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## Russia-Ukraine Imbroglio: An Appraisal

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### Abstract

*The impact of the political imbroglio involving Russia and Ukraine is complex and multi-layered. The proximity of Kiev and Moscow raises questions about the nature of relations between Ukraine and the West, which plays a vital role in managing the conflicts around the world to shape the future of the nations in political and economic dimensions. This study puts forth a proposition to observe in the background of the Russia-Ukraine war. The research has applied collaborative and bargaining approaches towards conflict management given by Thomas and Kilmann.*

*The study recommends that Ukrainian identity, legitimacy of authority and sovereignty should be restored. It is also suggested that the crisis can be solved with sustained and well-intentioned negotiations for conflict resolution, immediate referendums under international surveillance in disputed territories, the complete demilitarisation and non-alignment of Ukraine. The research intends to observe to what extent Western powers play their role in facilitating the dialogue instead of using Ukraine for their political agenda. There is a dire need to revisit trust-building measures between the two neighbours on the ground of their national interests and regional policies. The complicated nature and its far-reaching influence of the crisis demand an urgent handling and an enduring solution before it spirals out of control and the whole region has to bear its insidious outcomes.*

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### Introduction

"It's showing something horrible, something that involves everyone." – Serhii Zhadan, *The Orphanage*<sup>1</sup>

2022 saw one of the biggest conflicts in Europe taking a nasty turn and becoming a full-scale war. Russia launched an offensive against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, after months of tension and with the military at high alert on both sides.<sup>2</sup> This crisis has great global implications and concerns after WWII. It can turn into a war on a larger scale and transform economic and political relations in the region and also beyond. The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine has its international effects that play a crucial role in relations between many European countries. War is causing havoc in welfare and established society, with much economic loss, a great number of migrations, unemployment, and a food crisis.

Since the independence of Ukraine in 1991, the geographical position of the country has compelled it to form its policies keeping the Russian influence into account despite its orientation to the West. The prime reason for the economic and political dependency of Ukraine is its geographic reality. On the other hand, the independence of Ukraine was a huge setback for Russia's economic relations with different parts of the European countries and their military. The Ukrainian population was the main source of military troops and its geographic position provided an important strategic position to the Western front. The capital of Ukraine, Kyiv has also been a source and the centre of emotional and historical background dating back to the former Rus empires that ruled from the present capital of Ukraine.<sup>3</sup> There have been many political myths circling this historical narrative to gain pro-nationalist support for the sake of political mobilisation.

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<sup>1</sup> Serhiv Zhadan, *The Orphanage: A Novel* (Yale University Press, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> M. Fisher, "Putin's Speech and his Case for War in Ukraine", *The New York Times*, 25 February 2022. Visit at <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/world/europe/putin-ukraine-speech.amp.html>.

<sup>3</sup> P. Van Ham, Ukraine, Russia and European Security: Implications for Western Policy, *Chailot Paper*, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), 1<sup>st</sup> February 1994. Visit at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep07050.5>.

Ukraine, like other European countries, is a diverse nation in many respects from culture to political reality. It shapes its own vulnerable identity. There is a divide in the nation on the eastern and western sides. The eastern and southern sides are pro-Russian, whereas the central and western sides are pro-European. The issue of disputed borders and regions has been a bone of contention for Ukraine and Russia.<sup>4</sup> Many Russian politicians and statesmen do not accept the legitimacy of Ukraine itself along with other different neighbouring countries. Russia has been accused of assisting separatist elements in the areas where there is a majority of Russian language speakers and ethnic Russians. Pro-nationalist politicians have always looked up to them to achieve national interests in the region.

