

Andrew Klauber
American Heritage School, Plantation
CC - Ukraine in Turmoil

1. I began Model UN as a sophomore during the 2012-2013 school year when I attended Model United Nations at the University of Chicago (MUNUC). There, I won honourable (2nd place at MUNUC) as Moscow, Russia in the World Cities Summit. Later that year I attended the Miami Invitational Conference for the Simulation of the United Nations (MICSUN) but unfortunately did not win an award. As a junior in the 2013-2014 school year, I attended William and Mary High School Model United Nations conference (WMHSMUN) where I received an honourable award in DISEC as Albania. I also attended Princeton Model United Nations Conference (PMUNC) where I won an outstanding award in the Historical Security Council as India. Later that school year, I won honourable at MUNUC as the Minister of Finance in the French Popular Front continuous crisis. I also attended NHSMUN, which does not give individual awards, representing Sweden in the United Nations HABITAT committee. Finally at MICSUN I won as the Secretary of War for the Confederate States of America in the JCC American Civil War committee. As a junior I ran the Operation Torch crisis committee as Assistant Crisis Director at our high school's first annual conference. As a senior, I was both Secretary General and Crisis Director for the First Crusade: Council of Princes continuous crisis at our second annual conference. I am the co-president of my school's Model United Nations team and have been the club's webmaster and club representative, as well as co-director of the NHSMUN and MICSUN conferences.
2. The Ukrainian crisis comes at a moment where Russia, supposedly buoyed by natural resource production, has entered the geopolitical limelight for the first significant moment since the decline and fall of the Soviet Union. Although this definitely attracts me to the topic, my main interests in the Ukrainian crisis can be traced back to Western involvement in the Balkans and Eastern Europe during the Clinton presidency, mainly the engagement of NATO in the Yugoslav Civil Wars. When I was taking AP Comparative Government and Politics, a Russian friend explained to the class how the modern Russian opinion of the USA and other Western powers as interventionists arose out of the involvement of NATO in Yugoslavia and the extension of NATO into Eastern Europe after the USSR fell. From his perspective, modern relations between the USA and Russia stems back to this change in foreign policy, a point commonly discussed in Russian academia but less so in American academia. In this light, the Ukrainian crisis represents the first major engagement between Russia and the USA and will direct the future course of relations between the two powers for decades to come.
3. Connecting Ukraine to the West are economics and the European Union, a distinct cultural identity, and an educated younger generation. From one perspective, the involvement of Russia in Ukraine can be seen as a Victorian tactic to keep Ukraine from drifting too far from Russian influence and towards the European Union. Ukraine has much to gain from incorporating into

the EU, including unified border and energy policies. Furthermore, the distinct Ukrainian culture, language, and ethnicity paints the Ukrainian people as desirous of national sovereignty and national pride. This pulls Ukraine away from Russia and, at the moment, towards the West and the European Union. Similarly, a new, young, educated generation of Ukrainians desire a democratic and independent state, a desire which naturally pushes Ukraine away from Russia and towards the European Union.

On the other hand, shared cultural and historical experiences, religion, and economics all influence Ukraine more towards Russia. Although the Russian and Ukrainian peoples are entirely distinct with separate cultural identities, similarities paint the two as cousins. Both have similar languages, traditions, and beliefs. Similarly, the existence of strong histories of Eastern Orthodox Christianity ties the two nations together. Finally, Ukraine benefits greatly from Russian natural resource expansion as Russian pipelines move through Ukraine to reach the European Union. Without Russian investment, Ukraine would not have the same level of industry and infrastructure as it does today.

4. Although the annexation of the Crimean peninsula is a crime according to international law, the actions of Russia are entirely understandable and I, personally, am sympathetic to Russian reasoning. For hundreds of years, the Crimea was the focus of Russian southern expansion. Even under Ukrainian control, Russia still based its navy in Sevastopol. It's easy to partition Russian lands into different states, but for an incredibly long period of time, the Crimea *was* Russia. The existence of a large Russian population in the Crimea corroborates this fact. However, under international law the Crimean Oblast was handed to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. This agreement has been acknowledged since 1954 and the unwilling cession of the region to the Russian Federation clearly violates the terms of agreement between the Ukrainian and Russian governments at the time. The Russian people certainly should express their discontent with the situation, but translating political and cultural expansionism into outright warfare disrupts the region counterintuitively.