

CHAPTER III UKRAINIAN CRISIS

Chapter III aims at explaining the events that occur prior, during, and the aftermath of the Ukrainian Crisis. Thus, this chapter in detail will have an in depth discussion on the Ukrainian crisis, it also discusses about Yanukovych and the events that followed. Prior to the crisis was the events of demonstration and must distrust in the political stage. The fall of Yanukovych was the next event, this downfall of political stability created a pre-crisis, named the Eastern Ukraine Crisis. A crisis that made an opening towards a possible Russian Intervention, thus the event that came afterwards was the annexation of Crimea. This chapter will also provide an insight towards Russian politics that intervene the events that led to the main event of the Ukraine Crisis. This will give an insight towards the readers in order to understand the next chapter better.

3.1 Leading The Fall of Yanukovych

Euromaidan is a term that emerged in November 2013 and refers to massive demonstrations in the Maidan square. This demonstration was triggered by Yanukovych's decision to postpone the signing of cooperation with the European Union.

The demonstration began on November 21, 2013 at night when Yanukovych had decided to postpone the signing of the contract. Many Ukrainians wanted Ukraine to establish closer cooperation with the European Union, but Russia had the power to pressure the Ukrainian government. In addition to the postponement of the signing of the agreement, the Ukrainian people were ignited by other things such as corruption in the Ukrainian government (Getmanchuk, 2014), and also human rights violations against former Prime Minister of Ukraine, Yulia Tymoshenko. Ukrainian society demands the release of Yulia Tymoshenko from prisoner and demands that President Viktor Yanukovych step down. Until the beginning of December 2013, the number of

demonstrators continued to grow and reached 800,000 people. Until mid-January, the government began to ban demonstrations so that there was violence that took many victims. On January 28-29, Prime Minister Mykola Azarov resigned. The crisis continued, many demonstrators were arrested and many were killed. Until February 20, at least 88 people were killed in 2 hours. This is the worst violence in nearly 70 years of the history of Kiev. The demonstration continued until February 22, 2014, finally Viktor Yanukovich was overthrown and Yulia Tymoshenko was released (Loiko, 2014).

After Yanukovich's resignation as President of Ukraine, many changes began. On February 21, Yanukovich and his supporters in the government disappeared from Kiev and allegedly sought refuge in Russia (Woehrel, 2015). On February 23-26, Parliament decided to ban Russian as the second official language after Ukrainian. This also caused a wave of anger in several regions in Ukraine that use Russian as their primary language. In fact, judging from History, Ukraine was one of the biggest fragments of the Soviet Union after the Russian Federation so many Russians used to live in Ukraine and other Soviet Union fragments, but they did not mingle with other residents. So, they still become Russian Speaking people and are still bound to Russian culture. And this is what makes Russia still have influence on the countries of the former Soviet Union. With this fact, the Ukrainian parliament actually appointed Olexander Turchynov as interim president and Arseniy Yatsenyuk as prime minister until the election was held again.

Under Yanukovich's, Ukraine has a close relationship with Russia, while under Olexander Turchynov, Ukraine prefers to approach Europe than Russia. After Turchynov, the elected president was Poroshenko. During his term, Ukraine signed the Trade Pact with the European Union (Higgins & Herszenhorn, 2014). It is this difference in regime and different leadership ideologies that later also led to

demonstrations in other parts of Ukraine, in the eastern part of Ukraine.

The crisis in the Eastern of Ukraine began on February 27 when there was a group of unidentified but armed soldiers who took over government buildings in Simferopol, Crimea (Babiak, 2014). Not only government buildings, they also look after Simferopol airport. This group of soldiers was later identified as Russian soldiers. Starting from this point, by the international community, Russia is considered to begin intervening in Ukraine militarily.

3.2 Eastern Ukraine Crisis

On April, 7th 2014, protests and demonstrations began to spread to Kharkiv, Donetsk and Luhansk. They demanded for a referendum on independence. Kharkiv, Donetsk and Luhansk want to free themselves from Ukraine. In fact, some of the demonstrators demanded to join Russia. On April 17, Ukraine sent its armed forces to prevent widespread demonstrations. However, 3 protesters were killed as the first victims of riots between separatists and the Ukrainian army. On April 22, the president declared resistance by issuing military operations against the pro-Russian Ukrainian people. The death toll in Ukraine increased when riots broke out. On May 11, 2014, *The Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republic* declared their independence from Ukraine (Walker, Grytsenko, & Amos, 2014). Since then, protests from pro-Russian separatists have expanded. This is because the majority of the population in Eastern Ukraine are people who still have emotional and cultural relations with Russia.

Until August 22, 2014, there was a large humanitarian convoy from Russia entering Luhansk without permission of Ukrainian Government. This is also what Ukraine calls a form of intervention. On August 26, 2014, a group of Russian soldiers were caught in Ukraine on a special mission (Prentice & Makhovsky, 2014). On 27-28 August 2014, separatist leader Alexander Zakharchenko said that there were about 3 to 4 thousand Russian civilians around the Azov Sea and

Novoazovsk. Russia's involvement has deepened until Russia gets sanctions and embargoes from various countries in the world. But that does not reduce Russia's influence in Eastern Ukraine. Finally, on September 5, 2014, the pro-Russian rebels, the Government of Ukraine and the Russian Government also held talks in Minsk, Belarus which produced a protocol containing 12 points.

