RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Russian Ukrainian War: the Birth of a Multipolar World

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Abstract

This paper aims at understanding the international political and strategic changes after the Russian Ukrainian conflict that is supported by the West in general. The conflict includes an occidental pole that wants more control on the peoples of the world and the destruction of all the new powers that may oppose it. In fact, it is a global conflict, not between two neighbor states, as the media outlets say. This paper sheds light on the conflict of Russia against the NATO regarding its roots and historical, economic, and geostrategic repercussions.

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Introduction:

The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine is not a mere conflict between two neighboring states; rather, it is between a new pole that refuses the Western imperialist hegemony and a US European pole that aims at controlling the world and fighting any renaissance in any state or axis.

1. Why is the Russian military operation?

To understand the truth of the conflict between Ukraine (NATO) and Russia since 22 February 2022, we must understand the events that took place during and after the era of President Yanukovych. Some believe that the decision of the president to end the negotiations with the EU was not a sufficient reason to justify the massive mobilization of the Ukrainian people; rather, they believe that the violence exercised by the regime led to the revolt. Besides, allegedly, the people who initiated the manifestations before the violence acts on 30 November were paid by interest groups allied with the EU. Regardless the circumstances of the revolution that led to the conflict, the big majority of the protestors suffered from the regime of Yanukovych. The Ukrainian people protested against a corrupt repressive regime that had hindered the national development for a long time (Corneau, 2016.P7).

After the escape of PresidentYanukovych to Russia, due to the protests of either the Ukrainian people or some EU agents, a pro-Western government emerged and signed commercial accords with the EU. Besides, it launched a campaign to root out the Russian population and its strategic interests. This was considered by Russia as a Western provocation and interference. For Putin, keeping Ukraine within his orbit by integrating it in the UEFA is primordial for the Russian return as a big international power. The UEFA has been formally existing 01 January 2015 after its establishment by Russia, Belorussia, and Kazakhstan to unite them and create a stronger diplomatic and economic path against the EU. Russia had big hopes in this union and aimed that it could join the EU to make a Paneuropean union where Russia would be a very influential member. However, without Ukraine, Russia would not have the demographic and economic bases to gain a position as a leader in this potential scenario. Rather, the opposite is likely to take place because the development of the Ukrainian economy deeply depends on the Russian. Hence, the Russian and Ukrainian actions must be considered within the Euro-Asian context of integration (Cormeau, 2016,p7).

The EU did not only impose economic and political sanctions on Russia; rather, it marginalized its interests and expanded NATO to cover the states that neighbor Russia, breaking the accords of 1991 between Russia and the EU. In this regard, Putin blamed the West for the conflict with Ukraine, claiming that it did not respect the agreements made after the collapse of Berlin Wall that provided for the non-expansion of NATO towards the East. Besides, Putin pointed in the start of the conflict that the integration of Ukraine in NATO is totally inacceptable for Russia. Therefore, the coup in Ukraine that was on behalf of the pro-EU and anti-Russia government exacerbated the tensions and obliged Russia to react to prevent the rapprochement between Ukraine and the EU; and, thus, NATO (Cormeau, 2016,p16).

The military operation was seen by the Russian people as necessary and imposed by the Western hostility against their state, as the West is decadent, traitor, and hypocrite. Despite the Russian efforts to reach a common ground with the EU since the Cold War, where President Gorbatchev called for future common projects with Europe, the European thought was perceived with hostility. In his article on 10 September 2009, Dimitri Medvedev called for the modernization of Russia and admitted that the harmonization of the Russian relations with the Western democracies is not a question of taste, personal preferences, or prerogative of certain political groups because the Russians and the EU have many common aims, such as the priorities that affect each inhabitant, including the nuclear non-proliferation and the decrease of the negative effects of the climate change caused by the anthropic activities (Rogove, 2009,p482).

The common interests between Russia and the West include the maritime security and fighting terrorism, the expansion of the massive destruction weapons, drug dealing, etc. In addition, it is necessary to make an evaluation of the common threats, as suggested by Moscow in many times. A realistic evaluation of the Iranian nuclear and ballistic programs would allow facing the Iranian risk diplomatically, and by economic sanctions and anti-missile systems if necessary. Since Obama canceled the installation of the 3rd site of anti-ballistic defense, new opportunities emerged to build a European anti-missile system that links the Russian, NATO, and US defenses. Such system should fight the long and short missiles (under 5500 Km). The components of such system may be US mobile interceptors (Patriot PAC-3 and THAAD), Russian interceptors (S-400, S-500), medium extended air defense system (MEDAS) of the NATO, and US and Russian land and maritime radars (Rogove, 2009,p843).

