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**UKRAINE'S WILL TO FIGHT:
UKRAINE'S TRIDENT AT WAR AGAINST THE RUSSIAN BEAR**

by

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Ukraine's Will to Fight: Ukraine's Trident at War Against the Russian Bear

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ABSTRACT

TITLE OF THESIS: Ukraine's Will to Fight: Ukraine's Trident at War Against the Russian Bear

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It is challenging to measure intangibles associated with a country's *will to fight*. Utilizing the *Will to Fight* analytic framework developed by the Defense Intelligence Agency in 2023, which is primarily based on the RAND corporation's 2018 study by the same title, the primary purpose of the thesis is to examine specific factors in Ukraine's *will to fight* Russian assaults in 2014 and 2022. Of the numerous potentially important *will to fight* analytic factors, this thesis focuses on these four as critical: government cohesion, national level popular support, allies/diplomatic engagement, and military training. This training factor includes the Resistance Operating Concept (ROC), which was developed by the US Army's Special Operations Command-Europe (SOCEUR). Using this method the research will answer the question, "to what extent did Ukraine's *will to fight* affect Ukraine's resistance to the Russian Federation invasion of 2022."

This thesis applies the will-to-fight framework to two cases: the Russian Federation's invasion and illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and Russia's further invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Applying this framework to these case studies provides a useful comparison understanding

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of Ukraine's resistance in 2014 and 2022. The major findings are that Ukraine's *will to fight* was weak at best during the conflict in 2014. Only after the ouster of Ukrainian President Yanukovich and the illegal annexation of Crimea could Ukraine form a new government and align itself with the European Union and NATO. These changes brought more pro-Ukrainian outlooks and less positive views toward Russia. Before Russia's further invasion into Ukraine in 2022, the four factors in the *will to fight* tradecraft became significantly stronger than in 2014. Throughout the leadup and during the current conflict in Ukraine, this researcher discovered that Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was a common theme in Ukraine's dramatically improved will to fight. This researcher found that Zelenskyy's leadership was associated with all four of the critical *will to fight* factors discussed above. For example, his willingness to stay in Kiev instead of becoming a leader in exile during the initial days of the Russian invasion clearly inspired his people to fight and encouraged much of the Western world to provide aid. Zelenskyy has led his country with inspiring levels of charisma, passion, and consistency. He has proven his ability to adapt to changes as a strong leader and has successfully advocated around the world for his people while challenging the Russian aggression.

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Ruby (left) and Belle (R)

My apartment complex have been some of the best supporters throughout this process.

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Introduction

The Russian Federation has attempted to maintain the narrative that the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) threaten its survival. Moscow continually stresses that neighboring NATO countries threaten Russian sovereignty, which Moscow has highlighted over the last two decades in messaging to target European and Nordic nations interested in joining the Alliance. Russia considers NATO and its future expansion as a direct and existential threat. The Russian Federation has thwarted attempts from many European and Nordic nations against considering joining NATO. From NATO's inception in 1949 with twelve founding members to the enlargement of now thirty-one member nations in eight rounds of expansion, Russia's attempts have seemed to backfire. Russia has failed to intimidate the Baltic and Nordic nations since those states have continued adding to NATO's numbers even after threats of consequences were disregarded.¹

¹ Kristin Archick, Paul Belkin, and Andrew S. Bowen, "NATO: Finland and Sweden Seek Membership," *Congressional Research Service*, (February 14, 2023), 2, <https://heinonline-org.niu.idm.oclc.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.crs/govekpi0001&div=2>.

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Figure 1.1. Finnish flag flying at NATO Headquarters in Brussels. Anthony J. Blinken, “Finland’s Accession to NATO,” US Embassy Finland, Photo US Mission to NATO, April 4, 2023, 1, <https://fi.usembassy.gov/finlands-accession-to-nato/>.²

In response to Georgia's intentions to request membership in NATO, the Russian Federation invaded Georgia in 2008. NATO's policy has been clear on requirements for membership, and if a state is at war or in conflict, that nation is ineligible for entry.³ The Russian Federation knew about this condition, and the illegal invasion was enough to slow down the membership process. Moscow sought to deter other states from applying for membership with the threat of war. Unfortunately for Russia, these threats had little consequence, as previous attempts of other Former Soviet Union (FSU) states to consider NATO membership were ignored.

² Blinken J. Antony, “Finland’s Accession to NATO.” US Embassy Finland, US Mission to NATO. April 4, 2023, <https://fi.usembassy.gov/finlands-accession-to-nato/>.

³ Carl Bildt, “NATO’s Nordic Expansion Adding Finland and Sweden Will Transform European Security,” *Foreign Affairs*, April 26, 2022, 4.

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In 2014, nearly 25,000 Russian-speaking, non-insignia-wearing troops, highly likely Russian special forces, invaded Crimea, Ukraine's southern peninsula. These troops pretended to be Ukrainian soldiers and police and were termed as the "little green men."⁴ President Putin blatantly denied Russia's involvement.⁵



Figure 1.2. Russia's "little green men" facilitating the annexation of the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea in February 2014. Armed with modern Russian small arms and equipment, these personnel were a mix of Russian special forces and other elite Russian units who wore unmarked green uniforms, February 2014, 10, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/September-October-2020/Derleth-New-Generation-War/linkId/155428379/>.⁶

⁴ *Hearing before the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities*, HRG 115-184, Russian Influence and Unconventional Warfare Operations in the "Gray Zone": Lessons From Ukraine, Committee on Armed Services US Senate, 115th Cong., 1d sess., March 29, 2017, 8, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-115shrg28945/html/CHRG-115shrg28945.htm>.

⁵ James J. Coyle, *Russia's Border Wars and Frozen Conflicts*, (Springer International Press 2018) 49.

⁶ James Derleth, "Russian New Generation Warfare, Deterring and Winning at the Tactical Level," *Military Review*, September-October 2020, 5, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/September-October-2020/Derleth-New-Generation-War/linkId/155428379/>.

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Subsequently, US officials refused to recognize Crimea as a Russian territory. It is official US policy to recognize Crimea as Ukraine's territory.⁷ In turn, Russian officials have not acknowledged Ukraine's Crimea as sovereign to Ukraine but as a separate Republic of Ukraine that has been annexed to the Russian Federation, as stated in a speech by President Putin on March 18, 2014.⁸ The Russian Federation has grown anxious about Ukraine's close ties with Western-minded views and the prospect that the country might join NATO or the European Union (EU). In mid-2021, Russian forces amassed along Ukraine's southern and western borders under the guise of large-scale joint exercises. Russian forces also gathered along the northern border of Ukraine that is shared with Belarus.



