"DIME" Analysis of the Conflict in Eastern Ukraine

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Following the Maidan Revolution in 2014, the competing interests of the main actors in Ukraine and globally stalled the process of conflict resolution. The geopolitical view of the situation prevented focusing on the regional challenges such as the humanitarian situation and were unlikely to facilitate positive developments in the peaceful settlement of the conflict. The Minsk Agreements were questioned by both sides, although they were the only existing framework for the settlement of the conflict. The United Nations efforts in conflict management were limited due to controversial views between the West and Russia. This paper uses DIME conflict analysis to examine the various actors involved in the conflict between Ukraine and the separatist movements in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine from 2014 to the invasion of Ukraine in 2022. DIME is an acronym for Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economic. The various parties and stakeholders involved in the conflict in eastern Ukraine are listed and characterized under these four descriptors.

Keywords: conflict Russia and Ukraine, humanitarian situation in Donbas, DIME conflict analysis, U.S.-Russia relationships

INTRODUCTION

The armed conflict and the hostilities in eastern Ukraine are in the eighth year. The clash may escalate as the rhetoric between Russia and the United States becomes more intensified. All-out war may result. The socio-economic situation and the hardship of the conflict affected population, representing around 5.2 million men, women, and children, remains more than difficult and challenging. The humanitarian crisis is not addressed effectively and leaves the population residing along both sides of the line of contact in a poorly, deprived, challenging, and deteriorating state, constantly exposed to the direct impacts and threats of hostilities. The overall security situation in eastern Ukraine remains tense, volatile and unpredictable. Furthermore, international humanitarian law and human rights continues to be repeatedly violated. The population, primarily on non-government-controlled areas (NGCA) is facing multifaceted difficulties and hardship, depriving them from basic rights and services.

This paper uses DIME conflict analysis to examine the various parties involved in the current conflict. DIME, an acronym for Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economic, is used by the U.S. military to describe the parties and stakeholders of a conflict, providing insights into their roles, motivations, and purposes. In the DIME model of public diplomacy, Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economic (DIME) are considered the main instruments of national power. The strength of the state lies in applying the instruments of national power to serve to achieve national strategic objectives

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT

In 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed, Ukraine declared its independence on the 24 of August, followed by and formalized with a referendum in December 1991. More than 90 percent of the voters confirmed the declaration during the referendum of independence and Leonid Kravchuk was elected as the first president of the newly born state of Ukraine (CSCE, 1992, p. 1). "Ukraine's unfinished revolution of the early 1990's produced an unhealthy continuity of elites" (Forbrig & Shepherd, 2005, p. 33), which vary left and right. However, Ukraine "resulted by settled border and territorial issues with Russia, created its own army, navy and air force and established diplomatic and legal foundations for integration with European political, economic and security organizations" (Plokhy, 2015, p. 325). The economy started to move from a state ruled economy to a liberal one. Transition to the market economy resulted in the painful eight-year recession and drastic decline in production.

In June 1994, Ukraine signed a partnership and cooperation agreement between the European community and its member states, with the objectives as determined in Article 1 of the agreement: "to provide an appropriate framework for the political dialogue between the parties allowing the development of close political relations, promote trade and investment and harmonious economic relations between the Parties and so to foster their sustainable development, provide a basis for mutually advantageous economic, social, financial, civil scientific technological and cultural cooperation, and to support Ukrainian efforts to consolidate its democracy and to develop its economy and to complete the transition into a market economy" (European Union, 1994). The economic recovery and GDP growth was only registered six years after, when economic reforms began.

A reform program with assistance of the International Monetary Fund was initiated in October 1994 including the privatization of medium and large enterprises. This continued during the presidency of Leonid Kuchma between 1994 and 2004. However, the economy still performed poorly until the end of the decade.

Novelties on the security aspect appeared in January 1994 when NATO and Ukraine signed a Partnership for Peace (PfP) Framework Document to deepen their political and military ties and to contribute further to the strengthening of security within the Euro-Atlantic area. Within the Partnership for Peace (PfP) Ukraine is participating and adhering currently to the following programs: NATO initiative on building integrity and transparency of defense institutions, the program for professional development of civilian personnel employed in Ukrainian security institutions, NATO Defense Education Enhancement Program (DEEP), and NATO Trust Fund in utilizing small arms and light weapons and conventional ammunition in Ukraine (NATO, 2019). The aim of the programs is to conduct government reforms and establish strong and transparent security and defense structures.

