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Fail of Diplomacy

– Rearmament race of the XXIst century: the Ukraine Fall –

Diplomacy is a *continuation* of war by other means. (Zhou En Lai)
Status quo you know, is Latin for the mess we're in. (Ronald Reagan)

The actual geopolitical context and international security environment have ranked out peace and human rights as overrated concepts, while war has become the immediate solution and response for achieving national and security goals, using as main tool diplomacy.

R. Reagan's understanding of peace as not the absence of conflict, but as the ability to handle conflicts by peaceful means, has lost its meaning and applicability.

An ancient art meant to facilitate cooperation, to prevent conflict breakthrough, means of conflict management, negotiation and peace building, diplomacy is now faded practice, an instrument for egoistic, self-centered interests, an excuse for waging war.

Therefore, fading from a means of communication and peace keeping to an apple of discord, diplomacy seems to fail or in some cases seems to have failed its main purpose and goal, the Ukrainian crisis stands out as proof.

A civil war meant to bring to the people of Ukraine freedom, independence from a dictatorial Russian regime, to restore the rule of law and align Ukraine to the sovereign European states and to the international security architecture proved the entire world how in just the blink of an eye human rights become nothing more than a currency with a different exchange rate according to one's own interests and visions, and diplomacy, even though the main mean to assert, protect and promote them a failed instrument.

This is the subject the present paper addresses, trying to answer at the end of the analyzes of the Ukrainian case to a central question related to diplomacy and its future, considering the new geopolitical context and Russia's and US's interests in Europe.

Furthermore, are the US still a guarantor of Europe's military security pursuing to linger Russia's expansionist interest towards the former soviet republics? Keeping in mind that America is no longer by far the superpower, the only power in this multipolar international construct, yet still a promotor of international security and defense initiatives.

Does Russia pursue the rebirth of the former Russian empire and restoration of the former sphere of influence? A question that holds the main pages of every agenda and journalistic appraisal, as „whoever does not miss the Soviet Union has no soul, whoever wants it back has no brain.”(V.Putin)

Is Russia in this global multipolar international architecture a regional power wishing to become a superpower and pursuing US's dethronement? NO, for Russia will not be Russia

anymore, as Putin argues. However in Russia's conception, the regional powers should have a saying the areas where they play the role of areal regional hegemon, thus the legitimized attacks on Ukraine or Chechnya.

After the collapse of the USSR, Russia is back on track, growing and asserting a new principle: the economic power mean political power and Moscow has managed to transform the event in a political lesson and instrument.

The seduction of the imperial past is yet tremendous. Instead of focusing on internal reconstruction and democracy enforcement, Russia is somehow obsessed with expansion. It still has this messianic vision of conquest, majestically allegorized by the Katherine the Great: "If I could live 200 years, the whole Europe would be under Russian domination."

On this geopolitically complex chess board, Ukraine bears an immensely importance, as strategic goal and European interface for both Russia and the US, "without Ukraine Russia cannot be an empire anymore, with it, it can" affirmed Z.Brzezinski. Yet, nowadays, Russia gave a new meaning to this thought by asserting that "without Ukraine Russia can be an empire, but it is not Russia anymore".

West Ukraine is catholic, pro-European and poor in terms of resources, whilst the eastern part is orthodox, pro-Russian and wealthy. We have a classical recipe of a frozen conflict, which unfortunately can remain for long time frozen. A frozen conflict at EU's borders and inside the geographical Europe.

So, let's do the math.

Diplomacy's decrease of influence, through its speech and actions in resolving crisis and managing relations between states is the phenomena I seek to explain. The dependent variable sizes the paradox of the contemporary diplomatic speech, from relaunching relations and peace building, Ukraine's restoration, it led to a race of rearmament, highlighting the basics of Realpolitik: increase and reinforcement of own national security as a response.

Therefore, diplomacy became a means of disguise of own interests and actions against the others. Hiding under the pretext of vigilance and preventive diplomacy, the deployment of armed forces, tanks and arms became the favorite rhetoric or the main powers engaged in this conflict management: the US and Russia.

Hence, I consider identifying and analyzing the factors and public statements of the US and Russia regarding Ukraine of a great practical relevance. As already mentioned, my analysis strategy will focus on singular case, that of Ukraine and its relations to Russia and the West.

The paper continues actually my research efforts in understanding Russia and its strategy towards Europe, as well as its relations to the US and its former soviet republics, as part of its goal of restoration of its sphere of influence. Useful is also, from my point of view, the theoretical approach, due to the comparison I encourage between two apparently antithetical theoretical perspectives of international relations, realism and constructivism, proving that each approach comes in fact to complete the other one, offering a complex perspective of the security landscape ad of the cooperation between them. This account focuses on the Ukrainian crisis started in 2014, with particular interest in diplomacy's role and impact in the conflict management ad stabilization of the area, as well as in defining and relaunching the US-Russia relations.

Considering Russia's and US's well known security interests in Europe and the stake of this game of powers in Eastern Europe, the Ukrainian crisis brought to attention some critical security issues in the area with great implications for both the EU and Russia, but mostly for

Ukraine itself. It is a frozen conflict that can break again at any time, determining and maintaining a climate of insecurity, uncertainty, fear and destabilization. However this is Putin's favorite instrument for politics and control: divide et impera.

This security variable leads to huge losses in the economic sector, asserting thus Putin's number 2 international diplomatic pretext: economic power means political power, applying the lesson to any disobedient state, whether Ukraine or Chechnya. Exactly that has he succeeded in Ukraine: deepening a sick dependence relationship, through diplomatic efforts to mask the intent of annexation, invoking sensitive excuses known as historical responsibility and cultural, religious brotherhood.