The serious Russian attempts to cooperate with Europe were not welcomed by the Western European presidents and raised a Russophobia amid the political elite of the Central Europe. M. Medvedev expressed his state's desire to cooperate and coordinate with the EU and USA in all the fields, and called for the adoption of all the measures that protect the European and Russian security.In addition, he called for the formation of a united front against drug dealing and Al-Qaida. However, this discourse did not see the light due to the Russophobia. In that document, President Medvedev stated that Russia was ready to organize a joint conference with the European national security regarding accords that limit the expansion of the conventional weapons, through the participation of all the European states, even those who did not participate in the treaty of 1991. Moreover, he called for ending the Cold War and building a unified project. Nevertheless, the rapprochement attempts announced by Medvedev were not welcomed by the West, which insisted on the expansion and threatening the Russian frontiers through calling the neighboring states such as Lithuania and Estonia to join the EU.

2. The strategic importance of the energy during the war between Russian and NATO:

Since the start of the military operation in Ukraine, the EU imposed new economic sanctions on Russia, in addition to those imposed by USA, UK, Australia, and Japan. However, the Russian economy was strong. A group of researchers confirms that the economic sanctions against Russia failed and that the Russian economy took proactive measures to face them. According to Agnes Benassy- Queré, the economist head in the general direction of the budget, the ultimate goal of the sanctions is to change the Russian foreign policy and end the war in Ukraine. In this context, they did not succeed, as confirmed by Cyrille Bret, an associate researcher at Jacques Delor institute. The indirect goal is to cause damages in the production tool and in the Russian public finances so that Russia cannot finance its war efforts.

40% of the Russian incomes come from the extractive sector. The increase of the incomes of the Russian energy exports gives idea about the efficiency of the sanctions. According to the think tank of the Center for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), the incomes of the Russian energetic exports are higher than in 2021, as 625 million Euro per day were estimated in May 2021 compared to 750 million Euro per day in June 2022. The prices of oil increased when the world refused the oil and gas of a big producer, in a time where the global production did not increase, according to Florent Parmentier, an associate researcher at the geopolitical center HEC. In this regard, the Russian crude oil witnesses a decrease compared to the European Brent (more than 3 USD per barrel in the beginning of August compared to 2 USD in the end of 2021) (Aude, 2023,p47).

This Policy Brief presents multiple changes provoked by the Ukrainian war on the European energetic scene, which raise challenges for the EU in avoiding the dependence on the Russian fuels. In this regard, many potential courses may take place. The 1st is aims at introducing a real race in the gas market and at preventing potential cuts in the supplies through regularizing the storage obligations. The second is about recomposing the geographic landscape of the fuel flows through diversifying the supply sources. Finally, the 3rd revolves around accelerating the energetic transition despite the short term obstacles faced by Europe. Even if the heterogeneity of the EU states regarding the dependence to the Russian fuels is a fact, it must be overcome to find new common answers and end the gas and oil dependence on Russia. Globally speaking, the war in Ukraine obliges the EU states to develop a volontarist common diplomacy in the raw material markets (energetic or industrial). In this context, we witness in fine pillars of the future economic transformation in the zero-carbon path (CEPIL, 2022,p15).

Regarding the oil markets, Europe is the 3rd consuming region after Asia and North America. Besides, it is the 2nd importing region worldwide while Russia is the 1st exporting region of crude oil towards Europe, as it supplies it with 30%, followed by CEI states with 14%, West Africa with 13.7%, USA with 12%, Iraq with 9%, and KSA with 8.8%. The European dependence on the Russian oil products is high since Russia supplies 40% of the European imports. On the other hand, the European destination represents 54% of the crude oil exports of Russia, and 53% of the oil products (CEPPII, 2022, p13).

As for the gas market, the dependence of each EU state on Russia to import crude oil and oil products shows high rates, which reach 84% in Finland, 69% in Poland, and 34% in Germany. In France, the fuels reserves are abundant and are strongly geographically concentrated. In addition, their production has been following an increasing dynamics in the last decade. The geographic distribution of the production does not reflect the distribution of the reserves. In this context, the end of 2020 showed estimations of 188 trillion m^3 of global reserves of natural gas. This represents 49 years of exploitation in the current rhythm of production. In addition, the crude oil is at 1733 billion barrel, i.e., 54 years of production. These reserves increased in the last 20 years. (CEPPII, 2022, p 15).