In 1996, Ukraine adopted a new constitution and introduced the Hryvnya as its new currency. Due to the Constitution of 1996, Leonid Kuchma could not run for a third term as president. Yet, "politically, with left and right parties increasingly passive anyway, Kuchma and the oligarchs were able to blunt any challenge to power by exploiting the local arts of 'political technology' – playing divide and rule" policy (Wilson, 2014, p. 42).

In 1997, Ukraine and Russia signed intergovernmental agreements on the division, basing, and costs of the Black Sea Fleet. The financial situation deteriorated again in 1998 because of the Russian financial crisis. Further reforms were implemented in 2000, which led to recovery of the economy in the following years (Åslund, 2015, pp.65-69). The global financial crisis in 2008 impacted the economy, forcing Ukraine to borrow from the World Bank.

In the meantime, at the end of 2004, the parliamentary opposition called for mass protests triggered by massive attempts at fraud during the presidential elections in November 2004. Twenty-four (24) candidates contested in the election, although already pre-election polls clearly indicated that only two of them, Viktor Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovych, the incumbent Prime Minister, enjoyed any significant support. (Viktor Yushchenko derived support in western and some northern regions, while Viktor Yanukovych enjoyed support in the east of the country, and in southern regions and Crimea, while the central regions were to be keenly contested by both candidates.) Serious disparity between preliminary results and the released results from the Central Electoral Commission resulted in mass demonstrations with hundreds of thousands of citizens supported by various non-governmental organizations. Finally, Viktor Yushchenko won the elections. The protests ended peacefully and without any victims after five weeks and entered the history books as the "Orange Revolution" (OSCE, 2005).

During the presidential elections in 2010, eighteen (18) candidates were registered. The final candidates were Ms. Yulia Tymoshenko, member of the All-Ukrainian Union – Motherland and Mr. Viktor Yanukovych of the Party of Regions. Ms. Tymoshenko was the first woman to enter a second round of a presidential election in Ukraine. Both candidates had been allies during the "Orange Revolution" and became political opponents during the 2010 election campaign.

On 14 February 2010, the Central Electoral Commission declared Mr. Yanukovych winner with 48.95 per cent of the votes against 45.47 per cent for Ms. Timoshenko (OSCE, 2010). "Yanukovych presented himself as a committed market and economic reformer and he soon visited Brussels, Moscow, and Washington in that order" (Åslund, 2015, p. 82). Although Ms. Timoschenko challenged the results of the election, Viktor Yanukovych became president of Ukraine.

2014 Maidan Revolution

In 2012, an agreement between Ukraine and the European Union was initiated but was not signed by the president. Yanukovych was looking for closer ties to the Russian Federation. Pro-western demonstrations, initiated in December 2013 and continuing until end of February 2014 (again as in 2004 at the Maidan square), led to riots and clashes between the demonstrators and law enforcement agencies and ended with 78 fatalities (Secretary General of the Council of Europe, 2015, p. 21). Viktor Yanukovych fled to Russia. In the aftermath of the turmoil, the Russian Federation annexed Crimea, pro-Russian demonstrations were held in Sevastopol, and armed formations took control of strategically important facilities. Thereafter, a referendum was held on 16 March 2014 that ended in the formal independence of Crimea. Two days later on 18 March 2014, Crimea was incorporated by the Russian Federation, although multiple treaties guaranteed the territorial integrity of former Ukrainian Socialist Republic (Merezkho, 2015). The annexation contravened agreements made following the fall of the USSR within the framework of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which mention the principle of territorial integrity and inviolability of borders of the former Soviet Republics. The European Union and the United States immediately accused Russia of violating international law and Ukraine's constitution.

In both the "Orange Revolution" and the "Euromaidan", the Maidan, Kyiv's main square was used as a gathering place and stage. In the second instance, the protests ended tragically in the death of 78 people. In both cases, the "West" supported the efforts of the protesters whereas Russia condemned them. The euphoric atmosphere of Euromaidan was very similar to that of Orange Revolution. However, "the Maidan was tainted with blood and Ukraine was subject to severe Russian military aggression, with Russia having annexed Crimea and devastated large parts of Donbas" (Åslund, 2015, p. 111).