But such a war demands great costs in terms of armament and military industry, without mentioning the tremendous costs in human casualties. Even if it came to an end it will leave the country drained and throw it in a deep not only economic as well as social crisis: unemployment, lack of investors, market profit sinks, enabling chaos and deepening the dependence to Russia. Russia which is willing to lend Ukraine money (it will get it back, if Ukraine does not want to freeze without any gas) and help it reconstruct under its "guidance", for it helps its own people, its own Russians. On the other hand, the EU and the West will grant them the help needed and integrate them in the western structure in exchange of too high unbearable burdens and will not have the patient to bargain for their fulfillment.

Again, Putin has it his own way.

The description of the Ukrainian crisis as well as an inside of the Chechnya wars, the public declarations of the Russian and American administrations, their rhetoric and the reactions of the Russian and international mass media, as well as the historical background that motivates the breakthrough of the conflict are good indicators to support my research variable.

The independent variable comprises the security perspective and will be measured in terms of military preparations engaged in this area by both states: on the one hand the US strengthens its positions to the Black Sea, protects itself from any nuclear attack through a missile shield, deploys troops and conducts different military exercises...whereas Russia cannot remain still. It secures its eastern flank and deploys troops and armament to Transnistria.

The economic dimension of the research is to be explained through the security one, being closely linked, as no one can refer to Ukraine as a rich state, a real stake because of its resources. Yet, Ukraine is Russia's Delilah, betrayed by its flesh and blood to the West, to freedom and democracy, Mother Russia feels betrayed and cheated.

A divided Ukraine can never be an eligible candidate state for the western security structures, a reliable partner, yet only an insecure, unstable and drained land, sidelined by a jealous compulsive obsessive Russia.

Two hypotheses seek to explain the fading power of diplomacy in managing conflicts and give an answer whether diplomacy will ever claim its importance and purpose as we know them reinforced through its auxiliary concepts of preventive or defensive diplomacy. The first hypothesis argues that the more active the diplomatic ties are and diplomacy, as ambassador of states' administrations impels to peace and cooperation the more the state wants to strengthen its security and of the other linked states, determining the relief of relation and minimizing the risk of a military conflict.

The second one results from the security dimension and adjusts the first hypothesis by explaining that the greater the states commitment to peacefully solving a conflict employing all diplomatic channels and tools, the less the economic damage on the victim state will be and the

faster the status quo of instability and insecurity will be changed into one of peace, reconstruction and cooperation.

It will be interesting to see how realism and constructivism lead to the same result: cooperation based on a common goal – one's own national security.

If realism reduces the interstate relations to power and selfish pursue of security rationales and interests and defines states as main actors of the international system and play makers, constructivism seizes the common ground for the selfish power based relations.

The social interaction between the states lead to security structures and organizations, while the diplomatic speech draws the framework to assert not only one's own security interests but of the international community, strengthening security as concept and practice overall. "Nations are interdependent and that recognition of our dependence upon one another is essential for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness of all mankind."¹

The more one state seeks to accomplish its own interest the more bound it is to interact and cooperate with other states: without Russia there is no Europe and without Europe there is no Russia, the same as with the US.

Constructivism, as political theory emphasizes the social dimension and the historical relations between states, as the grounds for the cooperation between states. Seeking their own national interests, the states interact socially laying the social assumptions to strengthen the relations between them.

It argues that international relations are in fact a social construction: collective subjects of international relations, the states and the international institutions are built from the material side of human nature, but each of them has its specific cultural, political, resulting from human interaction and cooperation in the social world.²

We find ourselves between one hard power that is struggling to embrace the soft side of diplomacy and promote it in those parts of the world where it can serve its purposes, hence remaining faithful to the hard power practices and principles, and a soft power trying to define its own path and sphere of influence by embracing the historical brotherhood pretext. The paradox is that Russia also resorts to the hard power specific tools and means. A powerful, justified legitimization for mingling in Ukraine's internal affairs, if we are to consider Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights released by the UN in 1948: "All people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

The following pages will provide a foray in the history of diplomacy, its definitions and its evolution, and a radiography of the Ukrainian crisis and of the meaning of what remains in history know as Euromaidan, proposing the preventive diplomacy concept and means as the best renewed medicine against conflicts with some amendments.

The Ukrainian crisis has emphasized again what the Chechnya wars, or the Iraq crisis already asserted, yet again the international community failed to hear to: different security strategic cultures, two different societies that are incompatible due to a huge gap between

¹ Andrew J. Bacevich, *American Empire. The realities and consequences of US diplomacy*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, London England, 2002, p.5

² K.M Fierke, Constructivism, in Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, Steve Smith, *International Relations Theories. Discipline and Diversity*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, p.168

military capabilities, foreign policy areas of interests and its instruments. (military vs. diplomacy)

One more reason to take into account such an analysis, Kissinger's observation in his study of the Vienna system providing Putin a perfect justification: „societies exist in time more than in space... a state achieves identity through the consciousness of a common history. History is the memory of states.”

Diplomacy – “the master institution of international relations” (M.Wight)

“Diplomacy is the term given to the official channels of communication employed by the members of a system of states.”³

Medieval diplomacy took after Ludovic's XI “raison d'etat” doctrine, institutionalized by Richelieu, as well as Machiavelli's principle the ends justify the means, as politics have no relation to moral. The main tools to achieve the goals were lying, cunning, corruption, betrayal, whilst sincerity, loyalty or honesty were considered flaws. The diplomatic activity was defined by suspicion and concealment...should we reconsider today's diplomatic practices and be afraid of such a step backwards?

No, as diplomacy moved forward and moves forward, adjusting to the new challenges of the international system by developing or reinforcing different auxiliary means of its armory. It is the art of negotiation, of masterfully handling words and intentions in order to prevent conflicts and build peace and close cooperation.

