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Загрози та виклики перед молодими європейськими країнами у нових міжнародних умовах на прикладі України та Республіки Молдова

Кілька місяців тому під час екстреного засідання Ради Безпеки ООН генеральний секретар Антоніо Гутерріш зробив дуже тривожне твердження, що "холодна війна" повернулася, і вона ще більш небезпечна, ніж у 60-х роках. Це не новина для більшості наукових кіл. Новий міжнародний конфлікт розпочався у 2014 році, коли Росія анексувала Кримський півострів. Новий міжнародний конфлікт, безумовно, змінить баланс у міжнародних відносинах. Найбільш вразливими в цих нових умовах є молоді демократії та країни, що формувалися кілька десятиліть тому завдяки розпаду СРСР і всього комуністичного блоку, України, Молдови, Південнокавказьких та балтійських держав.

Імперське минуле залишило тривалий слід на економічному, соціальному та політичному житті цих новозбудованих держав. Радянські соціальні експерименти привели до ряду проблем для колишніх республік, починаючи від політичних до територіальних. Російська Федерація використовує ці проблеми для її переваги. Виживання в цих суворих умовах та реформування свого суспільства є головною проблемою молодих європейських країн.

Ключові слова: Україна, Молдова, Росія, Путін, гібридна війна, пострадянській простір, міжнародна безпека.

Threats and challenges for young European countries in new international conditions, using Ukraine and Moldova as a case study

Several months ago, during emergency meeting of UN Security Council, General Secretary Antonio Guterres, made a very troubling statement, that Cold war is back and it is even more dangerous than in the 60's. This is not news for majority of scientific community. New international conflict started in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimean peninsula. New international conflict will definitely change the balance in international relations. The most vulnerable in these new conditions are the young democracies and countries that formed several decades ago due collapse of USSR and the whole communist bloc, Ukraine, Moldova, south Caucasian and Baltic states.

Imperial past left a lasting mark on economical, social and political life of newly form states. Soviet social experiments led to good number of problems for the former republics, ranging from political to territorial. Russian Federation uses these problems for her advantage. Surviving in this harsh conditions and reforming their society is the main challenge of young European countries.

Keywords: Ukraine, Moldova, Russia, Putin, hybrid war, post-soviet space, international security.

Last April, during emergency meeting of UN Security Council, General Secretary of Organization of United Nation Antonio Guterres, made a very troubling statement, Cold war is back and it is even more dangerous than in the 60's².

Of course, anybody who paid attention to current developments in international politics cannot help but agree with Mr. Guterres statement, and even add that Cold war 2.0 started in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimean peninsula. For the first time since World War II one European sovereign nation an-

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² Hromytske.(2018) The UN Secretary General announced the return of the Cold War. Available at: <https://hromadske.ua/posts/hensek-oon-zaiavyv-pro-povernennia-kholodnoi-viiny> (date of reference: 30.04.2018).

nexed part of another European sovereign state. Some argue that war started even earlier, but never the less regardless of its starting date new international conflict will definitely change the balance in international relations.

The most vulnerable in these new conditions are the young democracies and countries that formed several decades ago due collapse of USSR and the whole communist bloc, Ukraine, Moldova, south Caucasian and Baltic states. It is obvious that Russia considers these territories, as its area of influence where it can do what it wants and how it wants. Economical and political support from West for democratic development considered by Moscow as a interference in there sphere of influence and by this a direct threat to Russia.

In these conditions, an obvious solution for new global conflict will be to just agree on Moscow terms. This several years ago tried to propose former Secretary of State of USA, Henry Kissinger³. Mr. Secretary is well known supporter of Realpolitik approach to international relations, in which all politics or diplomacy based primarily on considerations of given circumstances and factors, rather than explicit ideological notions or moral and ethical premises. To summarize I will use words of Ancient Greek historian Thucydides: "The strong do what they want, the weak suffer what they must"⁴. It is easy to understand that in current conditions countries like Moldova or Ukraine fall in the weak side of equation.

