



RESEARCH PAPER

Geo-Politics of Crimea: A Critical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to provide a descriptive overview of the "Invasion of Crimea by the Russian in 2014" issue to a broader audience. The 2014 invasion of Crimea by Russian forces was noticeably an important geopolitical landmark, moving tensions and reshaping global relations. It does this by outlining the issue's recent historical background, highlighting some international responses to the crisis, and explaining it through structural realism theory, closely related to geopolitics and geostrategy. The invasion of Crimea by Russia sparked prevalent criticism, leading to sanctions imposed by the Western nations on Russia. The theory of "Land Bridge & Watchtowers" is applied to analyze Russian reasons for the invasion and broaden our understanding of Russian foreign policy in this area. The study proves the the importance of the issue by doing qualitative document analysis and suggests that peace is necessary in the region for continuous prosperity.

Keywords: Crimea, Crimean Peninsula, Geopolitics, Geostrategy, Russia, Russian Alliance

Introduction

The fascinating research of geopolitics in Crimea reveals how the distinctive geographical features of the area influence political, economic, and social processes. Being at the meeting point of several civilizations and surrounded by a variety of topographies, Crimea's geopolitical significance has influenced its past. It continues to have an impact on its current affairs. This introduction will examine the main tenets of geopolitics in Crimea. The location of Crimea is a key factor in determining its geopolitical significance. The area acts as a link between various cultural and economic networks since it is situated at the intersection of important tectonic plates or trade routes. The interests of outside forces wishing to exert influence or control over Crimea's activities are frequently drawn to this advantageous position.

The region's borders have changed over many years due to geographical elements including mountains, rivers, and oceans, as well as historical and political considerations (O'Loughling et al., 2019). Conflicts over historical claims or the squabble over important resources that can be located close to boundaries can lead to ongoing territorial conflicts. The distribution of important resources, such as oil, natural gas, minerals, and productive agricultural land, is influenced by Crimea's geography. Control over these resources has the potential to increase economic growth and geopolitical clout, which frequently leads to complicated resource politics and global rivalry (Yari, 2020). Environmental issues in the area, such as climate change, water shortages, and ecological degradation, can have significant geopolitical repercussions. These difficulties might intensify resource-related disputes, lead to migration, and influence regional stability. With several ethnic groups, dialects, and religious traditions living within its borders, Crimea enjoys a rich tapestry of cultural variety (Pashtetsky et al., 2020). Understanding the social fabric of the region and its impact on political alliances and conflicts requires an understanding of these cultural

processes. Empires, conquests, and geopolitical changes have all occurred throughout Crimea's history. The identity of the area, national narratives, and opinions of surrounding states have all been permanently shaped by past events.

In Crimea, alliances and rivalries between regional powers and neighbors influence geopolitics. These ties are frequently shaped by historical encounters, common interests, and security considerations (Axt, 2022). Because Crimea is a strategically important region, numerous world powers are interested in it. These outside parties' objectives and activities have a big impact on the stability of the area and its internal and international policy. From domestic violence and terrorism to interregional power struggles, Crimea faces a variety of security issues. Understanding the underlying geopolitical intricacies is necessary to resolve these security challenges. This perspective on the Crimea instance can offer a far more comprehensive understanding of the problem, which in turn helps shape a potential solution. The next section of this paper analyzes three crucial resolution techniques: unilateral action, multilateral integration, and shared sovereignty. This research finishes by stating that a synthesis of three, with violence on multilateral inclusion, is the best path toward a solution after illuminating the good and bad features of each. This is the most feasible plan for a resolution in Crimea, according to the instruments of geopolitical analysis, and it would result in the greatest peace and stability. The research's intended contribution to the conversation on how this dispute will be handled is to provide the reader with a deeper knowledge of current Russian-Ukrainian relations via the prism of Crimea.

