

Oleksandra Hryhorieva

Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University

Vinnitsia

Research Supervisor: O.P. Ivanytska, PhD in History, Ass.Prof.

Language Supervisor: V.I.Kalinichenko, PhD in Philology, Ass.Prof.

THE MEDIA IN WAR POLITICS: HOW THE REASONS OF RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR 2014-2017 ARE PRESENTED

Introduction. Since 2008 Putin has ushered in military reforms and a massive increase in defense spending to upgrade Russia's creaky military forces. Thanks to the above-mentioned project, Russia has recently evinced a newfound willingness to use force to get what it has planned. First, in February 2014, right after Euromaidan protests Moscow sent soldiers in unmarked uniforms to wrest control of the Crimea from Ukraine, implicitly threatening Kiev with a wider invasion. It then provided weaponry, intelligence, and command-and-control support to the pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine's Donbas region, checking Kiev's attempts to defeat them. The Ukrainian territory of the Crimea was annexed by the Russian Federation (RF) on 18 March 2014. Since then, the peninsula has been administered as two de facto Russian federal subjects—the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, which, until 2016, were grouped within the Crimean Federal District. The operation in the Crimea was not a shooting war, but actual fighting followed a few weeks later in the Donbas region. The mass media has already named a tactic of the Crimea invasion as "hybrid warfare": providing logistical and intelligence support for the pro-Russian separatists in the Donbas while undertaking military exercises near the Ukraine's border to keep Kiev off balance" [1: 25].

The objective of the paper is to discuss the peculiarities of the mass media functioning in the sphere of war politics by means of analyzing the ways of how the reasons that have caused the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2014-2017 are presented in various foreign and native media sources. According to *The Associated Press* when the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine began (April 2014) the Ukrainian government accused Moscow of "intervening militarily in Ukraine, financing acts of terrorism, and violating the human rights of millions of Ukraine's citizens". Since spring 2014 Ukraine has accused Russia of financing separatist rebels in the Eastern Donetsk and Luhansk regions as well as sending the Russian troops there. The Kremlin has denied the accusations although President Vladimir Putin said in October that Russia "had to defend Ukraine's Russian-speaking population" [2].

To analyze any conflict there is a need for one to deepen into its beginnings and roots, to discover its causes, possible scenarios of events' development that different experts suggest and the mass media sources discuss.

Firstly, considering the geographic limitations and ambitions: Russia's capacity to reach the sea is limited by geography, so ports in the North and South seas, leading to larger waters, are viewed as crucial. Sevastopol is a strategically important base for Russia's naval fleet, in addition to being Russia's only warm water base [3]. The key

role also belongs to the bridge building project with railway and auto passage through the Kerch Strait to connect the Crimea Peninsula with the Caucasus.

The second significant interpretation is regarded within the pattern of “Putin as defender”— is that the Crimean operation was a response to the threat of NATO’s further expansion along Russia’s western border. According to this logic, Putin seized the peninsula to prevent two dangerous possibilities: the first one – that Ukraine’s new government might join NATO, and the second one – that Kiev might evict Russia’s Black Sea Fleet from its longstanding base in Sevastopol [4: 47].

Russian press often manipulates authoritative opinions of scientists and scholars in defense. Noam Chomsky, an American linguist, cognitive scientist, social critic, and political activist, when commenting upon the policy of Russian leader V. Putin, mentions that the provocative NATO enlargement to the South, starting from 1990s, has evoked a nature reaction of Russian government because such the enlargement threatens directly to state interests and Russia’s security. Noam Chomsky underlines that Ukraine’s desire to enter NATO “doesn’t protect Ukraine, on the contrary threatens Ukraine with massive war. And it means this is a serious strategic threat for Russia, what any Russian leader has to react for” [5].

Henry Kissinger emphasizes that Russia and Ukraine share common border and long history of trade, cultural exchange and even statehood. That is why he assumes “Ukraine should be included into the system of European and international security architecture in such a way to become a bridge between Russia and West, but not to stand on one’s side” [6].