From the first permanent embassies of the papal diplomacy, the venetian and Florentine style of active, cultivated, strict and meticulous diplomatic act, the keen fine Italian negotiation art, the French meddlesome and ambitious administrations, diplomacy has evolved and adapted itself to the changing threats, interstate relations and world order. Hence the concepts of “preventive diplomacy” and “defense diplomacy”, both seeking to face the global threats and address in a timely and successful manner the changes of this multipolar international stage. Negotiation remains however its main instrument, an essential step to the difference between peace and war, the only one that, as G.R. Berridge and T.G.Otte puts it, can bring out the advantages of a cooperative pursuit of common interests and can prevent violence from being employed to settle arguments.

Can we still confirm negotiation as a trustworthy, reliable tool in the context of continuous numerous geopolitical crisis and conflicts? Do diplomacy's methods and ways still apply and achieve a satisfying result and a constructive cooperative solution?

If referring to the Ukraine as a geostrategic stake in Russia's Realpolitik view, diplomacy played the role of an instrument to serve Russia, shaping a Machiavellic foreign policy and defined in the terms of a struggle to increase state power, in this case Russia's sphere of influence over one of its former soviet republics. Machiavelli's permanent state of war applies perfectly to the destructive relationship between Ukraine and Russia, while Putin embodies perfectly Machiavelli's portrait of the prince. A “prudent ruler cannot and should not keep his word when keeping it is to his disadvantage and when the reasons that made him promise no longer exist.” The main concern for a prince should be war, or the preparation

³ G.R.Berridge, Maurice Keens-Soper, T.G.Otte, “*Diplomatic theory from Machiavelli to Kissinger*”, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2001, p.1

thereof, not books. Through war a hereditary prince maintains his power or a private citizen rises to power. Machiavelli advises that a prince must frequently hunt in order to keep his body fit and learn the landscape surrounding his kingdom. Through this, he can best learn how to protect his territory and advance upon others. For intellectual strength, he is advised to study great military men so he may imitate their successes and avoid their mistakes. A prince who is diligent in times of peace will be ready in times of adversity. Machiavelli writes, “thus, when fortune turns against him he will be prepared to resist it.”

Nothing more true when analyzing this race of rearmament started by the two paleo-makers in the eastern part of Europe. An American missile shield pointed against Iran or any other nuclear power state that does not conform to the international rules of conduct, is seen in the context of the signed Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between Iran and the P5+1 and EU as a spine in Russia’s flank, yet a legitimizing weapon in Putin’s offensive: troops deployment and use of nuclear weapons for self-defense. “Changes were requested in the context of the new international modified political situation and a consolidated role of Russia as a great naval power. There is great focus on the Atlantic Ocean, on NATO’s enlargement to the East and the new military infrastructure in its nearby. The second element to consider it’s Crimea’s and Sevastopol’s unification with Russia. Thirdly, there is the intention of resuming the presence of the Russian fleet in the Mediterranean sea.”⁴

Machiavelli and Kissinger both perceived the importance of the historical brotherhood and of the religious factor in shaping a states’ interests and foreign policy, granting Putin a diplomatic testament he loves to prey: “we were ready to do this (use nuclear weapons)...Crimea is our historical territory. Russian people live there. They were in danger. We cannot abandon them.”⁵

According to Machiavelli, since “men are born and live and die in an order which remains over the same”, religion could become a reinforcer of diplomacy itself. Tool brilliantly instrumented in Putin’s expansionist speech towards the Ukraine. The states’ foreign policy and diplomacy are a reflection of its own history, it is being shaped by these and they become an expression of the “historical experience, the physical environment and their natural resources.”⁶

In Kissinger’s opinion, foreign policy is shaped by the past and defines the state, its interests and international behavior, whereas diplomacy becomes the means and the language, the speech to facilitate these goals and adjust the moral behavior of the state.

Still we must pay great attention as “history is not a cookbook offering pretested recipes. It teaches by analogy, not by maxims, and its lessons can therefore never be automatic...whatever meaning history has, is derived from the convictions of the generation which shapes it.”⁷

Kissinger was deep inside as constructivist as one can be.

Constructivists tried to understand and explain the change in international relations stressing the importance of historical context on the evolution of state and social construction results. In their view, international relations have an important social dimension based on

⁴ Dmitri Rogozin, Russian vice premier, 26.07.2015

⁵ Vladimir Putin, in Andrey Kondrashov's documentary “*Crimea: the way home*”, A Rossiya One production, 22.03.2015, available at <http://www.sott.net/article/294197-Crimea-The-Way-Back-Home-EN-Subtitles-Full-Documentary-VIDEO>, accessed on 10.15.2015, 21:23.

⁶ G.R.Berridge et alli, *op.cit*, Kissinger, p. 184

⁷ *Idem*, p. 185

norms, rules and language typical at this level, idea shaped by Gorbachev's new thinking. "International politics is a world of our making" constructivists claimed, arguing that interstate relations are actually a process of interaction and the result of such a process is a social construction. The actors take different decisions in the process of interaction with others hence the distinct historical, political and cultural realities.⁸

Up to a degree, Kissinger pointed out the basic principles of preventive diplomacy and diplomacy's main role as a mean of prevention and conflict management, a tool meant to avoid escalation demanding and displaying a certain degree of creativity and flexibility: "the decline of a civilization is usually traceable to a loss of creativity and inspiration and therefore avoidable...centuries of great achievements punctuated by catastrophic upheaval...but each tragedy was followed by a new burst of creativity." Cooperative pursuit of interests and conflict management requires creativity and compromise.