Figure 1.3. Russia deploys over 100,000 troops surrounding Ukraine's border, *Reuters*, February 16, 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/map-russian-troop-locations-near-ukraine/6409967.html>.⁹

⁷ US Department of State, "Crimea Is Ukraine," by Michael R. Pompeo Secretary of State Press Statement, Washington D.C., February 27, 2019, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/crimea-is-ukraine-2/index.html>.

⁸ Associated Press, "Vladimir Putin Announces Crimea Annexation," *The New York Times* video, 01:45, YouTube, March 18, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v+l10BsQzOGKM>.

⁹ Reuters, "Map: Russia Troop Locations Near Ukraine," *Voices of America*, February 16, 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/map-russian-troop-locations-near-ukraine/6409967.html>.

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Consequently, Russian Federation forces further invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Russian propaganda regarding the invasion remained the same from the attempted annexation of Crimea in 2014: to save the Ukrainian people, return them to Russia, and save them from Nazification.¹⁰ The invasion of Ukraine was not the effect the Russian Federation hoped for. Russia's strategy to keep nations from joining NATO once again backfired.

Finland and Sweden had been part of many NATO exercises for years, but Helsinki and Stockholm had little interest in joining NATO. These Nordic nations balanced their political, economic, and cultural ties with Western and Russian viewpoints. After the Cold War, they joined the EU, where their NATO relationship began.¹¹ The further invasion of Ukraine in 2022 triggered an unwelcome and surprised response felt by the Russian Federation, with a distinct shift in opinion for Finland and Sweden to request rapid accession into NATO. President Putin downplayed the situation but still alluded to the possibility of a response if he felt provoked.¹² The newest potential NATO members would significantly enhance the security of NATO allies and members by bolstering air defense capabilities, funding, and border control abilities, thereby transforming European security with their robust military forces. Finland alone doubled NATO's borders with Russia.¹³

¹⁰ US Department of State, "To Vilify Ukraine, The Kremlin Resorts to Antisemitism," *Disarming Disinformation*, July 11, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/disarming-disinformation/to-vilify-ukraine-the-kremlin-resorts-to-antisemitism/of-State>.

¹¹ Kristin Archick, Paul Belkin, and Andrew S. Bowen, "NATO: Finland and Sweden Seek Membership," *Congressional Research Service*, (February 14, 2023), 1, <https://heinonline-org.niu.idm.oclc.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.crs/govekpi0001&div=2>.

¹² Kristin Archick, Paul Belkin, and Andrew S. Bowen, "NATO: Finland and Sweden Seek Membership," *Congressional Research Service*, (February 14, 2023), 4, <https://heinonline-org.niu.idm.oclc.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.crs/govekpi0001&div=2>.

¹³ Kristin Archick, Paul Belkin, and Andrew S. Bowen, "NATO: Finland and Sweden Seek Membership," *Congressional Research Service*, (February 14, 2023), 1, <https://heinonline-org.niu.idm.oclc.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.crs/govekpi0001&div=2>.

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Finland and Sweden have continued to supply and support Ukraine as non-NATO country allies in providing support focusing on ways to end this war. The Finns are not broadcasting how and what they have provided for the war efforts due to operations security (OPSEC) purposes. The Finns have stated that they deliver what they can without weakening their defenses.¹⁴ The Swedes are more forthcoming with their military and humanitarian aid packages and what they have included in supporting Ukraine. The Swedes have provided crucial advanced weapons systems, ammunition, vehicles, and personal equipment, including winter gear.¹⁵ NATO's Article V mutual defense clause plan is an added incentive for these Nordic states to join. Within Article V is a pledge of common defense that compels member states to come to the aid of a fellow member based on their sovereign choice.¹⁶ This article alone would bolster security for the Finns and Swedes, giving them the potential for support from other NATO members with powerful weaponry if Russia decides to invade.¹⁷ With a holdout from Hungary and Türkiye, Sweden still awaits entry into NATO. President Biden and Secretary of State Blinken have urged Hungary and Türkiye to reconsider their stance and allow Sweden to join.¹⁸

¹⁴ David Mac Dougall, "Finland and Sweden Step Up Military Aid to Ukraine Ahead of Winter," *Euronews*, November 23, 2022, <https://www.euronews.com/2022/11/23/finland-and-sweden-step-up-military-aid-to-ukraine-ahead-of-winter>.

¹⁵ David Mac Dougall, "Finland and Sweden Step Up Military Aid to Ukraine Ahead of Winter," *Euronews*, November 23, 2022, <https://www.euronews.com/2022/11/23/finland-and-sweden-step-up-military-aid-to-ukraine-ahead-of-winter>.

¹⁶ Carl Bildt, "NATO's Nordic Expansion Adding Finland and Sweden Will Transform European Security," *Foreign Affairs*, April 26, 2022, 7.

¹⁷ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "The North Atlantic Treaty," April 10, 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm.

¹⁸ Joseph Biden, "Welcoming Finland to NATO," The White House Statement, April 4, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/04/04/statement-from-president-joe-biden-welcoming-finland-to-nato/>; Antony J. Blinken, "Finland's NATO Instruments of Accession Ceremony," US Department of State, Brussels, Belgium, April 4, 2023, <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-at-finlands-nato-instruments-of-accession-ceremony/>.

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Russian President Vladimir Putin repeatedly referred to the current invasion as a "special military operation" until very recently when a national public address referred to it as war.¹⁹ In response to the unlawful Russian Federation aggression against the sovereign state of Georgia in 2008, the United States Army's Special Operations Command-Europe (SOCEUR) officials developed the Resistance Operating Concept (ROC) in 2013.²⁰ The resistance concept is a US military Western-minded plan to restructure smaller European nations with non-conventional tactics and strategies to contend against Russian aggression. A vital premise of the resistance concept is that the country in question cannot resist Russia conventionally. The resistance concept had just been introduced to Ukrainians in late 2013, which did not allow the concept to be fully implemented before the annexation of Crimea in 2014. US special forces have continued to work with Ukraine and other sovereign nations to fight against authoritarian aggression since late 2013.

