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UKRAINE 2014 – THE END OF THE SECOND EUROPEAN *BELLE ÉPOQUE*

ABSTRACT: This article is devoted to the roots of the developments that have taken place in Ukraine since Autumn 2013 and up to the Russian invasion. It stresses the historical differences between Ukraine and Russia, presents the international milieu of Ukrainian independence in the years 1991–2013, and ends with a description of the nature of the Maidan revolution and the pan-European challenge created by the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The main thesis is that the struggle for Ukraine ends the post-Cold War epoch marked with an illusion of eternal peace in Europe and with the groundless hope for Russian imperialism to expire.

KEYWORDS: Ukraine, Russia, Poland, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Yanukovych, Maidan revolution, European Union, NATO, appeasement, war

Barbara W. Tuchman has described the end of the first European *belle époque* (1871–1914) in *The Proud Tower: A Portrait of the World Before the War, 1890–1914* and *The Guns of August.*[1] The second European *belle* époque started in 1989 with the second European "Spring of Peoples" that liberated the eastern part of the continent from the Soviet/Communist yoke and while being born was marked with an illusion of "the end of history" by Francis Fukuyama (Fukuyama, 1989: *passim*). It is, however, being terminated now with the "Guns of August" the sound of which is being heard in eastern Ukraine. Thus, the title of the book by Tuchman fits well as a symbol of the end of both the *belle époques* – 1914 and 2014. There is no simple analogy between 1914 and 2014. Even Today, Russia itself wants rather a revision of the post-Cold-War international order and the wars it is ready to fight are more a tool

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[1] *The Zimmerman Telegram* completed the trilogy on the subject.

to achieve that aim than the aim itself. The tool will be used if necessary as Moscow still hopes rather to terrorize their neighbours and the West and to deprive them of their will to resist Kremlin's expansionism than to confront the victims of such Russian policy openly and to defeat them on the battlefield. There is no military spirit among the European nations and their mood recalls the one that produced the appeasement policy of 1933–1939 and not the one that produced war in 1914. There is however a substantial difference between 1930s and today's situation too. Then, the revisionist camp in Europe was composed of Germany, the USSR, and Italy and was supported by smaller states that lost in World War I (Hungary, Bulgaria) (Juhás, 1979: 356), and at least two non-state nations of the time: Ukrainians and Croats (Żurawski vel Grajewski, 2013: 99–107). There is only one fundamental revisionist power in Europe today – Russia. Germany and France do not want to return to the Cold War scale of the American domination in the continent, and therefore contest the US leadership on different occasions and are very lenient with Russian aggressions, but still, one can hardly call them "revisionists." Hungary still mourns their Trianon tragedy and one can speculate to what an extent its attitude towards Russian revisionism is shaped by that fact any continuing, active participation of Budapest in the reshaping of the political map of Europe according to the patterns it was following in 1938–1941 is highly improbable. On the other hand, the main pillar of the present European stabilization – the US military power and its prestige – had been absent from Europe before 1941 which is not the case today. The US, however, is challenged now by the rising problems in the Far East and Middle East, and its stabilizing impact on Europe may be negatively impacted by events in Iraq, Syria, Iran, or China (Shambaugh, 2014), or Korea, Taiwan and in the East China Sea (White, 2014) etc., or with some of those problems combined.[2] The Malaysian aircraft shot down by Russians over Ukraine is not an equivalent to the *Lusitania* (Preston, 2003; Protasio, 2011: 200–201).[3] It has turned the attention of Europe to the conflict in Donbas but it has not awoken the spirit of revenge. In spite of all those obvious differences there is one fundamental

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[2] The Chinese threat is overestimated still its perception is a real factor in American policy planning.

[3] The ship sink by German U-boat on May 7th 1915 – the event contributed very much to convince the American public opinion for the US to enter the World War I.

similarity between the two *belle époques* in question – the existence of the illusion of the improbability of a serious war in Europe. This illusion was over in 1914 and is over now too. The monster of history is back on the scene.

There is however another historical analogy: this time the one between mental situation of Germany after 1918 and that of Russia after 1991. Russia lost the Cold War in a manner unconvincing to the man in the street just like Germany lost WWI. Do we see the "Weimar Russia" (van Herpen, 2013: 6, 8, 13–170) just being turned into the "Russian Third Reich"? The "humiliated power" that has no respect for the dignity of other nations and who believes in its own international position and power has been destroyed by "internal and external treason" and a plot, while its army had never been defeated in the field – is it a description of Germany in between the wars or Russia of today? The "treason of civilians" (Mikhail Gorbachev and Eduard Shevardnadze as the Russian equivalent for Philipp Scheidemann and Mathias Erzberger[4]) (Diest, Feuchtwanger, 1996:186–207; Hunt, 1958: 355–371), a lot of Russian ethnic minority scattered all over the former Russian/Soviet Empire and the lack of consent to accept the fact that not necessarily all the ethnic Russians should live in the Russian State combined with the mystical semi racist ideology of 'russkiy mir' – "Russian world" inhabited by "Russian peoples" (Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians), resembles strongly the Nazi myth on the Nordic-Teutonic community of the Germans and other Germanic peoples. There is a similarity between the European policy of appeasement both in the 1930s towards the Third Reich and since 2008 towards Putin's Russia.