It is this scamper of the states for their own security and power that lays the ground for a constructive cooperation between rational states and leaders. For it is the statesman who is the educator who reshapes and reconstructs the national interest and moral behavior, "he must bridge the gap between a people's experience and his vision, between nation's tradition and its future."⁹

Applying Kissinger's vision to the Ukrainian situation, the crisis becomes obviously a paraphrase of its own political actions and a projection of Russia's power and influence over it. A power translated by Russia in Joseph Nye's terms, as "the ability to get the outcomes you want and to affect the behavior of others to make this happen."¹⁰ Furthermore, Russia possess as well other resources to obtain the desired outcomes: large population, territory, important natural resources, military force and economic strength compared to Ukraine.

From here on Kissinger's speech takes another track, "power is merely an instrument of self-restraint and limitation, without attempting to play God..."⁹, which would not portrait Putin.

This international system based on the balance of power, where the actors are the main actors, Kissinger asserts the principle of international stability and the concept of legitimacy as core elements of this equilibrium.

The Ukrainian crisis is to be considered an attack to the international stability and to the legitimacy of the existing international order, whereas diplomacy failed and became a supplement of war.

Still, why did diplomacy, the key element of modern international policy, fail? In Kissinger's words, diplomacy in all its forms failed as two vital conditions have not been fulfilled: equilibrium/balance and stability.

"Equilibrium was the name of the game" and diplomacy its rule maker and keeper. Within the reshaped global equilibrium, US would still play its balancing role and Russia, given the rapprochement to the American values and capabilities to assure their independence and security, would develop a stronger interest in better relations with the US, leading to a stabilization of the international climate. Of course, the US was to have and be granted the role of a pivotal state of the new geostrategic order, whereas Russia had other plans. In this case there is no wonder diplomacy started to fade and fail, as it did not look beyond its primarily

⁸ K.M Fierke, *op.cit*, p.169

⁹ *ibidem*

¹⁰ Joseph Nye, *Hard power, Soft Power and the war on Terrorism*, in ed. David Held and Matthias Koenig – Archibugi, *American Power in the 21st century*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2004, p.117

role of adjusting relations between apparently antagonistic powers and therefore to preserve regional alliances.¹¹

Kissinger perceived the essence of constructivist theory, defining diplomacy in terms of the conduct of relations between states short of war, tightly linking it to military power.

They should support each other, furthermore, military power can become an instrument of diplomacy, to reinforce it and assure its objectives will be accomplished, along with the main diplomatic tool, negotiation. Negotiation, or the conference method in Grotius terms remains the first and most important method to prevent conflicts from breaking into war, together with arbitration and mediation, incorporating also the most aggressive and less desirable diplomatic response, determination by lot or a variant on it single combat.”¹²

However, in the case of the Ukrainian crisis, US’s and EU’s mediation skills failed, leading Russia’s way to apply the third mentioned method to settle the dispute: determination.

The US has again granted Russia the liberty of maneuver, as the international regulations meant to prevent and control such display of force have been undermined by their initiator itself. The Americans who had their own interest to pursue. This freedom to act without being punished was a gift Putin’s Russia did not hesitate to use in the wars against Chechnya or now Ukraine. A short comparison between the two crisis will be presented in the next subchapter.

Their new diplomacy practices introduced military power as a tough, reliable means of facilitating communication, the fight for power, the negotiations favors the social interaction and encourage the cooperation and the common pursuit of the own personal as well as collective security interests.

We are dealing more with a defense diplomacy, emphasizing the evolution of military force, from simply an instrument of threat and force, repression it has a new role, it is a tool of foreign and security policy.¹³

The western military forces have a new role, to build the bridge between the two antithetic approaches on international relations, realism and constructivism, promoting more elements of the later.

Defense diplomacy is what gave birth NATO, the Warsaw Pact and other alliances for decades, so why not hope it will succeed in the case of Ukraine? From an instrument of realpolitik and enforcer of this balance of power and pursuer of national interests no matter the means employed, military cooperation sets today the ground for defense alliances, maintaining spheres of influence, commercial interests as well as a means of blocking other regimes. As tool of foreign and security policy it seized the importance of cooperation with other states, even with the ones considered enemies, launching therefore a strategic engagement. When faced with a great threat, the security needs encourage cooperation and the selfish rational survival interests becomes the ground for the common engagement.¹⁴

This is what the US promoted as solution in the Ukrainian case, standing by its role of security promotor, but failed to enhance the security dialogue and multilateralization of defense diplomacy. NATO is its best weapon and example of a defense diplomacy initiative, which

¹¹ G.R.Berridge, et alli, *op.cit*, p.196

¹² *Idem*, p.53

¹³ Andrew Cotty, Anthony Forster, *Reshaping defense diplomacy: New roles for military cooperation and Assistance*, Oxford University Press Inc., New York, p.6

¹⁴ *Idem*, p.7

managed to attract the former soviet republics and Central Eastern Europe states and get the out of Russia's influence. Yet, as we can witness it, it did not succeed 100%.

Could diplomacy take over any of the three roles identified by Andrew Cotty and Anthony Foster and put an end to this crisis? Strategic engagement as a means of preventing conflicts between former or potential enemies, promoting democratic civil military relations and thirdly to support other states in developing peacekeeping capabilities.

Given the Ukrainian crisis, defense diplomacy seems to acquire a new role: stabilization of a weakened state, enforce democracy and reduce the probability of another war or conflict in the region.

In Chechnya's case it seemed to have failed again.

Once just an attribute of state power and sovereignty, central argument and weapon of realistic approach of interstate relations, military force is now a part of the constructivist approach, relaunching the interstate relations on other grounds, acting as a reinforce of cooperation, mutual trust and commitment to overcome or manage differences.¹⁵

It is up to a degree the pretext Putin sold when explaining the presence of Russian militants and mercenaries in Ukraine, their purpose was to reestablish order, protect the Russian population and reinforce their will.