At the end of 2013 and beginning of 2014, clashes occurred mainly in the southeast of Ukraine, in Kharkiv and Odessa. In May 2014, 48 people died in an abandoned building in Odessa, which caught fire during confrontations and hundreds more were injured at that time (OHCHR, 2014, p. 10). After the incident, the authorities were able to restore the public order and gained back control, whereas in the Donbas fighting continued and activists took control over strategically important buildings. In May 2014, rebel groups called by Ukrainians as separatists or terrorists declared the "People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk – DPR and LPR" (Yekelchyk, 2015, pp. 141-144).

Efforts for conflict resolution gained an international dimension. The "Normandy Format" was created on 6 June 2014, during the 70th anniversary of the landing of the allies in the Normandy and involves the leaders of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine in resolving the conflict. The involvement of France and Germany became and remains the most important factor in the Normandy Format (de Galbert, 2015), especially in terms of reaching the Minsk I and Minsk II agreements (European Parliament, 2018). The "Minsk Agreements" are the outcome of international peace efforts (Normandy Format) and comprise of two documents, negotiated in September 2014 and February 2015 in Minsk. The agreements underlined the immediate and complete end of all fighting, withdrawal of heavy weapons, functioning systems of monitoring and verification, amnesty for those involved in the Donetsk and Luhansk events, exchange of hostages and illegally detained persons, humanitarian aid for all in need, reestablishment of Ukraine's control over its territory and other important measures. In May 2014, the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG), which is coordinated by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), was established with representatives of Ukraine, Russia, and certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Since May 2015, it has been structured into working groups on security, political, economic, and humanitarian issues (OSCE, 2015, 2016).

On 5 September 2014, the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) after consultations in Minsk reached a twelve-point agreement for a ceasefire and a process to resolve the conflict (MINSK I). On 12 February 2015 after lengthy negotiations, a package of measures was agreed upon and signed (MINSK II), but despite intense efforts the package was not implemented. The agreements continued to be violated and the armed conflict resumed. In consideration of the situation in Ukraine, the Permanent Council (PC) of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) decided to deploy a special OSCE monitoring mission of international observers to Ukraine (OSCE, 2014). Since March 2014, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) has operated throughout Ukraine, including the territories not controlled by the Ukrainian government. It is playing a key role in monitoring activities and the conflict resolution.

After the annexation of Crimea and the outbreaks of hostilities in eastern Ukraine in 2014, the relations between Ukraine and Russia have continued to deteriorate. Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada (in February 2016) conducted a process of de-communization of toponyms, changing the names of hundreds of settlements in the government-controlled areas, as one attempt to transform political commitment. Ukraine's political commitment to Euro-Atlantic integration continues.

Internal issues and relations with Russia hampered the process of Euro-Atlantic integration and the general political situation in Ukraine. An example of the difficulties happened on 25 November 2018, when three Ukrainian naval vessels, a tugboat and two gunboats, while transiting in the waterways from the Black Sea to the Sea of Asov, were rammed and fired at in the Kerch Strait by the Russian coastguard and after that the ships and the crews were detained. Because of the incident, the President of Ukraine proposed martial law (Bentzen, 2018). In response to Russia's violation of international law, Ukraine sent three warships from Odessa in the Black Sea through the Sea of Azov to Mariupol. On the other side, Russia accused Ukraine of illegally entering their territorial water.

While fighting remained intense in the Donbas region and civilian casualties still occurred, the greatest threat to peace was the massing of Russian troops on Ukraine's east and northern borders as well as the Crimean Peninsula. In the meantime, Russia's military and intelligence services developed the capacity to act decisively in Ukraine and it is believed they infiltrated the Ukraine and supported the Donbas separatists. Cyber warfare and a battle of disinformation and propaganda bombarded the Ukrainian people. In the meantime, Russia claimed it had not interfered internally in Ukraine's internal affairs, but it is evident that the secession movement in the Donbas had both Russia's moral and material support.

