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Settlement of the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict on the Donbas in the Focus of the Problem of War and Peace

Abstract: The purpose of this article is to understand how the blurry nature of hybrid warfare and hybrid peace influences the assessment of national security and the making of adequate foreign and security policy decisions, including, in particular, the prediction of the further course and resolution of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, which is not only a threat to Ukraine's existence but also to European security in general. In order to properly study this issue, the Russo-Ukrainian war on the Donbas was selected as an object. As the main method of the research of this problem was chosen the conflict analysis. The conclusions drawn from this analysis prompt us to differentiate the concepts of war, peace, and conflict and bring our perceptions of them to reality. When the idea of internal conflict replaces the real war, their sophisticated substitution will leave the problem of settlement of the conflict on the Donbas not solved, and the war between Ukraine and Russia is not completed.

Achieving peace by "settlement the conflict on the Donbas" within the framework of a real war of Russia against Ukraine will not lead to its end and sustainable peace. In such a situation, only a temporary "cold peace" is possible. The implementation of the strategy of Ukraine and the international community should begin with the rejection of the "plot for settlement the internal conflict on the Donbas" and the recognition of the reality of the war, in which the belligerent and aggressor is Russia, but not Phantoms DPR/LPR.

The study's objectives are based on identifying epistemological reasons that make it impossible to resolve the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Donbas and clarify their national and international security consequences. The study results are based on an analysis of the course of the Russian-Ukrainian war and the process of settling the conflict in Donbas. The article analyzes the mechanism of interaction between hybrid war and hybrid peace in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Donbas, clarifies the essence of war and peace under existing realities, and identifies epistemological reasons that make it impossible to resolve the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Donbas. The article also analyses the real and probable national and international consequences of the unresolved problem of war and peace in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict on Donbas.

The article concludes with a proposal for a possible solution to war and peace on Donbas. Recommendations for resolving the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Donbas

are based on Ukraine and the international community's rejection of the "plot for settlement the internal conflict in Donbas" and recognition of the reality of a war in which the warring party and the aggressor are Russia, but not the phantom DNR/LNR. According to these recommendations, military force should become the main instrument for coercion of Russia for forcing peace and ending the war on acceptable terms for Ukraine. Ukrainian diplomacy must act under the task of war, but not only so much for the sake of "settlement internal conflict on the Donbas."

Key words: hybrid war, hybrid peace, Russian-Ukrainian conflict, military power

The relevance of the research topic is determined by the search for ways to resolve the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Donbas. With the transformation of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict into a long-term armed confrontation, the international community is trying to forget about this clear threat not only to the existence of Ukraine as an independent state but also to the entire architecture of European security. However, this threat is evidenced by the fact that in the American edition "Foreign Policy" rating, the Russian-Ukrainian war in Donbas is among the top ten largest conflicts in the modern world (Malley, 2019). On the other hand, the existence of this conflict is additional evidence of the inability of modern international security structures to cope with new challenges. Moreover, with the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the destruction of the existing world order and its institutions, created as a result of the Cold War, began.

Attempts by existing international structures and international platforms in the form of the "Normandy" and "Minsk" formats to resolve this conflict are failing. The problem goes far beyond the Russian-Ukrainian conflict's political and diplomatic process and therefore requires a more thorough political science approach in its research. The purpose of the article is to study the epistemological reasons that make it impossible to settle the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Donbas and to find out their consequences for national and international security. The subject of the study is the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Donbas.

The tasks of the research are clarifying the essence of the problem of war and peace under the realities of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Donbas; identification of the mechanism of interaction between hybrid war and hybrid peace in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict on Donbas; identification of epistemological reasons that make it impossible to settle the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Donbas; forecasting national and in-

ternational consequences of the unresolved problem of war and peace in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Donbas; clarifying the acceptability of the neoliberal approach to resolving the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Donbas; identification of the state of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict on Donbas in the context of the problem of war and peace; search for a formula for solving the problem of war and peace in Donbas in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

The research methodology is based on systemic, epistemological, political science, and conflictological approaches to studying the problem using the theory of international relations, particularly its neorealists' and neoliberal concepts. The realistic paradigm proved to be an acceptable methodology for this study precisely because it provides an entirely logical and, at the same time, quite simple justification of national interests, the antagonism of which is the basis of international conflicts and wars between states. Politics as a way of satisfying interests is productive only when it is based on force. It is no coincidence that the concepts of "power" and "interest" are the central categories of realistic and neorealist concepts. As G. Morgenthau notes: "while armed strength is the most important of the material factors that make up a nation's political power, the actual use of armed strength to affect a political outcome, represents an abdication of political power in favor of military or pseudo-military power. In international relations, armed strength is the most important of the material factors that make up a nation's political power" (Morgenthau, 1967, pp. 26–27).

Another important question: what exactly creates the need for power? Of course, such a need is formed by the antagonism of interests between the parties. Based on this, G. Morgenthau concludes: "This being inherently a world of opposing interests and of conflict among them, moral principles can never be fully realized, but at best approximated through the ever temporary balancing of interests and the ever precarious settlement of conflicts" (Morgenthau, 1967, pp. 3–4). This thesis has two key conclusions: the objectivity and inevitability of conflicts in international relations and the impossibility of achieving a balance of interests without achieving a balance of power. According to the theory of balance of power, the cause of war is the imbalance of power between enemy states, which gives grounds to hope for victory to the strongest side and makes its position uncompromising while its behavior aggressive.

Thus, despite its conservatism, the realistic paradigm gives the most accurate assessment of international processes because it focuses on the

study of objective reality rather than theorizing and replicating abstract ideas and notions about the ideal world. Concerning this subject of research, it has important methodological and ideological significance because: first, it provides an opportunity to understand the essence of modern international processes that directly affect the state of international relations; second, to understand the behavior of states in the international arena, the type, and nature of their interests. The ideological significance of this paradigm is that it exposes the falsity of established notions of eternal peace, the absoluteness and inviolability of international law, and the stability of the international relations system.