¹⁹ Aljazeera News, "No Other Option,' Excerpts of Putin's Speech Declaring War," February 24, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/24/putins-speech-declaring-war-on-ukraine-translated-excerpts>.

²⁰ Hearing before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Helsinki Commission "Russia's Occupation of Georgia and the Erosion of the International Order," July 17, 2018, 5; <https://www.congress.gov/event/115th-congress/joint-event/LC58583/text?s=1&r=64>; Steven Edwards and Peter Musselman, "Joint Special Operations University Panel: What is the Role of Special Operations in Ukraine? Signaling the Future," JSOU Future of SOF Forum FY22 Q4 SOCEUR Command Team Pre-Recorded Remarks. September 14, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8uA1STUMxE>.

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Figure 1.4. Ukrainian civilians taking a resistance training course by a Christian Territorial Defense Unit in Kyiv, Ukraine on February 19, 2022. 5, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/27/politics/russia-ukraine-resistance-warfare/index.html>.²¹

Purpose of This Thesis

The primary purpose of the thesis is to examine the most important *will to fight* factors by comparing Ukraine during the Russian Federation invasion and illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the further invasion of Ukraine in 2022.²² By examining the following *will to fight* factors; government cohesion, popular support, allies/diplomatic engagement, and training in Ukraine during both time frames, this will give a better understanding of how quickly Crimea was overtaken in 2014 versus how the further invasion into Ukraine in 2022 was able to show more resistance in the *will to fight*. The *will to fight* factors will be examined by applying the tradecraft developed by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) in 2023, which is primarily based on the

²¹ Oren Liebermann, “How Ukraine is Using Resistance Warfare Developed by the US to Fight Back Against Russia,” *CNN*, August 27, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/27/politics/russia-ukraine-resistance-warfare/index.html>, 5.

²² Office of the Research Director, *Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23*, (Washington D.C., Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2023): 3.

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RAND study on the “*Will to Fight*”²³ The data collection strategy is explained later in this chapter.

The US military's resistance concept will be generally defined as *non-conventional, western style warfare utilized by smaller, less equipped states against Russian large-scale conventional military aggression*. Before the initial invasion of Ukraine in 2014, US forces briefly trained elements of the Ukrainian military on the resistance concept. However, the limited time was insufficient to incorporate the changes needed to defend Crimea.²⁴

Research Question and Subordinate Questions

To what extent did Ukraine’s will to fight affect Ukraine's resistance to the Russian Federation invasion of 2022?

The following are subordinate questions to help investigate the main research question in the case studies, Crimea in 2014 and Ukraine in 2022.

1. What military training, to include the resistance operating concept, did the US utilize to support Ukraine during both conflicts?
2. To what extent did allies and international organizations aid and support Ukraine during both conflicts?
3. What was the political climate in Ukraine during both conflicts?
4. How did President Zelenskyy’s leadership affect Ukraine’s will to defend the homeland in 2022?

²³ Office of the Research Director, *Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23*, (Washington D.C., Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2023), 6; Ben Connable, et al., *Will to Fight: Analyzing, Modeling, and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018) https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2341.html.

²⁴ John W. Creswell and J David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2018), 49.

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5. Which of the numerous aspects of *will to fight* were and are most important to Ukraine's ability to resist Russian aggression in 2014 and 2022?

Analytic Design

The best and most practical analytic approach for answering the research question is a case study, that compares four critical factors mentioned above during Crimea in 2014 and Ukraine in 2022. This thesis will be comparing two case studies as defined by George and Bennet.²⁵ Using a comparative case study, this thesis will attempt to show a relationship between the multiple qualifiable variables associated with the resistance operating concept, including US priorities, allies/diplomatic engagement, political views, and military readiness during both timeframes could show possible positive or negative correlations. By combining the variables, government cohesion, national level popular support, allies/diplomatic engagement, and military training, this methodology aims to show the correlation of the variables observed. This thesis identifies the independent variable as Ukraine's resistance in both conflicts. If the independent variable, Ukraine's resistance changes, causality should change as well. There are possible pitfalls associated with using this causality methodology. This methodology can be highly suggestive based on correlations. Ensuring critical variables are included while conducting this case study is essential.²⁶ Once all data is collected, the data will be displayed and explained using showing the correlations for Crimea in 2014 and Ukraine in 2022.

²⁵ Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, (MIT Press, 2005), 17-8.

²⁶ Matt Masten, "Correlation Verses Causation," Causal Influence Bootcamp Educational Modules, 7:02, Duke University, 2015, <https://mattmasten.github.io/bootcamp/>.

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Data Collection Strategy

For the data collection strategy, qualitative variables will include the political climate by looking at government cohesion in Ukraine, popular support, allies/diplomatic support, and training opportunities and exercise involvement to help have a better understanding of whether there is a positive or negative correlation with the different variables. Historical data is needed to understand how the Russian Federation's government's doctrine has been applied in the past and how Crimea and Ukraine have been viewed. A historical background with the trending analysis on how Russia's military forces have trained and executed in conflicts in the past, including Georgia, Crimea, and other conflicts, is critical to understanding what aggression might be carried out in future conflicts.

Focusing on information available in open-source realms of Ukraine's military capabilities will help gauge how training was conducted and what type of support and resources were allocated during both conflicts being researched. Also, having consultations with members at RAF Molesworth and the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (OUSD-I&S) on the will to fight factors will allow for a straightforward set of factors to compare. There are factors deemed to have a more significant influence on the will to fight and how the will to fight tradecraft process will aid in understanding how the information provided shaped Ukraine's strategy. Also, utilizing unclassified information to compare the factors during the conflicts in 2014 and 2022 will be helpful to see if there is any correlation to the resources allocated. Taking a deeper look at President Zelenskyy by utilizing open-source information about his background, rise to power, and how he leads his country will help have a better understanding of the will of Ukrainians to continue to fight against Russian aggression.

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Relevance to the Intelligence Community

Answering to what extent Ukraine's will to fight affected Ukraine's resistance to the Russian Federation invasion of 2022 by utilizing certain factors of the will to fight tradecraft will help the Intelligence Community and other sovereign nations' officials anticipate how other countries have the potential to resist if threatened by another aggressor, such as Taiwan. By continuing to develop the will to fight tradecraft, the feedback on the resistance concept implementation and the will to fight factors will help answer one of the highest national security priorities of the President of the United States of America (POTUS). By uniting nations and solidifying how the US combats Russian aggression by implementing irregular warfare tactics, the will to fight tradecraft will be able to look at other potential conflicts providing practical ways of defending against authoritarian aggression of sovereign nations worldwide.²⁷

²⁷ Joseph Biden, "Interim National Security Strategic Guidance," Washington D.C., White House. March 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NSC-1v2.pdf>.