In December 2021, Undersecretary of State Victoria Nuland outlined the United States' position regarding Russia and Ukraine before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. She stated: "We don't know where the Russian President Putin has made a decision to attack Ukraine or overthrow its government, but we do know he's building the capacity to do so. Much of this comes right out of Putin's 2014 playbook but this time, it is on a much larger and more lethal scale." She claimed to be engaging Russia diplomatically, warning Russia of the costs and consequences of military action. The U.S. was also

strengthening Ukrainian defenses and helping them fight disinformation. In addition, the U.S. met with NATO and the OSCE and other allies to send a united message: "Russia must deescalate, pull back its forces and return to negotiations" (Nuland, 2021). Nulan's comments became prophetic when Russian forces invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

From the very beginning of the armed conflict in Ukraine, the presence of many actors has made the situation very complex. These include the European Union (and individual EU states), Russia, United States and Turkey (positioning itself as protector of the Crimean Tatars rights, endangered by the secession of Crimea and its annexation to the Russian Federation).

All of these actors have their own interests in the conflict. The interest of U.S. could be NATO presence and democratization in the east of Europe, while European Union priority is to keep stability on its eastern borders, offering opening the market and "possible" membership. On the other side, the basic goal of Russia could be to prevent Ukrainian NATO integration and to keep geopolitical influence. The different actors have varying perceptions of the conflict in Ukraine, related to their individual goals and interests. These are identified in the next section.

METHODOLOGY: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS

Conflict management is the process of resolving conflict, whether among individuals, in organizations, or between nations. The purpose of conflict analysis is to help in understanding, resolving, and managing conflict, where mainly multilateral diplomacy and bodies are trying to resolve or to manage it. Guliyev and Gawrich (2021) used Zartman and Touval's conceptual framework to analyze the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) mediation efforts in Eurasian secessionist conflicts: the Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) **conflict** between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the **conflict** in Eastern **Ukraine**. They claimed that "OSCE mediation strategies were constrained given its weak organizational capacity, lack of legal empowerment and adverse geopolitical environment." Because these structural limitations, the OSCE is more "effective in containing **conflict** than contributing to **conflict** resolution." Zartman and Touval (1985) indicated that mediation must be understood as a form of third-party intervention focusing on negotiations and that mediators "suggest ideas for a compromise, and they negotiate and bargain directly with the adversaries" (pp. 31–32).

The Public Diplomacy Council (2021) writes: "No longer can governments decide the world's fate irrespective of their own and other nations' publics. Both "old" and "new" media mobilize publics as never before. Leaders consult stakeholders, carefully analyze public opinion on a daily basis, and seek to shape media support. Deeply held values and cultural norms affect public perceptions and judgments about issues."

Conflict management and resolution as well as public diplomacy are processes for dealing with discord or facilitating peaceful and satisfactory cessations to conflict, and even potentially its transformation. Ideas and actions about how disputes are handled within various historical, geographic, political, economic, and cultural contexts and structures.

DIME is a tool used in conflict management analysis. To describe the nature of the conflict in Ukraine, the four broad elements of power are abstracted in the DIME (Diplomatic, Information, Military and Economic) method that was used as a model to describe the state of the main actors and stakeholders involved in the conflict and their different interests and objectives. In the DIME model of public diplomacy, **Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economic (DIME)** are the main **instruments of national power. The** strength of the state lies in applying the instruments of national power to serve to achieve national strategic objectives (Noordin & Lokman, 2012; Kilpeläinen et al., 2015; U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2018). (This should not be confused with the World Bank's Development Impact Evaluation initiative – **DIME.)**

The conflict in Ukraine can be defined as a proxy war originated as an extended arm in the cold war manner. On the one side, the regime in Kyiv has its allies of which the most important are the U.S. and leading EU states. On the other side, they are opposed by Russia and the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR), which are in favor of pro -Russian ideology and identity.

FINDINGS

The following tables and conclusions provide conflict management analysis of the situation in Ukraine from 2014 to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2014. This analysis may provide insights into the current escalation of the situation and suggest possible approaches to resolution and outcomes form the struggle. The first five tables describe the behaviors in the form of DIME analysis and the goals and interests of the main actors in the conflict. The main actors are Ukraine (Table 1), Russia (Table 2), the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) (Table 3), the European Union (Table 4), and the United States (Table 5). Organizations involved in negotiations and working toward peace are described in the next three tables: the United Nations (Table 6), the Normandy Format, which included France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine (Table 7), and the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine (TCG), which included the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Russia, Ukraine, and the Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic.