Whatever the previous experiences of the border between the peace and the war in Europe are more similar to the current developments – those of 1914 or the ones of 1930s. – one thing is clear: the war in Ukraine having been started by Kremlin is a turning point in the European history – it ends an époque – one of the best Europe has ever had in her history. The odds for the future of the world seemed to be splendid at the beginning of the twentieth century – the most bloody one in the human history. They were the same at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Ukraine is not well-known in the West. The best book on the country and its people published in English in the last years (not by

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[4] German politicians blamed for proclamation of Weimar Republic on November 9th 1918 (Scheidemann) and the acceptance of the Compiègne armistice on November 11th 1918 (Erzberger) – so called *Dolchstoßlegende* (stab-in-the-back myth).

accident) has been entitled *Ukrainians an Unexpected Nation* (Wilson, 2009: 392; Żurawski vel Grajewski, 2013: 69–71). Thus, in order to understand the importance of Ukraine, it is not enough just to present the ongoing developments at the banks of the Dnipro River.[5] One should be aware of the history of the country which is neither "Southern-Western Russia" nor the "nest of Russian history" – at last not more than ancient Rome is a birth place of France or Spain. Zbigniew Brzeziński has described Ukraine as a pivotal state (Brzeziński, 1998: 41). Napoleon named Poland "a keystone of the European roof" – of course having said Poland he meant the only one that was imaginable in his times – i.e. the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that means Poland together with Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus. Those lands that are situated roughly speaking between the Dvina and the Don Rivers in the East, the Oder River in the West, the Baltic Sea in the North, and the Black Sea and the Carpathian Mountains in the south.

No one in Europe remembers that the Russian army started its march to the West in 1792 by crossing the Dvina and the Dnipro Rivers to invade the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth just after the Constitution of May 3rd 1791 (the first in Europe and the second one in the world after the American one) had been adopted in Warsaw(Butterwick, 2005: 695–731). In 1798 Suvorov's army reached Switzerland and in 1814 the Russian troops entered Paris. Russia would have never done that without the French Revolution and the subsequent wars in Europe at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Europe of today is stable and peaceful. Who knows what will be tomorrow. Will Catalonia and Scotland declare independence? Will the Eurozone survive? Will the US maintain its capacity to guarantee the military security of the new NATO member states while being involved in the rising problems in the Middle East? What about the abovementioned problems of the Far East and the Washington engagement in Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Philippines, what about China? Will the Germans and the French be good Europeans like they used to be last 50 years ago? Does the West exists as a political entity that existed during the Cold War times? Are the "new" NATO and the EU member states treated by the "old" westerners as a part of that enlarged West (Kuźniar, 2014)? The Newport NATO summit (3–4.09.2014) has proved it is

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[5] All the Ukrainian toponyms in the text were spelled in a transcription from Ukrainian and not from Russian therefore Dnipro and not Dnieper, Kyiv and not Kiev etc.

not necessarily the truth.[6] Central Europe without NATO's substantial military infrastructure, and without numerous American troops on the spot, remains a second category grey zone of security. Who is deterred by the US bases in Germany and Italy? Are those countries threatened with any foreign military invasion? No one in Europe (except for Ukrainians) is ready to die for Donbas. Will anybody be ready to die for article 5 of the Washington Treaty if Putin's "green men" appear in the Baltic States or Poland? These are the questions we ask ourselves over and over again here in Central-Eastern Europe. Ukraine fights for her freedom and integrity against the empire well-known to all the peoples in the region therefore it fights not only for her freedom still for our own too. What is Ukraine – the country that tries "To build a barrier…To slow down the giant, Who wishes to bring chains to the world?" (Delavigne, 1831).

The Country and its History

Ucraina est omens divisa in partes tres – one could start an essay on that country with that famous sentence travestied from *De Bello Galico* by Julius Caesar. It would be a far reaching simplification however to see the country as divided into a Western part (Vohlynia, Eastern Galicia, Transcarpathian Ukraine, Northern Bucovina), a Central one (Eastword from the USSR western border of 1939 up till Chehryn line east-southwards from which the former "Wild Fields" – the steppes of the Black Sea started – the land that had remained uninhabited till mid-eighteenth century) and the Eastern-Southern part of the country (Donbas, Azov seaside and the Black Sea coast the areas that used to be the mentioned former steppes). The country is both divided and united simultaneously. Till the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the

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[6] NATO has offered practically no material support for Ukraine (*NATO leaders pledge support to Ukraine at Wales Summit*, Web: 04 Sep. 2014 20:49, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_112459.htm) and respected Russian zone of special interests in new NATO member states by refraining from the creation of any new serious military bases or facilities on their territory and by refusing the deployment of any standing substantial military forces there. *Wales Summit Declaration, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales*, Press Release (2014) 120, Issued on 05 Sep. 2014, Web: 05 Sep. 2014 16:21, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm?selectedLocale=en.