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CHAPTER 2**Literature Review**

The literature review for this thesis focuses on the sources associated with themes for my research topic and questions. Having a better understanding of the historical framework will help provide awareness of the political climate during both time frames. By looking at what the US priorities and interests are for both conflicts will give a better understanding of how allies/diplomatic engagement have fared given the timeframes. By researching how non-conventional warfare has developed in recent years will aid in how the training during both timeframes have contributed to Ukraine's will to fight. Having a reference and outline of the will to fight will aid in maintaining focus on the factors chosen for both timeframes. The themes will help refine my searches and filter out the questions already answered. The sources have helped uncover information on this topic about what has already been written and improved search techniques by utilizing different terms found in the primary sources. I have also been able to see where some of the gaps in the resistance operations research and ability to develop a solid will to fight factors list are located and how to refine critical questions. These sources will contribute to my research topic and question while I refine my question and figure out how to find an answer.

Theme: Historical Framework of Russia's War on Ukraine and the International Response

Russia's Border Wars and Frozen Conflicts, a book by James J. Coyle, focuses on significant conflicts Russia has had with Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Crimea, and Nagorno-Karabakh. It goes into depth about Russia's views on international law, the mindset of acquiring territory by force, not negotiations, and the concept of world order balance and sovereignty. Coyle also explains how the Russian military performed in each conflict and the political climate

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at the time.²⁸ This source contributes to my research by providing a better understanding of Russian military tactics throughout the years and how the ROC can evolve to combat Russian aggression in the future.

A World in Disarray, American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Old Order, a book by Richard Haass, discusses how the current world order theory is shifting and what that is beginning to look like. The shifting of the current world order theory is about the obligation to band together in solidarity against issues that affect multiple nations, such as climate change, terrorism, and nations that continue to violate international law. This new order is holding nations accountable for their actions and organizations that might affect others regionally or globally. This source contributes to my research by showing how Russian aggression and violations of international law are being discussed worldwide, creating a unified front to combat Russian aggression by supporting the Ukrainian people.²⁹

Russia's Occupation of Georgia and the Erosion of International Order, a hearing before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe hosted by the US Congress, raises the importance of respecting international law and how Russia continues to violate sovereign nations. This hearing also expresses the concerns surrounding the possible invasion of Ukraine and the Baltic States and what the US plans to support those nations by training, enforcing international law, and protecting sovereignty. It also discusses the importance of alliances with NATO and the European Union on ways to combat Russian aggression. This source contributes to my research

²⁸ James, J. Coyle, *Russia's Border War and Frozen Conflicts*, (Springer International Press, 2018).

²⁹ Richard Haass, *A World in Disarray*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2017).

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by revealing different commissions, committees, and sources available to aid with researching more areas for the thesis.³⁰

Theme: US Interests in Ukraine

President Biden's *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* addresses the US priorities and the continued commitment to upholding universal values and working closely with our allies and partners to modernize our military capabilities and defend the rights of all democracies. The US is not only standing up for the values of Americans but for uniting democracies to combat threats worldwide. President Biden's *Strategic Guidance* also addresses the importance of alliances and plans to bolster the relationships with the UN, EU, and other global organizations. *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* also discusses the importance of deterring and defending fellow democracies against cross-border aggression and those who undermine international law. This source contributes to my research by providing the framework of President Biden's top strategic priorities of the US and will help guide my research by focusing on how to identify how to improve communications and intelligence sharing with allies to help against Russian aggression.³¹

When former Secretary of State Michael Pompeo made the press statement, "*Crimea Is Ukraine*," he was making it clear to Russia that the United States would not tolerate violations of international law and respect the sovereignty of nations' borders. This press statement also shows support for Ukraine and the refusal to recognize Russia's illegal actions and would continue to

³⁰Hearing before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Helsinki Commission, "Russia's Occupation of Georgia and the Erosion of the International Order," July 17, 2018, <https://www.congress.gov/event/115th-congress/joint-event/LC58583/text?s=1&r=64>.

³¹ Joseph Biden, "Interim National Security Strategic Guidance," Washington D.C., White House, March 14, 2022, 9, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NSC-1v2.pdf>.

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enforce the sanctions until Russia's government returns Crimea to Ukraine.³² This source contributes to my research by making a public statement to the world that Crimea was unlawfully invaded and continues to show that the United States will not give in and will uphold sanctions. The policy is still valid in the invasion of mainland Ukraine regarding adding more sanctions; it also gives me a better starting point for looking up the newer sanctions imposed in 2022.³³

To Vilify Ukraine, The Kremlin Resorts to Antisemitism, a statement given by the US Department of State in early 2022, described how one of the most common disinformation narratives coming from Russian officials attempting to justify the invasion of sovereign Ukrainian territory by stating the goals were to save all the population of Ukraine and “denazify” them. Russia has attempted to manipulate international opinion in that way and many others. This source contributes to my research by understanding Russia's justifications and seeing how the US and over 140 international historians denounce this claim. This also shows how Ukraine is still a priority to support by the United States and has given me other sources to research for my topic.³⁴

Theme: Non-conventional Warfare

“ROC(K) Solid Preparedness: Resistance Operations Concept in the Shadow of Russia,” by Otto Fiala and Ulrica Pettersson, describes what the Resistance Operations Concept (ROC) is and how resistance is a form of unconventional warfare and how it can be planned. This article details how the Department of Defense's budget plans to support five main lines of effort in supporting Ukraine with a focus on the Baltic region. This article also details the lessons learned from the

³² US Department of State, “Crimea Is Ukraine,” by Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State, (Washington, D.C., February 27, 2019), <https://2017-2021.state.gov/crimea-is-ukraine-2/index.html>.

³³ US Department of State, “Crimea Is Ukraine,” by Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State, (Washington, D.C., February 27, 2019), <https://2017-2021.state.gov/crimea-is-ukraine-2/index.html>.