The rivalry over the Donbas region started with the independence of Ukraine in August 1991. 85 percent of the region was in Ukraine. A majority of people there speak Russian and are pro-Russian. The region had vital industrial importance in the former USSR. Both countries have contested the claims of the region.<sup>5</sup> The Ukrainian stance is that they are Ukrainian natives and must stay with Ukraine because they are a part of Ukraine's sovereign national identity. Whereas, using the pretext of language, Russia claims that the region belongs to it. Russia states that the Ukrainian administration behaves towards them as immigrants, not as people rooted in soil. Therefore, there is a need for regional autonomy or their separation from Ukraine. Either Ukraine must accept the special status of the region or give the region back to Russia where they belong.<sup>6</sup> The issue of Donbas turned formally into an armed conflict in 2014.<sup>7</sup> Russia has been continuously supporting separatist movements in the region of Donetsk and Luhansk. Many casualties occurred in just one year of the conflict and Russian-backed separatists took control of much of the populated and developed areas. Germany and France interfered to start a dialogue forum to bring peace between Russia and Ukraine.<sup>8</sup> These efforts are known as the Minsk agreements of 2014 and 2015. It was decided that the countries stop fighting and no military advancement should happen anymore considering the looming threat of

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<sup>4</sup> D. J. Galbreath, and T. Malyarenko, "Evolving Dynamics of Societal Security and the Potential for Conflict in Eastern Ukraine," *Europe-Asia Studies* 72, No.2 (2020): 209-237.

<sup>5</sup> O. Onuch and H. E. Hale, "Capturing Ethnicity: The Case of Ukraine", *Post-Soviet Affairs* 34, Nos.2-3 (2018): 84-106.

<sup>6</sup> A. Wilson, "The Donbas between Ukraine and Russia: The Use of History in Political Disputes", *Journal of Contemporary History* 30, No.2 (1995): 265-289.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

fighting over many contaminated areas. But the legitimacy of the agreement was shattered when the fighting changed into a form of war.<sup>9</sup> Many local people were dislocated and killed, and economic losses, and political instability resulted. The International Criminal Court (ICC) in November 2016 recognized that Ukraine and Russia are at war. Since then, the cases regarding financing of terrorism in the Donbas, the loss of infrastructure and loss of innocent lives are being monitored by the ICC.<sup>10</sup>

### **Russia, US, Europe and the realist school of thought**

Experts like Brzezinski viewed Russian foreign policy as being designed to be at war with the West as Moscow's mentality of the infamous Cold War era had not ended.<sup>11</sup> Putin's political legitimacy resided in framing the West as a perpetrator of violence and an enemy of Russia and its neighbouring countries.<sup>12</sup> The Moscow administration argues that the Euromaidan Revolution in 2014 and the Colour revolutions in Ukraine, Georgia and the former USSR States were not genuine public protests, but were backed by the CIA and the West to undermine the Russian interests and influence in the region and bring NATO in the Black Sea.<sup>13</sup>

The realist school of thought believes that big powers wish to maintain the balance of power in and around the region. The Monroe Doctrine by the USA is one of its examples. Therefore, the reaction of Russia against the association of Ukraine with NATO is understandable. Russia's deep security interests were challenged when the USA decided to persuade Ukraine to join NATO. In addition, the West and the USA are mainly responsible for the Ukrainian conflict. The consequences will be severe and Ukrainians will

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<sup>9</sup> I. Marchuk and A. Wanigasuriya, "The ICC Concludes its Preliminary Examination in Crimea and Donbas: What's Next for the Situation in Ukraine?", *EJIL Blog* (16 December 2020), available at <https://www.ejiltalk.org/the-icc-concludes-its-preliminary-examination-in-crimea-and-donbas-whats-next-for-the-situation-in-ukraine/>.

<sup>10</sup> I. Marchuk and A. Wanigasuriya, "Venturing East: The Involvement of the International Criminal Court in Post-Soviet Countries and its Impact on Domestic Processes", *Fordham Int'l LJ* 44 (2020): 735.

<sup>11</sup> Michael C. Paul, "Western Negative Perceptions of Russia: 'The Cold War Mentality' Over Five Hundred Years", *International Social Science Review* 76, No. 3/4 (2001): 103-121.

<sup>12</sup> M. McFaul, S. Sestanovich and J. J. Mearsheimer, "Faulty Powers: Who Started the Ukraine Crisis?", *Foreign Affairs* 93, No.6 (2014): 167-178. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24483933>.