Literature Review

Russian invasion on Crimea has been debated by various scholars. The expansion of NATO, a crucial element of the West's strategy was to remove Ukraine from Russia's globe of authority and integrate it into Western country's problem (Rajan Menon & William Ruger, 2020). Putin finally responded to Russia's persistent worries by annexing Crimea, a peninsula that NATO was planning to utilize as a naval base against Russia. Putin views Western participation in Ukraine as a major strategic danger to Russian sovereignty (Shahi, 2022). Understanding the geopolitical dynamics of Crimea offers important insights into how the area is changing both domestically and in its interactions with the larger international community. We get a greater knowledge of how Crimea's geography, history, resources, and cultural exchanges combine to form its current political scene as we dig further into the various facets of Crimea's geopolitics.

The assumption further Ukraine will join the European Union stems from the long-standing and increasingly close relations between the two countries and the coming signing. The succeeding history section will provide a comprehensive explanation of the association documents put forth by the Ukrainian Yanukovich government. The quantity of material about the political implications of this event that is available in bookstores and on the internet has been gradually increasing; nevertheless, because the topic is still relatively "new" in the context of history, there isn't as much research done from a neorealism perspective. Books Richard Sakwa's "Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands" and Andrew Wilson's "Ukraine Crisis: What It Means for the West" provide contrasting perspectives on the Ukrainian crisis and its significance for Western countries. view the invasion of Crimea as a single aspect of the larger Ukrainian Crisis, which encompasses several interconnected issues about that nation between 2013 and 2016. In contrast, books like Alexander Sergunin's Explaining Russian Foreign Policy and the highly contentious Foundations of Geopolitics: Geopolitical Futures of Russia deal with the invasion of Crimea as one of many interconnected issues involving that nation between 2013 and 2016. by Alexander Dugin offers a more comprehensive view of how the Russian side views the entire "Ukrainian affair" (Sergunin, 2016). We observe that other related. The internal nature of issues such as the European Union Euromaidan or the war with pro-Russian separatists can be observed from a different perspective. In contrast, the Crimean Peninsula issue merits separate research on its own because it pertains to the IR arena significantly more. Hall

Gardner's story focuses on Crimea, global conflict, and revenge is this problem; nevertheless, the book also gives a far broader view of the situation by illustrating the series of events that culminated in the invasion (Gardner, 2015).

"The Russian Alliance responded to counter the European Union's evolving expansion into Ukraine by shifting its foreign policy towards Crimea" (PiKULicKA et al., 2015). The "why" pattern is used in both the inquiry and the hypothesis, which is a typical approach in academics to discuss and address scientific difficulties. The variables that make up the hypothesis are, in this instance, as follows: The development of the European Union's expansion program is an independent variable. Changes in the foreign policy of the Russian Alliance towards Crimea are the dependent variable. The primary, independent variable in the hypothesis is the assumption that the alleged expansion of the European Union into Ukraine has been a process that has changed over time in response to political and economic developments. The dependent variable, which relates to assertiveness, shows how ties between Russia and Ukraine have changed as a result of the latter's reaction to the encroachment of its "territory" by the European Union role. Several well-established theories and cogent research techniques were used to the issue. The methodology is based on two main principles: secondary sources and scholarly conversation. Regarding the theoretical framework, the aforementioned theories of geo, geostrategy, and neorealism were employed to show and uphold the paper's scientific argumentativeness. The definition of the theories is as follows:

Neorealism: Kenneth Waltz reconstructed an old idea that reflects realism to meet the demands of contemporary science He considered this in his book *International Political Theory* (1979) (Waltz, 2010). This theory has been scientifically validated. Alternatively known as structural realism, this theory of IR asserts that power is the primary element in IR. The capacity of a state to pursue its interests and make relative gains is directly correlated with its level of power. Neorealists view the field of international relations as anarchic, in which each actor's standing and sway are based only on its level of power. Classical realism and neorealism are two separate theories. Neorealists contend that the nation-state's structural limitations are what ultimately decide a state's actions, contrary to the classics who claimed that strategy, motive, and egoism all have a role. The author applies this theory to the analytical section and serves as a foundation for other geopolitical and geostrategic ideas.