³⁴ US Department of State, “To Vilify Ukraine, The Kremlin Resorts to Antisemitism,” Disarming Disinformation, (July 11, 2022), <https://www.state.gov/disarming-disinformation/to-vilify-ukraine-the-kremlin-resorts-to-antisemitism/of State>.

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past to help make this unconventional warfare successful and adaptable for NATO and non-NATO States. This source contributes to my research by breaking down the concept and giving the history of what has been successful and unsuccessful. This article's footnotes have also given me many other ideas for sources and how to look at how the ROC can be used in the future against Russian aggression.³⁵

Joint Special Operations University Panel: What is the Role of Special Operations in Ukraine? Signaling the future, a SOCEUR interview was given by Steven_Edwards and Peter Musselmann. This interview explains the reasons and history of the ROC and how SOCEUR started training Ukrainian forces eighteen months before the invasion of Crimea in 2014. This invasion caused US forces to withdraw from Ukraine, and all training had to be coordinated and completed through telework and joint exercises outside of Ukraine. This interview showed the struggles, adaption, and perseverance of US and Ukrainian forces working together toward a common goal of training to the Western standard to defeat Russian aggressors through non-conventional methods. This source contributes significantly to my research because the interview is from an officer and enlisted individual who experienced the interaction firsthand. This source also gave me a lead for other SOCEUR sources that go into detail on successes and failures that have been overcome since the initial development of the ROC.³⁶

SOCEUR and Resistance Operating Concept (ROC), an article by John Friberg, discusses how SOCEUR forces have been working with Ukraine, the Baltic, and the Nordic States to help

³⁵ Otto Fiala and Ulrica Pettersson, "ROC(K) Solid Preparedness: Resistance Operations Concept in the Shadow of Russia.," *PRISM* 8, no. 4, (2020): 16–29, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26918231>.

³⁶ Steven Edwards and Peter Musselman, "Joint Special Operations University Panel: What is the Role of Special Operations in Ukraine? Signaling the Future," JSOU Future of SOF Forum FY22 Q4 – SOCEUR Command Team Pre-Recorded Remarks. (September 14, 2022), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8uA1STUMxE>.

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conduct resistance operations training to defend against possible Russian aggression. This article breaks down how unconventional warfare has been used in many wars throughout history and how the ROC has been adapted due to studying the history of unconventional warfare. Friberg details the breakdown of the six core activities usually included in unconventional warfare and the future of ROC. This source contributes to my research because it breaks down the concept and uses different words to describe the concepts of ROC, such as operating instead of operations and unconventional instead of non-conventional. This article will aid in refining my search techniques to find other sources associated with my topic.³⁷

Resistance Operations: Challenges and Opportunities for Special Operations Forces, an article by Ilis-Alm and Ulrica Pettersson, focuses on lessons learned in previous conflicts and how to be flexible when an initial plan has not gone as well as hoped. Whether a joint operation is possible or not, it shows what a nation needs to do to be successful. Opportunities and challenges are described to understand better some pitfalls and successes to focus on. This article also details the importance of total government buy-in and how implementing joint operations is one of the keys to the successful implementation of the ROC. This source contributes to my research by showing the challenges of implementing this concept and many examples of how every military force and structure differs and how countries adapt to fit their nations' composition.³⁸

Theme: The Will to Fight

Will to Fight; Analyzing, Modeling, and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units, a RAND report written by Ben Connable et al. in 2018, focuses on the importance of how there are

³⁷ John Friberg, "SOCEUR and Resistance Operating Concept (ROC)," *SOF News*, (July 19, 2019), <https://sof.news/uw/resistance-operating-concept/>.

³⁸ Hans Ilis-Alm and Ulrica Pettersson, "Resistance Operations: Challenges and Opportunities for Special Operations Forces," *Journal on Baltic Security* 8 no. 1, (2022): 77-94.

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many factors when determining the will to fight of a nation. Many factors are overlooked and misinterpreted because it is difficult to quantify certain factors. This RAND report details the will to fight and its significance to the outcomes of war. This report also details better ways of integrating the will to fight into military capabilities, civil-military relations, popular support, and allies. This report provides a flexible model that can be applied and adapted depending on the scale of war and the nations involved. This source contributes to my research by showing factors to identify in the case studies included in this thesis, providing valuable insight into this type of analysis.³⁹

Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23 developed by the Office of the Research Director with the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) from 2023 breaks down the different factors for the national and military combat will to fight and how each factor affects the overall will to fight of a nation. This tradecraft note was developed using the above RAND report to determine the will to fight a nation. This tradecraft note contributes to my research by having a detailed description of the national and military combat will to fight factors utilized to validate the case studies included in this thesis, providing tables to keep the research organized and easier to identify the contributing factors.⁴⁰

Summary

I have gained much knowledge from the sources associated with the different themes developing for my research topic and question. Having a better understanding of the historical framework, US interests, and how non-conventional warfare and the will to fight have developed

³⁹ Ben Connable et al., *Will to Fight: Analyzing, Modeling, and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2341.html.

⁴⁰ Office of the Research Director, “*Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23*,” *Defense Intelligence Agency*, (January 2023).

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in recent years will help refine my searches and filter out the questions already answered. I was surprised by how much information on my topic has been written about by modifying my searches. Using different terms in the primary sources used in this literature review was almost overwhelming. I have also seen where some of the gaps in the resistance operations research are located and how to refine my question. This has been eye-opening, and the sources will contribute to my research topic and question while I continue researching my question and figuring out how to find an answer.

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CHAPTER 3

Analytic Methodology

Analytic Methodologies Considered and Chosen

This chapter will provide some methodologies that could have been chosen for the thesis, reasons for the methodology chosen, and will go into the limitations on the research that brought me to the factors in the will to fight tradecraft ultimately identified. There are a multitude of analytic methodologies to consider when answering a research question. In many ways, the historical methodology could be helpful as an approach to understanding how the Russian Federation government's doctrine has been applied in terms of how Russia views Ukraine and Crimea. A historical background combined with the analysis of trends on how Russia's military forces have trained for and executed combat operations in conflicts in the past, including Georgia, Crimea, and other conflicts, is critical to understanding what Russian aggression could look like in future conflicts.⁴¹ That said, the historical methodology cannot answer how successful a nation will be against an aggressor in future conflicts. For the research question to be answered, the historical background will be needed, but not by way of the primary methodology.