A different interpretation from neorealism and political realism to these ideas is given by the theory of neoliberalism, which should also be applied to study the indicated problems. According to this theory, international conflicts are anachronistic and therefore must become a thing of the past. According to this neoliberal concept, the world community can resolve conflicts exclusively by peaceful means by legal regulation, mutually beneficial cooperation, and exchange. In particular, the theory of “democratic peace” emphasizes the dependence of war or peace on the nature and type of existing political regimes. Countries with democratic regimes are not inclined to fight among themselves, while authoritarian and totalitarian regimes prefer wars to achieve their goals and interests. Hence, the conclusion follows: it is necessary to establish democratic regimes in countries to strengthen peace in the world.

Another neoliberal theory that deserves attention is the theory of complex interdependence. Interdependence is characterized by mutual influence between states or actors in different states. From this thesis of interdependence, it follows that it is inexpedient to use force or to wage war against a state with which one is interdependent because, in that case, both states will suffer losses.

Research methods include comparative analysis, topical research, observation, and prognostic methods.

Research hypothesis: the problem of war and peace is a sophisticated substitution of ideas about the state of these phenomena due to the blurring of their boundaries and interactions when the real war is replaced by the idea that it is an “internal conflict.” In this case, the problem of resolving the Russian-Ukrainian conflict on Donbas will not be resolved, and the war between Ukraine and Russia will be unfinished.

The author believes that the implementation of the strategy of Ukraine and the international community should begin with the abandonment of

the “plot of resolving the internal conflict on Donbas” and recognition of the reality of war in which the warring party and the aggressor are not phantom DPR/LPR, but Russia.

Hybrid war as a trend of the XXI century

Regarding the name of these terms’ “hybridity” of war and peace and their novelty, the scientific community, in their lively discussions, divided into two opposite camps. Some argue that there is nothing new in this war since paramilitary formations have been involved in the war since ancient times, and the Chinese commander, Sun Tzu called for the strategy and tactics of indirect actions. Others speak of the new quality of this form of war (*Cvitova hybridna woyna*, 2017).

It is considered that the theory of hybrid warfare is a model of military strategy in postmodern conditions. As models of the new economy built on high technologies and information resources prove their advantage over traditional economic models of the industrial era thus, hybrid wars claim a qualitative superiority over existing military-strategic concepts of the industrial era (Doroshkevich, 2015). The difference between the “hybridity” of war and peace from their previous forms is due to modern trends of the XXI century.

The main among these trends is the formation of large inter-civilizational associations, making them the main subjects of inter-civilizational conflicts. Samuel Huntington wrote about this trend at the time. The main objects of such conflicts are values that have an intangible dimension. Thus, the prerequisite for the emergence of hybrid wars is civilizational structuring of the world order since the main object in this form of asymmetric conflict is civilizational values. Another prerequisite became the creation of a global information space.

In turn, the emergence of hybrid warfare, as well as nuclear war, led to a change in the nature of its conduct in general, when the belligerents try to inflict maximum damage to the enemy in the first strike, or even before the beginning of the active phase of the war, taking advantage of surprise, and thus achieve a strategic advantage, when the enemy side is not yet ready to deploy its forces, mobilization and defend the state.

Due to the new nature of war, another factor is the appearance of missile weapons of great impressive power, speed of action, and immediate use. Of course, such changes in the means of warfare have led to changes

in the organizational structure of the troops. The emergence of special operations forces, private armies, and immediate and rapid response forces significantly increased their readiness for offensive actions. Strategic deployment of troops and construction of broad fronts are no longer relevant in such a situation.

The new organizational structure of these forces allows the aggressor to perform covert actions while avoiding responsibility for violations of international law. All these changes in armaments, organization of troops, and nature of modern warfare are reflected in the modification of military strategy. Thus, there has been a departure from the classic offensive and defensive operations of asymmetric strategies based on atypical, inadequate methods and methods of warfare. This group of strategies includes the “deterrence” strategy, based on the principles of precautionary and preventive actions, as well as the “controlled escalation” strategy, which provides for the regulation of the escalation of hostilities depending on the goals, achievements, or losses.

Typical for hybrid warfare is the strategy of “managed chaos,” built on rigid information and psychological impact, which allows the external control of the enemy’s behavior by manipulating the public consciousness of the general population through the information space of the opponent’s state with the use of hidden manipulative information technologies. A characteristic feature of hybrid warfare is also the strengthening of influence on the enemy by non-military means of waging this type of war, by creating so-called “soft threats,” which include: the use of structural force, controlled organized crime, controlled illegal migration, organization of the mass riots, financial and economic sabotage, epidemiological influence and others. The effect of all these factors and trends has led to the refusal of the diplomatic practice of declaring war on other states by conveying appropriate diplomatic notes, which further increases the blurring of the line between peace and war, peculiar to their hybrid form.

However, the problem here is the considerable complexity of determining the parameters of hybrid warfare, one of the main features of which is the blurring of these parameters. The researcher of this phenomenon of war, Marcel H. Van Herpen, gives such characteristics of this feature of hybrid warfare. “The existing lines of demarcation are becoming increasingly blurred: not only between soldiers and civilians but also between the army and hired paramilitary brigades, between combat units and peacekeeping forces, between fighting and provision of humanitarian aid” (Herpen, 2014, p. 34). This characteristic indicates the blurring of

clear signs of participants and their functions, measures, and means of warfare with their inherent universality of application. This principle of hybrid warfare F. Hoffman calls modality.

Ukrainian researcher of hybrid warfare, head of the research project “Antares,” M. Honchar, also points to the key role of the factor of uncertainty in hybrid warfare, when it is difficult for the enemy and third parties to determine and classify what is happening since the bet in this war is not on the basic component for the classic version of warfare, but on stimulating and revealing the internal conflictogenic potential of the victim state (*Hybressia Putina*, 2016, pp. 12–13).

The hybridity of these elements of hybrid warfare was most vividly described by the Polish political scientist, Łukasz Wujczyk, reflecting on the hybridity of “green men:” “Green men” in the East of Ukraine is a kind of hybrid, something in between soldiers and terrorists: it is unknown who they are and who commands them. If there are no commanders, there is no one to negotiate about surrender, no one to discuss the terms of the truce. If the shooting starts, it is unknown who will be responsible for this and who to aim at. It is not easy with these people and residents, because it is not clear where they may still appear (Wójcik, 2014). Ukrainian military units directly faced with this hybridity of “green men” – Russian special forces were blocked by them and the civilian population of Crimea.