very name Ukraine (*Ukraina* – in Polish and Ukrainian means *the end*, *an edge* or *a borderland*) was a geographical and not an ethnic nor political term. It was used since the sixteenth century as a common name for the three former voivodships (districts) of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – Kyivian, Braclav, and Chernihiv. Only at the dawn of the twentieth century the Ukrainian historian and then president of the parliament of the Ukrainian People's Republic, Mykhaylo Hrushevskyi, popularized the term Ukraine and Ukrainians (and not indigenous – Rus' and Rusyns or based on Latin – Ruthenia and Ruthenians – having been used till then) as an ethnic and political one for all the lands of the Ukraine of today (Грушевський, 1913–1936).

Ukraine is in some sense like England with its 1000 years of history and the United States with its 200 years combined in one country. The "England" is that part of Ukraine that has been inhabited since the Middle Ages, and which constituted the bulk of the populated lands since the beginning of the history of Kyivian Rus' (or Kyivian Ruthenia)[7] till the end of the seventeenth century. The "United States" is former "prairie" – the uninhabited steppes that started south east from the mentioned Chehryn and were limited from the south by the Black Sea and the Azov Sea while in the East they are divided by the Ukrainian border now still geographically they ended "nowhere" reaching in fact to the Pacific Ocean in Manchuria. Those opened lands and borders that could not be effectively guarded in the condition of the technical civilization prior to the late eighteenth century were the homeland of kozaks – originally the self-defense of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's borderland (the country that was invaded every spring by the Tatars from Crimea), and then a military structure being partly a kind of "pirates" of the steppes, and partly the irregular forces mobilized by the state in the case of war. That part of Ukraine was lost by Poland in the years 1648–1686 still finally conquered and effectively controlled by Russia of Catherine II – Sofie Anhalt Zerbst not earlier but by 1775.

What is western and central Ukraine now ("England") had been a center of Kyivian Rus' and then with Kyiv itself become a part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth or in minor parts went under

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[7] The term Kievan Russia or Kievan Rus used in the western historiography has been adopted under the influence of the Russian imperial version of history according to which the medieval state of the eastern Slavs with its capital in Kyiv (Russian Kiev) was the first "Russian" state. It is obviously false.

Hungarian (Subcarpathian Rus"[8]) (Magocsi, 1978, passim) or Moldavian (Romanian) sovereignty (Northern Bucovina). The Crimean Peninsula was the center of the Tatar's Khanate and like South Besarabia – Budiak were both under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. This was all changed step-by-step since 1654 when Russia started to conquer those lands first from Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth then in the eighteenth century from Ottoman Empire and then in the years 1939–1945 from Poland, Romania, and Hungary/Czechoslovakia. As a result, the "prairie" was settled by Ukrainians only when having been already conquered by the Russian Empire – i. e., since the mid-eighteenth century and then additionally populated with many Russians especially as a result of the disaster of the Great Famine (1932–1933) that had "purified" the lands from millions of Ukrainian peasants (Dolot, 1985: 231; Мицик, 2003–2004: 295, 441). The country was additionally ethnically reshaped as a result of a side effect of the Stalinist industrialization that attracted to those lands millions of workers from all over the USSR. The Great Famine, the Bolshevik terror, and the collectivization of the 1920s and 1930s were the experience of the Central and Eastern Ukraine, while the Western part was saved from all that by virtue of not being a part of the USSR till 1939. The Western part of the country, Eastern Galicia, Transcarpathian Ukraine, and Northern Bukovina had never been under Russian rule until World War II, and had preserved its Central European character under Polish or Habsburg rule and a dominant Greek-Catholic population (unlike in Russian/Soviet part of the country with the orthodox denomination as the only legal one). Another western province of the country – Volhynia – was taken from Poland and annexed by Russia in 1795, and since then forcefully Russified as all the other Ukrainian lands within the Russian Empire, so it is dominated by the Orthodox Church. Still its Western part belonged to Poland between 1919 and 1939. Thus, it was not as deeply "Sovietized" as the territories eastward from the pre-war Polish-Soviet border, and had no experience of Soviet genocide by starvation that was the fate of the territories to the east.

There is some separatism in Transcarpathian Ukraine inspired both from Moscow and from its Canadian and US based diaspora[9]

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[8] Subcarpathian/Transcarpathian Ruthenia/Rus/Ukraine has 13 names given to it by the people and state possessors of the land.

[9] The main western based center of that idea is concentrated around Paul Robert Magocsi – a well-known historian of the region.

(The Persistence of Regional Cultures …, 1993; Magocsi, 1993) Ca. 200 thousands of ethnic Hungarians in the region constitutes the local border majority just at the frontier with Hungary. The Hungarians are quite numerous in the main cities of the province too.[10] The consecutive Hungarian, Austro-Hungarian, and Czechoslovak political affiliation of the country, as well as the Greek Catholic denomination of the Ukrainian population and Roman Catholic or Calvinist one of the Hungarians places it in the western cultural space and Central European and not Russian political tradition.