In this mist of calibration of the power relations, diplomacy can return to its original purpose, as defense diplomacy and relaunch the perception that Russia and the West do share common interests and goals, which would be better addressed through international cooperation, compromise and acceptance of existing rules and international regulations.

Russia's Delilah – the Ukrainian crisis

“In the case of the Soviet Union, federalism failed as the ethnic principle triumphed. In the case of the Russian Federation, federalism faces the opposite danger, that of reflexive centralism, in which even the autonomy of the ethnically Russian regions is at risk, if autonomy for the minority regions is not respected.”¹⁶

Ethnicity and nationality are two relatively new concepts with a very fine line between them, used to explain the origin of the eastern slaves, group of which the Ukrainians, Russians and Byelorussians are part. The “little Russia” inherited the burden of its nickname from the XIXth century when the ethnic groups have been classified in: the great Russians, the little Russians and Byelorussians.

Despite the major differences between the three groups, they have been constantly identified as Russian, each group developing its own specific ethnical identity.

The Ukrainian identity comes into being in the XVIth century, the Russian one can be traced back in the Imperial Russia.

Alexandru Danilov offers an expose of the historical becoming of the national identities of the two clashed states, identifying as common root the period of Kyven Russia, or the period of all Russians (X-XIII centuries). This term appears for the first time in the tsarist historiography in order to delimitate the historical periods of the Russians.

¹⁵ *Idem*, p.16

¹⁶ Robert V. Daniels, 1997 in Matthew Evangelista, *The Chechen Wars. Will Russia go the way of the Soviet Union*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C, 2002, p.196

The Kyven Russia has been grounded by Oleg, a vareng, another terminology for Viking, as he took over Kiev in 882. After the disappearance of the Cossacks in 1764, the Ukrainians' identity got incorporated in the multiethnic and multicultural character of the tsarist empire. They have been the most active contributors to the ideology, the institutions and states apparatus of the empire, representing 25% from the total of the empire's population. Their influence has grown stronger under Queen Elisabeth (1741-1762), who has married Alexei Razumovski, the son of a Ukrainian Cossack.

However, the Ukrainians have preserved their cultural, social and political identity within the empire. Not for long, as for Queen Catherine the Great, the Ukrainians having the same rights as the Russian nobles was an injustice, starting thus a process of russification, justified by the common origins in the Kyven Russia. This identity of all Russians part of the eastern slaves group had absorbed all national identities of the Ukrainian and the Russians, until 1991, when, after the collapse of the soviet Union, the Ukrainian nationalism resurrected along with the Ukrainian independent state.

The purpose of this foray is to highlight Russia's main objectives towards Ukraine: the restoration of its influence in the former soviet republics in achieving its stance of great regional power.

Yet, W. Shakespeare laid gracefully the precondition of such a tenure: "some nations achieve greatness, some are born great and some have greatness thrust upon them."

Transforming the national Ukrainian identity into a main theme of the Russian speech and motivating its roots to a common period, that of the Kyven Russian, served Putin's action of founding a cultural union to promote its political interests.

As already mentioned, Russia achieved its goal to push Ukraine off a possible integration in the European community and keep it politically close to it. Yet it remains to be seen how the new signed EU Agreement will help Ukraine develop and integrate in the western structures, not only from security point of view, but also economic, socially and culturally.

Ukraine is no economic stake nor for Russia or the US and the EU, however it plays a geostrategic role, that turns it into a target, a prey to be haunted.

Given its dependence to the Russian gas and its debt to pay the gas quantities delivered by Russia, Ukraine has no other choice but maintain good relations to Russia, as many times the gas deliveries have been stopped by Russia, as a means of punishment. Under Kremlin's political pressures, Ukraine has renewed the permission for the Russian fleet to station in Sevastopol until 2042. Even if Ukraine wishes to be politically independent it does not have the economic resources to do so.

In the context of NATO's Eastern enlargement, Russia will do everything in its power to keep Ukraine as a buffer zone between the Russian territory and NATO, trying to regain Ukraine its sphere of control. For the pro-Russian population, the only solution to an economic recovery is a tight collaboration with Russia. This is Ukraine's Gordian knot, maintaining political independent while obtain economic benefits from its cooperation with Russia. Russia is yet keen, and aware of the fact that it can easily destabilize Ukraine and this is what it has tried to do during the 2013-2014 crisis, through blackmail and supporting the internal riots .

As we can all see it, it is all about dependence, whereas today's international order is based on interdependence between states, and diplomacy on the principle of reaction-counter reaction. No matter how hard the one strikes, the other one will strike harder, no matter what one promises, the other one won't take it seriously, as none of them will stand by them.

The Ukrainian crisis or the Euromaidan, stand for the popular reaction to the Russian foreign policy and threat of Russian trade sanctions, government corruption and police brutality. It started on the 21st of November 2013 with public protests in the Independence Square (Maidan Nezalezhnosti) in Kiev, at first demanding only closer European integration and afterwards expanding its demands. The protests led ultimately to the 2014 Ukrainian revolution.

The protests reached a climax during mid-February, as police and protesters fired guns with both live and rubber ammunition in multiple locations in Kiev. The fights continued through the following days in which the vast majority of casualties took place. In connection with the tragic events of February 18–20 Yanukovich was forced to make concessions to the opposition to end the bloodshed in Kiev and end the sharp political crisis. Therefore, an Agreement on settlement of political crisis in Ukraine was reached, being signed by Vitaly Klitschko, Arseny Yatsenyuk, Oleh Tyahnybok. Witnesses to the signing were the foreign Ministers of Germany and Poland, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Radosław Sikorski and head of the Department for continental Europe of the Ministry of foreign Affairs of France Eric Fournier.¹⁷ Vladimir Lukin, representing Russia, refused to put his signature on the agreement, as for Russia, this could mean losing Ukraine to the EU and US, it would be out of its control sphere, a vulnerable gift to the West.

