

UKRAINE CONFLICT: GEOPOLITICAL VALUE AND THE WAYS OF ITS REGULATION

Feng Yujun (Beijing)

A range of popular disobedience actions, forced regime change and other developments, which were taking place in Ukraine during 2014, grabbed the attention of the whole world although that country is not among the premium European countries, in the main owing to the change of the geopolitical landscape of the modern world, which began just from there. The current rift in Ukraine is not only an internal problem of this country; the political crisis has the direct impact on the influence areas of the main geopolitical players. The president of Russia Vladimir Putin made multiple statements about his intentions to revive the authority of Russia in the neighboring countries after his inauguration, and this time the Crimean developments affected directly the European Union and its assertive “eastern policy”.

The Ukrainian conflict affects anyhow the interests of not only the western countries such as Russia, the European Union and the USA, but also of the countries of East Asia, such as China and Japan. One can say that the development of the Ukrainian crisis has as consequences the changes of the strategic axes of the foreign policy of the abovementioned countries and the intensification of the struggle for the national interests. Nevertheless, the development of the Ukrainian crisis brings up more and more complicated questions, which trouble the solution of the issues of the political tension reduction. Neither diplomatic negotiations, nor imposing of sanctions or threats of use of force allowed finding a way of recovery from the crisis until now.

Russia: complicated situation, decisive attack. The increase of protest actions on Maidan Nezalezhnosti in Kiev was at the same time with the beginning of the winter Olympic Games in Sochi. There were many forecasts that after their finish Moscow would respond to the situation as it had been in Georgia in 2008. But the further moves by Vladimir Putin resulted in the people’s referendum and the hasty accession of the Crimea to Russia.

There were several reasons of the actions of Russia in spite of the predicted aggravation of the international situation: firstly Russian military prescriptive was given support by the local population, which allowed getting the territory under control. Secondly, it was forecasted, that the political, economic and military interests of these two countries would come in collision after the revolution and establishment of the western-minded government.

Today it is usual to explain the Russian intervention as a “necessity of defense of Russian citizens in the Crimea” or as “respect to the choice of the local population”, but there are few people who speak of the fact that the West nears step by step the border of Russia through the former union republics and lays it whereby under the necessity to defend its interests more and more severe. It was forecasted that the EU association agreement would result in the weakening of the relations between Ukraine and Russia and in the arrangement of conditions of the various forms of the military integration, which could result in the forfeiture of the

Russia's Black Sea Fleet base in its turn. Moscow could not allow the weakening of its defensive capacity faced with a threat of NATO. Besides, Vladimir Putin used the Ukraine conflict against the West and first of all against the USA in retaliation at their neglect of the interests of Russia during the last 20 years.

What effect will the accession of the Crimea have on Russia? The current government of Ukraine fails to stand against Russia and to resolve the conflict in the southeast of the country. Regardless of the development of the crisis in the future the relations between Russia and Ukraine will be not broken in full. Ukraine will aim for the ensuring the support of the West against Russia. Russia will prevent NATO expansion to the East, although holding more cautious position concerning the southwest of Ukraine.

The USA and Europe: the trap of sanctions. Breaking out with the geopolitical competition in the background, the Ukrainian crisis became a result of a deeper dilemma of the European security. As it known, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the demise of the Soviet Union the actions of the West were fueled with the optimism concerning the “victory in the cold war” and believing in the “end of the history”; as a result the western countries neglected of the statements of Helsinki Final Act concerning the inviolability of frontiers and went back on their promise of disbanding of NATO together with the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact Organization. Moreover the western countries continue NATO expansion to the East notwithstanding the interests and protests of Russia, hedging in its strategic space. This situation is a look alike of the repressive and exploitative policy in relation to Germany according to the versailles-washington system, which was created after the First World War. One can say that the huge risk towards the European security, which appeared due to the current Ukrainian crisis, is to wide extent a result of the “arrogance”, “indifference” and “complacency” of the USA and Europe.

It will be appreciated that the western countries dealt quite passive towards Russia during the Ukrainian crisis; in fact the only response they supplied was the imposing sanctions. However the western sanctions aren't consequential enough because of the close economic ties between Russia and Europe. So while both Europe and Russia sustain losses, the only party which benefit due to the imposing sanctions is Washington D.C.

Neither the USA nor Europe is going to exercise any direct military involvement. On the one hand Ukraine is not a member of NATO and even in case of the signing of any treaty between Kiev and the leadership of the North Atlantic Alliance there will not be any grounds for dispatch of the troops to Ukraine. On the other hand the United States exercise more caution in the matter of the military involvements last years, one can say the prefer the war by proxy and there is little likelihood that they want meet face to face with Russia. Besides, according to some experts opinion, the USA are on the firm ground nowadays inspiring various plots and color revolutions; and the interference of NATO with this conflict will contribute to the “opposition of the West and the East”.

Economically the USA intends to stiffen the sanctions against Russia, as they have minimal impact on the cooperation between two countries. This policy

will exert great influence on Russia and Europe. Nevertheless the threat of possible damage to the economic interests will be a constraining factor for European countries, which were able to weigh the determination of Moscow concerning the instant adoption of reprisals. Another factor which effects the development of the situation among the Europeans is the growing understanding of the negative consequences of attempts of the USA to cause a clash between the parties.

