

## **CHAPTER II**

### **RUSSIA-UKRAINE RELATIONS**

Chapter II aims to describe the object of research, namely the relation between Russia and Ukraine. Therefore, this chapter contains patterns of foreign policy taken by Russia so far. Relations between Russia and Ukraine are described so that policy interventions can be carried out through patterns of cooperation and conflict that have occurred between the two countries. This chapter also describes bilateral relations between the two countries and the conditions of their cooperation. This chapter is a description of the phenomenon and object of research, before continuing to the analysis in the next chapter.

#### **2.1 Russian Foreign Policy**

Russia has a long history of foreign policy and always took world's attention. Even though territory of Russia, geographically has changed throughout history, Russia is a Great Power in Europe. Russia became a decisive and influential actor in the Seven Years' War, becoming a conqueror of the Napoleon army, and an important country along the Concert of Europe. Russia was also the main protagonist in the Crimean War and other crises caused by the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century. The Russian alliance with France in 1890 was often seen by the world as the stage that initiated World War I, as well as its defense with Serbia in 1914 which was considered the main act that led to the war. Then, the Soviet Union war in World War II era was also very decisive. After World War II ended, Russia led parts of Europe through its power in the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact for half a century in the 20th century (Oliker, 2015). This shows how much power the Soviet Union has from year to year until the end of the Cold War.

Even though Russia seems not having interest to have cooperation with other countries, Russia still continues to cooperate with the West to strengthen the economy and its

position in the international community. After the Soviet Union era, in 1999 Russia made several cooperation with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on the issue of the Yugoslav bombing campaign that year. In fact, Russia invited the NATO secretary general to Moscow to develop relations with 'Western' leaders. This was welcomed by the West by giving a positive response and full support through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Putin said that Russia's foreign policy must be based on "clear national priorities, pragmatism and economic effectiveness".

In 2012, Russia tried to focus on its economic issue, then initiated anti-Western nationalism, increased the defensive cost, and pursued the widest hegemony to the former Soviet Union (Giles, 2015). From 2007 to at the end of 2013, Russia still had an unfavorable relationship with Ukraine regarding the problems of the Ukrainian oil and gas pipeline and debt. This was coupled with an agreement between Ukraine and the European Union so that the Ukrainian crisis emerged and Russia's intervention on Ukraine.

Year after year, there is a clear pattern, that Russia will always prioritize its interests rather than cooperation. Cooperation will occur as long as it is in line with Russian interests. Russia still makes superior of its military power in the international community. This to maintain its identity as Great Power. However, there are many things that are taken into consideration in every Russian foreign policy decision making. The pattern of cooperation or conflict taken by Russia will show the interests and values that are always upheld.

In every foreign policy carried out by Russia, there are actors who play a role in the decision-making process. As a country with the largest region in the world, Russia has many elements of decision making. Although the elements of decision-making in Russia are quite a lot, but Putin is a manifestation of the regime and is the key decision maker also the right spokesperson in every policy. Dmitri Trenin

said that, "In all important issues, the political system in Russia is controlled by the only decision maker, namely Vladimir Putin. The power is like a monarchy or a Tsar and it is also supported by an old tradition in the Russian government." (Lyne, 2015).

The highest decision is in the hands of the president. From the president, the decision was then through presidential administration and the Security Council. The results of the decision then went to the Ministry of Defense which was then followed by the desired operation, both land, sea and air.

From the explanation above, there are many parties involved in making recommendations. However, it remains the president who is the one who take a Russian foreign policy. Further, what happened in the case of Russian intervention. Russian intervention that has got various recommendations was later carried out after obtaining approval from President Vladimir Putin.

