

Committee: DISEC 1

Topic: The Question of peace in Ukraine

Chair: Charlie Bennet

School: Bede's

Summary

Ever since the declaration of war, Ukraine and Russia have been stuck in a gruelling conflict that has lasted around a year and a half, with no end in sight. Both sides have made several accusations of war crimes, attacking civilian populations and mistreating prisoners of war. It has been the forefront of news articles in various newspapers and has garnered international intervention from most major powers, whether it's aiming to broker a peace deal or it's sending weapons and aid to their respective side, it has caused divisions in Europe that haven't been seen since the Cold War era. A war in Europe hasn't been seen since World War 2, and everyone is watching nervously to see how it will play out.

Definition of Key Terms

Prisoner of War – any person who is captured or interned by a belligerent power during war.

War crime – a violation of the laws of war that gives rise to individual criminal responsibility for actions by combatants in action.

Causus Belli – an act or event that either is used to justify or provokes a war.

Sanction – an official order, approval, or punishment taken against a country or a person to make them obey international law or a rule.

Denounce - to criticise something or someone strongly and publicly.

Background Information

On the 24th of February, Russian military forces invaded Ukraine and launched a full military offensive. The United Nations regarded this as “a violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine”. Whilst there had been instability in the region for almost a century, the conflict in Ukraine is at an all-time peak of tension. Since the 24th of February to the 30th of June the OHCHR has reported that over 9177 Civilians have been killed during the conflict which include a total of 535 children with almost 16,000 civilians being injured. This has caused the international community to rally behind Ukraine with a vast

anti-Russian and anti-Putin movement throughout the world. International aid has been at the forefront of the debate of peace in Ukraine. Countries like the United States of America have given 70.7 billion Euros since the war began and other countries giving various amounts such as: European Union 35.6 billion Euros, United Kingdom 10.74 billion Euros, Germany 10.68 billion Euros, Japan 6.62 billion Euros etc.

The most notable precursor to the conflict in Ukraine was the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea. Throughout late 2013 and early 2014, Ukrainian civilians were unhappy with the pro-Russian political direction that President Viktor Yanukovich had taken the country in. Whilst Yanukovich had previously created a strong relationship with the European Union, it was his victory in 2010 that sparked the change. This led to the Euromaidan movement. Mass protests erupted throughout Ukraine that demanded the restoration of closer ties with the European Union and the removal of President Yanukovich.

As a result of the Euromaidan movement President Yanukovich fled Ukraine, and a new interim government was formed. However, Russia viewed the removal of a pro-Russian President as a threat, especially considering the historically close ties between Russia and Crimea. This led to a Russian controlled and internationally unrecognised referendum surrounding the issue of Crimea. The referendum offered the choices of whether to join Russia or to restore Crimea's 1992 constitution or stay in Ukraine. Yet this vote took place with the presence of Russian military forces, raising concerns about its legitimacy. As a result of the referendum, Russia officially annexed Crimea in March 2014, making it a part of the Russian Federation. Since 2014, and the escalations in 2022, there has been a global push towards regaining peace in the Eastern Region. The international community has a history of acting to create peace in the region with the historic 2014 case. The Minsk Protocol and the Minsk II Agreement stand as historical examples of the international community backing peace in the region.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Ukraine

The designated victim of the war, Ukraine has held off the Russian for the duration of the war and has been in the process of a counteroffensive. They have received aid and support from most of the Western world and have accused Russia of several war crimes during the war.

Russia

Widely considered the aggressor in the war, Russia initially was advancing well onto Kyiv but is now slowly being pushed back by the Ukrainian forces. They have also accused Ukraine of being Fascists who are terrorising Russian people in Eastern Ukraine.

United States of America

The United States of America are the main ally of Ukraine, contributing the most out of any country to the Ukrainian war effort. They have been sanctioning and condemning Russia for previous incidents like the Russian occupation of Georgia and have further placed sanctions on Russia because of the war.

Poland

Poland has also been a significant contributor to the war effort in Ukraine, taking in lots of refugees and supplying lots of weapons to the Ukrainians. An incident occurred earlier in 2023 where a missile, thought to be Russian at the time, hit a Polish border village and Ukraine and Poland took the opportunity to immediately escalate the situation to a near-conflict scenario, which was eventually diffused when the missile was found to be a misdirected Ukrainian missile. This incident demonstrated Poland's hatred of Russia and their willingness to oppose Russia at any given opportunity.

Germany

Germany has also contributed a lot to the Ukrainian war effort, but not many weapons as Germany, since the end of WW2, has been encouraged and persuaded to be a mostly demilitarised nation. However, when the Ukraine war began, other NATO members encouraged Germany to remilitarise and since then, have sent crucial military equipment like Leopard II tanks to Ukraine.

