has a veto power on enlargement process and decisions by implying Russia. However, another stipulation of the Study indicated that states with ethnic, territorial or jurisdictional disputes could not be evaluated for candidacy without solving these problems will be used by Russia to prevent membership of the countries invited to NATO in violation of the Russian interests.

3.2.6. Enlargement within the Framework of Partnership for Peace

Since the decision on enlargement depends on the strategic contributions and capacities of the partners, launching of the Operation Joint Endeavor in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which announced by NATO Foreign and Defense Ministers in December 1995, was one of the biggest tests for both NATO and aspiring PfP participants.[103] Authorized with the UNSC Resolution 1031, multinational implementation force (IFOR) was deployed in Bosnia Herzegovina for a year in order to take the place of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and to assist with the implementation of military and territorial provisions of Dayton Peace Agreement.[104] IFOR, formed by 36 member and partner countries including non-PfP participants with 60,000 personnel, was the first major crisis respond operation in NATO'shistory ratified the post-Cold War transformation of the Alliance.[105] Although, it is

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[103] "Statement on Bosnia Herzegovina" (Press Communique of North Atlantic Council December 5, 1995), NATO, accessed December 17, 2017, https://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1995/p95-119.htm.

[104] United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1031, On implementation of the Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina and transfer of authority from the UN Protection Force to the multinational Implementation Force (IFOR), S/RES/1031, (December 15, 1995), http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1995/scres95.htm.

[105] "Peace Support Operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina," NATO, accessed December 17, 2017, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52122.htm.

not a prerequisite for membership evaluation, IFOR and following Stabilization Force (SFOR) missions have become a way to demonstrate the willingness, competence and capacity of PfP participants to the US and other NATO members.

The first tangible step on enlargement was taken at the December 1996 ministerial meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels. This meeting on the one hand confirmed the first round of invitations of one or more countries at the 1997 Madrid Summit, on the other hand replaced EAPC with NACC in order to provide a broad cooperative mechanism for increased activities under NACC and PfP.[106] Although the Brussels meeting did not explicitly point at any country for membership invitation, the countries to be invited for membership implicitly designated as Hungary, Poland and Czech Republic in the 1996 NATO Enlargement Facilitation Act of the United States, while Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Moldova and Ukraine were designed to provide diplomatic support in order to qualify for NATO membership.[107]

The 1997 Madrid Summit presented a similar statement as the NATO Enlargement Facilitation Act. According to Madrid Summit decisions, accession talks of Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic would be finalized in the 50th anniversary of the Washington Treaty in 1999; however, evaluation of other aspirant states will continue to be carried out in the framework of the 1995 Study on Enlargement.[108] The progress that the aspirant states made in the framework of the Study on enlargement will be revised at the 1999 Washington Summit with the finalization of the membership of Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic.

3.2.7. Membership Action Plan (MAP)

The Washington Summit taken place in the 50th anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty introduced three new members to the Alliance and presented Membership Action Plan (MAP) to further the next round of enlargement of the aspirant states. Membership Action

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[106] "Final Communique" (Issued at Ministerial Meeting of North Atlantic Council, December 10, 1996), NATO, accessed December 25, 2017, https://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1996/p96-165e.htm.

[107] NATO Enlargement Facilitation Act of 1996, S.1830, 104th Cong. (1996).

[108] "Madrid Declaration on Euro-Atlantic Security and Cooperation" (Issued by the Heads of State and Government, July 8, 1997), NATO, accessed December 25, 2017, https://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1997/p97-081e.htm.

Plan as a manifestation of NATO's open-door policy, is a program that offers list of activities to aspirant states in order to provide a tailored support to their membership preparations. Every MAP participant was obliged to present the Annual National Program (ANP) comprising setting objectives, targets and schedule for the preparations to the Alliance.[109] ANP, which covers political and economic, defense and military, resource, security and legal aspects of the preparations, would provide a basis for monitoring progress of the countries and enable NATO to give feedback. NATO stipulated to provide feedback every year with 19+1 format meetings and workshops. Romania, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Macedonia and Albania were the first countries included in the MAP process to review their progress 2002 Summit meeting.[110] Following the first nine participants, Croatia in 2002, Montenegro in 2009 and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2010 joined the MAP process to be evaluated for the membership.

3.2.8. Enlargement within the Frame of Membership Action Plan

Prior to the membership invitations at the 1997 Madrid Summit, allies disagreed over the first round of the post-Cold War enlargement; furthermore, Alliance could not reach a consensus over invitation of Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic. The US supported the Baltic inclusion, while France and Italy supported the invitation of Romania and Slovenia claiming they could better provide a geopolitical balance in Southeastern Europe.[111] Invitation of Slovenia and Romania postponed because of their technical incompetence by the US, while a more detailed strategy needed on the Baltic States, whose membership was not desired by any European members due to the their geographical and historical ties with Russia.

Expression of the US ultimate strategy on the Baltic membership of NATO took shape with the Charter of Partnership among the United States of America and the Republic of Estonia, Republic of Latvia, and Republic of Lithuania dated January 16th, 1998. The Charter made a

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[109] "Membership Action Plan," NATO, accessed December 28, 2017, https://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-066e.htm.

[110] "Washington Summit Communique" (Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington, D.C., April 24, 1999), NATO, accessed December 28, 2017, https://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-064e.htm.

[111] Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door*, 212.

beginning with a statement that the US never recognized the forcible inclusion of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to the USSR in 1940 and continued by affirming the highest political commitments of the US to the Baltic States. With this Charter, the US approved the Baltic aspirations on NATO membership, pledged to support their integration into the transatlantic community and by referring to Russia, reminded the principle that no non-NATO country has veto power on Alliance decisions. At the same time, the US acknowledged that the NATO membership procedures performed in accordance with the strategic interests of NATO and the NATO membership of the Baltic States was in line with the American strategic requirements.[112] In this sense, MAP, which launched at the 1999 Washington summit, contributed to the revival of membership aspirations of Baltic States. On the other hand, inclusion of the countries in Southeastern Europe to the MAP process served for very important strategic objective of NATO in terms of stabilization of Kosovo region. The displacement and ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians by Serbs brought a similar problem to Alliance reminiscently the Bosnia experience.

Keeping membership aspirations alive in the framework of MAP, the Foreign Ministers of Baltic and Southeastern European countries formed Vilnius Group in Lithuania in May 2000 and declared their intention to integrate their institutions into Euro-Atlantic community similar to the Visegrad Group. This statement called the Vilnius Declaration was beyond announcing compatibility of their defense structures and policies with NATO and their readiness for the burdens and responsibilities of NATO membership was a clarion call to NATO to invite their countries to accession talks at the 2002 Summit.[113] At the 2002 Prague Summit, allies invited Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia for the accession talks to be concluded in May 2004, while Albania, Macedonia and Croatia remained under consideration for the future membership.[114] MAP supported the seven invitees during the preparation process for the 2004 enlargement, provided a framework for

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[112] "A Charter of Partnership among the United States of America and the Republic of Estonia, Republic of Latvia, and Republic of Lithuania" (January 16, 1998), US Government Printing House, accessed December 29, 2017, https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PPP-1998-book1/pdf/PPP-1998-book1-doc-pg71.pdf.

[113] "Vilnius Statement" (Conference "NATO's Role in the Changing Security Environment in Europe" Vilnius, Lithuania, May 18-19, 2000), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, accessed December 29, 2017, http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/security-policy/co-operation-with-nato-member-states-and-candidate-countries/conference-nato-s-role-in-the-changing-security-environment-in-europe-vilnius-statement.

[114] "Prague Summit Declaration" (Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Prague, November 22, 2002), NATO, accessed January 3, 2018, https://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm.

Albania and Croatia for the 2009 enlargement and for Montenegro for the 2017 enlargement. NATO's Southeast European enlargement particularly aimed at ensuring stability and safety in the Balkans, supporting security and defense sector reforms, providing strategic support for NATO-led missions.

CHAPTER 4

UKRAINE'S INTEGRATION INTO NATO

Ukraine's relations with NATO, which has been progressing since its independence, is closely linked to the importance attributed to Ukraine in the European security system. Under the leadership of the US, NATO member states designated Ukraine as a buffer zone between the Eastern Europe and Russia in the post-Cold War geopolitics. The attribution was compatible with the interest of NATO in many respects. During NATO's eastward expansion process, Ukraine's integration with NATO would prevent instabilities in Eastern Europe, would make progress in the destruction of the nuclear and conventional assets inherited from the Soviet Union and taking advantage of Ukraine's geographical and political proximity to Russia, while NATO would be able to establish bilateral relations with Russia.

The main motivation that directs Ukraine into integration with NATO, was related to Ukraine's attempts to consolidate its independence. Ukraine, who inherited many problems from the Soviet Union, had to solve these problems to protect its entity as an independent country. In order to solve these problems, which are mostly composed of nuclear and conventional assets from the Soviet Union and the border issues with Russia, Ukraine saw it as an opportunity to integrate into Western institutions. As one of the most valuable of these institutions, NATO would guide Ukraine in the solution of military problems, while contributing to Ukraine's formation of a new national identity outside the Russian geopolitical axis in the process of state and nation building. Furthermore, Ukraine could have the position to use its relations with NATO as a trump card against Russia.

For these reasons, Ukraine's NATO integration was a mutually beneficial situation for both the West and Ukraine. Driven by these geopolitical reasonings, Ukraine's NATO integration is a process that consists many technical steps tailored to bring Ukraine closer to NATO. However, the progress of these technical steps remained more dependent on the domestic and foreign policy context of Ukraine, rather than the political intentions of the pro-western Ukrainian governments. Consequently, the evaluation of NATO integration in the case of Ukraine requires all these factors to be considered as a whole.

4.1. The Geopolitical Reasons for Ukraine's NATO Integration

4.1.1 The US Point of View

Considering NATO's post-Cold War transformation and enlargement, Ukraine's relations with NATO cannot be assessed apart from the importance attributed to Ukraine in the European security architecture. The critical position of Ukraine for European security was initially expressed by the US in the early 1990s on several occasions. The US allocated technical and financial assistance to accomplish democratization, consolidation of independence and market economy in Ukraine under the Freedom Support Act as in the other former Soviet states.

Based on five basic principles, the fundamental role of Ukraine in European security system expressed with its strategic position, tragic history, relations with Russia, political, economic and societal problems, nuclear and conventional assets inherited from the Soviet Union.[115] Therefore, the deepened dialogue between the US and Ukraine indicated far more extensive relations that the US established with other post-Soviet states. Between 1992 and 1996, the US provided more than $1.3 billion bilateral aid to finance democratic and market reforms, to reduce weapons of mass destructions (WMDs) in Ukraine, in fact, Ukraine became the fourth largest recipient of the US assistance in the world.[116] American funding focused on humanitarian assistance including food, medicine and clothing, financial assistance covering private sector, energy sector, agriculture, housing and fiscal systems, socio-political assistance to political parties, independent media, elections, exchange programs for journalists, local government officials, academicians and business people.

Admittedly, the dismantling and destruction of strategic offensive arms from the Soviet era had precedence over all the social, political and economic issues in Ukraine for the US. Representing a new era of the relations between the two countries, the Joint Statement on the Development of the US-Ukrainian Friendship and Partnership in 1994, drafted a general

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[115] Strobe Talbott, "The United States and Ukraine: Broadening the Relationship" (Statement before the Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, DC, June 24, 1993), US *Department of State Dispatch* 4, no.27 (July 1995).

[116] "Fact Sheet: U.S. Assistance to Ukraine," US Department of State Bureau of Public Affairs, accessed February 23, 2018, http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/bureaus/eur/releases/960313Ukraine.html.

framework for the US commitments to Ukraine, especially in the field of security.[117] Under the framework of the Agreement on the Elimination of Strategic Nuclear Arms, and the Prevention of Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction signed between the two states in 1993, the US agreed to provide financial assistance to Ukraine for 1994 and 1995.[118]

After Ukraine reaffirmed the removal of all tactical weapons from its territory within seven years with acceding to Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with Lisbon Protocol in 1992 and liquidating its nuclear status with acceding to Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1994, relations between the US and Ukraine evolved through a "strategic partnership". The official expression of the relations between the US and Ukraine in the form of strategic partnership corresponded to the establishment of the US-Ukraine Binational Commission (The Kuchma-Gore Commission) on September 19th, 1996.[119] Held its first meeting on May 16th, 1997, the commission provided the highest level regular dialogue between the US and Ukraine in the fields of foreign policy, security, sustainable economic development, trade and investment.[120]

The US Congress ratified the NATO Enlargement Facilitation Act of 1996, provided support for full and active participation of Central and Eastern European states in military exercises and peacekeeping initiatives, including Ukraine, in order to qualify for NATO membership. However, the intensified US efforts concentrated on shaping Ukraine as a democratic, law based, economically stable, prosperous, investible and non-nuclear state, were the precursors on a broader US policy towards the country. According to the Clinton administration, as the lynchpin of the post-Cold War Europe, Ukraine became an actor providing stability and security in the region within its frontier status derived from its historical experiences and

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[117] "Joint Statement on Development of U.S.-Ukrainian Friendship and Partnership" (March 4, 1994), US Government Publishing House, accessed March 5, 2018, https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/WCPD-1994-03-07/pdf/WCPD-1994-03-07-Pg435.pdf.

[118] "Joint Statement on Development of U.S.-Ukrainian Friendship and Partnership."

[119] Razumkov Centre, "Ukraine's Strategic Partnerships with Other Countries: Approaches and Assessments" (Analytical Report), *National Security & Defence*, no.12 (2000): 3.

[120] "First Plenary Session of US-Ukraine Binational Commission, Joint Statement of the Kuchma-Gore Commission," *Ukrainian Weekly*, May 25, 1997, http://www.ukrweekly.com/old/archive/1997/219724.shtml.

geographical location.[121] Due to such geographical location, European security and balanced political relations between the West and Russia, were heavily depended upon the good relations between Ukraine and Russia, at the same time Ukraine's integration with European security structures, such as NATO.[122]

Acknowledging the importance of geopolitics in international relations, this critical position of Ukraine in the US foreign policy was clearly articulated by Brzezinski. In accordance with the long-term US strategic interests, the requirement of identifying geostrategic actors in Eurasia led to the distinction of Ukraine as a geopolitical pivot in the region.[123] Considering Ukraine's ethnic and religious composition and pivotal geopolitical position in the Russian imperial history, Ukraine's detachment from Russian geopolitical axis meant the loss of Slav populated industrial and agricultural economy, and Russia's privileged position on the Black Sea. With the influence of 52 million Slavs, Ukraine could provide a leading position for Russia in Eurasia without breaking ties with Europe and prevent Russia from becoming more Asian.[124] In addition to this, Ukraine provided the gateway to the Mediterranean for Russia with the port of Odessa in Crimea. However, independent policies of Ukraine towards NATO meant the loss of Russian dominant position on the Black Sea while joint naval maneuvers of NATO forces creating contradiction with the Russian naval presence on the Black Sea.[125] Brzezinski proposed Ukraine's inclusion in NATO by considering the impacts of the loss of Ukraine on Russia, in the future between 2005 and 2010, after taking necessary steps towards European institutions and completing its internal reforms.[126]

The geopolitical significance of Ukraine as articulated in this manner by Brzezinski, made Ukraine a competitive element between Europe and Eurasia, while limiting its Euro-Atlantic options. As NATO integration of Ukraine progressed, Russia had to be integrated into the

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[121] Strobe Talbott, "Ukraine's Future and the Future of Europe" (Address before the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC, November 18, 1994), *US Department of State Dispatch 5*, no.47 (November 1994).

[122] Talbott, "Ukraine's Future and the Future of Europe."

[123] Brzezinski, *Grand Chessboard*, 39-40.

[124] Brzezinski, 92.

[125] Brzezinski, 93.

[126] Brzezinski, 41-76.

European security structures as well, in order to demonstrate that Russia was not isolated, and NATO enlargement was not a threat to Russian national interests. Consequently, this reality led to unorthodox tripartite relations between NATO, Ukraine and Russia in the mid-1990s.

The Clinton administration, while evaluated the integration of Ukraine into the NATO as a critical goal, did not aspire to damage the current stability in the region by leading to a potential crisis between Ukraine and Russia.[127] Considering the time frame of the first post-Cold War NATO enlargement, constructive relations between Ukraine and Russia was encouraged by the US and regarded as an intermediary for NATO's reaching to Russia.[128] Although the Clinton administration entitled them as independent processes, NATO's relations with Ukraine began to develop in parallel with NATO's relations with Russia. However, when NATO integration of Ukraine was assessed from a wider perspective, it was important for Ukraine to "stay on course" set by the US rather than ensuring ultimate NATO membership. Russia's opposition to NATO membership of Eastern European states, especially Ukraine's NATO membership, was an estimated reaction by the West. While enlarging NATO through the east, Allies faced a critical task to provide Ukraine's survival, which was the balancing factor in the European security architecture. Therefore, eastward expansion of NATO in the post-Cold War period could only be possible if Ukraine remained as an independent state, which was not controlled by Russia, even if it was not integrated with the West. An independent Ukraine receiving Western financial assistance would serve as a bridge between Europe and Eurasia and protect the eastern borders of East Central European states, otherwise a new bipolar confrontation between Russia and the West could have emerged.[129]

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[127] Strobe Talbott, "Ukraine at Five: A Progress: Report on U.S. Policy" (Remarks Before the Washington Group Leadership Conference, Washington DC, October 11, 1996), *US Department of State Dispatch* 7, no.43 (October 1996).

[128] Strobe Talbott, "The New Ukraine in the New Europe" (Address at the Workshop on Ukraine-NATO Relations, Brookings Institute, Washington DC, April 8, 1998), *US Department of State Dispatch*.9, no.4 (May 1998).

[129] Richard Kugler, *Enlarging NATO: The Russia Factor* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1996), xxii.

4.1.2. The Ukrainian Point of View

Ukraine's relations with NATO, which began to deepen since 1997, represented much more complex and multifaceted geopolitical concerns of Ukraine. Furthermore, it stemmed from both domestic and foreign policy preferences. Following the declaration of independence in August 1991, Ukrainian government focused more on state and nation building, and inherited the security issues of Ukraine, rather than the economic and political reforms that the Ukrainian society needed.[130] Between 1991 and 1994, the main concern of Ukraine was to create an international environment in which Ukraine could define its own national interests and to establish independent relations with other states, and thus, to ensure the recognition of Ukraine's sovereign rights.

Ukraine had proclaimed its sovereign rights with the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine in 1990, before the Soviet Union collapsed. According to this document, Ukraine has right to self-determination within the existing borders with the ability to pursue international relations by virtue of equality principle. Under its intention to become a permanent neutral state Ukraine would not participate in military blocs and adhere to nuclear free principle.[131] The Act of Independence of Ukraine, which was accepted by Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in 1991, endorsed the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine. The Act of Independence which refers to the thousand-year state tradition of Ukraine, declared indivisibility and inviolability of Ukrainian borders and the validity of laws, in accordance with the self-determination right.[132] Although both documents emphasized the sovereign rights of Ukraine, Ukraine's "international sovereignty" continued to be questioned by the European states due to inherited problems from the Soviet Union. Even after the declaration of Ukraine's independence, many of the European states regarded the status of Ukraine as

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[130] Taras Kuzio, "Ukraine's Relations with West: Disinterest, Partnership, Disillusionment," *European Security* 12, no.2 (Summer,2003): 22, https://doi.org/10.1080/09662830412331308046.

[131] "Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine," Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, (July 16, 1990) http://static.rada.gov.ua/site/postanova_eng/Declaration_of_State_Sovereignty_of_Ukraine_rev1.htm.

[132] "Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine," Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, (August 24, 1991), (http://static.rada.gov.ua/site/postanova_eng/Rres_Declaration_Independence_rev12.htm.

temporary and incomplete based on these problems, and the first years of the Ukrainian foreign policy aimed at asserting its sovereign rights in the international environment.[133]

As mentioned in the Declaration of State Sovereignty, disarmament and liquidation of the inherited nuclear assets of the Soviet Union constituted only part of these problems. The problem of disarmament was solved when Ukraine signed the Lisbon Protocol in 1992 to join START I and signed the Budapest Memorandum in 1994 to join NPT. Nevertheless, the Ukrainian national identity crisis, created by Ukraine's relations with Russia, has led to the question Ukrainian sovereignty by other states and to assert of Ukraine's own sovereignty rights, during the first years of independence.[134]

The absence of modern nationhood constituted the main reason for the Kravchuk administration to tend towards nation building policies. Instead of modern sense Ukrainian nation, there were multiple pre-modern identities influenced by the Tsarist and Soviet era identity politics, possessed binational and strong regional disparities, and shaped in part by the language use of people.[135] When considering the non-static, adaptable and constructible features of the national identity, the basic assignment of the Ukrainian nation building policies was to transfer all these identities to Ukrainian nation by maintaining local loyalties, in order to consolidate newly independent Ukrainian state.[136] However, Ukrainization of Ukraine required the identification the geopolitical orientation of the country (either Europe, Eurasia or in between), resolution of the socio-economic and political attributes of the state, and most importantly, determination of ethnic and cultural derivation of the population that would form the core of the Ukrainian state.[137]

Naturally, this decision-making process required Ukraine's disposal of pre-modern, Little Russian and Soviet identities. Little Russian identity in Ukraine was rooted in the adaptation of Russia language by ethnic Ukrainians who accept the cultural superiority of Russia. The

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[133] Paul D'Anieri, "Constructivist Theory and Ukrainian Foreign Policy" in *Ukrainian Foreign and Security Policy*, ed. Jennifer D.P. Moroney, Taras Kuzio and Mikhail Molchanov (Westport: Preager, 2002), 46.

[134] D'Anieri, 44-46.

[135] Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building* (London: Routledge, 1998), 6-19.

[136] Kuzio, 4-9.

[137] Kuzio, 133-137.

Soviet identity, on the other hand, remained valid as a nostalgia element for the Communist Party supporters and for the elderly population after the collapse of the Soviet Union. These two identities in Ukraine emerged under intense Russification and Sovietization during the Tsarist and Soviet periods and reflected the elements of pan-Slavism.[138] In order to locate Ukrainian identity in separate place, which was intertwined with Russian identity in historical process, Ukraine devoted its effort to prove Ukraine's distinctiveness from Russia as Russia's sovereign equal in domestic and international environment.[139] Accordingly, Ukrainian identity issue deeply influenced Ukrainian foreign policy, in particular, Ukraine's relations with Russia and the West.

The geopolitical vector of Ukraine, that forms one of the basic problems of nation building and determines the foreign policy orientation, was on the agenda of Ukraine even before Ukraine gained its independence. Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine of 1990, which approved by the Declaration of Independence in 1991, defined Ukraine as permanent neutral state that does not participate in military blocs, while characterized Ukraine as a country supported international security and peace, recognized humanitarian values and international law, and most importantly, participating in general European process and structures.[140] Ukraine's European choice, which asserted in 1990's, would facilitate Ukraine to distinguish itself from the Russian identity, break out of the Russian geopolitical orbit and integrate into European structures in nation building process. At this point, bilateral relations with NATO aspired to make pro-western influence on Ukrainian national identity to consolidate nation building, rather than the eventual membership of Ukraine during the first years of independence.[141] Despite the close cooperation between Ukraine and NATO, Ukraine's doctrine of permanent neutrality, close relations with Russia and being the founding member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), were perceived as Ukraine's reluctance to NATO membership by NATO allies. However, this strategy of Ukraine aimed to prevent any possible Russian dissatisfaction and manipulation of Ukrainian sovereign rights that could arise from the choice of Ukrainian geopolitical vector. Eventually, consolidation of Ukraine's sovereignty and the future European integration, depended upon Ukraine's ability

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[138] Kuzio, 154-159.

[139] D'Anieri, "Ukrainian Foreign Policy," 45-46.

[140] "Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine."

[141] D'Anieri, "Ukrainian Foreign Policy," 50.

to peacefully resolve its problems with Russia without jeopardizing geopolitical interests of Russia in the region.

After the removal of Ukraine's nuclear status by acceding START I and NPT, the crucial issue, that could challenge Ukraine's sovereignty remained as the status of Crimea, which has been the Ukrainian territory since its donation by Khrushchev in 1954. The Russian claims over the Black Sea Fleet and the basing rights coming with the Fleet in Sevastopol could prevent Russia from recognizing the Ukrainian borders and disadvantage the sovereignty claims of Ukraine.[142] In these circumstances, the only way to ensure Russian recognition of Ukraine's sovereignty over Crimea, was to ensure Ukrainian recognition of Russian possession of a part of Black Sea Fleet and its basing rights in Sevastopol, which meant a serious political dilemma for the Ukrainian government. Non-recognition of the basing rights of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Crimea, may lead to the loss of the authority of Ukraine in Crimea, however, its recognition legitimized the Russian military presence in Ukrainian territory and could lead a geopolitical disaster, in case of possible tension with Russia.[143]

On the Ukrainian side this dilemma contributed to the strengthening of Ukraine's relations with NATO, calculating security problems in addition to identity considerations.[144] Considering the harsh Russian reaction in the process of resolving the Black Sea Fleet issue, Ukraine, who is the first CIS member joined the PfP program, made a sharp foreign policy maneuver by not participating in economic and military integration within CIS and not expressing any desire for NATO membership under the neutrality principle. In this sense, neutrality provided Ukraine a room for establishing relations with NATO, without a membership prospect and prevented Ukraine from further integration with the Russian dominated CIS at the same time.[145] Division of the Black Sea Fleet and the lease of the port facilities in Sevastopol for Russian portion of the Fleet for twenty years, would open a new

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[142] Roman Wolczuk, *Ukraine's Foreign and Security Policy, 1991-2000* (London: Routledge, 2003), 29.

[143] Wolczuk, 29.

[144] Mikhail Molchanov, "National Identity and Foreign Policy Orientation in Ukraine" in *Ukrainian Foreign and Security Policy: Theoretical and Comperative Perspectives*, ed. Jennifer D.P. Moroney, Taras Kuzio and Mikhail Molchanov (Westport: Preager, 2002), 250.

[145] Molchanov, 249.

chapter for Ukraine's relations with NATO. This situation also could pose problems for Ukraine, because the Russian military presence in the region was officially recognized by Ukraine. In an environment, where nation building, and foreign policy preferences intertwined, Ukraine's European choice found its expression in Ukrainian foreign policy as cooperation with NATO. Under the influence of identity problems, the relations developed with NATO mainly aimed to make pro-western influence on Ukrainian identity and lacked on membership aspirations. Affected by the strategic partnership with the US and its linchpin position attributed by the US, Ukraine considered a partnership with NATO as a first step towards integration with European structures from the mid-90s. [146]

Eventually, in addition to its intended effect on Ukrainian identity, partnership with NATO could have supported Ukraine to manage its post-Soviet transition in pro-western frame and to solve its basic security problems that could arise from the consolidation of regime in Russia. As one of these security problems, Crimea constituted one of the basic obstacles for Ukraine's NATO integration with the Russian military presence and its ethnic Russian population. The Russian side, who calculated that Ukraine's European choice -specifically NATO integration would terminate the Russian military presence in the Black Sea, fueled anti-Russian sentiments among Ukrainians and Russians in the country and continued to contest Ukraine foreign policy over energy issues, economic relations and identity occasionally. [147]

NATO integration, which expected to strengthen Ukrainian identity, was a manifestation of Ukraine's European choice. However, integration into NATO led to a constant challenge of Crimea's status by Russia and impairment of Ukrainian national identity by threatening the European orientation of the country. In this regard, the status of Crimea formed a weak spot for Ukraine's geopolitical orientation, as it prevents Ukraine from integrating with the West to contribute to Ukrainian nation-building, creates a continuous Russian pressure in political, military and economic fields. The Ukraine's strategy to get rid of the Russian geopolitical axis and its integration into NATO, in order to promote Ukrainian identity is on the basis of the problems between Russia and Ukraine after the independence of Ukraine. In these circumstances, in order to preclude Ukraine's NATO integration to not to lose Crimea, Russia

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[146] Taras Kuzio, "Ukraine's Relations with the West," 22- 30.

[147] Molchanov, "National Identity and Foreign Policy Orientation in Ukraine," 252.

intended to use the geopolitical weak spot Crimea and complex identities in Ukraine against the Ukrainian governments.

4.2. NATO Integration of Ukraine and Its Impact in the Domestic and Foreign Policy Context Until the Annexation of Crimea

4.2.1. Inclusion into North Atlantic Cooperation Council

In search of being an effective player in international relations and protecting its national interests against other political actors, Ukraine could not develop comprehensive relations with NATO between 1991 and 1994. Post-Soviet transition and nuclear disarmament were the preconditions for the recognition of Ukraine's international sovereignty[148] while the main threat to Ukraine's sovereignty was the unresolved border issues with Russia.[149] In the process of gaining international recognition, Ukraine has limited its relations with NATO to NACC during the Kravchuk period, in order to solve the border problems with Russia without igniting anti-NATO sentiments in Russia.

With the invitation of NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner during his Kyiv visit, Ukraine participated in NACC in 1992 and started its first relations with NATO shortly after its independence. North Atlantic Cooperation Council, which acted as a multinational forum established to solve the political and security problems of the post-communist states under the guidance of NATO, has focused on resolving specific problems in Ukraine ranged from regional issues, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to defense and budget planning, nuclear safety, air traffic control. However, has not provided an opportunity to establish bilateral relations with NATO.[150] North Atlantic Cooperation Council enabled Ukraine to develop bilateral relations with NATO and laid the groundwork of PfP in 1994. These were the greatest benefits of NACC to Allies as well as to Ukraine. Ukraine's participation in PfP

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[148] Molchanov, 248.

[149] Wolczuk, *Ukraine's Foreign and Security Policy*, 28.

[150] "Ukraine's Activity within Euro-Atlantic Partnership," Mission of Ukraine to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, accessed March 28, 2018, http://nato.mfa.gov.ua/en/ukraine-nato/economy.

on February 8th, 1994, as the first CIS member was compatible with the domestic and foreign policy of Ukraine.