Therefore, advice of most acclaimed minds in modern international politics to let Russia assume control over post-soviet zone seems reasonable. For the last decade, US had problems combating terrorist in different parts of the world, with abundance of internal problems it seems illogical to try to exchange blouse with a aggressive former super power with nukes. Moreover, Russia does everything to emphasize its nuclear arsenal and will to use it. But will they?

Anybody who ever participated in a fight knows that the biggest showoff is usually the least interested person in the bloodshed. All of warmongering, saber-rattling and demonstration of new types of tanks, submarines and nuclear missiles is just an attempt to scare West in to surrender.

In the same time, US and Europe should not be too cocky. Yes, now majority of Russia new arsenal can serve only as an exhibition piece, but the key words here are "at the moment". In a few years situation can easily change. In 1930's Britain and France had several possibilities to stop Nazi Germany and prevent World War II, before the German Wermacht reached it full fighting force.

The same is with Russia; now international community has the possibility and means to influence Moscow behavior on international arena. Those means are economical sanctions that West installed after annexation of Crimean peninsula. Slowly but surely, they give results, according to World Bank, GDP growth of Russian Federation dropt + 1.785 in 2013 to -2.828 in 2015⁵. Since then it rose to -0.225 in 2016, and Russia had a little economical growth in 2017, but today according to economical data fell in a steady stagnation in 2018⁶. According to Trading Economics global macro models and analysts expectations, Russia GDP is projected to trend around 1590.00 USD Billion in 2020. While in 2013, it was 2230.6 billion dollars⁷.

This led Moscow to cut spending on the military. According to report produced by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute in May of 2018, Russia decreased its military spending by 20%, dropping in list of Top military spenders from third to fourth position⁸. This is the first such cut since 1998, when Russia was struck by the biggest economical crisis in her modern history. This is a very

³ Strana.ua. (2016) Kissindger will offer Tramp a compromise on the Donbas and the Crimea. Available at: <https://strana.ua/news/47351-kissindzher-predlozhit-trampu-kompromiss-po-donbassu-i-krymu.html> (date of reference: 30.04.2018).

⁴ Thucydides. (1951) The Pelopponesian War. New York: Random House, 1951. p. 331.

⁵ The World Bank. (2018) Growth of Russian GDP. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?end=2016&locations=EN&start=2008>. (date of reference: 05/22/2018)

⁶ Statistica.com. (2018) Russia: the growth rate of real gross domestic product (GDP) from 2012 to 2022. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/263621/gross-domestic-product-gdp-growth-rate-in-russia/>.(date of reference: 05/22/2018).

⁷ Trading economics. (2018) GDP of Russia – forecast. Available at: <https://tradingeconomics.com/russia/gdp/forecast> (date of reference: 05/22/2018).

⁸ Radio Free Europe. (2018) Russia, Despite Military Ventures, Cut Defense Spending By Most In Decades. <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-despite-ventures-syria-kraine-cut-military-spending-last-year-most-since-1998-economic-collapse-western-sanctions-recession/29203634.html> (date of reference: 05/22/2018).

clear signal that sanctions do work, and need to be continued to restrain from further territorial expansion and keeping the Kremlin at the negotiating table.

But some negative impact from sanctions had and on opposite side, European Union lost 11 % of its export which amounts to 34.7 billion dollars⁹. EU wide sanctions led to 0.04% lose of gross of unions GDP, that amounts to 6 billion Euros or approximately 7 billion United States dollars¹⁰. Although the numbers appear to be gigantic, European Commission classifies loses as “sustainable”. But this didn’t stop some European politicians to criticize sanctions, most vocal are Victor Orban, current Hungarian Prime-Minister, and Gerhard Schröder, former German Chancellor, Marine Le Pen, a far right French Politian and others. All of them have close financial ties with Vladimir Putin. Orbans government received in April 2018, 10 billion Euros for expansion of Paks nuclear power plant¹¹. Gerhard Schroder in 2017 was nominate to position of member of the board of Rosneft, biggest oil company in Russia, also former Chancellor has a share in Northern stream pipeline, construction of which was green lighted during Schroders time in office and stopped do to sanctions. Le Pen received money from Russia on her presidential campaign in 2017, and was indorsed by Putin himself¹². All of this people have influence in their countries, Orban won the Hungarian national elections in a landslide, Le Pen almost won French presidential election, so this people are not some sort of marginal’s or political backbenchers. People like this have influence and can influence opinions, and they can easily ride the wave of populism to the top. So thread of new Munich is very much fusible.