The fuels global reserves are unequally distributed (table 01). The oil reserves were 70% by the organization of the oil exporting stats, 6.2% by Russia, 14% by North America, and 1% by the rest of the organization of the economic development. The gas reserves are equally concentrated because 03 states hold more than half of the reserves, namely Russia (20%), Iran (17%), and Qatar (13%). In 2020, the European gas reserves made 1% of the international reserves. In this regard, 0.8% were in Norway and 0.1 was in Netherlands and the UK (CEPII, 2022). On the other hand, KSA and Russia made a rapprochement since 2016, leading to an extended organization of the oil exporting states that allowed Russia to influence the gas and oil courses. This alliance was efficient as it increased the oil prices (Antoine, 2023, p52).

Regarding the monetary plan, the rapid increase of the Russian currency since the end of March created doubts about the efficiency of the sanctions, because it is a sign of the success of the interventions of the Russian Bank to support its currency. In addition to increasing the interest rates, the monetary institution imposed a very severe exchange control on the Russian companies and houses to hinder the exchange of the currency with Euro or USD, according to Jullien Vercueil, economics professor at Inalco (Aude, 2023, p47).

The Russian Bank declared a decrease of 20% in the imports in the 2nd term of 2021. The good position of the currency is a good sign when the imports are constraints (Audin, 2022). It is clear that Russia was economically prepared before the start of the military operation because it made an alliance with the Gulf states that export the oil and gas and found alternative destination to export its gas, such as China and India, thanks to the policy of Putin. Besides, Russia encouraged the local products as an alternative to the Western, and developed its economy thanks to the policy of reducing the foreign consumption production.

Thus, the Westerners continue daily pouring considerable sums to Moscow. However, the sums received by Russia have been decreasing since March due to the ban of the new contracts with the EU and the cuts in the delivery imposed by Russia. Furthermore, the share of the West from the daily sums of Russia decreases. On the other hand, China and India represent an increasing part of the Russian incomes. The behavior of India that receives 18% of the Russian crude oil exports is an important crack to handle (Aude, 2023). The economists doubted the success of the European economic alternatives imposed by Russia to overcome the Russian gas, in a time where the protests increase in France, UK, and Germany. This shows the failure of the economic alternatives that substitute the Russian gas.

The OPEC reserves and the production capacity must allow targeting a high supply to Europe to replace the Russian oil imports. The exports of KSA towards Europe increased to 2.78 million barrel per day in 2020 and might keep increasing, even if the Asian markets are privileged today for Riyadh. Besides, the exports of Venezuela that decreased to 0.04 million barrel per day might strongly increase. In fact, the production of the Venezuelan oil that reached 3.1 million barrel per day in 2005 decreased in 2021. However, in the short term, it is unlikely that a massive increase of its production shall begin due to its fragile oil sector, which needs foreign investments; something that is not probable due to the instability in the state.

Outside OPEC, the non-conventional oil production in North America gives an interesting potential to supply Europe. The US production may increase thanks to the development of the light tight oil22 production (7.3 million barrel per day in 2020). The international energy agency expects an increase and a peak of 13 million barrel per day in 2032, which shall increase the exports towards Europe. Beyond this date, the agency expects a potential increase in the production of the asphaltic sand in Canada of 3.7 million barrel per day in 2040. Furthermore, the increase of the crude oil production in Brazil may meet the global oil demands, as it shall increase from 2.9 million barrel per day in 2020 to 4.7 (CEPII, 2022, p49). However, the economic and geopolitical indices show that Europe may suffer severe economic repercussions if the Russian Ukrainian crises is not diplomatically settled.

3. The deep origin of the Russian Ukrainian crisis:

Is Putin responsible for this situation? If we confirm, we shall be unjust towards him. The consequences of this war are supported by those who block the Russian culture in Ukraine and the Russophobe Ukrainian regions, such as Donbas and Lunsk, and neglect the cultural, economic, and political interests of Russia in Ukraine. Despite the serious efforts and the sincere plans suggested by Medvedev to reinforce the cooperation on security between Russian, 07 ancient Soviet republics, NATO, EU, the organization of the security and cooperation in Europe, and the organization of the treaty of the collective security, the West did not appreciate its efforts. This was confirmed by President Putin regarding the Russian military operation, saying that Ukraine has no margin for settling the conflict diplomatically. For Russia, ceding Ukraine to the EU and abandoning its Euro-Asian project is not acceptable. The importance of Ukraine in the economic development of Russia pushed President Putin to take drastic actions to hinder Ukraine from joining the EU and ban the European interests in the region. In this regard, maintaining economic and familial links with Ukraine is no more important (Cormeau, 2016,p6).