As a result, the Ukrainian military was disoriented and demoralized, which ultimately led to their surrender to Russian troops without any armed resistance. As a result, these “green men,” together with Russian ground troops and Russian Black Sea Fleet, seized the Crimean Peninsula without a single shot, disarmed, and seized 11 000 Ukrainian troops and forces of the Ukrainian Navy in Crimea. The same tendency was typical for the first phase of the Russian military intervention in Eastern Ukraine (Perepelytsia, 2015, p. 420).

As noted by the same authors of the research project “Antares”: “This is propagandistically masked by the aggressor as a civil conflict in a state that has become the object of aggression. The strategic goal of informational and propagandistic support is to generate uncertainty. It allows misleading public opinion – to impose favorable interpretations of what is happening as a continuation of a deep internal conflict (civil war). The outside world, and many citizens in the victim state who are under the influence of enemy propaganda, perceive exactly this interpretation” (*Hybressia Putina*, 2016, p. 16).

The absence of a clear date of the beginning of the hybrid warfare deprives the state of the ability to mobilize promptly and properly prepare for this war to fight back against worthily Russian aggressors. Thus, the date of the beginning of Russia's war against Ukraine is still discursive. Some consider the beginning of the war to be when the "green men" seized the Verkhovna Rada of Crimea, which happened on February 23, 2014. Those who determine the beginning of the war on February 20, 2014 – the date specified in the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of Vladimir Putin on awarding the Russian military for the occupation of Crimea – are also right. The third ones – on March 1, the day of the decision of the Russian Federation Council on the introduction of Russian troops in Ukraine. Not without reason, Yevgeny Magda also considers the events on Euromaidan an important element of Russia's hybrid warfare against Ukraine, which became "a kind of intelligence battle, which was conducted not by 'green men,' but by representatives of Ukrainian law enforcement agencies, but who were already under external leadership" (Magda, 2015, p. 28). Accordingly, this masked warfare by Russia enables the official authorities of Ukraine not to recognize the reality of the war but to accept it as an anti-terrorist operation (ATO).

To the indirect signs of the beginning of Russia's hybrid warfare against Ukraine, its researchers include in particular: large-scale exercises of Russian troops before the start of the direct invasion in Ukraine; distribution of Russian passports to the civilian population living in the territory of their probable invasion and occupation; accusations of violation of the rights of the Russian-speaking population and genocide of ethnic Russians living in this territory as a reason for launching a war and military intervention, as it was in Crimea and Donbas.

An important feature and difference between hybrid warfare and other forms of conflict is the originality of its results. These results are expressed in such categories as "victory" or "defeat" in traditional conventional wars. On this hybrid warfare feature, hybrid warfare results point out the authors of the book "Ukraine-Russia: the ninth wall or the Chinese wall" pay attention to this feature:

"In a 'hybrid' warfare, you can be defeated, which at this stage of escalation of the conflict will also be 'hybrid,' that is, not as brutal and total as a defeat in a full-scale war (it will even be more about retreat than defeat)" (*Ukraine and Russia*, 2015, p. 52).

Although this perception of defeat is quite dangerous because it can lead to latent surrender resulting from several military defeats. Moreover, the existence of a channel of permanent negotiations at any time allows diplomatically and legally to secure such surrender. In particular, the defeats of Ukrainian troops near Ilovaisk and Debaltsevo on the Eastern front of Ukraine closer resulted in the surrender in this war with Russia, which is to some extent already enshrined in the “Minsk-2” Agreement. It is precisely because of this “cunning” of defeat that the conflicting parties carefully weigh the “price” of victory (evaluate the stakes): they exert diplomatic pressure, are more afraid of being defeated than they seek to win (Perepelytsia, 2015, pp. 429–430).

This strategy of the behavior of the conflicting parties condemns the hybrid warfare to a long-term period of its course. In this regard, the problem of determining the stages, periods, and phases of development of hybrid warfare becomes urgent. Although, the authors mentioned consider hybrid warfare as a stage preceding a full-scale undisguised war or a return to the cold war – the previous stage of the conflict. In this sense, the authors of this book point to the feature of “hybrid warfare to overlap with other stages of conflict development,” “including when one of the parties to the conflict, usually the aggressor, having already started a full-scale war, tries to make it look like a hybrid” (*Ukraine and Russia*, 2015, pp. 53–54). It is to demoralize and disorient the target of the attack and mislead the world community.

Although, on the other hand, this disorients the conflicting parties in their actions and makes the process of hybrid warfare and a hybrid peace quite chaotic. Moreover, this feature makes it possible to deny their participation in the war, recognizing themselves, instead of the aggressor, a peacemaker or mediator, which is quite actively used by Russia, avoiding international responsibility as an aggressor for an international crime committed. Therefore, “an integral characteristic of this new type of war is the ability to deny the participation of soldiers, special forces or special services of the aggressor state. This possibility of denial is supported in the ‘information war’ accompanied by military actions,” states Marcel H. Van Herpen (2014, p. 34). Analyzing the course of the Russian-Georgian war of 2008, which was a certain rehearsal in Russia’s development of the “hybrid warfare” model, Van Herpen (2014, p. 36) divides it into three phases: the “cold war,” explicit hostile actions, and the full-scale war.

At the same time, in this form of war, Ukraine and Russia refuse to recognize themselves in a state of war and to rely on international law,

which regulates relations between belligerent states on the legal consequences of war, such as the Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907, which define general principles and specific rules of international law relating to war, as well as the Geneva Conventions for the protection of war victims in 1949, and others.

Such a chaotic process of hybrid warfare erases its boundaries and makes invisible the onset of peace, which is commonly called “hybrid peace.”