4.2.2. Partnership for Peace Program

Primarily, the 1994 presidential election in Ukraine was the scene of a major contest between the two candidates, Kravchuk and Kuchma, over the geopolitical orientation of Ukraine.[151] In face of Kravchuk, who is the first president of independent Ukraine and initiator of nation-state building in pro-western sense, Kuchma's desire to solve economic problems in cooperation with Russia, led him to be portrayed as pro-Russian.[152] Based on his Eastern Ukrainian industrial background, this tendency stems from Kuchma's awareness on Ukraine's inability to develop bilateral relations with other states independent from Russia, not from his pro-Russian foreign policy preferences and Little Russian identity.[153] Accordingly, this tendency of Kuchma was reflected in Ukraine's security and foreign policy during his presidency, and unlike Kravchuk, Kuchma followed policies regarding Russian sensitivities on NATO enlargement and Ukraine's relations with NATO.

Although, Russian sensitivities on NATO enlargement were taken into account, Ukraine did not interpret NATO enlargement from a hostile perspective. With the perception that a possible NATO enlargement would not threaten Ukrainian security, the main concerns of Ukrainian political elite were that the enlargement would put Ukraine in "buffer zone" between two blocs and that process would harm Ukraine's relations with Russia.[154] In this case, Kuchma administration assessed the necessity of protecting a certain distance with Russia, however, calculated the fact that a possible NATO membership would jeopardize relations with Russia and Ukraine's sovereignty.[155]

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[151] Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine Under Kuchma: Political Reform, Economic Transformation and Security Policy in Independent Ukraine* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 51.

[152] Kuzio, 39-41.

[153] Kuzio, 51.

[154] Taras Kuzio, "Ukraine and NATO: The Evolving Strategic Partnership," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 21, no.2 (June 1998): 4, https://doi.org/10.1080/01402399808437715.

[155] Kuzio, 5.

According to the Ukrainian administration, Ukraine had no interest to be a NATO member in the future, but Ukrainian military and security policies required the framework of military cooperation that NATO would provide due to the developments in international environment during that period.[156] Ukraine, who was aware of the security problems in the context of the Chechen intervention of Russia and was unable to resolve its Black Sea Fleet issue, became the first CIS member and most ambitious participant of PfP, due to its desire to abandon its nuclear status, to receive financial-technical and to the attributed role as the vital stabilizer by the US in the NATO enlargement process.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Anatoliy Zlenko, referred to PfP, which Ukraine signed on February 8th, 1994, as a "reasonable and pragmatic alternative to NATO enlargement" and emphasized its "open nature and absence of intention to create new dividing lines in Europe".[157] Moreover, Ukraine's dependence on Russia in its relations with NATO because of geopolitical reasons increased Ukraine's need for Russian participation in PfP. Russian participation in the program, which was approved in May 1995, would contribute to the development of common approach on NATO with Russia, facilitate the solving of territorial problems with Russia and provide Ukraine "breathing space" to focus on its economy and nation building issues while developing bilateral relations with NATO.[158]

Ukraine's participation in defense and security related activities under NACC contributed to its nation and state building process in many respects. Partnership for Peace program on the one hand provided enhancement in the technological standards and peacekeeping capabilities of the Ukrainian army by providing access to NATO technologies and conducting joint research and studies, on the other hand increased the effectiveness of NACC as a political framework.[159] More importantly, the entire process served as a solid foundation for Ukrainian national identity building in the direction of Euro-Atlantic integration while meeting in

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[156] Kuzio, *Ukraine Under Kuchma*, 190.

[157] "Ukraine in 1994: A Year of Changes," *Ukrainian Weekly*, December 25, 1994, http://ukrweekly.com/archive/.

[158] Kuzio, *Ukraine Under Kuchma*, 195-196.

[159] Kuzio, "Ukraine and NATO," 21.

common values, ensuring stability and security in the region, and formally building mutual trust between NATO and Ukraine in bilateral manner.[160]

4.2.3. Individual Partnership Program (IPP)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Hennadiy Udovenko's visit to NATO Headquarters in Brussels indicated that the dual approach towards NATO and Russia began to be gradually abandoned by Ukraine within the approval of Ukraine's Individual Partnership Program. NATO's vital role in political, security and military issues in the Euro-Atlantic area stressed by Ukraine, Udovenko emphasized Ukraine's commitment to fully benefit from NACC and PfP by participating in all 19 areas of activities, including crisis management, joint exercises and planning and review process of NATO.[161] Furthermore, this meeting aimed at shaping NATO-Ukraine relations in "16+1" format in high-level institutional framework.

With the final communiqué of the North Atlantic Council Ministerial Meeting at the end of the year, NATO endorsed the new course in NATO-Ukrainian relations favoring Ukraine's territorial integrity, democratic, independent and stable existence while inviting Ukraine to participate in the implementation of peace plan to deepen cooperation between NATO and Ukraine.[162] In this regard, when NATO-Ukraine relations took a new path, Ukraine deployed troops to NATO-led peacekeeping operations in Bosnia in 1996, participated in the joint peacekeeping activities Peace Shield-95 and Peace Shield-96 with the US, Cossack Step-96 with the US and Great Britain, and Cooperative Neighbour-97 with the participation of 18 countries in the framework of PfP between 1995-1997.

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[160] Olga Vasylchenko, "Game Changers: The Factor of NATO and Ukraine's National Identity Transformation," *Ukraine Analytica* 2, no.8 (2017): 52.

[161] "NATO-Ukraine Joint Press Statement" (September 14, 1995), NATO, accessed March 30, 2018 https://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1995/p95-083.htm.

[162] "Final Communique" (Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council Brussels, December 5, 1995), NATO, accessed March 30, 2018, https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c951205a.htm.

4.2.4. The Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between NATO and Ukraine

The year of 1997 represented a defining moment in terms of relations between Russia, Ukraine and NATO. Prior to 1997, there was a longstanding disagreement over the Black Sea Fleet and Ukraine's recognition depended upon the lack of a cooperation agreement between Russia and Ukraine since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The failure to finalize these two issues by reaching an agreement prevented the normalization of Russian-Ukrainian relations.[163] Ukraine's avoidance of further CIS integration under the principle of neutrality and deepening relations with NATO concurrently, constituted the main reason of the disagreements between Russia and Ukraine while encouraged the Russian contestation of Ukraine's sovereign rights on Crimea. According to the Ukrainian administration, Russia's pressure on Ukraine's domestic and foreign policy through Crimea and CIS, was a consequence of Russia's inability to recognize Ukraine as an independent, sovereign and non-aligned state. Kuchma described the function of CIS for Ukraine as "an interstate mechanism for consultation and negotiation" that Ukraine taking part in the framework of non-alignment and he argued that Russia's unwillingness to recognize Ukraine's rights in Crimea due to Ukrainian views on CIS, threaten the future of the relations between Russia and Ukraine.[164] According to Kuchma, the pressures on Ukraine through CIS indicated that the sovereignty of Ukraine is still questioned, while the Black Sea Fleet issue and the status of Sevastopol turned into a major problem between two countries as Russian politicians challenged Ukraine's rights on Crimea.[165] However certain developments within NATO structures and in Ukraine-NATO relations have compelled Russia to recognize Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereign rights in Crimea by signing the Black Sea Fleet Agreement and Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership Agreement in 1997. These developments were NATO's transformation in pursuant to the post-Cold War realities and special partnership with Ukraine as part of its transformation process.

The special partnership between NATO and Ukraine, which was proposed during Kuchma's Brussels visit in 1995, was initialized with the Charter on Distinctive Partnership between

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[163] Kuzio, *Ukraine Under Kuchma*, 198.

[164] "For the Record: Kuchma Speaks on the CIS and Black Sea Fleet Issue," *Ukrainian Weekly*, December 29, 1996, http://ukrweekly.com/archive/.

[165] "Kuchma Speaks on the CIS and Black Sea Fleet Issue."

NATO and Ukraine on May 29th, 1997, in the Sintra meeting, to be signed at the Madrid Summit later in July. Announcing special partnership to public Hennadiy Udovenko, declared that this decision would "adapt NATO to new geopolitical realities" and mentioned the contribution of this strategic decision of Ukraine to European security.[166] The timing of the charter was meaningful for both Ukraine and Russia. A day before the Sintra meeting on May 28th, Russia and Ukraine signed three agreements to solve the ongoing issue of the division of the Black Sea Fleet by recognizing the Russian leasing rights on three of the four bays of Sevastopol for a 20 years period and allocating Ukraine 500 million dollars for giving its own portion to Russia.[167]

A day after the Sintra meeting, on May 31st, the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership signed between Russia and Ukraine. With this treaty, Ukraine and Russia officially recognized each other as sovereign states exercising equal rights, affirmed establishing mutual relations while seeking territorial integrity, protecting the rights of ethnic minorities within their territories, creating suitable conditions for Ukrainian and Russian language use and complying with their commitments to the division of the Black Sea Fleet.[168]

Prior to NATO's decision to incorporate Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic to the enlargement process, Russian decision to sign the Black Sea Fleet Treaty was interpreted as an act to ensure Ukraine's non-member perspective on its relations with NATO with the influence of the Sintra meeting decisions on NATO-Ukraine Charter.[169] As a result of signing agreements with Russia, Ukraine reaped the fruits of its growing relations with NATO by solving the fundamental issues regarding it sovereignty in an environment, where NATO enlargement and Ukraine's integration was strongly opposed by Russia.

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[166] Hennadiy Udovenko, "Address Initialling of the Ukraine-NATO Charter on the Occasion of the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Ministerial Session" (May 29, 1997), NATO, accessed March 30, 2018. https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1997/s970529d.htm.

[167] "Ukraine: Instability in Economy, Politics," *Ukranian Weekly*, December 28, 1997, http://ukrweekly.com/archive/.

[168] Yaroslav Bilinsky, "Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between Ukraine and the Russian Federation" in *Endgame in NATO's Enlargement: the Baltic States and Ukraine*, (London: Preager, 1999), 116-126.

[169] Wolchuk, *Ukraine's Foreign and Security Policy*, 32.

NATO-Ukraine Charter on a Distinctive Partnership signed in the Madrid Summit on July 9th, expressed a "transitional" process both enabled NATO's internal transformation and Ukraine's integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures with Kuchma's statements.[170] According to this, cooperation of Ukraine and NATO for European security within the scope of the Charter was necessary for the stabilization of Ukraine's national security and consolidation of Ukraine's European choice. Furthermore, the Charter would lead the way for NATO to complete its internal reforms to reach countries in Central, Eastern and Southeast Europe without creating dividing lines as in the past.

The Charter reiterated the essence of the relations between NATO and Ukraine agreed in 1995, by acknowledging Ukraine's right to choose its own security arrangements, right of sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and NATO's commitments to ensure Ukraine's democratic reforms.[171] The reforms that Ukraine has committed to implement under the Charter, included defense sector reforms, democratic and civilian control of the armed forces, and improvement of operational capabilities in partnership with the NATO members. Moreover, it was agreed on consultation and cooperation covered political and security related subjects including conflict prevention, peacekeeping, nuclear, biological and chemical non-proliferation, disarmament, drug trafficking and terrorism and conducted through joint seminars, joint working groups and the cooperative programs. The Charter also approved NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC), which composed of all NATO member states and held periodic meetings at foreign and defense ministers' level to further the development of relations and to supervise the execution of the Charter's provisions.[172]

The Charter on a Distinctive Partnership with these provisions has contributed to Ukraine's national identity transformation at the symbolic level as well as defense and military reforms.[173] The Charter on the one hand supported Ukraine's democratic reform process, through regular institutional relations between Ukraine and NATO, on the other hand

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[170] Leonid Kuchma, "Opening Statement at the Signing Ceremony of the NATO-Ukraine Charter" (July 9, 1997), NATO, accessed March 31, 2018, https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1997/s970709i.htm.

[171] "Charter on a Distinctive Partnership Between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Ukraine," NATO, accessed March 31, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/official_texts_25457.htm.

[172] "NATO - Ukraine Commission," NATO, accessed March 31, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50319.htm.

[173] Vasylchenko, "Game Changers," 52.

recognized Ukraine's goal of integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures and Ukraine's key position in European peace, security and stability.[174] In this sense, Kuchma's words indicated that Madrid Summit was a the clear signal of Ukraine's European choice as follows: "Ukraine has made its choice and is ready together with NATO member countries and the Alliance partners to take an active part in the construction of a secure future for Europe."[175]

4.2.5. Polish Ukrainian Peacekeeping Battalion (POLUKRBAT)

Implicit pro-western tendency of Ukraine until the Madrid Summit decisions attracted the attention of the US and NATO as well as Eastern and Central European states as the actors of the first post-Cold War expansion of NATO. Their prioritized goal of joining the Western European economic and security institutions, required the prevention of Russian expansionist tendencies in their region by ensuring Ukraine's policies stable and free from Russian influence.[176]

The states of Eastern and Central Europe calculated the threats could arise after the consolidation of regime in Russia and perceived Ukraine as a buffer zone between their territories and Russia; therefore, they aspired to bring in Ukraine to the Western course, in order to secure their eastern borders.[177] However, the inability to predict Ukraine's overall attitude towards NATO and their complex European integration processes prevent them to build bilateral relations with Ukraine in the first half of 1990s. Within the participation of Ukraine and Russia in PfP the idea behind the program challenged by the countries in the region, especially Poland, who did not seek to be in the same group with Russia and Ukraine in the framework of PfP.[178] Depending on the success of the internal reforms in Ukraine, Ukraine's independent and stable foreign policy preferences regarded as one of the basic

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[174] "Charter on a Distinctive Partnership Between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Ukraine."

[175] Kuchma, "Opening Statement at the Signing Ceremony of the NATO-Ukraine Charter."

[176] Margarita M. Balmaceda," Ukraine, Central Europe and Russia in a New International Environment," in *On the Edge: Ukrainian- Central European-Russian Security Triangle*, ed. Margerita M. Balmeceda (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2000), 6.

[177] Balmaceda, 10.

[178] Wolczuk, *Ukraine's Foreign and Security Policy*, 106.

components of Poland's security system, after receiving Ukraine's validation of NATO's eastern expansion and the development of Ukraine's bilateral relations with NATO in the second half of the 90s.[179]

Due to Ukraine's geopolitical position as the immediate eastern neighbor and the buffer zone between the potential Russian danger, and gaining momentum of Poland's NATO membership, Poland and Ukraine signed the Declaration Towards Accord and Unity in 1997 to become the strategic partners in European integration process.[180] Ukraine gave its support for the European integration process without objecting Poland's NATO membership, while Poland's efforts became concrete with the formation of Polish-Ukrainian Peacekeeping Battalion (POLUKRBAT) based on the idea in a meeting between Polish and Ukrainian ministers of defense on October 5th, 1995. Polish-Ukrainian Peacekeeping Battalion, reached its combat readiness in 1997, formed with 800 soldiers and began to take part in NATO peacekeeping missions under the UN authorization. Polish-Ukrainian Peacekeeping Battalion deployed in Kosovo as a part of Kosovo Force (KFOR) and constituted the most significant area of Ukraine's cooperation with NATO starting with 1999.[181]

Poland's contribution to the development of the operational capacity and interoperability of Ukrainian armed forces provided a momentum in Ukraine's process of NATO integration, while reflected leadership aspiration in the region by bridging between newly independent states and Europe. Promotion of close links between Ukraine and NATO would strengthen Poland's international image in the region against its Visegrad partners - Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, who valued Ukraine from minority issue and economic perspectives, by prioritizing the position of Ukraine in European security.[182]

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[179] Agnieszka Legucka, "V4 – Ukrainian Cooperation Within the European Security" in *Ukraine, Central Europe and the Future of European Security* ed. Róbert Ondrejcsák and Grigoriy Perepelytsia (Bratislava: Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs, 2015), 32.

[180] Wolczuk, *Ukraine's Foreign and Security Policy*, 108.

[181] Legucka, "V4 – Ukrainian Cooperation," 38.

[182] Legucka, 32-33.

4.2.6. NATO-Ukraine Action Plan

By 2000s, Ukraine had not yet declared NATO membership goal as a foreign policy orientation, even though it had bilateral relations with NATO, strategic partnership with two geopolitically critical member states like the US and Poland, and actively participated in NATO peacekeeping missions. Ukrainian foreign policy tended to break away from the European orientation adopted in the second half of the 90s. Commitment to democratic principles, stability and pursuing national interests replaced by the pro-Russian course accompanying with international isolation within the second term of Kuchma.[183] Ukraine's international image rapidly declined due to the domestic developments related to the political orientation of Ukraine concretized in corruption, trafficking of arms and violence against opposition.

The first domestic policy development that affected the Ukrainian foreign policy was the disappearance of dissident journalist Heorhiy Gongadze, who previously travelled with a group of journalists to the US, to create awareness on the diminishing press freedom of Ukraine. Finding Gongadze in a forested area outside Kiev, headless and decomposed on November 15, fell like a bombshell to the Ukrainian public and caused the surfacing of the Kuchma administration's corruptions.[184] In the process following Gongadze's murder investigation, former parliamentary chairman and presidential candidate Oleksandr Moroz claimed Kuchma's personal responsibility for the murder of Gongadze and the voice recordings delivered by an official worked in the Ukrainian Security Service in October, would confirm his claims.[185] Although, the authenticity of the recordings was denied by the Kuchma administration, arrival of the video recording of Mykola Melynchenko testifying that tapes were recorded by himself during his presidential guard duty, led to the growth of Kuchma's tape scandal.

Tape scandal emerged with the murder of Gongadze and later called as "Kuchmagate", negatively affected Ukraine's external affairs and international image by revealing the high

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[183] Taras Kuzio, "Neither West, Nor East: Ukraine's Security Policy Under Kuchma," *Problems of Post Communism* 52, no.5 (September/October, 2005):65, https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2005.11052215.

[184] "Ukraine's Domestic Affairs: The Good, the Bad, the Ugly," *Ukrainian Weekly*, January 7, 2001, http://ukrweekly.com/archive/.

[185] "Ukraine's Domestic Affairs: The Good, the Bad, the Ugly."

level of corruption in Ukraine including illegal sale of weapons, money laundering, misuse of public funds and official authority, violent persecutions against dissident movements and election fraud in 1999 and 2000.[186] The methods used to cover up the scandal caused major protests in Ukraine while led Ukraine to detach itself from its Ukraine's European course. Anti-Western broadcasts of state television, coup accusations against activists, entitling demonstrators as fascists and assignment of paramilitary groups to oppress opposition were only small parts of the government practices.[187]

The last contingent, which directly affected NATO-Ukraine relations, broke out as a part of Kuchmagate Scandal of 2000. In September 2002, Washington announced that the US obtained intelligence derived from recorded conversations between Kuchma and Jordanian broker on Ukraine's selling Kolchuga anti-aircraft defense system to the Iraqi government, which was sanctioned by the UN in 2000.[188] In consequence of this, the US government has decided to freeze the US financial aid allocated to the Ukrainian government.[189]

Along with the other components of Kuchmagate, Kolchuga case became an obvious sign of Ukrainian deviation from the European route. NATO's provisions to the Ukraine's current orientation had devastating consequences for the foreign policy achievements of Ukraine on NATO integration. Before the Kolchuga exposure in September, Allies agreed to pay attention to Ukraine's determination to integrate into the Euro-Atlantic structures and undertook a new task to create new mechanisms for Ukraine based on the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership in North Atlantic Council meeting on May 15th.[190] It was planned to further economic, political and defense related consultations at the NATO-Ukraine Commission meeting in July and at the Prague Summit in November. In response to that,

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[186] Taras Kuzio, "Oligarchs, Tapes and Oranges: 'Kuchmagate' to the Orange Revolution," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 23, no.1 (2007): 42, https://doi.org/10.1080/13523270701194839.

[187] Kuzio, 43.

[188] "Ukraine's Foreign Affairs: Pluses and Minuses," *Ukrainian Weekly*, January 12, 2003, http://ukrweekly.com/archive/.

[189] "Ukraine's Foreign Affairs: Pluses and Minuses."

[190] "Final Communiqué" (Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council Held in Reykjavik on May 14, 2002), NATO, accessed April 1, 2018, https://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-059e.htm.

Kuchma officially declared Ukraine's eventual NATO membership aspiration on May 29th, after years of neutrality.[191]

NATO-Ukraine Commission, which met in the context of the Ukraine's declared NATO membership goal on July 9th, accepted to prepare a new NATO-Ukraine Action Plan to broaden and deepen the dialogue until the Prague Summit in November 2002. However, as a result of Kolchuga Scandal, the North Atlantic Council informed Ukraine on October 30th, that none of the leaders of the NATO member states would seek to meet with President Kuchma in the summit and expressed their concern on possibility of the Kuchma's presence at the summit.[192] Following Kuchma's attending the Prague Summit, for the first time in NATO history French language was used for the seating arrangements, to avoid Kuchma's sitting next to the leaders of the US and the UK on the basis of the English alphabetical order.[193] Moreover, the NATO-Ukraine Commission to convene under the Prague Summit degraded to the level of foreign ministers. At the Summit, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Anatoliy Zlenko expressed Ukraine's commitment to the adopted NATO-Ukraine Action Plan and the irrationality of the accusations by the American and British authorities about the Kolchuga sales. Zlenko stated that Ukraine would cooperate with the US and Britain by providing necessary information on Kolchuga sales to drop charges, while seeking the rights of opposing parties that acquired Kolchuga systems, arising from the bilateral agreements.[194] Although, Kolchuga scandal and alphabet crisis created recession in relations between NATO and Ukraine, NATO-Ukraine Action Plan would encourage Ukraine to restore its international image and to return to the Euro-Atlantic course.

NATO-Ukraine Action Plan, which was adopted in November 2002, defined Ukraine's priorities and objectives compliant with Ukraine's goal of full integration to the Euro-Atlantic structures. Reforms, as significant components of this process, varied from ensuring separation of powers, human rights, freedom of speech, rights of ethnic and national

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[191] "Ukraine's Foreign Affairs: Pluses and Minuses."

[192] "Ukraine's Foreign Affairs: Pluses and Minuses."

[193] Kuzio, "Ukraine's Relations with the West," 26.

[194] "Press Conference by NATO Deputy Secretary General, Minuto Rizzo and Foreign Minister of Ukraine, Anatoliy Zlenko" (Prague, November 22, 2002), NATO, accessed April 2, 2018, https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s021122r.htm.

minorities, political pluralism, non-discrimination, democratic elections, reform in the legal system, market economy, economic freedoms, social justice in internal issues, to proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, war on terrorism, developing civil-military relations, participation in peacekeeping activities, implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions, reformation of armed forces and defense capabilities in external issues.[195] Annual Target Plans (ATP) were drafted to monitor Ukraine's progress, and NATO member states continue to provide advices and proposed timelines for specific implementations, within the framework of NATO-Ukraine Commission.[196] Burden of the reforms would fall primarily on Ukraine, Allies provide assistance by exchanging assessments and experiences to ensure Ukraine's progress in reforms.

The process began with the Kuchmagate symbolized the breakaway of Ukraine from western oriented foreign policy and led to national embarrassment due to the alphabet crisis, an isolation from the West and implementation of American sanctions on Ukraine. Defined as the key state in the European security and stability by the US since the early 90s, Ukraine's relations with the US witnessed all-time low since the disintegration of the Soviet Union.[197] In addition to the deterioration of relations with the US, Kuchma's inconsistent policies led to a "Ukrainian fatigue" in the Western governments and organizations, so that, Ukraine has begun not to be regarded as a part of the European culture depending on the exhibited neo-Soviet oriented policies.[198]

The appointment of Kuchma as the head of the CIS Council of Heads of State by Putin in January 2003 made him the first non-Russian leader of the CIS, while confirmed Ukraine's changing geopolitical vector towards Russia, as a result of its isolation in the West. Kuchma's CIS leadership did not represent a symbolic disengagement of Ukraine from the West. Covering the largest economies within the CIS, Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan plus Belarus, decision of establishment of a Single Economic Space (SES) and Kuchma's pushing

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[195] "NATO-Ukraine Action Plan," NATO, accessed April 2, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_19547.htm.

[196] "NATO-Ukraine Action Plan."

[197] Kuzio, "Ukraine's Relations with the West," 26.

[198] Kuzio, "Neither East, Nor West," 61.

for the free-trade zone as a first step of economic integration within the CIS were interpreted as the change of Ukraine's geopolitical vector towards Eurasia rather than Europe.[199]

Regarding NATO, Kuchma's rapprochement with Russia under the cover of a multi-vector policy was not the only development that formed this perception on Ukraine's geopolitical orientation. At the same time, there was no public support of Ukraine's eventual goal to join the Euro-Atlantic structures at the beginning of the 2000s. According to a sociological poll conducted in 2000, 46.2 per cent of Ukraine's population still perceived NATO as an aggressive bloc, besides that, 15.8 per cent of the population did not have a clue about the function of NATO.[200] The number of the participants who opposed the eventual NATO membership, showed parallels with the numbers of participants who perceived NATO as an aggressive bloc or had no idea on the issue. Overall, 51.1 per cent of the participants did not seek Ukraine to be a NATO member.[201] These perceptions of Ukrainian society on NATO, related with the Soviet era anti-NATO propaganda and Russian sympathy, which visibly intensified in some regions.[202]

Another poll conducted in 2002 displayed these regional differences on Ukrainian people's support for NATO membership. Only 17.9 per cent of the participants in the western part of the Ukraine, neighboring the new NATO members and candidates, perceive NATO as an aggressive military bloc, while 45.4 per cent of the respondents declared that they could vote for Ukraine's NATO membership in case of a possible referendum.[203] This percentage was changing in a comparable manner in Eastern and Southern Ukraine, where the proportion of Russian speaking population, border contacts with Russia and Russian influence increased. In Southern Ukraine, where anti-NATO sentiments were the highest throughout the country, 44.3 per cent of the respondents recognized NATO as an aggressive military bloc, only 27.9 per cent of the respondents stated that they would vote in favor of NATO membership. These

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[199] "Ukraine's Foreign Affairs: Crisis Management," *Ukrainian Weekly*, January 11, 2004, http://ukrweekly.com/archive/.

[200] Andriy Bychenko and Leonid Polyakov, "How Much of NATO Do Ukrainians Want" (Public opinion poll between May 26 and June 4, 2000 in all regions of Ukraine), *National Security & Defence*, no.8 (2000): 14.

[201] Bychenko and Polyakov, 13.

[202] Bychenko and Polyakov, 14.

[203] Valeriy Chaly and Mykhailo Pashkov "NATO- Ukraine Relations in the Public Focus" (Sociological survey held between June 17-25, 2002), *National Security & Defence*, no. 32 (2002): 58-59.

ratios were 40.2 per cent and 29.8 per cent in Eastern Ukraine, which exhibits a similar appearance with the Southern Ukraine.[204]

From this point of view, the debate on Ukraine's vector in foreign policy was related with the fact that Ukraine is a divided society to a certain extent. This division had regional characteristics and represented the patterns of Ukraine's geopolitical features. The unstable geopolitical vector politics of Ukraine demonstrated itself at regional level in internal politics and related to the failure of nation building and dismissal of the Russian influence. Indeed, the influence of Russia on Ukrainian society was non-negligible. 63 per cent of the participants in the poll conducted in 2000 contemplated that Ukraine had to comply with the Russian views on NATO, which were already hostile towards Ukraine's cooperation with NATO.[205] For majority of the participants, the Western way of life was desirable, however, the way to achieve these standards was not to join NATO, but through solving economic and social problems. The deterioration of relations with Russia as the main strategic partner due to Ukraine's NATO integration could further reduce the already low living standards of the Ukrainian society.[206]

Therefore, considering the internal dynamics and social attributes of Ukraine, neither NATO-Ukraine Action Plan's focus on social dimension of Ukraine's relations by foreseeing social, economic, and political reforms nor the pro-Russian foreign policy orientation beginning to develop in Kuchma's second period was coincidental. The success of Ukraine's NATO integration depended on the public support for NATO membership as much as the Ukrainian government's efforts to reform. The public support on the other hand largely depended upon the representation of the positive effect of Ukraine's NATO enlargement on the social, political and economic situation in Ukraine where Ukrainian society exhibited the behaviors of the Soviet and Russian identity sporadically. In this sense, NATO-Ukraine 2003 Target Plan drafted in compliance with NATO-Ukraine Action Plan, concentrated on the internal political, economic, judicial and social reforms in Ukraine for the year of 2003 including improvement in electoral process, encouraging freedom of speech and diversified media,

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[204] Chaly and Pashkov, 58-59.

[205] Bychenko and Polyakov, "How Much NATO Do Ukrainians Want?," 18.

[206] Bychenko and Polyakov, "How Much NATO Do Ukrainians Want?," 20.

ensuring religious freedoms, strengthening civil society, actions against money laundering, reforms in governmental institutions and judicial system.

In addition to enabling Ukraine to become a country in line with the Euro-Atlantic standards, these reforms aimed to raise public awareness on the economic and social benefits of NATO by raising the standards of living of Ukrainian people. As a result of this policy, Head of the National Centre for Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine Volodymyr Horbulin foresaw public relation support to assist Target Plan to create public awareness via informative activities of the government which would enable a suitable environment for the public assessment of the activities within the Euro-Atlantic directions in Ukrainian public opinion where "many compatriots were still in captivity of old perceptions of the nature and tasks of NATO."[207] In this sense, it was not a faulty assessment to indicate that the reform process launched under NATO-Ukraine Action Plan, aimed to increase public support for NATO membership in the current domestic political environment of Ukraine. At this point, 2003 Target Plan focused on the informative dimension of the NATO-Ukraine Cooperation by defining objectives both for NATO and Ukrainian government including establishing Public Information Center for Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic Integration, creating NATO-Ukraine cooperation website, organizing round tables on NATO-Ukraine cooperation and study visits of journalists, initiating the program of Informational Support of NATO-Ukraine Cooperation for 2003, providing information on the steps of NATO's financial support, and preparing a strategy related the public education on NATO through the instrument of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and NGOs.[208]

4.2.7. Intensified Dialogue

The Orange Revolution that took place in 2004 was a societal reaction to the Kuchma's authoritarian and pro-Russian policies pursued under the "multi vector" approach. Obtaining broad constitutional powers for carrying out reforms when first elected as president, Kuchma exercise these powers to protect the interests of oligarchs and himself. This resulted with the political and economic superiority of the pro-Kuchma oligarchs in Ukraine while oligarchs

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[207] Volodymyr Horbulin, "Ukraine-NATO Relations in the Context of Euro-Atlantic Integration," *National Security & Defence*, no.43 (2003): 6.