Table 1 provides a conflict analysis for Ukraine. It represents a systematic study of DIME, the profile, nature, and behaviors of the main actor as well as its interests and goals. It provides a description of the nature of the conflict from its point of view. Following the table are conclusions drawn from the analysis and the historical review.

TABLE 1
CONFLICT ANALYSIS – UKRAINE

Main Actor	UKRAINE
Main Actors′ Behavior	**D:** Requested support from International Community; Minsk Process; Normandy-format; Non – Recognition Territorial integrity Policy. **I:** Information campaigns; restoring information channels to the nongovernment-controlled territories; promoting Ukrainian identity and increasing resilience of citizens against Russian propaganda. **M:** Antiterrorist and Joint Forces Operations; strengthening military capabilities; regaining control of the nongovernment-controlled territories and re-establishing the sovereignty and integrity of the country. **E:** Social services and economic support to the people residing on the nongovernment-controlled territories; energy independence; association and free trade agreement (AA and DCFTA - EU); achieve better economic standards.
Main Actor′s Goals or Interests	Territorial integrity (including Crimea) and full control of internationally recognized state borders. Resolution of the conflict; reintegration. Withdrawal of non-government armed formations. Stronger relationship with Western allies (EU and NATO). Humanitarian aid for Internally Displaced Persons (IDP). Financial support and military aid by Western Allies.
Nature of Crisis	Bilateral ("aggression" from Russian Federation) Armed Conflict

Conclusions From Table 1: Conflict Analysis – Ukraine

Ukraine´s main interest would be to re-gain control of the nongovernment-controlled territories and to re-establish the sovereignty and integrity of the country within the internationally recognized borders, to further deepen and strengthen its relations towards the West, and to seek a full integration into the NATO and EU. In support of these interests, especially concerning the integrity of the state borders, Ukraine on international level, such as the United Nations General Assembly, often referred to the "Budapest Memorandum of 1994", in which the United States, United Kingdom and Russia committed to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine and to refrain from any threat or use of

force. Ukraine was represented in the existing negotiation platforms to seek a political solution of the situation. To re-gain control of the nongovernment-controlled territories in the beginning of the conflict an "anti-terrorist operation" (ATO) was launched and replaced in 2018 with a "Joint Forces Operation" (JFO) in the east with the aim to liberate the area, using military means, with limited success. The military and security situation could be described as frozen, but still kinetic along the line of contact, although major gain of terrain could not be achieved. Economically Ukraine's economic output was severely affected due to the conflict. It is seeking closer ties with the EU and implementing standards and regulations in relation to the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) as a part of the Association Agreement (AA) to improve the economic situation.

On the other side, Russia's vision of the nature of the conflict and its interests and objectives are presented in Table 2: Conflict analysis – Russia.

TABLE 2
CONFLICT ANALYSIS – RUSSIA

Main Actor	RUSSIA
Main Actor's Behavior	**D:** Involvement in diplomatic negotiation formats – no predisposition for concessions; permanent member of the UN Security Council. **I:** Creating and presenting its own narrative about the causes of conflict; information-controlled management. **M:** Providing weapons or other military tools to the nongovernment-controlled areas; covert military involvement. **E:** Economic support to nongovernment-controlled areas; controlling energy resources of the area.
Main Actor's Goals or Interests	Prevention of close association between Ukraine and West (NATO and the EU) to stop further eastward expansion of the West. Maintaining political presence in Ukraine and the region. Preserving power and influence, strategic assets in the Black Sea region. Protecting Russian minority in Ukraine. Maintaining control of energy resources of the area.
Nature of Crisis	Primarily geopolitical

Conclusions From Table 2: Conflict Analysis – Russia

Russia's main interest would be to strengthen and preserve its geopolitical influence in the wider Black Sea region, to protect and support Russian-speaking minorities, and to reprehend a further and deeper integration of Ukraine into Western Alliances, especially to stop a full integration and therefore a further eastern enlargement of NATO. Russia as a permanent member of the UN Security Council can block any (strong) resolution concerning the Ukraine conflict if not serving Russian interests. On the other side, Russia was represented in any existing negotiations for a political solution of the conflict, such as the Normandy format, Minsk consultations and the Trilateral Contact Group. Russian media including mainstream and social media consistently portray their own narratives about the conflict and its root causes to attempt to influence public opinion in the contested areas as well around the globe. Direct engagement and involvement of Russian troops and military activities in the Donbas conflict are still denied. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine (2019), military involvement and the provision of weapons and military tools were hidden. Economically and financially the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) and Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) depended on Russian financial support, whereas the Russian economy was negatively affected by sanctions and restrictive measures of the West.