Hybrid peace in Ukraine

Hybrid peace can be interpreted as a state of intangible war when society does not feel this state psychologically and physically but continues to live a peaceful life without noticing the losses and serious consequences. Or when one part of the society of the state is in a state of war (in a combat zone) and the other in a state of peace where there is a peaceful life, and there is no threat to people’s livelihoods. As noted by the famous novelist and publicist Mikhailo Slaboshpitskiy: “Rose-colored glasses of the peace should be changed to something that will allow you to see events in a much more real way in the new context of the day. Even today, many citizens in Ukraine live, act, speak and think without any amendment to the war – it is not present in their feelings at all” (Slaboshpitkiy, 2015, p. 38). Such peace can be considered incomplete, insufficient when partial mobilization is carried out in peacetime, the purpose of which is not clearly defined, or the military tax is removed. The civil-military administration is introduced when there is no war officially when certain elements of martial law are introduced in peacetime.

Hybrid peace in Ukraine is when military actions are introduced in some areas, and peaceful cooperation with Russia is developing in other areas. Thus, Ukraine maintains diplomatic and consular relations and develops a political dialogue with the aggressor. While implementing its foreign policy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continues to use peacetime instruments, limiting itself to statements, consultations, declarations, notes, working visits, and negotiations with the Russian side. Ukraine has not even been able to recall its Ambassador from Moscow and sever diplomatic relations with Russia (Perepelytsia, 2015, p. 425).

Despite Russian military aggression, the annexation of Crimea, and economic sanctions imposed by the West against Russia, Ukraine con-

tinued to develop trade and economic relations with the Russian Federation in the trade and economic sphere. Despite the war, close cooperation between Russian and Ukrainian business groups continues. Restrictive measures in trade, economic and humanitarian relations were sporadic and targeted when introduced with great delay in response to the trade, economic, and information war waged by Russia. Then, as a rule, with the beginning of the war between the belligerent states, trade, economic and financial relations are terminated, transactions with individuals and legal entities of the aggressor are prohibited when all state property of the enemy state that is located on the territory of the opposing side can be confiscated, except for diplomatic and consular institutions.

A striking feature of the hybrid peace of Ukraine can also be considered the refusal to implement the state's defense plan and the transfer of the state's economy to the war economy. The system of measures for the state's defense has not been put into effect, starting with the vertical of the military and political leadership and ending with the implementation of mobilization plans by state authorities. Only certain measures were implemented, and only certain elements of this system were applied, which on their own did not have the desired effect.

Generalized armed struggle as a purposeful system of actions to repel aggression and defense of Ukraine remained absent. Ukraine's foreign policy in relations with Russia during this war is also aimed at achieving a hybrid peace since it excludes the use of force, clearly adheres to the principles of international law: the inviolability of borders, respect for Russian state sovereignty, inviolability of obligations to Russia, even though it is the aggressor, non-interference in its internal affairs and the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes. That is why political and diplomatic means and appeal to international organizations have become Ukraine's main priority in resolving the Russian-Ukrainian conflict under a hybrid peace principle. The main argument for choosing such means in countering Russian military aggression was the slogan of President Petro Poroshenko: "There is no military solution to the conflict with Russia" (Perepelytsia, 2015, p. 426).

Ukraine's focus on establishing a "hybrid peace" as the main goal of the war with Russia immediately disoriented the opinion of the international community that Russia had started this war. The war began to be perceived as peace, as an internal conflict in Ukraine, to which Russia is not directly related since there are peaceful relations between these states. According to the international community, which was imposed by Rus-

sian propaganda, this conflict was due to the illegitimate change of power in Ukraine. Therefore, Russia is not the aggressor, the initiator, and the root cause of this war.

The second reason for the inefficiency of such a foreign policy of Ukraine during this period was that the government of Ukraine is solely responsible for the reaction of the international community to condemn the aggressor and appeal to international organizations such as the UN, NATO, and the OSCE; on the guarantees of the Budapest, Memorandum provided to Ukraine in exchange for its nuclear disarmament, which in reality were no such guarantees. As a result, despite its moral superiority, Ukraine's foreign policy position seemed too weak and did not influence the aggressor since it was not backed up by real military force and concrete steps to organize the state's defense. The government of Ukraine had neither a specific plan nor a strategy for the implementation of its foreign policy goals. Its actions turned out to be low-productivity, incompetent, indecisive, belated and ineffective, and sometimes counter-productive.

The main hope of the interim government of Ukraine in achieving a hybrid peace with Russia after its occupation of Crimea was because, firstly, Vladimir Putin would be satisfied with Crimea and will not go further to the territory of mainland Ukraine. In this way, a large-scale war can be avoided; secondly, accede to the request of the West not to fight back armed resistance to Russian aggression in order not to escalate the conflict will be met. Accordingly, this could guarantee that the West will stand up for Ukraine and stop the aggressor, according to statements by Barack Obama and the EU that the mainland of Ukraine is a "red line" for Vladimir Putin.

However, such hopes were in vain. Rather, they were perceived as a "flight" from making difficult and responsible decisions to repel Russian military aggression that this interim government would have to organize. It was easier for it to postpone this decision than to accept it. Thus, the format of the "hybrid peace" in the war with Russia was nothing more than a latent capitulation of the Ukrainian leadership, in which it saw its salvation and the opportunity to stay in power. Therefore, "hybrid peace" is the reverse side of hybrid warfare, its complement. Their common features are latency, internal and international legitimation (Perepelytsia, 2019, p. 474).

Hybrid peace legalizes hybrid warfare, creates favorable conditions for achieving the war goals, and makes it productive. Since the main goal of any war, including hybrid warfare, involves the enemy's surrender,

the hybrid peace provides such surrender and legitimizes the hybrid warfare. If we declare “peace” in relations with Russia, then there is no war. It means that Russia is not a violator of international security and thus avoids international isolation. The hybridity of the peace increases the latency of hybrid warfare because, with such a latent surrender of Ukraine, Russia does not need to use large military formations, create fronts and resort to large-scale military operations. Thus, it is easy to deny the presence of Russian troops and their military actions against Ukraine on its territory. Ukraine cannot prove this to the international community because it is in a state of “peace” with Russia (Perepelytsia, 2019, p. 474).

The hybrid peace also reinforces the internal legitimacy of the hybrid warfare since it translates the discourse of this war from an external, international perspective to an internal one, allowing to interpret this war as an internal Ukrainian conflict – the “Ukrainian crisis.” Accordingly, it allows Vladimir Putin to use a broader range of non-military means to assume the role of a peacemaker and defender of the interests of the Russian-speaking population and the territorial integrity of Ukraine from “encroachments” on its state sovereignty from the United States and the West. This refrain was seen in his speech on March 18, 2014 on the referendum results in Crimea (*Obraschenie Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federacii*, 2014).