[208] "NATO-Ukraine 2003 Target Plan in the Framework of NATO-Ukraine Action Plan," NATO, accessed April 5, 2018, https://www.nato.int/docu/update/2003/03-march/e0324b.htm.

used their political and economic power to create public support for Kuchma and consolidate his authority.[209] Corruption, control of the media, the use of state organs for personal interests and election frauds were most frequently resorted methods during the Kuchma era.[210] The authoritarian tendencies surfaced with the Kuchmagate and shifting to the Russian orbit after isolated from the West, led to the formation of the pro-western alliance of Viktor Yuschenko and Yulia Tymoshenko against pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovych who was nominated by Kuchma.

The poisoning of Yuschenko during the election campaign and the announcement of Yanukovych's presidency with the election fraud in Eastern Ukraine, resulted in massive demonstrations of Yuschenko's pro-western supporters, who were tired of the Kuchma regime policies, called the Orange Revolution. Although the Kuchma regime turned to the option of using force and push Ukrainian public to accept election results by provoking the regional and ethnic distinction with the support of Russia, Viktor Yuschenko became the president of Ukraine in January 2005.

What makes Orange Revolution important was not merely the victory of Yushcenko and its supporters, mobilized against the anti-democratic policies and corruption of Kuchma administration and prevailed despite Russian interference, but also presenting geopolitical insight on Ukraine. The social mobilization that initiated Orange Revolution took its source from the less Sovietized, pro-European young and middle generation of Ukraine supporting Viktor Yuschenko.[211]

As the election statistics and opinion polls pointed out, in the central part, which offers an overall conjuncture of the country, and in the western part of Ukraine close to Europe the support for Yuschenko was intensified, while support for Yanukoych, advocating anti-NATO and pro-Russian security policies, concentrated in the eastern and southern regions close to Russia with high ethnic Russian and Russian speaking populations.[212] This situation

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[209] Theodor Tudoroiu, "Rose, Orange and Tulip: The Failed Post Soviet Revolutions," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 40, no.3 (September 2007): 325-326. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2007.06.005.

[210] Tudoroiu, 326.

[211] Kuzio, "Neither East, Nor West," 67.

[212] Tetiana Sylina, "Exit Poll: A Long Ordeal," *National Security and Defence*, no.58 (2004): 26.

displayed the effects of the regional distribution of the country on the geopolitics of Ukraine while foreshadowing Ukraine's upcoming pro-western foreign policy with Yuschenko's elections. In this sense, the Orange Revolution revealed a similar pattern resembling the distribution of Ukrainian support for NATO membership.

Yuschenko attended the Brussels Summit in February 2005 and declared the new foreign policy course of Ukraine embodied the European choice made by the Ukrainian public and its contribution to social, political and economic life of Ukraine. According to Yuschenko, integration with the European and Euro-Atlantic structures would hereafter determine the framework of the foreign policy of Ukraine. The following speech by Yuschenko sent a message to Ukrainian people as well as to NATO members with the following words:

> We want every citizen of the country to see the advantage of these standards. Exactly in this understanding, we want the Ukrainian society to realize that the European future of Ukraine is inseparably linked with the deepening of its relationships with the alliance. [213]

After the national embarrassment at the Prague Summit, Yuschenko's commitment to NATO integration and to join MAP greeted with a great enthusiasm by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. Furthermore, the US-Ukrainian relations, which witnessed the lowest level in the independent history of Ukraine in the Kuchma period, entered a recovery period with the open support of Bush for Yuschenko.[214]

Yuschenko's commitment to NATO integration and reformation of the relations between the US has opened a new page on NATO-Ukraine strategic partnership at the 2005 Vilnius Summit. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Borys Tarasyuk declared Ukraine's active support to the Operation Active Endeavour, which is the first Alliance operation under the mutual defense principle of Washington Treaty to monitor terrorist activities in Mediterranean Sea,

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[213] Viktor Yushchenko, "Opening Statement at the meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Council" (February 22, 2005), NATO, accessed April 5, 2018. https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2005/s050222e.htm

[214] George W. Bush, "Opening Statement at the press conference following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council" (February 22, 2005), NATO, accessed April 5, 2018, https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2005/s050222j.htm

while initiated the Intensified Dialogue process with NATO to commit fundamental reforms for eventual NATO membership.[215]

As a package covering short term actions to enhance NATO-Ukraine cooperation in the Ukraine's reform process, Intensified Dialogue foresaw formal meetings, discussions, assessments and exchange of information and ideas. NATO-Ukraine Commission, NATO-Ukraine Action Plan and Annual Target Plans (ATP) aimed to ensure Ukraine's reforms in media freedom, electoral and judicial processes, arms control, non-proliferation, security and defense sector.[216] Public diplomacy efforts have also widely covered in the short term actions such as addressing negative perceptions established by the Ukrainian public in every region on NATO, providing NATO publications in Russian language, increasing public awareness by organizing seminars for media representatives, scholars and public opinion-makers.[217]

The process initiated with Intensified Dialogue was a clear statement of NATO's support for the internal reforms in Ukraine and the development of NATO-Ukraine relations under the NATO's open-door policy. However, according to NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, these reforms were not automatically oriented Ukraine towards the accession process, it was rather NATO's partnership for the steps Ukraine has taken for building its own future, "not in the West of the East but in Ukraine itself".[218]

4.2.8. Prospects on Membership Action Plan

NATO informal foreign ministers' meeting in April 2006 pointed out that the MAP process, as a path for Ukrainian membership to NATO, could have begun at any moment. Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, expressed that there would be clear signals in November 2006 Riga Summit, regarding a possible NATO enlargement. According to that, the address of these signals would be decided in compliance with the performances of Ukraine, Georgia

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[215] Borys Tarasyuk, "Opening Remarks at the Informal Meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission" (April 21, 2005), NATO, accessed April 5, 2018, https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2005/s050421f.htm.

[216] "Enhancing NATO-Ukraine Cooperation Short-term Actions," NATO, accessed April 5, 2018, https://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2005/p050421e.htm.

[217] "Enhancing NATO-Ukraine Cooperation Short-term Actions."

[218] Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, "Speech at HQ, Brussels" (June 9, 2005), NATO, accessed April 5, 2018, https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2005/s050610k.htm.

and the three MAP participants in the Balkans.[219] Nevertheless, according to Scheffer, defining specific measures and timelines for specific countries heavily depended on the readiness of the countries and summarized NATO's stance on this issue by saying: "When they are ready NATO is ready…So also here, the when and the where I can't answer because it is, are they ready?"[220] This comment of Scheffer was very meaningful when the internal situation in Ukraine was considered, so that the readiness of Ukraine could be evaluated from distinct perspectives.

Initially, the perception of the Ukrainian society on Ukraine's membership to NATO remained as a major problem for the oncoming process in the framework of NATO. By the year of 2006, The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Borys Tarasyuk, indicated that the economic, social and political reforms promoted by NATO created a visible improvement in Ukrainian living standards, economic and political life, and Ukrainian society was no longer polarized over NATO membership while accepting a division over society arising from socio-economic issues.[221]

Contrary to Tarasyuk's optimistic approach, despite the reforms and public diplomacy efforts, the Ukrainian people's support for Ukraine's NATO membership remained in low levels. Public opinion polls clearly showed that support for Ukraine's NATO membership in November 2002, when the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan adopted, was at the level of 31.5 per cent, while prior to November 2006 Riga Summit, when Ukraine was expected to be invited to MAP, this rate was fallen to 17.2 per cent.[222] In addition to this, Ukrainian society continued to display different regional trends on Ukraine's NATO membership. According to the public opinion polls conducted between late 2005 and 2006, the tendency to oppose NATO membership in the west was 32.1 per cent, while it was 79.7 per cent in the east, 77.6

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[219] "News conference by the NATO Secretary General" (April 27, 2006), NATO, accessed April 6, 2018, https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2006/s060427d.htm.

[220] "News Conference by NATO Secretary General."

[221] Borys Tarasyuk, "There Is No Equal Alternative to NATO Accession," National Security & Defence, no.9 (2006): 18-19.

[222] "How Would You Vote If the Referendum on Ukraine's NATO Accession Was Held the Following Sunday?" (Public opinion poll recurrent, 2002-2015), Razumkov Centre, accessed April 6, 2018. http://old.razumkov.org.ua/eng/poll.php?poll_id=46.

per cent in the south and 53.2 per cent in the center of Ukraine.[223] In case of regional differences, the support given for NATO membership seemed to increase where the Russian influence diminished.

Another poll conducted in all regions of Ukraine in October 2006, showed how effective the Russian influence over Ukrainian people's preferences for Ukraine' NATO membership. 69.7 per cent of those surveyed, presented their opinion that they would vote for Ukraine's NATO membership if Russia joined NATO too. Accordingly, in the presence of Ukrainian public, Ukraine's accession to NATO was considered as an alternative to Russia rather than a requirement of Ukraine's national security. Considering these results, Ukraine was not ready for NATO membership at the societal level.

The negative attitude of the Ukrainian people towards NATO, fed by Russian influence and accompanying regional divisions manifested itself in 2006, during the preparation phase of NATO naval exercise Sea Breeze 2006. More than 200 American marines, who arrived at the Feodosia region in Crimea on May 29th, to set up a training base for Sea Breeze 2006, were met by anti-American and anti-NATO protests. At the end of these intense protests, in which Crimean Russophiles were supported by the pro-Russian and communist political elements, the Parliament declared Crimea as a "territory without NATO" while Sea Breeze exercise was ultimately cancelled.[224]

Ukrainian readiness for NATO membership had also a political aspect that created a dilemma in policies. In 2005, Yulia Tymoshenko, who was the main supporter of the Orange Revolution, was appointed as a prime minister by the newly elected pro-western president Viktor Yuschenko on January 24th. In addition to the government plan including fighting corruption, raising living standards, free health care, judicial reform and the EU membership, Tymoshenko also initiated a fight with the Russian energy sector over the unaffordable prices applied to Ukraine. Accused Russia of sabotaging the Ukrainian economy, Yulia

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[223] Razumkov Centre, "Identity of Ukrainian Citizens: Common and Different" (Sociological surveys held on December 20-27, 2005 and on April 20 - May 12, 2006 in all regions of Ukraine), *National Security & Defence*, no.7 (2006): 19.

[224] "Feodosia Protests," *Ukrainian Weekly*, January 14, 2007, http://ukrweekly.com/archive/.

Tymoshenko created an energy crisis in Ukraine that began with the oil shortage in May and peaked with the cut of Ukrainian natural gas by Russia in January 2006.[225]

The energy crisis created a tension in Yuschenko-Tymoshenko relations and serious interruptions in the functioning of government and furthered the tension with Russia. Yuschenko's heavy criticism on Tymoshenko's efforts to deal with the energy crisis and his lack of confidence on Tymoshenko's policies culminated in the establishment of a coalition by Yuschenko's Our Ukraine and Yanukoych's Party of the Regions, even though Tymoshenko Bloc won more votes than Yuschenko's Our Ukraine. Following the elections, the US urged the establishment of an "orange coalition" to ensure Ukraine's invitation to MAP as indicated at the Sofia meeting, however, Yanukoych's inability to prioritize Ukraine's national security interests over his personal rifts with Tymoshenko led the pro-Russian Yanukoych's becoming the prime minister in August 2006.[226] The political aspect of Ukraine's inability to be ready for NATO membership, revealed after Yanukoych's expression stated that Ukraine was not yet ready to consider possible NATO membership, during his visit to NATO Headquarters in September.

The Riga Summit in November 2006, which described as a "transformation summit" by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, was convened following the domestic problems in Ukraine. Considering the strong public opposition, Russian influence and policy disputes in Ukraine, Allies contented themselves with reaffirming the importance of NATO-Ukraine Distinctive Partnership and their support for reforms in Ukraine, by declaring their commitments to NATO's open-door policy and further invitations for aspirant countries at the 2008 Bucharest Summit. Despite the efforts of the US and the endorsement of NATO, the dynamics stemmed from the Russian influence, prevented Ukraine from receiving the MAP invitation at the Riga Summit in 2006.

Low public support and internal political disputes in 2006 prevented Ukraine from being included in the MAP process at the Riga Summit. In company with the political crisis, which ended up the dismissal of the parliament by Yuschenko in 2007, non-participation of Ukraine

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[225] "Energy Crises Escalate Through End of Year," *Ukrainian Weekly*, January 15, 2006, http://ukrweekly.com/archive/.

[226] Taras Kuzio, "Ukraine's Relations with the West since the Orange Revolution," *European Security* 21, no.3 (2012): 397-398, https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2012.655272.

into MAP has initiated a period of regression in NATO-Ukraine relations. According to NATO, Ukraine's NATO integration was dependent on Ukraine's internal and foreign policy dynamics rather than NATO's willingness. This situation found its best expression in the words of NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer as follows: "NATO's doors, to an even closer relationship, remain open, but it is ultimately up to Ukraine's people, and their elected leaders, to determine the country's future path with NATO."[227]

Yuschenko attempted to resolve the political crisis in Ukraine by approving pre-term elections in September 2007, and the crisis was overcome for a while by the establishment of the Tymoshenko government in December 2007. The revival of the Orange Coalition with the Tymoshenko's prime ministry signaled Ukraine's steps towards Euro-Atlantic integration in 2008. In this respect, President Yuschenko, Prime Minister Tymoshenko and the chairperson of the Ukrainian parliament Arseniy Yatsenyuk signed and sent a "Letter of Three" to NATO Secretary General Scheffer requesting for a MAP invitation for the upcoming Bucharest Summit.[228] As a consequence, NATO Secretary General Scheffer proposed a review of the developments in Ukraine's Intensified Dialogue to the newly appointed Defense Minister Yuriy Yekharunov at the Vilnius Summit on February 7th. In the meantime, MAP efforts of the government and the Letter of Three were met by a harsh reaction in the Ukrainian parliament so that it protested with balloons written "NATO-No!" by the Party of the Regions and communists in the parliament.

The Bucharest Summit and its outcomes were important for the allies as well as Ukraine's membership objectives. According to NATO Secretary General Scheffer, Summit would be a milestone in NATO's evolution on several counts. Signaling NATO's open-door policy to Ukraine and Georgia at the Bucharest Summit as one of these important aspects, would ensure the Euro-Atlantic security, besides would be desirable for Poland as the "driving force" behind NATO's policies towards Ukraine.[229] In the presence of Poland, the Bucharest Summit would encourage the new NATO members to offer an alternative approach to

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[227] Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, "Introductory Remarks at the Informal Meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission" (April 27, 2007), NATO, accessed April 6, 2018, https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2007/s070427a.html.

[228] "Ukraine: Cold War of Viktor vs. Yulia," *Ukrainian Weekly*, January 11, 2009, http://ukrweekly.com/archive/.

[229] Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, "Keynote Speech in International Conference on NATO's Bucharest Summit – Transformation of the Alliance and Polish and Regional Perspectives," NATO, accessed 6 April 2018, https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2008/s080313a.html.

NATO's development and future path, with the influence of their geographical locations and shared histories.[230] In this sense, Ukraine's NATO membership aspirations and MAP invitation were supported by the Central European allies and it was thought that membership would contribute to the national reforms in the country as well as to the transformation of NATO.[231]

The support for Ukraine's MAP invitation expressed by the new NATO member states reiterated during the US President Bush's visits to Kyiv on March 31st with the following words: "This week Ukraine seeks to strengthen its ties through NATO Membership Action Plan. The United States strongly supports your request. We are proud to stand with you in Bucharest and beyond."[232] Nevertheless, these efforts of the US and East-Central European states led by Poland, did not prevent NATO allies from splitting up on the invitation of Ukraine and Georgia to MAP and revealed NATO's current geopolitics.

Membership Action Plan invitations of Ukraine and Georgia were rejected by the German and French representatives considering the low defense capabilities of the two countries and the possibility of the Russian opposition to the plan. While this approach of Germany and France is also adopted by Italy, Hungary and Benelux countries, the new NATO members Romania, Estonia and Latvia supported the American and Polish approach on MAP invitations.[233] Thus, NATO was divided into two camps in the Bucharest Summit as the old and the new Europe regarding the MAP invitations of Ukraine and Georgia. Bucharest Summit did not provide the anticipated MAP invitation to Ukraine. The Summit Declaration promised Ukraine and Georgia an assessment for MAP invitations for December 2008 meeting and declared that Ukraine and Georgia "will become members of NATO" in the future.[234] In such environment, suffering from the lame duck syndrome, George Bush, failed

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[230] Bogdan Klich, "Opening Remarks," in *NATO Summit 2008: Transforming NATO Polish and Regional Perspective*, ed. Andrzej Bobinski (Warsaw: Center for International Relations, 2008), 16.

[231] Witold Waszczykowski, "A Regional Perspective: A View from Poland," in *NATO Summit 2008: Transforming NATO Polish and Regional Perspective*, ed. Andrzej Bobinski (Warsaw: Center for International Relations, 2008), 66-67.

[232] "Ukraine: Cold War of Viktor vs. Yulia."

[233] Steven Erlanger and Steven Lee Myers, "NATO Allies Oppose Bush on Georgia and Ukraine," *New York Times*, April 3, 2008, https://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/03/world/europe/03nato.html.

[234] "Bucharest Summit Declaration," NATO, accessed April 8, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm.

to influence the anti-Ukrainian sentiments of the Western European allies, German suspicion on NATO enlargement and insecurity towards the Ukrainian leaders.[235]

The reason of the non-invitation of Ukraine to MAP in Bucharest was not only the opposition of the Western European members headed by France and Germany, due to their the economic, political and energy relations with Russia. In addition to that, low public support in Ukraine was influential in this decision led by Germany and France. Ukrainian public support for NATO membership was at 20.4 per cent in April and showed even lower trends in the eastern and southern regions.[236]

The decision taken at the Bucharest Summit on the assessment of Ukraine and Georgia's MAP invitation for December 2008 council meeting, have caused worrisome outcomes for Georgia. The actions initiated by Russia to destabilize two breakaway regions of Georgia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, have evolved into a war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008. The Ceasefire Agreement settled by Nicholas Sarkozy ended the conflict between the two parties. However, the controversial status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia completely abolished the possibility of Georgia's MAP invitation, according to the principle that, countries with ethnic and territorial disputes could not enter the process of NATO enlargement without solving these problems.[237]

The Russo-Georgian War in August was a major warning for Yuschenko, who was lobbying for MAP invitation during the Foreign Ministers meeting in December 2008. Acknowledging NATO's role in Euro-Atlantic security and reaffirming their commitments at the Bucharest Summit regarding Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration, allies decided to pursue their relations with Ukraine in the context of ANP under the supervision of NATO-Ukraine Commission and to amend the Charter on Distinctive Partnership due to the calculated risks on Russian opposition to MAP invitation.[238] Decisions taken at the ministerial meeting in December

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[235] Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption and the New Russian Imperialism* (Santa Barbara: Preager, 2015), 449-450.

[236] Razumkov Centre, "How Would You Vote If the Referendum on Ukraine`s NATO Accession Was Held the Following Sunday?."

[237] NATO, "The Study on Enlargement."

[238] "Final Communiqué" (Brussels, December 3, 2008), NATO, accessed April 8, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_46247.htm.

indicated that, there was no possibility of Ukraine for MAP invitation in the near future, after Russian objections embodied in the August War. In addition to that, the newly elected US president Obama's reluctant attitude towards NATO expansion, the priority given to the developments in Middle East and the reset policy initiated with Russia deprioritized Ukraine's NATO integration in the presence of the US administration for the year of 2009.[239]

After an amendment of the Charter on Distinctive Partnership in August 2009, in accordance with the Bucharest Summit decisions, Ukraine proceeded its internal reforms in military and civil fields by implementing ANP 2009. Attended the NATO-Ukraine Commission meeting in December 2009, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko confirmed Ukraine's commitment to Euro-Atlantic integration and internal reforms to strengthen NATO capabilities and Ukraine's international image for 2010.[240]

4.2.9. Renouncement of NATO Membership Aspirations

Victory of Yanukovych in the 2010 presidential elections in February brought dramatic changes to the geopolitical vector of Ukraine. Supported by the Donbas oligarchs during the election campaign, Yanukovych initiated the dismissal of Tymoshenko government and the illegal formation of a pro-Russian parliamentary coalition that one third of the ministers originated from Donetsk, geographically and ideologically close to Russia. Yanukovych organized his first presidential visit in March to Brussels to reassure the European Parliament that European integration and conclusion of the EU Association Agreement was a top priority for Ukraine. A few days later, Yanukoych met with his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev to propose the renewal of the 1997 Black Sea Fleet Agreements which will be expired in 2017. In this regard, Yanukovych gave the first signals that Ukraine abandoned its NATO integration goal, despite the fact that NATO membership was a component of Ukrainian national security.

The signing of the Kharkiv Pact with Russia on April 21st was one of the concrete initiators of Ukraine's geopolitical vector shift. The Kharkiv Pact extended the lease of the Sevastopol

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[239] Kuzio, "Ukraine's Relations with the West since the Orange Revolution," 403.

[240] Petro Poroshenko, "Opening Remarks at the Meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission" (December 3, 2009), NATO, accessed April 8, 2018,
https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/opinions_59820.htm?selectedLocale=en.

naval base for the Russian navy for 25 years until 2042, in exchange for the discount in price of gas from Russia. The Kharkiv Pact created a geopolitical lapse of Ukrainian foreign policy and domestic disputes within the parliament that the pro-western forces defined agreements as "national betrayal" and "political Chernobyl".[241]

Renewal of the Black Sea Fleet Agreement with the Kharkiv Pact had economic, political and strategic implications for Ukraine. Having greater economic value than what Russia offered, Sevastopol port was highly strategic for both Russia and Ukraine. Leasing the port for 25 years to Russia, legitimized the Russian military presence once again, in a foreign policy environment where the regime in Russia more consolidated than 10 years ago and displayed neo-imperialist tendencies, provided a basis for Russian cultural propaganda and support for separatist movements in the region. Yanukoych, who continued neo-Soviet policies by adopting communist-era traditions, restricting media freedom, public meetings and protests, eliminating opposite voices, and developing educational policies acknowledging the supremacy of Russian language and culture, officially rejected the Euro-Atlantic integration goal of Ukraine with the legislation "About Fundamentals of Domestic and Foreign Policy". The legislation, which is developed by the National Security and Defense Council and adopted by Verkhovna Rada in July 2010, formalized the non-bloc status of Ukraine and redefined the NATO-Ukraine relations as constructive partnership.

The future framework for NATO-Ukraine relations was elaborated by the Defense Minister of Ukraine Mykhailo Yezhel, in his first visit to Brussels on June 10th. By referring to the newly adopted non-aligned status of Ukraine, Yezhel announced the continuation of strategic partnership between NATO and Ukraine under the ANP mechanism and cooperation on peacekeeping related activities, implementation of economic, social and military measures to create suitable conditions for the development of the Ukrainian state.[242] This policy change indicated that Ukraine would perform its relations with NATO in the framework of cooperation in internal reforms and peacekeeping activities without a membership prospect. Thus, Yanukovych became the first Ukrainian president pursuing anti-NATO policies, including Kuchma, who known for his pro-Russian policies and tendency of developing

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[241] "For Ukraine a New Regime," *Ukrainian Weekly*, January 16, 2011, http://ukrweekly.com/archive/.

[242] Mykhailo Yezhel, "Opening Remarks at the Meeting of NATO Defense Ministers" (June 10, 2010), NATO, accessed April 9, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/events_64075.htm?selectedLocale=en.

relations with NATO under non-align status. Yanukovych's non-alignment was a product of anti-NATO tendencies derived from the Soviet discourse, rather than pro-western neutrality.[243]

Non-alignment of Ukraine was recognized by NATO at the Lisbon Summit in November 2010, by reiterating Alliance's commitment to NATO's open-door policy, the Bucharest Summit decisions and NATO's support on the Ukraine's reform process, and by recognizing Ukraine's right to choose its own security arrangements.[244] However, the deterioration of the situation of media organizations, local governments and non-governmental organizations, arrest of opposition leaders, including the former Minister of Internal Affairs Yuriy Lutsenko and former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko. Imbalanced relations with Russia caused Allies to question Yanukoych government's commitment to democratic principles.[245]

 NATO allies recognized that Ukraine's societal division, originated from Russian influence, shaped the Ukrainian foreign policy. Pro-western orientation during Yuschenko era had an adverse effect on Ukraine's relations with Russia, while Russia worked towards preventing Ukraine's participation in MAP.[246] In this sense, the Yanukoych administration's potential to balance Ukrainian foreign policy between Russia and the West was greeted warmly by Allies. Nevertheless, with the leasing of Sevastopol for 25 years to Russia in exchange for 30 per cent reduction in gas prices and the efforts of dissemination of Russian language and culture in Ukrainian social life, it was considered that Ukraine damaged the relations for the benefit of Russia.[247] In practical terms, Ukraine was a country with the most comprehensive partnership program. It was also the only partner country participating in all peacekeeping operations and activities of NATO such as Stabilization Force in Bosnia Herzegovina (SFOR), Kosovo Force (KFOR), International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan

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[243] Kuzio, "Ukraine's Relations with the West Since the Orange Revolution," 407.

[244] "Lisbon Summit Declaration," NATO, accessed April 9, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_68828.htm.

[245] Lucio Malan, Post-Orange Ukraine: Internal Dynamics and Foreign Policy Priorities, Report to NATO Parliamentary Assembly, October 2011. https://www.nato-pa.int/document/2012-140-cdsdg-12-e-rev-1-russia-malan-report.

[246] Malan, Post-Orange Ukraine.

[247] Malan, Post-Orange Ukraine.

(ISAF), Operation Active Endeavour in Iraq and Operation Ocean Shield in Somalia. However, the lease of Sevastopol to Russia until 2042 seriously would damage possible membership aspiration of Ukraine in the future.

Concerns expressed in the Malan Report accompanied with Tymoshenko's imprisonment for seven years for abuse of authority and corruption, and her ban from public work for three years, the change of "free" status of Ukraine to "partly-free" in Freedom House Index, budget cuts in the government institutions concerning the Euro-Atlantic institutions and disruption in security and defense sector reforms were all reflected on the NATO-Ukraine relations in a negative manner. Allies voiced their concerns at the 2012 Chicago Summit on the "selective application of justice" and "politically motivated persecutions" in Ukraine, and the need for justice system reforms, free and fair elections. Furthermore, it was meaningful that in the Chicago Summit Declaration, Ukraine was not mentioned among the thirteen partner countries, who politically and financially supported the NATO-led operations or among NATO membership candidate list.[248]

Ukraine witnessed dramatic changes as of 2013 with a series of events initiated by Yanukovych's turning away from the EU Association Agreement on November 21st, a week before the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius to be involved in further economic cooperation with Russia. Pro-western mass protests organized in Kyiv, later called as Euromaidan or Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine, was the biggest public demonstration that Ukraine witnessed since the Orange Revolution in 2004. Demonstrations began as a reaction against Yanukovych's dismissal of the EU Association Agreement, transformed into a civil unrest against Ukraine's current Eastern geopolitical orientation, political pressure, corruption, incitement of social and cultural division, disregarding of law and the loss of neutrality of the state organs since 2010.[249] Yanukovych government implemented a series of actions to violently suppress the protests with the advice of Russia, however, participated in NATO's PfP missions since 1994, the Ukrainian army refused to get involved in such

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[248] Thirteen partner countries were Australia, Austria, Finland, Georgia, Japan, Jordan, Republic of Korea, Morocco, New Zealand, Qatar, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates. NATO membership candidates were Georgia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia. See "Chicago Summit Declaration," NATO, accessed April 10, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87593.htm#ukraine.

[249] "In Ukraine: Movement Toward and Away From EU," *Ukrainian Weekly*, January 12, 2014, http://ukrweekly.com/archive/.

actions, and police force remained inadequate. It was only the elite police force Berkut carried out state terror by beatings, kidnapping, torture and murdering of the protestors.[250]

The US and the EU imposed visa and trade sanctions to the Ukrainian authorities responsible for the violence on February 19th. Besides, diplomatic negotiations between Yanukovych and European diplomats Radoslaw Sikorsky, Frank Walter Steinmeier and Laurent Fabius focused on reaching a crisis-resolving agreement aimed at ending excessive use of force against Ukrainian citizens in Kiev. On February 21st, an Agreement on the Settlement of the Crisis in Ukraine, which enforced the termination of use of force, early presidential election and the restoration of the 2004 constitution, was signed by Yanukovych and the opposition leaders in the Ukrainian parliament.

Visa and trade restraints and the signed agreement did not prevent Yanukovych to gather his Russian speaking Eastern and Southern Ukrainian supporters in the Kharkiv Congress to create a Kharkiv based autonomous political entity with the Russian intervention on Ukraine.[251] However, Yanukovych did not participate in the congress in the face of the fact that the Kharkiv governor Mikhaylo Dobkin and Kharkiv residents did not accept secession from Ukraine. After fleeing from Ukraine to Russia, Yanukovych renounced the crisis-resolving agreement signed with the EU delegates and provoked the pro-Russian forces in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. In his address to the Ukrainian public on February 28th, Yanukovych stated: "The time has come for me to say that I intend to continue the fight for the future of Ukraine against who are trying, through terror and fear to take charge over."[252]

The fall of the presidency of Yanukovych by Verkhovna Rada has initiated the process of another geopolitical vector change in Ukraine, however, this change also implied Ukraine's biggest geopolitical catastrophes: annexation of Crimea and the separatist movements in Donetsk and Luhansk region.