Northern Bukovina first belonged to the Moldavian Principality – one of the two so called Danube Duchies (the other being Valacchia) that in the mid-nineteenth century united into the Romanian Kingdom. Prior to that they were the fiefdoms of the Ottoman Empire. Less lucky Moldova as a result of the Turkish-Russian wars lost Bukovina for Habsburg Monarchy in 1775 and Bessarabia (the bulk of which is known as Moldavia of today) for Russia in 1812. Between the world wars both the provinces belonged to Romania (Żurawski vel Grajewski, 1995: 56–67; Balcerak, 1980: 3–15) and were taken from her in 1940 as a result of the Nazi-Soviet Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact of 1939 and the military disaster of France in June 1940 that had reassured Stalin on the lack of any risk of such an action. Northern Bukovina and Southern Bessarabia were incorporated into the Ukrainian SSR and thus then inherited by the independent Ukraine (Kastory, 2002: 193–219).

Ukraine fought fiercely for her independence in the years 1918–1921 against the "White" and the "Red" Russia, Poland, and Romania. The former "Russian Ukraine" – proclaimed the Ukrainians People's Republic (22nd January 1918) with Kyiv as its center and fought its war for independence against Russian imperialism regardless of its colors ("White" or "Red") and finally allied with Poland in 1920. The former Habsburg province of Eastern Galicia proclaimed another Ukrainian state (Western Ukrainian People's Republic) with Lviv as its center. The city of Lviv (Polish Lwów, Austrian – Lemberg, French – Leopolis) inhabited at that time by the Polish majority, rebelled however in a Polish national uprising against the newly created Ukrainian state, and thus started its war against the reconstituted Polish state (1st November 1918). The two

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[10] The percentage of Hungarians in the main cities of the province according to 2001 census is: Uzhorod/Ungvár – 7.03 %, Mukachevo/Munkács – 9.64 %, Berehovo/Beregszász – 55.87%. *Distribution of the population by native language, Zakarpatska oblast*, (All Ukrainian Population Census, State Statistics Service of Ukraine).

Ukrainian states confederated (22nd January 1919) and then broke up their union. For the Western Ukrainians Poland was the main enemy, for the eastern ones – Russia. Divided and attacked from all angles, the Ukrainians lost their war for independence in spite of the Polish efforts to build a Kyivian Ukraine as a bulwark against Russia. Thus, within the Versailles system, Ukrainians constituted the largest nation without its independent state in Europe and were pushed into the revisionist camp dissatisfied with the post-World War I European order. This resulted in the Western Ukrainian-German collaboration before and during the war, and in a bloody action aiming at the extermination of the Polish civil population of Vohlynia and Eastern Galicia conducted by the Ukrainian guerrilla (UPA – Ukrainian Insurgent Army) in the years 1943–1944 – when those lands were being occupied by Germany (Siemaszko, Siemaszko, 2000: *passim*).

Moscow traditionally tried to Russify the newly conquered regions. It abolished the Greek Catholic Church and imprisoned its priests in the Gulag. The bitter guerrilla resistance lasted in the Western Ukraine till 1956 and won UPA the distinction of being heroic fighters for national freedom. The image of UPA still divides Poles and Ukrainians. For Poles, it was a criminal organization responsible for genocide of the men, women, and children in the south-east territories of occupied Poland, and for Ukrainians, it is an army of freedom fighters against the totalitarian USSR.

Stalin's unification of Ukraine in the years 1939–1945 was based on the Soviet conquest and ethnic as well as on social-class-struggle theory based purification (the annihilation of all potential class enemies of communism) of the new lands incorporated into the Ukrainian SRR. The victims of that action were both non-Ukrainians (Poles, Czechs, Germans, Romanians) as well as non-Soviet Ukrainian leaders and population. Massive killings, imprisonments, and deportations shaped the Ukrainian SSR that enriched with "Khrushchev gift" of Crimea in 1954 (the Peninsula conquered by Russia in 1783 (Podhorodecki, 1987: 267–277), and finally ethnically purified by a Soviet-type – genocidal deportation of Crimean Tatars of May 18th 1944 (Chazbijewicz, Olsztyn: 97–110) survived till the end of the USSR. The independent Ukraine proclaimed in 1991 came into being in the territorial shape resulted from history. Ethnic purifications of the World War II in the Western part of the country had annihilated the physical base for Polish-Ukrainian conflict that had been poisoning the relations between the two peoples since the late nineteenth century. The memory of the bloody past

still exists in Poland and in five out of 25 districts of Ukraine still
the Poles and the Ukrainians no more share the same motherland,
which used to be the case of the struggle prior to 1947 and thus
the real reason for conflicts of 1918–1919 and 1939–1947 is over.
Russia tries to play on the memory of them, as it does as far as the
other historical animosities in the region are concerned, but still
these are not the ghosts of history that shape contemporary Polish-
Ukrainian relations. Nevertheless, the Russian state tries to revive
them hoping for the destruction of the regional co-operation and
solidarity of the "limitroph" states threatened by Kremlin's imperi-
alism.[11] Taking that into consideration the reconciliation between
Polish and Ukrainian elites and the fact that Poland was the first
country in the world that recognized the independence of Ukraine
in 1991 (Canada was the second one) and both the Maidans – the
one of 2004 and that of 2013/2014 enjoyed a great popular sup-
port in Poland is one of the most important socio-psychological,
and thus political, victories of both nations positively shaping the
Polish-Ukrainian relations in spite of the bloody past.