A branch of science that studies how geographic variables affect sociopolitical processes and occurrences. Academic geopolitics is an interdisciplinary field of research that focuses on geographic factors that influence the formation, operation, and disintegration of nations. One of the main approaches to implementing foreign policy is applied geopolitics, which is based on spatial thinking and geographical determinism. It believes that there are perpetual disputes between the states as they vie to increase their spheres of influence. One example of such applied geo politics is geostrategic planning. This kind of foreign policy is based on geographic considerations, which also have an impact on a state's military, political climate, and opportunities. An effective geostrategic plan would be tightly linked to a state's capabilities; that is, it would focus on aligning the means—that is, the resources that the state commands—with the aims. Both of them originate from various national viewpoints, and while researchers differ in their ideas and points of view about geopolitics, they are fundamentally shaped by the viewpoint of a particular nation. The Russian Alliance's perspective on geopolitics was used in this study.



Fig. 1 Source: Sorana Jude. (2023) Geopolitical imaginations of war preparations: visual representations of the Romanian armed forces' military exercises.

Introduction to "Land Bridge & Watch Towers", background, overseas reactions, way of thinking, and analysis from a geopolitical perspective are the six components that make up the research. While the second portion discusses the effects of the invasion on international relations, the first section seeks to enlighten the reader about the fundamentals of the current crisis. The author then makes a brief note about the alleged existence of a "land bridge" that would connect mainland Russia with Russian-controlled Central and Western European Union "watchtowers" on both the northern and southern ends. The author's effort at a neorealist political analysis is covered in the last chapter.

The Crimean Peninsula has been characterized as a cosmopolitan area with no native population, having been colonized over time by individuals from many ethnic groups and countries. Due to its subjective strategic position allowing it to control the Black Sea from the north, it has been a region of intense conflict throughout history (PiKuLicKa et al., 2015). Various regional groups claimed the peninsula, including Byzantine and Genoese settlers and the Cossack Siege. After WW II, Crimea stayed part of the Supreme Soviet Union until 1954, when it was ceded by the chief Soviet to the USSR under the leadership of Nikita Khrushchev, then General Joseph Stalin's successor. It was a department. Communist Party of the USSR. The Secretary-General clarified that this was a personal sign and a symbolic attempt to reorganize the center system (sources quoted him as saying: "Full exposure: " In a way, it was a tribute to his beloved country. Although he was of Russian fall, he felt strong ties to Ukraine (Calamur, 2014).

The fortified town of Sevastopol of the Supreme Soviet Black Sea line stays as a village of the Russian roulette SFSR. Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Crimean Peninsula stayed within the borders of Ukraine as the free Republic of Crimea, and the newly established Russian Federation took control of Sevastopol (Nesnera, 2014). The conflict waked from the boosting of Western dominions into eastern equine encephalomyelitis European Union rope, including Finland (often considered Northern European Union rope), the Baltic States, and most just Ukraine. Ukraine is favorably evaluated by the European Union as a right-of-way other in the European Union vicinage procedure (EU, 2014), a foreign policy initiative intended to strengthen collaboration between the European Union and its bordering states. commerce between the two countries increased throughout the post-Soviet era and accounted for one-third of total international commerce between Ukraine and Russia in 2012. It was intended to be a step toward

harmonizing legislative and economic ideas, including modernizing that nation's energy infrastructure, granting access to the European Union Investment Bank for Ukraine, eliminating visa requirements, equating worker rights, and judicial cooperation through information and personnel exchanges (Peter, 2014). As with in addition to the European Union Free Exchange Alliance, which is a free exchange area formed among the European Union, Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland, a "deep and comprehensive free trade area" should also be established. Moldova, and now Ukraine (EU, 2013). The signing of the Agreement was abruptly put on hold by the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament).