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[250] Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption and the New Russian Imperialism*, 106.

[251] Kuzio, 108.

[252] "In Ukraine: Movement Toward and Away From EU."

CHAPTER 5

RUSSIAN AGGRESSION IN CRIMEA AND DONBAS AND ITS GEOPOLITICAL BASIS

As a product of Putin's foreign policy exhibiting Eurasianist tendencies, Russia's policies towards Crimea and Donbas can be interpreted as counter-geopolitical maneuvers initiated to respond NATO's effort to integrate Ukraine into NATO structures, due to the organization members' geopolitical calculations over Eurasia. Russia's confrontation with NATO policies on Ukraine was related to the suitable domestic policy environment of Ukraine for the European and the Euro-Atlantic integration. Russia, who intended to protect its geopolitical interests over Ukraine, sought to legitimize its intervention in Ukraine in the presence of international community.

The actions of Russia in Crimea and Donbas, which was related to the Ukraine's prospects of NATO membership, were rooted in Russia's disputes with NATO in the post-Cold war period. Developments in Crimea and Donbas were not due to an isolated event but rather to the effects of the developments within NATO on Russia, since the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Therefore, understanding the current developments in Ukraine requires analyzing Ukraine's relations with NATO, as well as comprehending bilateral relations between NATO and Russia, and geopolitical sensitivities of Russia in the post-Cold War period. In accordance with the discursive character of the field of geopolitics, these geopolitical sensitivities were expressed in Russia's foreign policy practices and in bilateral relations with NATO. In other words, Russia has constructed its own geopolitical boundaries discursively in the historical process. Since the field of geopolitics is a practice, which aimed to legitimize political actions, the connection of Russia's actions in Crimea and Donbas to the process of Ukraine's NATO membership is possible only with the understanding of Russia's discursive legitimization practices, which is driven by its geopolitical calculations.

5.1. Eurasianism in Russian Foreign Policy

During the Cold War period, the main reason of NATO's formation was to ensure the containment of the Soviet Union, a policy which was shaped by the American diplomat George Kennan. However, the end of the Cold War resulted in the questioning of NATO's reason of being, as well as Russia's formation of its foreign policy towards the Eurasian region including the former Soviet Republics. The creation of the policies was carried out in parallel with the geopolitical concepts and ideas in contemporary Russia.[253] The most fundamental reason for this was the requirement of fixing the security vacuum generated in the former Soviet geography, as a result of the economic, social and military problems and conflicts in the former Soviet republics due to the dissolution of "the traditional geopolitical identity" with the collapse of the Soviet Union.[254] The reconsolidation of Russian interests over the region motivated Russia to shape a new geopolitical projection for the region. Russia, preoccupied with its socio-economic problems, initially required defining its role in the world as well as its priorities and policies to be pursued. In the first years, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Andrei Kozyrev relied on that the best strategic option for Russia to acquire a democratic and stable identity was partnership with the US, at the same time he argued for the necessity of reintegration of the post-Soviet space in the body of the CIS.[255]

Russia intended to manage the advantages of security and economic partnerships and democratic experiences obtained from the European structures to transform the post-Soviet space and thus preserve its interests.[256] In this process, the main concern of Russia was enabling the transformation of NATO in the post-Cold War environment, in compliance with the democratic principles adopted by Russia. Kozyrev explained the basis of this policy with the following words: "Russia does not wish to bear any unnatural military responsibility

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[253] Martin A. Smith and Graham Timmins, "Russia, NATO and the EU in an Era of Enlargement: Vulnerability or Opportunity," *Geopolitics* 6, no.1 (2007): 70, https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040108407707.

[254] Andrei P. Tsygankov, "Mastering space in Eurasia: Russia's Geopolitical Thinking After the Soviet Break-up," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 36, no.1 (2003):104, https://doi:10.1016/S0967-067X(02)00055-7.

[255] Andrei Kozyrev," Lagging Partnership," *Foreign Policy* 73, no.3 (May/June 1994): 59, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20046658.

[256] Andrei Kozyrev, "Russia: A Chance for Survival," *Foreign Policy* 72, no.2 (Spring 1992): 10-12, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20045121.

beyond its borders. The time of world policemen is over, as is the era of military confrontation…The role of NATO is bound to change under the circumstances."[257]

The policy suggested by Kozyrev based on cooperation with the West later called Atlanticism, has begun to lose its stance in Russian domestic politics when the US initiative PfP process started for the Eastern European states.[258] The steps taken by the Eastern European states to join PfP had led to the option of pursuing and protecting Russian national interests in its foreign policy and opting for the transformation of NATO as a pan-European security organization abandoning its divisive characteristics. The relations between NATO and Russia were defined as "Cold Peace", Russia sought to be involved in NATO processes in order to influence NATO decisions likely to result in enlargement.

Russia's policy to pursue its own national interests was not able to prevent Russia's integration with the West rather than its "near abroad" during Yeltsin period. The characteristics of the integration of the newly independent states within CIS and Russia's role in this process did not become prominent due to lack of Russian power and strategy.[259] Accordingly, Russia sought to improve bilateral relations with the countries in the region and prioritized ties with the West over its "near abroad".

As the founding member of CIS, Ukraine's seeking European integration as part of its state and nation building constituted a strategic crisis for Russia. Caucasus and Central Asia were always farther from Russia both culturally and geographically, Ukraine was perceived by Russia as the nucleus of Russia rather than the extension of the Russian empire.[260] Furthermore, from the geopolitical aspect Ukraine provided port facilities to the Black Sea Fleet and a strategic corridor between east and west.

Starting from the Yeltsin period, the main strategic issue between Russia and Ukraine was whether Ukraine would continue to exist as a separate entity or be under the Russian patronage. Russia used Russian minorities, controversial the Black Sea Fleet and the

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[257] Kozyrev, 11.

[258] Kugler, *Enlarging NATO: Russian Factor*, 28-35.

[259] Kugler, 42.

[260] Kugler, 45.

Ukrainian gas debts as pretexts to intervene in the Ukrainian domestic and foreign policy. Started in 2000, the Putin period has been a period of recovery and restoration of the Russian foreign policy embodied in the clearly defined "geopolitical spaces" and Russian politics to address contemporary issues to construct Russian "great power" status.[261] According to this, Russia regarded itself as a member of three geopolitical spaces defined as Euro-Atlantic, Eurasia and Asia-Pacific.[262] Euro-Atlantic, which embodied by the presence of NATO and the EU, is a geopolitical reality that made itself into Russia's greatest opponent during the Cold War era and enabled Russia to achieve its great power status. Excluded itself from the Euro-Atlantic for a long time, Russia proposed a "triple understanding" for the Euro-Atlantic region incorporating Russia, the US and Europe, and stated that in some cases regarding strategic issues Russia is closer to Europe than the US as a European state.[263]

This assertion of Russia was related to the prospect of building of pan-European security system and abandoning the NATO-centric policies excluding Russia from European security.[264] In this sense, Russian president Dmitry Medvedev proposed a European Summit for all the countries in the region and drafted European Security Treaty aiming to establish a security mechanism resembling NATO, however, "open for signature by all the states of the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian space from Vancouver to Vladivostok".[265]

On the other hand, Asia-Pacific region was defined in the Russian geopolitical discourse predominantly in economic terms. The proximity of the region to the Russian Far East and Siberia has allowed the association of the region with economic development and led Russia to be an active geopolitical actor in Asia.[266] Finally, with regard to Eurasia, unlike Euro-Atlantic and Asia-Pacific, Russia regarded itself as a dominant power in Eurasia. As a

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[261] David Svarin, "The Construction of 'Geopolitical Spaces" in Russian Foreign Policy Discourse Before the Ukraine Crisis," *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 7, no.2 (July 2016) :131, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euras.2015.11.002.

[262] Svarin, 138.

[263] Sergey Lavrov at MGIMO University on the Occasion of the Start of a New Academic Year (September 3, 2007), The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, accessed April 19, 2018, http://www.mid.ru/en/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/364540.

[264] Svarin," The Construction of 'Geopolitical Spaces'," 133.

[265] "The Draft of the European Security Treaty," President of Russia, accessed April 19, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/6152.

[266] Svarin, "The Construction of 'Geopolitical Spaces'," 134.

controversial concept introduced in the early 20th century, Eurasia and Eurasianism influenced the contemporary Russian domestic and foreign politics with the ideas of Alexander Dugin, who is a pioneer of the neo-Eurasianist movement in Russia. Dugin's ideas on Eurasia corresponded with Russia's foreign policy priorities and strategies during Putin period.

Influenced by the Heartland and Rimland concepts in classical geopolitics, Dugin claimed that Russia coincided with the Heartland of the continental space considered as the "geographical pivot of history" and represented an independent and special orientation, different than east and west.[267] Representation of a different geopolitical reality, obliged Russia to position itself in a different place from these two concepts. With reference to the argument referring geopolitical situation of the state is more important than its political structures, Dugin proposed a geopolitical future for Russia in which Russia dismissed the influence of Atlanticism and consolidated its political position in the Heartland by conciliating the Eastern European states and creating allies in its near abroad.[268]

The main objective of the formulated geopolitical scenario was to limit the influence of the liberal sea power theory represented by the US and to establish the Russian Empire. This empire envisaged the preservation of the identities of both Russians and non-Russians and strategic alliance of the components of the Russian periphery. The problems of the Russian minorities emerged with the collapse of the Soviet Union could be solved in this scenario without harming the territorial integrity of these countries.[269] However, the failure of the establishment of such strategic alliance indirectly meant that Russia could harm the territorial integrity of these countries in the periphery in order to solve the problems of Russians, in fact, it is necessary to evaluate the policies of Russia implemented in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 within such understanding.

Dugin's imperial recovery projected geopolitical expansion in the south of Russia. Geopolitics of the south, covering north of the Balkans, Moldova, Southern and Eastern Ukraine, Krasnodar, Caucasus, the Caspian Sea, Central Asia, and Mongolia, unlike the east

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[267] Alexander Dugin, *Rus jeopolitiği: Avrasyacı yaklaşım* (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2014), 3

[268] Dugin, 9-10.

[269] Dugin, 87.

and north, expresses expansion geopolitics related to the Russia's global mission. According to that, the southern strips beyond Russian control, pose the danger of the spread of sea power to the Heartland. Therefore, geopolitics of the south corresponds to Russia's offensive geopolitical projections rather than defensive and depicted as the expansion area of Russia.[270]

The most fundamental problem of Russia in the south is establishing sustained Russian political and military control over the territory starting from Abkhazia and extending to the Black Sea shores of Ukraine. This geopolitical requirement made Ukrainian sovereignty a problem. Ukraine, who aspires to integrate into Atlantic structures, forms a geopolitical anomaly for Russia. According to Dugin, Ukraine composed of four geopolitical parts: European oriented western Ukraine, Russian oriented Eastern Ukraine, Central Ukraine, which forms the nationalist core of Ukraine and created a special geopolitical formation – Crimea, prevents Ukraine to be fully integrated neither to the East nor to the West.[271] Consequently, for the Russian interests, it was necessary for Ukraine to be divided into four parts, to form an alliance with Eastern Ukraine and bring Crimea under control with a special status.

As it is seen, Russia's political approach to Ukraine starting with Putin's presidency cannot be considered apart from the geopolitics of Eurasianism. This approach provided a basis for the legitimization of Russia's interests discursively within the process, to the destabilization and controlling of Abkhazia with the 2008 Georgian War, of Crimea and Eastern Ukraine with the 2014 Ukraine Crisis.

5.2. Russian Geopolitical Reasoning

5.2.1. German Unification

The geopolitical reasoning of Russia regarding the Crimean issue primarily stemmed from the assurances given to the Soviet Union, during the negotiation talks on the German unification. The German unification is a constrained process which is the result of intense diplomatic efforts between the US Secretary of State James Baker, Chancellor of the Federal

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[270] Dugin, 169-170.

[271] Dugin, 206-208.

Republic of Germany Helmut Kohl, Foreign Minister of Federal Republic of Germany Hans Dietrich Genscher, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and the President of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev. The Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany Helmut Kohl, who was the initiator of the unification process, aspired to form a unified Germany within NATO structures and with the US military existence. The proposed German plan projected the reduction of Soviet military presence and rejected the idea of a special status for Germany that was supported by George Bush who considered the necessity of the US military presence under NATO.[272] Gorbachev was optimistic on the German unification issue that he convinced unification would be a long process that it would not jeopardize the presence of Soviet troops and a unified Germany would not be a NATO member.[273] By considering the sensitivities of Gorbachev, the US Secretary of State James Baker proposed a military structure for a unified Germany, after indicating that Allies and East Europeans endorsed the US presence in Europe.

According to the records of the conversation between Baker and Gorbachev, Baker gave several security assurances to Gorbachev who acknowledged the inevitability of the unification process and demanded a neutral non-militaristic Germany after the unification. One of the main concerns of the Gorbachev was the possibility of the rearmament of Germany by integrating into the NATO structures. However, Baker disclosed the US resolution to maintain military presence in Europe and guaranteed that "there would be no extension of NATO's jurisdiction for forces of NATO one inch to the east" if a united Germany became part of NATO.[274] The same security guarantee was officially issued by NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner after the Baker-Gorbachev meeting, on May 17, 1990 as follows: "The very fact that we are ready not to deploy NATO troops beyond territory of the Federal Republic gives the Soviet Union firm security guarantees."[275]

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[272] Memorandum of Conversation Between Helmut Kohl and George Bush at Camp David, 24 February 1990, NATO Expansion: What Gorbachev Heard, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

[273] Mark Kramer, "The Myth of a No-NATO Enlargement Pledge to Russia," *The Washington Quarterly* 32, no.2 (April 2009): 43, https://doi.org/10.1080/01636600902773248.

[274] Memorandum of Conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and James Baker in Moscow, 9 February 1990, NATO Expansion: What Gorbachev Heard, The National Security Archive, Washinton, D.C.

[275] Manfred Wörner, "Atlantic Alliance and European Security in the 1990's" (Address to the Bremer Tabaks Collegium, Bremen, May 17, 1990), NATO, accessed November 25, 2017, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_23732.htm.

In the light of firm security guarantees of NATO and domestic problems such as rising crime rates, separatist movements and poor economic performance, the Soviet Union was incapacitated to maintain its political position against the German unification. The content and implications of the conversation were frequently expressed during the NATO enlargement debates. Russia, who endeavored to solve its economic, military, security problems and to consolidate the regime in the 90s, had to focus on the reforms with the US support rather than involving in the NATO enlargement debate.

The guarantees given on the NATO enlargement during the German unification were revived in the Putin era. It was implied that NATO enlargement imposed new and virtual dividing lines after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and intended against Russia rather than securing Europe. In his famous Munich Conference speech, Putin reminded the security assurance given by the NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner in May 1990, with the following words: "Against whom is this expansion intended? And what happened to the assurances our Western partners made after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact? Where are those declarations today?"[276]

In order to defend NATO enlargement against Putin's arguments, Putin's claims are described as "alleged promise" by the authorities involved in the German unification negotiations and the NATO officials.[277] It is argued that Russian side aimed to create a "broken promise" perception in order to legitimize its current involvement in the former Soviet republics.[278] Noting that these security guarantees have no formal foundation, it was expressed that the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union implied the need for a new security order in Europe.[279]

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[276] Vladimir Putin, "Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy" (February 10, 2007), President of Russia, accessed April 12, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034 .

[277] "NATO-Russia: Setting the Record Straight," NATO, accessed December 12, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/115204.htm.

[278] Michael Rühle, "NATO Enlargement and Russia: Myths and Realities," NATO, accessed April 12, 2018, https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2014/Russia-Ukraine-Nato-crisis/Nato-enlargement-Russia/EN/index.htm.

[279] Rühle, "Myths and Realities."

5.2.2. NATO Enlargement in Eastern Europe

The source of the Russian geopolitical reasoning was the violation of the security assurances given by the West in the enlargement debates that began with the Clinton period in 1994 rather than the integration of German Democratic Republic into NATO structures after the unification of the two German states. As a matter of fact, Russia's objection to possible NATO enlargement began in July 1991, when the Soviet Union had not yet disintegrated and the debate on enlargement had not yet begun. A memorandum submitted to Yeltsin on the parliamentary delegations' visit to NATO headquarters in Brussels indicated that NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner and thirteen NATO member states were opposed to NATO expansion, furthermore, Wörner himself would express his opposition on the membership of Romania and Poland during his first meeting with the leaders of the two states.[280] However, the necessity of legitimizing American presence in the post-Cold War Europe forced the US administration to transform NATO in the manner of addressing Eastern European problems, while supporting democratic reforms in Russia. According to American officials, the success of the reforms in Russia played an important role in the future of NATO enlargement, as well as the solution of the security problems in Eurasia and Europe. If the reforms in Russia were failed, NATO's failure to integrate Russia into NATO activities could create a perception that the NATO enlargement targeted Russia and could lead to the revival of nationalism in Russia. In these circumstances, transforming NATO required to reach out to the Central and Eastern European states, Ukraine and the other newly independent states through the NACC and bilateral relations; however, the main problem in the context was Yeltsin's approval.[281]

Yeltsin's letter to Clinton in September 1993 clearly revealed Russia's antagonistic assessments on the NATO enlargement planned in Central and Eastern Europe. Yeltsin, who recognized Central and Eastern European states' right to choose their own security arrangements, expressed "uneasiness" of NATO's "quantitative expansion" by including these states into its structures. According to Yeltsin, the expansion of NATO in Central and

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[280] Memorandum to Boris Yeltsin About the Results of the Delegation of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR's Visit to Belgium on Invitation of the NATO Headquarters, 2 July 1991, NATO Expansion: What Yeltsin Heard, The National Security Archives, Washington, D.C.

[281] Memorandum for Secretary from Davis, "Strategy for NATO's Expansion and Transformation," 7 September 1993, NATO Expansion: What Yeltsin Heard, The National Security Archive, Washington D.C.

Eastern Europe would not contribute to European security in the context of existing ethnic conflicts, furthermore, it also contradicted with the provisions of the Treaty on Final Settlement with respect to Germany that restrained NATO troops beyond the western part of Germany.[282] Instead, Yeltsin proposed the establishment of a pan-European security system or the development of a cooperative system between Russia and NATO in providing security guarantees to the Central and Eastern European states.

Efforts for NATO expansion in Central and Eastern Europe by minimizing Russian opposition expressed by Yeltsin, led the US to a solution that would both transform NATO and incorporate especially Russia and Ukraine.[283] In this sense, the most logical solution from the point of the US was creating a peacekeeping partnership mechanism in NACC framework to restructure NATO by focusing on crisis management, to assess the capabilities of aspirant countries and most importantly, to include Russia and Ukraine by showing that NATO's door were open to all NACC members.[284] Partnership for Peace, which was compatible with the Russian foreign policy interests and the Russian opposition to NATO expansion, was introduced by the US as a program open to all the NACC members to develop cooperation and interoperability partners with "no immediate provisions for new memberships" to Russia.[285] However, this definition created an ambiguous perception of whether PfP is an alternative to NATO membership. Russian side foresaw that PfP was a preparation for a possible NATO enlargement, advocated that the effect of possible NATO enlargement on Russia's interests depend on NATO's ability to transform itself. However, according to the Director of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service Yevgeny Primakov, the transformation of NATO and NATO's role in the new international system was not clear enough. NATO maintained a bloc mentality derived from the Cold War period and comprehended Russia as a military threat to the western civilization. As a consequence of that, it harmed the Russian geopolitical interests by expanding its zones to the Russian borders through enlargement

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[282] Retranslation of Yeltsin Letter on NATO Expansion, 9 October 1993, NATO Expansion: What Yeltsin Heard, The National Security Archive, Washington D.C.

[283] Briefing Memorandum to Secretary from Robert Galluci, "Your October 6 Lunch Meeting with Secretary Aspin and Mr. Lake," 5 October 1995, NATO Expansion: What Yeltsin Heard, The National Security Archive, Washington D.C.

[284] Briefing Memorandum to Secretary from Robert Galluci.

[285] Secretary Christopher's Meeting with Foreign Minister Kozyrev, "NATO, Elections, Regional Issues," 25 October 1993, NATO Expansion: What Yeltsin Heard, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

towards Eastern and Central European states.[286] In company with the Russian objection to NATO enlargement, PfP introduced to NACC participants in January 1994. During the discussions between the North Atlantic Council and Russia in Brussels on June 22nd, 1994, Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev announced Russian participation in PfP program and NATO-Russian cooperation outside the scope of PfP,

Russian involvement in PfP was a way for the US to persuade the Russian side into NATO's transformation and to take part in NATO's inclusive programs, while Russian side participated in the program to keep the process of NATO enlargement under control. In this sense, Yeltsin was convinced by the US administration that PfP was a process of partnership, which did not leave any surprises for NATO enlargement and Russia's approval for further processes would be obtained in the future.[287] However, the decision to draft a study on the principles and guidelines of the NATO enlargement for 1995, led Yeltsin to wake up from the dream of NATO-Russia cooperation and on NATO enlargement. Few days later, Yeltsin warned NATO of dragging Europe "into cold peace".[288] In response to the developments in NATO front, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Andrei Kozyrev accused the West of "demarcating Europe" and provocating anti-Western sentiments within Russia by launching immediate enlargement of NATO without improving NATO's transformation and its relations with Eastern European states.[289] According to Kozyrev, the main component of the transformation of NATO should have been the development of NATO-Russia relations rather than an abrupt enlargement. It should be accepted by the West that, Russia just like the US and Western European allies had some interests in Europe as part of its internal and external political processes and it would not be perceived as a superpower maneuver with the habits derived from the Cold War period.[290] Kozyrev argued that NATO's preparations for enlargement should be considered as a new containment against Russia, in spite of NATO-Russia cooperation. Uncertainty in the transformation of NATO's reason of being from

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[286] Izvestia Summary of Primakov Report on NATO, 26 November 1993, NATO Expansion: What Yeltsin Heard, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

[287] Official Informal No.248, Boris-Bill Letter, 6 December 1994, NATO Expansion: What Yeltsin Heard, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

[288] Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door*, 94.

[289] Andrei Kozyrev, "Partnership or Cold Peace?," *Foreign Policy*, no.99, (Summer,1995):4, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1149002.

[290] Kozyrev, 7-8.

containment into something else and the exclusion of Russia from the decision-making process, as pointed out by the enlargement study, were the main pillars of Kozyrev's argument.[291]

NATO-Russia cooperation, which was announced by Kozyrev in May 1995, was initiated with the individual partnership program between NATO and Russia "Area of Broad and Profound Dialogue and Cooperation". Individual partnership foresaw information exchange and discussion in 16+1 format in the North Atlantic Council and constituted the first step of bilateral relations between Russia and NATO. However, Russian side maintained its adversary position on NATO enlargement; instead, insisted on a Pan-European security partnership proposed by Yeltsin.[292]

As the second step of bilateral relations between Russia and NATO, Christopher-Kozyrev meeting in December 1995 pointed out a Russia-NATO Treaty for further cooperation and Russian involvement in former Yugoslavia to implement provisions of the peace agreement. Russian involvement in the NATO-led peacekeeping operation IFOR in the framework of PfP was announced in 1996 while the Founding Act between NATO and Russia was agreed in May 1997. The timing of the Founding Act was meaningful, when considering the first round of membership invitations and the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between NATO-Ukraine at the Madrid Summit in July 1997.

The Founding Act on Mutual Relations Cooperation and Security, which was approved in the NATO-Russia Summit in Paris in 1997, was designed to create a NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC) for consultation and cooperation on the security related issues in Europe including conflict prevention, peacekeeping, information exchange, arms control, denuclearization. In the Founding Act it was stated that the provisions of the act "do not

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[291] Kozyrev, 11-13.

[292] Andrei Kozyrev, "Statement at the Acceptance of the Russian Partnership Programme, and the Broad, Enhanced NATO-Russia Dialogue and Cooperation beyond Partnership for Peace" (May 31, 1995), NATO, accessed April 14, 2018, https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c950531b.htm.

provide NATO or Russia with a right of veto over the actions of the other" or "they cannot be used as disadvantage to the interest of other states".[293]

In spite of the Russian statements expressing Russia's ongoing opposition to NATO enlargement and requesting a negotiation on the enlargement issue in the framework of the Founding Act, Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic were invited for accession talks in 1997 Madrid Summit. Furthermore, the Allies emphasized open door policy by referring to the three Baltic states, and initiated bilateral dialogue between Ukraine and NATO in the Madrid Summit. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Yevgeny Gusarov, while indicating new dividing lines for Europe, warned NATO that further expansion led to the drawing of "red line" into Baltic states by Russia in the 1999 Munich Security Conference. [294]

5.2.3. NATO Military Actions in Kosovo

The Founding Act between Russia and NATO and NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council were the mechanisms to enable Russian involvement in taking decisions related to European security, without creating any divisions or confrontations in Europe.[295] However, from 1997 to 1999, there were a lot of developments in NATO's policies, which displayed Russia's inadequacy to influence NATO's decisions. Despite the strong and long-standing Russian opposition, Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic invited to accession talks in 1997 and became NATO members at the 1999 Washington Summit. Moreover, the new strategic concept presented at the Washington Summit prepared a policy infrastructure for MAP by reiterating NATO's open-door policy for further enlargement and in parallel with the developments in the Balkans, brought NATO's interventionist features into the forefront under the crisis management title.[296]

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[293] "Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security Between the Russian Federation and North Atlantic Treaty Organization," NATO, accessed April 14, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/su/natohq/official_texts_25468.htm.

[294] Robert Burns, "Russian Opposes More NATO Expansion," *Associated Press,* February 7, 1999.

[295] NATO, "Founding Act on Mutual Relations."

[296] "The Alliance's Strategic Concept," NATO, accessed April 20, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/on/natohq/official_texts_27433.htm.

Although, Russia did not have the military and diplomatic capacity to prevent NATO intervention, it offered diplomatic solution for the situation in the Balkans rather than military intervention for the solution of the humanitarian crisis. The Contact Group formed by Russia, the US and the major European countries to solve the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, adopted a resolution to impose economic and other type of sanctions against Yugoslavia after the escalation of events in Kosovo in February 1998. However, Russia, based on its close ties with the Milosevic administration focused on the issue sensitively and brought forward a proposal of a restriction on the supply of military equipment.[297]

In the meantime, North Atlantic Council announced NATO's support for a political solution in the case of a ceasefire in Kosovo and the initiation of PfP activities in the region to assist the UN and the Albanian authorities, in the separate statements in May, June and December. Strengthening the possibility of NATO's military intervention in 1998, Russia invited Milosevic to Kremlin for a diplomatic solution and joint statement was prepared to improve the situation in Kosovo. [298]

Despite Russia's strict disagreement with NATO military intervention and sanctions against Yugoslavia, Russian efforts in the Contact Group were ineffective. NATO decided to organize an air campaign under the UN mandate in March 1999 on the Yugoslavian forces for conducting ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. As a result of NATO's ignorance of the Russian opposition on the military intervention in Kosovo, Russia suspended its activities and responsibilities defined in the Founding Act and NATO-Russia PJC in 1999.[299]

5.2.4. NATO Enlargement in the Baltics

The transfer of Yeltsin's official authority to Vladimir Putin on December 31st, 1999 implied the beginning of a new era in Russian domestic and foreign policy. The new era, which manifested itself with the commitment to resolve the Chechen problem and to undertake

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[297] Yevgeny Primakov, *Russian Crossroads Toward the New Millennium* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), 180.

[298] Primakov, 183.

[299] "Relations with Russia," NATO, accessed April 21, 2018, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50090.htm.

economic reforms, was reflected in foreign policy as the strengthening of the bilateral relations with the US that was signaled at the US-Russian summit in June 2000.

Russia's efforts to strengthen relations with the US was clear after the 9/11 events in Putin's offering Russian support for military operations in Afghanistan, providing Russian and Central Asian airspace for humanitarian aid, Russian assistance for the search and rescue missions, for supply of information and arms and ammunition assistance to the Afghan government.[300] Putin's support for fighting terrorism was perceived as a promising development, in terms of Russia's relations with NATO. NATO Secretary General George Robertson offered a new consultative body for the development and deepening of relations between NATO and Russia in October 2001. However, despite the progress made with NATO, Putin announced Russia's ongoing opposition against a new round of enlargement.[301]

A new process regarding the Russia-NATO relations started at the NATO-Russia Summit in 2002 with the Declaration on NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality. Putin, while recognizing the importance of the Summit in terms of changing the relations between NATO and Russia "from opposition to dialogue", remarked Russia's contribution to the formation of a "single security region from Vancouver to Vladivostok" by harmonizing its efforts within both CIS and NATO.[302] In addition to the opening of a new chapter in NATO-Russia Relations, A New Quality replaced the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council with NATO-Russia Council (NRC) and created a structure in which Russia was treated as equal partners with other allies, instead of a bilateral NATO+1 format.[303]

Thanks to the deepened dialogue with Russia, NATO avoided a large-scale opposition by Russia during the 2002 Prague Summit, when seven countries including the Baltics invited for the accession talks. Unlike Yeltsin's attitude explicitly opposing NATO enlargement,

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[300] Russian President's Statement (September 24, 2001), President of Russia, accessed April 15, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/21338.

[301] "Press Conference After a Meeting with NATO Secretary General George Robertson" (October 3, 2001), President of Russia, accessed April 15, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/21350.

[302] Vladimir Putin, "Speech at a Meeting of NATO-Russia Council" (May 28, 2002), President of Russia, accessed April 15, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/21611.

[303] "NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality," NATO, accessed April 15, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_19572.htm.