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[11] Russian historical policy coordinated by Foreign Ministry and supervised
by the president is concentrated on two main goals – glorification of Soviet/Rus-
sian participation in the second part of the World War II (while being rather silent
on the period 1939–1941) and on the nourishing of the memory of the conflicts
between Poles and Ukrainians, Poles and Lithuanians, Poles and Belarusians,
Ukrainians and Romanians, Hungarians and Slovaks etc. There are special asso-
ciations, web sites and periodic issued or sponsored by Russian Federation deal-
ing with that task. For the examples of such Russian historical propaganda see:
Фонд "Историческая память" http://historyfoundation.ru/index.php or Журнала
российских и восточноевропейских исторических исследований, http://histud-
ies.ru/. For the examples of official state prepared materials see: Деятельность
ОУН-УПА из документов НКВД-МГБ СССР рассекречено в 2008 году,
Информационные материалы, Дипломатия России от посольсково приказа
до наших дней Историко-документальный департамент МИД России, http://
www.idd.mid.ru/inf/inf_01.html or Комментарий к официальному материалу
МИД ЛР, распространенному в Брюсселе в апреле 2009 г. среди стран-членов
НАТО «О латышском добровольческом легионе СС», Историко-документальный
департамент МИД России, 10-06-2009, http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/ns-arch.ns
f/932b471b7dc29104c32572ba00560533/941db813df91a9fec32575d1002b1ce
4!OpenDocument.

Ukraine in Europe in the shadow of the EU's "Russia first policy"

The *belle époque* started in 1991 with the collapse of the USSR. Poland soon associated with the European Communities and thus with the newly created EU soon.[12] The other countries of the region did the same except for Belarus, who did not want to, and Ukraine and Moldova who tried but were still rejected by Berlin and Paris who did not want "to irritate," "to humiliate," or "to isolate" Russia (Bielecki, 2000:.A1-A5; Żurawski vel Grajewski, 2001: 179–214). Thus, in spite of the first pro-European offensive of the Ukrainian diplomacy (1998–1999) led by Ukrainian foreign minister Borys Tarasiuk, the project of a European Ukraine failed as a result of the "Russia first" policy adopted by the EU, and as the outcome of the incompetence, corruption, and inertia of the Ukrainian state itself. Ukraine signed the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU and simultaneously resigned from its nuclear status in 1994. The PCA was put into force in 1998 and was never fully implemented.[13] The EU-Ukraine debate was to a large extent dominated by the Chernobyl power station problem till 2000 when the facility was finally closed under EU pressure (Monitoring Foreign and Security Policy of Ukraine, March 1999: 38–39). No more Ukrainian problems have ever seriously occupied the minds of the European politicians except for the Poles till 2004.

The "big bang" of the European Union enlargement of 2004 was combined with the second wave of the NATO enlargement and with a profound breakdown within NATO and inside the EU caused by the American-led war in Iraq (since 2003). Three out of four strategic political goals of Poland had been achieved: liberation from Soviet/Russian domination, NATO membership, and EU membership. Only the political westernization of the Eastern

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[12] *Układ europejski ustanawiający stowarzyszenie między Rzecząpospolitą Polską, z jednej strony, a Wspólnotami Europejskimi i ich Państwami Członkowskimi, z drugiej strony, sporządzony w Brukseli dnia 16 grudnia 1991 r.*, (Dz. U. z dnia 27 stycznia 1994 r.), p.1–169.

[13] *98/149/EC, ECSC, Euratom: Council and Commission Decision of 26 January 1998 on the conclusion of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and Ukraine, of the other part*, EUROPA, EU law and publications, EUR-Lex – 31998D0149 – EN, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/;ELX_SESSIONID=LTL5JP vDytYkyYKh91QyFj1VftTzJhXLcvyzTCcxcgWpJJHw86gJ!-701004031?uri=CELE X:31998D0149.

Polish neighbourhood remained as the only one to be accomplished. On the other hand, in spite of some differences beneath of the strategic level, the near-unanimous support Poland had enjoyed from her western partners in the previous decade was over. The strategic community of Polish and German interest expired. It was Germany, not Poland that had changed its traditional pro-American foreign and security policy having been conducted till 2003 since Konrad Adenauer times. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder proclaimed his *Deutsche Sonderweg* (German special way) policy (Adamski, 2005) oriented towards Russia, and aimed at the reduction of the US domination in the security structure of Europe (Malinowski, 2009: 363–390; Miszczak, 2012: 229–245 and 306–341). This could not be supported by any responsible Polish government.

