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UKRAINIAN AND SYRIAN ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AS TWO SIDES OF GEOPOLITICS

УКРАЇНСЬКЕ І СИРІЙСЬКЕ ПИТАННЯ У МІЖНАРОДНИХ ВІДНОСИНАХ ЯК ДВІ СТОРОНИ ОДНІЄЇ ГЕОПОЛІТИКИ

УКРАИНСКИЙ И СИРИЙСКИЙ ВОПРОС В МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫХ ОТНОШЕНИЯХ КАК ДВЕ СТОРОНЫ ОДНОЙ ГЕОПОЛИТИКИ

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Abstract. *The article gives a detailed analysis of the confrontation between the leading centers of global influence – the EU, the US and Russia, which led to the aggravation of the situation in two countries at once. It was found that both Ukraine and Syria face the risk of becoming a major geopolitical struggle springboard between Russia and the West. Russia's military presence in Syria in particular is to build military bases in the Middle East and the Mediterranean, by supporting the regime in Damascus. Expanding the strategic impact of Russia is also in supervising oil and gas market and transit of energy resources to the EU. Continuation of military intervention in Syria and Ukraine had a profound impact on the security situation in the former Soviet Union and the Middle East. This reality makes all members of the settlement of these conflicts reconsider their foreign policy strategy and future plans regarding Ukraine and Syria. EU and US support only peaceful diplomatic solution to the crisis in eastern Ukraine through the allocation opposing sides of the contact line and holding democratic elections. Meanwhile, Syria's main task for the West is fighting against ISIS and removing the current authoritarian regime from power. Russia does not show much interest in resolving these regional crises and intends to maintain instability in Eurasia and the Middle East.*

Key words: *Russian, Ukrainian conflict, Syrian conflict, the Middle East, the interests of the great powers, geopolitics, ISIS.*

Анотація. *Розкрито зміст протистояння між провідними центрами світового впливу – ЄС, США та РФ, яке призвело до загострення ситуації одразу у двох країнах. З'ясовано, що Україна як і Сирія ризикує перетворитися на головний плацдарм геополітичної боротьби між Росією та Заходом. Військова присутність Росії в Сирії зокрема полягає у створенні військових баз на Близькому Сході та Середземномор'ї шляхом підтримки існуючого режиму в Дамаску. Розширення стратегічного впливу РФ полягає також у забезпеченні контролю нафтогазового ринку та транзиту енергоресурсів до ЄС.*

Продовження військового втручання Росії в Україні й Сирії справило глибокий вплив на ситуацію у сфері безпеки на пострадянському просторі та Близькосхідному регіоні. Така реальність змушує всіх учасників врегулювання даних конфліктів переглянути свою зовнішньополітичну стратегію й подальші плани відносно України та Сирії. ЄС і США обстоюють виключно мирний план дипломатичного вирішення кризи на сході України через відведення протиборчих сторін від лінії зіткнення та проведення демократичних виборів. Водночас, у Сирії основним завданням для Заходу є боротьба з ІДІЛ та усунення від влади нинішнього авторитарного режиму. Росія не проявляє особливого зацікавлення щодо врегулювання зазначених регіональних криз та має намір і надалі підтримувати нестійкість як в Євразії, так і Близькому Сході.

Ключові слова: Росія, український конфлікт, сирійський конфлікт, Близький Схід, інтереси великих держав, геополітика, ІДІЛ.

Аннотація. *Раскрыта суть противостояния между ведущими центрами мирового влияния – ЕС, США и РФ, которое привело к обострению ситуации сразу в двух странах. Выяснено, что Украина и Сирия рискует превратиться в главный плацдарм геополитической борьбы между Россией и Западом. Военное присутствие России в Сирии в частности заключается в создании военных баз на Ближнем Востоке и Средиземноморье путем поддержки существующего режима в Дамаске. Расширение стратегического влияния РФ заключается также в обеспечении контроля нефтегазового рынка и транзита энергоресурсов в ЕС. Продолжение военного вмешательства России в Украине и Сирии оказало глубокое влияние на ситуацию в сфере безопасности на постсоветском пространстве и Ближневосточном регионе. Такова реальность заставляет всех участников урегулирования данных конфликтов пересмотреть свою внешнеполитическую стратегию и дальнейшие планы относительно Украины и Сирии. ЕС и США отстаивают исключительно мирный план дипломатического разрешения кризиса на востоке Украины путем отвода противоборствующих сторон от линии соприкосновения и проведения демократических выборов. В то же время, в Сирии основной задачей для Запада является борьба с ИГИЛ и отстранения от власти нынешнего авторитарного режима. Россия не проявляет особого интереса по урегулированию указанных региональных кризисов и намерена и в дальнейшем поддерживать нестабильность как в Евразии, так и на Ближнем Востоке.*

Ключевые слова: Россия, украинский конфликт, сирийский конфликт, Ближний Восток, интересы больших государств, геополитика, ИГИЛ.

The issue of transforming the existing world order is updated on the rise as geopolitical contradictions between the major subjects of international influence in existing and new intersections of their interests. The historical retrospective shows that the major powers expanded its influence mainly through expansion towards small and medium-sized countries. The clash of interests of great powers led to large-scale conflicts, two of which were global-scale. After the end of World War II economic expansion replaced military force. In modern terms the information revolution has brought a number of new categories of geopolitical analysis, the central of which are the “information war”, “hybrid warfare”, “semantic war”, “information weapons” etc. One of the challenges of modern information war is to create an enabling environment for any geopolitical and geoeconomics operations.

Analyzing the current situation in the Eurasian and Middle East regions we can talk about acceleration of civilizational confrontation. That is why geopolitical status of Ukraine, as a part of the geopolitical front in an inter-civilization conflict, is a catalyst for Eurasian and world order change in general.