Nature of the conflict and the interests and objectives of the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) and Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) are presented in Table 3: Conflict analysis – LPR/DPR.

TABLE 3
CONFLICT ANALYSIS – LPR/DPR

Main Actors	Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) / Donetsk People's Republic (DPR)
Main Actors′ Behaviors	**D:** Trying to interact as independent states with other actors; aspire to establish special status or "union state" with Russia; try to assert their role as participants in Minsk talks. **I:** Relying on Russian media to present themselves as independent states. **M:** Have their own armed forces; dependent on Russian capacities. **E:** Rely on Russian gas; implement Russian currency, develop, and strengthen economic relation with Russia.
Main Actors′ Goals or Interests	As minimum to achieve autonomy/special status within Ukraine. Second best is to be independent. The most desired outcome – joining Russia.
Nature of Crisis	Having in mind their Pro-Russian orientation, they see the crisis as a "*justified separatist war.*"

Conclusions From Table 3: Conflict Analysis - LPR/DPR

The main interest of the LPR/DPR would be to gain substantial autonomy or a special status. Since the two entities are not internationally recognized, foreign trade is limited to Russia. The long-term goal to become an integrated part of the Russian Federation will mostly depend on future relations between the West and Russia. Both "republics" soon after the start of the conflict held "independence referenda" and built up their administrative structures and management including armed forces and juridical systems, as well as at the end of 2014 "parliamentary and presidential elections" were held. The role of the entities on international efforts, due to non-recognition, to settle the conflict was limited to participation as observers in Minsk talks and engagement within the Trilateral Contact Group. In conjunction with Russian media and social media, their own narratives were presented and used to influence the population. The armed forces as well depend on "military aid". Economically both entities, especially since Ukraine imposed an embargo in March 2017, were totally subject to (limited) trade relations to Russia and in need of financial support.

The European Union's vision of the nature of the conflict and EU interests and objectives are presented in Table 4: Conflict analysis – European Union.

TABLE 4
CONFLICT ANALYSIS – EUROPEAN UNION

Main Actor	EUROPEAN UNION
Main Actor's Behaviors	**D:** EU – Ukraine summits EU Statements on Ukraine′s sovereignty and territorial integrity (non-recognition policy). Suspension of support for Russian Federation (OECD, International Energy Agency, new financing provided by European Bank for Reconstruction and Development). **I:** EU statements; wide press coverage in EU member states raising awareness. **M:** (CSDP) EU Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform Ukraine (EUAM/Ukraine). **E:** Sanctions in response to the crisis in Ukraine (Russian Federation undermining territorial integrity, misappropriation in Crimea). Humanitarian assistance (ECHO). EU-Ukraine Strategic Energy Partnership Support for Ukraine′s reform program. Visa-free travel.

Main Actor's Goals or Interests	Peaceful settlement of the conflict in line with international law.
	Rules based international order: the strict observance and the development of international law, including respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter (art. 3 sec. 5 TUE).
	Economy (energy security).
Methods/Tools	Diplomacy
	Sanctions
	Cooperation between EU + NATO
	Humanitarian aid
	Capacity building (education, security, health)
Nature of Crisis	Violation of international law.

Conclusions From Table 4: Conflict Analysis – European Union

The European Union´s interest would be to contribute to a peaceful restoration of the integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, to promote democratization and reform processes, and to normalize the deteriorated diplomatic and economic relations to the Russian Federation. With EU-Ukraine summits, political and economic ties were strengthened and with various measures and actions, the EU was supporting Ukraine. The EU is providing political, financial, and economic support to Ukraine. This included a support program, macro-financial assistance, autonomous trade measures and a Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) mission, in the form of the European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM) Ukraine. It promoted civilian security sector reform. Furthermore, progressively restrictive measures in response to the situation in Ukraine were imposed, which include diplomatic measures, individual restrictive measures, restrictions on economic relations with Crimea and Sevastopol, and economic sanctions and restrictions on economic cooperation. EU. Russian summits were cancelled and instead of the 2014 G-8 summit, a G-7 summit without Russian participation was held.