Off course nobody wants to be a bargain chip in some ones game, but what newly created Eastern European countries can do in this conditions. The obvious answer is to reform and become successful. But this is not an easy task to do.

Imperial past left a lasting mark on economical, social and political life of newly form states. Soviet social experiments led to good number of problems for the former republics, ranging from political to territorial.

First of politically majority of post soviet republics have problems with construction of a function democratic systems. Only the Baltic’s who had experience in state building after the First World War manage to somehow construct a function democratic society. Others republics developed authoritarian regimes or live in a permanent cycle of political crisis. Countries of our interest fell in the later category. Moldova just couple years ago exited its longest political crisis, Ukraine in 25 years of its history relived two revolution, and each year is marked by a wave of protest. The causes of this is lie deep in Moldovan and Ukrainian societies.

First of all centuries of totalitarian rule, both as a part of USSR and Russian empire, didn’t help in formation of a participative political culture in this countries. Society is usually passive, and political parties usually present a short lived phenomenon that exist only for a short time and disappears very quickly from political landscape. This happens because they all leader based parties they form around a single leader and live as long as this person is popular. For example Partidul Liberal-Democrat a Moldovei, was formed in 2007, in 2009 it had 12 seats in Parliament, a year after they had 32 members of parliament, becoming one of the most popular political parties in Moldova. But with decrease of popularity of its leader Vlad Filat, started decrease of popularity of a party itself. In 2014 it won only 23 seats, and after arrest and imprisonment of its leader in just a year one of the most powerful parties in Moldova become one of the week in the parliament with only 5 MP’s and no chances on next elections. As a result of this short life cycle of this political entities politicians tend to get as most dividends in their time in power as possible, which leads to corruption, and to keep their power as long as possible which leads to abuse of power and political fraud. Which in it’s self decreases trust of common citizen in political system of a country, especially for the youth. In 2016 only 53.31% come

⁹ Berlin Economics. (2017). The economic impact of EU-Russia mutual sanctions on the EU. http://berlin-economics.com/wp-content/uploads/BE_Economic-impact-of-EU-RUS-sanctions-on-EU_30-May-2017.pdf (reference date: 02.05.2018).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Gulf News. (2018) Hungary and the nuclear option. <https://gulfnews.com/opinion/thinkers/hungary-and-the-nuclear-option-1.2204498> (date of reference: 05/22/2018).

¹² The Guardian. (2018) Putin welcomes Le Pen to Moscow with a nudge and a wink. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/24/putin-welcomes-le-pen-to-moscow-with-a-nuhe-and-a-wink> (date of reference: 05/22/2018).

to vote in First round¹³, from which only 9.97% between 18 and 25 years old¹⁴. For second round, only 48.95% went to the ballot stations, from which only 10.98% were under 25 years old¹⁵.

Corruption and abuse of power from political class leads to distrust of political system as a whole from the citizens. In April 2017, only 16% of Moldovans had any trust in Parliament and Political parties and 19% trusted in countries Government¹⁶. The most trusted institution was the church, with 29%. In Ukraine situation is even more drastic, 65% do not trust in countries Government, 70% do not trust in President and 75% have no trust in Verchovna Rada¹⁷.

Situations like this open the door for populist movements that promise swift changes and quick rise of citizens well being. According to data presented by Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, in February of 2018, majority of Ukrainians will vote for parties with cleared populist agenda, 22.5 for "Batkivshchyna", 13.7% for Radical Party of Oleg Leashko, 12.4% for Opposition block and 10.3% - "Za zhittea" party¹⁸. On next presidential elections 24.5% will vote for Yulia Tymoshenko, 15.5 for Oleg Leashko, 12.5 for Anatolii Gritsenko and only 9.8 for current President Petro Poroshenko, who in 2014 won with 54.7%¹⁹. The same situation is in Moldova, where in populist in its rhetoric Partidul Socialistilor, receive 43.6% and its leader Igor Dodon and current President has 32% percent of thrust from people, for comparison the leader of pro-European opposition Maia Sandu has only 17% of trust²⁰. Popularity of populist rhetoric causes other political forces and even Government to adopt this type of discords.