3.3 Crimean Occupation

Russian intervention continued in early March when the Russian parliament accepted Putin's request to use their military force in Ukraine to protect Russian interests in Ukraine. On March 16, 2014, Crimea held a referendum to join Russia or not. As a result, 97% of the Crimean people want to join Russia rather than Ukraine (Siddiqui, 2014). Although March 17, 2014 the European Union and the United States gave a travel ban and froze the assets of several Russian officials, on March 18, 2014 President Putin signed a contract which declared Crimea to be part of Russia. Everything goes so fast. Crimea became independent from Ukraine on March 16, 2014 and entered Russia's part on March 18, 2014. This was due to the large number of ethnic Russians in the Crimea. However, Russia has come under fire and embargoes from the West for its great condemnation actions.

Since the Ukrainian crisis and the fall of president Victor Yanukovyh, has stirred up turmoil in Eastern Ukraine because this area is the largest Russian ethnic in Ukraine, then makes the society declare the referendum and one of them is Crimean.

It's began on February 27, 2014, since the fall of Victor Yanukovyh. Unknown troops and strongly suspected as Russian troops commanded to seize the building of the Crimean Council and other ministerial buildings in Simferopol as a form of the impact of the Ukrainian crisis. Time after, Russian flags were raised above the buildings. While these unknown troops still occupied governmental

buildings in Simferopol. The Crimean Council dissolved the government, then through the meeting chose Sergey Aksyonov, chairman of the Russian Unity Party which is a minority party, as the Crimean Prime Minister. This appointment is considered to be legally flawed by the Ukrainian government. Aksyonov and parliament speaker Vladimir Konstantinov said they considered Viktor Yanukovich as de jure president of Ukraine, and they could ask for Russian help.

On March 1, 2014, Aksyonov declared that the new de facto Crimean authorities would rule over all Ukrainian military base on the Crimean Peninsula. He also asked Russian President Vladimir Putin, Yanukovich's main supporter in the international community to help ensure peace and public order in the Crimea. On March 2, 2014, Russian forces moved from the Naval base in Sevastopol, and with the help of troops, armored vehicles and helicopters from mainland Russia, succeeded in taking control of the Crimean Peninsula (Pravdareport, 2014).

A referendum held in the Crimean Republic in March 2014 showed broad support from the society to rejoin the Russian Federation. Although sharp criticism from the international community, the government of the Russian Federation and the Crimean Autonomous Republic continued the process of accessing Crimea to become part of Russia, so that the Crimean Republic was formed as the subject of the Russian. The results of the referendum which took place from around 50% of the votes counted have resulted in 95% of the votes of the Crimean people choosing to join Russia and separate from Ukraine. Legal and illegal claims for the conduct of the referendum raise the tensions. Russia considers the referendum Legal, America and European consider it illegal.

3.4 Russian Intervention in Ukrainian Crisis

Since becoming the Russian Federation, there have been several incidents involving intervention from Russia. In 1991, Russia intervened in the civil war in Georgia, which was in the Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transnistria, Gori, Poti and Pervyi. In 1993, Russia succeeded in occupying Transnistria. Russia intervened in the war in Georgia until 2008, finally Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Gori, Poti and Pervyi occupied by the Russian occupation.

In 2014 Russia intervened in the domestic crisis in Ukraine. The justification is similar to the previous intervention, which is to protect the ethnic Russians there. In fact, until 2015 Russia has intervened in the Civil War in Syria. However, for some interventions such as in Syria, Russia is in the name of sovereignty and wants to help the power of the government in power.

There are some similarities that can be drawn in the red thread. Russia will intervene in countries that have Russian ethnic, which means the countries of the former Soviet Union. This was done when a crisis was in the country. In addition, the intervention was carried out in the countries of the former Soviet Union to preserve its power in the territory of the former Soviet Union, especially its influence on neighboring countries, so that Russia's interests and needs can be achieved.

The political instability and changes in government in Kiev, Russia responded with efforts to intervene militarily in Ukraine. Starting on February 27, there were many heavily armed soldiers in the Crimea. They use Russian. They control the airport and also important buildings in Crimea. At that time, President Vladimir Putin claimed that the army was not Russia's military force, they were only a local defense force in the Crimea (Woehrel, 2015). In April 2014, Putin admitted that Russia's armed military forces had invaded Crimea.

Referendum was held in Crimea on March 16, 2014 and 96.77% of voters agreed to rejoin Russia. On March 18, Putin signed an agreement Crimea to rejoin as part of Russia.

At the end of March, thousands of pro-Russian demonstrators demonstrated at several points in eastern Ukraine, in Donetsk, Luhansk and Kharkiv. That continued until April. Several armed civilians controlled several government buildings in more than 12 cities in the Donbas province. In May, the Donetsk and Luhansk communities held a referendum and set themselves independent. This was later considered illegal by the Ukrainian government.

Russian convoy was known entering Ukraine for humanitarian reasons On August 22, 2014. But that was without the permission of the Ukrainian government so that this was included in the intervention carried out by Russia. The separatists continued to demonstrate until September 5. the Government of Ukraine, the Russian Government and several representatives of the separatists agreed to an agreement containing 12 points of peace in Minsk, Belarus. However, none of these points were implemented properly, triggering an offensive led by Russia to attack the Ukrainian army.

Besides, Ukraine stated that Russia had kidnapped and illegally detained Ukrainian citizens, and banned Crimean Tatars from entering Crimea. In addition, Ukraine also stated that Russia had carried out direct and indirect actions in financing illegal armed units in Ukraine, Russia had also sent heavy military equipment, weapons and ammunition to Ukraine. Russia has organized training and financing of rebels in Ukraine.

The various actions of Russia, starting from entering the territory of Ukraine without permission, deploying troops, providing humanitarian assistance, providing weapons assistance and arming the separatists, trying to control several vital objects such as government buildings, is a form of military intervention. Russia has taken a stand to intervene to protect its interests in Ukraine