On November 21, 2012, despite political will, argument, and frequent summits with prospective signatories. The reason was a political deal over the European Union's demands for former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko to be released from prison and transferred to the European Union on medical grounds. Moreover, the delay in signing the agreement calls into question two decades of gradual improvement in relations between Ukraine and the European Union. this politically motivated backstabbing also incited the Ukrainian people's wrath, which culminated in the lengthy European Union Roman protests. This was a protest and civil disturbance wave. On November 30, Yanukovich's administration attempted to scatter demonstrators; nevertheless, the exact reverse happened, sparking the 2014 Ukrainian revolution (Woehrel, 2014). After being removed from office, Yanukovich fled to Russia. The Russophone communities in Eastern and Southern Ukraine, especially in Donbas and Crimea, became enraged as a result, and they reacted with counter rallies and different pro-Russian actions.

The parliament of the Free Republic of Crimea convened an extraordinary session on February 21, 2014, a day after Yanukovich was removed from office in Kyiv (Bering, 2017). It was expected that separatist tendencies would explode in Crimea given that the Russophone population of the region supported him and his Party of Area govern the European Union Euromaidan and opposed the European Union Euromaidan's claim for closer inspection ties with the European Union (News Y. , 2015). Furthermore, Russian President Putin spoke about the "return of Crimea to Russia." Anti-Ukrainian protests began in Sevastopol and quickly expanded Riots and open disobedience broke out across the peninsula. Some even formed a "self-defense" or "civil defense" group, attacked pro-Ukraine rallies in Crimea's capital Simferopol, and local government institutions that continued to support the transition period targeted the Ukrainian government (News , 2014).

The situation changed on February 28 when the dodgy "little green men" ("polite people"), organized and heavy-armed paramilitary forces began to seize control of strategic locations on the Crimean Peninsula, including air and naval ports, buildings used for civil administration, and energy infrastructure (Senate, 2017). They also blockaded military facilities in Ukraine and eventually captured them one by one. The withdrawal of Ukrainian soldiers from Crimea effectively put an end to the possibility of organized opposition, especially because of the provisional government's non-resistance directive the declining morale of Ukrainian military units stationed in Crimea, and the maximum number of soldiers Half of them fled to Russia. The Free Republic of Crimea held a vote on the country's political value on March 17th, even though the Constitutional Court of Ukraine had declared it to be unlawful and that it was not recognized internationally (Kirchner, 2015). The vast majority of votes were in favor of rejoining Russia. Crimea declared its independence the next day and signed a draft treaty with Moscow right away. President Putin officially approved the document's final draft on March 21, solidifying the Russian Alliance's invasion of Crimea MacAskil et al, 2014).

Overseas Reactions

The takeover of Crimea was generally met with highly negative reactions from the international community. The European Union's official position was to fully defend Ukrainian territorial integrity and denounce the RF decision. The balance, sovereignty, and

territory dispute character of Ukraine must be regarded at all time parties, according to a statement released on March 1st by European Union Catherine Ashton, High Representative, nonnative Affairs and Security Policy Coalition. She also urged all parties to explore options through dialogue. It is unacceptable to violate these standards in any way. Restrained behavior and a feeling of accountability are more important than ever (Union, 2014). This declaration aligned with the one made by the Council of the European Union on March 7th, which validated the legitimacy of the newly elected Ukrainian government and the country's territorial integrity (PACE, 2014). The council denounced the referendum itself later that month (MFA, 2014).

The Secretary-General of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, convened a meeting of the NAC on March 2nd. He denounced Russia's military build-up in Crimea, citing violations of international law, the 1997 Treaty of Friendship and Correspondence between Russia and Ukraine (NATO, 2014). One of the most significant international organizations in the Central-Eastern European Union, the Visegrád Group is made up of the four former Red Bloc nations of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. On March 4th, the groups issued a joint statement field both sides of the conflict: Russia must act in agreement with foreign law, in particular the Budapest directive, and Ukrainian law regarding the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and Ukraine must take into account ethnic minorities such as the Russian language/Russians.