The questions of subjection of Ukraine in the new geopolitical realities and Syrian issues became the subject of interest of many experts, analysts and political scientists, scholars both in our country and abroad. Scientific research and articles apply to events that are taking place in Ukraine and Syria and international situation that arose in relations with the growing confrontation between Russia and the West for spheres of geopolitical influence in Eurasia and Middle East. All the studies and the authors that are working on geopolitical problems of Eurasian and Middle East space we can disperse within three separate groups. The first one is represented by Russian political scientists, historians, sociologists and ideologues of Eurasianism such as: K. Hadzhyiev, V. Dergachov, A. Dugin, S. Luzianin, S. Panarin, Y. Primakov, K. Sorokin, T. Shakleyina, L. Shevtsova, E. Turkina and etc.

Another group of scientists with our question form the representatives of the domestic political science thought, namely: A. Voloshyn, V. Gorbulin N. Doroshko, R. Zhangozha, A. Irkhin, L. Kovryk-Tokar, G. Perepelytsia, A. Potekhin, M. Fesenko, L. Chekalenko, A. Shergin and others.

Finally, the third group consists of representatives of Western scholars of political science schools to which we assign A. Aslund, Y. Bodansky, Z. Brzezinski, T. Graham, E. Kuchins, G. Mirshaymer, A. Stent, J. Sherr, A. Umland, M. Hackard and more.

University of Pittsburgh Professor E. Turkina believes that these developments and, in general, the Russia-Ukraine relationship represents a fascinating case for analysis. It is not evident why two countries that are so close on many levels – from a common history, family and friendship ties, strong business ties, and interconnections between political elites – failed to secure partnership and engaged in escalating confrontation. Ukraine is highly important. Europeanists emphasize Kyiv and Ukraine as a key to Russian Europeanness, because Kievan Rus, a prosperous and vast Russian state was an inalienable part of the medieval European landscape. Eurasianism believes that Russia is a civilization on its own (with Moscow being the “Third Rome” and with Russians as a titular ethnos). In geopolitics, this cultural identity translates into the Russian geopolitical space: the Russian orbit includes smaller systems, which altogether present an alliance of nations. So, this vision focuses on Russia as on a regional power rather than on a nation-state. In this vision Ukraine is important, as it is perceived as belonging to the Russian orbit and civilization. Nationalism is related to promoting the cultural unity of Russians and is closely related to pan-Slavism. Here, Slavic ethnic ties with Ukrainians are significant. Like in the European vision, both in Eurasianist and nationalist visions, the symbolism of Kievan Rus is of equal importance, as it represents the roots of Russian Orthodoxy and is largely perceived as being at the heart of the formation of Russian civilization; modern Ukraine is a continuation of the so-called “Russian World” [Turkina, 2015: 192].

The modern conflict in Ukraine goes far beyond local war between Kyiv and Russia supported terrorist groups that occupied part of Donbas and created in that area LPR/DPR fictitious public formations. The deployment of armed struggle in Ukraine was caused primarily by a clash of geopolitical interests of three global centers of world/civilizational influence – Russia, the EU and the US in this part of Eastern Europe. In geopolitical struggle, that is growing, West pursues the goal to consolidate its interests through strengthening liberal-democratic values in Eastern Europe, using such young democracies like Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. All this should ultimately make Russian influence in the Eurasian region weaker. Thus, Ukraine has got the role of a large outpost of American pressure on Moscow. Russia, in its turn, wants to preserve its influence on post-Soviet countries and to prevent the pro-Western economic and political changes. The latter applies especially to Ukraine as to one of the most important post-Soviet countries [Фесенко, 2014: 10-11].

Russia is involved in the Syrian conflict quite unconventionally. Since the beginning of the armed conflict in Syria a group of Russian warships arrived to the coast of Syria. With the point of logistics of the Navy in the port of Tartus (former sea port facilities, leased USSR until 1991, is now used to house troops), Russia from September 2015 launched here the construction of infrastructure airbase in Latakia for receiving heavy military transport aircraft, and create a data-base in Safita. Russia's active position in confronting government forces B. al-Assad against the Syrian opposition increasingly exacerbated the situation involving the civil war. Placing a limited military contingent in Syria, the Kremlin seeks to demonstrate the ability to send troops to any part of the world, not only limited with the zone of its strategic responsibility [Adamsky, 2015a]. In last years, Russia is testing West for strength and contributes to undermining Euro-Atlantic security system, trying to force Washington and Brussels see in it an influential world power with great geostrategic interests.

Politics Russia was supplying Syria mostly in the arms and the direction of limited military contingent, which serves as support government troops. Evidence of this was the activation of the movement of Russian military boats, whose arrival in 2015 in Syria increased almost three-fold. In August 2015 with the Russian military bases in the Black Sea through the Bosphorus to Syrian Tartus it was sent ten Russian warships. On some boats, military vehicles were placed directly on the upper decks, which indicated their extreme congestion. According to some estimates, during the first half of 2015 the so-called Russian Express (unofficial name system supply arms and military equipment from Russia to Syria) made nearly 40 flights. Parallel to supply material support was by air [Короткий, 2015].

The evidence of the presence of Russian troops in Syria, exactly in Tartus, is selfies of Russian soldiers with the Syrian government flags and portraits of B. al-Assad posted on social networks. While Russian troops are not a major part in direct hostilities at the forefront, nevertheless, their participation becomes more noticeable. This is evidenced by a series of military successes of government forces, which have recently expanded control over the area Syrian-Turkish border in the province of Latakia. The criterion for open support of the Assad's regime B is joint operations with government troops by air support against their opposition. The consequences of such actions are the mass death of civilians as a result of Russian bombing aircraft areas controlled by opposition forces. In addition, government forces captured the city of Sheikh Maskin, Sheykun Khan, Salma, and with the support of the Russian Air Force launched the attack on the main opposition city – Aleppo in order to further capture the city [Говриков, 2015].