China

China is considered the main ally of Russia in this conflict and has supplied them with numerous new weapons and equipment. While China is technically 'neutral', it is evident to the world that China is on Russia's side and will continue to support them. However, China has been active in peace talks and has contributed greatly to brokering a peace deal.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description
1991	- Ukraine becomes an Independent State
1994	- Budapest Memorandum Signed (Honouring Ukraine's Sovereignty)
2004	- Orange Revolution (Overthrowing of pro-Russian forcefully elected president)

2008 - Russia fights NATO membership bid for Ukraine

2013, 2014 - Euromaidan Protests

2014 - Russia Annexes Crimea

2019 - Zelensky is elected Ukrainian President under ending war with Russia and anti corruption manifesto

2021 - Putin demands security guarantees and deploys troops to Ukraine border

Feb 2022 - Putin officially recognises breakaway Donetsk and Luhansk regions

Feb 2022 - Russia launches invasion of Ukraine

Sept 2022 - Ukraine causes Russian Retreat

Sept 2022 - Putin struggles to create forces and calls up 300,000 reservists

Oct 2022 - Russia Annexes Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya regions

June 2023 - Wagner Mutiny and rebels against Russian Military

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

Geneva Conventions

Reports of sexual violence, torture and killings of prisoners of war and forceable deportation described by (Nekrasova) have all come to light since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine. These all can be cited to breach different aspects of the Geneva Conventions and break numerous international laws.

Minsk Agreements

The Minsk Protocol and the Minsk II Agreement are a series of agreements to end violence in the Donbas region after Russian backed separatists engaged in violence across Ukraine. This was extended by a memorandum after the treaties were broken commonly up to two weeks after their signing. Both Minsk and Minsk II are the last main examples of bilateral partisanship between Ukraine, Russia and the International community.

UN Aggression Resolution

In March 2022, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution dubbing the conflict in Ukraine as "Aggression against Ukraine by Russia" (Eleventh Emergency Special Session of the UN General

Assembly) The Assembly, through the resolution, urged Member States to cooperate in the spirit of solidarity to address the global impacts of the war on food security, energy, finance, the environment and nuclear security and safety. Understanding that arrangements for a lasting peace should consider these factors, the Assembly also called upon all nations to support the Secretary-General in his efforts to address these impacts.

Russia-Ukraine Friendship Treaty

The Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation, and Partnership between Ukraine and the Russian Federation was an agreement between Ukraine and Russia, signed in 1997, which fixed the principle of strategic partnership, the recognition of the inviolability of existing borders, and respect for territorial integrity and mutual commitment not to use its territory to harm the security of each other.

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

Minsk Agreements

Brokered by the organisations for security and cooperation in Europe (OSCE), it allowed the creation of a buffer zone and dialogue to take place in the region. Whilst this resolved the issue of the territorial advancements it did not end a heightened political tension between Russia, Ukraine and Pro Russian Separatist groups.

Normandy Format

The Normandy Format is a diplomatic group consisting of Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France which aimed to create dialogue to end conflict in Ukraine during the 2014 Annexation of Crimea.

Trilateral Contact Groups

Before the conflict, representatives from Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE would meet regularly to discuss and work on measures to de-escalate the conflict and to allow it to come to a peaceful resolution.

Crimea Platform

The Crimea Platform was a political initiative created in 2021, to keep the Annexation of Crimea at the forefront of international debate. It aimed to de-occupy Crimea and restore Ukraine's territorial integrity and end the conflict.

Work of China

China has stood at the forefront of current peace negotiations claiming to be a neutral entity. A plan outlined by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, discusses the importance of bringing Ukraine and Russia together to make sure that hostilities are ceased, nuclear power plants are kept safe and so they can reduce strategic risks.

Possible Solutions

NATO Adoption of Ukraine

By NATO adopting Ukraine as a member, it would create a situation where Russia could not justify a conflict with a country in alliance that would protect them from that conflict. This would extend NATO's region of influence around Eastern Europe and prevent any further acts of aggression or conflict involving the Russian Federation.

Russian Isolation

The absolute and sole isolation of Russia from all aspects of the international community would create a situation where Russia would no longer financially be able to support its aggression in Ukraine but create further conflicts in the eastern region. By creating a situation where Russia has to be solely dependent on its own domestic services, there could be the outcome that it cannot justify a war and will create peace in Ukraine.

Further Sanctions

Sanctions have already been placed on; over 1,000 individuals who are believed to be connected to the Kremlin, Russian Exports, Russian Financial Assets and have been removed from the international

banking system. However, this has not gone far enough. Complete sanctions on: the free movement of Russian citizens, the financial assets of all Russian citizens both domestic and abroad, the complete removal of Russian dignitaries from nations and the absolute ban on Russian individuals from taking part in international events are to be taken into consideration. Whilst this move is barbaric, it would have the potential to cause a political surge in ending Putin's chokehold on the Kremlin and allow Russia to remove itself from Ukraine, creating peace in the region.

Move to Renewability

Historically Russia's largest exports are fuels and energy products making up a total of 63% of total shipments which can be broken down into 26% being crude oil and natural gas and a further 10% of their total shipments being precious metals. Whilst Russia has tactically sent Europe into economic instability due to cutting off their oil and gas pipes, this could be reversed to create peace. The move to sustainability would rob Russia of 73% of their total exports making it hard for Russia to grow or to stay competitive economically. This worldwide move would benefit the world both economically, environmentally and grow peace in the region, as it would prevent the war from becoming worthy of fighting.

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