<sup>13</sup> A. Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis: What it Means for the West* (Yale University Press, 2014).

suffer a great deal if they hold onto their besotted approach, says Mearsheimer.<sup>14</sup>

The West, on the other hand, consider Putin a dictator in pursuit of geographical wins after the disintegration of the USSR.<sup>15</sup> They argue that his ambitions will not be fulfilled by only conquering Ukraine. He is adamant about advancing toward other neighbouring countries one by one and then for European nations. Russia has used its neighbouring countries that got independence from the former USSR to develop a hybrid war. Ukraine is one of those neighbouring countries. Russia's hybrid warfare and propaganda of information to spread disinformation created an anti-West cold war narrative. The current political tactics of Russia are to create a frenzy in nations, facilitating disunity, through this information propaganda. Some of the techniques Russia has been using in Ukraine were to present its ambitious interests as simple and reasonable, the legality of its actions in Ukraine as not a conflicting party but rather an interesting power to maintain peace in the region and at the same time pointing figures to the legality and legitimacy of the actions, military might, framing its narrative regarding the conflict.<sup>16</sup> The Russian public in the past has stood with Putin's ultra-nationalist narrative. But Putin's recent step to wage the war on Ukraine also divided the nation into thinking about whether his tactics are morally and politically justified or not. Mass protests and resistance were held in different parts of the country. The state police were used to arrest those who defied Putin's policy of war with Ukraine.<sup>17</sup>

US has been boasting showcasing its military capabilities whenever he think its convenient to prove the might. The nostalgia of American supremacy over the USSR back in the 90s when it was disintegrated is over now President

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<sup>14</sup> J. J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin", *Foreign Affairs* 93, No.5 (2014): 77–89. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24483306>.

<sup>15</sup> E. C. Dunn and E. C. Bobick, "The Empire Strikes Back: War without War and Occupation without Occupation in the Russian Sphere of Influence", *American Ethnologist* 41, No.3 (2014): 405-413.

<sup>16</sup> M. Snegovaya, "Putin's Information Warfare in Ukraine, Soviet Origins of Russia's Hybrid Warfare", *Russia Report* 1 (2015), 133-135. See also *The Economist*, "The Fog of Wars", (21 October 2016). <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2016/10/20/the-fog-of-wars>.

<sup>17</sup> "Ukraine Attack: Hundreds Arrested in Anti-war Protests in Russia", *Al Jazeera*, 24 February 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/24/ukraine-crisis-hundreds-detained-in-anti-war-protests-in-russia>.

Putin is in absolute power. Putin lacks any such agendas to pursue. His attack on the nuclear power plant was evidence of his intentions. The prolonged complacent attitude of the US and other countries those took part in the Minsk agreement will work in favour of the Moscow government. Putin wants to create a new reality. He wishes to influence people and control their assets. There is a possibility sanctions by the West may shape the future of cryptocurrency, favoured by Putin, that means a new social order will be replacing the older one. Also, if no negotiations and no resolution emerges, there is a possibility of a partition of Ukraine into Eastern Ukraine of ethnic Russians and Western Ukraine of ethnic Ukrainians, probably.

Yekelchyk<sup>18</sup> opine that it was not until the mid-1990s that American policymakers recognised the strategic importance of Ukraine in the political and economic war against Russia. Once they realised it, they made Ukraine the focal point in the policies against the ever-increasing assertiveness of Russia. They arbitrated the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty between Russia and Ukraine, in which Ukraine handed over its nuclear armaments. The US and the UK assured Ukrainian their sovereignty by signing the Budapest Memorandum. Since then, Ukraine has received political and economic support from both. According to Kirby<sup>19</sup> Ukrainian president Zelenskyy fears Russia's two main targets are his family, which implies that they see the democratically elected and America-inclined president as a threat to Russia.

One of the leading interests of the US is to ensure Euro-Atlantic security and its mantra of humanitarian and economic burden of war. Whereas after NATO's presence around Ukraine, Russia has used the Baltic and the Black Sea and deployed a large number of forces with precision missile technology and has also threatened to use nuclear weapons. The conflict also has created a refugee crisis and displacement towards many bordering countries. Recently many countries have given space to Afghan refugees after the withdrawal of America and the coming of the new Afghan Taliban government. The refugee crisis has taken another turn. There have been reports that some European countries are creating space for the Ukrainian

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<sup>18</sup> S. Yekelchyk, *Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2020).