The reform of the voting system in the EU Council (first proposed in the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union) provoked next clash between Poland and the leading European powers, thus deepening the division produced by Polish (Central European) support for American-led war in Iraq. Polish activity in Europe based on the accession process had been over and the new one had been blocked by the two conflicts with Berlin and Paris mentioned above. In such a situation the Orange Revolution and the Polish support for it brought Poland back into the game. It was the Polish and Lithuanian presidents' efforts that brought Javier Solana to Kyiv. The real importance of that fact was limited still the impression in Poland and in Europe was significant – Poland led the EU Ukrainian policy for a while. The EU reacted poorly, however, and the "Orange" camp compromised itself in the few years following the Maidan of 2004.

Nevertheless, Poland tried to attract the EU and NATO attention to its eastern neighbors, and particularly to Ukraine. NATO seemed to be a less complicated structure to be addressed, however, Kyiv membership in it was politically more difficult to be promoted as a goal of Ukrainian foreign and security policy both due to the post-Soviet mentality of a large part of especially eastern Ukrainians, and secondly due to the bitter opposition of Russia the West did not want to annoy (Ukraina bliżej Zachodu, 2005). The first attempt was made as early as 1995 when Poland and Ukraine created a common peace battalion then used in former Yugoslavia (Grygolec, no 6: 78; Krząstek, 2002: 284–303; Malendowski, 1998:

158–163).[14] After 2004, when Spain had withdrawn her troops, the Ukrainian contingent constituted the second largest force in Polish leaded multinational division Center in Iraq. This however was terminated soon by the withdrawal of the Ukrainian troops that had been promised to Maidan by then newly elected president Victor Yushchenko (Kolasiński, 2008: 255–292). The climax of pro-NATO Ukrainian offensive took place in April 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest and ended with failure. In spite of Polish, Lithuanian, and Romanian support, the US confronted with Franco-German opposition proved not to be able to push the Membership Action Plan for Ukraine (and Georgia). The decision was postponed until the December summit and the postponement once publicly declared triggered Russian invasion on Georgia that has ruined the entire project (Asmus, 2010: 187–240).

As far as the EU dimension was concerned, Warsaw tried to finalize her first large eastern initiative (*the EU Eastern Dimension*) at the turn of 2002 and 2003 when Poland had still been merely a candidate country to the EU and the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) was just being born (Żurawski vel Grajewski, 2004: 67–89). The Polish initiative failed, however, mainly due to the Mediterranean lobby opposition. The second Polish (and Swedish) project was launched in 2008–2009 in a context of the Russian aggression on Georgia. The initiative is known as the Eastern Partnership (EaP).

The announcement of the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean by the President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy on 13th August 2008 (Barcelona Process, 2008:1–13) created a good climate for the regionalization of European Neighborhood Policy – and the Russo-Georgian war create a demand for the EU "to do something" for its eastern neighbors. The negative goals that motivated the main players, however, hidden deeply in the diplomatic rhetoric, determined the shape of the initiative. The Polish-Swedish action could have relied on German support since Berlin was interested in slowing down French ambitions that were based on drawing attention and attempting to direct the majority of EU funds to the Mediterranean basin – i.e., to the areas outside of the German scope. German

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[14] For more information consult: *Drive to set up Joint Battalions or New Defense Cooperation Philosophy, CACDS*, http://www.niss.gov.ua/mac/cacds/archivee/Jan/0122d.html and *POLUKRBAT*, Jednostki wojskowe, Wojsko Polskie, http://www.jednostki-wojskowe.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=360&Itemid=26.

support for the Eastern Partnership initiatives had therefore more instrumental than strategic meaning. It was a will to build a counterbalance to the French initiative to limit it, yet not for the real intention to open the EU towards the East that motivated Germany. The other "big actors" had no interest in the project whatsoever. When the EaP was accepted at the first EU-EaP countries summit in Prague (7 May 2009), the president of France, along with the prime ministers of Great Britain, Italy, and Spain, were absent at the meeting. The only top-level representative of a large EU member state was German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The biggest concern of the German representatives, supported by the Dutch, was that the invited neighboring countries were not called "European partners" (this could have been interpreted as approving their ambitions concerning future membership in the EU) but as the Eastern-European partners. Additionally, this happened according to German preferences.[15] The summit in Warsaw (29th–30th September 2011) ended up with failure. No one of the partner countries had supported the Polish prepared declaration on Belarus that boycotted the meeting (Kłysiński, 2011), and as far as the western leaders are concerned the absence of the French president as well as the prime ministers of Britain and Italy seemed to become traditional (Szymaniak, 2011).[16] The Eastern Partnership poorly financed and politically neglected by the leading EU powers seemed to die at the end of 2011 with the EU attention overwhelmingly attracted by the eurozone crisis (Żurawski vel Grajewski, 2012) and the Arab revolutions. That situation lasted till mid-2013 when Russian pressure on EaP partners country combined with unexpected and unwilling cold relations between Berlin and Moscow, caused by the Cyprus bank system crisis that painfully hit Russian oligarchs, revived the initiative.