Syria, like Ukraine, is the subject of a clash of strategic interests of major world powers. Therefore, the external dimension of the Syrian conflict defined support of a number of powerful geopolitical players. Thus, among the countries that support the government of B. al-Assad, should be, providing military assistance. Assist government forces and supplying weapons, finances and energy – North Korea, Venezuela and Iran. Tehran, as “Hezbollah” is an ally of Assad's regime, because as in Moscow, he has interests in the Caspian Sea region and the Caucasus. Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, as Western coalition, opposes the government of B. al-Assad. On the common interests of Russia and Iran in Syria shows a series of meetings in Moscow concerning the coordination of support for the regime of B. al-Assad and increasing military presence of Russia. Another proof of a common strategy for Russia and Syria have a secret visit to Moscow, the Iranian General K. Suleiman, who is the head of the special forces of the Islamic Revolution Guards “Kods” that actively supports the B. al-Assad [Solomon, 2015].

The transformation of the world order is accompanied by geopolitical turbulence, manifested in the dynamics of the spread of local and regional conflicts. The Syrian conflict has be-

come one of the hallmarks of world politics, in which the major powers defend their interests at the expense of other participants in international life. One such example is Moscow's policy in the Middle East, pursuing its own geopolitical interests, trying to recover at least part of the former Soviet influence. However, their participation Russia seeks to rebuild the world order according to the strategy, in which plays leading role is not international law, and the right forces.

The Syrian conflict is another challenge to global security, and its settlement - a major challenge for the world's leading players. In this situation, Russia demonstrates equal responsibility for the situation in the Middle East, together with the US and EU. Representing thus the importance of participation in peace processes worldwide, Russia has positioned itself as a state, without which it is difficult to solve the key problems of the transitional world order. Although the subject of the Syrian conflict and participation occupies the front pages of the world press, publishing academic nature of this issue is still rare [Kondratenko, 2016: 104].

The Russian elite emphasizes that Ukraine is part of the Orthodox (Russian) civilization, which accidentally turned into a separate territory as a result of "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the twentieth century" – collapse of the USSR. Therefore, having weaker resources nowadays, Russia considers Ukraine as "a failed state" that has to be reunited in a common Slavic community. The propaganda of politics during deployment of the so-called hybrid war was aimed to prove that Ukraine can maintain its territorial integrity and viability only under conditions of constitutional reform which should be the result of federalization of the country. According to the plan of Russian Federation, federalization of Ukraine should give special status to the south-eastern regions where a significant percentage of Russian and Russian-speaking population is present. These territories, according to Moscow, would be a convenient lever of pressure on Kyiv in case of unfair policy towards Russia. Another factor that motivates Russia to use force in Ukraine is a categorical rejection of the West and Euro-Atlantic aspirations of Kyiv in which the Kremlin sees a potential threat to its security. There is an international position about the way out of this situation could be the "finlandization" of Ukraine, which excludes its accession to NATO, but this mechanism does not satisfies either Ukraine or major geopolitical players yet [Racz, 2014; 88–104].

The questions of subjection of Ukraine in the new geopolitical realities became the subject of interest of many experts, analysts and political scientists, scholars both in our country and abroad. Scientific research and analysis articles apply to events that are taking place in Ukraine and international situation that arose in relation with the growing confrontation between Russia and the West for spheres of geopolitical influence in Eurasia.

In general, the aim of this publication is the representation and analysis of Ukrainian factor in the formation of a new world order, as well as coverage of the specific of geopolitical struggle for the influence in Eurasia between Russia and the West.

Noteworthy, that the paradigm of inter-civilizational confrontation was grounded by well-known American political scientist S. Huntington. He predicted the opposition in Ukraine, which is geographically located at the turn of the Orthodox and Eastern (Orthodox) and Western (Catholic) civilizations. In his opinion, these very states are the most malleable to the conflict confrontation of powerful international actors. We must note that this paradigm implies the existence of a number of civilizations whose boundaries do not always coincide with the boundaries of states or their coalitions. Therefore, Samuel Huntington predicted more intrastate conflict in Ukraine than direct clash with the Russian state. At that moment the analyst did not exclude high probability of collapse of Ukraine according to Czechoslovak or Yugoslav scenario [Хантингтон, 2011: 39]. However, as we see, even to such eminent experts it is difficult to predict the actual behavior of Russia to one of the largest facilities geopolitical attention in the modern

world. It turned out that the causes of social and cultural confrontation in the Ukrainian state was primarily an external factor [Кондратенко, 2014: 155–156].

In the conditions of the Eastern threat liquidation in Europe and the start of the implementation of a full-fledged EU foreign policy, there was still a question of appropriateness; for the United States it was also the question of the price of total further reliance of Europe in the field of security and defense. The United States began to shift the priorities and political-military resources to resolve and prevent the security challenges in the regions of Central and Southeast Asia and the Middle East. As a result, American military presence in Europe decreased from 300 to 80 thousand people. That means that the United States, which accounts for around three-quarters of all NATO defence spending, will want European allies to do more to defend themselves [Syta, 2014].