<sup>19</sup> B. P. Kirby, "Why has Russia Invaded Ukraine and What does Putin Want?", *BBC News* (09 May 2022). Visit at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56720589>.

refugees after Putin's attack on Ukraine, by dragging Afghan refugees out from their given homes.<sup>20</sup>

The American Congress has passed bills with a large amount of money for economic and military aid for Ukraine.<sup>21</sup> This is legitimate only if it is for the preservation of the sovereignty of Ukraine and for its economic structure. The purpose solely should be to defuse the tension not to escalate it.

### **21<sup>st</sup> century and war in Ukraine**

The Russians and the Western European miscalculated the political dynamics involved in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Russia considered that the war with Ukraine would be similar to the war with Georgia where normalcy could be restored with lukewarm response from the west. Whereas, the Western countries misgauge that Putin could not afford to sever its economic relations with the Western countries. The West sees Putin's audacity to start conflicts along European borders as a threat to the European World Order and a violation of international law. The political administrations of European states and the USA are eager to contain the rising threat of Moscow's tactics of 20<sup>th</sup>-century political dominance in the 21st century which is unacceptable as it does not respect the principles of sovereignty of an independent nation.

The catch-22 scenario has emerged for Russia and European nations with the beginning of war in February 2022. Ukraine is getting more support from the European countries that are dependent on Russia for gas. This is a decisive move of the West to find new sources of energy supply and reduce dependency on Russia. The nature of the conflict is unprecedentedly prone to nuclear proliferation, more dangerous than ever in the previous century, especially during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.

Yekelchik<sup>22</sup> explains that Ukraine holds great geopolitical significance as it is the second largest European country after Russia and is 'sandwiched'

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<sup>20</sup> S. Glinski, "Germany is Displacing Afghan Refugees for Ukrainians", *Foreign Policy* (22 April 2022). <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/04/20/germany-refugee-policy-afghanistan-ukraine/>.

<sup>21</sup> Remarks by President Biden on the Request to Congress for Additional Funding to Support Ukraine, *The White House*, April 28, 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/04/28/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-request-to-congress-for-additional-funding-to-support-ukraine/>.

<sup>22</sup> Yekelchik, *Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know*, 18.

between Russia and the countries of the Western alliance. Its waters and earth are rich in resources with considerable production of coal, iron, steel, rice, and other agricultural and industrial products. As to the national and political identity of Ukraine, Chenoy<sup>23</sup> has noted that there is no single Ukrainian identity, they are constituted of multifarious identities. Chenoy<sup>24</sup> likens the Ukrainian identity to that of Pakistan, India and most of the African countries because no single idea unites the people and there are several factions. However, the strongest tie holding people of Ukraine together is their shared Slavic roots. Yekelchyk<sup>25</sup> describes that the Ukrainians had to fight for their separate identity because earlier, Ukraine was considered a small part of Russia and the people were referred to as 'little Russians', historically. Ukrainians were never seen as equals by the Russians. In contemporary Ukraine, ethnic Ukrainians have a clear majority over ethnic Russians. Especially after the Donbas war, the Ukrainian national identity solidified and the pro-West and pro-secularism ultranationalists emerged opposing the pro-Russians.

Some critics have called the eastern region of Ukraine as pro-Russian and have given unnecessary attention to regional differences in political opinion. According to Menon and Rumer<sup>26</sup> that the assumption of a Ukraine polarised based on the people's sentiments toward Russia is too simplistic. There are several other foundations for distinctions in people, like, class, gender, secular identity etc. Neither the east nor west Ukraine is homogeneously and monolithically anti or pro-Russia. There are subtle gradations between them. However, the differences between the east and west are too substantial to be ignored. Ukraine's complex history has spawned the differences and they have been resurfacing during politically significant events like 2014 elections and the Orange Revolution, manifest in diverse interpretations of these events. The problem is not just about language when it is about the identity of Ukraine. Putin during a NATO summit in 2008. Ukraine is identified as not even an independent nation at all. Russia does not accept Ukrainian identity

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<sup>23</sup> A. M. Chenoy, "Ukraine's Conflict and Resolution", *Economic and Political Weekly* 49, No. 12 (March 2014): 24-26.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> S. Yekelchyk, *Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know*.