Putin assessed the situation as "mechanical expansion does not allow us to effectively oppose primary threats that we face today" and announced that Russia respects the rights of aspirant states to choose their own security arrangements.[304] When the NATO enlargement in March 2004, incorporated the Baltics into NATO, Russia's main concern was NATO's military presence next to Russian borders. Nevertheless, in a cooperative atmosphere created by the NATO-Russia Council, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov announced that NATO and Russia do not pose threats to each other, however, NATO's outdated security arrangements cannot respond to the threats in the Baltics.[305]

5.2.5. Prospects on the Membership Action Plan of Ukraine and Georgia

The moderate attitude towards the second post-Cold War NATO enlargement during Putin period lefts its place to a hostile approach with the pro-western changes brought by the Orange Revolution in Ukraine and the Rose Revolution in Georgia. The main reason for this aggressive stance was the abrupt shifts in Ukraine and Georgia's geopolitical vectors eliminating the possibility of a Russian impact on them. The membership aspirations of Ukraine were officially announced by the President of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma in May 2002. Putin, while accelerating joint efforts to form a free trade zone and Eurasian Economic Community with Kuchma, commented on this development as follows: "I am absolutely convinced that Ukraine will not shy away from the processes of expanding interaction with NATO and the Western allies. At the end of the day the decision is to be taken by NATO and Ukraine. It is a matter for those two partners."[306]

In the joint summit in February 2003 with the participation of the Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko and Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Putin and Kuchma announced that the talks on the free trade zone would result in September and emphasized the importance of Common Economic Space (CES) in Eurasia. A working group

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[304] "Meeting with NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer" (April 8, 2004), The President of Russia, accessed April 16, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22413.

[305] Sergey Lavrov, "Remarks at Press Conference Following Russia-NATO Council Session" (June 28, 2004), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation, accessed April 16, 2018, http://www.mid.ru/en/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/466282.

[306] "Press Statement and Answers to Questions at a Joint News Conference with Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma" (May 17, 2002), President of Russia, accessed April 16, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/21598.

created in Kiev worked out the details of the agreement throughout the year and developments were regularly shared with the public.

The extension of the dam built by Russia on the Taman Peninsula in the Kerch Strait to the Ukrainian-owned Tuzla Island and the intervention of the Ukrainian border control to the construction, brought Russia and Ukraine to the brink of a diplomatic crisis. The negotiations of the use of Azov Sea and the Kerch Strait were initiated in 2003 and resolved with the ratification of the Treaty for Cooperation in Utilizing the Azov Sea and Kerch Strait in May 2004.

Following the Orange Revolution and the election of pro-western Viktor Yuschenko, as the new president of Ukraine, Putin was hopeful for the future of the Common Economic Space with Ukraine, however, Yuschenko announced that the national interests of Ukraine and the European integration process were in the forefront regarding economic policies.[307] Yuschenko's declaration that Ukraine's European option could not be an alternative to the strategic partnership with Russia has been approved by Russia in various occasions, but, the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, announced during the NATO-Russia Council in 2005 that NATO membership of Ukraine would bear some consequences for the Russian-Ukrainian relations.[308] The idea that these consequences could be related to Crimea began to be clear with the protests organized by the pro-Russian forces to prevent NATO's Sea Breeze military exercises in Crimea, and Crimean parliament's resolution declaring Crimea as a "NATO-free zone" in June 2006. Sergey Lavrov while indicated that the protection of the rights of the Russian citizens is important for the course of relations between Russia and Ukraine, clearly stated that Ukraine's integration with NATO would cause "a colossal shift" in global geopolitics.[309]

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[307] "Press Conference Following Russian-Ukrainian Talks" (January 24, 2005), President of Russia, accessed April 17, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22795.

[308] "Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Press Conference After Ministerial Meetings of Russia-NATO Council and Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council" (December 8, 2005), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, accessed April 17, 2018, http://www.mid.ru/en/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/418026.

[309] "Georgia and Ukraine NATO Accession May Cause Geopolitical Shift," *Sputnik*, June 7, 2006, https://sptnkne.ws/jKqh.

NATO allies reiterated NATO's open-door policy at the 2006 Riga Summit, announced further invitations for NATO membership at the 2008 Bucharest Summit including Georgia and Ukraine, and referred to the value of Intensified Dialogue in the reform processes of Georgia and Ukraine.[310] This development contributed the surfacing of aggressive rhetoric of Russia on the NATO Enlargement once again. Putin's address at the 2007 Munich Security Conference assessing NATO's role in the European security from a Russian perspective, declared that the right to use of force solely belongs to the UN and the UN cannot be replaced with NATO. According to Putin, security, which is indivisible in Europe, is a requirement for every state. However, NATO enlargement that took place in spite of the security assurances given during the German unification talks, was a "serious provocation" that undermines the mutual trust between Russia and the West, and far from being related to the European security.[311] In addition to this, the decision of NATO to pursue enlargement at the 2008 Bucharest Summit led to the Russian perception that the containment policy during the Cold War period initiated against modern Russia once again. While the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov addressing the reasons of containment against contemporary Russia which dismissed its ideological and imperial designs and dealing with internal developments; approached NATO enlargement as an event containing Russia, which was justified by NATO "with the necessity to promote democracy".[312]

It can be argued that by the year of 2008 Russia abandoned its policy of openly opposing NATO enlargement, which was adopted to prevent NATO enlargement perceived by Russia as an act of "containment". Instead, Russia started to implement provocative actions to destabilize zones of Russian interest and legitimize its actions with the western rhetoric. Primarily, in early 2008, Kosovo's prospect of independence defined by Putin as "amoral, against law and Serbia's territorial integrity". By giving the example of the nonrecognition of Northern Cyprus, Putin accused European states of implementing double standards regarding territorial integrity.[313] In the case of European states and the US recognizing

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[310] "Riga Summit Declaration," NATO, accessed April 17, 2018, https://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2006/p06-150e.htm.

[311] Putin, "Speech at the Munich Conference."

[312] Sergey Lavrov, "Containing Russia: Back to the Future", *Russia in Global Affairs*, No.4 (October/December 2007), http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_9792.

[313] "Transcript of Annual Big Press Conference" (February 14, 2008), President of Russia, accessed April 18, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24835.

Kosovo's independence, Putin announced that Russia would not play the fool and respond to the West in the same manner to protect Russia's interests, and continued his words as follows: "If they believe they have the right to promote their interests in this way, then why can't we?... We have our own affairs, and we know what we will do."[314]

The words of Putin were directed towards the areas of "frozen conflict" emerged after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which had de facto autonomy from Georgia. Russia did not officially recognize these territories, however, provided Russian passport, economic and political assistance. Furthermore, Russia held military force in these regions under the name of peacekeeping forces, deployed in the region between 1991-1993, during the South Ossetian and Abkhazian War and since then they have continued to exist. Recognition of Kosovo's declaration of independence and the efforts to invite Georgia and Ukraine to MAP in Bucharest Summit in April was resulted in the abandonment of status quo in two breakaway regions and Russian State Duma passed a resolution to assess recognizing the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia on March 21st, 2008. On the basis of the decision taken at the Bucharest Summit in April that "Georgia and Ukraine will become members of NATO" and of the principle presented in 1995 in the Study on Enlargement, that states with territorial and ethnic disputes must settle such disputes to be qualified for NATO membership, Russian side intervened in Georgia in August 2008 to protect its interests in the separatist regions. Russia did not annex Abkhazia and South Ossetia, instead recognized their independence as a reprisal of Kosovo's independence. Medvedev legitimized Russia's actions as realizing "self-determination rights" of Abkhazia and South Ossetia resembling the Western rhetoric, this was a warning for Ukraine who pursued NATO membership goals in the same way as Georgia.[315]

While it was previously expressed by the Russian side that the status of Crimea would create problems between Russia and Ukraine in the case of Ukraine's NATO membership, Putin mentioned a possible "emotional impact" of Sevastopol's transformation as NATO naval base and Ukraine's hosting NATO ballistic missile defense system in the case of Ukraine's joining NATO during a joint press conference with his Ukrainian counterpart Yuschenko in

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[314] "Transcript of Annual Big Press Conference."

[315] "Interview with Al-Jazeera Television" (August 26, 2008), President of Russia, accessed April 18, 2018, http://en.kremln.ru/events/presdent/transcrpts/1230.

February 2008.[316] NATO aspirations of Ukraine were interpreted as a counterproductive development towards the Russian national security and equal security principle, because it brought NATO closer to the Russian borders and created new dividing lines in Europe. The Russian administration stated in the 2008 Russian Foreign Policy Concept that Russia's security could not be ignored at the cost of providing European security and Russia's negative stance would continue especially regarding Ukraine and Georgia's integration into NATO. Thus, the Ukrainian prospects of NATO membership, interpreted in the Foreign Policy Concept in this manner, abandoned by the presidency of Yanukoych in 2010.

5.2.6. Euromaidan

Yanukovych's presidency represented a strategic period for Russia with the opportunity to restore "what was lost over the past years".[317] Implicitly, this period stood for the reestablishment of Russian interests over Ukraine, which had been lost during the pro-western governments, rather than the recovery of Russian-Ukrainian relations. The renouncement of Ukraine's NATO membership goals with the adoption of non-aligned status, lease of naval bases in Crimea to Russia with the Kharkiv Pact in exchange for reduction of gas prices, Ukrainian integration efforts to Common Economic Space and Customs Union were the developments confirming the basic motives of Russian policies over Ukraine.

With reference to the presupposition that the world economic and political power shifts to the East, the priority of Russian foreign policy as of 2013, was to achieve the economic integration of Eurasia by establishing the Eurasian Economic Union and improving the legal and regulatory framework of the Customs Union and Common Economic Space.[318] Therefore, Ukraine has been declared as the priority partner of Russia for the purpose of economic integration. However, the EU Association Agreement and the expected Deep and

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[316] "Press Conference Following Talks with President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko and the Second Meeting of the Russian-Ukrainian Intergovernmental Commission" (February 12, 2008), President of Russia, accessed April 18, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24833.

[317] Dmitry Medvedev, "Speech at Meeting of the Russian-Ukrainian Interstate Commission" (November 26, 2010), President of Russia, accessed April 18, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/9615.

[318] "Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation, accessed April 18, 2018, http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/122186.

Comprehensive Free Trade Area which would be discussed at the November 2013, the Vilnius Summit between the EU and Ukraine interfered with the Russian efforts to establish the Eurasian Economic Union. Hence, in several occasions, Putin intensified the emphasis on the economic aspect of Russia-Ukraine relations. Putin, who visited Ukraine on the occasion of the 1025th anniversary of the baptism of Kyivan Rus, emphasized the shared culture and history within Orthodoxy and Russia's respect of the civilizational choice. However, he warned that Ukraine should take into account the trade volume between Russia and Ukraine, when evaluating the EU Association Agreement.[319] Ukraine's willingness to sign the Association Agreement with the EU pointed to the inadequacy of Russia's implicit pressure. In response, the Russian government decided to ban all the products of Roshen sweets, which was owned by Petro Poroshenko, one of the biggest supporters of the Association Agreement, classified Ukrainian goods as "high risk" products and refused to renew the duty-free agreements with Ukraine.[320] Economic downturn due to the trade restrictions of Russia forced the Yanukovych administration to suspend the Association agreement in November 2013, while Putin clearly expressed that the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine implies the end of Russia's trade relations with Ukraine and Ukraine must make pragmatic calculations in order to solve its problems.[321]

Demonstrations at Kyiv's Independence Square started after the Yanukovych's renouncement of the Association Agreement, soon turned out into a social unrest that erupted due to the anti-democratic policies due to Russian influence, corruption, restrictions of freedom and Ukraine's geopolitical orientation.[322] At this point, the basic maneuver of Russia was to support the Yanukovych regime in order to protect its economic and political privileges acquired in Ukraine. Following the demonstrations started on November 24th, Russia signed an agreement with the Yanukovych government on December 17th, to further

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[319] "Orthodox-Slavic Values: The Foundation of Ukraine's Civilisational Choice Conference" (July 27, 2013), President of Russia, accessed April 18, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/18961.

[320] "In Ukraine: Movement Toward and Away from EU."

[321] "News Conference of Vladimir Putin" (December 19, 2013), President of Russia, accessed April 20, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/19859.

[322] Lisa Sawyer Samp, et al., *Recalibrating US Strategy Toward Russia: A New Time for Choosing* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 47.

reduce the gas prices while allocating $15 billion worth of loan, intelligence and security personnel to suppress the greatest protest of the Ukrainian history since the independence.[323]

Putin on the one hand, provided economic and security support for the Yanukovych government to suppress the mass protests; on the other hand, condemned the use of force of the Yanukovych government in the presence of the EU. Putin declared Russia's respect for Ukraine's sovereign choices and announced that economic aid for Ukraine and the discount in gas prices were aimed at providing social welfare, rather than supporting the Yanukovych government.[324] However, the Russian rhetoric stating Russia's non-interference in Ukraine in any circumstances, changed with Yanukovych's leaving Ukraine and Verkhovna Rada's decision to remove Yanukovych from the presidency.

5.3. Annexation of Crimea and Donbass Erupts

5.3.1. Russian Involvement

Until Yanukovych's fleeing to Russia in February 2014 and his subsequent removal from the Presidency, Putin calculated that the demonstrations in Ukraine could be suppressed with economic and political assistance and presented an image supporting steps taken by the EU, in the name of the legitimacy of the solution. However, Yanukovych's removal from the Presidency with the Verkhovna Rada resolution implied a geopolitical shift in Ukraine towards the West. This could interfere with the objectives of Russia's Eurasian integration and could pave the way for Ukraine's NATO membership.[325]

From the Russian point of view, Ukraine's NATO integration scenario would prevent the Eurasian integration goal of Russia, by ensuring the penetration of the Euro-Atlantic influence to the region. The penetration of the Euro-Atlantic influence into the territory would make the future of the Black Sea Fleet, which Russia regarded as a geopolitical necessity, ambiguous and would have created a geopolitical catastrophe with the establishment of a

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[323] Samp et al., 47.

[324] "Russia-EU Summit" (January 28, 2014), President of Russia, accessed April 20, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/page/145.

[325] Dmitri Trenin, *The Ukraine Crisis and the Resumption of Great Power Rivalry*, (Moscow: Carnagie Moscow Center, 2014), 5.

NATO basis in Crimea. At this point, the basic maneuver for Russia was to annex Crimea by preventing its accessibility by the post-Yanukovych government, while the second maneuver was to destabilize pro-Russian Eastern Ukraine by forming autonomous structures. Thus, Russia would have made Ukraine's NATO membership structurally impossible, pursuant to the 1995 Study on Enlargement.[326]

Russia camouflaged the initiation of the annexation of Crimea with a massive military exercise close to the Ukrainian border on February 26th. With the unmarked uniforms of Russian military units and with the orders given by the Ukrainian government not to take any military measures against the Russian forces to prevent violence, Russian annexation was completed in a brief period of time. This confusing tactic, which involved neutralizing the Ukrainian military, controlling of local government institutions by the pro-Russian forces, accompanied with the disinformation and propaganda practices, delayed the perception of the annexation by the public and called as "hybrid war" by the West.[327] Putin's hybrid warfare was accompanied by a comprehensive geopolitical reasoning. Like the practices used in the 2008 South Ossetia War, this reasoning primarily focused on the unconstitutionality of the Yanukovych's removal, the illegality of the demonstrations in Ukraine, self-determination rights of the population as advocated by the West.

A letter sent to the UN Security Council by the UN representative of Ukraine Yuriy Sergeyev expressed that Ukraine's territorial integrity was threatened by the actions in Crimea and called an urgent meeting of the Security Council on February 28th.[328] In the Security Council meeting convened on March 1st, the Ukrainian side alleged that Russia illegally infiltrated the Crimean Peninsula under the order of Putin and violated the international law obligations and the provisions of the UN Charter.[329]

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[326] Trenin, 6-7.

[327] F. Stephen Larrabee, Peter A. Wilson and John Gordon, *The Ukrainian Crisis and European Security* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2015), 6.

[328] United Nations Security Council, Letter Dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/2014/136, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2014/136.

[329] United Nations Security Council, Verbatim Record of the 7124th meeting, S/PV.7124, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.7124.

While responding the allegations, Russia argued that Yanukovych had an agreement, which stipulated early parliamentary elections and return to the 2004 constitutions, with the EU bureaucrats on the Ukrainian crisis and displayed a compromising attitude by withdrawing the police forces. However, the life-threatening situation in Ukraine forced him to leave his country.[330] In this case, the illegitimate situation was created by the use of force of the demonstrators and unconstitutional toppling of Yanukovych supported by the European Union. Putin assessed the current situation in Ukraine as radical changes demanded by the Ukrainian people in a consequence of the unfair policies implemented in Ukraine since independence, while speaking at the press conference on March 4th. According to Putin, the administration of the regional governments by oligarchs, instead of representatives elected by the people, has worsened the economic and social life with unjustified privatizations. He added that people living in the regions in Ukraine "should determine their own future and obtain "equal participation" in order to appease social discontent.[331] Putin, on the one hand stated that the incidents in Crimea were not related with the military exercise carried out by Russia near the Ukrainian border, on the other hand designed a legitimate framework for a possible Russian intervention in Ukraine, despite the current hybrid war in Crimea. Thus, when the control over Crimea was completely maintained, Putin would have already prepared the legitimate ground for intervention and quickly annex Crimea, in such a way not to cause an immediate Western reaction.

As an essential part of the Russian geopolitical reasoning, legitimacy required the reconstruction of the situation in Ukraine by the Russian side. According to that, political atmosphere in Ukraine, created by the actions of the reactionary, anti-Semitic and nationalist forces was threatening the lives of Russians, Ukrainians and the Russian speaking population in the east and the south of Ukraine.[332] Furthermore, these extraordinary circumstances in Ukraine, threaten the lives of Russian citizens and army members located in Crimea, and

[330] "Verbatim Record of the 7124th Meeting."

[331] "Vladimir Putin Answered Journalists' Questions on the Situation in Ukraine" (March 4, 2014), President of Russia, accessed April 21, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/20366.

[332] "Vladimir Putin Answered Journalists' Questions."

forced the Russian Federation to deploy armed forces into the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, until the civic and political atmosphere settle down in Ukraine.[333]

Although, the use of force to protect Russians and the Russian speaking Ukrainian population in the eastern and the southern regions was seen as a last resort by the Russian authorities; Putin stated that the legitimate ground for the military intervention was already existed. According to Putin, President Viktor Yanukovych officially requested the use of force from the Russian side for the protection of rights and freedoms of Ukrainian citizens and if the uncontrolled crimes spread to the eastern regions and the local people asked for help, Russia was ready to respond to the request.[334] The hybrid war carried out by Russia, enabled Crimea to join Russia through a local referendum on March 16th, without requiring military intervention in the traditional sense.

The assumption that recent events in Ukraine would lead Ukraine to fasten its process of NATO integration constituted the basis of the Putin's geopolitical reasoning and accompanied with the ethnic composition, historical and cultural significance of Crimea for Russia. According to Putin, Crimea "has always been an inseparable part of Russia, in people's hearts and minds", as a place embodying the legendary fortress Sevastopol as the birthplace of the Russian Black Sea Fleet and the place that Prince Vladimir adopted Orthodoxy, which form the basis of the cultural, civilizational and humanitarian values of the Russian, Belarussian and Ukrainian people.[335] Ukraine's integration to NATO, implied the NATO military presence in Sevastopol in the "backyard" of Russia and posed a military threat to Southern Russia.[336] According to Putin, this scenario was not acceptable for the people living in the region and people living in Russia, as well as for the Russian government. Annexation of Crimea, which derived its legitimacy from people, was not a political decision of Russia, it is rather an action to protect the interests of people in Sevastopol and Crimea, which mostly consisted of ethnic Russians and Russian speaking population. It was argued

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[333] United Nations Security Council, "Verbatim Record of the 7124th Meeting."

[334] President of Russia, "Vladimir Putin Answered Journalists' Questions."

[335] Vladimir Putin, "Address to State Duma Deputies, Federation Council Members, Heads of Russian Regions and Civil Society Representatives" (March 18, 2014), President of Russia, accessed April 22, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/20603.

[336] Putin, "Address to State Duma Deputies."

by Putin that the situation in Crimea nothing, but people's exercising self-determination rights defined under the UN Charter, as it was used in Kosovo before. With the annexation of Crimea, the rights of Russians and the Russian speaking population living in Crimea were protected by Russia.[337]

The foundations of the Russian geopolitical reasoning expressed by Putin were consistent with the statistical data. According to the All Ukrainian Population Census conducted in 2001, 58.3 per cent of the Crimean population was composed of ethnic Russians, while 24.3 per cent were Ukrainians and 12 per cent were Crimean Tatars. In Sevastopol, the Crimean Tatar population fell dramatically while the Russian population was 71.6 per cent and the Ukrainian population was 22.4 per cent.[338] Throughout Crimea, the dominant language was Russian language that 99.7 per cent of the Russians, 59.5 per cent of the Ukrainians and 25.0 per cent of the Crimean Tatars were speaking Russian.[339] The situation affected the identity choices of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. According to the public opinion poll in 2006, 49.9 per cent of the population identified themselves as Russian while 23.9 per cent of the population identified with the Soviet identity and they expressed the feeling of closeness to the residents in Russia, rather than the residents in other regions of Ukraine.[340] The kinship with Russia reflected on the security choices of the residents in Crimea. While 51.1 per cent of the residents in Crimea identified NATO as a security threat to Ukraine, 64.1 per cent of the population considered the extension of the stationing of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in Crimea would contribute to the security of Ukraine.[341] The compatibility of the societal characteristics of1 Crimea lay at the core of the success of the implementation of the hybrid

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[337] "Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club" (October 24,2014), President of Russia, accessed April 22, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/55882.

[338] "About Number and Composition Population of Sevastopol City Council," All Ukrainian Population Census 2001, State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, accessed April 22, 2018, http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/nationality/Sevastopol/.

[339] "About Number and Composition Population of Autonomous Republic of Crimea," All Ukrainian Population Census 2001, State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, accessed April 22, 2018, http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/language/Crimea/.

[340] Razumkov Centre, "Identity of Ukrainian Citizens: Common and Different," 23.

[341] Razumkov Centre, "Attitude of the Crimean Residents to Probable Threats and Issues Bearing A Strong Conflict Potential" (public opinion polls conducted Crimea and Sevastopol on February 21-March 14, 2011 and October 18-November 9, 2008), *National Security & Defence*, no. 4-5 (2011): 33-34.

war supported by propaganda and disinformation practices, and the subsequent annexation of Crimea in non-violent manner.

The achievements in Crimea led Russia to a strategy of expanding its intervention to Eastern Ukraine in April 2014. Among the main objectives of Russia were to break the political unity of Ukraine and to secure Russian penetration by preventing Ukraine's integration into the Western organizations, especially NATO.[342] Although, Russia aimed at separating Eastern Ukraine by destabilizing the region with the same methods, the different characteristics of Crimea and Eastern Ukraine led to different results. Primarily, since there was no Russian military presence in Eastern Ukraine as in the Crimea, Russia hesitated to use direct force on Eastern Ukraine, instead encouraged separatism in the region and provided military support for separatists.

The conflict in Eastern Ukraine began in March 2014, with the mass riots in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. As another example of the Russian hybrid war, riots in Donbas region accompanied by an information campaign in the Russian media and the presence of Russian security forces wearing green uniforms without any insignia. Demonstrations spread over the other cities in Eastern Ukraine in April and manifested itself with the occupation of public buildings, demands for use of Russian language and regional autonomy.[343] Upon the statement that militants in Donetsk and Luhansk would hold local referendums to exercise self-determination rights, interim government in Ukraine initiated an Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) in Donbas region to limit the conflict within a small territory on April 14th. The loss of momentum of the separatist movements allowed the Kyiv government to establish control in Odessa, Kharkiv, Kherson, Mykolaiv, Zaporizhia and Dniopropetrovsk as of mid-April while the separatists declared independence by holding a referendum on May 11th. At this point, Russia's basic strategy was not to recognize the declaration of independence or the annexation of the regions, but to use the declarations against Kyiv in order to form a federal structure in Ukraine which was planned from the beginning.[344]

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[342] Samp et al., *Recalibrating US Strategy*, 51.

[343] Razumkov Centre, "The Current State of Ukraine-Russia Relations," *National Security & Defence*, no.5-6 (2014):7.

[344] Samp et al., *Recalibrating US Strategy*, 52.

Russian policy towards Donbas was based on the regional characteristics. Unlike Crimea, Donbas offered a structure, in which Ukrainians constituted the majority of the population that 59.9 per cent of the Donetsk population, 58.0 per cent of the Luhansk population consisted of Ukrainians.[345] Russians, who constituted between 38.0 per cent and 39.0 per cent of the population, were localized and their attachment to Russia has weakened.[346] The Russian influence in the region was mainly due to the Russian language use. As an identifier of socio-cultural identity, Russian language use is widespread that, 68.8 per cent of the residents in Luhansk, 74.9 per cent of the residents in Donetsk adopted Russian language as a mother tongue.[347] Adherence to the Ukrainian identity is quite low in comparison between the other regions in Western, Central and Eastern Ukraine; a vast majority of the population had no orientation to Europe or affiliation with the European identity.[348] In this case it can be said that the European integration as a foreign policy option was not preferred by the people in Donbas. The most basic component of this negative attitude was the integration with NATO rather than integration with the EU. In the case of a possible referendum for NATO membership, the proportion of residents voting for NATO accession was only 21 per cent, well below the share of other regions of Ukraine.[349] However, despite all the statistics, the residents of Donbas hesitated to identify themselves purely with Russian or Ukrainian identity, they rather affiliated with the city or region they live in and displayed negative tendencies towards separation from Ukraine or joining another state including Russia.[350]

In Donbas, Russia provoked the separatists about the future geopolitical orientation in Ukraine and supported the separatists militarily and financially to help them acquire regional privileges in a federalist framework designed as a component of its geopolitical reasoning.

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[345] "About Number and Composition Population of Ukraine," All Ukrainian Population Census 2001, State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, accessed April 30, 2018, http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/nationality/.

[346] Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building*, 83.

[347] "About Number and Composition Population of Ukraine," All Ukrainian Population Census 2001, State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, accessed April 30, 2018, http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/language/.

[348] Razumkov Centre, "Ukrainian Identity: Changes, Trends, Regional Aspects" (Sociological study conducted on December 11-23, 2015 in all regions of Ukraine except Crimea and Donbas), *National Security & Defence*, no. 3-4 (2016): 36-38.

[349] Razumkov Centre, 49.

[350] Razumkov Centre, 43.

Putin, who strictly rejected the Russian military presence in Eastern Ukraine, suggested that the Kyiv government should consider the federalization requests of separatists.[351] However, despite the decisions adopted in the Geneva meeting to stop the provocations by ending the occupation of public buildings and disarming the illegal armed groups, Russia continued to support the separatists with statements, financial and military aids.

ATO, led Russia to intensify its indirect efforts in Eastern Ukraine by shipping heavy weaponry including, anti-aircraft systems, tanks and heavy artillery by deploying "little green men" and by providing artillery fire support from the Russian territory.[352] This broad military support from Russia was widely publicized and condemned with the crash of the Malaysian Airline plane MH17 to pro-Russian controlled Donetsk on July 17th. Moreover, the findings pointed out to the Russian made surface-to-air (SAM) missile fired from Ukrainian territory.[353] Russia denied that the MH17 was shot down with the Russian ammunition, while increased its support for separatists in August and started a small direct Russian military intervention as of September against ATO in Ukraine. According to NATO figures, Russian intervention was limited to 3,000 troops, while Ukrainian side pronounced numbers between 7,000 and 15,000 Russian soldiers in Donbas.[354]

Direct Russian intervention brought about a different Russian rhetoric that while Ukraine's sovereignty was recognized by Russia, it did not consider Ukraine as a "complex" and multi component state formation. The reason for this was that Ukraine owed its post-independence territorial formation to the territories drawn by the Bolsheviks and had been incorporated into the Ukrainian borders during the Soviet period.[355] Some of the lands on the Western Ukraine formed by the lands taken from Hungary and Poland while Kharkiv, Donetsk, Luhansk, Nikolayev, Kherson and Odessa historically constituted historic region Novorossiya and were given by Russia to Ukraine in the 1920s.[356] Thus, Putin implied that Ukraine is "an

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[351] "Direct Line with Vladimir Putin" (Moscow, April 17, 2014), President of Russia, accessed May 1, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/20796.

[352] Samp et al., *Recalibrating US Strategy*, 52.

[353] Larabee, Wilson and Gordon, *The Ukrainian Crisis and European Security*, 8.

[354] Razumkov Centre, "The Current State of Ukraine-Russia Relations," 8.

[355] President of Russia, "Meeting of Valdai International Discussion Club."

[356] "Meeting of Valdai International Discussion Club."

artificial state" with territories carved from Eastern Europe and Russia, while defined the separatists in the region as Novorossiya militia.[357] In this case, according to Putin, military units of the Ukrainian army fought in Eastern Ukraine "is not an army but a NATO foreign legion with completely different goals to achieve the geopolitical aim of containing Russia not the Ukrainian people's national interests."[358]

5.3.2. Ukrainian Response

On the annexation of Crimea, Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada adopted "The Declaration on the Struggle for the Liberation of Ukraine" on March 20th, 2014. The Declaration stated that "Ukrainian people will never recognize" the annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and "will not stop the struggle for the liberation of Crimea from invaders", while demanded avoiding the recognition of Crimea from the international community.[359]

Ukrainian reaction to the annexation of the Crimea, both at societal and administrative level, did not bring an intervention option to the forefront beyond the diplomatic efforts. The basic strategy of Ukraine regarding the Russian hybrid war in Crimea was to reveal the aspects of Russia's geopolitical reasoning and receive support from the international community. On February 28th, 2014, the Ukrainian government sent a letter to the president of the UN Security Council to request an urgent meeting and to make a statement on the political developments in Crimea.[360] At the UN Security Council meeting on March 1st, the Ukrainian representative called for a stop to the Russian aggression which has infiltrated the Crimean Peninsula to protect the interests of the Russian-speaking communities. The UN resolution adopted on March 27th stated that the referendum held in Crimea had no validity and the

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[357] "Vladimir Putin Addressed Novorossiya Militia" (August 29, 2014), President of Russia, accessed May 2, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/46506.