As noted in the article Y. Bodansky, what in October, the Kremlin clarified that the Russian strategic objectives in Syria are to stabilize and consolidate the Assad's administration as the key to defeating the Jihadist forces, as well as to compel the US-led West to accept and acknowledge this reality. Adds that: "They must recognize that the Islamic State is the real threat that has been countered only by the Syrian regular army commanded by President B. al-Assad" I. Umakhanov, the Deputy Speaker of the Federation Council of Russia, predicted. For the Kremlin, all anti-Assad forces are terrorists. "In the West, they talk about moderate opposition, but we so far haven't seen any in Syria" General-Colonel A. Kartapolov, the Commander of the Russian operations in Syria, argued [Bodansky, 2016]. "Any person who takes up arms and fights the legal authorities, how moderate can he be?" F. Lukyanov, the head of the prestigious Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, noted that for official Moscow "terrorists" is a very vague definition which allows Russia to target all groups it needs to fight in order to achieve the main goal – strengthen Syrian army positions and help them restore control over major cities" [Lukyanov, 2016].

Finally, enlisted the support of the opposition forces led by the USA and their coalitions States (all 65 states), which also struggles with both ISIS and assists opposition forces in the fight against B. al-Assad. Thus, the United States and Western orchestra NATO operate on the principle of "double exclusion", as they are not acceptable as the continued existence ISIS and stay B. al-Assad as President of Syria controlled by him. Washington, in addition to training and instructing military supplies arms. Turkey contributes to the preparation of the opposition in Syria. Qatar, Libya, the UAE declared their participation by funding anti-Assad opposition. Significant logistical support to Syrian opposition forces provides Saudi Arabia, which has a religious conflict on the basis of Assad's regime ally – Iran [Густерин, 2012]. Overall, Syria fully passed into State controlled from the outside. However and this administration rather points to the uncontrollability processes rather than to the real support order. In addition, the Syrian conflict has caused serious destabilization in neighboring states Syria – Iraq and Libya [Ирхин, 2014: 224-228].

Central and West European countries cut defence spending by 6,5 percent during the period of time from 2004 to 2013 while Russian military spending doubled over that period, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, a defence think-tank, said last month. While Latvia and Lithuania have just pledged to more than double their military spending, other allies, such as Slovakia, say they cannot afford any increase. But despite budget cuts, NATO remains far more capable than Russia. Although Russia's military spending has risen, its armed forces have shrunk under reforms aimed at turning them into a better equipped, more professional military. Rather than keeping large numbers of forces in eastern Europe, NATO could rotate forces from other NATO allies to the region while preparing to reinforce quickly if needed [Syta, 2014].

To the will of fate and a number of international circumstances Ukraine found itself at the epicenter of geopolitical turbulence. We can say confidently that our country is in the center of a clash of great interest, geopolitical gravitation and civilizational break. Today we see increased competition for influence in Eurasia through the collision of two paradigms of integration – European (market, democratic, civil) and Eurasian (authoritarian, corrupt and administrative power). Russia appears undisputed leader of Eurasian integration structures, including the Eurasian Economic Community and EES. This organization is a materialized version of Dugin ideology, actively promoted by their apologists. Eurasian Community and the Eurasian Economic Union for Russia now, are the means of strengthening of regional leadership and imperial renaissance. The main task of the Russian leadership is to persuade Ukraine's membership in such organizations that are actively multiplying in the former USSR. By the way, the idea of joining the Eurasian integration structures was popular among a large part of the Ukrainian elite for a long time. The latter can be largely explained by the fact, that EEC was a typical post-Soviet Union dictatorship that was remarkable for its reluctance to progressive changes and sought to preserve a commodity-based economic system of corruption schemes. Ukrainian oligarchs for the conservation and enhancement of their capital were far from transparent commercial arrangements that are particularly needed for economic and political reforms in the context of the Copenhagen criteria [Сушко, 2002].

In recent years, some experts produced messages about Ukraine's surrender as Euro project and the final choice in favor of Russian Eurasianism. Such political pessimism was reinforced in 2013 by refusal of then-President V. Yanukovich to sign the Association Agreement with Ukraine EU, because of the promises of credit support from Russia. After withdrawal of V. Yanukovich as the President of Ukraine, Russia lost primary means of keeping Ukraine in the wake of its geopolitical influence. As a result of the events in Ukraine and establishment of pro-Western political elite Russia began to implement the annexation scenario of the Crimea and started to support separatists in Donbas, which led to a large-scale conflict [Coffey, 2014].

Ukraine has become a victim of political confrontation between the three world superpowers – Russia, the EU, and the US. For instance, the Ukrainian journalist Lilia Shevtsova writes that “Ukraine is a victim of both the Russian System's struggle for survival and the West's inability to protect the international legal space [Shevtsova, 2015].

It should be noted that according to experts, Russia's policy in Syria aimed primarily at creating a buffer against radical jihadists on its southern flank by maintaining the regime of B. al-Assad. This buffer is intended to curb Muslim influence in the Eurasian space and is able to provide potentially increasing Russian presence in the Middle East to further geopolitical competition with the West in this region [Adamsky, 2015a]. The structural component of the conflict is also the power factor. For example, Syria plays a key role in regional energy transportation, because borders with Iraq and Turkey and has access to the sea, which makes it a perfect transit corridor for Middle East gas to Europe. We know that the beginning of the Syrian crisis, Iran and Qatar considered the draft gas pipeline to export energy resources to the European market with their powerful joint South Pars field. This project was assigned a key role Syria transit country Middle East gas to the European Union [Топалов, 2015].

Qatar gas pipeline had to pass Saudi Arabia and Jordan, and Iran – in Iraq, and then through Syria to Europe. As a result of religious differences (Qatar profess Sunni branch of Islam, while the Syrian elite – Shiite) Damascus in 2011 chose to project Tehran, which aroused strong dissatisfaction of Doha. After power confrontation reflected the positions of the leading regional players during the Civil War. As a result, Iran has remained an ally of Damascus and Qatar started to finance anti-government opposition [Крижановский, 2015].