Ukraine: the political chaos and uncertain future. The poor leadership was the issue of a day for Ukraine since 1991 when the country became independent; so for example the most of decisions were made as a result of “bidding”. So the high corruption rate is the main reason for the popular discontent. Although most of the members of the new government of Ukraine including the President Petro Poroshenko took an active part in the Orange Revolution in 2004, now they come up against a difficult problem. They declared after their coming into power that the former leadership hadn’t been able to fulfill their promises due to the corruption of the government machine. Meanwhile the source of the Ukrainian corruption in the government machine is the pressure from the oligarchy. But taking into account the fact that Poroshenko has a direct bearing on the oligarchy, the question arises, how he will struggle against the corruption in the current government, army and police, and who will be blame for the possible mistakes of his policy.

However the aggravation of the security situation in Ukraine is the more serious problem. Nowadays it is quite evident that Ukraine is behind Russia in the military potential. Some of the representatives of the media of Ukraine told that the government must not refuse own nuclear weapon; but having lost own science potential, Ukraine wouldn’t be able to recover it without a help from the western countries in order to make a discouraging impact on Moscow.

It is also telling that concerning the energy sector Ukraine is totally depend on Russia as before; 80 percents of the energy are imported just from Russia because the policy of the diversification of the carbon supply pipelines wasn’t pursued since the time when country became independent. Moscow in its turn doesn’t intend to allow Ukraine of the illegal unloading of the gas which is supplied to the European partners. Moreover in 2014 Russia advanced a reasonable demand from Kiev to repay according to the natural-gas contracts and changed the terms concerning the payment, so from now the gas to Ukraine will be supplied on the pre-paid basis.

Besides, the western mass media brought about the information warfare against Russia, ignoring and wrenching the facts of the objective reality. Being focused on the struggle between the West and Russia they form the image of the country as if it is a rogue nation, but don’t take into account the political inconsistencies inside Ukraine. Meanwhile there are many ultra-radical and extremist movements as before as well as there are many fascist elements among the members of the current leadership. They campaign against the forming of the constructive dialogue with Russia, stand for the “ukrainization of Ukraine”, reject the offered to them possibilities of the legalization of their activity and keep their activity outside the legal environment provoking thereby the growing of

criminality. Therefore nowadays the risk of new internal conflicts increases in Ukraine.

The reason of the pessimistic future of Ukraine lies not only in the difficult political, economical and social situation inside the country but also in its dependence on the foreign centers of power. The new President Petro Poroshenko must make a choice whether he will rely upon own potential and national interests or continue the onward movement, helping thereby the USA. Being between two poles of the regional integration Ukraine must build relations both with Russia and the EU. Thereby they can benefit of the European cooperation and keep the long-standing relations with Russia. At the same time the accession of Ukraine to NATO and the EU membership seemed to be nowadays quite impossible. Even if Ukraine accedes to the EU, one should understand that their state won't be qualified as a partnership because of the economical weakness of Ukraine in comparison with the other countries of the Union.

Besides, the economic situation of the EU is also quite complicated and it means that they won't be able to render a substantial economic assistance to Ukraine. But there is yet a possibility to repair the relations between Ukraine and Russia. The most possible way of it lies in the conclusion of agreement between Russia and the West in order to render financial assistance to Ukraine in the context of multilateral co-operation.

Conclusions and recommendations. *First of all, all these anti-Russian sanctions are not the solution of problem; the main way to get over the crisis is the multilateral dialogue.*

The USA and Europe understand the complexity of the normalization of relations with Russia as well as they remember very close ties of a number of countries with Russian economy. The toughening of sanctions against Russia not only damages the interests of Europe but also indisposes Vladimir Putin towards the EU more and more. The tougher the sanction pressure is, the tougher Russian policy in Ukraine. The pledge of the handling of the Ukrainian crisis lies not in the isolation of Russia and poison of the world atmosphere with sentiments of a "new cold war" but in the active dialogue and quest for a compromise. The western community should understand that Russia need only stabilized and advanced Ukraine; the current split and anti-Russian sentiments are not in the interest of Russia.

Secondly, the parties should not use the energy as a bargaining chip.

The interested parties should recognize that mutual energetic games can disserve to every of them. If Russia uses the "energetic lever" to press the EU, this strategic market will be lost for this country in the future. As for the European countries, although in course of time they will be able to diversify the energy supply pipeline, one should note that the gas pipeline from Russia is the most preferable and cost effective system of the energy delivery.

Thirdly, the international cooperation should become the main tool of the political conciliation and state-building in Ukraine.

Neither of the opposing parties should ignore the internal problems of Ukraine. Neither Ukraine, nor the West or Russia can resolve the Ukrainian

problem singly. Economically the IMF should proceed to support Ukraine financially in order to help the country to get over the economic slump; herewith it is essential to take all reasonable efforts in order to prevent the improper use of budget resources by dishonest Ukrainian officials. Politically the parties should turn attention to the problem of the influence of extremist and radical organizations on the leadership of the country; it is necessary to oppose the rise in fascist sentiments in Ukraine. In this case, the participation of European countries and member states of the CIS in common celebration of the events devoted to the commemorative dates of the World War II this year would be well timed and correct. It would be a good reason for the consolidation of every party's efforts in order to assure the political conciliation of Ukraine as well as the equality, legitimate rights and interests of all ethnic groups and to prevent the disintegration of this country.

Репозиторий ВУАН