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[15] *Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit Prague*, *7 May 2009*, Council of the European Union, Brussels, 7 May 2009, 8435/09 (Presse 78), p.5. See as well: *Niemcy a Partnerstwo Wschodnie*, "Best OSW", nr 18(93), 13.05.2009, p.12. For more about the Eastern Partnership see: *The Eastern Partnership in the Context of the European Neighborhood Policy and V4 Agenda*, ed. by I Albrycht, Kraków 2010, pp.64. http://www.europeum.org/doc/publications/enp.pdf.

[16] See as well: *Na szczycie Partnerstwa Wschodniego Merkel i Barroso; zabraknie Sarkozy'ego*, Wiadomości, "Gazeta Prawna", 28 września 2011, http://www.gazetaprawna.pl/wiadomosci/artykuly/551415,na_szczycie_partnerstwa_wschodniego_merkel_i_barroso_zabraknie_sarkozy_ego.html. and: *Szwedzki MSZ: Efekt szczytu Partnerstwa Wschodniego "gorszy niż oczekiwano"*, EurActiv.pl, 4.10.2011, http://www.euractiv.pl/prezydencja/artykul/szwedzki-msz-efekt-szczytu-partnerstwa-wschodniego-gorszy-ni-oczekiwano-002984.

Russia had just humiliated the US in Syria which boost Kremlin's imperial mood that combined with an image of the decadent West – the EU confused with the eurozone financial crisis and the United States led by a weak president who is not able to enter any real confrontation – resulted in the next stage of the Moscow's zone of influence policy, this time focused on the EaP countries that had just been offered a perspective on the EU association. The respective decisions on association were expected to be taken at the upcoming Vilnius summit so Russian action started in the summer 2013 and aimed at preventing them. Armenia – surrounded by her traditional enemies – Azerbaijan and Turkey and looking for Russian protection, capitulated first, and withdrew from the negotiations with the EU.[17] Belarus neither wanted nor had been invited to association talks as well as Azerbaijan (Ananicz, 2013). On the other hand, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine continued the negotiations with Brussels and soon faced Russian counteraction. Kremlin's brutal pressure on Ukraine resulted in the withdrawal (21.11.2013) of president Victor Yanukovych from the already agreed the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement that was expected to be signed at the Vilnius EU-EaP summit. The decision triggered the second Maidan and thus the revolution.

The Vilnius summit (28th–29th November 2013) proved to be an exceptional one. Unlikely the previous summits in Prague and Warsaw this one was attended by all the leaders of the EU member countries. The association agreements with Georgia and Moldova were adopted, but still the one with Ukraine that had been already agreed upon earlier was not signed. Some minor agreements on visa regime liberalization (Azerbaijan) cheap airlines accession to the air space of the contracting parties (EU-Ukraine) and conflict regulations (Georgia) were signed too. These were, however, the solutions that soon were proved to belong to the epoch that is about to end. Governments and diplomats influence reality but it would be an illusion to think they alone shape or control it. The rare still powerful actor entered the scene – the nation – this time it was the Ukrainian one and changed the situation.

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[17] The Presidents of Russia and Armenia, Władimir Putin i Serzh Sargsyan met in Novo Ogariovo near Moscow (3.09.2013) and announced the decision on the Armenian accession to the Custom Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan and the will to create the Euroasiatic Economic Union. This was ipso facto the resignation of Armenia from the association with the EU.

"The Guns of August"

Protests started in Kyiv yet on 21st November with a student happening. While attacked by the riot police (30th November and 10th–11th December 2013) they turned into mature protest against the corrupted, oligarchic system. Then the Ukrainians – confronted with the set of new laws adopted by Verkhovna Rada (The Supreme Council – the Ukrainian Parliament) in an unconstitutional way (16th January 2014) – the laws directly "borrowed" from Russian "legislative acquis" – faced a dramatic choice – authoritarian dictatorship or revolution. They chose revolution. The first victims killed by the Yanukovych regime fell down in a symbolic place and on a symbolic day – in the Hrushevsky Street on 22nd January 2014 – on the Ukrainian national holiday – the Unification Day (the anniversary of the union between the Western Ukrainian People's Republic and the Ukrainian People's Republic proclaimed in 1919, which is simultaneously a day of the proclamation of the independence by UPR in 1918. Myhaylo Hrushevskyi was the first president of the UPR's parliament. The climax of the street fighting took place 18th–20th February and took the life of some hundred victims. Still the revolution prevailed, Yanukovych escaped and the country politically again turned to the West.