Methodology and Key Factors Chosen

To what extent did Ukraine's will to fight affect Ukraine's resistance to the Russian Federation invasion of 2022?⁴² The most applicable intelligence analytic methodology for answering the research question is by comparing two case studies. The case studies will be

⁴¹ Michael Morell, "Applying Cold War Lessons to Great Power Competition: Historian Hal Brands," *Intelligence Matters Podcast*. 36:00, (January 12, 2022), [Applying Cold War Lessons to Great Power Competition: Historian Hal Brands • Intelligence Matters \(spotify.com\)](https://www.spotify.com/track/3600-Applying-Cold-War-Lessons-to-Great-Power-Competition-Hal-Brands-Intelligence-Matters).

⁴² Steven Edwards and Peter Musselman, "Joint Special Operations University Panel: What is the Role of Special Operations in Ukraine? Signaling the Future," JSOU Future of SOF Forum FY22 Q4 SOCEUR Command Team Pre-Recorded Remarks. (September 14, 2022), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8uA1STUMxE>.

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completed by comparing the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 with the further invasion of Ukraine in 2022.⁴³ This thesis will apply a US government method, The Will to Fight tradecraft, that comprises four categories, with multiple variables in each category. The resistance operating concept focuses on the military aspect of non-conventional training techniques.

Utilizing the case study approach will show the relationship between the multiple qualifiable variables in the tradecraft and the resistance concept focusing on Ukrainian military training during both timeframes. Showing the relationship between the four factors chosen could show any positive or negative correlations that were discovered. Adding the variables for the 2014 and 2022 timeframe may shed light on the differences in the factors chosen from the will to fight tradecraft with respective timelines and the resistance capabilities.

To clarify understanding of any positive or negative correlations, I included these factors on national level popular support, government cohesion, allies/diplomatic engagement, and training. The training variable was a point of focus in terms of the resistance concept. By combining the findings from which, the exploration of the previous factors with the case study approach, a correlation could be shown between the factors observed if the independent variable change, causality outcomes, and results can also change. It is essential that all possible factors are included.⁴⁴

To help better understand what factors, I added in Ukraine during both timeframes, including national level popular support, government cohesion, allied/diplomatic engagement, military training opportunities, and military exercise involvement. Adding these key factors will

⁴³Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, (MIT Press, 2005), 17-18.

⁴⁴ Matt Masten, "Correlation Verses Causation," Causal Influence Bootcamp Educational Modules, 7:02 video, (Duke University, 2015), <https://mattmasten.github.io/bootcamp/>.

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help better understand whether there is a positive or negative correlation with the different resistance concept variables. By combining these factors and variables, this methodology could show the correlation of the factors observed to each other. If the independent factors of the will to fight tradecraft are present or not should change the outcomes.

Pitfalls, Perceptions, and Biases of the chosen Analytic Method

There are possible pitfalls associated with using a causality case study methodology. This case study methodology can be highly suggestive of causality based on correlations. To avoid pitfalls to help mitigate and be as unbiased as possible, this researcher will keep in mind that, correlations between variables do not always imply causation and if there is no correlation after using appropriate statistical techniques, then there is no causal effect. Ensuring that all possible variables are included while conducting this type of case study is essential.⁴⁵

Another pitfall this thesis will try to avoid is biased perceptions. Richards Heuer identifies four principles of perception in the *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, which are,

“We tend to perceive what we expect to perceive, mindsets tend to be quick to form but resistant to change, new information is assimilated to existing images, and initial exposure to blurred or ambiguous stimuli interferes with accurate perception even after more and better information becomes available.”⁴⁶

Although all four principles are essential to recognize, the one I have the most experience with personally and professionally is that an initial exposure to blurred or ambiguous stimuli interferes with accurate perception even after more and better information becomes available. For example, I tend to believe the first thing known about a given situation, even when other information becomes available. It is difficult for me to detach from something I know to be true, even when

⁴⁵ Matt Masten, “Correlation Verses Causation,” Causal Influence Bootcamp Educational Modules, 7:02 video, (Duke University, 2015), <https://mattmasten.github.io/bootcamp/>.

⁴⁶ Richards J. Heuer Jr., *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, (Washington, D.C., Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, 1999), 7-13.

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new information is brought forward. To mitigate the risks of this principle of misperception, I have identified factors that could contribute to my misunderstanding of the information available and will discuss a strategy I have strived to employ to perceive situations more accurately when they occur.⁴⁷ Being able to identify the factors that contributed to the misunderstanding in situations have helped me focus on utilizing the Will to Fight tradecraft. I have learned that focusing on the four factors and the resistance concept instead of not concentrating on other aspects of the conflicts is essential to mitigating my biases. As an analyst, it is difficult to process something that does not have a chance of succeeding and fail to look at the new information to see a different possibility or explanation for the resistance of Ukrainians in the conflict of 2022.⁴⁸

Throughout this process, I have been made aware of a cognitive bias and learned how to mitigate the bias when I researched information about my thesis. Anchoring bias is a cognitive problem when people rely too heavily on the first piece of information they receive when making decisions or judgments. This initial information, or "anchor," can influence subsequent judgments, even if irrelevant or inaccurate.⁴⁹ To overcome the anchoring bias, there are several strategies that I have utilized throughout this thesis process. I have overcome the anchoring bias by being aware of the bias, by seeking out additional information, and by using objective criteria. This requires a conscious effort to recognize the bias and actively work to counteract its influence using additional information, objective criteria, and a balanced perspective.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Richards J. Heuer Jr., *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, (Washington, D.C., Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, 1999), 14.

⁴⁸ Richards J. Heuer Jr., *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, (Washington, D.C., Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, 1999), 15-16.

⁴⁹ Kendra Cherry, "How Anchoring Bias Psychology Affects Decision Making," *Verywell Mind*, April 30, 2020, [How Anchoring Bias Psychology Affects Decision Making \(verywellmind.com\)](https://www.verywellmind.com/how-anchoring-bias-psychology-affects-decision-making).

⁵⁰ Richards J. Heuer Jr., *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, (Washington, D.C., Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, 1999), 152.