Another cause of rise of populism is un satisfaction with a economical conditions of life. In April 2017, survey showed that 30% of Moldovans are unsatisfied with economical situation in country²¹, in Ukraine in May 2017, 38% considered that economical situation in country will become worse²². But statistical data shows that in past years economical situation in country become better. According to World Bank data in 2001, 54.6% of Moldovans lived in poverty, in the same year 83.3% of Ukrainians were considered poor²³. Today only 9.6% in Moldova and 3.8% in Ukraine can be considered living in poverty. The rate of unemployment dropped from 12.4% in 2001 to 9.9% in 2017 in Ukraine²⁴, in Republic of Moldova from 2010 to 2017, dropped from 7.4% to 4.1%²⁵. But in the same time let's not forget that the both Ukraine and Moldova are both poorest countries in Europe, this influences salaries and prices on market, according to poll from 2017, half of Ukrainians have enough money for food,

¹³ Central Election Commission of the Republic of Moldova. (2016) Election of the President of the Republic of Moldova from October 30, 2016 Presence - 21:30. <http://cec.md/r/mersul%20votarii/prezidentiale2016/21h30/> (date of reference: 05.04.2018).

¹⁴ Unimedia. (2016) Availability for voting by age category. <http://unimedia.info/stiri/update-infografic--prezenta-la-vot-dupa-categorie-de-varsta-cu-100-de-mii-mai-multi-tineri-decat-in-turul-i-123141.html> (date of reference: 05.04.2018).

¹⁵ Central Election Commission of the Republic of Moldova. (2016) Elections of the President of the Republic of Moldova from November 13, 2016 Presence - 21:30. <http://cec.md/r/mersul%20votarii/prezidentiale-t2-2016/21h30/> (date of reference: 05.04.2018).

¹⁶ Institutul Politicii Publice, (2017) Barometer of Public Opinion. Republic of Moldova. April 2017. Chisinau, p. 45.

¹⁷ Democratic Initiative Foundation. (2018) Public Opinion, December 2017: Election Ratings and Ratings of Trust. <http://dif.org.ua/article/rejtingijfojseoj8567547> (date of reference: 05.04.2018).

¹⁸ Kiev International Institute of Sociology (2018) Rating of Party and Political Leaders Support: February 2018 Year. <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=753&page=1&t=2> (date of reference: 04/05/2018).

¹⁹ Institutul Politicii Publice, (2017) Barometer of Public Opinion. Republic of Moldova. April 2017. Chisinau, p. 49.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Institutul Politicii Publice, (2017) Barometer of Public Opinion. Republic of Moldova. April 2017. Chisinau, p. 12.

²² Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. (2018) Ukrainian citizens' feelings in May of 2017 year <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=709&page=1&t=6> (date of reference: 05.04.2018).

²³ Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. (2018) Ukrainian citizens' feelings in May of 2017 year <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=709&page=1&t=6> (date of reference: 05.04.2018).

²⁴ The World Bank. (2018) The ratio of regular poverty to national poverty levels. Moldova. Ukraine. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC> (date of reference: 04/05/2018).

²⁵ Ministry of Finance of Ukraine. (2017) The unemployment rate in Ukraine. <https://index.minfin.com.ua/ua/labour/unemploy/2017> (date of reference: 05/24/2018).

but not enough for other necessities, and 11% of young Moldovans are unemployed²⁶. Moreover, although presented current data look impressive and we can clearly see progress, if we compare with beginning of 2010's, we would see that situation has become worst in both countries. Ad here inefficiency of pension system, outflow of youth from the country, uncertainty for the future, and we can see why people don't are willing to vote for anybody who promises better conditions.

All this with bitter political situation makes the former soviet republics like Moldova and Ukraine vulnerable for outside threats. One of such threats is Russia, who is keen to return it's old position as a dominate force in the region, using economical, informational, political and military leverages.

