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The Exacerbation of the Competition Between Brussels and Moscow Over the Integration of Ukraine

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Abstract

The covert Russian war of intervention in Ukraine is inextricably linked to a civil war in the east of the country. It was preceded by military aggression on the part of Russia in order to annex Crimea. This in turn was triggered by the violent Maidan overthrow in Kiev, the organisers of which had hoped to see a signing of the Association Agreement with the EU and the liberalisation and democratisation of Ukraine. Such a move was regarded by Russia and by parts of Ukrainian society as potentially having a severely negative impact on their own interests in drawing Ukraine into the Eurasian Economic Union and the security structure associated with it. The military expansion of Russia in Ukraine has its roots in a crisis between the West and Russia, as well as in the political divisions in Ukrainian society. It marks the end of the integrative power of Russia with purely economic and political incentives and means of pressure.

The entirely new type of conflict between Moscow and Brussels is not a revised version of the historical East-West conflict, and certainly not a new Cold War with mutual threats of nuclear war. However, it had already taken on war-like forms with the Kosovo War of 1999 and the South Ossetian War of 2008. It is based on the competition for integration between western liberal democracies and the new autocracies in the eastern part of formerly communist Europe, which are both part of a common capitalist global market economy and a global system of nation states.

The economic sanctions imposed by the West against Russia will not be directly able to enforce either a policy or a regime change in Russia, although they do fulfil an important function of considerably increasing the costs of a further expansion by Russia and in the longer term of initiating learning processes in Russia in the sense of recognising the borders of its neighbouring states and its domestic and foreign self-determination. However, following the second Minsk Agreement, the possibility of a further penetration by interventionist and separatist military forces in the south-east of Ukraine cannot be excluded. At the same time, there is still a chance that the war could be ended in Ukraine, and that the deep crisis in relations between the West and Russia could be brought to a close, whereby an economic and security policy cooperation structure is created for the whole of Europe, into which the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union are incorporated, and in which the NATO-Russia Council is expanded. It could provide for later membership of Ukraine in the EU and a permanent neutrality (non-membership of NATO and the CSTO) and for a constitutional compromise between the civil war parties in Ukraine.

1 The development of the military application of force and war in Ukraine[1]

Since 2014, there has again been war in Europe. Russia is waging a covert war of intervention in Ukraine which has been preceded by the application of military force by Russia in Crimea and which has triggered a civil war in the east of the country. The war in Donbass has already cost thousands of lives, both of soldiers and civilians,[2] and has wounded and traumatised countless others. The occupation of Crimea occurred almost entirely without loss of life, since the Ukrainian security forces capitulated without a fight, or even went over to the side of the aggressor. The annexation of Crimea was approved by a pseudo-referendum, and was concluded under a false legal veneer with an accession agreement, according to which the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol were to become parts of the Russian Federation. The occupation of Crimea and the war in the Donbas was preceded by the "Euromaidan"[3] mass movement, which at the end of February 2014, after what were in some cases violent incidents with the police, led to the resignation of the Ukrainian government under Mykola Azarov and the flight of the president, Victor F. Yanukovych, from Kiev to eastern Ukraine and later to Russia. This movement, which brought over a million people onto the streets in Kiev and many other cities, came into being immediately after 21 November 2013, when Yanukovych, with the agreement of the government and parliamentary majority, announced that he would not sign the Association Agreement with the EU, which they themselves had negotiated and already paraphrased on 30 March 2012. The signing had been due to take place at a meeting of the Eastern Partnership in Vilnius a week later. Although the signing was only postponed and not rejected entirely, the move led to the "Euromaidan", which saw the agreement as presenting an opportunity for Ukraine to develop closer ties with the West, and thus for greater democracy and economic recovery. The movement also associated the agreement with a departure from Ukraine's arbitrary legal system and inherent corruption. This agreement was regarded by Russia and by parts of Ukrainian society as potentially having a severely negative impact on their interests in drawing Ukraine into the Eurasian Economic Union and the security structure associated with it.

The military and political expansion of Russia in Ukraine is rooted in a deep crisis between the West (predominantly the EU, but also NATO) and Russia, as well as in the divisions in Ukrainian society with regard to its economic, political and military orientation towards the West or the East. The inability of Ukrainian domestic politics and of international politics to find a peaceful resolution of the integration competition between Brussels and Moscow, i.e.

also between western democracy and new-style eastern autocracy, has to date prevented the war from being terminated by means of a comprehensive compromise between the West (EU and NATO), Russia and the Ukrainian civil war parties within the scope of an economic and security policy cooperation structure for the whole of Europe.

The war began when from 1 March 2014 onwards, armed pro-Russian separatists and Russian fighters who had quickly been brought in from the secret services and right-wing radical organisations[4] occupied administration buildings in numerous towns and cities in the Donetsk and Luhansk[5] regions in response to the change of government brought about in Kiev by the Euromaidan movement, partially through the use of force, and when from 15 April, on the orders of the newly established government in Kiev, Ukrainian forces, a newly created National Guard and armed units of the Ministry of Interior attempted with a military "anti-terror operation" to regain power over these towns and cities.[6] From the start, the aim of the insurgents and also of Russia was not to restore the elected president, Yanukovych, and his government to their positions of government within the scope of the existing Ukrainian constitution, but to unite either Ukraine as a whole or parts of Ukraine with Russia. They underlined this aim of a westward territorial expansion by Russia by using Russian state symbols and slogans. Thus, everything points to the fact that the war in the Donbas, which from the point of view of the leadership in Russia is not a war of conquest, but merely a war of intervention to bring about a change to the Ukrainian constitution and Ukrainian politics, triggered a civil war, and not vice-versa, that it is supporting an ongoing civil war.

Numerous Ukrainian police officers and soldiers went over to the insurgents' side with their weapons and also armoured vehicles,[7] certainly for very different individual reasons, ranging from pro-Russian convictions to purely the need for survival. On 7 April, the insurgents already proclaimed the "Donetsk People's Republic" and on 28 April the "Luhansk People's Republic" in large parts of both regions, which they succeeded in occupying.[8] They gave themselves legitimacy through a pseudo-referendum, in which 89 and 96% of the vote respectively went in their favour, allegedly with a very high level of voter participation. On 24 May, they formed what was clearly only a loose alliance, the federative state of "New Russia", which in future is to be joined by the Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhia, Kherson, Mykolaiv and Odessa. If this state (which would cover an area of 198,724 km² were to become a reality, it would make the rest of Ukraine without Crimea (with an area of 378,032 km² and a population of 26.8 million)[9] a landlocked country, and would provide a land link between Russia and the de-facto state of Transnistria, which in 2006 already hoped to join Russia.

It is unclear how many, primarily Russian-speaking, Ukrainian citizens and how many citizens of Russia are fighting on the side of the separatist People's Republics in Donetsk and Luhansk. Hundreds of thousands of eastern Ukrainians have fled.[10]

This is a covert war of intervention, i.e. on the side of the separatists, there have to date been no regular military units from Russia bearing Russian insignia. However, numerous Russian officers have taken up leading military and originally also political positions in both People's Republics.[11] Entire battalions from Russia, whose troop affiliation is known,[12] as well as many simple soldiers and volunteers who have been well-trained militarily, who have already fought in Afghanistan and Chechnya, and who are able to operate complex military weapons systems such as tanks, rocket launchers, air defence missiles, artillery, etc. are of decisive importance for the military capability of the interventionists and of the separatists. They themselves use the insignia of the two People's Republics, which is inspired by Russian symbols.

At the beginning of the war, the insurgents captured many weapons and armoured vehicles from the Ukrainian forces, whose members had fled and failed to render their weapons unusable, or who even went over to the separatists. Later, the latter received numerous heavy weapons, tanks and other armoured vehicles, artillery and air defence missiles via the open border from Russia, with which many Ukrainian fighter aircraft and helicopters were shot down, as a result of which during the last few months, the Ukrainian forces have no longer been able to wage an aerial war. During the intense ground fighting, they were forced to relinquish ever more territory to the insurgents and interventionists, even though they also took back several towns and villages. The separatists have received constant reinforcements from Russia in terms of weapons and soldiers, as well as industrial supply goods, while the West apparently has not to date supplied any weapons to Ukraine. As a result, since the Minsk Protocol of 5 September 2014[13] between Ukraine, Russia the representatives of the two People's Republics and the OSCE,[14] which made a vain attempt to secure a ceasefire, the separatists have gained considerably more territory (approx. 1,000 km²) within the territorial units (*oblasti*) of Donetsk and Luhansk.