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When I started working on this thesis, I had a considerable biased tactically focused view of the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the further invasion of Ukraine in 2022. My thoughts on Ukraine and how I viewed Ukraine were limited to the tactical view. I had become anchored in how I saw Ukraine and how the conflicts occurred. Living with only one viewpoint made me hardened in my assessments, and how the further invasion into Ukraine would turn out was the easiest, most straightforward way of thinking for me. Having that anchoring mindset simplified what was going to happen in my mind. Seeing how Ukraine could unexpectedly fight back and defend itself made me stop and reflect on how I could assess the situation so poorly.⁵¹ I have sometimes fallen into the anchoring bias but have recognized the situation and corrected the behavior by better absorbing all the relevant information in front of me, not relying only on my initial understanding of the situation in Ukraine.⁵² Understanding biases is essential to move forward and become a better analyst in the future. Everyone has different experiences and making sure that you are aware of those experiences can help mitigate the possibility of missteps and present the most correct, up-to-date information available.⁵³

⁵¹Richards J. Heuer Jr., *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, (Washington, D.C., Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, 1999), 150.

⁵² Jesse Richardson, "Your Bias," An Initiative of The School of Thought, 501c3 non-profit organization, (Brisbane Digital Agency, 2022), www.yourbias.is.

⁵³Richards J. Heuer Jr., *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, (Washington, D.C., Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, 1999), 163.

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Figure 3.1. Editorial Staff, “Anchoring: How We Cling to the First Piece of Information,” *Cognitive Biases, FinMasters*, January 24, 2023, 1, <https://fallacyinlogic.com/anchoring-bias/>.⁵⁴

The Will to Fight Tradecraft and Categories

The *Will to Fight* Tradecraft was developed by the DIA based on the Rand corporation’s 2018 and 2019 documents/studies. This tradecraft enables analysts to assess fundamentally intangible factors. The tradecraft is broken up into the following categories, including the national *will to fight*, combat *will to fight*, external/operation environment, and adversary military *will to fight*. Analyzing the *will to fight* is challenging and difficult to measure because most factors are qualitative rather than quantitative.⁵⁵ Although historical, social, and cultural data is critical to understand for assessment purposes, focusing on only those factors can produce unbalanced or

⁵⁴ Paul Elsher, “Anchoring: How We Cling to the First Piece of Information,” *Cognitive Biases, FinMasters*, January 24, 2023, <https://fallacyinlogic.com/anchoring-bias/>.

⁵⁵ Office of the Research Director, *Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23*, (Washington, D.C., Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2023): 6; Ben Connable, et al., “Will to Fight: Analyzing, Modeling, and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units,” (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018) https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2341.html, Ben Connable, et al., “Will to Fight: Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War,” Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2019, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB10040.html.

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incorrect assessments, as shown in the case of the US assessment of Ukraine's ability to resist Russian aggression in the further invasion of Ukraine in 2022.⁵⁶

The definitions of the four *will to fight* categories will be based on the DIA's Analyzing Will to Fight tradecraft. First, the national will to fight category focuses on factors that affect national-level leaders' outlook and decisions to conduct sustained military operations to achieve their political goals and objectives. Expected political, societal, economic, and military costs are not the focus in this category. The factors included in the national *will to fight* are civil-military relations, government cohesion, stakes of the conflict, popular support, allies/diplomatic engagement, economic strength, economic independence, messaging, and national identity/nationalism.⁵⁷

Second, a nation's combat *will to fight* category reflects the commitment, disposition, and decisions to sustain military operations in pursuit of its goals and is influenced by various factors. These factors are generally intangible and directly affect the enemy. A nation's combat *will to fight* is a critical factor in its ability to achieve its strategic objectives in military operations. The factors included in the combat *will to fight* includes identity, support, integrity, leadership, esprit de corps, control, competence, strategy, civil-military relations, doctrine, expedition, cohesion, quality, desperation, revenge, ideology, self-determination, economics, and training.⁵⁸

Third, the external/operating environment category focuses on the developing and ongoing external factors associated with the operating environment experienced. The factors

⁵⁶ Brian Michael Jenkins, "The Will to Fight, Lessons From Ukraine," (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, March 29, 2022), 2, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2022/03/the-will-to-fight-lessons-from-ukraine.html>.

⁵⁷ Office of the Research Director, *Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23*, (Washington, D.C., Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2023): 7.

⁵⁸ Office of the Research Director, *Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23*, (Washington, D.C., Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2023): 7.

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included in the external/operating environment include fatigue, weather, food/water access, terrain, time in combat, ally wounded, ally captured, ally killed, leader captured, leader killed, enemy wounded, enemy captured, enemy killed, enemy leader captured, enemy leader killed, unit degradation, and family threatened.⁵⁹

Lastly, the adversary's military will to fight category focuses on the expected behaviors and tactics the enemy may employ on the battlefield. This category has proven relevant to the battlefield and how the warfighter approaches counter-offensives and defends their territory. Other considerations to mention while examining the adversary's military will to fight includes economic leverage and allied support.⁶⁰ The factors included in the adversary military will to fight include artillery fire, direct fire, armor, flee combat, psychological operations (PsyOps), close quarters, air attack, surrender, atrocities, flank attack, fear weapons, sniper fire, massing, aggression, surprise, mines/Improvised Explosive Devices (IED)s, fanaticism, competence, cyber-attack, terrorists, proxies, and allies.⁶¹

Selected Will to Fight Tradecraft Factors Explored in This Thesis

Of the many factors to consider in the *will to fight* tradecraft, the four factors selected by this thesis for comparison in the case studies of Crimea in 2014 and the further invasion into Ukraine in 2022 are national level popular support, government cohesion, allies/diplomatic engagement, and military training. When examining the military training, the focus will be on Ukraine's absorption of the resistance operating concept developed by SOCEUR. First, national

⁵⁹ Office of the Research Director, "*Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23* (Washington, D.C., Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2023): 8.

⁶⁰ Michael J. McNerney, Ben Connable, et al., *National Will to Fight*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018), 15, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2477.html.

⁶¹ Office of the Research Director, "*Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23* (Washington, D.C., Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2023): 8.

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level popular support as it refers to the level of public approval or endorsement of a government or political system within a country. It measures the degree to which the general population supports the government's policies, actions, and leadership. Popular support can be measured in various ways, including through public opinion polls, election results, and other forms of feedback from the public. High levels of popular support are generally seen as an indicator of a stable and effective government, while low levels of support can indicate dissatisfaction, unrest, or even political instability.⁶²

Factors that can influence national level popular support include the economy's performance, the effectiveness of government policies, the level of corruption and transparency in government, and the perceived legitimacy of the political system. Public perception of the government's handling of issues such as national security, healthcare, education, and social welfare can also shape popular support. Overall, popular support at the national level is an essential factor in the stability and effectiveness of a government and is closely watched by political leaders, analysts, and the public.⁶³

Second, government cohesion generally refers to the degree to which different parts of a government work together effectively towards common goals. This cooperation can include coordination between different branches or levels of government, as well as collaboration between different agencies or departments within a single government. A cohesive government portrays a shared sense of purpose and a commitment to working together towards common objectives. This commitment toward a cohesive government can ensure that policies and

⁶² Office of the Research Director, *Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23*, (Washington, D.C., Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2023): 7.