First of all let's look at economical leverages. Since the times of Russian Empire, between the center and the periphery of the empire existed relation than Canadian historian of Ukrainian decent Orest Subtelny characterized as a colonial²⁷. The same way as for example Britain extorted raw material from its colonies and then imported goods produced from them back, Russia exploited the recourses of her provinces. In USSR system was change not one of 15 republic, had a complete cycle of production, Ukraine produced one part, Georgia another, Belarus third and then final product was assembled in Russia. Famous SS-18 Satan was assembled from parts produced on different factories in UkSSR and RFSSR.

After the collapse of the union Russia capitalized from existed system, continuing centuries existed system. Before 2013 majority of fruits and vegetables produced in Moldova, were exported in Russian Federation. The same in Ukraine, local military plants continued to be part of Russian military complex, producing and repairing ships, tanks, missiles, helicopters etc. Moscow often used this as an advantage on "rebellious" republics. Like in for example vine embargos on Georgia and Moldova in mid 2000's. With signing of Agreement of Association European, market was open for products from the Eastern Europe.

On Ukraine usually was used another mean of influence – natural gas. Before 2014 Russia was main importer of natural gas in majority of its neighbors. Company importer, Gazprom is partially state owned so there's no surprise that relations very fast change from business to political. During 2005 -2010 Viktor Yushchenko presidency, Russia twice stop import of gas under different pretexts, mainly to influence Kyiv to change its independent pro-USA course, another goal was to influence European partners of Ukraine to stop supporting Yushchenko and Timoshenko Government, due to fact that Ukraine was the main transport hub of gas from Russia to Central Europe.

After 2013, with implementation in EU and Associated members of Third Energetic Package which limited the monopoly on energetical market, Gasproms influence on European countries was reduced and Russia was forced to use other means of influence, which they found in Russian speaking minorities.

One of the results of Russian occupation of Eastern Europe is a large number of Russian speaking minorities, due to internal migration, sometimes after forced deportations of local indigenes population. Today Moscow uses them in their political interests and as a destabilization factor. All major conflicts after the collapse of Soviet Union were started by Russia with use of loyal to them forces. As a comparison lets use Transnistria and Donbas. Although between the conflict lie time gat in 20 years, they are practically identical. Both started after change in political course from prorussian to more independent. Using mass media and propaganda (more on that latter), Russian Federation started a wave of protest of local Russian speaking minorities. In both Moldovan and Ukrainian scenarios Russian television scared population with tales about unionist/banderian repressions against their communities and violation of their rights. Protesting crowds start to self-organize, usually under the guidance of curators from Mother Russia, and block roads and administrative buildings. After awhile rhetoric changes from preservation of Russian speakers rights to calls of federalization and sovereignty and then to calls for independents or/and union with Russia. With escalation of situation, groups of locals become armed and supported by volunteers from "Motherland" and Cossacks. In case of conflict gets, out of hand and local armed militias cannot handle the situating, as a last resort, Russian Armed Forces, join the conflict. Final result another grey area and a frozen conflict.

²⁶ National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova. (2017) Workforce in the Republic of Moldova: Employment and Unemployment in 2017. <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=5957> (date of reference: 05.04.2018).

²⁷ Subtelny O. (1993) Ukraine History. Kyiv: "Lybid", 1993. p. 236.

What are the benefits of this kind of conflicts for Russian Federation? First, military presence in the region, as peacekeepers (Georgia and Moldova) or as armed forces of self-proclaimed political entities (Ukraine and Georgia) with a possible threat of future offensive. Second, possible obstacle for any integration processed due to territories with unclear status. Third, more place for maneuver for pro eastern political forces that can now play the role of peacekeepers against “aggressive” central government, like socialists in Moldova and remnants of Party of Regions in Ukraine.

A key part in creation and sustaining of named above conflicts play propaganda. This is another threat to national security not only former soviet republics but word at whole. Since 2012, information plays a key role in Russian military doctrine as a key part in hybrid warfare. “The emphasis shifted to the use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian and other non-military measures, along with the use of the protest potential of the local population. All this must be accompanied by hidden military operations - for example, the methods of information warfare and the use of special forces ...”²⁸, this is a direct quote from deputy head of Russian Army, Valery Gerasimov. According to Forbes, Russia spent 61 billion rubles. Thus, the state is the largest donor of the Russian media market.