In February 2014, Yanukovich and many other high government officials fled the country and the parliament replaced the government with a pro-European one, ordering that Yulia Tymoshenko be released from prison. In the aftermath, the Crimean crisis began amid pro-Russian unrest. Despite the controversial impeachment of Yanukovich,¹⁸ the installation of a new government, and the signature of the political provisions of the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement, the protests have been ongoing to sustain pressure on the government, counter pro-Russian protests, and reject Russian occupation of Ukraine.

Hence, Ukraine's revolution main objectives have been partly achieved.

The EU Agreement came true in November 2015, when it has been ratified, even though its political provisions have been signed on the 21st March 2014. It establishes a political and economic association between the parties. The parties committed to co-operate and converge economic policy, legislation, and regulation across a broad range of areas, including equal rights for workers, steps towards visa-free movement of people, the exchange of information and staff in the area of justice, the modernization of Ukraine's energy infrastructure, and access to the European Investment Bank.

On the one hand, the European Union wants to ensure that its imports of grain and natural gas from Ukraine, as well as its exports of goods to Ukraine, are not threatened by instability in the region, believing that instability could eventually be reduced through sociopolitical and economic reforms in Ukraine. Ukraine, on the other hand, wants to increase its exports by benefiting from free trade with the European Union while attracting desirable external investments, as well as establishing closer ties with a sociopolitical entity to which many Ukrainians feel strong cultural connection.

¹⁷ <http://www.unian.info/>

¹⁸ Sindelar, Daisy (23 February 2014). *"Was Yanukovich's Ouster Constitutional?"*. Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty (Rferl.org). Retrieved 25 February 2014. [I]t is not clear that the hasty February 22 vote upholds constitutional guidelines, which call for a review of the case by Ukraine's Constitutional Court and a three-fourths majority vote by the Verkhovna Rada -- i.e., 338 lawmakers.

The European integration of Ukraine has been supported by all categories of people, students and civilians, nationalists, afghan war veterans, as well as by two of the national churches, the Orthodox and the Greek Catholic Church, by the parliamentary opposition parties, the Party of Regions, some political groups (the Ukrainian front) and different militant groups (Civic patrols, Red Sector, People's militia of Donbass).

Euromaidan was the West's hue and cry, of significant political symbolism for the EU itself, becoming the largest ever pro-European rally in the history.¹⁹

This is how diplomacy worked in the case of the Ukrainian crisis, there was no preventive diplomacy, no defense diplomacy attempts, yet a action-reaction diplomacy. As one side deployed troops at the eastern flank, the other one sent in more military equipment or weapons. It was, in my opinion, a type of diplomatic silently agreed to by both sides code, only for them to understand. The action was hidden behind the public declaration. The international law system demands respect between states and a certain degree of trust, truth and transparency, reliability in speech, hence the mediator role of diplomacy.

This kind of diplomacy revealed in our case mistrust, insecurity and offered both parts an excuse for rearming, securing their eastern flanks and relaunching the race of rearmament.

Admiral Yamamoto's remark after the attacks on Pearl Harbor, "I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve", seems to meet both sides' reactions.

The Minsk Agreement did not seem to resolve the crisis, negotiation and its diplomatic solution failed to relax the conflict and raised the level of mistrust and suspicion between the states involved.

Ukraine stands, exactly as Chechnya, as a proof of Russia's freedom of maneuver in Eastern Europe, and for the free pass granted to Putin by the US's unilateral withdrawal of the international treaties. Europe's mighty savior and warrant of freedom, security and democracy, independence, it sold it in the blink of an eye and offered it as a currency swap in exchange for its own national interests. Clearly, the US could not have enforced the international law because then, the US itself was to be amended and become a target of the international courts, for breaking human rights as well as the rights of states.²⁰

This was its strategy also during the Cold war, was not purely one of containment and defense of the free world against communist, but more one seeking to defeat the Soviet Union and Marxism-Leninism and to perpetuate the American preeminence and to foster an international order conducive to US's interests.

Since the US have renounced the treaties defending these rights and states' inviolability, how could anyone expect Russia to act differently?

At risk of a too tragically note, I would say that diplomacy as means of peace building, cooperation and rapprochement never stood a chance.

"If we have to use force it is because we are America. We are the indispensable nation."
(Madeleine Albright, February 1998)

Russia and the US are much more alike than they think or leave to be seen. In February 2002, former US President Bush decided to apply the protections of the Geneva Conventions

¹⁹ Orysia Lutsevych, "Ukraine Offers Europe Economic Growth and More", in The New York Times, 12 December 2013, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/12/12/does-europe-need-ukraine/ukraine-offers-europe-economic-growth-and-more>, accessed on 30 October 2015, 14:25

²⁰ Matthew Evangelista, *op.cit.*, p. 193 passim

to Taliban prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, as denying them the protection aroused the European public opinion's concern about the US standards of legality and protection of individual rights. Moreover, in May 2002, the Bush administration unsigned the treaty establishing the International Criminal Court. How could it then dare to criticize Russia for its war crimes in Chechnya. If the criminal courts were intended to punish war criminals, US's decision of rejecting it meant, in other words for Russia: ignore the atrocities committed by your troops in Chechnya without any fear of international legal sanction.

The US further "unsigned the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, a 1969 agreement" to refrain states from any steps that would undermine treaties they sign, even if they do not ratify them.²¹

The Chechen wars are a vivid proof as well as a victim of failed diplomatic initiative, the many similarities with the Ukrainian crisis confirming Putin's strategy and ordinary means to achieve it, in other words the wolf changes his hair, but not his nature.