The second Minsk Agreement on a "Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements" of 12 February 2015[15] was signed by the same actors, but was reinforced in terms of its importance by a joint declaration made by President Petro O. Poroshenko, Vladimir V. Putin, François Hollande and the German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, in which they reaffirmed the "unlimited respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of

Ukraine", well knowing, and denying with their compromising formulation that Russia no longer regards Crimea as being part of Ukraine, while the three other presidents do so.[16] This ceasefire, too, was largely broken after just a few days, enabling the insurgents to gain further territory. Following the conquest of Debaltseve, the fighting has ebbed to a noticeable degree, however.

While Russia has accepted the request for accession by the "Autonomous Republic of Crimea" which she had itself brought into being, she has to date not responded to the same desire expressed by the "People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk", in the same way as it refused earlier to respond to the same requests by the "Transnistrian Moldovan Republic"[17] and the "Republic of South Ossetia" following the August war in 2008. In so doing, Russia has left itself many options open. Thus, international peace policies aiming at a regulation of the conflict in the Donbas still have significant space to unfold. The official hypocrisy on both sides, according to which there is no war between Russia and Ukraine, is also helpful, enabling more compromise options to remain open between the two states. In Ukraine, only the Interior Ministry, and not the Ministry of Defence, is conducting an "anti-terror operation", while Russia denies the involvement of Russian troops in the war in the Donbas, even though several hundred or even far more Russian citizens have been killed during the fighting.

There is little reliable information on the extent of support for the separatists' armed struggle among the population in south-eastern Ukraine.[18] Certainly, however, it can be said that there are far more than just a few "collaborators", and that there are at least sizeable minorities, if not local majorities here or there. It is also unclear whether these have changed during the course of the war, whereby one can assume that an increasing number of people in the contested regions simply want to see the war come to an end, regardless of who their political rulers then are. It can be stated with certainty that a considerable portion of the population in south-eastern Ukraine regard themselves as being ethnic Russians and Ukrainian citizens at the same time, and who wish to see a close political union between Ukraine and Russia and not with the EU, and certainly not with NATO. How many of them wish to see incorporation of parts or even the whole of Ukraine into the Russian Federation, and at what point in time (before the war, at the start of the war, today or tomorrow), remains entirely unclear, and is constantly changing. Even so, the interpretation of the war in Ukraine as a military, ethnonational conflict between ethnic "Russians" and "Ukrainians" in Ukraine, in which an irredentist Russia is providing support to its Russian "compatriots" (*sootechestvenniki*)[19] in Ukraine, is far too narrow.[20] It can be claimed with certainty, however, that a peaceful regulation of the

conflict in and over Ukraine demands both inner-Ukrainian and international agreement (between Ukraine and Russia[21] as well as between Moscow and Brussels), which should both be coordinated as well as possible with each other, and which should only consist of compromises and not of an assertion of maximum demands. This requires an analysis of the conflict in and over Ukraine in the context of relations between Moscow and Brussels since 1992 and their deterioration in several phases.

2 Political controversies over the causes of the Ukraine crisis

Severe political disagreements over the Ukraine crisis divide not only the state and quasi-state warring parties of Ukraine, Russia and New Russia, but also the societies of Ukraine and Russia as well as the member states of the EU and NATO. The different stances taken by the individual western governments towards the Russian aggression against Ukraine to date have been overarched by a common policy of negotiation and sanctions, unlike during the Iraq war when the west was split into two camps. Politicians and publicists stand in opposition to each other, in some cases using sharp rhetoric, as either people denounced as "understanding Putin and Russia" or who proudly claim to do so themselves[22] and those who are accused of fanning anti-Russian sentiment.

The numerous positions in this dispute can be classified into two basic orientations, which are advocated in many different forms and with different distinguishing features. Opinions often already differ widely simply in the way in which the facts are perceived. Some regard the war as being primarily a civil war in Ukraine, in which Russia is supporting "the Russians" in eastern Ukraine with military assistance, while other see it as being a war of aggression by Russia, which is exploiting the support by a pro-Russian minority among the population of the Donbas. Accordingly, the details of the war events are perceived selectively or interpreted as being disinformation disseminated through war propaganda.

There is even sharper discord between the interpretation of the causes of the crisis and then of the war in Ukraine, and as a result, of who is to blame for both. The more clearly the finger of blame can be pointed, the more gloomy the prospects for east-west relations for the future are made to appear, with forecasts of a rekindling of the East-West conflict, a new Cold War or even a world war.

One fundamental view of events sees a constant eastward expansion of the EU and NATO since 1990, which has severely impaired the legitimate security interests of Russia as the suc-

cessor to the Soviet Union. This eastward expansion has, in their view, reached its peak with the support by all the important western states for the Euromaidan, in particular for the unconstitutional overthrow in Kiev and the expulsion of the democratically elected president Yanukovych. It is thus natural, or even necessary, they claim, that Russia should react.

In the conspiracy theory reduction, the Euromaidan is ultimately solely an initiative of the USA and the CIA in order to integrate Ukraine into the western alliances, with the long-term goal of finally also destroying and dismantling the existing order of Russia by stimulating nationalist movements and efforts to overthrow the regime. From this perspective, the Maidan activists were nothing more than puppets of the US Embassy in Kiev, as Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, who resigned on 28 January 2014, claimed a year after the overthrow.[23] According to a more moderate version, the Euromaidan can be traced back to separate Ukrainian initiatives, above all by nationalist, pro-western and anti-Russian, partially liberal and democratic, but partially also particularly militant right-wing radical, fascist forces, primarily in the western and central regions of Ukraine. However, according to this view, western politicians, either in their liberal and democratic naivety or consciously, demonstratively supported the political change and ultimately also the overthrow in Kiev through solidarity visits and material aid for the civilian population, as well as the opposition parties, in order to weaken Putin's influence on Ukraine. Since the US government had already approved membership of NATO by Georgia and Ukraine in 2008, and many European governments regarded the association and free trade agreement with Ukraine as being a preliminary step towards later EU accession by the country, Russia regarded this as being an intolerable provocation and an impairment of its legitimate or simply realistically foreseeable security interests. Further arguments put forward by those who understand Russia and Putin (which range from understanding for the publicly expressed views by Putin to full approval of them) are frequently that: 1. The annexation of Crimea to Russia is in line with the right to self-determination of the peoples and the will of the Russian majority among the population of Crimea, and is also a revision of an arbitrary act by the communist dictator N.S. Khrushchev in 1954; 2. The Ukrainian nation is not a real or unified nation, since the majority of the population in eastern Ukraine are Russia-oriented ethnic Russians; 3. A Ukrainian state has never really existed.

From this point of view, the West should recognise the annexation of Crimea to Russia[24], or at least silently accept it, should support a federative constitution for Ukraine, which guarantees the special interests of the Russian minority in the east of the country, and should lift its sanctions against Russia. NATO should guarantee that Ukraine will not become a member,

and the EU should formulate the Association Agreement with Ukraine in such a manner that it is conformant with the eastern Ukrainian and Russian interests in a close economic relationship between both states.

The opposite view stresses the essentially liberal and democratic nature of the regime change in Kiev, which due to the as such unnecessary flight by President Yanukovych, who was only to be forced to resign by a democratic mass movement, took on a revolutionary, i.e. not entirely constitutional character. While nationalist right-wing extremists (including obvious fascists) did participate in the Euromaidan, their parties suffered clear defeats in the later presidential and parliamentary elections. Otherwise, such nationalist right-wing extremists (who also included open fascists) played at least just as great a role in Russia, and were also a normal feature of all western democracies, in particular in France, Belgium, Sweden, Finland and Hungary. The task of all democracies worldwide is, they say, to politically, morally and economically support the democratic movement in Ukraine and the liberal, constitutional reforms that it demands to the existing corrupt, oligarchic system. There are some people, particularly US Republicans, but also many Europeans, who are of the view that the West should also provide modern weapons technology to Ukraine so that it can better defend itself. Ukraine is a sovereign state, they say, and like any other state has a right to determine its socio-political system itself and to make efforts to join state associations, including the EU and NATO, for example. These associations for their part have the right to accept new member states as they see fit, and in this regard, Russia has no right of veto. The territorial integrity of Ukraine and its borders are internationally recognised, including by Russia, and in particular also by the Budapest Memorandum of 1994,[25] in which Russia, the USA and Great Britain guaranteed the sovereignty and the borders of Ukraine. Russia should withdraw its troops and weaponry from the east of Ukraine and recognise the territorial integrity of Ukraine. NATO will not support the defence of territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine through military means. The EU and NATO have however introduced limited economic sanctions since the annexation of Crimea, in order to force Russia to respect international law. According to this perspective, this is an expression of the current tense relations between the West and Russia, which could relax again at any time, however, if Russia ends its illegal behaviour towards Ukraine. This has nothing to do with a Cold War or the risk of a third world war.