Russian policy planning towards Ukraine suffers from imminent and incurable weakness. It is based on the Russian imperial myth, being promoted by a favorite Kremlin's historical propagandist Alexander Dugin (Matt, 2014; Motyl, 2013), of mental unity of the Russian world (*russkiy mir*) – i.e. Russian, Belarusians and Ukrainians and of its Euroasian and not European nature. In Putin's imperial rhetoric they are all "one nation." According to that ideology Russian policy planners and socio-technicians try to plan their operations being addressed to Ukrainians in a way they do it while addressing Russians – if Ukrainians and Russians are "in fact one nation" as president Putin said (Fisher, 2014), they should react in the same way. Russian policy makers apparently think the socio-political tricks successfully applied by Kremlin while dealing with Russians should be equally effective in dealing with Ukrainians. The problem is that Ukrainians are not Russians, but Moscow imperialists cannot accept that "revolutionary" idea, and consequently, are not able to predict the reactions of the men in the street in Kyiv, Odessa, Mariupol, Donetsk, and Luhansk. The Maidan revolution and its success "took the Kremlin by surprise."

The expected pro-Russian massive uprising in Donbas and the so called Novorossiya (the former Black Sea steppes) never happened and the Ukrainian state has not collapsed. The informal aggression of the "green men" – so successfully conducted in Crimea while the Ukrainian state, and especially its armed forces, had been still in a post-revolutionary confusion, went pretty badly when Russia tried to repeat it in Donbas and Odessa. It failed completely in the south and could be survived only due to the growing military and material support from Russia in the east. Thus Putin and his siloviks (78% of the Russian higher officials are former KGB or GRU agents) started the risky game leading to war (Kisielewski, 2007: 93). The annexation of Crimea covered the impression of defeat Russia had suffered as a result of the Maidan victory. It could be a good point for Putin to stop and consume the glory of a winner. Still "the appetite grows with eating". The temptation was too big to resign from further steps. Thus the operation in the East started yet the Crimean model failed. Russian special forces and local criminals called "separatists" proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic officially aiming at the secession from Ukraine and the creation of Novorossiya. In fact the entire project was drafted as a tool to destabilize and then to dominate Ukraine winning it back to the post-Soviet zone of an autocratic or semi-autocratic, oligarchic system. The possible success of the Ukrainian democratization process started with Maidan, and the consequent economic development based on the deep and comprehensive free trade zone with the EU established in the EU-Ukraine association agreement, was the Kremlin's nightmare. The success of Ukrainian reforms based on democratization and a profit-seeking economy[18] would be a fundamental challenge for the stability of Russian political system. The so called "sovereign democracy" as Putin's propagandists have labelled the authoritarian system build in Russia after 1999, would be undermined. If Ukrainians "are Russians" and if democracy without adjectives are built by them, and bring with it an increase of living standards, the thesis that such a system does not fit real Russians would be questioned. Whether Putin believes in a great Russian ideology or just cynically plays with it is of a secondary importance. His aim is to maintain his power and a hypothetical Ukrainian success – quite possible one

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[18] The Russian one is rightfully characterized as a rent seeking one which is the truth for all the post-Soviet area except for the Baltic States and Georgia – the latest since the rose revolution of 2003.

could undermine it. This is why Ukraine (like Georgia before) was attacked and must be turned back into the post-Soviet zone. Putin lost the opportunity to close the game as a winner after Crimea had been taken. The successful Ukrainian counteroffensive in Donbas threatened both the self-proclaimed "People's Republics" with annihilation and this was something Moscow could not afford to. The result is known – an open (however a limited one and never officially declared) invasion of Russian regular forces on Donbas that stopped Ukrainian advances and threatened Kyiv with the further lost of territories. The possible Russian plan is to establish the territorial link to Crimea and Transdnistria thus completely cutting Ukraine off from the sea. This, however, means a full scale war.

Still the nature of the game is not that simple. Russia has armed itself intensively since 2006. Since February 2013, the units of Russian Army have been activated by surprise and trained in a numerous manuevers the largest of which engaged 160,000 soldiers in 2013 (Wilk, 2013). It has not been done for fun. Great powers arm themselves quickly. A similar process took Hitler only six years (1933–1939). The wars won – Chechenia (1999–2005); Georgia (2008), and the conquest of Crimea – proved to the decision-makers in Kremlin that the use of military forces as a tool of foreign policy is effective. The policy that leads to success has a tendency to be repeated. If Ukraine is abandoned by the West (which is possible) will nourish the Great Russian imperial mentality. The EU is not a structure built to deal with military threats and all the diplomatic actions taken in its name is negligible in that dimension. Russia does not respect the EU and despises it. The weakness of NATO demonstrated at the Newport summit (4th–5th September 2014) where the alliance declared its respect for NATO-Russia Founding Act on Mutual Relations of 1997[19] declared its intention not to deploy permanent bases and serious military facilities in Poland, the Baltic States, and Romania and offered no real support for Ukraine, was a clear message sent to the Kremlin. The message is – "Go ahead and test our reaction." The results are easily predictable and the conclusion is both simple and sad – the *belle époque* is over. *The Guns of August* and the appeasement of September reassure us we will see the next Russian wars in Europe soon.

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[19] *Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation*, signed in Paris, France, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_25468.htm.

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