

Explaining

RU



RUSSIAN BEHAVIOR

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Moscow's revisionist intervention in Ukraine has disrupted the prevailing international order

Harrowing accounts of events unfolding daily in Ukraine over many months add a grim reality to a turn in international affairs unexpected in the 21st century — the actuality of Europe's largest state confronting an existential challenge launched by the territorial aspirations of a neighbor. "Europe, whole and free" came to be understood as a common aspiration completely within the grasp of all modern European countries. But Ukraine's experiences throughout much of 2014 have bitterly reminded Ukrainians that history has not ended for Eastern Europe.

Whatever mistakes have been made by Ukraine and its neighbors and partners — mistakes of unrealistic expectations, unquenchable ambition, misperception and too little or too much trust — there is one lesson from Ukraine's situation that can be drawn by everyone. Ukraine's current agonies are not exclusive to that country alone; they are shared by a continent. The security of both Ukraine and its partners is key. In the absence of security, there is no long-term prosperity. In the absence of security, there is no enduring liberty. The dilemma of security has Ukrainian leaders facing a classic situation reminiscent of a Greek tragedy — to surrender to a more powerful aggressor is to risk identity and survival, but to raise

arms in defense of national sovereignty is to commit to a conflict whose costs will be bitter. Appeasement is only an invitation to greater and deeper conflict.¹



Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko passes an honor guard during his inauguration in Kiev in June 2014. Poroshenko was sworn in as Ukraine's fifth post-Soviet president and vowed to unify his country amid a crisis with Russia. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

AN INTERNATIONAL BREACH

This problem is not merely regional. It is a political crisis that brings to a focus the most fundamental principles of the contemporary international political community. Ukraine's situation is not about being torn between the East and West; it is about the very essence

“ IN THE ABSENCE OF SECURITY, THERE IS NO LONG-TERM PROSPERITY.”

of relations between East and West. It is about the very essence of liberty, national self-determination, and relations among and between countries of the world. The fate of Ukraine as a nation, as well as all the people on its territory, hangs in the balance. Every European country, both near and far from Ukraine, is concerned with the fate of Ukraine but also with the precedent established by how the international community, and in particular the professionals in the security community, relate to Ukraine and to one another during this ordeal. Territorial integrity is the first concern of all countries on Russia's periphery. But in a highly globalized and interconnected modern world, no country is entirely sheltered from threatening and dangerous influences such as energy dependency, media propaganda and possible influence on internal policy decisions. These have become issues of concern to Moldova, countries of the Baltic Sea region, the Caucasus and Central Asia. These developments also have implications for the Nordic countries and Western Europe.

Ukraine's situation represents a challenge to first principles. As Marshall Center Director Keith Dayton pointed out in introductory remarks to this issue of *per Concordiam*, the Russian Federation's use of a veto in the United Nations Security Council to thwart the international community from interceding to prevent violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity represents the first time in the history of the United Nations that a veto-wielding Security Council member has used its status to annex the territory of another UN member. The Kremlin's decision to annex Ukrainian territory undermines the norms and standards of international behavior and the very core of international law.

The significance of Russia's relations with Ukraine

has implications for all of Russia's neighbors and is being followed carefully by the entire international security community. As Gen. Philip Breedlove, commander of the U.S. European Command and NATO's supreme allied commander in Europe, pointed out: "Russia's actions in the Ukraine crisis represent a series of wrong steps in the wrong direction and move Europe further away from its original post-Cold War vision of being whole and free. They have also clearly moved NATO further away from realizing the vision of a strategic partnership with Russia in resolving European and global security challenges."²

Bearing these concerns in mind, we have brought together in this issue of *per Concordiam* a number of informed perspectives on the current situation in Ukraine, on the borders of Russia, and in the general security community as a whole. Russia's policy toward Ukraine represents a threat to the European Union and the international community as a whole. But our goal in this issue is not to vilify and lambast an adversary. Our goal is to clarify the problems and explore the nature of solutions to achieve mutual understanding. Any long-enduring solution to the Ukrainian crisis, whether diplomatic or military, must be based on an agreement that benefits all parties. This is not as difficult as it sounds. Many possible policies and agreements can re-establish Ukraine's territorial integrity, restore its national solidarity, and allow Ukrainians to enjoy open and mutually beneficial economic and political relations with countries on all points of the compass. As we think about these objectives, it may be useful to look backward and forward before turning to the present and steps that can and should be taken.



Ukrainian troops charge a Grad multiple rocket launcher near the eastern Ukrainian city of Shchastya in August 2014. Ukraine accused pro-Russian rebels of killing dozens of civilians fleeing the conflict-torn east. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, center, attends a summit in Minsk in August 2014. To his right is Russian President Vladimir Putin; to his left, Russian Foreign Affairs Minister Sergei Lavrov. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

LOOKING BACKWARD

The speed, scope and significance of political events in Ukraine during much of 2014 have taken many people by surprise. Despite being the biggest state in Europe territorially, Ukraine has not been a member of any major European institution, whether it be the EU, the eurozone, the Schengen Agreement or NATO. As a result, Ukraine has played only a minor role in international European interactions. EU negotiators have long been interested in institutionalizing economic interactions with Ukraine and have negotiated a comprehensive Association Agreement that was viewed as a first step in establishing closer political and economic relations with Europe. In November 2013, then-Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich announced during the EU economic summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, that his government would forego signing a long-negotiated and hotly debated westward-looking economic agreement proposed by the EU. Instead, Yanukovich favored signing an equally fiercely debated eastward-oriented economic agreement with Russia and its partners in an incipient Eurasian Union.

In response to Yanukovich's announcement, unrest broke out, particularly in downtown Kiev on Maidan square. For months, protesters occupied public spaces, and police and Special Forces were called out to quell the protests, resulting in accelerating violence in January and February 2014.

The unrest swelled to become what has become known as the EuroMaidan Revolution. Public disorder and protests resulted in Yanukovich's decision to flee Ukraine to Russia. A new interim government was formed in May, and Petro Poroshenko was elected Ukrainian president.

Moscow's perspective on the protests, known as the EuroMaidan Revolution, is viewed in the context not only of Ukraine's rejection of Russia's political and economic initiatives, but also of what is widely seen in Russia as "lessons" from the disintegration of the Soviet Union. As the first decade of post-communist experience proceeded, Russia's capacity to exert decisive influence over the former Soviet republics receded. Georgia's "Rose Revolution" starting in November 2003, followed in 2004 by Ukraine's "Orange Revolution," demonstrated to Kremlin leaders the momentum of centripetal forces in the former Soviet space. Underlying social support for what came to be called in Moscow the "color revolutions" precipitated adamant revanchist responses from the Kremlin. Moscow's policy response grew to focus on two things: first, to pursue integration policies from above and, second, to attribute any drive toward self-determination as the result of Western manipulation and, accordingly, infiltrate grass-roots movements to recapture the peoples and the spaces Moscow saw as being lost to foreigners. When the EuroMaidan Revolution foiled Moscow's efforts to coax, cajole