Thirdly, another possible reason is regarded within the pattern of “Putin as imperialist”: casts the annexation of the Crimea as part of a Russian project to gradually recapture the former territories of the Soviet Union. RF didn’t want to accept the post–Cold War European security order. In addition, it always had a sphere of “privileged interests” in the post-Soviet space and its desire to limit its neighbors’ sovereignty [7: 108]. Putin has never accepted the loss of Russian prestige that followed the end of the Cold War, this argument suggests, and he is determined to restore it, in part by expanding Russia’s borders.

Another explanation of the situation lies within the pattern of “Putin as improviser” — rejects such broader designs and presents the annexation as a hastily conceived response to the unforeseen fall of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich. The occupation and annexation of the Crimea, in this view, was an impulsive decision that Putin stumbled into rather than the careful move of a strategist with geopolitical ambitions.

However, the evidences that the intervention was a planned military operation in advance, testify about improbability of such an explanation. Vladislav Surkov, a senior Putin’s adviser, repeatedly visited Kiev and Simferopol, the Crimean capital, in the fall and winter of 2013–2014, in part to promote the construction of a bridge across the Kerch Strait to connect southern Russia and the Crimea—an essential transportation link in case of annexation. Around the same time, teams of Russian police and secret service officers were seen in Kiev. Meanwhile, Vladimir Konstantinov, the chairman of the Crimean parliament, was making frequent trips to

Moscow [4: 51]. These and other facts point that Moscow was preparing to seize the Crimea in the six months before Victor Yanukovich's fall.

Conclusion. To sum up, according to the concept of statistical probability the base of any historical event consists of its background, causes and possible scenarios of development. And to discover the reasons of the Crimea occupation and the war in the Eastern Ukraine there is a need to consider it by means of a complex analysis of all the vital areas that have been affected. In the public sphere the accent is placed upon the protection of Russian-speaking population, in the political sphere – identifying the historical region, in geopolitics – locations, strategic benefits in them and so on. Respectively, mass media highlights events from that point of view which makes benefits for them, herewith having vital influence on public opinion of a home country and other actors abroad. On the contrary, American and Western media sources are considered to be liberal, more objective and independent in their evaluations and attitudes towards the predetermined Russian media, which rather scantily describe all the depth of the problem in Russian-Ukrainian relations, stuck in accusations and permanent discharges to justify the governmental actions.

References

1. Trenin D. The revival of the Russian military / D. Trenin // Foreign Affairs. – 2016. – №3. – P. 23-29.
2. Ukraine sues Russia over Crimea Annexation and On-going War [Electronic resource] // Associated Press. – 17 January. – 2016. – Retrieved from: <https://www.apnews.com/b441f98193d84a0799aa9b322d70f752/>
3. Ukraine Crisis: Why Russia Sees Crimea as its Naval Stronghold [Electronic resource] // The Guardian. – 7 March. – 2014. – Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/international>
4. Treisman D. Why Putin Took Crimea / D. Treisman // Foreign Affairs. – №3. – 2016. – P. 47-54.
5. Долгов К. Современные войны и вооруженные конфликты [Электронный ресурс]: истоки, причины и пути решения / К. Долгов // Международная жизнь. – 2016. – 18 февраля. – Режим доступа: <https://interaffairs.ru/news/show/18829>
6. Dolgov K. Sovremennyye voyny i vooruzhennyye konflikty [Modern Wars and Armed Conflicts] [Electronic resource] / K. Dolgov. – Retrieved from: <https://interaffairs.ru/news/show/18829>
7. Кіссінджер вважає Україну «мостом» між Росією і Заходом [Електронний ресурс] / Politico // Дзеркало тижня. – 2016. – 28 грудня. – Режим доступу: https://zn.ua/POLITICS/v-ukraine- -naroda-268145_.html
8. Kissindzher vvazhayie Ukrayinu “mostom” mizh Rosiyeyu i Zakhodom [Electronic resource]. – Retrieved from: https://zn.ua/POLITICS/v-ukraine- -naroda-268145_.html
9. Stent A. Putin's Power Play in Syria / A. Stent // Foreign Affairs. – 2016. – P. 106-113.