<sup>26</sup> R. Menon and E. B. Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine: The Unwinding of the Post-Cold War Order* (MIT Press, 2015).



as separate from Russia. They call it "one people" therefore for them Ukraine has no legitimate sovereignty to call itself independent.<sup>27</sup>

Chenoy<sup>28</sup> states that these differences in loyalties are also rooted in the economy. The more industrialised sectors see Russia as their only option because it would benefit their enterprises. As the eastern wing of Ukraine is considered to be pro-Russian and Russian-speaking, Putin has several times used his concern for their safety in Ukraine as a pretext for deploying forces at the border, in the 2014 conflict. 2014 saw an unprecedented escalation in the conflict with the annexation of Crimea to Russia, the toppling of the pro-Russian government in Ukraine to be replaced by a pro-West regime.

The war between Russia and Ukraine is between national interests and national survival. In the conflict of pride and survival, the chances of escalation are greater, despite the outcome. Not only is Russian president Putin's power at stake but also his career, life and national image that he cannot bear to lose, considering his authoritarian rule. On the other hand, President Zelenskyy of Ukraine is fighting the war for survival, national integrity and sovereignty of the nation. His enthusiastic speeches have been echoed bringing peace with cooperation from the West, military aid and economic sanctions on Russia.<sup>29</sup> One thing is certain, wars always end with zero-sum results. The sooner the conflagration is handled, the better it will be.

### **Paradigm of Conflict Management**

The strengths of this paradigm as compared to other paradigms are discussed to prove its suitability in managing the conflict. There are five main paradigms for dealing with a conflict, according to Miall.<sup>30</sup> The first is conflict resolution. It aims to root out the disagreement by resolving the underlying factors that caused the conflict in the first place. It tries to reach a peaceful solution by exploring innovative ways of dissolving the dispute. Conflict transformation is the thorough transformation of the political, economic and

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<sup>27</sup> T. Kuzio, *Putin's War Against Ukraine: Revolution, Nationalism, and Crime* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2017), 21.

<sup>28</sup> A. M. Chenoy, *Ukraine's Conflict and Resolution*.

<sup>29</sup> V. Zelenskyy, Speech by the President of Ukraine at the Video Conference of G7 Leaders, President of Ukraine Official Website, (08 May 2022). Visit at <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/vistup-prezidenta-ukrayini-na-videokonferenciyi-lideriv-grup-74905h>.

<sup>30</sup> H. Miall, "Conflict Transformation: A Multi-Dimensional Task", in *Transforming Ethnopolitical Conflict* edited by A. Austin *et al* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2004), 68-87.

even societal and cultural factors that caused the conflict and still help to perpetuate it. Conflict prevention means taking preventive measures to check the escalation of the conflict. Its purpose is to prevent the conflict from getting out of control and taking a violent turn. While other approaches to dealing with a conflict can be used in its later stages, conflict prevention is used to nip it in the bud and prevent it from developing into a crisis. A conflict turning into a crisis implies 'an ineradicable consequence of differences of values and interests within and between communities'.<sup>31</sup> The tendency towards violence stems from 'existing institutions and historical relationships, as well as from the established distribution of power'.<sup>32</sup> The conflict management paradigm is the most suitable for the Russia-Ukraine crisis because it advocates peaceful and constructive handling of points of dispute between the two parties by understanding each other's viewpoints and integrating solutions. Miall<sup>33</sup> calls it a way to 'design a practical, achievable, cooperative system for the constructive management of difference'.<sup>34</sup> Since conflicts are not completely avoidable in any human situation; it leads to the supposition that conflicts can only be resolved by managing them and suppressing their negative outcomes. Miall states that it is because of its unavoidable nature that the realistic way to deal with conflict is not by expecting its complete elimination but by preventing it from becoming violent.