[358] "Meeting with Students at the Mining University" (January 26, 2015), President of Russia, accessed May 2, 2018, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/47519.

[359] "Ministry of Foreign Affairs Daily Briefing" (March 20, 2014), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, accessed May 3, 2018, http://mfa.gov.ua/en/press-center/briefing/1205-brifing-v-mzs.

[360] United Nations Security Council, "Letter Dated 28 February 2014."

territorial integrity of Ukraine should be protected, while the diplomatic efforts of the UN, OSCE and other international organizations were welcomed.[361]

Eastern European states directly addressed Russia with regard to the importance of the territorial integrity of Ukraine. On February 24th Visegrad Four (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) pressed a joint declaration and reiterated their commitment for maintaining the territorial integrity of Ukraine, for finding peaceful solution in partnership with the EU and for allocating financial assistance to Ukraine.[362] On March 12th, G8 members condemned the Russian actions and called Russia to end its illegal actions on Crimea. Furthermore, Russia suspended from G8 and G8 meeting scheduled in Sochi in June 2014 was cancelled. OSCE acknowledged the illegitimacy of the referendum in Crimea and deployed Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) on March 21st in order to observe and report the developments and create a suitable environment for the all parties. NATO expelled the Russian diplomats from NATO territory, suspended its cooperation with Russia conducted under the NATO-Russia Council established in 2002 and regarded Russian intervention in Ukraine as an illegal act, violating the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine.[363]

Measures of the EU regarding the Russian activities in Crimea were initiated in March 2014. On March 17th, the EU condemned the illegal annexation of Crimea and agreed to impose travel bans, to freeze Russian assets, to restrict buying or selling certain financial instruments to certain Russian banks, energy companies and defense companies until the completion of the Minsk Agreements.[364] In addition to that, trade restrictions imposed on the goods originated from Crimea, investments to Crimea prohibited for the EU based companies, touristic services in Crimea banned for European agencies, exports to Crimean companies

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[361] United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 68/262, Territorial Integrity of Ukraine, A/RES/68/262, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=a/68/49.

[362] "Joint Statement of V4 Foreign Ministers on Ukraine" (February 24, 2014), Visegrad Group, accessed May 3, 2018, http://www.visegradgroup.eu/joint-statement-of-v4.

[363] "NATO-Russia Council," NATO, accessed May 6, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/topics_50091.htm.

[364] "EU Sanctions Against Russia Over Ukraine Crisis," European Union, accessed May 6, 2018, https://europa.eu/newsroom/highlights/special-coverage/eu-sanctions-against-russia-over-ukraine-crisis_en.

was limited and the technical support provided in some sectors has been terminated.[365] However, the different attitudes of the European countries due to their economic and energy relations with Russia and failure to persuade Russia on a diplomatic solution in Crimea caused the EU sanctions to be inefficient. In an effort to politically support the Ukrainian interim government, the EU symbolically signed the Association Agreement with the Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk on March 21st. The signing of the Association Agreement on the one hand, economically and politically abolished the possibility of the Eurasian Economic Union, on the other hand provoked the expected Russian military operation on the Ukrainian mainland.[366]

The expected Russian intervention in Ukraine began with the separatist actions in Donetsk and Luhansk with Russia's incitement and military support as a component of the Russian hybrid war. Ukrainian public, administrative and infrastructural buildings were occupied by military units following the establishment of the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) in early April.

As a result of the recent events in Donbas, Ukraine displayed a patriotic reaction that was not displayed during the annexation of Crimea and decided to struggle for the protection of the territorial integrity of the country.[367] Under the presidency of Oleksandr Turchynov, the Ukrainian government initiated ATO with the presidential decree in Donbas on April 13rd. The success of ATO in the first period was interrupted by the active involvement of Russia and resulted in considerable number of casualties on the Ukrainian side as of August 2014. The diplomatic process accompanying ATO, forced Ukraine to conclude a ceasefire agreement on September 5th that Ukraine, Russia and representatives from DPR and LPR signed under the OSCE supervision in Minsk. The protocol signed in Minsk, prohibited the use of force for both sides, ensured the withdrawal of illegal armed groups from Ukraine, projected the "decentralization of power" for the Ukrainian government and amnesty for the

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[365] "EU Sanctions Against Russia Over Ukraine Crisis."

[366] "From Euro-Maidan to Revolution of Dignity," *Ukrainian Weekly*, January 18, 2015, http://ukrweekly.com/archive/.

[367] Kuzio, *Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption and New Russian Imperialism*, 109.

individuals who took part in the Donbas conflict and elections to be held for the local governments in Donbas.[368]

In accordance with the Minsk Protocol, the Ukrainian government adopted "The Law on Special Procedure of Local Government in Some Areas of Donetsk and Luhansk" to ensure elections for the establishment of special local governments for three years including districts, cities, towns and villages.[369] However, the amnesty clause was not put into practice due to the failure of Russia and local separatists to respect the provisions of the ceasefire agreement. Believed to have sent weapons to Eastern Ukraine under the name of humanitarian aid, Russia declared as the "aggressor state" due to the rocket attacks in the east while the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics defined by Ukraine as terrorist organizations on January 27th, 2015.

The package of measures entitled as Minsk II signed in February 2015 because of the growing tension, projected ceasefire, withdrawal of weapons and illegal armed forces, amnesty law and constitutional reform for Ukraine, continued to be violated by Russia as claimed by Ukraine. According to Ukrainian side, the actions of Russia in the Crimea were the actions that targeted the territorial integrity of Ukraine and could only be resolved by the economic and political pressure of the international community.[370]

According to the Ukrainian government, Russia used the rhetoric "the preservation of the rights of Russians and Russian speaking population in Crimea due to the chaotic atmosphere in Euromaidan and the removal of Yanukovych from presidency with "an unconstitutional coup"" as a pretext for the Russian intervention in Crimea.[371] The annexation of Crimea, which started on February 20th, 2014 was initiated with the Russian "green men" infiltrating Crimea and seizing the Crimean parliament, the Ukrainian military complexes,

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[368] "Protocol on the Results of Consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, accessed May 6, 2018, http://mfa.gov.ua/en/news-feeds/foreign-offices-news/27596-protocolon-the-results-of-consultations-of-the-trilateral-contact-group-minsk-05092014.

[369] "Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Adopted the Laws," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, accessed August 7, 2018, https://mfa.gov.ua/en/news-feeds/foreign-offices-news/27948-shhodo-uhvalennya-verkhovnoju-radoju-ukrajinizakoniv-ukrajini.

[370] "10 Facts You Should Know About Russian Military Aggression Against Ukraine," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, accessed May 6, 2018, http://mfa.gov.ua/en/page/open/id/5026.

[371] "10 Facts You Should Know About Russian Military Aggression Against Ukraine."

administrative and infrastructure buildings. The date of the honorary "return to Crimea" medal, which was dedicated by the Russian Defense Ministry to the personnel involved in this military operation, supported the claims of the Ukrainian side on the Russian infiltration.[372] On this date, Yanukovych had not left Ukraine yet and Verkhovna Rada had not adopted a resolution stipulated the deprivation of constitutional powers of Yanukovych and call for an early presidential election in Ukraine. In addition to the apparent military dimension, there is also intense propaganda and disinformation activities, cyber warfare, economic and energy sanctions in accordance with the characteristics of the hybrid warfare. Such hybrid warfare tactics applied in Ukraine are the standard practice of Russia, which are the same as the one previously applied to Georgia in the 2008 South Ossetia War and it essentially targets the Euro-centric policies.

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[372] Ihor Prokopchuk, "Four years of illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation" (Vienna, March 1, 2018), OSCE, accessed May 6, 2018, https://www.osce.org/permanent-council/374851?download=true.

CHAPTER 6

GEOPOLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA ON UKRAINE AND NATO

6.1. Geopolitical Vector Change in Ukraine

In the period following the Euromaidan, the conflict in Crimea and Donbas had in very important consequences for the Ukrainian politics. Primarily, the withdrawal of Yanukovych from the presidency resulted in the decision of a new presidential election on May 25th, 2014. In the context of the interception efforts in Donetsk and Luhansk regions the results of the Ukrainian presidential election revealed important clues on Ukraine's future geopolitical orientation. Petro Poroshenko, who received 55.0 per cent of the votes and became the fifth president of Ukraine, expressed his commitment to peace in Donbas and internal reform process, indicated the geopolitical vector of Ukraine in his inauguration speech:

> The return of Ukraine to its natural, European state was dreamt of throughout many generations. The dictatorship that reigned in Ukraine in the last several years strived to deprive us of this perspective – the people rebelled. The victorious Revolution of Dignity did not only change the government. The country became different. The people became different.[373]

Indeed, people became different in Ukraine in that these events relatively strengthened the Ukrainian national consciousness and changed the demographic features in Ukraine. According to a study, conducted in 2006 and in 2015 in Ukraine, the share of the population associated itself with Ukraine, Ukrainian language and culture and being Ukrainian increased significantly, while the share of the population associated itself with Russia, Russian culture and language, the Soviet Union and Soviet culture tended to decrease in all regions of Ukraine except Crimea and Donbas.[374]

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[373] Petro Poroshenko, "Speech at the Inauguration Ceremony" (June 7, 2014), *Euromaidan Press*, accessed May 7, 2018. http://euromaidanpress.com/2014/06/07/petro-poroshenkos-speech-at-the-inauguration-full-text/.

[374] Razumkov Centre, "Ukrainian Identity, Changes, Trends, Regional Aspects," 23-40.

In addition to the decline in Russian influence over the population, Europe as a geopolitical orientation tended to gain value for Ukrainian public. Ukrainian people prioritized the relations with the EU members in all regions except Donbas while support for the EU membership which was 48.0 per cent in 2013, rose to 56.0 per cent throughout Ukraine.[375] Symbolic reintegration of Ukraine to Europe was already initiated in March to support Ukrainian government; however, on June 27th, the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement was officially signed by the President Petro Poroshenko with an official signing ceremony which was define by Poroshenko as "the most important day for my country after the Independence Day". [376]

The pro-European orientation of the Poroshenko government and the Ukrainian people once again confirmed by the results of the parliamentary elections in October. For the first time in independent history of Ukraine, Communist Party did not receive enough votes to be represented in the parliament, and Yanukovych's Party of the Regions received only 9.7 per cent of the votes.[377] Thus, three pro-European parties constituted the majority in Verkhovna Rada and formed the most pro-European parliament in Ukraine's history.[378] Combining with the policies of Poroshenko, the pro-European formation of Verkhovna Rada supported the reestablishment of relations with NATO.

The non-aligned status adopted by Ukraine during Yanukovych period resulted in "constructive partnership" with NATO. Constructive partnership was a concept that restrained Ukraine's rapprochement with NATO in order not to remain in between NATO and Russia and allowed relations to be maintained by focusing on the European security issues.[379]

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[375] Razumkov Centre, 46.

[376] Petro Poroshenko, "Statement at the signature of Association Agreements Between EU and Georgia, the Republic of Moldova," European Council, accessed May 7, 2018, https://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu/event/eu-ukraine-3bb2/signing-of-association-agreements-with-georgia-republic-of-moldova-and5.

[377] Larrabee, Wilson and Gordon, *The Ukrainian Crisis and European Security*, 11.

[378] Larrabee, Wilson and Gordon, 11.

[379] Grigoriy Perepelytsia, "The Future of Ukraine-NATO Relations: A Ukrainian Perspective," in *Ukraine, Central Europe and the Future of European Security* ed. Róbert Ondrejcsák and Grigoriy Perepelytsia (Bratislava: Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs, 2015), 11.

The most important reflections of the geopolitical vector change on the Ukrainian politics had been the reform initiatives. Reforms were an essential component of Poroshenko's domestic and foreign policy in the new period. In the current security environment, Ukraine needed for military reforms. Poroshenko promised reforms to increase the combat capability of the armed forces in order to efficiently conduct the war in the east, while defining the effects of the non-bloc policy on Ukrainian Armed Forces and the Ukrainian Foreign Policy as "absurd pacifism".[380]

Partnership relations with NATO designated as the main pillar of the military reform process in the Poroshenko period. According to Poroshenko, reforms and NATO membership directly affect each other and membership could only be achieved if reforms succeeded.[381] However, the recent NATO-Ukrainian relations indicated that the internal reforms of Ukraine were not a vehicle to reach the NATO membership goal, it was rather the main purpose of the political process. As a country fighting with its main strategic partner, whose identity newly consolidating and whose economy was on the brink of bankruptcy, Ukraine needed financial, technical and diplomatic support to make military reforms. In this sense, the reform of the armed forces by using technical and legal framework that formed in the past in partnership with NATO would be beneficial for Ukraine even if the eventual membership could not be achieved.

The key step to start the reform process was to abolish the non-aligned status of Ukraine to demonstrate the determination of the Ukrainian government to develop relations with NATO. Verkhovna Rada approved an amendment to change the non-alignment status from the national security policy of Ukraine in December 2014 and took a decision to develop "deep cooperation with NATO" to meet the criteria for the membership in the organization.[382]

In the meantime, Ukraine began its efforts to reform its security and defense sector effective from 2015. Critical strategic documents such as the National Security Strategy and the

[380] Petro Poroshenko, "On the Internal and External Situation of Ukraine in 2015," President of Ukraine, accessed May 7, 2018, http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/shorichne-poslannya-prezidenta-ukrayini-do-verhovnoyi-radi-u-35412.

[381] "On the Internal and External Situation of Ukraine in 2015."

[382] "Distinctive Partnership Between Ukraine and NATO," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, accessed August 5, 2018, https://mfa.gov.ua/en/about-ukraine/euroatlantic-cooperation/ukraine-nato.

Military Doctrine of Ukraine were renewed in 2015. The National Security Strategy was aimed at improving the socio-economic and political environment in Ukraine by minimizing the threats to the national sovereignty of Ukraine and creating suitable conditions for the integration into NATO and the EU.[383] Protection of national sovereignty and territorial integrity from Russian armed aggression and reformation of the defense capacity of Ukraine to comply with NATO membership criteria defined as the primary tasks in the Military Doctrine of Ukraine.[384] In addition to this, the Concept for Development of Security and Defense Sector of Ukraine and Strategic Defense Bulletin were approved in 2016. The Concept aimed at creating a functioning security and defense sector by focusing on the ways, which covered in the National Security Strategy and Military Doctrine.[385] Strategic Defense Bulletin was developed to present realistic evaluations on the economic, political and technical planning necessary for adapting force structures of Ukraine to NATO standards and for enhancing operational capabilities of the armed forces to avoid current national security threats. [386] The Cyber Security Strategy was one of the strategic decisions adopted in 2016 to take effective measures against the cyber-attacks, which is an element of Russian hybrid war, and to establish a national cyber security network. These strategic documents and the accompanying law amendments essentially aimed at modernizing the Ukrainian armed forces to meet NATO standards and to qualify armed forces against the Russian armed aggression. In an environment where national security and territorial integrity were threatened, NATO membership served both as a goal and as an instrument facilitating the Ukrainian government's reform movements.

This willingness of the government for further NATO integration corresponded with the Ukrainian public opinion. The support of the Ukrainian people for NATO membership increased dramatically with the events in the Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. Along with the Yanukovych's non-alignment policy, public support on NATO accession was 17.9 per cent

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[383] "National Security Strategy of Ukraine" (Approved by Decree of the President of Ukraine, May 26, 2015, no.287), National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, http://www.rnbo.gov.ua/files/2016/en_print-1.pdf.

[384] "Military Doctrine of Ukraine" (Approved by Decree of the President of Ukraine of September 24, 2015, no.555), National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, http://www.rnbo.gov.ua/files/2016/en_print-1.pdf.

[385] "Concept of the Development of the Security and Defense Sector of Ukraine" (Approved by Decree of the President of Ukraine, March 14, 2016, no.92), National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, http://www.rnbo.gov.ua/files/2016/en_print-1.pdf.

[386] "Strategic Defence Bulletin of Ukraine" (Approved by Decree of the President of Ukraine, June 6, 2016, no.240), National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, http://www.rnbo.gov.ua/files/2016/en_print-1.pdf.

in 2011, while increased to 36.7 per cent in April 2014 to 43.3 per cent in March 2015.[387] It further increased to 47.2 per cent in June 2017 and reached its highest level in the history of Ukraine.[388] Statistics show that, Russia's aggression in Crimea and Donbas had led people distinguish Ukrainian identity and geopolitical orientation from Russia. Ukrainian public assessments on NATO reflected in the statistics pointed out the need of the Ukrainian people for security and improvement of the armed forces in an environment, where the Ukrainian government was inadequate to prevent the annexation of Crimea and to respond the Russian threat in the east 2017 statistics showed that NATO was seen as a "defense mechanism" by 43.2 per cent of the respondents as a result of the events in 2014. When this ratio distributed to the regions, in the west and the center, where the support for NATO membership is high, it is seen as 63.4 per cent and 48.2 per cent, in the south and the east, where the support decrease, it falls to 18.5 per cent and 30.2 per cent.[389]

In this sense, although Ukraine's NATO membership is unlikely to be possible under the current conditions, Poroshenko government will continue to maintain relations with NATO, in order to obtain technical, military and financial support for the domestic reform process, to consolidate the idea of Russian threat in the diplomatic framework of NATO and to increase public awareness on the benefits of NATO membership.

6.2. Relations Between Ukraine and NATO

During the events taking place in Kyiv, Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, NATO expressed its concern and respect for Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereign rights in many occasions. However, the statement of the NATO Defense Ministers in February 2014 reiterated NATO-Ukraine distinctive partnership and NATO-Ukraine Commission, announced NATO's readiness to engage in military cooperation and to assist defense with reforms in Ukraine in

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[387] Razumkov Centre, "How would you vote if the referendum on Ukraine`s NATO accession was held the following Sunday?."

[388] Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation and Razumkov Center, "Public Opinion of the Population of Ukraine on NATO" (Nationwide polling of the population of Ukraine was conducted in June 9-13, 2017, in all regions of Ukraine with the exception of Crimea and the occupied territories in Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts), accessed October 20, 2018, https://dif.org.ua/en/article/public-opinion-of-the-population-of-ukraine-on-nato.

[389] Ilko Kucheriv Foundation and Razumkov Centre, "Public Opinion of the Population of Ukraine on NATO."

order to ensure Ukraine's territorial integrity and construction of democratic institutional framework.[390]

After the statement of the defense ministers' meeting, Ukraine requested a NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC) meeting by invoking the NATO-Ukraine Charter. At the press conference after the NUC meeting, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen described Ukraine as a "valued partner and a founding member of PfP"; however, stated that no NATO member state has activated the Article 4 of the Washington Treaty which envisages consultation between NATO members in case of a threat to territorial integrity, independence and security of any party.[391]

In this sense, it was not a coincidence that North Atlantic Council was invited to the meeting after the activation of Article 4 by Poland. As one of the NATO allies, Poland directly involved in the crisis in Ukraine, in accordance with the leadership mission in V4 and took a firm stance towards Russia due to variety of reasons. Primarily, as the neighbor of Poland, Ukraine was the biggest supporter of Poland's NATO engagement in 1990s. Moreover, since 1997 the armies of Poland and Ukraine have been carrying out joint peacekeeping operations under the POLUKRBAT. Besides this cooperation, the deterioration of the territorial integrity of Ukraine acting as a buffer zone between Russia and NATO members was the basis of Poland's concern about a direct geopolitical confrontation between Russia and Poland. The fact that being the easternmost state in NATO, Poland was in a position that directly faces Russia in a possible crisis, therefore required to host permanent US presence.[392] This situation pointed out a great tension in terms of relations between Poland and Russia, which have been tense since the death of the Polish President Lech Kaczynski and a large number of people accompanying him in a suspicious plane crash over Russia while headed to a ceremony in Katyn forest.

Poland's concerns coupled with NATO's geopolitical calculations on concerns over of Ukraine's territorial integrity forced NATO to take some diplomatic measures against Russia,

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[390] "Statement by NATO Defence Ministers on Ukraine" (Brussels, February 26, 2014), NATO, accessed May 8, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_107429.htm.

[391] Anders Fogh Rasmussen, "Statement to the Media" (Brussels, March 2, 2014), NATO, accessed May 8, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_107682.htm.

[392] Trenin, *Ukraine Crisis*, 19.

including the suspension of NATO-Russia joint mission in Syria, exclusion of the Russian staff from the military and civilian meetings of NATO and a review of the NATO-Russia Council. The non-alignment policy of Ukraine came to the forefront in this period of time.

NATO Secretary General Rasmussen declared NATO's respect for Ukraine's foreign policy choices by referring Ukraine's non-alignment policy and expressed NATO's readiness to move forward the existing dialogue with Ukraine with the following words: "We have an excellent partnership with Ukraine within the NATO-Ukraine Commission. We're ready to continue and further develop that partnership. And it's for Ukraine to decide if they want to further develop that relationship."[393] Upon Rasmussen's announcement, NATO membership question was addressed to the Ukrainian interim government and the Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk announced that membership is not yet on their agenda.[394] In the current crisis environment Ukraine's primary goal was to protect the territorial integrity of Ukraine and to establish a permanent government. However, the annexation of Crimea with a referendum held on March 17th increased Ukraine's need for NATO's assistance for providing its security while NATO agreed to intensify its efforts to support the Ukrainian government on military reforms and political processes based on democratic values in order to prevent further instability in the Euro-Atlantic region.

The election of pro-western Petro Poroshenko to the Ukrainian Presidency meant the removal of the ambiguity of Ukraine's NATO policies and welcomed by NATO as an important step to peacefully solve the crisis escalated in Eastern Ukraine in cooperation with the new government. Signing of the EU Association Agreement in June 2014 confirmed Poroshenko's pro-western stance in the eyes of NATO. Secretary General Rasmussen's visit to Kyiv in August 2014, became the precursor of a new era in the NATO-Ukraine relations within the Wales Summit in September. Rasmussen declared NATO's support for Ukraine's sovereignty and its reform of armed forces and defense institutions against Russia's military

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[393] Anders Fogh Rasmussen, "Remarks at the Press Conference" (Brussels, March 5, 2014), accessed May 8, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_107743.htm.

[394] "Joint Press Point with NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen and the Prime Minister of Ukraine, Arsenii Yatseniuk" (March 6, 2014), NATO, accessed May 8, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_107842.htm.

actions.[395] Rasmussen announced that relations with Ukraine would be intensified through joint military training, exercises and defense planning, Rasmussen and invited Poroshenko to the special meeting at the Wales Summit in order to show NATO's solidarity with Ukraine. Allies declared their commitment to further cooperation between Ukraine and NATO and launched new programs to assist Ukraine in its reformation process in the framework of ANP at the Wales Summit while reiterating the key position of Ukraine in the Euro-Atlantic security.[396] Financed by NATO Trust Funds, new programs projected capacity building and capacity development projects through the regular Ukrainian participation in NATO activities. Joint military activities designated as the essential component of Ukraine's defense and security and constituted the basis of NATO's assistance to Ukraine in its struggle against Russia.

Trust Funds were designated for Command Control Communications and Computers, Cyber Defence, Medical Rehabilitation, Logistics and Standardization with the contribution of all allies. These funds were created in an effort to boost NATO's assistance to improve Ukraine's defense and security capacities at a technical level. Ukraine's participation in NATO operations were intensified to contribute to the internal reform process of Ukraine's armed forces and to enhance the operational effectiveness. Trust Funds, which is crucial to adjust the Ukrainian army to NATO standards and address the conflict in the east, were expanded at the Warsaw Summit in 2016. While the existing Trust Funds are still operational, a Comprehensive Assistance Package for Ukraine endorsed in the Wales Summit and allocated further assistance to Ukraine for capacity and institute building against the hybrid warfare practices conducted by Russia.

In December 2014, on the announcement that Trust Funds are operational, Poroshenko announced that the government abolished the non-bloc status of Ukraine, and initiated a process to fulfill the necessary criteria for NATO membership.[397] National Security Strategy and Military Doctrine made the NATO membership as a foreign policy priority of Ukraine

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[395] "Press Point by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen Following Meetings with Senior Ukraine Government Officials in Kiev" (August 7, 2014), NATO, accessed May 9, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_111908.htm.

[396] "Joint Statement of the NATO-Ukraine Commission" (Newport, September 4, 2014), NATO, accessed May 9, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/official_texts_115474.htm.

[397] NATO, "Relations with Ukraine."

while the Concept of the Development of the Security and Defense Sector of Ukraine and Strategic Defense Bulletin focused on realistic ways of implementing the necessary measures. However, while NATO still continues to support Ukraine's reforms technically, financially and diplomatically, it does not provide any assurance for Ukraine's membership, due to the implications of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict on the European security.

6.3. NATO-Russia Relations and NATO's Concerns

NATO defended the territorial integrity and sovereign rights of Ukraine without recognizing the Russian annexation in Crimea discursively and decided to suspend the civilian and military dialogue with Russia on April 1st, 2014. Russia's military intervention in Ukraine has not only violated the territorial integrity, domestic and foreign politics of Ukraine, but also destabilized the region and made a lasting impact on the European security environment. The Ukraine crisis was based on the abrupt shift of Ukraine from Russian geopolitical axis towards the West. It was not actually a solitary event or misunderstanding, but a geopolitical response of Russia to the post-Cold War NATO enlargement.[398]

The Ukraine Crisis, which was another variant version of the war in South Ossetia, displayed the geopolitical importance of Ukraine for Russia due to its strategic position and demographic structure, as well as sending a clear message to NATO approaching the Russian border. Consequently, the latest situation emerged with the Ukraine crisis has directed NATO allies to take military strategic measures besides imposing diplomatic and economic sanctions. The underlying concern of these military measures was the concern that Russia could proceed its military intervention in Europe, which was interestingly the reminiscent of the Cold War era security concerns of NATO.

NATO's defense measures have largely concentrated on Poland and the three Baltic states: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. As NATO's easternmost country, Poland has direct border with Russia's Kaliningrad region, along with the borders with pro-Russian Belarus and Ukraine. In addition to its ongoing problems with Russia since the plane crash in 2010, Poland was also the most enthusiastic supporter of Ukraine's European integration and

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[398] Trenin, *The Ukraine Crisis*, 14.

NATO membership. The violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine pointed out to the possibility that the next Russian aggression could be directed towards Poland.

The situation in the Baltics was more different than in the Poland. As the former parts of the Soviet Union, the Baltics had significant proportion of ethnic Russian and Russian speaking population. Especially in Estonia and Latvia almost one fourth of the population composed of ethnic Russians.[399] This made the Baltic states a suitable ground for the Russian implementation of soft power and hybrid warfare tactics to organize separatist movements as observed in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea.[400] In addition to the demographic features, surrounded by the Kaliningrad region of Russia, pro-Russian Belarus and the Russian Federation, the Baltic States are not capable of encountering a possible Russian intervention with their low military capacities. Therefore, numerical superiority of the Russian armed forces supported by geography, brought possible war scenarios in the Baltics and Poland to NATO's agenda and required NATO to adapt to the new security environment in Europe.

The Readiness Action Plan (RAP) adopted at the 2014 Wales Summit projected a number of military measures to ensure the security of NATO's eastern and southern borders. The primary measure was the enhancement of the capabilities of NATO Response Forces (NRF) and creation of Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) in order to quickly deploy 5,000 land components in two or three days in case of an emerged threat within NATO's borders. France, UK, Germany, Spain, Turkey and Poland undertook a leading role in VJYF on a rotational basis, however, its formation of NATO's eastern flank made Poland vulnerable to a possible Russian intervention. As a result of that, designed to protect Alliance's borders, VJTF deployed in Poland for the first time in the "Noble Jump" military exercise in June 2015. Another effort of NATO's adaptation to the new security environment was the positioning of the NATO Force Integration Units (NFIU's) in Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania as part of RAP in order to facilitate the collective defense planning and rapid deployment of forces in 2015. In 2017, Slovakia and Hungary joined the NFIUs.

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[399] Tomáš Čižik, "Implications for Security and Defence Cooperation of the Nordic-Baltic Region Following the Annexation of Crimea by Russian Federation," in *Ukraine, Central Europe and the Future of European Security*, ed. Róbert Ondrejcsák, Grigoriy Perepelytsia (Bratislava: CENAA, 2015), 75.

[400] Cizik, 76.

Allies, who aimed to increase NATO's presence in the east, have launched an enhanced Forward Presence (efP) to reinforce deterrence and defense capabilities in Europe. The enhanced Forward Presence, which comprised of four sustainable and rotational multinational battlegroups, located in Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland, coordinated and supervised by Poland through Multinational Corps Northeast Headquarters in Szczecin and Multinational Division Northeast Headquarters in Elblag. Formed with the participation of Denmark, the UK, Iceland, Canada, Albania, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Germany, Croatia, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Romania and the US, these battlegroups are the largest collective defense reinforcement in NATO's history by the year of 2018.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

NATO integration efforts of Ukraine, which is ongoing since the initial years of independence, was seen as a beneficial way of distancing Ukraine from the Russian orbit. Integration into NATO structures was considered by the pro-western governments in Ukraine to bolster Ukrainian national consciousness and to accelerate the reform of military, economic and judicial institutions. The pro-western Ukrainian governments attempted to restore the repressed national identity of Ukraine by leading Ukraine to the West and giving Ukrainian identity a Western appearance. In this way, the Ukrainian identity, which had been exposed to the intense Russification and Sovietization, would have the opportunity to develop apart from the Russian influence. NATO integration was one of the early stages of Ukraine's strategy and it was more effortless in line with NATO's goal of reaching more countries in Eastern Europe. However, this process also meant an important geopolitical vector shift and thus brought with a great challenge for Ukraine in its domestic and foreign policy. NATO integration of Ukraine, which was reluctantly welcomed by the Ukrainian public by reason of the inherited Tsarist and Soviet era identities, caused consistent objections by Russia due to its geopolitical considerations. Russia based its objections on the continuation of NATO's reason of being and its tendency to enlarge towards Russia in the post-Cold War period despite the promises made during the German unification. While the Ukrainian public resisted the integration based on the hostile image in their minds which was reminiscent of the Soviet-era prejudices.