In general, this time opens a new page of Russian foreign policy, its international relations and security strategy formation. Russia could not stay without respond the transformation of the political regime in Ukraine, and took it as a challenge to their status and geopolitical threat from the United States [Trenin, 2014]. As a result, the increasing of Russian military presence in Ukraine followed. According to most of Western as well as local experts Russia, using uncertainty of West seeking thereby “freezing” of the conflict, or at least its end on favorable terms, which lies in the preservation of Russian cultural identity in the southeast, the official confirmation of the status of Russian as a second language state and guarantees that Kyiv confirm the position of not joining NATO and the EU in the future [Migranyan, 2014].

The events of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict were the subject of the great geopolitical game in the EU and NATO for the influence over the Eastern policy, including the informal competition between Great Britain and Germany. At the end of July 2014, the British magazine “Independent”, on the basis of the information from its own sources, revealed the existence of a secret plan-agreement between Angela Merkel and Vladimir Putin to resolve the conflict in Ukraine, which included the recognition of the annexation of Crimea and refusal of Ukrainian entry to NATO. This plan was allegedly never realized because of the accident of Malaysian airliner over the Donetsk Region [Pagano, 2014].

There is a theory that Russia was interested in Ukrainian escalation of events in an attempt to redistribute the spheres of influence with Germany. Under the assumption of Russia it was counting on economic control over the southern and eastern regions of Ukraine and Germany through formal Kyiv convergence with the EU would have access to the center and west, thus strengthening its position in Eastern Europe and the EU as a whole. However, the United States as the world hegemon is not interested in the redistribution of global balance of power is not in their favor, and therefore oppose the creation of Germany continental bloc. The result was that Washington actually persuaded Germany to his side and promised to help to increase energy independence of the EU through the diversification of energy supplies. Perhaps, that is a result of V. Putin to get in a geopolitical zugzwang without having major allies [Романенко, 2015].

The participants of the Syrian conflict, and especially Russia, are trying to take control of Syrian oil-producing facilities in the northeastern part of the country. Moreover, after the aggravation of Russian-Turkish relations and delaying the project “Turkish Stream” indefinitely, Moscow actually lost perspective-included Syria in its gas transport corridor project, which had to pass through Turkey and ensure delivery of gas to the EU. In particular, the Kremlin favorable support instability (because of the Syrian conflict) in the Middle East to prevent the implementation of any future energy projects of hydrocarbon supplies to the EU can make additional competition “Gazprom”, which is already losing its monopoly position in the European energy market. Strategic Kremlin calculation is that the destabilization of the region would lead to a gradual increase in oil prices. A conflict that lasted for as long as possible, needs to maintain the supply of weapons to crisis regions.

Speaking about the information aspect of the conflict – Russia’s foreign-language media, such as channel “Russia Today”, permanently focus on the negative coverage of opposition. The conflict is actually a tactical move V. Putin in his geopolitical confrontation with the West as one of the objectives is to create pictures, which, though virtually but portrayed Russia to global power and military force. Thus in Russia understand that what’s keeping within the boundaries of Syria before the Civil War preserving Syria’s borders before the civil war in March 2011 are not available. The Kremlin has a strategy to support preservation and further education with the code name Alavistan – current territory controlled by the regime of B. al-Assad. So the main goal of multidimensional strategy in Syria, Putin is the task defeat both anti-government Syrian op-

position as – “National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces”, “Free Syrian Army” and ISIS, while maintaining the Assad’s regime BA as the only legitimate and one that suits the Kremlin. In general, intervention in the Middle East will make the Gulf increase support for anti-government Sunni insurgent groups in Syria that threatens to further the deployment of regional conflict with the risk of transition to a global war [Короткий, 2015].

Despite the fact, that Ukraine claims to be a geopolitical bridge between Europe and Eurasia, it fulfills the role of a rather heavily border countries like the EU and Russia. Speaking of geostrategy of Russia, we should state that Ukraine is the last bastion on the way of Western democracies for the Kremlin and Russia itself. Because of Ukraine, but rather by supporting the conflict in eastern Ukraine Russia is trying to push the EU and the US in order to maintain spheres of influence in Eurasia. However, it is known, Ukraine for V. Putin is just one of polygons of confrontation with the US, along with such objects of geopolitics as Syria or Iran with its nuclear program. Therefore, the victory of Russia in Ukrainian question will be regarded as another defeat of the United States [Бондаренко, 2014].

In the struggle for Ukraine V. Putin shows significant interest in the Ukrainian defense industry and that is partly due to his desire to establish control over the south-eastern regions where high-tech military is primarily concentrated, in particular such as Pivdenmash (Dnipro), Hartron (Kharkiv) Motor-Sich (Zaporizhzhia), Mykolayivskiy Shipyard plant and others. Secondly, Russia is interested in infrastructural facilities of the south of Ukraine, which is connected with the Crimea as Federal District. In turn, access to Transdnistria with subordinate Crimea would allow Russia to become stronger in the Black Sea basin, eventually to bring Turkey to the American sphere of influence and create the conditions for resolving the issue of alternative sources and supply routes to Europe by strengthening the position in Caspian region in the future. Against this backdrop, the US is trying to take revenge by involving Ukraine as a key Black Sea states into the orbit of influence after a series of defeats inflicted on Russia’s geopolitical front during the previous years, such as actual failure of US policy in Syria and Iran [Стельмах, 2016].