To date, the West has agreed to impose common sanctions, although several states are keen to intensify the sanctions much further (the USA, Britain, Poland, the Baltic states, Romania, Sweden, the Netherlands), while others are against them (Greece, Hungary, the Czech Repub-

lic, Slovakia, Finland), and others again are neither for nor against them (Bulgaria, Slovenia, Croatia), and some favour moderate, graduated sanctions (Germany, France, Italy).[26] Those in favour of sanctions stress the dangerous precedence of the first attempt at territorial conquest (in contrast to mere intervention in favour of a political or regime change) by a great power since 1945. The recognition of the existing state borders by all great powers was a key reason why the United Nations remained intact despite the East-West conflict. Even if sanctions are highly unlikely in the near future to enforce a reinstatement of Ukrainian sovereignty over Crimea, sanctions are necessary in order to increase the price paid by Russia for the conquest, and to deter Russia from attempting further conquests, even at the cost of economic detriment to the western countries. Many liberal democrats also feel that the sanctions are necessary in order to at least morally support the liberal-democratic forces both in Ukraine and in Russia, even if in the short term, they do not have any visible effect.

Among all western countries, there is socio-political opposition to the sanctions, which is often far stronger among the general population than in the political élite and in the media that set the tone. It is based on a curious congruence founded in very different interests and opinions. Some right and left-wing radicals, as well as more moderate right and left-wing groups, admire the strong leadership style of Vladimir Putin, who dares to stand up to the global political domination and arrogance (a disparaging description by Russia as a regional power, and a personal snub by Putin) of the USA, and partly also due to his autocratic style of rule.

Others fear an escalation of the conflict over Ukraine into a major war, and want to give Russia a free hand in "its" sphere of rule, as was the case with the Soviet Union when the West was forced to stand by and watch the military subjugation of the GDR Germans, Poles, Hungarians, Czechs and Slovaks. Peace is more important than freedom, according to this view. According to the logic of this argument, Georgians, Ukrainians and all other CIS peoples should first wait for a new period of Perestroika in Moscow before demanding the freedoms that they wish and are permitted to achieve. This "political realistic" stance is noticeably popular in Germany among grey-haired, prominent social and free democrats, who after 1968 carried the policy of relaxation towards the Soviet Union and who were highly sceptical of the Polish Solidarność movement. Opponents of the sanctions also include many entrepreneurs and employees, who fear that the cost of the sanctions will be felt in the form of loss of profits and future trade and investment opportunities (in competition with China), as well as of jobs.

3 The socio-political division in post-communist Europe

Following the collapse of communist party rule in the east of Europe and Mongolia, the East-West conflict, at least in Europe, came to an end, and the entire communist Europe appeared to become westernised, i.e. to adopt the capitalist market economy, the liberal-democratic political system and the state order of nation states. Step by step, the western part of post-communist Europe, i.e. the smaller Warsaw Pact states, the post-Yugoslav states, Albania and the Baltic States, set out on the path towards integration into the western alliance system in Brussels, into the EC/EU and NATO. In the east of post-communist Europe, the collapse of the Soviet Union led, without the Baltic States, to the Community of Independent States (CIS) under the leadership of Moscow. In Russia, too, it was thought that the CIS could be newly integrated on the basis of capitalism and the market economy, liberal democracy and nation statehood, as well as according to the EC model. However, many CIS states quickly pursued a different path of development along neo-autocratic lines. This resulted in a competition for integration between Moscow and Brussels[27], which was characterised by harsh conflicts, and a new socio-political division, which ended in the war over and in Ukraine.

Initially, Moscow wished to also integrate parts of western post-communist Europe – particularly the Baltic States, Orthodox-Slav Bulgaria and the Serb-dominated Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – into its own alliance system, or at least prevent their incorporation into the EC and particularly NATO. Conversely, the West attempted to include the CIS states in its security policy system through the Partnership for Peace, the NATO-Ukraine Charter and the NATO-Russia Council, as well as economically and socially through the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership. Russia did not wish to participate in these, but did agree to cooperate with the EU in four common areas. Furthermore, Russia was accepted as a member of the G 7/8 summit, the WTO and other western organisations.

If the CIS states had remained on the path of westernisation, a cooperative coexistence between the EC/EU and the CIS as with NAFTA and between NATO and the CSTO (the security policy core of the CIS), as with Japan, Australia and India and other states and international organisations could have developed. Such a development was prevented by the neo-autocratic course taken in the CIS states, which led to new antagonism with the West in terms of social policy and thus also foreign policy, which initially was expressed only in repeated international tensions, but which after February 2014 became more exacerbated, causing contemporaries to fear a new Cold War or even a third world war. Democratisation movements, sometimes stronger, sometimes weaker, repeatedly came out in opposition against the neo-

autocratic course taken in the CIS states, making the competition for integration between neo-autocratic Moscow and liberal-democratic Brussels to create a socio-political split in the CIS and their national societies, including most recently Ukraine.

4 The periodic deterioration of relations between Moscow and Brussels since 1993

In Russia, the new neo-autocratic path and the abandonment of its own westernisation developed in many small stages. Of decisive importance were the passing of a constitution which determined the extraordinarily strong position of the president and an accordingly lesser role of parliament,[28] and the parliamentary elections in December 1993, in which only a third of the electorate voted for liberal and democratic parties, while the others favoured neo-autocratic ones, which initially did not present a danger to the considerable democratic beginnings in the legal and de facto constitutional structures. Through their own political errors, and later increasingly through state repression, the liberal, democratic parties and organisations shrank to become very small socio-political minorities. Already under Boris Yeltsin, the partly chaotic economic and also social developments that were given impetus by the collapse of the global oil price facilitated the emergence of the "fixed-term, plebiscitary, adoptive autocracy",[29] which brought Vladimir Putin to power, and which he gradually expanded. However, this political system certainly also still contains several important constitutional and democratic elements, which could become important in the future. The president is not elected for a life-long period, as is the case in other neo-autocracies. Elections are held regularly, with potential movements protesting against their manipulation. There are still societal niches of democratic organisations and media. Widely different neo-autocratic systems with their own particular characteristics also emerged in the other CIS states, which like the Kremlin feared and battled against the risk of liberal, democratic movements, but which ideologically, economically and in terms of domestic and foreign policy are certainly intent on pursuing their own paths.

Since 1993, relations between Moscow – sometimes only as the centre of Russia, sometimes as that of several CIS states – and Brussels have repeatedly worsened periodically, before improving again in a makeshift manner. The eastward expansion of NATO, and to a lesser degree that of the EC/EU, and the creation of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership, were met with sharp criticism to a greater or lesser degree and with political resistance by Russia. The decrease of Russia's influence in the Balkans during the

course of the wars in foundering Yugoslavia and in the Yugoslav successor states, particularly in the Kosovo war in 1999, marked an important zenith in the deterioration of the relations between Moscow and Brussels in the final period of the Yeltsin era. The second war in Chechnya is closely linked to the political rise of Vladimir Putin, and gave the autocratic development of Russia a strength of impetus that should not be underestimated. While Russia tended to support the western war in Afghanistan, and generally politically tolerated the Iraq war, the difficult relations again became exacerbated in the Libya war and in the Syria war, and particularly during the Georgia and South Ossetia war in August 2008, after most western states, despite Russia's objections, had recognised the independence of Kosovo in February of that year.[30]

The neo-autocratic power élite in Russia, which under Vladimir Putin is supported by a very large majority of the population – thanks to the global oil price, which until recently was high, and the economic and social consolidation that it made possible, Putin is far more popular in Russia[31] than Barack Obama in the USA or Angela Merkel in Germany, although at the same time, the neo-autocratic system is in the medium term more fragile than the democratic system in the western states – feels increasingly threatened by the western policies towards the CIS and the national democratisation movements in the CIS states, which are interpreted not as being an expression of the weakness of the existing regimes, but rather as products of manipulation by the secret services, liberal-democratic non-government organisations, the media propaganda from the West and divisive western interference in the CIS. The creation of the GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development, support for the colour revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, the announcement by the Bush administration to accept Georgia and Ukraine into NATO in March 2008 (a move which was blocked by France and Germany), are among many other actions regarded as being components of a western policy of subversion. The revolutionary upheavals in several Arab countries after December 2010 again stimulated fear among the power élites in the CIS states and in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation that similar events might occur in their own countries, so that in 2014, they even conducted "anti-terrorist" manoeuvres to combat colour revolutions.[32] Ultimately, it was the planned signing of an Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine, which would have nullified Russian hopes for incorporation of Ukraine into the planned Eurasian Economic Union.Accordingly, Russia's leadership asserted massive influence with the threat of sanctions and the offer of financial incentives, in order to prevent the signing of the association and free trade agreement. The state leadership under Yanukovych

bent under these influences. This in turn led to the creation of the Euromaidan, which was supported by numerous western politicians, and to the toppling of the Yanukovych regime, which resulted in a dramatic worsening of relations between Moscow and Brussels. Both sides, Moscow and Brussels, intervened massively in the debates being held in Ukraine regarding its foreign policy orientation, without adequately considering the possible consequences for relations between Moscow and Brussels, or for the regional cohesion of Ukraine.