Thomas and Kilmann<sup>35</sup> have given five approaches to conflict management: (i) the conquest or competing for approach seeks to achieve one's interests while completely neglecting the interests of the other party, (ii) the collaborating approach treats the conflict as a mutual problem and deals with the other party with respect and understanding, (iii) the bargaining or compromising approach relies on give-and-take; there is no win-win situation, (iv) the avoiding approach aims at prolonging the conflict by ignoring it, and (v) the accommodating approach attempts to restore broken ties with the other party by surrendering one's interests and satisfying the other. On the two-dimensional chart (as shown in figure 1) where

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 71.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> K. W. Thomas and R. H. Kilmann, "Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI)", TKI Profile and Interpretive Report prepared for Jane Sample, (May 2008), Available from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265565339\\_Thomas-Kilman\\_conflict\\_MODE\\_instrument](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265565339_Thomas-Kilman_conflict_MODE_instrument).

assertiveness lies on the vertical plane and cooperativeness on the horizontal plane, the collaborative approach is midway between assertiveness and cooperation. It tries to explore such ways to solve the problem as have not been explored before. It integrates the mutual interests of the parties to 'find a solution that fully satisfies the concerns of both. It involves digging into an issue to identify the underlying concerns of the two individuals and to find an alternative that meets both sets of concerns.<sup>36</sup> The bargaining or compromising approach, on the other hand, allows the parties to negotiate and surrender some of their goals in exchange for some other, more pressing ones. After the first phase of Ukraine's resistance, it adopted the position bargaining approach. Because Russia is one of the world's paramount political powers, prolonging the war would be considered a weakness of its military and geo-economic position. The nature of the conflict is such that both parties will have to compromise on certain fronts with a mutual agreement to ensure long-lasting peace and welfare of the region.

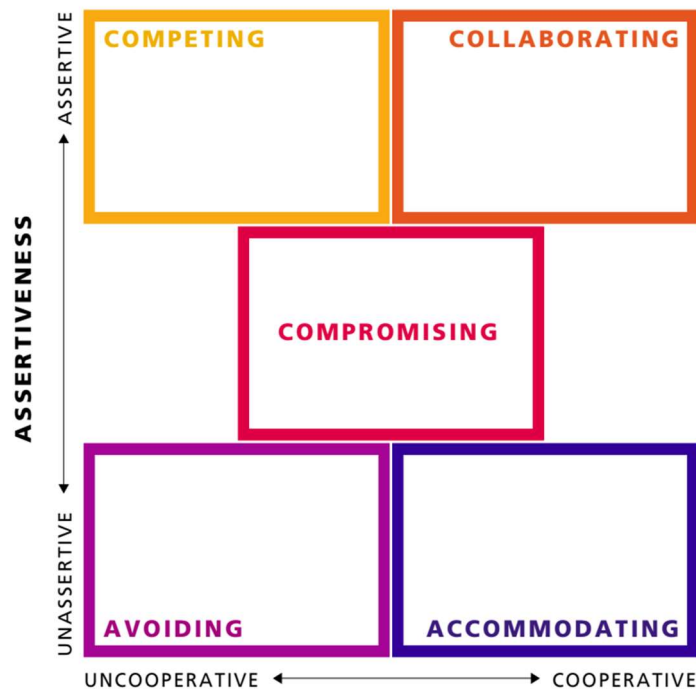


Fig 1. From Thomas and Kilmann (2008)

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

### Recommendations

The present study uses a combination of bargaining/compromising and collaborative approaches to propose a conflict management strategy.