Funds from the budget are received both by mass media with state participation, and private. About 60-70 percent of the funds subsidized by the media are received in the form of subsidies. The rest of the newspapers, magazines and TV channels win on tenders for the placement of information materials and receive them as grants.

The media group of VGTRK gets the most budgetary funds. According to the estimates of the publication, only a subsidy to ensure their work and production of programs in 2016 is 21.8 billion rubles. On the second place is the Russia Today TV channel with a budget of 17.5 billion rubles, the third is the media group "Russia Today" with more than 6 billion rubles. Task that stands before those channels is promotion Russian interests abroad.

Another mean of informational influence are local channels with Russian agenda, like NTV – Moldova, RTR-Moldova, NewsOne and etcetera. They are more effective mean of propaganda due to fact that they pose as local media and function the same way as local pro-Russian political forces²⁹.

To summarize all written above we can say that new cold war is quite different from previous. Participants have more means in their arsenal, and “frontlines”, lie thru former USSR republics.

In this conflict, Moscow’s goals are clear. First, of all restore Russia’s former dominance in the world. Putin and his surrounding know that for this they need to take control over Central and Eastern Europe. Especially important is Ukraine and Moldova. Previous, because of her resources, industrial complex and access to Black Sea. Later, is important as a doorway to Danube River and whole of the Balkans. Another point of interest for Russian Federation is to use those states as a buffer zone between it and West.

For achieving this goal Russian Federation uses several means. Beginning from economical sanctions, using ties that existed between countries from imperial times and modern energetic relations. This all continued with heavy informational bombardment, using television and internet but also Russia funded organization, local Russian speaking and even church. The messages are simple “without Russia our countries won’t survive, Europe/West in general needs us just to dump cheap products”. A very powerful message that is used is anti-LGBT propaganda, which threatens citizens of Eastern Europe with “moral degradation” and “increasing numbers of gay’s”. In last couple of years appeared new trend in propaganda, Syrian refugees. During 2016, Presidential elections in Moldova, one of the arguments against main pro European candidate were that she would let thousands of Syrians in stay in Moldova. Before the elections, society thru the means of TV and internet was already charged with anti refugee messages.

Very important role here play pro-Russian political movements, that use populist rhetoric can ether come to power and slowly submit to Russia, or if necessary pickup arms to destabilize situation and create a new zone of frozen conflict.

Parallel to this the same mechanism work in western countries. Supported by Russia politicians and state funded international channels lead work the same scheme as in Eastern Europe but with other

²⁸ Gerasimov V. (2013) The value of science in foresight. VPK <https://www.vpk-news.ru/articles/14632> (date of reference: 05.04.2018).

²⁹ Information resistance. It is known how much Russia spends on propaganda. <https://inforesist.org/stalozvestno-skolko-rossiya-tratit-na-propagandu/> (date of reference: 05.04.2018).

goal to legitimize Russian claims to the region of former USSR and Communist bloc and lift sanctions. This already worked in 2008, when Putin got away easy after invasion of Georgia.

So surviving this onslaught is the main challenge for young European countries formed after the collapse of Soviet Union. First step already is made. Both Chisinau and Kyiv understand that Russia capitalize on political and economical weaknesses of their respective countries. Slowly but shyrly reforms change societies for the better, but in the same time a lot of mistakes are made. Not enough efforts applied combating corruption, political parties are stuck in constant squabble and common citizens don't understand the main goals of implemented by reforms.

Only with construction of a working democracy with functioning civil societies and with adequate anticorruption legislation, former USSR republics can guaranty a more stable economical growth and working social programs. This will benefit the integration processes started by the countries in European and Euro-Atlantic alliances. If not as members but as full-fledged partners. As shown by Cyprus, have territory of which are now under control of unrecognized Turkish government, grey zones are not a obstacle in integrations processes.

Finally, it is easily to convince western allies to continue support of our cause if we have a functioning government. Thus, continue sanction and diplomaticall pressure on Russia and not thru to negotiate with Moscow. Only we can prevent second Munich.

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