For a long time, the European Union showed no particular interest in Ukraine. The European Neighbourhood Policy was even created in 2004 in order to prevent a further eastward expansion of the EU following its expansion into eastern central Europe and prospectively also into south-eastern Europe, while at the same time creating a band of states to the east and south of the EU which were to come as close as possible in terms of their economic and political structures to those of the EU.[33] However, Poland and Sweden then insisted in 2009, the eastern European states should be offered the opportunity of entering the EU with the establishment of the Eastern Partnership[34]. The association and free trade agreement was therefore accordingly designed. Within the spirit of bringing legal policy standards in line with those of western Europe, the EU applied massive pressure on President Yanukovych and his government to retract or mitigate the harsh sentence passed on the former prime minister, Yulia Timoshenko, paradoxically for making too heavy compensations in Russia's favour with regard to gas prices. Only then would the EU be prepared to sign the association and free trade agreement.[35] Before the summit in Vilnius, the EU also showed no willingness at all to support Ukraine in its financial crisis, causing President Yanukovych to give in to pressure on the part of President Putin not to sign the agreement with the EU for domestic policy and economic reasons. On 21 November 2013, he had the parliament and government decide in favour of suspending the agreement. This then triggered the "Euromaidan" movement that was carried by millions of Ukrainians, and which was entirely unanticipated internationally and was quickly supported by the opposition parties in parliament and ultimately also from the West. It combined the foreign political links to the West with the westernisation (liberalisation, democratisation, removal of oligarchic rule and corruption) of the country, and a rejection of the neo-autocratic approximation by Ukraine to Putin's model of rule.

Vladimir Putin had already regarded the revolution in orange in Ukraine at the end of 2004 as presenting a risk to Russia's foreign policy interests as they were interpreted, also in the long term, by his own regime. Accordingly, he supported, albeit in vain, the presidential candidate Yanukovych and the Party of the Regions against his opponents Viktor Yushchenko and

Yulia Timoshenko and their parties. However, the regular election of Viktor Yanukovych in 2010 rewarded Russia with an extension of the lease agreement of the port of Sevastopol until 2042, which would otherwise have expired in 2017. This would perhaps not have occurred under President Yushchenko. Following the acceptance of Bulgaria and Romania into NATO in 2004, the Black Sea threatened to become an entirely NATO sea were Ukraine to become tied to the West. From Russia's perspective, this risk was again exacerbated by the enforced change of government in Kiev. This change reflected the failure of the civilian integration policy that had been pursued by Russia until then, together with the economic incentives and pressures in its most important neighbour in the CIS. It finally triggered the decision by the Kremlin to militarily occupy and annex Crimea, which was followed by western sanctions against Russia, to which she responded with counter-sanctions.[36] The war of intervention and the civil war in the east of Ukraine marked a further stage of deterioration. Even if Russia bears the main responsibility for the escalation to war, this is also the result of the inability of Ukrainian domestic politics and international politics to find a peaceful regulation of the competition for integration between Brussels and Moscow, i.e. also between western democracy and new-style eastern autocracy.

5 Comparison of the historical east-west conflict with the new conflict between Moscow and Brussels

Due to the widespread fear that the East-West conflict could be rekindled, or even that there could be another Cold War which could possibly lead to a third world war, it is necessary to explore the important differences between this historical conflict and the new conflict between Moscow and Brussels.

The historical east-west conflict that lasted from 1917-1991 (which is still continuing in its aftermath is some parts of the world today) was a conflict between the supporters of two incompatible, universal socio-political orders, frequently erroneously referred to as "ideologies". This conflict was indeed not about systems of ideas or intellectual concepts, but about real economic and political systems and the interests of the social strata and political groupings – parties and other social organisations of all kinds – that carried them. It was thus far more than a mere global power conflict between the USSR and the USA. The two systems differ from each other considerably not only as economic, but also as domestic political and international orders. The supporters of both systems raised a missionary and universal socio-political claim to humanity as a whole, and they were represented in very different degrees in

all countries of the world. Almost everywhere, one could find communists, as one could supporters of the capitalist order and liberal democracy. "The East" was merely Eurocentric geographical metaphor for the 16 countries in which the communists were historically first able to seize power, where they organised a central state-controlled planned economy, which ultimately comprised a quarter of the earth's land area, and a third of the global population. At the same time, they created a single-party dictatorship with the claim to represent a higher form of democracy, by abolishing the division of power and parliamentarianism. Finally, they hoped to create a state order of very closely allied socialist national republics, initially in the form of an international global republic, then in the form of a global socialist system under the most uniform possible dictatorial leadership which was dedicated to "proletarian and socialist internationalism".[37]

The "West" consisted of the numerous other countries with a capitalist-market economy order, particularly the industrial countries. However, most of the developing countries, which later became known as the "Third World", were part of the capitalist world system. Following the downfall of the powers of the global political "centre" of the here highly simplified "fascist" capitalist states, the most powerful states of this global system were all liberal democracies, although many of the states which were allied with them against the communist part of the world were capitalist dictatorships, so that the contradiction between the political systems in both partial world orders was only a secondary one. In relation to state order, the West strove to achieve a pluralistic order of nation states with a low degree of organisation (the League of Nations, the United Nations) on the basis of a liberal global economic system and common international law. While in this system, too, the most powerful states, and above all the USA, laid claims to leadership, they could not or would not assert them through dictatorial means, at least over the other democracies, although they did so in several developing countries.

In the long term, the West attempted to achieve a westernisation of the entire world, i.e. at first the transfer to the capitalist market economy, which was more or less a social market economy, second to the liberalisation and democratisation of the government systems of all states, which third led to their nationalisation (i.e. their conversion into state nations or division into nation states according to the democratic wills of their partial populations), and which at the same time implied their voluntary international association. Conversely, the East attempted to easternise the entire world, i.e. to socialise it according to communist principles, even if through to the 1970s, there developed a sharp conflict of interests and even military

dispute between the advocates of widely differing concepts of global communist organisation, particularly in the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. These conflicting interests presented a greater threat of war than the conflicts of interests between the capitalist industrial states, which although certainly vehement did not threaten war.

The contradiction between the eastern and western systems was institutionalised and in some ways also stabilised by the mutual deterrence both between the two global powers, the Soviet Union and the USA, and between their two alliance systems, thus in Europe between the Warsaw Pact and NATO, while in the developing countries, it remained dynamic and characterised by numerous local wars. Within the two partial global systems, the respective dominant powers were able to wage limited wars unpunished. The nuclear deterrence system with a mutual second-strike capacity led to the West refraining from intervening in conflicts in Eastern Europe (1953, 1956, the building of the Berlin Wall to end the western migration from the GDR in 1961, 1968 and 1981), just as the East refrained from providing military support to communists in Western Europe, although it did so in individual cases in the Third World.

The protagonists of both systems did not want to assert their universal claim to validity by conquering the world, but in most cases trusted in the fact, although not solely so, in the spread of their socio-political concepts of order in the respective opposing system, which they promoted in whatever way possible through foreign policy, and to a small extent also through military assistance in the form of military interventions. The westernisation of central eastern and south-east Europe was only possible after communism also began to falter in the centre of eastern power, namely in the Soviet Union and then in the RSFSR.

Following the collapse of communist party rule in the east of Europe, no changes occurred in the claims to global validity made by western social policy. To the contrary, it appeared to have obtained a glorious historical affirmation. Some contemporaries even announced the end of all conflicts over a global political order, since after the historic downfall of fascism and communism, there were no more serious opponents with an alternative to the liberal, democratic and capitalist world order. Now, there would at most for a longer period of time only be conflicts with local and regional forces, which were opposed to liberalisation, democratisation and incorporation into the capitalist global economy.[38] The age of eternal, liberal and democratic world peace appeared to be historically close. All post-communist countries, as well as almost all of the countries that continued to be ruled by parties that referred to themselves as "communist", made the transfer to the capitalist market economy, which from now on was transformed from being a partial global economic order to an economic order which really

was global. All three multinational states of communist Europe disintegrated into their nation state components, so that even the inter-state, "internationalist" communist organisational principle dissolved into nothing and the principle of the democratic nation state association became dominant.