1. *Sustained negotiations*: Negotiations and dialogue between Ukraine and Russia must be encouraged and facilitated by the European countries and the USA to prevent the conflict from turning into another frozen conflict similar to those in Azerbaijan, Moldova and Armenia during the 1990s.
2. *Conflict management in conflicted regions*: There must be negotiations between Russia and Ukraine on the issue of Donbas. The region has witnessed many casualties and destruction. For proper management of the conflict to avoid any future escalation, the issue of conflicting regions must be tackled. A referendum is necessary to curb corruption and malfunction by letting a government get elected there. It must be held in Donbas and other conflicted areas in complete international surveillance so no party could start accusing others after the result. There has not been any such effort made in the region so with utmost transparency, whatever the result, Russia and Ukraine must accept that for the welfare of the region.
3. *Reviving the Minsk Agreements*: The Minsk II agreement should be a starting point for conflict management. The war could have been prevented if the USA had played an active role in the implementation of the agreement. The US should be criticised for its disdainful approach to a peaceful resolution. In addition, the USA is not an actual party to the conflict. However, considering its influence over the world and its current relations with Ukraine, Joe Biden ought to play his role in bringing peace to Ukraine without urging it to keep fighting to no end except destruction.
4. *Only actual parties*: The prudent approach should be to unite the country rather than tearing it apart and sharing it between political powers without giving any consideration to the citizens of Ukraine who are the actual victims of this issue. The conflict must remain between Russia and Ukraine as two actual parties. These two conflicting parties must manage the conflict prudently. In the case of the involvement of the West as a party in the conflict, there are serious concerns about bargaining Ukraine away. This will also encourage other powerful states to be a threat to poor neighbouring countries. Power politics can replace cooperation. There is a chance that the world again can follow the 19<sup>th</sup>-

century political tactics of war and conflict to achieve certain economic and political interests, hence a failure of the United Nations.

5. *Withdrawal of NATO:* Great diplomacy is that which paves way for involved parties to save their dignity as happened during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Both America and Russia saved face by reaching an agreement to not attack Cuba and Russia pulled back its missiles. The political dynamics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are different. Russia's attack on Ukraine on 24th February 2022 has shown that Ukraine has a defending capability that made the West invest in Ukraine with military and economic aid. Through negotiations and with some European countries such as France and Germany as guarantors, NATO must refrain from being involved in the regional politics of Russian neighbouring countries including Ukraine.
6. *Reconciliation and bargain:* For the greater good of the region, both Ukraine and Russia should aim at reconciliation through dialogue, cease the politics of hate rhetoric and avoid a show of ammunition. Militarisation is not the solution to any conflict. The EU and Russia must stop unnecessary interference to avoid further polarisation that can be harmful to the whole region. The territorial Integrity and Political subjectivity of the Ukrainian nation must be accepted and respected. Both Russia and the EU should stop seeing Ukraine as a playground for their interests. Instead, a neutral policy, which is not inimical to Ukrainian interests, should be adopted by both. Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy has explicitly been in favour of peace in the region rather than fighting a war. His approach in this regard is commendable. However, the political situation in the region supports the bargaining approach. Putin and Ukraine through negotiations should follow a compromising approach. Ukraine should vow complete nonalignment and demilitarisation in exchange for the assurance of peace with NATO and other world powers as guarantors.
7. *Non-alignment and demilitarisation of Ukraine:* Ukraine should retreat to its neutralised role with the status quo. Another factor is the demilitarisation of Ukraine very much like Mexico with its sovereignty and identity but not in the position of proving itself to be dangerous to America. Ukraine should not tread on the path of nuclearization with the help of NATO, to use it against Russia. The association of Ukraine with NATO can create an imbalance of power in the region.
8. *The legitimacy of sovereignty:* Russia must acknowledge the independent and sovereign nature of Ukraine and its diverse distinctive

history with its national identity. The economic and political relations must strengthen the welfare of the Ukrainian people, where there is a large number of people who speak Russian. Russia must pledge to refrain from using language as a tool to provoke any insurgency in Ukraine and create disunity among different parts of Ukraine through its hybrid war propaganda.

### Conclusion

Recalling the end of September 1939, the time of War in Poland, Ryszard Kapuściński wrote, "All of them walking, riding, running somewhere-nobody knows where".<sup>37</sup> This is a true depiction of the scenario whenever a war or conflict starts. The conflict of Ukraine can be timely handled through the principle of conflict management with the bargaining and collaborative approaches. Russia needs to accept and respect the territorial integrity of Ukraine and discourage any remarks that compromise the sovereignty of an independent nation by Putin from calling it an 'artificial' country or Lavrov castigating the Kyiv regime neo-Nazis.<sup>38</sup> Without collaborating and bargaining approaches by the conflicting parties, there can be no durable solution. In conflict, there are always chances of mistakenly following approaches based on uncertain facts and sudden happenings of the events. American foreign policy is fraught with such approaches. However, we have a precedent from WWI where such approaches cost millions of lives.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, modern politics cannot be analysed through WWI lenses but it is also true that in shaping modern political dynamics, propaganda tactics have played a crucial role.