## **2.2 Russian Politic in The International Community**

In international politics, the world is a system, where interactions within the system are started by the politics of inter-state power (Hough, 2004). So that the international community can be interpreted as international relations between countries so that raises a certain pattern of interaction between countries that have strong power and weak power state. Russia assumes that the post-Cold World international community that exists in world politics is a multipolar system with an anarchic interaction between its countries. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, many emerging powers such as strengthening cooperation in the European Union (EU), new economic power such as China, Japan, South Africa, Brazil, as well as Western powers incorporated in NATO. The existence of new forces in this world, Russia seems to have no alliance. Cooperation that Russia did spread to various points without any alignments. For example, if Russia sells weapons to a country in war, Russia sells its weapon to its oppositions. Thus, no country is

truly an alliance of Russia (Gannon, 2001). Russia is still trying to become an independent state of Great Power by exploiting its strategic geographic position (Giles, 2015). In addition, Russia's post-2003 that is less supportive of the international community formed post-Cold war in Europe, made countries in Europe re-thinking in every cooperation that they interlace with Russia. These phenomena awakened some countries in Europe that seeing Russia's current state Russia cannot serve as a partner or alliance state (Lyne, 2015).

The existence of new powers as well as new forms of cooperation that do not always involve the state as the main actors, surely affecting the changes to the international community. The Soviet-era international community system that was bipolar and relying on military power was slowly change to change with multipolar and strengthen other aspects such as the economy. This complex system has made Russia difficult to adapt because Russia still wants the old system. Even in this new system erased the Westphalian with the concept of sovereignty because the new system brings out new concepts such as Responsibility to Protect and organized transnational crime. The new concepts contradict with the old concept of sovereignty. Russia still wants the old system even though the system is imbalances of power, but remains structured and ordered to guarantee the world peace (Freire & Simao, 2014). Russia also wants the old system because in history, Russia was once a hegemonic power called the Soviet Union. The largest legacy Soviet Union today is Russia, with the legacy of its powerful military. It means Russia feels more and more that they are hegemony. As we know with Gramsci's hegemonic theory, with considerable power, they can do anything.

Since the defeat of the Soviet Union in the Cold War, Russia should begin to organize its country in the domestic policy. This is because Russia facing various internal obstacles such as the weakening of economy and political culture that ultimately threaten the condition of businessmen

and society. If these internal barriers are not addressed immediately, it will threaten the security in Europe and stability in Russia (Giles, 2015). However, instead of focusing on these internal obstacles, Russia is in fact trying to build a system in order to unite the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries as a counter to the strength of NATO. One of the interests of Russia is preventing the expansion of NATO.

In the case of intervention in Ukraine, Russia seeks to keep Ukraine from joining the EU with a close relation with NATO. In the international community, Russia is trying to show their power as a Great Power with the fact that Russia is not affected by the embargo committed by the EU related cases of intervention in Ukraine. As long as it does not oppose their interests, Russia maintains a good relation like bilateral relations with Luxembourg which is actually a member of the EU that gives an embargo to Russia (Lavrov, 2015). In addition, Russia strengthens their position by cooperating with BRICS countries and countries in the Eurasian region. This is proven by the signing of a memorandum between Russia and China to join *Silk Road Economic Belt Projects* and *Eurasian Economic Integration* (EAEU) (Lavrov, 2015).

From those explanation, we can analyze that since 2003 until now, Russia has acted like an Independent Great Power with their foreign policies in facing multipolar international community system. Russia will be negative towards the countries that oppose them, but Russia remains positive and cooperates with new emerging powers countries as a form of adaptation to the ever-changing international community system. Russian attitudes and actions will be deciding whether they are in line with their national interests or not.

On the phenomenon of Russian Intervention in Ukrainian crisis, Russia is aggressive against Ukraine when Ukraine decides to establish further cooperation with the EU. Before the Ukrainian crisis took place, Russia did not behave like that because the policy of Ukraine still has not opposed

the interests of Russia. In the context of the international community, Russia does not want Ukraine to work more closely and further with the EU or NATO because this will barriers to the interests of Russia in the future.