All governments and almost parties of the post-communist states announced their intention to move away from a communist single-party dictatorship to a pluralistic democracy, although in several countries, they only partially achieved these aims, and began to reintroduce new autocratic elements into their political systems. This is the deeper reason for the fact that after 1991, socio-political antagonism again emerged within ex-communist Europe, which split into an increasingly liberalised, democratic east-central, south-eastern Europe and to a lesser degree also in the east of Europe, which wished to become integrated into the western alliance systems, and an autocratic east, which regarded the eastward expansion of NATO and then of the EU as a threat.

The new Moscow-Brussels conflict thus differs from the historical East-West conflict through the following features, even if there are commonalities between them.

a) While there are considerable political tensions, there is probably no danger of an escalation of these tensions into an all-encompassing "East-West" war, and not even of a new Cold War, since there is no serious intention either in Brussels or in Moscow of conducting politics on the brink of a nuclear war.[39] NATO has clearly stated that it is not willing to defend Ukraine militarily, and Russia will not dare to conduct a covert military intervention and policy of conquest in Estonia or Latvia, i.e. in a NATO country, in the same way as it did in eastern Ukraine. It is not Poland or the Baltic States which are threatened by Russia's expansive policy, but Belarus and Kazakhstan,[40] if democratic mass movements or changes in foreign policy do emerge there one day. The nuclear deterrence between Russia and NATO functions silently in the background, and no explicit threats are needed to reinforce it. Russia has a military blank cheque for Ukraine, and a clear military escalation dominance, which NATO will also not be able to dislodge by delivering weapons to Ukraine, and will probably also not remove through military support for Ukraine.

b) There is no principle contradiction in the economic systems of Brussels and Moscow, as there was during the historical East-West conflict, even if in the East, strong state capitalist elements dominate. The CIS states are largely integrated into the capitalist global economy.

Thus, in principle, cooperation between the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union, and a compromise over the Ukraine question, is possible.

c) The neo-autocracies have no common, universal socio-political programme, but do share a common enmity towards liberal-democratic threats. Since they have no alternative, universal concept for a world order to liberal and democratic universalism, they must of necessity propagate unrestricted nationalism. However, while all the smaller CIS states revere defensive, status-quo-oriented nationalism, Russia went more and more over to a nationalism that extended beyond the state borders of the Russian Federation, which regards itself as being the defender of the "near abroad" and the unit of the "post-Soviet space", which accordingly must be preserved "geopolitically" and "geostrategically" (i.e. geomilitarily) against all western, subversive political interventions.[41] As long as peaceful measures such as economic and political incentives and pressures were sufficient, then these methods were preferred. Time and again, this goal was pursued through renewed initiatives for closer union between at least some of the CIS states. Thus, in 2004, the Kremlin supported the Party of the Regions and Viktor Yanukovych against the protagonists of the "Orange Revolution", and still in 2013 succeeded through financial incentives and economic pressure to cause the government and parliament of Ukraine to suspend the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU. When, however, western democracy began to gain the upper hand in this field of economic and political competition in several CIS states, too, first in Georgia and finally also in Ukraine, Russia turned to an expansive military policy.

On closer inspection, nationalism in Russia is a conglomerate of widely differing, in part contradictory nationalisms. The hard core is Russian ethnic nationalism, which is often dressed in Orthodox-clerical garb. A further nationalism includes all Russian speakers, to which a large share of Ukrainians also belong. Pan-Russian nationalism, which designates all eastern Slavs as being Russians, negates the existence of a Ukrainian and Belarusian nation and language. These two eastern Slav languages are regarded by its supporters as being nothing more than dialects of Russian. Russian imperial and great power nationalism often has no problems in glorifying the imperial politics of the holy tsar Nicholas II and the communist dictator Josef V. Stalin, and merging both traditions to form a common image of history. This great power nationalism is nominally polyethnic or "multinational", as well as multi-religious and bi-continental ("Eurasian") in orientation, while at the same time emphasising its Russian Orthodox core. The same applies to the poorly developed state nationalism that is only weakly anchored in the people's awareness, that of the "Russian Federation – Russia", which recognises

its existing borders, which are generally also recognised in international law, and thus also those of its neighbouring states. This state name very nicely reflects the dual nature of the state, both as a Russian nation state and as a federative multinational state.

Nationalism has the dual function of distinguishing one nation from others, while at the same time uniting a nation which consists of very different regions, social strata and classes, and often also heterogeneous ethnic and religious sections of the population. In current or threatened social and domestic political conflicts in particular, which endanger the existing system of rule, some governments tend to use an expansive military policy and nationalist propaganda in order to produce national consensus and thus to stabilise their rule. The corresponding theory of diversion from inner conflicts through expansive foreign policy is very popular in political science and in journalism, but can only rarely be empirically proven. Thus, the theory that the current political élite in Russia with its military policy of expansion hopes to counteract the threat to its rule through social and internal unrest were the country to deteriorate economically following falling global energy prices and a lack of modernisation, remains for now only one not entirely implausible hypothesis.[42] It implies that the spiritual, liberal-democratic infection of the population of Russia by the democratisation movement Ukraine and Georgia beyond the model image of the countries of the European Union and North America could be considerably increased. Thus, the fear among Russia's power élite of a domino effect of the Euromaidan of 2013/14 such as the one that occurred at the end of the 1980s in Eastern Europe and a few years ago in the Arab countries could explain the transition from the pragmatic status-quo policy pursued to date, with peaceful means of influence and pressure, to the policy of military conquests and intervention. In general, it would not be increasing political and military strength, but a growing economic and domestic weakness in Russia and the reduction in Russia's power of economic and political integration within the CIS which caused the power élite with Putin to take offensive action out of necessity. It could be successful in the short term, but in the medium term, it is likely to achieve the opposite of what was intended: a further weakening and ultimately the collapse of the existing political system.

d) The current Moscow-Brussels conflict is very similar to the historical East-West conflict in relation to the incompatibility of the political systems, although here, too, there are important differences between the communist system of the Soviet Union and the system under Putin in Russia, which to date tolerates even more areas of freedom than the former did before the beginning of the brief Perestroika phase. It is after all based on the principle acknowledge-

ment of several common features with the West. It is not insignificant that the current conflict is played out rhetorically on the diplomatic stage as being a conflict between "partners", and not between "opponents", let alone "enemies", even if Russian propaganda in the mass media is already waging a battle against the "fascist enemies" in the Ukrainian "junta" and their apparent lackeys in the West.

Thus, there are far more opportunities for peacefully regulating the dispute in the Moscow-Brussels conflict today than there were during the historical East-West conflict, and there is no threat of the East-West conflict being revived.

6 Conflict scenarios in the Ukraine war

The following scenarios can be formulated of the further development of the Ukraine war and the Moscow-Brussels conflict.

1. The ceasefire that was agreed in Minsk on 12 February 2015, and which remains highly fragile, will be permanently observed by both war parties. A UN peacekeeping mission would then be possible along the ceasefire line, in which the most suitable participants would be the neutral states of Europe (Finland, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland, Ireland) and possibly also countries such as India. Ukraine (without Crimea and the Donbas) would then effectively come increasingly closer to the EU and NATO, and could perhaps even become a member of the EU (like Cyprus) without its territorial division being recognized.

2. A permanent ceasefire could be followed after a long time by a (peace) treaty, in which Ukraine acknowledges the loss of Crimea and the Donbas in order to enable the rest of Ukraine to join the EU and NATO. (At least NATO will not dare to accept a country such as Ukraine or Georgia that is partially occupied by Russia as a member, since the effective toleration of an illegal occupation of NATO territory contradicts NATO's purpose of providing defence). This scenario is unlikely to find majority support for a very long time to come.

3. If one follows the declarations made by Ukrainian separatists and Russian interventionists in "New Russia", then one can assume that the war of intervention and separation will continue with different stages or also end goals, and in some cases also in a different sequence: a) Conquest of the parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions which they do not yet occupy; b) Conquest of the Zaporizhia and Kherson regions, in order to establish a land bridge between Russia and Crimea; c) Conquest of the Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolaiv and Odessa re-

gions, which are also regarded by some as being part of "New Russia". These territories would establish a land connection to Transnistria in Moldova and cut the rest of Ukraine off from the Black Sea. Some pan-Russian nationalists, who deny the existence of a Ukrainian nation, hope for d) Conquest of central Ukraine with Kiev as the home of the Orthodox "Holy Russia"; and even e) Conquest also of western Ukraine.