The actual holding referendums in the occupied territories is also one of the means of internal legitimization of both the hybrid warfare and the hybrid peace, as they “legitimize” the objectives and results of the war and conducted to consolidate peace by the surrender of the enemy, making this surrender is legitimate and justified in the eyes of Ukrainian society and the international environment, not to mention Russians, who regard it as a historic victory over the West and the Ukrainian “Bandera.”

The priority of diplomacy in a war in comparison with military means is also intended to be an indication of hybrid peace and is one of its structural elements, according to the logic of which Ukrainian diplomacy works as a set of tools for solving an internal rather than an international conflict, and therefore does not consider the hybrid nature of war. Consequently, the refusal of the state’s highest military and political leadership to recognize the state of war with Russia and adhere to the principles of a hybrid peace led to serious military and political, military and strategic, and international consequences, which caused the loss of Ukraine’s territorial integrity and inviolability of borders, which put its very existence as an independent and sovereign state under immediate threat.

Virtual peace or real war on Donbas and their consequences

Such military and political consequences have become: firstly, refusal to organize the state's defense and put into effect the state's defense plans; secondly, the failure of the acting President of Ukraine to implement the p. 102, Art. 105 19, 20 of the Constitution of Ukraine and Law of Ukraine "On Defense of Ukraine," which primarily led to the non-recognition of the state of war and of Ukraine as a victim of Russian military aggression, rejection of the decision to use the Armed Forces of Ukraine for their constitutional purpose for the defense of the state and deprived of the constitutional grounds for the mobilization of the economy and bounded to military service; thirdly, misunderstanding of the goals of the war with Russia by the society and the authorities, since the highest leadership of Ukraine did not formulate such goals due to the non-recognition of the war as an existing reality.

Compliance with the principles of the hybrid peace led to the disruption of the system of military and political leadership, disorganization in the system of defense of the state and paralysis of vertical bodies of military management, the disorientation of the military command, since the Supreme Commander-in-Chief was not created to provide strategic leadership of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other military formations, and, accordingly, the General Staff could not carry out functions of working body of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. Instead, these functions were assigned to the anti-terrorist center, which, as a division of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), was a priori unable to perform them and resist Russian military aggression in Russia's hybrid warfare against Ukraine. The result of this substitution of functions was the loss of combat control of military formations and coordination of actions of Ukrainian law enforcement agencies in the Donetsk theatre of operations.

Attempts to achieve the goals of the war exclusively by diplomatic means make them unproductive and, ultimately, leads to military and political defeat. The priority of diplomacy in a war in comparison with military means is also intended to indicate hybrid peace and is one of its structural elements, according to the logic of which Ukrainian diplomacy works as a set of tools for solving an internal rather than an international conflict, and therefore does not take into account the hybrid nature of war.

Attempts to operate in a hybrid peace format have already led to a defeat in the information war since such a peace does not cause the urgent need to organize a decisive counteraction to such a war. The hybrid peace

needs mythologization, which translates public consciousness into a virtual perception of the reality of war, which significantly complicates the task of countering the means of conducting hybrid warfare by the aggressor. That is why the feeling of a hybrid peace is constrained by the formation and replication of such myths as: “there is no war, but there is terrorism in the Donbas,” “we do not have enemies, or we do not perceive one of the states as an enemy,” a “solution to the conflict with Russia can only be achieved through political and diplomatic means”, a “new system of European security cannot be built without Russia’s participation” (Perepelytsia, 2015, p. 583).

Non-recognition of the state of war and attempts to repel Russian military aggression in the format of an Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) had negative international consequences for Ukraine, which will be extremely difficult to overcome. Firstly, this plot led to the perception of the Russian-Ukrainian war as an internal conflict in Ukraine – the “Ukrainian crisis.” Secondly, thanks to this perception, Ukraine has lost the opportunity to receive direct military assistance as a victim of aggression, to form an international anti-Putin coalition. Instead, restrictive economic and political, and diplomatic means were introduced, which could not force Putin to stop the war against Ukraine. Thirdly, having introduced the ATO, Ukraine lost the ability to apply international law, which regulates the rules of war and guarantees the protection of its prisoners’ rights, provided by the Geneva and Hague Conventions. Fourthly, having translated the international discourse of the Russian-Ukrainian war into the internal Ukrainian conflict, Ukrainian diplomacy is trying to solve it by resolving internal conflicts, such as the initiative to impose OSCE control over the Ukrainian-Russian border, the introduction of UN peacekeeping forces, or a police contingent in Donbas, which only strengthens the international community’s belief in the internal Ukrainian nature of this conflict. Fifthly, trying to portray this war as a hybrid peace and following the logic of the solution to the internal conflict, the Ukrainian diplomacy agrees to participate in peacekeeping “Normandy” or “Minsk” formats that include measures to resolve internal conflict, where the parties are phantom “DPR” and “LPR,” not inter-state Russian-Ukrainian conflict, in which Russia acts not as a belligerent party, but as a mediator that does not assume any obligation and provides no guarantees regarding the termination of the war.

Finally, the attempt to abstain from the hybrid peace and follow the logic of the ATO led to extremely negative military and strategic impli-

cations, which has affected both the negotiation process and Ukraine's international positions. Firstly, full-fledged strategic planning and deployment of the Armed Forces of Ukraine were never realized, since the ATO format does not require the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to plan and conduct offensive or defensive operations or to plan and organize systematic combat operations to inflict military defeat on the aggressor both at the tactical, operational and tactical, and military and strategic levels. Secondly, the strategic management system turned out to be destroyed and unable to function adequately in the context of hybrid warfare with Russia. Thirdly, mobilization training and mobilization reserves were also destroyed, and mobile reserves were reduced below the acceptable level and looted. The staffing of the Armed Forces and other military formations remained at the level of peacetime. Fourthly, the military-industrial complex and the economy of Ukraine have not been mobilized according to the requirements of wartime in its absence. Fifthly, the General Staff and military units were never tasked with conducting operations and combat operations to destroy the military enemy and inflicting a military defeat on it. In the absence of such tasks and the priority of diplomatic means, Ukrainian troops were forced to move to passive self-defense, as a result of which the separatists and Russian troops gained a strategic advantage and freedom of maneuver in the combat zone, thanks to which they entrenched in most of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions during April–June 2014 (Perepelytsia, 2015, p. 585).

