

### **Description of the conflict**

The conflict that will be used in this assignment is that between the Russian Federation and the Ukraine regarding the Crimea peninsula. The conflict began after Russian armed forces invaded the peninsula claiming to protect the Russian population there from the unrest caused by the violent removal of the former Ukraine president Yanukovich in February 2014 [1] [2]. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2014 the Crimean populated voted to secede from Ukraine and join the Russian Federation [3]. This was done thought what is believed by many to be a flawed referendum. Since then tensions have risen between the countries.

### **Goals of the different parties**

Goals of Ukraine (as formulated by its government): Ukraine does not tolerate the invasion of Russia in its territory [4]. Furthermore, it does not recognise the secession of Crimea [5]. Therefore, the goal of Ukraine is to regain control over this region and demands Russia to retreat its troops either back to their bases on the peninsula or to Russia.

Goals of the Russian Federation: Russia feels it has the right to protect its citizens if they are in danger [6]. Furthermore, they see the secession of the Crimean peninsula as the result of a valid referendum in which the Crimean people decided to join the Russian Federation [7]. Therefore, the goal of Russia is to maintain the current situation as this is the result of a lawful process.

### **Solving the conflict: determining the best alternatives of the two actors if negotiations break**

Best alternative for Ukraine: the best alternative for Ukraine is they get support from the US and the EU which can sanction Russia for its behaviour. In this case Ukraine will not recover Crimea nor will the Russian troops leave the peninsula.

Best alternative for the Russian Federation: the best alternative for the Russian Federation is the status quo stays in place (i.e. Russia maintains Crimea).

### **Solving the conflict: describing the bargaining space**

The bargaining space in this conflict is very narrow. The views of both parties are extremely opposed to each other and negotiating a bargain will be hard. Nevertheless, there seems to be a shared believe by both actors the unrest has to end. This is in the interest of both parties. However, how this ending of the unrest has to take place and who should be responsible for this is a point of great debate between the actors.

### **Strategies that can be used by an outside mediator**

The proposed strategies to solve this conflict are communication and facilitation and, procedural mediation.

As communication between the two parties is almost non-existent a third party negotiator should first try to see if they can solve the problem themselves by creating the opportunity to speak with each other. This can be done by providing the opportunity to communicate during an event which both parties already planned to attend (e.g. an international summit).

In case the above strategy does not work as either the parties do not wish to talk to each other or are unable to solve the problem themselves, a more direct approach is preferred. This would take the form a procedural mediation strategy in which the focus should be on containing the conflict to the Crimean peninsula. Currently, the conflict appears to spread to other parts of eastern Ukraine. Containing the conflict is key as a spread out conflict only makes the situation more complex.

### **Extend of realism of the proposed solution**

It is believed unlikely the proposed mediation strategy and solution will have an impact in the conflict. Given the unsuccessful results of previous negotiations and the fact the conflict is still ongoing decrease the chances of successfully solve the disagreement over the ownership of Crimea. The fact the conflict has extended to other parts of Ukraine it is believed it would be preferred to first solve this conflict before turning back the attention to the conflict discussed here.

### **References**

[1] Mackay. D., Sommerlad. N. (2014), Russia invades Crimea to 'protect its Black Sea naval fleet' as Ukraine tensions soar, Retrieved from: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/ukraine-news-russia-invades-crimea-3194129>

[2] BBC News Europe (2014), Ukrainian MPs vote to oust president Yanukovich, Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26304842>

[3] The economist (2014), What the original Crimean war was all about, Retrieved from: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2014/03/economist-explains-5>

[4] Ceceri. M. (2014), The Russian invasion of Ukraine, Retrieved from: <http://www.fpri.org/articles/2014/03/russian-invasion-ukraine>

[5] *ibid.*

[6] Mackay. D., Sommerlad. N. (2014), Russia invades Crimea to 'protect its Black Sea naval fleet' as Ukraine tensions soar, Retrieved from: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/ukraine-news-russia-invades-crimea-3194129>

[7] Harding. L., Wlaker. S. (2014). Crimea votes to secede from Ukraine in 'illegal' poll, Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/16/ukraine-russia-truce-crimea-referendum>