"The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia are appalled to witness a military intervention in 21st century European Union rope akin to their own experiences in 1956, 1968, and 1981," the Visegrád nations said in response to another historical analysis of the matter. Regarding the UN, there was a dual approach taken to address the issue. The 2014 Crimean referendum was condemned in a draft resolution by the UN Security Council, which is made up of the United Governments of the USA, one of the perpetual members of the council. The proposal also called for other governments to refuse to accept the results of the vote. The resolution was dropped after Russia, another permanent member, rejected the draft (Ceterski, 2017). The UN's General Assembly provided yet another forum for opposition to the invasion. For the 80th Plenary get-to-getter, they convened on March 27 to vote on Resolution 68/262, "Territorial integrity of Ukraine." The purpose of the Resolution was to declare the 2014 Crimean referendum to be internationally void and to reiterate the General Congressional dedication to protect Ukraine's territorial integrity within its foreign-recognized borders. The resolution was adopted with 100 votes in favor, 11 votes against, 58 abstentions, and 24 absent votes. Nevertheless, the decision lacked an international legal framework and was non-binding. Nevertheless, It was introduced by Costa Rica, Canada, Germany, Poland, and Ukraine itself (Ceterski, 2017).

Idea of "Landbridge and Watchtowers"

The thesis of "Landbridge & Watchtowers" states that the unusual location of Crimea on the European Union map served as the strategic justification for Russia's invasion of the region. It must be note that all of defence side's conflicts with Russia, including those that posed a serious threat of foreign conquest of modern Russian states, took place on its European Union side, along a "bridge" land strip that connected the Crimean Peninsula to the Kaliningrad Oblast today. From conflicts between the Principality of Muscovy and the Tsardom of Russia with modern power to the conflicts of the Russian Empire, to WWII (Germany's involvement). Among these, the Russian nations found the wars with Poland, France, and Germany to be especially risky and expensive; these victories were frequently achieved only by attrition, unfavorable environmental circumstances, and a significant cost in blood, sweat, and steel. The Russian state adopted a protective stance toward the Western European Union as a result of all those confrontations. Using heavy military and fortified exclaves - "Watchtower" - heading towards Russia, save control of Sevastopol, Königsberg (later Kaliningrad) and its surroundings, and now Crimea Secure the edge of the Eastern European Union "land bridge" Examples of geopolitical man European uncovering. These

exclaves provide access to the two seas that are most important for Russian naval forces and trade: the Black and Baltic seas, respectively. From a geopolitical perspective, those exclaves offer several advantages: they function as commercial centers, "gates to the West," military installations with both offensive and defensive capabilities, and bulwarks against any foreign force that might be preparing to strike Russia directly from the "Landbridge" direction.

Deconstruction from a Geopolitical Angle

The European Union accept that the 2014 Crimea issue and its invasion is an excellent example of an applied case of contemporary real politics. From the European Union's perspectives, the last two decades of close relations with Ukraine have been a power struggle with the RF. "traditionally" viewed Ukraine as their "backyard," making it one of the main targets of Russia's "near abroad" foreign policy, which holds that the Russian Alliance and other former USSR have a unique "link" and should promote alliance and partnership amongst themselves. Actually, it's a way of reinforcing Russia's power in the post-Soviet era. Russia would have to start its relations with the outside world again if there were no differentiation between "near" and "far" outside. The Commonwealth of self-dependent States and "near abroad" were attempts to stabilize Russia during a precarious transitional period, provide future legitimacy for prospective geo-political actions, and regain Russia's position as a major regional and international force. Considered a crucial trading partner and "buffer state," Ukraine served as a barrier between the Western powers who emerged victors in the Cold War and a weaker post-Soviet Russia in Russian foreign policy. As Russia faced political upheaval, social unrest, and battles in the Caucasus Mountains, particularly in Chechnya, the Proclamation of Nothing could stop the self-reliance from parts of the Eastern European Union and Central Asia it was hesitant to do so—but it might nevertheless have a significant impact on them and, in due course, intensify this in tandem with a purported return of Russian authority. Regarding the European Union during the Cold War era, it was a young idea that would take decades for political and gainful structures to develop that it was at the start of the twenty-first century, thus it was not fighting the Soviet Union on the front lines. Following the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the formerly communist nations underwent political upheaval and started a full-scale push towards the West, symbolized by the European Union and NATO.