Overall, Ukraine for the Kremlin, unlike the United States, is a part of a larger geopolitical project, a type of key to the dream of the Eurasian Union. We remind that the brass ideological foundation of the plan was the famous “Russian World” that without Ukraine and Kyiv as “a mother of Slavic towns” minimizes legitimized “the Kremlin throne”. The change of the independent Ukrainian state borders by annexation of the Crimean peninsula from further fueling the conflict in the south-eastern regions has been a challenge, which Russia has thrown the Western world and the existing world order in general. Well-known American historian T. Snyder believes this behavior gives a challenge for world order and the European Security and sees the intentions to destroy Ukrainian statehood [Габриелян, 2014].

In fact, after the Second World War there were no cases of violent rejection of the sovereign states territories in European history. Precedent to correction of the geopolitical paradigm of Russian Federation appeared in the context of protecting citizens abroad, whose number is about 25 million people, that create the foundation of “Russian World”. A number of analysts see the resolution of the Fourth World War (assuming that the Third World War was a Cold War), and the behavior of the Kremlin leader is often compared to the actions of Hitler in late 30’s. You can accept such estimation of international situation, because the world conflict actually started before the Crimean events, and incorporation of Ukrainian territory only reaffirmed the intention of Russia “to move” west borders by force [Stent, 2016].

According to experts, Russia’s victories in local conflicts are necessary for the preservation of existing authoritarian regime. The example of this is the sharp jump in ranking of Russian

President to over 80% after the Crimea. For example, it is traced that the rating of Russian leaders is growing in the time of aggravation of internal or external enemies or in case of threats to national security. Thus, during the military antiterrorist operation in the North Caucasus of Russia in 1999 (better known as the second Chechen war – Author) rating of Prime Minister V. Putin grew within four months from 31% to 80%. Another such example was the special operation of Russia in Georgia in 2008 after which the level of support for V. Putin rose to an unprecedented 88% [43].

Thus, according to the deterioration of the internal situation in Russia, authorities are able to distract people for some time from the social problems through exploitation the nostalgic thesis of Russia special features, as the core of the Orthodox Church, located in a hostile environment, opposes depraved West. In addition, all local conflicts in Russia with the media and propaganda are trying to show the US policy aimed to isolating and destroying Russian sovereignty. Thus, one of the main components of internal geopolitics is to create an enemy to consolidate/mobilization of society around the regime and leader. However, support for escalation in Ukraine should be viewed as an attempt of Russian elite to keep Putin's authoritarian system in conditions of the recession and imposed sanctions. The successful Europeanization and prosperity of Ukraine would put into the question the effectiveness of anti-democratic regimes in many post-Soviet countries, as well as in Russia. The fiasco of the strategy of successful transformation in Ukraine would serve as a clear example of democratic uprising of a large Orthodox country for Russian society. Therefore, limited military intervention of Russia in Ukraine is aimed at the prevention of Kyiv reforms. Also, we can suppose that the strategy of Russia includes exhaustion and collapse of Ukraine not by the open large-scale military intervention and subversion of state provocation, but by discontent of population and removal of the pro-Western authorities [Умланд, 2015].

Political experts from different countries united in the fact that the Syrian gambit as Ukrainian was needed of at least three reasons: First, Russia wants to force the West to accept the Kremlin's rules; Second, V. Putin is trying to maintain its high rating among Russians; thirdly, the following is an attempt to break out of diplomatic isolation in which Moscow came after inciting the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine. Indeed, primarily Russia hopes that the West will soften rhetoric on the Ukrainian question and gradually abolish the sanctions in return for their help in the fight against ISIS [Шевцова, 2015].

Relatively successful information geopolitics (hybrid warfare) Russia in Europe, including the lifting of sanctions, enables it to achieve notable success. So, after the bloody events in Paris on 13 November 2015 the French leader Hollande said on ability to restore broad cooperation with Russia on the issue of combating ISIS and devoted to this issue his official visit to Moscow. The French establishment then started talking about forming a broad anti-terrorist coalition with the EU, US and Russia. Such convergence will no longer exclude the possibility mitigate or full employment and economic sanctions from Russia, but recently changed the official Paris rhetoric toward Russia [Нуриева, 2015].

At the same time, Russia wants to enlist the support of new allies in the Middle East seeking to use Syria as a bargaining chip leverage the West, because the US is trying to expand as geopolitical bridgehead in the area of special interest in Moscow. In addition, it allows the Kremlin to divert Russian citizens from domestic problems, the sharp economic decline. Equally, the important strategic task in the Syrian conflict is Moscow's attempt to return to the world leaders able to influence the geopolitical processes demonstrate its part in the optimization of the modern system of international security.

Many experts say that, by launching a military operation in Syria, Russia regained its status with global interests. This suggests that latter task is joining the coalition leading countries

that are responsible for the fate of the world order. An example or ideal person for such participation is Putin's so-called new Yalta as a mechanism to participate in a new redistribution of the world (or rather, spheres of influence) between major geopolitical players – the US, EU and China.

Of course, in the draft of “new” bipolarity such states as Syria and Ukraine the Kremlin assigns the role of tertiary facilities/extras new world order. However, a broad anti-terrorist coalition with Russia, which V. Putin spoke to the UN rostrum last year, did not happen. It is worth noting that Washington has its own coalition, he is unlikely to be reflow soon. To the by anti-ISIS coalition if Russia is ready to accept it only on the rights of junior partner. Also, the likelihood of the United States to join the alliance anti-ISIS “Russia–Iran–Iraq–Syria”, according to most experts, is zero. To this should be added that Saudi Arabia as a loyal US ally in the Middle East has created a coalition, which is mainly aimed at curbing partner Russia – Iran [Кобзев, 2016]. However, despite the fact that the positions of Moscow and Washington disagree regarding the political future of the regime of B. al-Assad, Syria's military presence in Russia as a necessary means of pressure on the US to equal participation in the fight against the Islamic-terrorist ISIS [Adamsky, 2015b].