The European Union's fundamental values are respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality, and the rule of law. The foreign and security policy is based on diplomacy and respect for international rules. The EU supports the territorial integrity of Ukraine, condemns Russia's role in the Donbas and imposed various sanctions and measures in Russia in response of the situation in Ukraine. Furthermore, political and economic reform processes were supported, and the Association Agreement (AA) and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) were being implemented. Various capacity building activities and programs were initiated, and financial and humanitarian aid was provided. The EU and its institutions didn't obtain an immediate role in the conflict resolution. Only two of its member states, France and Germany played a key role in the conflict resolution through the Normandy Format.

When it comes to the United States, the U.S. interests and objectives could be identified as they are presented in Table 5: Conflict analysis – United States.

TABLE 5
CONFLICT ANALYSIS – UNITED STATES

Main Actor	UNITED STATES
Main Actor's Behavior	**D:** Peace negotiation support, indirect involvement in the conflict, UNSC discussions, etc. **I:** INTEL sharing - satellite imagery, cyber warfare capabilities and operations security. **M:** Military aid, training, equipment and capacity building, joint exercises. **E:** Sanctions against Russia, financial support to Ukraine.
Main Actor's Goals or Interests	Support Ukraine′s liberal values, EU and North Atlantic orientation, geostrategic competition with Russia, show of dominance and power, economic interests. Containment of Russian influence in the region and peace and stability in the wider region. Development of democratization.
Nature of Crisis	Superpower's rivalry competition. Geopolitical dominance.

Conclusions From Table 5: Conflict Analysis – United States

The U.S.´s interest would be to support Ukraine´s orientation and integration towards the West, to maintain and to strengthen its strategic dominance and role in the wider Black Sea region in security and economical dimensions and to contain Russian influence. The U.S., as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and the only remaining "globally projecting superpower" was not directly engaged in peace negotiations besides UN efforts. An extension of the Normandy format with U.S. participation was discussed in 2019 but did not take place. The U.S. supported the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and played a substantial role in training, advising and equipping the Ukrainian Army. As the EU, the U.S. imposed restrictive measures and sanctions on Russia.

The United Nations goals and interests, methods and tools used in conflict managements are presented in Table 6: Conflict management analysis – United Nations.

TABLE 6
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS – UNITED NATIONS

Actor	UNITED NATIONS
Goals/Interests	Restoring international peace and security in the region. Restoring the sovereignty, political independence, unity, and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders (UNGS Res. 68/262). Peaceful resolution of the conflict (Chap. VI). Strengthening minority rights protection and human rights in general (REP. 2015).
Methods/Tools	UNGA resolution 68/262 (2014) on territorial integrity of Ukraine (non-binding). UNGA resolution 74/168 (2019) on Crimea (calling RF to withdraw troops); human rights report on Crimea and Sevastopol. UNHRC – Special Reporter Report on minority issues (2015). UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission (2014). No UNSCR veto of Russian Federation.

Conclusions From Table 6. Conflict Management Analysis – United Nations

The United Nations' purpose according to its founding principles is to maintain and restore [international] peace and security and to promote human rights and freedom. It addressed the crisis in Ukraine through its main organs. The primarily main body dealing with the maintenance of international peace and security, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) with its five permanent members remained in a "deadlock" due to controversial views and interests concerning the nature of the conflict, as described in the conflict analysis of Russia and United States in this paper. Nevertheless, the crisis in Ukraine still remains on the UN Agenda and is discussed during General Assembly and Security Council meetings. Furthermore, the UN was the only International Organization with an established mandate for a human rights monitoring mission, agreed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Government of Ukraine in summer 2014. Various UN agencies were present and active in the area, addressing challenges of the conflict. The limitation of the UN to restore peace and security therefore is based on the veto of Russia to adopt a (strong) UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR), consequently only non-binding UN General Assembly Resolutions (UNGA) such as 68/262 dated 27 March 2014 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine were adopted.

The Normandy Format's goals and interests, methods and tools used in conflict managements are presented in Table 7: Conflict management analysis – Normandy Format (France, Germany, Russia, Ukraine).