Russian and Ukrainian objections had a fair share in their geopolitical contexts. Although NATO shifted its mission statement to conflict prevention, crisis management and peacekeeping in the post-Cold War period; NATO enlargement continued to be a geopolitical process designed to include the former eastern bloc and post-Soviet states. In addition to the continuing the US military presence in Europe on larger scale, the post-Cold War NATO enlargement would provide democratic transformations in the states integrated into NATO structures and initiated cooperation between the candidate states to contribute to the new peacekeeping mission of NATO.

The Post-Cold War NATO enlargement, which is an elaborately calculated geopolitical move, facilitates the democratic transformations of the former eastern bloc and the post-Soviet states, provides clear information about the military assets of these states, enables the US to reduce its defense spending by encouraging aspirant states to participate in peacekeeping operations on their own initiatives and ultimately would help continuing America's military presence in Europe in the post-Cold War posture. Until the middle of 2000s NATO member states, particularly the US, was very pleased with this political atmosphere created as a result of the geopolitical calculations. Former eastern bloc states and the post-Soviet states, such as Ukraine, joined peacekeeping operations, adapted their armies to NATO standards, clarified their interests for eventual NATO membership and accelerated their post-Soviet transformation through reforms.

Russia, as the country concerned with the NATO enlargement process, contributed to the peacekeeping operations in the Balkans and the Mediterranean, participated in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and NATO-Russia Council and opened military liaison in Moscow for an effective cooperation with NATO. For Russia, the most basic motivation for effective cooperation with NATO structures is not the willingness to intervene in the security problems in the Euro-Atlantic region, but to prevent or influence the decisions on enlargement towards Russia. However, despite the "no enlargement commitment" made by Germany and the US during the German unification process and the clarification of Russia's red lines during the first rounds of the post-Cold War enlargement, Russia recognized that the close cooperation with NATO did not provide the political leverage to change or influence NATO's decisions. Vladimir Putin's speech at the 2007 Munich Security Conference was a remarkable representation of the Russian realization on this issue. Putin, who indicated that the problems of the global security architecture was based on the legitimization of the use of force by non-UN structures, especially NATO, questioned the rationale behind NATO's enlargement and positioning of its military forces near the Russian border in exchange for Russia's fulfillment of its treaty obligations on arms reduction. Putin, who was recalling the promises given to Russia in 1990s on NATO enlargement, implied that the post-Cold War NATO enlargement was a new containment movement against Russia, and it created "new dividing walls" rather than implementing security measures in Europe. Russian Foreign Policy Concept released in January 2008 confirmed this notion of Vladimir Putin by emphasizing Russia's legitimate national interests in the region and equal security for all the countries. Accordingly, a possible NATO expansion, approaching the borders of Russia by

encompassing Ukraine and Georgia, would not only ensure Russian distrust of NATO; but would also eradicate the concept of equal security for all.

NATO's Bucharest Summit convened approximately one year after the Munich Security Conference confirmed once again Russia's concerns over NATO enlargement. The Bucharest Summit decisions in April 2008 affirmed that Ukraine and Georgia would soon become NATO members and the next phase in their integration process was a MAP invitation. In other words, NATO did not only proceed to consider the enlargement as ensuring the European security system, but also chose new candidates from the post-Soviet geography which would harm the Russian geopolitical interests. In this case, Russia, who did not have the opportunity to prevent NATO decisions by bureaucratic means as in previous enlargement movements, preferred to block the possible NATO membership of Georgia and Ukraine by referring to the most basic element of the 1995 Study on Enlargement: states with ethnic or territorial disputes are not considered for NATO membership without solving their disputes peacefully. The South Ossetia War that took place in August 2008, left Abkhazia and South Ossetia as two Georgian regions with controversial status, also in line with the Russian interests in terms of the geopolitical calculations of Alexander Dugin. This war had allowed Russia, who was forced to make concessions on NATO enlargement, to re-establish its position in the Caucasus, in compliance with Dugin's projection and made it impossible for Georgia to join NATO. However, viewed from this aspect it was also a message to Ukraine as a precursor of what might happen in the future.

From the Ukrainian point of view, Russia's response to NATO enlargement embodied by the war in South Ossetia signaled a greater problem than the disruption of Ukraine's western integration. Apart from the economic and political interdependence, Ukraine and Russia has been involved in socio-cultural interaction since the Tsarist period. This interaction enabled the Russian and Soviet culture to be of great importance in defining the Ukrainian identity. Furthermore, Ukrainian geopolitics continued to bear the traces of these interactions with Russia after the independence of Ukraine. Ukraine aspired to get rid of or smoothen the Russian influence over the Ukrainian national identity in order to succeed in state and nation building process. It was perceived by the pro-western Ukrainian governments that turning to West from the Russian geopolitical axis and adding a pro-western character to Ukrainian identity would make the nation building successful. The political and economic aids of the US and Europe, the economic weakness of Russia and the need for reform in various sectors

in Ukraine laid the foundations for the consolidation of this understanding. Integration with NATO could support reform efforts in Ukraine and encourage the promotion of a separate Ukrainian national identity in the context of NATO's ongoing transformation process and the inclusive programs dedicated to the post-Soviet countries. The governments in Ukraine that were established in the first decade after independence purposed to benefit these indirect effects rather than being a full member of NATO. It should not be forgotten that on the geopolitical background of this situation was the issue of the Black Sea Fleet and the status of Crimea which have not yet been resolved between Russia and Ukraine. Consequently, until the 2000s Ukraine did not have ability to move autonomously from Russia and to detach itself from Russian geopolitical axis suddenly. Instead, Ukraine participated in NATO programs such as PfP under the guise of neutrality and solved the Black Sea Fleet and Crimea issues by using its own and Russia's developing relations with NATO countries as a political leverage.

The settlement of the Black Sea Fleet issue and the Crimean issue enabled Ukraine to act more openly on the NATO integration issue. In 2002, the Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma officially declared Ukraine's ultimate aim of NATO membership. However, both the process of solving the Crimea problem and Russian influence over Ukrainian people formed the weak spot of Ukrainian foreign affairs. Primarily, NATO membership aspirations of the Ukrainian governments never fully shared by the Ukrainian society. In accordance with the geopolitical position between Russia and Europe, the Ukrainian society roughly divided as the nationalist pro-western Western and Central Ukraine, and pro-Russian Eastern Ukraine and Crimea. This division manifested itself in almost all kinds of social events such as elections and protests, including support for NATO integration. This can be considered as a direct result of the Russian influence over the Ukrainian identity. When Russia's lease of port facilities in Sevastopol for 25 years and correspondingly Russia's right of possession of the troops in Crimea were added to the scenario it was an undeniable fact that Ukraine's NATO integration had many internal and external risks. Societal dissidence on NATO integration could be attempted to overcome to some extend by the programs aiming to raise awareness about NATO activities. First sections of NATO-Ukraine Annual Target Plans specifically focused on the electoral, judicial and political reforms in the process of NATO integration to improve the fundamental rights and freedoms of the Ukrainian society. It was thought that, Ukrainian people, who saw the social benefits of NATO integration, would eventually favor the NATO membership of Ukraine. Correspondingly, the public support for

NATO integration of was evaluated with the opinion polls of think tanks on regional and country basis in this process. Nevertheless, as the country hosting Russia's gateway to the Black Sea, external outcomes of Ukraine's membership to NATO would be grave for Russia.

After the 2008 South Ossetian War, pro-western government in Ukraine gained an insight about the type of price to be paid for NATO membership. Existing personal disputes between the then President Victor Yuschenko and the then Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, Russia's threat to cut Ukrainian gas supply, failure on European integration and domestic problems in Ukraine caused an administration change in Ukraine. Pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovych, who took over the Presidency in 2010, initiated neo-Soviet practices including cultural Russification, restriction of the individual rights of citizens, selective prosecution of oppositional elements, along with signing the controversial Kharkiv Pact. The Kharkiv Pact led to critical geopolitical consequences for Ukraine by extending the lease period for the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol until 2042. This agreement only provided reduced gas prices and implied geopolitical capitulation for Ukraine, while it was eventfully approved in the Ukrainian parliament.

Yanukovych era practices placed Ukraine into Russian geopolitical orbit in an unprecedented manner since its independence. The Kharkiv Pact was not the only indication of this trend, further, the Euro-integration efforts of the Ukrainian governments were affected adversely. With a legislation granted non-aligned status for Ukraine in June 2010, NATO integration and eventual membership goal, which was adopted by the previous pro-western governments, were removed from Ukraine's foreign policy priorities. Ukraine remained in NATO programs as the only non-member state who participated in wide range of NATO activities. However, the Yanukovych government banned the NATO drills and exercises over Ukrainian territory. Despite the domestic developments in the country, NATO's Chicago Summit in 2012 was an indication that the hope for the Ukraine's Euro-integration goal was not yet lost. On the basis of the Ukrainian contribution to NATO missions and its progress towards the integration, NATO signaled that NATO's doors remained open to Ukraine and underlined the need for Ukraine to adopt democratic attitude against the political prosecutions in the country.

Ukraine's close cooperation with the EU also interrupted due to the rapprochement with Russia. The reconciliation on the EU Association Agreement and the creation of the Deep

and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, which would also provide visa-free travel to Ukraine, was expected to be achieved by the year of 2011. However, after Putin's emphasis and tacit threats on how the EU Free Trade Agreement would harm Ukraine's trade ties with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, and the assurance on the reduction in natural gas prices, Ukraine agreed to sign an agreement aiming to create a free trade area between the members of the CIS. This apparent shift towards the Russian geopolitical axis and authoritarian tendencies displaying itself with the elimination of opposition in politics have led to the questioning of the Ukraine's commitment to the EU values and principles. The EU postponed the finalization of the Association Agreement to the period after the parliamentary elections in October 2012.

It is not a coincidence that the series of events that led to the domestic instability in Ukraine was initiated over the EU Association Agreement not due to the abandoning of the NATO integration goal. Public support for the EU integration had always been more than the support for NATO integration. This was related to the fact that economic, political and social acquisitions of the EU integration met the expectations of the Ukrainian public more appropriately. The year of 2013 was the year when the EU Association Agreement would be finalized, and Ukraine would begin to reap the benefits of the EU integration. However, the European Union, who made more efforts to conclude the Association Agreement, aimed to ensure democratic reforms on election and judiciary system and termination of political prosecutions against the opposition rather than securing the economic recovery of Ukraine. Ukraine, on the other hand, had remained in a deadlock because of the pro-Russian policies of Yanukovych on Tymoshenko's imprisonment and the economic, cultural and political pressure of Russia on the EU integration. In the course of events, signing of the EU Association Agreement, which was postponed once again until November 2013, was cancelled by the cabinet decision on November 21st. The demonstrations, which started in the following days in Independence Square (Maidan Nezalezhnosti) in Kiev, demanded the signing of the EU Association Agreement as well as Ukrainian people's need for democratic institutions and regulations. The demonstrations, which continued with up to one million participants, shaped a political movement demanding more than the Euro-integration and became the symbol of the uprising of the people against the authoritarian rule in Ukraine.

The emergent social movement, which took the name of Revolution of Dignity, was interpreted as the civilizational choice of Ukraine by the international public. In February

2014, the process that began with the Yanukovych's flee from Ukraine and taking refuge in the Russian Federation led to the approval of Ukraine's civilizational choice by international organizations, particularly the EU and NATO, as well as resulting in Russia's intervention in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. However, Russia's intervention was not directly related to Yanukovych's loss of authority in Ukraine or to the demands of the Ukrainian people for the EU Association Agreement. The main motivation of Russia's actions in Ukraine is that this civilizational choice of Ukraine would make Ukraine sooner or later a member state of NATO, NATO troops and the US ballistic missiles would possibly deploy in the territory of Ukraine and NATO ships would eventually dock in the port of Sevastopol. These possibilities, voiced by Putin himself, were the main reason behind the Russian actions in Ukraine. Furthermore, the Russian anxiety was nourished by NATO's enlargement towards Russia and the potential installation of ballistic missile equipment into Czech Republic and Poland, despite the objections expressed by the Russian Federation who was in cooperation with NATO since the end of the Cold War.

Under these circumstances, annexation of Crimea and destabilization of Eastern Ukraine was a strategic necessity for Russia, driven by the geopolitical calculations rather than Russia's hostile approach to people in Ukraine. Russian actions were the methods to halt the possible NATO expansion over Ukraine in two respects. Primarily, they made Ukraine's NATO membership structurally impossible by making the status of Crimea questionable and supporting separatist movements in Eastern Ukraine. Secondly, they aimed to reduce the geopolitical importance of Ukraine in the presence of the Allies by setting the unstable Eastern Ukraine as a buffer zone between the territory under the control of Ukrainian government and Russia and by annexing the geopolitically valuable Crimea. The Putin administration established control over Crimea and annexed it to Russia by a referendum through a strategy called hybrid war, which is a combination of tactics such as conventional, cyber, irregular warfare, intense propaganda and electoral intervention and denied Russia's attachment with the developments in Eastern Ukraine. As complement to geopolitical actions, Crimea's annexation to Russia was legitimized by various discursive tools in the national and international public opinion. These attempts, which kept NATO's promises during the German unification in the background, are mainly based on the donation of Crimea to Ukraine the presence of the historic Russian Black Sea Fleet in Crimea, the protection of the rights of ethnic Russians and the Russian-speaking population and self-determination rights of the people in the region.

The annexation of Crimea could not find a military response on the Ukrainian side. Along with the fact that Russian covert operations and the number of Russian troops and ammunition, demographic characteristics of Crimea made the Ukrainian military intervention impossible. According to Population Census conducted in 2001, Russians constituted the majority in Crimea with 58.5 per cent of the total population. Developments in Eastern and Southern Ukraine, on the other hand, followed a slightly different course. In the spring following the annexation of the Crimea, Russia supported the occupation of official buildings in Donetsk and Luhanks regions and provoked pro-Russian communities in other regions against the Ukrainian administration. In regions such as Odessa, Kharkiv, Kherson, Mykolaiv, Zaporizhia, Dnipropetrovsk separatist movements were mainly intercepted by the local people in consequence of lack of direct Russian involvement. However, irregular warfare tactics in Donbas responded with ATO by the Ukrainian government. Anti-Terrorist Operations was launched with several complications due to the pro-Russian elements in the army, but in short period of time it was supported by the patriotic Ukrainian citizens. Volunteer battalions created within the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior, along with other volunteers, who did not participate in the troops, engaged in activities such as providing financial aid, food, cloth, medical supply for soldiers and repairing military equipment.

The annexation of Crimea and the war in Eastern Ukraine changed Ukraine's geopolitics radically. Although its political status is controversial in the international arena, Crimea is no longer a Ukrainian territory. In Eastern Ukraine, ATO started to be called as national security measures against the armed aggression of the Russian Federation in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, by changing its name as of February 2018. This development officially confirmed that the situation in Eastern Ukraine was a war beyond terrorism. The war has also made an unprecedented contribution to the national identity building in Ukraine that leading to the emergence of patriotic reflexes among the Ukrainian people in all parts of the country. This was the patriotic reflection standing on the shoulder of the Euromaidan's influence on the people of Ukraine. The developments started with Euromaidan, the annexation of Crimea and the war in the east, became the symbol of the price that Ukraine paid for its pro-western geopolitical orientation, freedom and independence, and consolidated the idea of the unity of the Ukrainian nation. The idea of unity was strengthened by the Day of Commemoration of the Heavenly Hundred on February 20th which is dedicated by Poroshenko to honor the

memory of those who killed in the Euromaidan protests for the pro-western civilizational choice of Ukraine.

Within the election of Petro Poroshenko as the President of Ukraine in 2014, Ukraine on the one hand struggled to outmaneuver the pro-Russian forces in the east; on the other hand, took necessary steps to fulfill the Euro-integration goal of Ukraine. NATO membership was the primary target in this process. The abandonment of the non-bloc policy, the reform of the armed forces by increasing its operational capacities, the fight against corruption and the adoption of NATO membership as the strategic foreign policy goal were the endorsements of this objective. For the first time in the history of Ukraine, the pro-western parties formed the majority in eastern and southern regions, the Communist Party not being represented in the parliament after the 2014 parliamentary elections. The fact that the popular support for NATO membership was at its highest level in its history in 2017, gave the signals of the need for NATO for national security as well as the displaying the progress in the building a pro-western national identity in Ukraine.

The geopolitical changes created by the developments in Ukraine are not limited to Ukrainian territory. NATO's developing relations with Russia were severely damaged in this process. Cooperation under the NATO-Russia Council, which was founded in 2002, was suspended in 2014 because of Russia's illegal military actions in Ukraine. With the idea that Russia's aggressive stance could be extended to European countries by spreading beyond the borders of Ukraine, NATO organized its defense posture and formed multinational battle groups in Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia and Poland. Furthermore, according to NATO, Russia's current support for the regime in Syria and the case of Skripal poisoning in the UK are the extensions of Russia's aggressive stance on NATO's borders.

From another point of view, what happened in Ukraine is not simply a cause or result, but a part of the geopolitical struggle between NATO and Russia since the Cold War. This struggle will continue on different geographies in the future as in the past. However, what makes the example of Ukraine valuable in terms of my subject is that this geopolitical struggle is consistent with Ukraine's internal dynamics. The political, social and economic transformations that Ukraine has undergone since its independence can become meaningful in the context of Ukraine's relations with Russia and NATO. NATO integration, which can

be interpreted as the sign of Ukraine's civilizational choice, is above all, related to the Ukraine's geopolitical character and is much more complex than a foreign policy choice.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY /TÜRKÇE ÖZET

UKRAYNA'NIN NATO ENTEGRASYONU VE JEOPOLİTİK ÇIKARIMLAR

Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesi ve Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılması ile birlikte Ukrayna bağımsız bir ülke olarak pek çok sorunla karşı karşıya kaldı. Bu sorunların başında uluslararası toplumu yakından ilgilendiren Sovyetler Birliği'nden arda kalan nükleer ve konvansiyonel varlıkların tasfiyesinin yanı sıra devlet kurumlarının Soğuk Savaş sonrası döneme uygun olarak yeniden düzenlenmesi ve ulus inşası süreci gelmekteydi. Ukrayna 1990 tarihli Devlet Egemenliği Beyannamesi ve 1991 tarihli Bağımsızlık Bildirisi'nde açıkça belirttiği üzere bu sorunları kendi kaderini tayin hakkı ve toprak bütünlüğünü saklı tutarak, ulusal ve kültürel toparlanmayı sağlayarak, ülkeyi her türlü nükleer silah ve varlıklardan arındırarak, sürekli tarafsız devlet statüsünde ancak Avrupa yapılarına doğrudan katılım sağlayarak çözeceğini beyan etmişti. Ukrayna'nın bu beyanı esasında egemen bir güç olarak uluslararası ortamda başka devletler tarafından tanınmak ve kendi ulusal çıkarları doğrultusunda diğer devletlerle eşit ilişkiler kurabilmek amacına yönelikti. Bu doğrultuda bağımsızlık sonrası Ukrayna'da toparlanma ve Sovyet sonrası dönüşüm ekonomik ya da politik reformlardan daha ziyade ulus ve devlet inşası ve güvenlik meselelerinin çözümüne odaklandı. Nükleer ve konvansiyonel varlıkların tasfiyesi, kurumların demokratikleştirilmesi, serbest piyasa ekonomisine geçiş konusunda ABD başta olmak üzere Ukrayna pek çok batılı ülkeden ve uluslararası örgütlerden finansal, teknik ve politik destek aldı.

Ulus inşası ve Ukrayna'nın egemen güç statüsü nükleer varlıkların tasfiyesinden sonra bile Ukrayna iç ve dış politikasında tartışmalı birer konu olarak varlığını sürdürdü. Bunun temelde iki önemli sebebi vardı. İlki Ukrayna'nın Çarlık İmparatorluğu ve Sovyet dönemlerinde Rusya ile iç içe geçmiş kültürü ve tarihinin Ukrayna ulusal kimliğini devletin bağımsızlığına kadar biçimlendirmiş olmasıydı. Modern anlamda bir ulus konseptinin bulunmadığı Ukrayna'da halk kendini Çarlık ve Sovyet dönemlerindeki kimlik politikalarına uygun olarak Rus kültürel üstünlüğünü işaret eden "Küçük Rus" ve Sovyet kimlikleriyle

tanımlamaktaydı. Kültürel üstünlüğü sebebiyle etnik Ukraynalılarca benimsenen Küçük Rus kimliği Çarlık dönemi Ruslaştırma ve Pan-Slavizm politikalarının bir ürünü iken, nostaljik bir eğilim olarak Komünist Parti destekçisi yaşlı nüfusta gözlemlenen Sovyet kimliği Sovyetleştirme ve Ruslaştırma politikalarının sonucuydu. Her iki kimlik de tarihsel süreç içerisinde Ukrayna kimliğine entegre olmuş ve onun Rusya etkisinden bağımsız bir ayrı kimlik oluşturmasını engellemişti. Benimsenen kimlikler Rusya'ya coğrafi yakınlığa göre bölgesel farklılıklar sergilemekle birlikte Rus dilinin kullanımı alışkanlıkları ile etkileşim içerisindeydi. Ulusal kimliğin devlet ülkesi ve devlet ülkesinin dışı arasında net bir ayrım belirten, inşa edilebilir, değişken, etnik, dini, bölgesel aidiyetleri tek bir ulus aidiyeti fikrine bağlayan bir unsur olduğu düşünüldüğünde ulus inşasının başarısı için bu bölgesel farklılıklar ve yerel bağlılıklar sergileyen, Rus dilinin kullanımına göre şekillenen çoklu kimliklerin Ukrayna ulus kimliğine aktarılması gerekliydi. Rusya ile iç içe geçmiş tarihi, kültürü ve coğrafi sınırları sebebiyle Ukrayna ulusal kimliğinin inşa edilebilmesinin tek yolu ona Rus etkisinden bağımsız bir gelişme olanağı sağlamaktı. Bu noktada bağımsızlık sonrası Ukrayna hükümetleri ülkenin jeopolitik yönelimini değiştirmenin Rusya'dan ziyade Batı'ya yönelmenin ulus ve devlet inşasını tamamlamak için gerekli alanı yaratacağı fikrini paylaştılar. Ancak bağımsızlık sonrası Ukrayna'nın jeopolitik yöneliminin karakteri, jeopolitik yönelimin Ukrayna halkında ve Rusya'da bulacağı karşılık Ukrayna'nın ulus inşası sürecinin temel problemini oluşturmaktaydı. Ukrayna Devlet Egemenliği Beyannamesinde ve Bağımsızlık Bildirisinde işaret edildiği ölçüde bu problem Ukrayna'yı sürekli bağımsız ülke statüsü altında askeri yapılardan muaf tutarak, Avrupa yapılarına katılım sağlayarak ve ülkenin ulusal değerlerini yeniden inşa ederek aşılmaya çalışıldı.

Ülkenin egemen güç statüsüne muhalefet eden durum ise Ukrayna'nın kimlik problemlerinin gölgesinde çözüme ulaştırılamamış sınır sorunlarıydı. Bu sınır sorunları özerk bir bölge olan Kırım'daki Rus Karadeniz Filosu ve Karadeniz Filosunun Sivastopol'deki bulunma haklarıyla ilgiliydi. Ukrayna'nın egemen güç statüsü en başta Rusya ile sınır sorunlarını barışçıl yollardan ve ülkenin toprak bütünlüğünü ihlal etmeden çözümlemesine bağlıydı. Ancak Ukrayna topraklarında bulunan Rus Karadeniz Donanması aynı zamanda ülkenin egemenlik hakları açısından ciddi bir çelişkiyi de bünyesinde barındırmaktaydı. Kırım'da Rusya'nın bulunma haklarının tanınmaması neticede Kırım'ın kimlik özellikleri de hesaba katıldığında bölgenin kaybıyla sonuçlanacak olan sınır sorunlarını geniş bir zaman dilimine yayabilir, Rusya'nın bulunma haklarının tanınması ise Rus askeri varlığını bölgede meşru

kıldığından olası bir savaş durumunda Ukrayna açısından jeopolitik bir felakete yol açabilirdi.

Ulus inşası ve dış politika sorunlarının iç içe geçtiği bu ortamda NATO ile partnerlik Ukrayna'nın Avrupa yapılarına katılım amacının kazançlı bir yoluydu ve ilerleyen dönemlerde Ukrayna'nın Avrupa tercihinin sembolü haline geldi. Sürekli tarafsızlık statüsü altında NATO ile kurulacak yakın ilişkiler ülkenin Sovyet sonrası dönüşümünün ve ulus inşasının batı yanlısı bir çizgide gerçekleşmesini sağlayabilirken öte yandan Kırım ve Karadeniz Donanması sorununun adil ve barışçıl yollardan çözümü konusunda Rusya'ya baskı yapabilirdi. 2002 yılında Kuçma Hükümeti NATO entegrasyon hedefini resmi olarak açıklayana kadar Ukrayna'nın NATO ile yakın ilişkilerden beklentisi Rusya ile yaşanabilecek güvenlik sorunlarının en aza indirgenmesi, bir Avrupa güvenlik yapısı olarak NATO'nun Ukrayna'ya sunacağı çerçevede ülkedeki reform hareketlerini tamamlamak ve toplumun kültürel dönüşümünü sağlamaktı. Bu doğrultuda Ukrayna 1992 yılında çok uluslu bir forum olan ve Soğuk Savaş sonrası Avrupa'daki güvenlik sorunlarının çözümüne odaklanan Kuzey Atlantik İşbirliği Konseyi'ne, 1994 yılında NATO üyesi olmayan ülkelerin askeri kapasitelerinin iyileştirilmesini ve Balkanlardaki güvenlik sorunlarına müdahale edilmesini amaçlayan Barış İçin Ortaklık Programına katıldı.

Ukrayna'nın NATO ile kurduğu ilişkiler aynı zamanda ABD'nin Soğuk Savaş sonrası bölgeye yönelik jeopolitik çıkarları ile ilişkiliydi. Soğuk Savaş'ın bitimi Soğuk Savaş dönemi çevreleme stratejisinin bir ürünü olan NATO'nun varlık sebebi konusunda geniş çaplı bir tartışma başlattı. 1990 yılındaki Almanya'nın yeniden birleşmesi görüşmeleri esnasında Amerikan Başkanı George Bush ve Alman Şansölyesi Helmut Kohl ABD'nin bölgedeki askeri varlığının Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde NATO şemsiyesi altında sürmesi gerektiğinden hareketle Birleşik Almanya'nın NATO yapılarına entegre edilmesi kararını aldılar. Bu karar Sovyetler Birliği Devlet Başkanı Mihail Gorbaçov tarafından bölgedeki Sovyet çıkarlarını tehlikeye atabileceği gerekçesiyle olumlu karşılanmadı. Gorbaçov Almanya'nın tarafsız ve askerden arındırılmış bir şekilde birleşmesi gerektiğini, NATO yapılarına entegre olan bir Almanya'nın silahlanacağını ve bunun aynı zamanda NATO genişlemesini tetikleyeceğini öngörüyordu. Bu hususta ABD Dışişleri Bakanı James Baker Gorbaçov'a Birleşmiş Almanya'nın NATO yapılarına dahil edilmesi durumunda NATO'nun yetki alanının Almanya'nın doğusuna bir adım bile ilerlemeyeceği yönünde güvenlik garantileri verdi. Almanya'nın yeniden birleşmesi görüşmelerinin yarattığı olumlu

diplomatik atmosfer içerisinde aynı yılın Temmuz ayındaki Londra Zirvesi'nde NATO, Doğu Avrupa ülkeleri ve Sovyetler Birliği'ni NATO ile işbirliği yapmaya yönlendirecek bir dönüşümün temelini atmış oldu. Bu zirve doğu-batı ilişkilerinde bir dönüm noktası olarak adlandırılmakla birlikte George Bush tarafından ifade edildiği şekliyle Sovyetler Birliği'ni kışkırtmadan Doğu Avrupa ülkeleri ve NATO arasında bir köprü kurma fikrine yönelikti. 1991 yılında önce Varşova Paktı'nın ve ardından Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılması Doğu Avrupa ve eski Sovyet ülkelerinin NATO ile işbirliğini daha da kolaylaştırdı. Bölgedeki güvenlik sorunlarını çözmek için kurulan ve üye olmayan bölge ülkelerini NATO mekanizmalarına dahil eden Kuzey Atlantik İşbirliği Konseyi NATO'nun Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemdeki dönüşümünün ve varlık sebebini meşru kılmanın ilk ifadesiydi. Ancak Bill Clinton'un 1993 yılında Amerikan Başkanı seçilmesiyle birlikte ABD'nin bölge ülkelerinin ve NATO'nun dönüşümüne yönelik daha ayrıntılı stratejileri gün yüzüne çıkmış oldu.

Clinton döneminde ABD'nin üç temel dış politika önceliği mevcuttu. Buna göre ABD, öncelikle Soğuk Savaş döneminde yapılan askeri harcamaları günün şartlarına göre azaltarak ülke sınırları içerisindeki ekonomik kalkınmayı sağlayacak ve orduyu Soğuk Savaş sonrası dinamiklere göre modernize edecekti. Bunu sağladıktan sonra komünist yapılarını dönüştürmeye çalışan eski doğu bloğu ve Sovyet ülkeleriyle etkin ekonomik ilişkiler kuracak ve Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde ortaya çıkan yeni güvenlik sorunları ve tehditlere demokrasi ve insan haklarını teşvik ederek müdahale edecekti. Bu üç temel dış politika önceliğini bir noktada buluşturan en temel mücadele Rusya'nın Sovyet sonrası reform sürecine yardımcı olmaktı. ABD, Rusya'daki reformların etkisiyle kendi nükleer varlıklarını sınırlandıracak, askeri harcamaların azaltılmasıyla kendi ekonomisini ve ordusunu revize edecek ve bu sayede dağılan Yugoslavya'da yaşandığı gibi güvenlik sorunlarına müdahale edebilecekti. Amerika'nın dış politika önceliklerindi gerçekleştirmeye yönelik bir öneri olan NATO'nun Barış İçin Ortaklık programı Amerika'nın Yugoslavya'daki sorunlara düşük maliyetli müdahalesini sağlarken bir yandan da bölge ülkelerinin demokratik dönüşümlerini ve aralarındaki işbirliği ilişkilerini geliştirmeyi amaçlamaktaydı. ABD Genelkurmay Başkanı John Şalikaşvili tarafından kamuoyuna tanıtılan Barış İçin Ortaklık Programı, ABD Dışişleri Bakanı Warren Christopher tarafından yeni ve güvenli bir Avrupa kurmanın Rusya, Ukrayna, Polonya Macaristan ve diğer yeni demokrasilerin NATO ile işbirliği içerisinde barışı korumak için çalışmasından daha iyi bir yolu olamayacağı sözleriyle teşvik edildi.