In 1994, Boris Yeltsin explained the invasion of Chechnya as a necessary action to preserve the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation and prevent further secessions. Putin took it to another level and elaborated the speech, appealing to the West's sensibility and moral responsibility towards its territorial integrity and survival of the federation. Invoking the historical, cultural and religious brotherhood, the nationality factor triggers all necessary actions, the end excuses the means when it comes to national security and integrity.

If diplomacy failed, the leaders are to be blamed.

In the case of the Chechnya wars, the pursuit of a military solution was not the right thing to do, the proper solution. Yeltsin was the main responsible for the unwillingness to seek peaceful, negotiated "Tatarstan solution" to the Chechen separatism in 1991. His diplomatic apparatus did not manage to carry out the peace accords to end the first war and provide funds for reconstruction, yet provided grounds for a civil war and ultimately for a second war. As always, Russia thought control can be regained by employing overwhelming air power and military force.

Defense diplomacy did not fail as no one thought to consider it as solution, no one came up with a viable political strategy to accompany the military one, negotiation being ignored and refused.

Paradoxical, the Western leaders seemed to be competing with each other for Putin's favor, eager to treat Russia as an equal member of the G7 club, renaming it G8 in order to accommodate Russia at its summit meetings. Putin got away and had it his way, gaining at the price of war and destruction, equality with the other powers.

On the other side, considering the twisted diplomatic actions and speeches, one could also think it may have all been part of West's strategy to integrate Russia in their circle, in order to better control and limit its ambitions, to observe how it thinks and what is it after.

Keep your friends close, yet your enemies closer.

Meanwhile the toll of victims from the wars continues to mount, leading to a destruction of the states themselves. The costs of such luxurious actions are huge for all the states involved: unemployment, social crisis, lack of social assistance, organized crime, economic instability and insecure investment markets, civil and ethnic war... though the result is brilliant: deepening the economic dependence to Mother Russia.

²¹ *Idem*, p.194

While the classic war between states tends towards the monopolizing of power, and by every measure strengthens the apparatus of the state, the civil war is characterized by the constant threat that discipline will break down and the militias dissipate into armed bands operating on their own account.²²

Putin's dream of turning Russia into a strong state incorporating the former European soviet space is somehow accomplished, as a federal unified state can emerge and exist only based on trust, cooperation and respect for the one's right. Yet, all former republics feel nothing but scare, mistrust and suspicion when talking about and looking to Russia. A fear of annexation, loss of freedom, independence, tore of democracy and human rights violation, of losing their own identity and state.

Piece of cake in Putin's view, whose understanding of the concept of sovereignty finds its correspondent in Goble: "sovereignty is less about popular rule than about the power of the state, an entity which stands above and beyond the society over which it rules."²³

The media could play a big part in stopping conflicts or preventing war, becoming a tool of diplomacy and reinforce of popular will and democracy. Once a means of mass manipulation now it can be an instrument of preventive diplomacy, betting on its ability and capacity to broadcast images of horror and spread transparently communication, information.

Encouraging therefore a healthy, free, well informed public opinion, that would of course impose its will to the governments, as every person is a vote. Relation of interdependence that unfortunately is not working properly, since political power is more than aware of the power the people have, their action could lead to a government overthrow and destabilization, weakening the state and leaving it vulnerable to the others. Media, with all its channels, TV, newspapers, internet must become more than a tool of blackmail, brain wash and reeducation, reinterpretation of specific values providing a justification and popular legitimization of states' actions. The former Russian president, Dmitri Medvedev once declared that "empires appear and disappear, but what really matters is the national interest."

The cultural movements after the Euromaidan became symbols of cultural diplomacy and of the important part it can play not only in relaxing the relations between states but also in the reconstruction and reunification of a hardened people.

Music is soul food said one member of the Scorpions group and this is what music meant during the crisis and after, it brought people together, supporting each other, healing each other and eased the way to a new beginning. Brat za Brata (Brother for brother), the unofficial anthem of Euromaidan, or the song of the Ukrainian –Polish band "Give a hand to Ukraine" were meant to raise awareness of the horrors, such a war can determine cooperation and unification of the people, as only together can one nation succeed. Ukraine has yet not died tried to show the filmography inspired from the Euromaidan tragedies and the photo galleries depicting unique episodes of everyday life at Maidan.

Ukraine showed the entire world that Babylon '13 remains just a dark bloody page in the contemporary history of the people. How the rebellion towards a dictatorial, autocrat state like Russia, in the name of freedom and democracy can be expensive, and the price sometimes unbearable. This is the contemporary international system, an unscrupulous one, with no means

²² Hans Magnus Enzenberger, *Civil Wars, from LA to Bosnia*, New York, New Press, 1994, p.15, apud Matthew Evangelista, *op.cit*, p.197

²³ Matthew Evangelista, *op.cit*, p.198

of control, punishment and self-restraint, with rules made by the great powers in their interest, while the small one are their geostrategic stake and exchange currency.

The 21st of November became for Ukraine the “Day of Dignity and Freedom”. It is worth the price? All the fresh born states, after the collapse of communism, know what such a price means, know the suffering and the pain...but in the end it is worth it, for us, for them, but for the generations to come, for the dream and faith in a better world, a stable system and a global society ruled by law, democracy and diplomacy.

Conclusions

Moscow’s ambitions to regain its domination in Eastern Europe continues to mark the Russian political elite as well as its desire to regain its influence in the neighborhood, invoking the everlasting soviet brotherhood, Moscow launching therefore an offensive meant to ruin the legitimization of the sovereignty of the states once part of the former USSR, to restore its economic, political and security hegemony within the CIS (Community of Independent States) and to finally intimidate the governs by inciting the Russian minorities, offering them citizenship and Russian passports. The Community of Independent States is the main mean that Moscow has to rebuild its influence sphere and domination upon the territories of the former Soviet Union.