In the context of moral evaluation, the question arises: can a hybrid peace be fair? According to Quincy Wright's theory, developed by Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung, such peace is "negative" because it means the absence of war, but not structural violence. In a hybrid peace, structural violence is present. The ethical paradox of the justice of the hybrid peace is determined by the extent to which this structural violence is aimed at ending violence in general.

This blurring of the borders between hybrid warfare and a hybrid peace, their beginning and end, is the problem of defining and identifying the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Donbas, as well as the ways to settle it.

This dilemma can be solved by identifying what is happening in Donbas: hybrid peace, war, or conflict? Donbas is a theatre of military operations, in which, on the one hand, the Ukrainian Armed Forces act, and on the other hand, the units of the 1st and 2nd Army Corps of the 8th army of the Russian Federation's Armed forces. All logistics of these Russian troops is carried out by the Southern Military District of the Russian Fed-

eration, planning and control of combat actions are carried out by the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

These troops' main type of action is systematic combat operations against Ukrainian troops in passive positional defense. Russia's political goals in this war are the destruction of Ukraine as a sovereign state and the destruction of Ukrainian national identity, making it impossible to develop Ukrainian society as a European nation. The military and political goals of Ukraine in this war are to create conditions for achieving peace and deterring the advance of Russian troops, and preventing further capture of Ukrainian territories.

Thus, there are all the signs of a local war in Donbas, in which the belligerent parties are Ukraine and Russia. However, Russia does not recognize itself as a belligerent party, hiding behind a hybrid arrangement of the structures of the 1st and 2nd Army Corps, which are formed from both paramilitary groups and regular units of the Russian troops. It makes it possible for Russia's political leadership to claim that "they are not there" and present this war as an "internal conflict" in Donbas, or a "civil war in Ukraine," or simply a "Ukrainian crisis." But instead of itself, Russia is the belligerent party of the so-called DPR/LPR, which are administrative structures of the Russian occupation authorities in Donbas.

The Ukrainian political leadership also does not recognize the war that Russia unleashed against Ukraine. Instead, it presents it as a "conflict on the Donbas" and tries to solve it by means and strategies for resolving the conflict through peaceful diplomatic means, rather than acting under the logic of waging war. This logic of warfare provides for declaring a state of war in the state or on its separate territories; mobilization of population and economy; imposing labor duties for work in the defense sector; using production facilities and labor resources for defense needs, removing property for defense needs; protecting important objects; imposing curfews and special regime for entry and departure from the state, or from front-line territories; prohibiting the activities of political parties and civil organizations that may threaten the state sovereignty of the state; strengthening control over media activities; a temporary ban on holding elections and referendums; evacuation of civilians from the war zone and other measures. There are no such measures in Ukraine, but the collaborationist authorities carry out the vast majority of them in the Russian-occupied territories of Donbas. It means that Russia is acting according to the logic of waging war, and Ukraine is trying to achieve peace in this war in the format of "conflict settlement."

Peace in war, as we know, only comes as a result of victory, defeat, or surrender of one party. In contrast, in the conflict, it is achieved by finding a compromise between the belligerent parties provided that the belligerent parties are convinced that the losses incurred in the course of the conflict will be much more expensive than anticipated benefits; when the full realization of the goal is submitted by each of the parties to the conflict unattainable; when there are not enough resources to fully implement the goal; when each side is convinced that it will not be able to achieve victory in a military and political conflict; when both parties are sufficiently organized and legitimate; when both parties adhere to common rules and take into account each other's arguments (Perepelytsia, 2003, p. 325).

But the first problem that the Ukrainian side faced in the format of "conflict settlement" on the Donbas was determining who is a party to the conflict? Ukraine recognized itself as such. Russia in this conflict, according to the "Normandy" and "Minsk" formats, acts as a "mediator" but not a belligerent party. Instead of Russia, DPR/LPR is such a party according to these formats and the Minsk agreements, which in Ukrainian legislation are referred to as separate regions of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions (ORDLO), and are illegitimate, non-negotiable, and utterly subordinate to the Russian leadership. Therefore, the question immediately arises: will the DPR/LPR agree to a compromise with the Ukrainian authorities for peace with the mandatory return to Ukraine of control over the lost Ukrainian-Russian border and occupied territories, and on what conditions is such a compromise possible?

After all, a compromise is possible only if there is goodwill on both parties of the conflict. There is no goodwill or conditions under which such a compromise is possible on the Russian side, represented by the DPR/LPR. However, despite the absence of such conditions, the political leadership of Ukraine is trying to resolve this conflict exclusively by peaceful diplomatic means, pursuing a strategy for conflict resolution which includes: preventive diplomacy, negotiations, mediation, a truce, operations to establish, preserve and build peace, a ceasefire, the withdrawal of troops and the creation of a security zone for the deployment of international peacekeeping forces, the restoration of civil infrastructure and the holding of local elections.

The Ukrainian government under President Petro Poroshenko and now under President Volodymyr Zelensky is trying to end the war with Russia in the format "to settle the conflict on the Donbas" exclusively by diplomatic means, ignoring the fact of the war, and therefore the military

means of its conduct. Thus, Zelensky went to the next meeting in the “Normandy” format on December 9, 2019, intending to end the war as soon as possible, reach a truce along the entire line of demarcation of forces and deploy troops in the next three sections and establish Ukraine’s control over the lost Ukrainian-Russian border. However, at this meeting, he only managed to agree on expanding the mandate of the OSCE mission’s observers and exchange of prisoners, but not “all for all” as Zelensky required, only part of those captured by militants in Donbas occupied by Russian troops (Sidorenko, 2019). Putin did not agree to anything else.