Program bu doğrultuda Orta ve Doğu Avrupa ülkelerinin ordularının barış koruma ve kriz çözme kapasitelerinin geliştirilerek modernize edilmesi, bu sayede Bosna Savaşı'na müdahale edilmesi fırsatını sağlarken, aynı zamanda olası bir NATO genişlemesi için bu orduların değerlendirilmesi olanağı sunmaktaydı. NATO genişlemesi Soğuk Savaş döneminde jeopolitik kaygılarla yönlendirilen ve devletlerin askeri kapasitelerinden çok coğrafi konumlarıyla ilgili bir dinamik iken Clinton dönemi dış politika ilkelerine göre Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde ABD'nin askeri yükünü hafifletme amacı da taşımalıydı. Bu noktada Barış İçin Ortaklık programına Ukrayna ve Rusya'nın katılımı hem taraflar arasındaki işbirliğini güçlendirerek bu ülkelerin ordularının da modernize edilmesini sağlayacak, hem de NATO'nun dönüşümü ve olası genişleme stratejisinde Rusya ve Ukrayna'nın itirazları minimuma indirgenecekti. Bu iki ülkenin programa katılımı NATO'nun karar alma mekanizmalarından dışlanmadıklarının bir göstergesi olmalıydı. Hem Rusya hem de Ukrayna 1994 yılında Barış İçin Ortaklık Programına katılarak önce Bosna, daha sonra Kosova'daki barış koruma operasyonlarında görev aldılar.

1995 yılında yayımlanan NATO'nun Genişleme Çalışması NATO'nun varlık sebebi ve olası genişlemesi konusundaki tartışmaları bir kenara bırakarak genişlemenin nasıl olacağı ve hangi devletleri kapsayacağı fikrine odaklanılmasını sağladı. Bu çalışma Rusya'nın Avrupa güvenliğindeki öncelikli konumunu kabul ederken, genişlemeye yönelik Rusya itirazlarını önlemek amacıyla hiçbir üye olmayan devletin NATO kararlarını veto edemeyeceği ilkesini onayladı. Çalışmanın etnik, bölgesel ve yetkisel anlaşmazlıkların barışçıl yollarla çözüme ulaştırılmadığı takdirde ülkelerin üyelik başvurularının değerlendirilemeyeceği maddesi ise, NATO kararlarını veto etme yolu kapalı olan Rusya'nın ilerleyen dönemlerde kendi jeopolitik çıkarlarını meşrulaştırırken kullanacağı bir zafiyeti halini alacaktı.

Rusya'nın politik güçsüzlüğünden faydalanan ABD liderliğinde NATO, Temmuz 1997 Madrid Zirvesi'nde Polonya, Macaristan ve Çek Cumhuriyeti'ni 1999 yılına kadar bünyesine katarak, Soğuk Savaş sonrası ilk genişlemesini gerçekleştirme kararı aldı. Madrid Zirvesi kararları ABD'nin NATO genişlemesini kolaylaştırmaya yönelik 1996 yılında çıkardığı bir yasayla oldukça uyumluydu. NATO bir yandan Doğu Avrupa ülkelerini yapılarına entegre etmek için gerekli adımları atarken, bir yandan da Rusya'nın NATO genişlemesine yönelik olası itirazlarını önlemeyi amaçladı. Buna uygun olarak Madrid Zirvesi öncesi 1997 Mayıs'ında Rusya ile Karşılıklı İlişkiler, İşbirliği ve Güvenliğe Dair Kurucu senet imzalandı. Rusya'nın NATO ile müttefik ilişkilerini geliştirmesinin bir önkoşulu olarak ve kendisine

NATO jeopolitiğinde atfedilen kritik konum sebebiyle NATO ve Ukrayna arasında Madrid Zirvesi'nde imzalanmak üzere Belirgin Ortaklık Şartı Mayıs ayındaki Sintra Zirvesi'nde karara bağlandı.

NATO'nun iki ülke ile geliştirdiği ikili ilişkiler Rusya ve Ukrayna arasında o döneme değin henüz çözülememiş Rus Karadeniz Filosu meselesinin dolaylı yoldan çözümüne sebep oldu. NATO genişlemesi hedefi ve Ukrayna-NATO arasında başlatılan ikili ilişkiler Rusya'yı Ukrayna'nın egemenlik haklarını kendisinin ise Karadeniz Donanması'nın bulunma haklarını bir an önce tanınmasını sağlamaya teşvik etti. Belirgin Ortaklık Şartı'nın karara bağlandığı Sintra Zirvesi'nden hemen önce 28 Mayıs tarihinde, Ukrayna ve Rusya Rusya'nın Karadeniz Donanması'na ilişkin anlaşmaları, 31 Mayıs tarihinde ise Dostluk İşbirliği ve Ortaklık Anlaşması'nı imzaladı. Bu anlaşmalar ile iki ülke birbirlerinin toprak bütünlüğüne saygı duymayı, sınır ihlalinde bulunmamayı, etnik ve kültürel azınlıkların haklarını ve dillerini korumayı taahhüt ederken, Rusya'nın Kırım'da askeri varlığı ve Sivastopol deniz üssünün 20 seneliğine Rusya'ya kiralanması yasal bir zemine oturtulmuş oluyordu. Bir anlamda Ukrayna, NATO ile olan ilişkilerini, bağımsızlığın ilanından bu yana çözülemeyen sorunlarını çözmek amacıyla, Rusya'ya karşı pazarlık kozu olarak kullanırken; Rusya da NATO-Ukrayna ilişkileri derinleşmeden Kırım'daki askeri varlığını garanti altına almaya çalışmıştı.

1997 yılından itibaren Ukrayna ve NATO arasındaki ilişkilerin derinleşmesi ABD jeopolitik çıkarları için de bir gereklilikti. Bu gereklilik Amerikalı stratejist Zbigniew Brzezinski tarafından kapsamlı bir şekilde ifade edildi. Brzezinski'nin Büyük Satranç Tahtası olarak adlandırdığı Avrasya bölgesinin kontrolü, ABD'nin Soğuk Savaş sonrası küresel jeopolitik mücadeledeki üstünlüğünün temel önkoşulu idi. Avrasya bölgesinin kontrolü ancak ABD'nin Avrupa kıtasındaki etkisinin Avrasya'nın iç kesimlerine nüfuz edebilmesine bağlıydı. Brzezinski'ye göre Soğuk Savaş sonrası ABD'nin Avrupa kıtasındaki askeri varlığının meşru yolu olan NATO'nun doğuya doğru genişlemesi Avrasya'daki Amerikan etkisini tesis etmeye yönelik faydalı bir strateji olabilirdi. Ancak NATO genişlemesi gerçekleştirilirken Avrasya kıtasında bağımsız politikalar izleyen ve kıtadaki gücü konsolide eden bir Rusya'nın ortaya çıkmaması gerekiyordu. Bu noktada Brzezinski Ukrayna'ya Avrasya'nın kontrolü stratejisinde kritik bir görev tahsis etmişti. Buna göre, Ukrayna Ortodoks-Slav nüfusu, doğal kaynakları ve Karadeniz'e çıkış kapısı sağlayan jeopolitik konumuyla Soğuk Savaş sonrası jeopolitik düzende Rusya'nın toparlanması için önemli bir unsurdu. Amerikan stratejik

çıkarları açısından Batı etkisi altındaki Ukrayna "imparatorluğun" toparlanmasına fırsat vermeden Rusya'daki post-Sovyet dönüşümünü sağlayabilir ve Rusya'nın Batı'ya çekilmesine hizmet edebilirdi. Dolayısıyla, kendi kurumlarını reforme etmiş bir Ukrayna 2005 ve 2010 yılları arasında NATO üyeliği için hazır hale getirilmeli, Fransa, Almanya ve Polonya ekseninde kurulan Avrupa güvenliğinin Batı'daki çekirdeğine dahil edilmeliydi.

Brzezinski'nin bu tasarıları Rusya'nın ekonomik ve politik olarak pek çok iç ve dış sorunla mücadele ettiği bir dönemin eseriydi. Dolayısıyla Amerika'nın Avrasya bölgedeki jeopolitik çıkarlarının tanımlanması bir anlamda bölgedeki politik boşluğun Rusya'nın toparlanmasına fırsat verilmeden doldurulması anlamına geliyordu. Rusya'nın geçireceği Sovyet sonrası dönüşümün karakteri ve Amerikan jeopolitik tasarılarına ne şekilde yanıt vereceği dönemin dinamikleri açısından çok net olarak kestirilememekteydi. Bu yüzden Brzezinski Amerikan çıkarları açısından Rusya'nın Ukrayna üzerinde kontrol sahibi olmaması ve NATO'nun doğuya doğru genişleme sürecinde Rusya'nın NATO'dan uzaklaşmaması konusunda tavsiyelerde bulunmuştu.

1990'lı yılların başından Vladimir Putin'in iktidara geldiği tarihe kadar, ABD nüfuzuyla NATO bünyesinde alınan kararlar ve bu kararların uygulanış biçimi Brzezinski'nin tasarılarına oldukça paralel gelişme gösterdi. 1990 yılında yeniden birleşen Almanya'nın NATO yapılarına katılmasının ardından, NATO 1999 yılında Polonya, Çek Cumhuriyeti ve Macaristan'ı bünyesine katarak 50. Kuruluş yıl dönümünde ilk Soğuk Savaş sonrası genişlemesini gerçekleştirmiş oldu. Üç Baltık ülkesi ve Ukrayna ise NATO'nun açık kapı politikası yinelenerek ikili diyaloğa davet edildi. Ekonomik sorunları ve politik güçsüzlüğünün gölgesinde NATO karar alma mekanizmalarına etki edemeyen Rusya'daki Yeltsin yönetimi, NATO'nun genişleme hareketlerinin Avrupa'da "soğuk barış" ortamı yarattığını, Baltık ülkelerinin ise genişleme konusunda Rusya'nın kırmızı çizgisi olduğunu ifade etmekle yetinebildi.

Putin'in başkanlık koltuğuna oturmasıyla Rusya'daki rejimin konsolidasyon süreci de başlamış oldu. Rusya Avrasyacılık ekseninde kendi jeopolitik çıkarlarını bölgede ABD karşısında biçimlendirmeye yöneldi. Rusya'nın Avrasyacı ulusal çıkarları neo-Avrasyacı Aleksandr Dugin'in dış politika tasarılarında kapsamlı şekilde yer buldu. Rus stratejist Dugin'e göre, ABD'nin aksine Rusya bir Avrasya gücü, Halford Mackinder'ın betimlediği tarihin jeopolitik ekseni, kalpgahın kendisiydi. Dolayısıyla Rusya'nın Atlantikçilik ve

Avrasyacılık arasında bir tercih yapması söz konusu değildi. Rusya'nın ABD ve NATO bloğuyla kurduğu yakın ilişkiler Rusya açısından geçici bir anomaliydi ve bu anomali Rusya'daki rejimin güçlenmesiyle düzelecekti. Rus jeopolitik çıkarları bu anomalinin düzelmesiyle birlikte Rusya'nın liderliğinde kurulacak Avrasya imparatorluğunun gerekliliğini işaret ediyordu. Avrasya imparatorluğunun kurulması temelde ABD'nin bölge üzerindeki stratejik kontrolünün ve Atlantikçi etkinin reddedilmesini gerekli kılmaktaydı.

Dugin Avrasya imparatorluğunun kurulması ve Rus jeopolitik çıkarlarının tanımlanmasına yönelik pek çok fikir beyan etmekle birlikte, imparatorluğun kurulması yönündeki en büyük engelin bağımsız Ukrayna meselesi olduğunu savunmuştur. Buna göre, Ukrayna bünyesinde pek çok farklı jeopolitik unsur bulundurmanın sonucu olarak ne doğuya ne de batıya tam anlamıyla entegre olamamaktaydı. Bu durum Dugin'e göre Ukrayna'nın içinde Atlantikçi yapılara entegre olmak isteyen jeopolitik unsurlar yaratarak temelde ABD'nin bölgesel stratejisine hizmet etmekteydi. Ukrayna'nın Atlantik yapılarına entegre olması Rusya'nın Karadeniz'e erişimini engelleyerek Rusya'nın Ukrayna'dan Abhazya'ya kadar olan Karadeniz kıyılarında kesintisiz kontrolünü tehlikeye atmaktaydı. Karadeniz üzerinde kesintisiz kontrol diğer bölgelerden farklı olarak Rusya'nın küresel jeopolitik stratejisiyle ilgiliydi ve sonuçta Ukrayna'nın jeopolitik unsurlarına uygun olarak parçalanmasını gerektiriyordu. Bu parçalanma Dugin tarafından jeopolitik olarak Orta Avrupa'ya yönelmiş Batı Ukrayna, bağımsız bir politik kimlik olarak Küçük Rus Orta Ukrayna, Moskova'nın bir müttefiki olarak Doğu Ukrayna ve özel statüsüyle doğrudan Rusya'nın kontrolünde bir Kırım şeklinde ifade edilmişti.

Putin dönemindeki dış politika gelişmeleri Rusya'nın Dugin'in tanımladığı Avrasyacı eksende kendi ulusal çıkarlarını bölge üzerinde meşrulaştırdığını doğrular nitelikteydi. Bir yandan Çeçen sorununu çözüp ekonomik reformlar yapan Rusya, 11 Eylül'ün yaratmış olduğu uluslararası ortamda ABD ve NATO ile yakın ilişkiler kurmaya başladı. ABD'nin Afganistan'daki terörle savaşına insani ve lojistik destek sözü veren Rusya, 2002 yılı Roma Zirvesi'nde NATO-Rusya Konseyi'nin kurulmasını kabul ederek ilişkilerde yeni bir dönemi başlatmış oldu. Rusya, NATO'nun Baltık ülkeleri üzerindeki yeni dalga genişlemesini genişlemeye yönelik kaygıdan ziyade, NATO'nun modası geçmiş güvenlik düzenlemeleri üzerinden eleştirdi. Bu dönemde Rusya, Ukrayna'nın Avrupa yapılarına entegrasyon hedefi konusunda da ılımlı bir dil kullandı. 2002 yılında Ukrayna Devlet Başkanı Leonid Kuçma tarafından resmen ifade edilen NATO üyelik hedefi, Putin tarafından üyelik kararının

neticede Ukrayna ve NATO'ya bağlı olduğu ve ancak iki partneri ilgilendirdiği sözleriyle yorumlandı. Bu Kuçma yönetiminin Rusya'yla kurduğu yakın siyasi ve ekonomik ilişkilerin yanı sıra, Ukrayna iç ve dış politika ortamının yakın bir gelecekte Avrupa kurumlarına entegrasyona imkân sağlamamasıyla da ilgiliydi.

2000'lerden itibaren NATO entegrasyonunu bir dış politika tercihi olarak benimsemesine, ABD ile stratejik ortaklığına, NATO'nun en doğu sınırındaki komşusu Polonya ile oluşturduğu Polonya-Ukrayna Barış Gücü Taburu'na ve NATO'nun Balkanlardaki misyonlarına aktif katılım sağlamasına rağmen Ukrayna Kuçma'nın ikinci başkanlık dönemiyle birlikte Avrupa yöneliminden kopuş eğilimleri sergiledi. Avrupa kurumlarıyla yakın ilişkiler, demokratik ilkelere bağlılık, istikrar ve ulusal çıkarların gözetilmesi, yerini ekonomik ve siyasi kurumlardaki yozlaşma, muhalif unsurların sert bir şekilde bastırılması ve silah kaçakçılığı gibi Kuçma yönetiminin anti demokratik uygulamalarına ve buna bağlı olarak uluslararası imajın düşmesi ve politik izolasyona bıraktı. 2000 yılında açığa çıkan Kuçmagate Skandalı, muhalif gazeteci Heorhiy Gongadze'nin öldürülmesi, Ukrayna yönetiminin seçim usulsüzlükleri, kara para aklama, devlet hazinesinin ve otoritenin kötüye kullanımı, BM yaptırımlarına aykırı olarak dönemin Irak hükümetine Kolchuga erken uyarı radar sistemi satışı yapılması gibi pek çok usulsüzlüğü ve skandalın üstünün örtülmesi için yapılan anti-demokratik uygulamaları uluslararası kamuoyu nezdinde gözler önüne serdi. Öyle ki ABD hükümeti Ukrayna'ya yaptığı bütün mali desteği dondurduğunu açıklarken, NATO müttefikleri NATO-Ukrayna Eylem Planı'nın görüşüleceği 2002 Prag Zirvesi'ne Kuçma'nın olası katılımından duydukları rahatsızlıkları dile getirmişlerdir. Zirveye katılımı üzerine Kuçma'nın İngiliz alfabetik sıralamasına göre yapılan oturma düzeninde ABD ile Birleşik Krallık arasına oturmasını engellemek amacıyla, NATO tarihinde ilk defa oturma düzeni Fransız alfabetik sıralamasına göre yapıldı. Kuçmagate ile başlayan bu süreç Ukrayna'nın Batı'ya yönelme odaklı dış politikasından kopuşu ve Rus jeopolitik ekseniyle yeniden bütünleşmesini sembolize etmekteydi. 2003 yılında Kuçma Batı'dan kopuşun bir başka göstergesi olarak, Vladimir Putin tarafından Bağımsız Devletler Topluluğunun Rus olmayan ilk dönem başkanı seçildi ve BDT'nin en büyük ekonomileri olan Rusya, Ukrayna, Kazakistan ve Belarus arasında serbest ticaret bölgesi kurulması yönünde taleplerde bulundu.

2005 yılında Batı yanlısı lider Viktor Yuşçenko'nun Turuncu Devrim sonrası iktidara gelmesi Ukrayna'nın Rus yanlısı jeopolitik eğilimlerini tersine çeviren bir gelişme oldu. Yuşçenko 2005 yılında NATO-Ukrayna Konseyi'nde yapığı konuşmasında Ukrayna

halkının Avrupa geleceğinin NATO ile bağların kuvvetlendirilmesinden ayrı düşünülemeyeceğini belirterek ülkenin Avrupa-Atlantik hedeflerini yinelerken, NATO ile Yoğunlaştırılmış Diyalog çerçevesinde ülkenin medya özgürlüğü, seçim ve yargı süreçleri, silahların denetlenmesi, güvenlik ve savunma politikalarında reform ve kamuoyunu NATO üyeliği konusunda bilinçlendirme çalışmaları yapmayı taahhüt etti. Ukrayna'nın NATO entegrasyon hedeflerinin Rusya Ukrayna ilişkileri açısından birtakım sonuçlar doğuracağının ilk işaretleri ise Rusya'nın Ukrayna'ya karşı retoriğinin sertleşmesiyle verilmiş oldu. 2006 Riga Zirvesi'nde NATO Genel Sekreteri Scheffer tarafından Ukrayna ve Gürcistan için her an başlayabileceği açıklanan Üyelik Eylem Planı, Rus yanlısı unsurların Kırım'ı "NATO'suz bölge" ilan ederek, NATO'nun Haziran ayında bölgede yapacağı Deniz Esintisi tatbikatını önlemeye yönelik Amerikan ve NATO karşıtı eylemlerine zemin hazırladı. Bölgedeki Rus vatandaşlarının haklarının Rusya-Ukrayna ilişkileri açısından önemini belirten Rus Dışişleri bakanı Sergey Lavrov Ukrayna'nın NATO entegrasyonunun dünya jeopolitiğinde muazzam bir yön değişimi yaratacağı konusunda Ukrayna ve NATO'yu uyardı. NATO'nun Deniz Esintisi tatbikatının Rus yanlısı unsurlarca sabote edilerek iptal edilmesi, Rusya'nın Ukrayna üzerinde yarattığı enerji teminine yönelik baskı, vaat edilen reformların gerçekleştirilememesi ve NATO entegrasyonuna yönelik düşük kamuoyu desteği, 2006 Riga Zirvesi'nde Ukrayna'ya Üyelik Eylem Planı'nın sunulmamasına sebep olurken, NATO Genel Sekreteri, NATO'nun açık kapı politikasını yineleyerek, nihai kararın Ukrayna halkının tercihlerine ve ülkenin politik yönelimine bağlı olduğunu açıkladı.

2008 Bükreş Zirvesi için NATO Üyelik Eylem Planı teklifi Ukrayna ve Gürcistan için mümkün kılınırken, Rusya bu tarihten itibaren NATO genişlemesine yönelik ılımlı tutumu bir kenara bırakarak, NATO'nun Avrupa'da yaratmaya çalıştığı güvenlik ortamını açıkça eleştirmeye yöneldi. Putin'in 2007 Münih Güvenlik Konferansı konuşması bu anlamda NATO kararlarına duyulan şüphenin bir göstergesi oldu ve Rusya'nın bölgedeki çıkarlarının konsolide edilmesine yönelik birtakım söylemleri de beraberinde getirdi. Buna göre NATO'nun genişlemesi Rusya'ya Almanya'nın yeniden birleşmesi sırasında verilen güvenlik taahhütlerine aykırı bir gelişme olarak Batı ve Rusya arasındaki karşılıklı güveni ihlal eden ciddi bir provokasyondu. NATO genişlemesinin yarattığı güvenlik endişelerinin dikkate alınmadığını belirten Rusya yönetimi, 2008 Bükreş Zirvesi'ndeki genişleme ihtimaline paralel olarak 1995 Genişleme Çalışmasındaki etnik, bölgesel ve yetkisel anlaşmazlıkların barışçıl yollarla çözüme ulaştırılmadığı takdirde ülkelerin üyelik başvurularının kabul edilmemesi ilkesini devreye soktu. ABD, Baltık ülkeleri ve Polonya

tarafından kararlılıkla desteklenen Üyelik Eylem Planı'nın Ukrayna ve Gürcistan'a teklif edilmesinin Almanya, Fransa, İtalya gibi ittifakın önemli üyelerince reddi, NATO ülkeleri arasında eski-yeni Avrupa kamplaşması yaratırken Rusya uzun zamandır çeşitli politik uygulamalarla donmuş çatışmaları teşvik ettiği Gürcistan'ın iki bölgesi Abhazya ve Güney Osetya'nın statüsünü tartışmalı hale getirerek ülkenin Üyelik Eylem Planı hedeflerini yapısal olarak imkansız kıldı. Bu durum aynı zamanda NATO'nun Aralık ayındaki Dışişleri Bakanları Zirvesi'nde Üyelik Eylem Planı daveti için lobi faaliyetleri yürüten Yuşçenko'ya da bir uyarı niteliğindeydi. Hem NATO hem de Ukrayna yönetimi Üyelik Eylem Planı'nın beraberinde getireceği jeopolitik sonuçlara hazır olmadıklarının bilincinde olarak, Ukrayna-NATO ilişkilerinin 2010 yılına kadar Yıllık Ulusal Planlar çerçevesinde kalması hususunda anlaştılar.

2010 yılındaki seçim sonucunda başkanlık koltuğuna oturan Rus yanlısı lider Viktor Yanukoviç ülkenin Batı yanlısı yönelimini tamamen değiştirecek birtakım eylemlere imza atmaya başladı. Rus Donanmasının Sivastopol'deki bulunma süresini 25 yıllığına uzatan Kharkiv Anlaşmalarını süresi dolmadan yineleyen Yanukoviç, onayladığı bir yasayla ülkenin NATO üyelik hedeflerini resmi olarak terk edildiğini açıkladı. Yanukoviç'in uyguladığı Rus yanlısı siyasal ve kültürel politikalar, Batı yanlısı unsurların bastırılması, eski Başbakan Yuliya Timoşenko'nun tutuklanması, adalet sistemindeki yozlaşma ve son olarak 2013 Kasım ayında görüşülecek olan AB Ortaklık Anlaşması'nın reddi, ülkenin jeopolitik yönelimine, tarafsızlığını kaybeden ve yozlaşan baskıcı yönetime karşı bir halk hareketine sebep oldu. Euromaidan olarak anılan bu muazzam protesto hareketi ülkenin en büyük jeopolitik felaketi olarak anılabilecek olan Rusya'nın Kırım'ı ilhakı ve Doğu Ukrayna'daki Rus yanlısı unsurların ülkenin jeopolitik yönelimi konusunda kışkırtılarak desteklenmesine ve ayrılıkçı hareketlerin ortaya çıkmasına sebep oldu.

Uluslararası kamuoyunda geniş yankı uyandıran Kırım'ın ilhakı ve Doğu Ukrayna'daki askeri çatışmalar, Ukrayna, Rusya ve NATO açısından farklı bir takım ciddi jeopolitik sonuçlar doğurdu. Öncelikle Ukrayna açısından Euromaidan ve sonrasında Batı yanlısı lider Petro Poroşenko'nun iktidara gelmesi Ukrayna'nın Avrupa yanlısı jeopolitik yönelime geri dönüşüne işaret etti. Poroşenko'nun öncülüğünde Ukrayna, Yanukoviç'in terk ettiği NATO entegrasyon hedefi resmi olarak yeniden benimsendi ve güvenlik ve savunma alanında reformlar başlatıldı. Rus nüfusun yoğun olduğu Kırım ve çoğunluğu Rus yanlısı Ukraynalılardan oluşan Donbas bölgesinin kaybı ülkenin geri kalanının NATO

entegrasyonuna verdiği desteği artırdığı gibi, Ukrayna ulusal kimliğinin inşa sürecine büyük bir katkı yapmış oldu. Ancak Kırım ve Donbas'ın kaybı ülkenin yakın bir gelecekte NATO üyeliğine kabul edilmesi ihtimalini de ortadan kaldırmıştır. Ukrayna'daki reformlara katkı sağlamak isteyen NATO, Ukrayna'nın askeri kapasite geliştirme programlarına ve askeri tatbikatlara katılımını teşvik ederek ülkenin iç reform süreçlerine askeri, teknik ve finansal destek sağlama kararı aldı. Ayrıca NATO, Ukrayna'nın egemenlik haklarının ihlalini göz önüne alarak 1990'lardan bu yana Rusya ile kurduğu ikili ilişkileri NATO-Rusya Konseyi'nin faaliyetlerini durdurarak dondurduğunu açıkladı. Ukrayna'da yaşanan gelişmeler temelde Rusya'nın Ukrayna'nın jeopolitik yönelimindeki ani değişimin NATO entegrasyon hedefine yöneleceği ihtimalinden hareketle Kırım'daki jeopolitik çıkarlarını korumak ve Doğu Ukrayna'yı istikrarsızlaştırarak Ukrayna'nın NATO üyeliğini imkânsız hale getirme amacını taşıyordu. Rusya'nın bu saldırgan eylemleri aynı zamanda Rusya sınırlarına doğru genişleyen NATO'ya da bir uyarı sinyaliydi. Bunun karşılığında NATO müttefikleri, Rusya'ya politik ve ekonomik yaptırımlar uygulama kararı alırken, Rusya'nın özellikle NATO'nun doğu sınırındaki askeri faaliyetlerini sürdürebileceği endişesiyle yeni bir güvenlik yapılanması oluşturma seçeneğine yöneldiler. 2014 yılındaki Galler Zirvesi'nde kabul edilen Hazırlık Eylem Planı, NATO'nun doğu ve güney sınırlarını koruyacak olan Çok Yüksek Hazırlık Seviyeli Müşterek Görev Gücü kurulmasını kabul etti. Bu görev gücü Avrupa'da en geç üç gün içinde harekete geçmeyi sağlayacak, çok uluslu hava, kara deniz ve özel kuvvetler unsurlarından oluşan bir askeri yapılanma idi. Rusya'nın özellikle Baltıklar ve Polonya'da caydırılması amacıyla NATO 2016 Varşova Zirvesi'nde ise İleri Askeri Mevcudiyet olarak adlandırılan yeni bir askeri yapılanma açıkladı. İleri Askeri Mevcudiyet Estonya, Letonya, Litvanya ve Polonya'da bulunan dört çok uluslu taburdan meydana gelmekle birlikte NATO'nun günümüze kadarki süreçte oluşturduğu en geniş çaplı kolektif savunma takviyesi olarak tarihe geçmiştir.

Tüm bu gelişmelere bakarak söylenebilir ki Ukrayna'da yaşananlar basitçe Rusya'nın saldırgan birer eylemi olmaktan çok, ABD destekli NATO ve Rusya arasında Soğuk Savaş sonrası yaşanan jeopolitik mücadelenin bir parçasıdır. Bu jeopolitik mücadele Ukrayna'nın iç politik süreçleriyle de uyumludur. Bağımsızlık sonrası kültürel, ekonomik ve politik dönüşümü ülkenin Rusya ve NATO'yla ilişkileri bağlamında değerlendirildiğinde anlamlı bir bütün oluşturur. Ukrayna'nın medeniyetsel tercihinin bir ürünü olan NATO entegrasyon hedefi bir dış politika tercihi olmaktan çok ülkenin ve bölgenin jeopolitik dinamikleriyle ilişkilidir.

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<u>YAZARIN /</u> AUTHOR

Soyadı / Surname : ÖNDER
Adı / Name : Sevsu
Bölümü / Department : Avrasya Çalışmaları

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