Yet, the European part of the CIS, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova represent the most important are for Moscow, in order to restore its domination and project its growing power over Central and Western Europe. Under the Putin administration, the reintegration of the former soviet space has become a priority, as the revival of this hegemonic Empire would assert and consolidate Russia’s position as an important global actor and a factor of stability on the European continent.

Through intimidation, energetic blackmail and political motivated investments, Russia can become a threat for Eastern Central Europe, by restoring its privileges in the region and dictating the security options of these states. Former President Putin referred to Ukraine as to “Little Russia”, o term heritage of the czarist age, attacking the West that wants to separate Ukraine from Russia. In Moldova, Moscow pushes for the acceptance of a resolution that would recognize Transnistria’s autonomy and would guarantee the permanent presence of the Russian troops in this province, while the population here bets on the European integration, and is attached to the European values.

One no longer speaks about the power of the Soviet Union, but that of the Russian Federation, a construction at half way between a national state with huge dimensions and a continental Empire, with a troubling Muslim population. Russia pursues the strengthening of security and the restoring of its empyreal influence, facts that require more attention for the CIS countries: an Ukraine that wants now a closer relationship with the EU and NATO, as well as with the Central Asia countries, in possession of oil and gas deposits, which, having escaped from the USSR influence, are struggling now to avoid a new dependency to Gazprom and Rosneft.

Reinforcing negotiation as primarily solution and secondly the sanctions to be applied if no agreement is reached, would be the ideal scenarios for diplomacy to achieve its purposes and fulfill its mission. A task easily to wright about it on paper but harder to accomplish it when there is no mutual interest in such a cooperation, when the stake poses no threat or risk, when

misunderstanding and suspicion shape the moral behavior. A chess table surrounded by play makers waiting to make their move, while in the background Elvis Presley's Suspicious minds can be heard.

Human rights is another problem that requires immediate attention, defense diplomacy must include the military force when thinking about a better and secure solution. Hence, far from states the thought of a race of rearmament or using this force to impose political power and control over others. As this is what today is happening.

The training of the vulnerable states' military and the trans-border cooperation, by participating at different joint military initiatives and peace keeping – building operations should be rethought. The strategic engagement as means of conflict prevention should be the solution.

Cultural diplomacy could easily integrate the preventive and defensive dimensions in order to promote the liberal values of freedom, integrity, states' inviolability, people rule and reinforce democracy. There are no guaranteed vaccinations to prevent conflicts from starting and no miracle cures to end them once they have started.²⁴

If during the Cold war there was one single enemy and guilty, communism, now the challenges have changed, became more complex and the enemies are becoming more and more each day that passes.

Francis Deng's international subsidiarity principle supports my theme and comes to reinforce my question: "when sovereign nations fail in their obligations to their citizens, the international community has the responsibility to hold the states accountable, and if necessary to intervene and provide the needed protection and even help find remedies for the underlying conditions that led to violence"²⁵, reinstating therefore the master institution of international relations, diplomacy.

Vladimir Putin seeks to transform Russia into a "powerful independent state", in an equal partner of the great powers and it must have an influence according to its status of great regional power.

"We are a free nation", resonated Putin's speech, invoking Russia's millenary history, which practically grants it the right to lead an independent policy, a tradition it will not change today. "Russia's foreign policy independence is an absolute imperative, the question of sovereignty is a key question." This is how Serghei Lavrov depicted a new Russian Federation, aware of the fact that power and grandeur are based on cooperation, respect and soft power, on approaching the new problems and challenges on the international agenda, all these whilst still keeping its own cultural identity, respecting the diversity of cultures and world traditions.²⁶

Moscow has the impression it has given too much and has received too little: the US won't renounce their unilateralism, treating Russia as a junior partner, who's not entitled to anything in the post-soviet space, the UE is trying to consolidate its own structures and define its sphere of influence, as a new actor on the international stage, while the former soviet republics seem eager to become independent and adhere to the western structures.

²⁴ Kevin M. Cahill, *Preventive diplomacy. Stopping wars before they start*, a joint publication of Routledge New York, London and the Center for International Health and Cooperation, 2000, p. XV-XVI

²⁵ *Idem*, p. XVII

²⁶ Serghei Lavrov, in *Moskovskie novosti*, 18 january 2007.

The color revolutions in Georgia and now in Ukraine produced for some a shock comparable to that of the 9/11, but confirmed the fact that the post-soviet space is no longer an entity.

Yet, military intervention and sanctions often do more harm than good. That is why preventive diplomacy offers the best alternative to the failed brutal practices of the past. Its methods have succeeded after conflicts breakthrough, they escalated violence and hastened the restoration of peace, focusing and treating the root causes and encouraging early involvement.

The US, on the other hand, seems to still be pursuing its strategy of openness and the *pax Americana*, just like Russia, trying to preserve and expand the American imperium. Its core piece is the commitment to global openness, removing barriers that inhibit movement of goods, capital, ideas and people. US's purpose has always been to create an open and integrated international order, remaining faithful to the principles of democratic capitalism and to its role of order guarantor and enforcer of norms.²⁷

If Russia is being accused of trying to restore its sphere of influence in pursuit of reviving the empire, the US faces the same accusations, its preconditions for a prosper, free and liberal society being considered a variant of imperialism, relying on repression and exploitation. Hence, its strategy promotes active measures to open the world politically, culturally and economically.

Conflict, aggression are more present nowadays as solution to every problem, hence we all, especially the statesmen, should consider the following: "Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind." (J.F.Kennedy)

²⁷ Andrew J. Bacevich, *op.cit*, p.3

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