So, in the end nearly five years of confrontation, Syria virtually ceased to exist as a political organization of society or as a sovereign state, because its territory is under the control of a number of political forces and terrorist groups of all persuasion. Today, the country follows the fate of Iraq, which, after long opposition political and religious groups de facto disappeared from the political map of the world. As noted, for Russia than a distraction from the conflict in eastern Ukraine, a major objective in Syria is to preserve its latest geopolitical outpost in the Middle East by supporting the regime of B. al-Assad. Changes in the geopolitical situation in the Middle East region after the incident occurred with shooting down a Russian Su-24 November 25, 2015, which violated the airspace of Turkey [Адоманис, 2015].

Responding to developments in Ukraine and related actions by Russia has been a generally strong area of US – European coordination, though not completely without tension. The US and European analyses of developments have been largely aligned, and the two sides have openly sought to maximize their influence with parallel messages and mutually reinforcing actions, including extensive sanctions. Unlike the United States, which has relatively limited economic ties with Russia, many European countries have large and interdependent relationships with Russia in terms of trade, investment, finance, and energy. EU debates over sanctions contend with the economic value and political influence attached to these relationships; varying attitudes and outlooks on Russia based on history, geography, and culture; and doubts about the likely effectiveness of sanctions. US policy makers often express frustration at this process [Mix, 2015].

The political analysts say that since 2014, when Russia started its foreign invasion, US and European relations with Russia have become more adversarial in the context of Russia's annexation of Crimea and its actions in destabilizing Ukraine. So the bilateral relations between the two counterparts recently have only increased their priority. In National Security Strategy of 2015, B. Obama mentioned that during his years at the White House, the US “renewed their alliances from Europe to Asia” in the background of the Russian aggression. “Russia's aggression in Ukraine makes clear that European security and the international rules and norms against territorial aggression cannot be taken for granted”, wrote President B. Obama in National Security Strategy-2015 [22].

To understand EU “soft power”, it is necessary first to cast a glance at its hard power. As already noted, the military dimension remains the least developed aspect of EU foreign policy, and is primarily geared towards humanitarian intervention and not towards power projection in the classic, coercive sense. The economic means have been more prevalent, in the form of trade

agreements and development assistance, both typically accompanied by conditionality clauses. By these means, the EU has sought to pursue normative milieu goals. In this, the EU has often relied on its stronger economic position vis-à-vis partners, or indeed on the regional hegemony it enjoys over most of the European continent. The financial inducements and positive conditionality that Ferrero-Waldner regarded as the EU's "soft power" are fully in keeping with the notions of civilian power, in that negotiation, contractual relationships and economic incentives are central elements. But conditionality, whether positive or negative, and the sanctions implied, are, on a more rigorous understanding of power, clearly at the lower end of what can be termed hard power. At the same time, the EU's extensive trade ties with many parts of the world and its relatively generous development policies provide it with some important building blocks for developing "soft power" [Nielsen, 2013].

The weakness of the West, especially the EU, in relations with Russia are clearly manifested during the events of its military aggression on the territory of Ukraine. The annexation of Crimea in March 2014 brought an international condemnation, but had no significant consequences for the aggressor. First of all, Europe and the US have shown unreadiness to conflict development in Eastern Europe when they started the formation of a real strategy to fight during the deployment of Russian full-scale unofficial intervention in the Ukrainian Donbass. After lengthy hopes of diplomatic policy of appeasement the aggressor, the EU Council has finally taken the decision to impose systemic sanctions (aka "third wave" sanctions), but only after the tragedy of the passenger jet MH17 in the Donetsk region in July, and then the entrance of the regular units of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation into the territory of the region on the Independence Day of Ukraine on 24 August 2014. In terms of defense, the Union cannot offer anything to Ukraine but the traditional methods of "soft power", such as non-effective diplomatic support, the Association Agreement, the prospect of economic aid, and anti-Russian sanctions that will have long-term consequences. The irony of "soft power" is that it so often requires "hard power" policies to become effective [Grybinco, 2015: 76–77].

Thus, we could argue that V. Putin threw a dual challenge the United States – in Eurasia and the Middle East. However, according to some experts, the participation of Russia in the Syrian conflict is unlikely to bring her considerable geopolitical dividends, and the campaign itself risks becoming a protracted and exhausting. It is possible that Russia thus tries to share responsibility for the US world order, supra prove their claims by design impact in different regions. Limited resources do not allow the Kremlin to ensure geopolitical interests under the famous American formula "Win-win", which provides simultaneous participation in several regional conflicts. Grafting Russian military presence in Syria served to further aggravation of the military-political situation and the rise of opposition, resulting in the increased number of refugees to the EU, which was a new challenge for European security. Russia tries to establish joint diplomatic dialogue with Saudi Arabia, against the military campaign in Yemen to find the key to solving the Syrian issue. At the same time V. Putin signals Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar regarding what military steps to change the Syrian regime would be futile. Generally, activation of intervention in the Syrian conflict according to expert estimates only complicates the settlement. The Kremlin is trying to persuade such actions B. Obama to recognize the equality of participation in the settlement of the Syrian conflict. In this situation, Russia could put forward their conditions, in particular lead to further political bargaining B. al-Assad stay in power as the leader of the post-crisis Syria [Gordon, 2015]. It is believed if Russia fails to gain a foothold in the region and support the dictatorial regime, Tehran and Moscow can create a kind of Russian-Iranian protectorate controlled on B. al-Assad of Syria.