TABLE 7
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS – NORMANDY FORMAT

Actor	NORMANDY FORMAT (France, Germany, Russia, Ukraine)
Goals/Interests	End armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Ensure commitment at highest level. Negotiate a roadmap for peace. Ensure implementation of Minsk agreements.
Methods/Tools	Meeting at highest level. Diplomacy (including bilateral).

Conclusions From Table 7. Conflict Management Analysis – Normandy Format
(FRA; GER; RUS; UKR)

The Normandy format was the only platform on highest international political level, next to the efforts of the United Nations, with the ability to resolve the conflict. Established in June 2014, it excluded representatives of the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) and Donetsk People's Republic (DPR). The Minsk Agreements were the outcome of consultations between the leaders of the participating countries, but still due to the limited number of meetings and the controversial views of the represented actors, a breakthrough didn't occur. Progress toward a comprehensive settlement was constrained. "Freezing" of the conflict was the best the format was able to achieve. In doing this, the Normandy Format was partially successful.

The Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine goals and interests, methods and tools used in conflict managements are presented in Table 8: Conflict management analysis - Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine (TCG). The trilateral group contained representatives of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Russia, Ukraine, and the Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic.

TABLE 8
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS –
TRILATERAL CONTACT GROUP ON UKRAINE (TCG)

Actor	**TRILATERAL CONTACT GROUP ON UKRAINE (TCG)**: Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Russia, Ukraine, and the Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic.
Goals/Interests	Implementation of MINSK PROTOCOL Security: Permanent Ceasefire. Political solution. Social – economic recovery/reconstruction. Improvement of humanitarian situation. Ceasefire
Methods/Tools	Creating working groups on four aspects of the conflict Political Security Humanitarian Socio-economic

Conclusions From Table 8: Conflict Management Analysis – Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine (TCG)

The Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine (TCG) with representatives of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Russia, Ukraine, and the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) and Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), was the main confidence-building actor in the conflict, implementing the conclusions of Normandy Summits. With its four subgroups on political, security, humanitarian, and socio-economic issues, it was able to contain further escalation, to reduce ceasefire violations, and to improve the economic and humanitarian situation in the area. Considering the achievements in conflict management, the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) could be assessed as partially successful in achieving its goals.

CONCLUSIONS

During the period following the Maidan Revolution to the invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces, the conflicting interests of the main actors and the changed global security landscape continued to contribute to a stalled process of conflict resolution and settlement of peace in Ukraine. The geopolitical view on the conflict prevented focusing on the regional challenges such as the humanitarian situation and were unlikely to facilitate positive developments in the peaceful settlement of the conflict. The Minsk Agreements were questioned by the sides, but until the invasion were unlikely to be replaced and were the only existing framework for the settlement of the conflict. The United Nations efforts in conflict management were limited due to controversial views between the West and Russia and a United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) was unlikely to be adopted. The West feared increasing influence and even expansion of Russia towards the borders of the EU and imposed various measures and sanctions. Russia was concerned about the possibility of EU and NATO membership for Ukraine, which would decrease trade and provide a military threat. Its concern for Russian minorities in Ukraine may have been only a ruse, which provided an excuse for intervention in the country.

The Trilateral Contact Group, the main (and almost only) actor in confidence building measures, decided during its session on 11 March 2020 to establish an "advisory board" within the working group on political issues, which would create a platform for direct talks between Kyiv and representatives of the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) and Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), but any concession to the "rebels" in the East of Ukraine was a politically sensitive topic and faced strong opposition. The de-linking

of the ongoing conflict from geopolitics to root causes may have offered an option to fully implement the Minsk Agreements and to peacefully settle the conflict in the Donbas.

One purpose of conflict management analysis is to help humanitarian and peace building organizations to better understand the conflict and provide options to resolve humanitarian crises and bring about peace. The humanitarian situation in Ukraine was not resolved and has been exacerbated by the escalation of conflict and invasion by Russian armed forces The civilian population in the Donbas region and now throughout Ukraine is tremendously affected.

This analysis may provide insights into the current escalation of conflict in Ukraine and suggest possible approaches to resolution and outcomes from the struggle. The conflict and humanitarian situation in Ukraine can only be resolved if the goals and interests of the many actors are addressed.

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