Regarding the European Union during the Cold War era, it was a young idea that would take a decade to develop into the politics and economic structure that it was at the start of the twenty-first century, thus it was not fighting the Soviet Union on the front lines. Following the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the formerly communist nations underwent political upheaval and started a full-scale push towards the West, symbolized by the European Union and NATO. The European Union faced a far harder situation when it gained the majority of those countries. An examination. Ukraine is a potential member in the future and presently a significant commercial partner for the Union. The European Union raised the stakes this time, though, as it demonstrated that it had evolved from merely an economic cooperative and free trade zone to a political existence with its geo-political ambitions. This was in addition to the economic and legislative cooperation that it had made with all previous prospective members before accession. The political leaders of the unsuccessful pro-Western "Orange Revolution" were virtually put to death when the European Union ordered that they be moved to European Union territory for "medical reasons." Yanukovich's administration faced a serious conundrum since, in the view of Russia, Russophone Ukrainians, and other groups, freeing political prisoners whose guilt had been established by the Ukrainian judiciary would very certainly amount to political suicide. Simultaneously, Russia has made a counteroffer to Ukraine regarding a new alliance involving a few CIS nations. Presumably, they were the stated justifications for the suspension of the European Union Association Agreement.

To put it briefly, European Union took a risk by attempting to assert its political dominance over a "contested" state that was on the verge of becoming a dead superpower. Meanwhile, Russia attempted to salvage the situation by attempting to re-establish its "buffer state" near itself by purportedly providing Better financial incentives. According to the defunct Ukrainian government, it was politically and economically divided between two major parties, making it impossible to win powerful European Union nations, significant portions of the population supported one over the other, and there were questionable practices regarding political prisoners. As a result, it was expected that things would get worse. And with the European Union, it had. so, it intensified with the subsequent act of civil disobedience against the pro-Russian separatists and revolutionary temporary government. Indeed, the separatist movement in Eastern Ukraine resulted in a real civil war.

Conclusion

The European Union reply unfavorably to the irruption, assert that Russia was erosion the peacefulness and strength that currently prevails on the landmass. The European Union also try, albeit belatedly, a power play (which would weaken the perceived influence and power of such an attempt) and used other means to promote it. own expansion into Europe. Here is where the arguments on both sides of the conversation overlap but have distinct implementations: security. Accordingly, both the Russian Alliance and the European Union bear some of the blame for the current situation. The Russian Alliance is to blame for its use of controlled fire and for breaking an international treaty, of which it was a signatory; the European Union is to blame for its "quiet" opposition to the Russian Alliance in European and the Balkan regions, for setting a precedent that Russia would later reverse (such as the Kosovo issue), and for inciting the "Sleeping Bear." Given the involvement of the US and the tensions between the EU and Russia in the East, not only the European Union but also other countries of the world are on the brink of a new Cold War. But this time, both parties face off diplomatically with similar claims and justifications, resembling a giant chess game between the West and the East for political advantage. A series of long-term diplomatic negotiations between all parties, focused on an amicable solution to the issue of the civil war in Ukraine and the invasion of Crimea, no matter how simple, will help to avoid this situation. These commitments would also lead to political compromises and (ideally) new legally binding instruments. As an example, consider the difficult regional mutual recognition agreements (Crimea is recognized as part of Russia, but the Donbas region remains in Ukraine). Another option would be to form an international peacekeeping force, including Russian and Ukrainian soldiers, and place it under the authority of the United Nations, or to become an entirely new special organization, which would stop hostilities and control the areas mentioned above. One thing is certain: important conciliatory diplomatic measures must be taken to prevent the start of a new Cold War.

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