### 2.3 Russia-Ukraine Bilateral Relations

Russia's national territory, of course, was such a vast area due to various occupations and annexations at the time of the Russian empire. Russia's territory suffered during the collapse of the Soviet Union in the Cold War era in 1991. In the last 20 years, Russia has been trying to rebuild its glory, but of course it is not easy. In history, it can be seen the fact that Russia is still often involved in foreign policy affairs of the former Soviet Union. Not only is its foreign affairs, this former Soviet territory also a very important thing for Russia. These former Soviet territories, formerly the outer regions of the Soviet Union and have been tied to the Soviet Union in politically, economically, and socially and culturally.

Russia and Ukraine itself has a fairly long bond. Geographically, we know that Ukraine itself is not a state that is formed by itself. Its territory is a gift from the Soviet Union.

**Figure 2. 1 Russia-Ukraine Bilateral Relations**

**Territories annexed to Ukraine...**



Source: [russianuniverse.org](http://russianuniverse.org)

After the Russian Revolution, Ukraine declared its independence from Russia on January 28, 1918 which resulted in several wars between several groups. The Russian army finally won against the Kiev army and in 1920 Ukraine became part of the Soviet Republic. In 1922, Ukraine became one of the pioneers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). As part of the USSR, the territory of Ukraine also got wider during the time of Vladimir Lenin and Nikita Krushchev. Ukraine also became part of the USSR which played an important role in the development of USSR before the down of USSR (Infoplease.com, 2016).

The fact that Ukraine is rich in natural resources is an important point where geographically Russia will always maintain their influence on rich territory. Not only the abundant natural resources, with Ukraine in western Russia, Russia has built its oil and gas pipeline in Ukraine so that Russia can easily and efficiently supply its oil and gas products. In addition to the abundant natural resources, one of the goals of Russia has always maintained good relations with Ukraine because Ukraine is a buffer zone. So that the international political activities systemically can be seen into 2 different powers. Russia as the strongest axis in the East, and countries in Central and Western Europe are joining NATO. Utilization of Ukraine as a buffer zone is very much looking at the geographical position of Ukraine that limits between Russia and EU countries. If Russia can trust the EU member states, then Russia will not be so hard in keeping Ukraine as the outermost circle guarding Russia's national territory.

The location of Ukraine is very strategic because Ukraine connects Russia with European countries. This can be seen from two sides, the first of which is an opportunity because Ukraine can be used to channel international trade between Russia and countries in Europe so that the Russian economy and trade out will be more smoothly. But on the other hand, this is a threat if until Ukraine fell into the hands of Europe because Ukraine itself is a Buffer Zone which

became Russia's outer circle in protecting his country from Western influence.

Ukraine also has military bases in Crimea located near the Black Sea. The Black Sea is very strategic and connects Russian military bases with Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Georgia. The Black Sea also has abundant natural resources so that the presence of Russian military forces in the Crimea must be maintained. This is a strategy in maintaining Russian influence in the countries surrounding Russia, including Ukraine.

**Figure 2. 2 Map of Black Sea**



*Source: simple.wikipedia.org*

The strategic Black Sea can be utilized to its full potential if the Crimea is under Russian influence. During this time, the Crimea is part of Ukraine, but there are several Russian military bases that are stationed there. Crimea which was once part of Russia was still dominated ethnic Russian socially and culturally. Thus, for Russia to be able to enter the



Crimea region and affect the Crimean society will be easier. This is supported by the strong Russian military base in the territory of Russia that next to the Crimea so that both geopolitically and geostrategic ally, Russia will take the benefit from social, cultural and military circumstances.