The results of this Normandy meeting in 2019 were quite predictable and obvious because they reflected the reality that developed on the Russian-Ukrainian front in Donbas. The role of diplomacy in the format of “settlement of the conflict on the Donbas,” on which the Ukrainian authority relies, is the main one. In conflict settlement, military force is subordinate to diplomacy. Its role in this format is to force the enemy to compromise on favorable terms for Ukraine by achieving a military advantage. Since Ukraine has no such advantage on the Donbas, then the next Normandy meeting and the Ukrainian diplomacy itself turned out to be ineffective. As for the enemy, Russia has continued to wage war with Ukraine in Donbas, pushing the latter to surrender. That is why the Kremlin is not interested in “conflict settlement.”

In this Russian-Ukrainian war, Vladimir Putin behaves according to the logic of war, in which military force plays the main role. This role is to conduct combat operations to deter the aggressor, inflict military defeat or unacceptable losses, achieve victory over the enemy by conducting offensive, counter-offensive operations, and active defense. The role of diplomacy in war is always subordinated to the actions of the army at the front. The Minsk Agreements were necessary for Putin to secure a military victory over Ukrainian troops near Ilovaisk in September 2014 and near Debaltsevo in February 2015.

Thus, according to the logic of war, the task of diplomacy is to: in the event of a military defeat, neutralize its negative consequences, and in the case of victory, fix its results in treaties and agreements on peace; form an international coalition against the aggressor and deprive the enemy of the opportunity to isolate Ukraine and form their international anti-Ukrainian coalition. It is also clear that the political and diplomatic activities of a state that is a victim of aggression should be aimed at increasing its international military assistance and condemning the aggressor, which in this Russian-Ukrainian war is Russia.

Is there a formula for solving the problem of war and peace on the Donbas? This formula consists in a statement of reality. Firstly, the official recognition that there is a real war with Russia in Donbas, not an “internal conflict with the DPR/LPR.” Secondly, the recognition of Russia as a “belligerent party” but not a “mediator” in settlement of the “internal conflict” between Ukraine and the DPR/LPR. Thirdly, Russia does not want peace in this war. It seeks to inflict a final military defeat on Ukraine and achieve its political surrender, which will consist in the loss of Ukrainian statehood, state sovereignty, and independence. Fourthly, achieving peace by “resolving the conflict on the Donbas” within the framework of Russia’s actual war against Ukraine will not lead to its completion and sustainable peace. In such a situation, only a temporary “cold peace” is possible.

To a large extent, by unleashing this war, Putin achieved an increase in Russia’s political status in the international arena, strengthening its influence on international processes, despite its destructive influence. But such influence was also given by Russia’s specific political dividends, which manifested itself in the paralysis of the United Nations, NATO’s confusion, and the split within the EU over the formulation of its strategy for relations with Russia. Europe’s solidarity has been severely cracked, boosting the Kremlin’s and Russians’ confidence in another geopolitical victory over the West.

The mechanism of the Minsk agreements opens the possibility for Vladimir Putin to impose on the Ukrainian government his rules of conduct, which should guide Ukrainian society and state institutions. In this way, Putin wants to force them to live by the rules of Russian power in the face of a high probability of escalating hostilities and military aggression. Thus, Russia can deny the Ukrainian state monopoly on violence and control over Ukrainian territory or its part. As a result, Ukraine loses its internal sovereignty as the functions of another state, Russia, begin to be realized on its territory.

In this case, Ukraine loses external sovereignty, as it cannot exercise its international legal personality, as this right is limited to another state’s actions, both within Ukraine and abroad. Thus, Ukraine loses state sovereignty, territorially – as a result of the occupation of its territory, and legally – as a result of deprivation of its legal personality. The hybrid peace greatly facilitates Russia’s efforts to overthrow Ukraine’s sovereignty, as it is based on the exploitation of internal destructive factors that it laid down within the Ukrainian state and society even before the war.

The implementation of Ukraine's strategy to achieve peace with Russia must begin with rejecting virtual peace and recognizing the reality of war. Military force should become the main tool for forcing Russia to peace and ending the war on acceptable terms for Ukraine. The role of Ukraine's military force should be to deter the aggressor by actively defending it and inflicting systematic unacceptable losses, and achieving military superiority at the front. Ukrainian diplomacy must act following the war task, and not only and not so much for the sake of "resolving the internal conflict in the Donbas."

Conclusions

The study of the process of settlement of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict on Donbas in the focus of the problem of war and peace makes it possible to understand: how the blurred nature of hybrid war and peace affects the assessment of this conflict, national security, and adequate foreign and security policy decision-making, countering Russian hybrid war which threatens not only the existence of Ukraine but also European security in general. In order to properly research this problem, the Russian-Ukrainian war in Donbas was chosen as the object. Conflictological analysis was chosen as the main method of studying this problem.

The study's hypothesis is confirmed by three key theses of a conceptually epistemological nature, which can answer the problem of war and peace in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict on Donbas. First, understanding the transformation of the dilemma of war and peace under the influence of global trends of the XXI century is reflected in such concepts as "hybrid war" and "hybrid peace." A characteristic feature of the problem of "hybrid war" and "hybrid peace" is the blurring of boundaries between them, which greatly complicates their identification and separation of real war from the virtual idea about it as an existing peace. And therefore, an adequate foreign and domestic policy implementation. Second, the rejection of the sophistic approach in the understanding of such categories as "war" and "conflict," when war is replaced by the concept of "internal conflict," which is also a result of a new interpretation of the dilemma of war and peace. If we use the armed struggle as the main criterion for identifying war and peace, then "war" is characterized by the presence of armed struggle and "peace" by its absence.

Meanwhile, in the doctrinal and conceptual documents of many countries, armed struggle is referred to as “armed conflict,” which goes beyond the concept of “war” and is considered to be an intermediate state between war and peace, i.e., a separate form of interaction not between states but between their armed forces. The ratio of categories “war,” “peace,” “conflict” is interdependent (*Conflict in World Politics*, 1998). Conflict can also exist in a state of peace at the stage of its latent development when there is no use of military force between the conflicting parties. At the same time, war is a form of conflict. This formal logical interpretation gives us the right to claim that the Russian-Ukrainian conflict on Donbas takes the form of a war between Russia and Ukraine, which is happening now.