Politically speaking, this could lead to several scenarios: a) Following the conquest of New Russia, according to the spokesmen for the "Peoples Republics", unification with Russia should follow (New Russia annexation scenario); b) The mere threat of annexation of the conquered territories should force Ukraine (without Crimea) to join the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU blackmail scenario); c) Establishment of de facto statehood of "New Russia" according to the Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh and Northern Cyprus model for an indefinite duration, which should move NATO and the EU to refuse to accept membership of Ukraine due to its unresolved territorial conflict; d) Recognition of the independence of "New Russia" or individual "People's Republics" following the pattern of the recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which will be followed by assistance and troop stationing treaties. The Kremlin has clearly not yet firmly decided in favour of any one of the numerous variants of the continued conquest scenario.

4. If one follows the ideas of many Ukrainians and some US Americans, the territorial integrity of Ukraine can be militarily restored by retaking the Donbas (and possibly also Crimea) by means of armament and a modernisation of the Ukrainian armed forces by the West. The first partial scenario would envisage a military victory over the separatists and interventionists in the Donbas, and the latter a victorious war against the whole of Russia. Both scenarios are entirely unrealistic. From a certain time point on, any military pushback of the separatists would initiate the transition from covert Russian intervention to open war between Russia and Ukraine, a war which Ukraine can only lose.

7 The integration of Ukraine into the EU and of the Eurasian Economic Union into an economic and security order for the whole of Europe

A 5th scenario would envisage an international and at the same time an inner-Ukrainian compromise. The EU (with the support or toleration of the USA), Russia and Ukraine would acknowledge the fact that the conflict in and over Ukraine is the result of the confrontation between the EU and the EEU, and also of political division in Ukraine. Such a compromise

would have to take into account the economic, social and security interests both of Moscow and Brussels, as well as of the conflicting parties in Ukraine.[43]

It could entail the international neutralisation of Ukraine (according to the Finnish model during the East-West conflict), which permits Ukraine to be tied to and become a member of the EU following fundamental economic and political reforms.[44] This compromise would above all have to also find a solution to the problem that Russia and also parts of eastern Ukrainian industry fear a fundamental curtailment of its economic interests as a result of the association and free trade agreement between the EU and Ukraine. Before November 2013, it was claimed that an Association Agreement with the EU and membership of the customs union of Russia and other CIS states are incompatible, and that Ukraine would have to opt for either the West or Russia.[45] This incompatibility of the two economic communities systems must be at least relativised, if not entirely removed, by an overarching structure. Exceptional rules in the Association Agreement could make it possible to maintain the close ties between the eastern Ukrainian heavy and armament industries and Russia without ruining them on the western market. Protection by Russia from unwanted imports in a free trade zone from Gibraltar to Vladivostok, would have to be made possible by new-style structures that have not yet been conceived, at least for a longer transition period of modernisation of the economy of Russia and eastern Ukraine. The extension of the energy association between the EU and Russia would have to increase mutual dependency, which cannot be used for unilateral blackmail. In other words, overarching structures that cover the whole of Europe and North Asia, the EU and the EEU, would have to be made sufficiently attractive for Russia for it to withdraw its troops from the Donbas.

The West cannot provide any guarantee to the neo-autocratic regimes that they will continue to exist. But it can considerably reduce the state-sponsored promotion of democracy in the CIS states without curtailing this promotion at an individual and societal level, and place its trust in the fact that the peoples of these countries will one day achieve liberal and democratic transformation on their own strength, as was the case when they shook off communist party rule years ago. Until then, pragmatic, peaceful coexistence and cooperation by the West with the neo-autocracies is essential.

Such a compromise between Moscow and Brussels would have to be supplemented by a national arrangement in Ukraine on the basis of a roundtable between the Euromaidan parties, the opposition block elected to parliament in 2014, the remains of the Party of the Regions, and the separatists in the Donbas, starting from the fact that the Party of the Regions and the

Communist Party gained a voter majority in 2010, and did so in the east and south of Ukraine in particular. The considerable domestic and foreign policy contradiction between the south-east and the west and centre of Ukraine remained astonishingly peaceful for over two decades, and was cleverly bridged by national compromises and a balancing of domestic and foreign policy west and east orientation. It also did not disappear from Ukrainian society following the bankruptcy of the Yanukovych regime and the parties that carried it. The Euromaidan parties have to date failed to gain the support of large parts of the second half of Ukrainian society for a renewal of Ukraine, but could subsequently do so by means of a roundtable in which the separatists also participate.

Since 1992, Ukraine has in party political terms been permanently divided between the north-west and the south-east, albeit with flexible majorities. This division has much to do with regionally differing economic interests (such as heavy industry in the east) and social structures, but is now intermeshed to a large degree with ethnic and linguistic differences. In the south-east, there is now a minority of ethnic Russians who wish to see their territory, or even the whole of Ukraine, annexed to Russia. A very large number of Russian-speaking and even some Ukrainian-speaking ethnic Ukrainians want close and good ties to Russia, but clearly feel themselves to be Ukrainian and are opposed to the separatists and interventionists, even if they are political opponents of the Maidan parties, which are primarily anchored in the west and the centre of Ukraine.[46] The current war is likely to have considerably strengthened Ukrainian national consciousness and also militant nationalism on both sides of the war front, and has also led to a situation in which unlike before, a majority of Ukrainians wish to see their country join NATO.

The former political position of the Party of the Regions under Yanukovych and the Communist Party of Ukraine has after Euromaidan become divided into three groups: supporters of the new party block under Petro Poroshenko, supporters of the opposition block, and the separatists. As a result of the political impact of the course of the war, it can only be speculated what the precise relative number of supporters are for the three groups. One factor in favour of a roundtable is that many other civil wars (such as in Northern Ireland or Mozambique) could only be brought to an end by cooperation between the war parties. A result of such an inner-Ukrainian compromise could be a change in the constitution, which guarantees the 24 regions of Ukraine extensive autonomy similar to the Swiss model with its 26 cantons. In other words, the country would be subdivided many times, and not simply split in two along ethnic or linguistic lines.

When it comes to Crimea, for a very long time to come, agreement will only be possible over the fact that for a long time, Moscow, Brussels and Ukraine will be unable to reach agreement on this issue, but that despite this, following agreement over the issues discussed above, relations between them will relax and they will lift their mutual sanctions. The West never recognised the Soviet annexation of the Baltic States in 1940, but nevertheless found a *modus vivendi* with the Soviet Union. Neither Brussels nor Ukraine will have to recognise the annexation of Crimea in the years or possibly decades to come. Probably, the issue of Crimea will not be raised at the negotiating table until Russia is democratised. Today, one peaceful option for the Crimea issue can already be formulated: a) The Republic of Crimea is administered by Australia under the aegis of the OSCE or the UN for one year (as was the case with East Timor), and then, a free, fair and democratically competitive referendum over its state membership of Ukraine or Russia or its independence is held, in which all permanent residents of Crimea and their descendants can participate, who on 1 January 2014 had Ukrainian citizenship. b) Sevastopol is and remains under Russian rule and a Russian naval base for the duration (in line with the model of the British sovereign territory of Akrotiri and Dekalia on Cyprus).

8 The likely development of the Moscow-Brussels conflict over Ukraine

Currently, there is only limited acceptance in the societies of Russia, the West and Ukraine that the crisis in Moscow-Brussels relations and the war in Ukraine are the consequence of confrontational interaction both between the states and between the political parties and social groupings in Ukraine. For this reason, the option sketched out in the 5th scenario, or a similar peaceful option, only has limited chances of success. A massive break in the second Minsk ceasefire would probably result in an escalation of the war through the delivery of US American weapons and military advisors, and could lead to official intervention by Russian regular troops in Ukraine. While thousands of Russians would die in the Ukraine war, the figure among the Ukrainians would be tens of thousands or more. Even so, an increase in intervention costs (in human lives, funds and the consequences of sanctions) would in all probability result in neither a policy change nor a regime change in Russia. The state leadership of Russia will then in domestic policy terms have no other choice than to win the war and annex parts or the whole of Ukraine, even at the risk of years of guerrilla war in the west of Ukraine, as was the case after 1945 and of economic decline. However, a far too yielding attitude within NATO and the EU which calls into question an escalation of sanctions if military expansion

by the interventionists and separatists were to continue, and their division over this issue, can facilitate Russia's expansionist policy. The West is therefore faced with the extremely difficult problem of jointly finding an appropriate mixture of incentives (close cooperation between the EU and the EEU, intensification of cooperation in the NATO-Russia Council) and economic and political sanctions, which could at least lead to a halt in the advance of the Russian troops, or even to their withdrawal with their weapons systems from the Donbas. Ukraine is faced with the difficult task of admitting the military defeat in the south-east and the temporary loss of Crimea, and possibly also of tolerating for a longer period of time a de facto state in the Donbas in order to avoid extensive territorial losses and the complete breakdown of its socio-political conditions. In other words: if Russia is not willing to pursue the mutual regulation of the conflict as described in brief above, Ukraine needs a Konrad Adenauer, who prefers the consistent western orientation of the large majority of the country to what initially is an illusory restoration of territorial integrity within the borders of 2013.