**Table 2. 1 Russia-Ukraine Bilateral Trade**

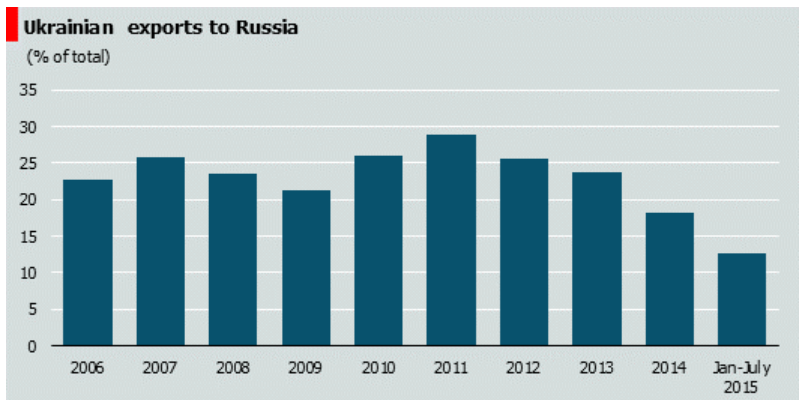


*Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit; Russian Federal Customs Service*

Economic and trade cooperation relationship can be seen from the trade balance between Russia and Ukraine which in 2006 reached USD 23.3 billion, with the growth of trade by 39% annually from 2002 to 2006 (Szeptycki, 2008). The trade structure between Russia and Ukraine was formed based on its relationship since it was still part of the Soviet Union. Ukraine is a machine exporter for Russia, locomotives, trains and other vehicles; turbines, winches, and other electric-powered engines; metal industrial products, pipes; agricultural and food products such as meat, dairy products, sugar, alcoholic beverages, canned foods; chemical products such as ammonia, plastics, tires and chemical cleaning agents (Szeptycki, 2008). This then causes Ukraine

to depends and rely heavily on Russia as a market as well as a consumer of the products it produces. Ukraine is easier to distribute its products to Russia because countries in Europe, which are mostly incorporated into the European Union, have quite strict trade barriers, while the quality of products produced by Ukraine is less superior than products from other countries.

**Table 2. 2 Ukrainian Exports to Russia**



*Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit; International Monetary Funds*

While Russia is the largest gas exporter for Ukraine. In 2005, Ukraine imported 68.4% of its fuel from Russia. Apart from Russia, Ukraine actually imports oil and gas from Central Asia, but geographically it still has to go through Russia so there is a necessity and dependency. And the fact that Russia provides cheap prices to Ukraine so that Ukraine is very dependent on Russia. This price is very cheap compared to its selling price to other European countries. However, the generosity of this price must be paid with the services of Ukraine as a transit country. Ukraine is called a transit country because 80% of Russia's oil and gas pipelines

flow to Europe via Ukraine. Russia also tried to overcome this by providing cheap prices for oil and gas to Ukraine (Szeptycki, 2008).

Other side of economics and trade, Russia and Ukraine have conflict relations regarding borders and disputed areas. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the process of division of regions and sharing of shared assets began. Especially for the Soviet Union's shared assets located in the countries of the former Soviet Union, such as the Soviet Union's nuclear weapons; the legal status of Crimea which was previously part of Russia given to Ukraine as a gift; Sea Fleet on the Black Sea which was once the Soviet Union's navy; and also, the port of Sevastopol which was one of the important points for the Soviet Union Navy. Although there have been agreements to share and cooperate in the use of the Crimea and Sevastopol, conflicts still occur frequently. This was triggered by the presence of ethnic Russians who lived in the area because of their work related to the sea fleet in the Black Sea. Otherwise, conflict and competition often occur between Ukrainian warships and Russian warships in the Black Sea. The area is disputed because geopolitical, the area is very strategic and will benefit the country that owns it.

Relations between Russia and Ukraine reached a very bad situation when in 2009 Russian President Dmitry Medvedev accused Ukraine in his open letter that the Ukrainian Government had issued an anti-Russian policy. The Russian president stated that Ukraine had supported Georgian troops in the war between Russia and Georgia, violated an agreement on the Russian navy in the Black Sea, and was involved in anti-Russian discourse. But relations between Russia and Ukraine improved better when in 2010 President Viktor Yanukovich was elected President of Ukraine. Viktor Yanukovich is one of the leaders in Ukraine who is more pro in establishing good relations with Russia. Russia's relations with Ukraine became unstable again when Euromaidan and the Ukrainian Crisis occurred at the end of

2013 which ultimately threatened Viktor Yanukovich's position as president.