This allows us today to confirm that the exactions of Boutcha are a mere game by the Ukrainians and the Westerners to demonize Russia, and that Marioupol was destroyed by the Nazi-Ukrainians. The authorities' justifications of their acts (genocide) in Donbas may seem incoherent to the Westerners, but allow each Russian to look for an argument to join the conformist majority (Katouiva-Jean, 2023). The fall of Yanukovych regime and its substitution by the pro-Western regime of Zelensky was the cornerstone of the process of February 2022. The refusal of the Ukrainian regime to enforce the accords of Minsk and Donbas confirmed to the Russian rulers that Ukraine and the West do not target peace. The West weakened Russia, created fears amid the Kremlin, and widened the gap between the Russian and Ukrainian regimes. Besides, the neo-Nazi attacks, as called by Putin, against the Russian culture increased and targeted the schools. As a result, Putin considered that President Zelensky is a threat to the Russian security and development. In his famous discourse of 22 February 2022, President Putin stated that the Russian military operation is necessary and inevitable, as all the soft power tools had been extinguished against NATO.

4. The birth of a multipolar world:

Seemingly, the world was heading towards multipolarity, which marks the last steps of the US hegemony, and of the West in general. The multipolarity is an inevitable economic, political, and cultural fatality. The military operation against Ukraine gained big support by the 3rd world states, which saw it as a painful hit to the Western hegemony and a failure of the efforts to isolate Russia. The latter made an economic alliance with the Gulf states in the energy fields and important diplomatic visits, namely the strategic alliance with China, Algeria, Iran, North Korea, etc. The Russian vice PM, Denis Mantourov, appeared on 20 February in the eccentric tent of Russia in the forum of Abu Dhabi for weapons few days after the anniversary of Ukraine invasion. The Emirati federation, which did not participate to the Western sanctions, remains neural between Russia and UA just like the other Middle East states (Kantouiva-Jean, 2023,p85).

In Dubai, where the Russian investments have increased since the last year, a district was called "Small Moscow". Other states, such as Turkey, opened their doors to these ultra-wealthy that were rejected by the Western world. Beside, KSA, a strategic ally of Russia in OPEC decided in the last October to decrease 02 million barrels of its daily production. This was seen by Washington as a direct support to the war efforts against Ukraine. To defend itself, Riyadh invoked the priority of is national interests to the unconditional support to the foreign policy of USA (Vacher, 2023, p15).

The notion of the Russian return to the international scene is largely imposed through its military interventions, such as the war in Georgia that inaugurated the trend in 2008, despite showing some problems in the Russian army then. Besides, the operations in Ukraine (Donbas and Crimea) in 2014-2015 confirmed the Russian pretension to use force to promote its strategic goals in the ex-USSR region for its security and international position (Isabelle, 2022). The firs indices of the return of Russia to the international scene after the collapse of USSR started in many fields. For instance, in 2011, it had part in the Syrian conflict through supporting the president Bachar al Assad who was refused by the West.

In sum, the world has completely changed after the military operation in Ukraine. After the end of the Russian operation, the world shall witness the return of Russia as an economic, military, and political power, which shall take part in a multipolar world, where the 3rd world states would not support the Western colonial hegemony.

Conclusion:

The Russian Ukrainian war is a real conflict between Russia and a Western imperialist pole that wants to stop its development as a political and economic power. Putin did not hide his will to create a multipolar world, what raises the US and its Western allies' worries because they want to keep the world under their control. Since the start of the last decade, Moscow wants to strengthen its position and preserve or develop its arms sale (it is the1st exporter towards the region). Nevertheless, its initiatives are limited for the other powers (USA, China, EU, etc.), what reflects the late nature of Russia. Vietnam allowed the Russian aircrafts and boats to use the Cam Ranh basis. Besides, a military cooperation accord is under discussion with the Philippines. These examples suggest that Russia may be apprehended as a regional equilibrium factor in the increase of the Chinese power and in the relations between China and USA.

Undoubtedly, the world goes towards the multipolarity. Besides, the Russian economy did not collapse and the army did not oppose Putin. Rather, Russia turned into a major destination for the free peoples of the world, such as Venezuela, Brazil, Cuba, Colombia, Algeria, etc. All these indices show that the Russian Ukrainian war, led by NATO, is the start of a multipolar world. In this context, the world moves towards economic blocks and political allies. It seems that the West lives its last years of dominating the world because some states started calling for a multipolar world.

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