So, with the aggravation of geopolitical confrontation in the Eurasian region and the Middle East, Russia is trying to act in the style of the times "cold war" to underline its global im-

portance and international weight as a global player. Expanding the Syrian military presence in Russia demonstrates that not only is not in isolation, but also has an impact on the system of regional and global security. Also similar actions Moscow is trying strategically to divert world attention from its involvement in the conflict in the southeast of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea.

Russia is more and more concerned with FTA. In Moscow, there were a lot of talks about the risks that Ukraine would be a kind of European goods transit zone, thereby would fill the market by foreign products and would influence Russian producers. After all it is because of pressure the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU was postponed to December 2015. However, such claims are issued at least due to the fact that the big part of the Russian market is formed by the products from Europe and their increase will not dramatically affect upon its structure.

Not quite proper is Russia's position to Ukraine's accession to NATO. More often we can hear rants of Kremlin leadership about the effect of the membership of Ukraine in NATO. Some leaders consider that it will radically disrupt the balance of power in the area of special interests. Ironically, however, even in Western political science discourse pro-Russian stance can be traced to some experts on Ukraine's rapprochement with NATO. A famous American scientist, Professor G. Mirshaymer of the University of Chicago expresses the special position on the policy of Realpolitik style and proves that it was the US, who provoked Ukrainian internal conflict and the Russian-Ukrainian opposition as a whole. Political analyst grounds that the annexation of the Crimea was a response to the expansion of NATO, which is guided with realistic motives. Another reason for aggression was the version of the revolution in Ukraine, allegedly carried out with the support of the United States, which was the basis of his troops to enter Crimea and east being afraid of "right-wing" pro-American leadership [McFaul, 2014]. In short, a representative of the realistic trend proves that Russia resorting to aggression have had demonstrated unacceptable implementation scenario of further color revolutions and creation of new Western democracies by post-Soviet countries and inevitably their involvement in NATO. However, as we know, Ukraine is not even a potential candidate for NATO membership. In addition, there is a question why Putin's aggression was conducted almost fifteen years late, as NATO's eastward expansion started in 1999? Also as a result of the next "expansion" of the Alliance in 2004 the membership has gained post-Soviet Baltic countries and Russia did not use force scenarios at that time. Another counterargument might be the last NATO enlargement in 2009, it was precisely due to Albania and Croatia. Latter in no way can be regarded as so-called areas of special interest Moscow [Gidadhubli, 2004: 1886].

Taking into consideration this state of affairs we can reach preliminary conclusion that the Kremlin is showing abnormal "offend" for the defeat in the Cold War and it finally proclaimed post-Soviet/Eurasian space as the area of their special interests, going even to the annexation of the territories of neighboring states. The counterstrategy of West is the support of democratic values, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Eurasia and its violation is the basis for the introduction of economic sanctions against Russia.

It is known that the introduction of the world's leading economic powers sanction restrictions and the fall in world oil prices to 30 dollars per barrel, in the aggregate has become the deterrent factor that stopped the advance deeper intentions of sovereign Ukraine to implement the project Novorosia. This project, recall, involved the creation of the territory of eight Ukrainian regions puppet buffer state.

The vast majority of policy experts argue that solving networked or so-called hybrid war and using the ambiguous position of some EU members such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria and Italy, Russia is doing her best to achieve prevention of turning Ukraine into a full-fledged

geopolitical foothold for further expansion of West Pax Americana in Eurasia. Highlighting the potential for radical imbalance of checks and balances in the modern world, Russian President V. Putin predicted in one of his statements multiplication of regional conflicts indirect interests of the great powers as a result of failure to reckon with the geopolitical interests of each other. This Russian leader said that risk should primarily include unstable countries that are at the intersection of geopolitical interests of the main centers of international power. Thus, according to the Russian president's rhetoric such message essentially announced the start of a new Cold War between Russia and West [42]. Thus, during the current geo-political and security crisis in the world can observe the formation of a new international order involving the participation of all the great powers of our time. In particular the US are trying to further the participation of its allies to expand Pax Americana. Stay unipolar world traditionally opposed to China and Russia, and to a lesser extent India and Brazil. The above state advocates building a world concert – multipolarity, which is an alternative to American global construct. In such circumstances, medium and small states are almost out involving reformatting world order, and often do serve as means to counter and defend global interests of the great powers.

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Therefore, Ukraine has become a field of struggle of Atlantic and Eurasian paradigm transformation of world order and international security. There is a reason to believe that the destruction of the mechanisms of checks and balances and formation of precedent for borders change will open the page in rise of conflict in modern international environment. With the aggravation between major centers of power (US, EU, Russia) although Ukraine is a significant factor of changing world order, but still it becomes more a kind of “experimental” area of geopolitics. Russia, with the great economic losses is trying to keep its neighbors in its influence despite minimal chances to win in the competition with the West. In general, depending on which of leading international players will keep Kyiv, that international player will ultimately determine not only the future of the Eurasian terrain but of the whole world order. Russia plays a double game in Syria – as causing air strikes on opposition forces fighting the regime of B. al-Assad, and in places where forces ISIS. This dualistic geopolitics aimed, on the one hand, to support the Assad's regime, whom Moscow considers the only legitimate representative of Syria; On the other hand, blows on ISIS shows support for anti-terrorism coalition of Western countries in the fight against international terrorism. Another reason for Russia's participation in the Syrian conflict is low world oil prices. Therefore, the Russian presence in the Middle East and its controlled destabilization can act as pressure on oil monarchy, particularly Saudi Arabia. Thus, Russia is trying to create at least the illusion that the sphere of its interests is not only the Eurasian space, but also to any other part of the world.

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