Thirdly, while promoting a neoliberal approach and demonstrating its devotion to democratic principles, the Ukrainian authority is trying to settle this Russian-Ukrainian conflict exclusively through peaceful political and diplomatic means. The main ones are reliance on the international community’s assistance, international law, and mediation of international organizations. This position of the Ukrainian leadership fits perfectly into the theory of a democratic peace, which, in its opinion, should also contribute to the assistance of the West to Ukraine in resolving this conflict. The latter, in turn, is also trying to settle this Russian-Ukrainian conflict with Russia, based on the theory of democratic peace, which prefers diplomacy, dialogue, negotiations, and cooperation in resolving international and internal conflicts. It is no accident that the “Minsk” and “Normandy” formats for the settlement of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict on the Donbas are built on such principles.

Based on the doctrine of a democratic peace, the West has an interest, which is to appease Russia. It is quite obvious that Russia’s goal in its global hybrid warfare against the West is to restore its status as a world power in the hierarchy of international relations and change the world order developed since the end of the Cold War. On the contrary, West is trying to preserve this post-bipolar order, which provides it with a fairly comfortable existence and development. Therefore, this correlation of goals and claims causes a state of relations between the West and Russia when the West resigns itself to a passive, reactive policy to prevent a return to the Cold War and prevent a new World war with Russia.

On the contrary, Russia pursues a policy of destroying the existing world order by unleashing hybrid warfare and blackmailing the West with a nuclear war. Of course, in terms of resources, Russia is significantly

inferior to the West. However, thanks to the planned war, it mobilized its resources for geopolitical and military revenge, while Western countries are in a state of stagnation, military, and economic demobilization, afraid to provoke Russia with even the slightest steps to restore its defense capability. They oppose their unprovocative policy of appeasement to Russia's aggressive foreign policy, thereby demonstrating their weakness to Russia. Thus, all these three conceptual theses are related to the interdependence of hybrid peace and hybrid warfare, which is the essential feature of the modern evolution of war and peace, manifested in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Donbas.

The analysis revealed that the draw conclusions motivate us to delineate the categories of "war," "peace," "conflict" and bring our ideas about them to their real existence. In practice, it means that the peace by "settlement of the conflict in Donbas" within the existing real war of Russia against Ukraine will not lead to its completion and establishing sustainable peace. In such a situation, a temporary "cold peace" is the only possible option. Thus, in a real war, only military force should become the main instrument for forcing Russia to peace and end the war on terms acceptable to Ukraine. Ukrainian diplomacy must act under the tasks of war, and not only and not so much for the sake of "settlement of the internal conflict in Donbas."

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Rozwiązanie konfliktu rosyjsko-ukraińskiego o Donbas w obszarze problemu wojny i pokoju

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest zrozumienie, jak rozmaity charakter wojny hybrydowej i pokoju hybrydowego wpływa na ocenę bezpieczeństwa narodowego i podejmowanie decyzji w polityce zagranicznej i bezpieczeństwa, w szczególności prognozowanie i rozwiązywanie problemów. Konflikt ukraiński zagraża istnieniu Ukrainy oraz ogólnemu bezpieczeństwu Europy. Aby właściwie ująć ten problem, za przedmiot badawczy wybrano wojnę rosyjsko-ukraińską w Donbasie. Jako główną metodę badawczą wybrano analizę konfliktu. Wnioski wyciągnięte z analizy prowadzą do wyraźnego rozgraniczenia pojęć wojny, pokoju i konfliktu oraz zmieniają nasz sposób myślenia o tych kategoriach.

Problem wojny i pokoju polega na wyrafinowanej substytucji wyobrażeń o stanie tych zjawisk na skutek zacierania się ich granic i interakcji, gdy prawdziwą wojnę zastępuje idea konfliktu wewnętrznego. W takim przypadku problem rozwiązania konfliktu rosyjsko-ukraińskiego w Donbasie nie zostanie rozwiązany, a wojna między Ukrainą a Rosją będzie niedokończona. Osiągnięcie pokoju poprzez „rozwiązanie konfliktu w Donbasie” w ramach rzeczywistej wojny Rosji z Ukrainą nie doprowadzi do jej zakończenia i trwałego pokoju. W takiej sytuacji możliwy jest tylko chwilowy „zimny spokój”.

Cele badania opierają się na zidentyfikowaniu przyczyn epistemologicznych uniemożliwiających rozwiązanie konfliktu rosyjsko-ukraińskiego w Donbasie oraz

wyjaśnieniu ich konsekwencji dla bezpieczeństwa narodowego i międzynarodowego. Wyniki badania opierają się na analizie przebiegu wojny rosyjsko-ukraińskiej oraz rozwiązywania konfliktu w Donbasie.

Artykuł analizuje mechanizm interakcji między wojną hybrydową a pokojem hybrydowym w konflikcie rosyjsko-ukraińskim w Donbasie, wyjaśnia istotę problemu wojny i pokoju zgodnie z istniejącymi realiami oraz identyfikuje epistemologiczne przyczyny uniemożliwiające rozwiązanie konfliktu. Artykuł analizuje również rzeczywiste i prawdopodobne konsekwencje narodowe i międzynarodowe nierozwiązanego problemu wojny i pokoju w konflikcie rosyjsko-ukraińskim w Donbasie.

Artykuł kończy się propozycją możliwego rozwiązania problemu wojny i pokoju w Donbasie. Podaje zalecenia rozwiązania konfliktu rosyjsko-ukraińskiego w Donbasie, polegające na odrzuceniu przez Ukrainę i społeczność międzynarodową „spisku dotyczącego rozwiązania konfliktu wewnętrznego w Donbasie” i uznaniu realiów wojny, w której Rosja nie jest widmem DNR/LNR. Zgodnie z tymi zaleceniami siła zbrojna powinna stać się głównym narzędziem wymuszenia na Rosji zawarcia pokoju i zakończenia wojny na warunkach akceptowanych przez Ukrainę. Dyplomacja ukraińska musi działać zgodnie z wytyczonym zadaniem wojennym, a nie tylko i nie tyle na rzecz „uregulowania konfliktu wewnętrznego w Donbasie”.

Słowa kluczowe: wojna hybrydowa, pokój hybrydowy, konflikt rosyjsko-ukraiński, siły zbrojne