The West will not risk a nuclear war over Ukraine. It will stand by and watch the brutal and often bloody misery in the East as it did during the East-West conflict in 1953, 1956, 1961, 1968 and 1981. At the same time, any western statesman will be required to say "I am a Tallinner", and emphasise the militarily reliably secured border of all NATO states against westward expansion by Russia. It is only through this deterrence and also military policy of non-intervention in the CIS that the Moscow-Brussels conflict shares several common features with the historical East-West conflict.

Within the post-Soviet space, Russia is in the process of establishing a new military border between the neo-autocratic east and an area which retains a chance of democratisation, liberalisation and orientation to the West. Currently (at the end of April 2015), further conquests by the interventionists and separatists are not unlikely, such as those that would create a land connection to Crimea. What is less likely is the conquest of all eight regions (*oblasti*), referred to by the conquerors as "New Russia", let alone of the whole of Ukraine and Moldova, or one day even Georgia. It is not NATO that will protect these countries, but only the fear within the Russian élite that they would be unable to survive these conquests economically, abroad and ultimately also at home, since the degree of willingness to suffer among Russians in order to realise illusory great power dreams is also limited. The societies of France, Germany and ultimately also Great Britain were forced to abandon such dreams. The society of Russia will one day also do the same. Through the direct and indirect annexation of territory in Georgia and Ukraine, the Putin regime may have won support among Russia's population, but this

remains fragile as long as the economy and society are not modernised. At the same time, it has lost all sympathy in all neighbouring states and even among those neo-autocratic élites and is politically isolated internationally and in Europe in particular, even if it is more intensively seeking support in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and among the other BRICS countries. So far, Ukraine has cleverly declined – as did Georgia – to leave the CIS, and in so doing, is helping Belarus and Kazakhstan fulfil an intermediary role. The chances for peace in the post-Soviet space are not yet lost. However, they also demand a cleverer policy towards the East on the part of the EU and NATO Brussels, although they are above all dependent on learning processes in Russia.

learning processes in Russia.

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[1] This lecture builds on my presentation: „Neuauflage des Ost-West-Konflikts? Friedenspolitische Herausforderungen durch die neuen Kriege in Europa“ (“A new version of the East-West conflict? Challenges to peace policy presented by the new wars in Europe”).
which I gave at the annual conference of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Osteuropakunde on 27 March 2015 in Berlin, and which will appear in the journal OSTEUROPA.

[2] According to information given by the Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko at the Munich security conference, the figure by the beginning of February 2015 was 1432 soldiers and 5638 civilians. The UN assumes that the number is “considerably higher”. According to unnamed “German security circles”, the figure is “up to 50,000 soldiers and civilians), Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung, 8.2.2015, p. 1; ref. also Ukraine-Analysen No. 145, 11.2.2015, p. 17, http://www.laender-analysen.de/ukraine/pdf/UkraineAnalysen145.pdf.

[3] Simon, Gerhard 2014: Staatskrise in der Ukraine. Vom Bürgerprotest für Europa zur Revolution, in: Osteuropa 64, No. 1, p. 25-41; Portnov, Andrij 2014: Krieg und Frieden. Die ‘Euro-Revolution’ in der Ukraine, in: OSTEUROPA 64, No. 1, p. 7-23.

[4] Only a later scientific study will perhaps be able to clarify whether these first armed operations were already controlled by the Kremlin, or only tolerated by it. On the infiltration of Russian fighters during the first weeks of the war, see Mitrokhin, Nikolay 2014: Transnationale Provokation. Russische Nationalisten und Geheimdienstler in der Ukraine, in: OSTEUROPA 64, No. 5-6, p. 157-174.

[5] See in detail the chronicle by Epifanova, Alena 2014, in: OSTEUROPA 64, Heft 5-6, S. 149-156.

[6] Gerhard Simon 2014: Zusammenbruch und Neubeginn. Die ukrainische Revolution und ihre Feinde, in: OSTEUROPA, No. 5-6, p. 38.

[7] Klein, Margarete 2014: Bedingt kampffähig. Die ukrainische Armee, in: OSTEUROPA, No. 9–10, p. 150 seq.

[8] The two regions together cover an area of 53,201 km², and are thus approximately the same size as the German federal states of Baden-Wurttemberg and Rhineland-Palatine combined. Before the war, they had a population of 6.5 million, i.e. more than the German federal state of Hessen.

[9] State Statistics Service of Ukraine: Population as of January 1, 2014,
http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2014/ds/kn/kn_e/kn0114_e.html.

[10] According to the UNHCR, 980,000 internal refugees and 600,000 refugees to neighbouring states, including 525,000 in Russia, were registered, hilfe-ukraine/wc/J102?gclid=CLvg6tGr38MCFYfKtAodvGkACg.

[11] On the to date extremely weak formation of state organs, see Mitrokhin, Nikolay 2015: Bandenkrieg und Staatsbildung. Zur Zukunft des Donbass, in: OSTEUROPA, No. 1-2, p. 5-19.

[12] Malek, Martin 2014: Moskaus Schlachtpläne. Hintergründe zu Russlands Krieg in der Ukraine, in: OSTEUROPA 64, No. 9-10, p. 108-110; Mitrokhin, Nikolay 2014: Infiltration, Instruktion, Invasion. Russlands Krieg in der Ukraine, in: Osteuropa 64, No. 8, p. 3-16.

[13] Protokol po itogam konsul’tacij Trechstoronnej kontaktnoj gruppy,
http://www.osce.org/ru/home/123258?download=true; http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/english-language-translation-of-the-sept-5-cease-fire-memorandum-in-minsk-365460.html.

[14] The protocol was only signed by the former president of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, the Russian ambassador to Ukraine, Mikhail Yu. Surabov, and the OSCE ambassador Heidi Tagliavini. The prime ministers of the two People’s Republics, Alexander V. Sakharchenko and Igor V. Plotnitski, merely acknowledged the existence of the protocol with their signature.