Since 2014, Russia identified NATO as a major external risk in its sphere of influence and has adopted a proactive foreign policy. The EU and the US, with their monopoly over NATO, have begun dealing with global issues and disputes according to their specific measures of war, resources, economic sanctions and military or humanitarian aid. In the hegemonic politics of Russia, the EU and USA, Ukrainians are suffering and Europeans under strains. More blood spilling and more hatred will shape inimical relations between the people of Russia and Ukraine, who have so much in common

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<sup>37</sup> R. Kapuscinski, *Imperium* (Vintage, 2013).

<sup>38</sup> "Sergei Lavrov: Kremlin concurs with Lavrov that Ukrainian regime reminiscent of Nazis", Radio Komsomol'skaya Pravda, 17 December 2018, available at <https://tass.com/politics/1036396>.

<sup>39</sup> Barbara. W. Tuchman, *The Guns of August* (Folio Society, 1997), 16.

yet are so unique and different in their identity. Russian stakes are said to be raised as the Ukrainians' resistance against the war put questions to Kremlin's might. Ukraine is strengthening its identity through creating stories of resistance. What are Russians creating to tell their generations to come? That's one of the many questions wafting around after the start of a new phase of war history.<sup>40</sup>

The conflict has also raised the matter of disarmament amid Russia's threat of using nuclear weapons. America's enormous aid of a billion dollars to Ukraine to fight against Russia should be for defensive use.<sup>41</sup> The lethal race of nuclear weaponization to use it as a strategic and defence strategy to deter war has put the world in a nuclear disaster where any country can use it as a pretext and the whole world with its planetary environment will be in danger. There is a dire need to recognise the issue to be in the national interest of all the existing countries.<sup>42</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty is of the view that there is a need to shun pursuing this race because humans should understand their responsibility as a geophysical force.<sup>43</sup>

Primarily Moscow accuses the USA of its role of monopoly through violence to fulfil its interests. The US attacked Syria and Iraq without the authorisation of the United Nations. The USA's capitalist agenda through promoting democracy and regime change policy in different parts of the world has been viewed as unjustified, unlawful and against the spirit of international law by Moscow. Using America's violent adventures as a pretext to attack the sovereignty of a nation is also morally and politically an unforgiven crime. Reforms should be introduced in the World political system to prevent such unlawful acts of brutality. All the parties and influential states must facilitate the channel of negotiations and meaningful dialogue for reaching a balanced result rather than recanting towards a new frozen issue with their political

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<sup>40</sup> Yuval N. Harari, "Why Vladimir Putin has Already Lost this War?", *The Guardian* (March 1, 2022). <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/feb/28/vladimir-putin-war-russia-ukraine>.

<sup>41</sup> The White House, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/04/28/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-request-to-congress-for-additional-funding-to-support-ukraine/>.

<sup>42</sup> J. Ibbitson, Conflict Management in a World Adrift. In *Managing the New Global Commons: Council of Councils Sixth Regional Conference, Centre for International Governance Innovation* (2014), 5-6. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep28839.7>.

<sup>43</sup> D. Chakrabarty and C. Webb, "The Planet is a Political Orphan", NOEMA, (March 17, 2022). Visit at <https://www.noemamag.com/the-planet-is-a-political-orphan/>.

negligence and lack of willingness. An independent nation like Ukraine does not deserve to suffer from the competitive politics of Russia and the West because if political powers want to impose their decisions for future interests, they will only fuel the bloody kerfuffle.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 11. See also B. Valeriano and J. Macias, Paper Tigers: Proxy Actors Are the True Cyber Threats, Cato Institute, 2022. Retrieved from <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/2326914/paper-tigers/3087537/> on 09 May 2022. CID: 20.500.12592/ktfcjv.