[15] The precise wording of the declaration and the Minsk Agreement, http://transform.or.at/news/article.php/20150212221425359/print.
[16] Official declaration on the Minsk summit, http://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/minsk-183.html.
[17] In 2006, apparently 97.2% of Transnistrians already voted for accession to Russia in a referendum, a desire that was again expressed in the parliament on 18 March 2014, http://de.sputniknews.com/zeitungen/20140318/268059463.html. Pridnestrov'e vsled za Krymom khochet vojti v sostav Rossii, <www.rosbalt.ru/ exussr/2014/03/18/1245241.html>.
[18] In an opinion survey conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Kiev International Institute of Sociology from 8-18 February 2014, i.e. just before the overthrow in Kiev, 12% of Ukrainians were in favour of a unification of their country with Russia, among whom 41% lived in Crimea, 33% lived in the Donetsk region, 24% in the Luhansk and Odessa regions respectively, and 15% in the Kharkiv region. http://dif.org.ua/en/events/ukrainieyu-ne-hochut.htm.
[19] The term relates in the standard use of the Russian language not only to state citizens of Russia, but also to ethnic Russians, Russian-speaking non-Russians or even to all former Soviet citizens in the neighbouring countries of Russia.
[20] A detailed description of the social cleavages in Ukraine on the basis of the highly differing history of the individual parts of the country can be found in Kappeler, Andreas 2014: Kleine Geschichte der Ukraine, Munich: Beck. In abbreviated form: Das zerrissene Land. Der Kampf um die Ukraine und ihr historisches Erbe, in: Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik 4/2014, S. 43-52. See also Schneider-Deters, Winfried 2014: Die Ukraine: Machtvakuum zwischen Russland und der Europäischen Union, Berlin: Berliner Wissenschaftsverlag.
[21] Haran', Oleksyj/ Burkovs'kyj, Petro 2010: Konflikt und Kooperation. Ukraine und Russland: Eine Beziehungsdynamik, in: OSTEUROPA 60, No. 2-4, p. 331-349.
[22] Bröckers, Mathias/ Schreyer, Paul 2014: Wir sind die Guten. Ansichten eines Putinverstehers oder wie uns die Medien manipulieren, Frankfurt a.M. Ref. also Krone-Schmalz, Gabriele 2015: Russland verstehen. Der Kampf um die Ukraine und die Arroganz des Westens, Munich: Beck.
[23] Ukraine-Krise: Moskau wirft USA und EU Nichteinhaltung des Budapester Memorandums vor, http://de.sputniknews.com/politik/20140319/268070115.html.
[24] The former prime minister of Brandenburg (2002-2013) and party chairman of the SPD (2005-2006) Matthias Platzek in particular advocated this idea in an interview, but then revised his statement, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/ukraine-krise-matthias-platzeck-will-legalisierung-krim-annexion-a-1003646-druck.html; http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/matthias-platzeck-rudert-in-debatte-um-krim-annexion-zurueck-a-1003829-druck.html.
[25] Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with Ukraine's Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Budapest Memorandum of 5 December 1994, http://unterm.un.org/DGAACS/unterm.nsf/8fa942046ff7601c85256983007ca4d8/4fe5ea3e98fbff4e852569fa00008aae?OpenDocument.
[26] This was the assessment of the team of authors around Aleksandr A. Dynkin from the Institute of World Economy and International Relations in "Rossija i mir: 2015. Ekonomika i vnešnjaja politika. Ežegodnyj prognos", http://www.imemo.ru/files/File/ru/publ/2014/2014_031.pdf, S. 129-135.
[27] The authors Aleksandr A. Dynkin et al. (see note 23) speak of a "Competition between the 'pro-European' or, in fact, 'pro-Western' and 'pro-Eurasian' trends" in the post-Soviet space, http://www.imemo.ru/files/File/ru/publ/2014/2014_031.pdf, p. 136. IMEMO experts argue that "that in fact the tough competition among the integration projects, namely, between the EU Eastern Partnership and Russia's Initiatives of Eurasian integration that provoked the Ukrainian crisis in November 2013." Ibid, p. 103. On the creation of the term "competition for integration", see Jahn, Egbert 2007: Ausdehnung und Überdehnung. Von der Integrationskonkurrenz zwischen Brüssel und Moskau zum Ende der europäischen Integrationsfähigkeit, in: OSTEUROPA, No. 2-3, p. 43, see note 10. A similar view is presented by Tolstrup, Jakob 2014: Russia vs. the EU. The Competition for Influence in Post-Soviet States, Boulder/ London: Lynne Rienner; Adomeit, Hannes 2012: Integrationskonkurrenz EU-Russland. Belarus und Ukraine als Konfliktfelder, in: OSTEUROPA, No. 6-8, p. 383-406; Kropatcheva, Elena 2010: Russia's Ukraine Policy against the Background of Russian-Western Competition, Baden-Baden: Nomos.
[28] Frenzke, Dietrich 1995: Die russischen Verfassungen von 1978 und 1993, Berlin: Arno Spitz; Nußberger, Angelika (ed.) 2010: Einführung in das russische Recht, Munich: Beck.
[29] For a more detailed discussion, see Jahn, Egbert 2012: Putins Siege: Niederlagen der Demokratie in Rußland?, in: idem Politische Streitfragen, Band 3. Internationale Politik, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, p. 125-142. On the still debatable characterisation of the political system in Russia, see Mommsen, Margareta 2010: Oligarchie und Autokratie. Das hybride politische System Russlands, in: OSTEUROPA 60, No. 8, p. 25-46; Beichelt, Timm 2014: Legitimer Autoritarismus? Politische Stabilität im postsowjetischen Raum, in: OSTEUROPA 64, No. 8 p. 49-61.
[30] On the deterioration in relations between Russia and the West, see Ševcova, Lilija 2008: Ende einer Epoche. Rußlands Bruch mit dem Westen, in: OSTEUROPA 58, No. 11, P. 65-69.

[31] On the consistently high popularity rating enjoyed by Putin for over a decade, see Ross, Cameron 2014: Das Paradox: Putins populäre Autokratie. Legitimitätsquellen in einem hybriden Regime, in: OSTEUROPA 64, No. 8, p. 99-112.
[32] See also the authors "Rossija i mir: 2015" (see note 23), p. 107.
[33] Sapper, Manfred et al 2007: Inklusion, Exklusion, Illusion. Konturen Europas: Die EU und ihre Nachbarn, in: Osteuropa 57, No. 2-3.
[34] Stewart, Susan 2009: Russland und die Östliche Partnerschaft, in: SWP-Aktuell No. 21.
[35] Rjabčuk, Mykola 2011: Weckruf. Die Ukraine, die EU und der Fall Tymošenko, in: OSTEUROPA 61, No. 11, p. 3-6.
[36] Fischer, Sabine 2015: EU-Sanktionen gegen Russland. Ziele, Wirkung und weiterer Umgang, in: SWP-Aktuell 26, March.
[37] See the review in the volume "Durchschaut. Der Kommunismus in seiner Epoche", OSTEUROPA, No. 5-6/2013.
[38] Fukuyama, Francis 1992: The End of History and the Last Man. New York: Free Press.
[39] The invocation of a new Cold War has much to do with an ahistorical extension and trivial generalisation of the term, as well as its use to describe any state of heightened international tensions. Accordingly, there have already been thousands of Cold Wars throughout the course of history. However, the authors who use this sensationalist term to describe the current situation do note important differences from the "First Cold War", such as Trenin, Dmitri 2014: Welcome to Cold War II, in: Foreign Policy, 4 March. http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/03/04/welcome-to-cold-war-ii/; Legvold, Robert 2014: Managing the New Cold War, in: Foreign Affairs, July/August.
[40] Accordingly, the authors of "Rossija i mir: 2015" (see note 23) note that Kazakhstan is disturbed by an 'irredentist' mood among parts of Russian society in its relations with its "Russian-language" eastern regions, and for this reason is deepening its relationship to the EU, p. 136.
[41] On the renaissance of geopolitical thinking in Russia, see Ignatow, Assen 1998: Geopolitische Theorien in Rußland heute, in: Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien 17; ref. also Peter, Rolf 2006: Russland im neuen Europa. Nationale Identität und außenpolitische Präferenzen (1992-2004), Hamburg: LIT, p. 140-194. Influential but not representative of predominant thinking in the Kremlin are: Dugin, Aleksandr G. 2001: Osnovy geopolitiki, Moscow 2001; Ivašov, Leonid G 2000.: Rossija i mir v novom tysjačiletii. Geopolititičeskie problemy, Moscow.
[42] This is put forward e.g. by Schmid, Ulrich 2015: UA – Ukraine zwischen Ost und West, Schriftenreihe der Vontobel-Stiftung März, Zurich.
[43] Ref. also Dembinski, Matthias/ Schmidt, Hans-Joachim/ Spanger, Hans-Joachim 2014: Einhegung: Die Ukraine, Russland und die europäische Sicherheitsordnung, No. 3
[44] Ref. also Schneider-Deters, Winfried 2010: EU – nicht NATO! Thesen zur Zukunft der Ukraine, in: OSTEUROPA 60, No. 1, p. 55-63.
[45] In February 2013, the President of the EU Commission, José Manuel Barroso, presented Ukraine with the choice between rapprochement to the EU or entry into the customs union dominated by Russia,, in: Ballin, André 2013: EU stellt Ukraine vor die Wahl. Kiew muß zwischen Moskau und Brüssel wählen, http://derstandard.at/1361241226412/EU-stellt-Ukraine-vor-die-Wahl. Barroso spoke unequivocally of an "either-or decision" that Kiev would have to make,, http://www.welt.de/print/die_welt/politik/article113905484/Ukraine-verspricht-der-EU-rasche-Reformen.html. Following the failure to sign the Association Agreement, it was claimed that "This was preceded by months of wrangling between Moscow and Brussels which was reminiscent of the Cold War", in: Pauly, Christoph et al. 2013: Geplatzte Verlobung. Mit Drohungen und Milliardenversprechen hat Wladimir Putin das Wettbieten um die Ukraine gewonnen, Der Spiegel, 25 November; Aden, Mareike/ Bota, Alice 2013: Die Entscheidung. West gegen Ost, Demokratie gegen Diktatur: Europa und Rußland kämpfen um die Ukraine. Die ZEIT, 14 November, p. 3; Blome, Nikolaus et al. 2013: Ein Profi für Runde zwei. Der Kampf um die Ukraine ist einer zwischen dem russischen Präsidenten und der deutschen Kanzlerin. Der Spiegel, 9 December, p. 22.
[46] Simon, Gerhard 2014: Legitimation durch Wahlen. Der Umbruch in der Ukraine, in: OSTEUROPA 64, No. 9-10, p. 165-168.