⁶³ Michael J. McNerney, Ben Connable, et al., *National Will to Fight*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018), 36, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2477.html.

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programs are implemented effectively and efficiently and that resources are coordinated strategically.

Reaching government cohesion can be challenging, particularly in large and complex organizations. It requires strong leadership, effective communication, and a willingness to collaborate and compromise. It also requires a shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities of different parts of the government, as well as a commitment to transparency and accountability. Overall, government cohesion is essential in ensuring that governments can effectively serve the needs of their citizens and achieve their policy objectives.⁶⁴

Third, with allies/diplomatic engagement, the definitions will be separated and then will bring the two concepts together. Allies are countries or organizations that have formed a formal or informal partnership or alliance with another country or organization for mutual benefit. Allies typically share common interests, values, and goals and work together to achieve them. Diplomatic engagement refers to building and maintaining relationships between countries or organizations through diplomatic channels. This can include formal diplomatic meetings, negotiations, agreements, informal communication, and collaboration.⁶⁵

Diplomatic engagement is essential for promoting peace, stability, and cooperation between countries. It can help to build trust and understanding and can facilitate the resolution of conflicts and the achievement of common goals. Allies often engage in diplomatic activities, such as joint diplomatic missions, negotiations, and peacekeeping operations. Diplomatic engagement can also involve working with non-allied countries or organizations to achieve shared objectives,

⁶⁴ Michael J. McNerney, Ben Connable, et al., *National Will to Fight*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018) 36, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2477.html.

⁶⁵ Michael J. McNerney, Ben Connable, et al., *National Will to Fight*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018) 29-31, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2477.html.

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such as promoting human rights or combating climate change. Overall, allies and diplomatic engagement are essential components of international relations and play a key role in shaping the world's political, economic, and social landscape.⁶⁶

Lastly, training for military members is typically conducted by experienced military personnel, often with the assistance of civilian instructors or contractors. It may occur at military bases, training centers, or other specialized facilities and involve individual and group training. Military training aims to ensure that military personnel are prepared to carry out their duties effectively and safely, whether in combat or in non-combat roles. It is an ongoing process throughout a military career, with personnel receiving regular training and refresher courses to maintain their skills and knowledge. Training for military members is a critical component of military readiness and crucial in ensuring military operations' effectiveness and success.⁶⁷

One of the ways the resistance operating concept has helped train against aggression is by emphasizing the importance of unconventional warfare and irregular tactics. This concept includes training in guerrilla warfare, sabotage, and subversion, which can be used to disrupt enemy operations and create chaos behind enemy lines. The resistance operating concept also strongly emphasizes training in information operations, including cyber warfare and psychological operations. This aims to counter the propaganda and disinformation campaigns often used by near-peer adversaries to sow confusion and undermine support for military operations.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Office of the Research Director, *Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23*, (Washington, D.C., Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2023): 13.

⁶⁷ Michael J. McNerney, Ben Connable, et al., *National Will to Fight*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018), 142, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2477.html.

⁶⁸ Otto Fiala, "Resistance Operating Concept (ROC)," *Joint Special Operations University Press*, 2020, 11,74,110.

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In addition, the resistance operating concept emphasizes the importance of training in joint operations, including coordination with other military branches and allied forces. This concept aims to improve interoperability and coordination in the face of complex and rapidly evolving threats. Overall, the resistance operating concept has helped train against aggression by providing a comprehensive framework for countering near-peer adversaries. By emphasizing unconventional tactics, information operations, and joint operations, the concept has helped prepare military personnel for modern warfare's complex and dynamic challenges.⁶⁹

Reasons for Selecting the Specific Factors

These case studies, as all case studies do, have some limitations. DIA's *Analyzing Will to Fight* tradecraft recommends utilizing all four categories with all factors available to reach a complete and thorough study.⁷⁰ However, due to the shortened academic year and the exact requirements for graduation, I had to limit the number of factors used for comparison in the case studies. I chose the factors that had the most contrasting appearances among the two cases. After consulting with US Army Col Skaggs an expert from OUSD I&S, in the will to fight method, I found that certain factors carry more weight in certain situations. After additional consultations and further research focused on the swift takeover of Crimea in 2014, I chose the factors that would best show how these intangible factors impacted both cases and with Col Skaggs sound advice. The four factors I chose to apply to my two cases, are national level popular support, government cohesion, allies/diplomatic engagement, and military training; these four seemed to have the most impact on Ukraine's *will to fight*.

⁶⁹ Steven Edwards and Peter Musselman, "Joint Special Operations University Panel: What is the Role of Special Operations in Ukraine? Signaling the future," *JSOU Future of SOF Forum FY22 Q4* – SOCEUR Command Team Pre-Recorded Remarks, 53:35, September 14, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8uA1STUMxE>.

⁷⁰ Office of the Research Director, "*Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23*, (Washington, D.C., Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2023): 4.

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Scope of the Two Cases

The chronological scope of the case study for the illegal invasion and annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation will include the fall of 2013 through the spring of 2014. I chose this timeline due to the quick nature of the Russian takeover. The timeline for the further invasion into Ukraine will include the fall of 2021 through April of 2023. I chose this timeframe because it shows the drastic difference in timelines of these two case studies possibly affected by some or all the *will to fight* factors, I have selected in the two cases.

Assumptions

The assumptions for these case studies are that the *will to fight* factors chosen for the timelines will correlate with when factors are present. The following questions will be answered using the four selected *will to fight* tradecraft factors. What military training, including the resistance operating concept, did the US utilize to help train Ukraine's military forces during both conflicts? To what extent did allies and international organizations aid and support Ukraine during both conflicts? What was the political climate in Ukraine during both conflicts? How did President Zelenskyy's leadership affect Ukraine's military and popular support to defend the homeland in 2022? Which of the four factors selected of the *will to fight* tradecraft were and are most important to Ukraine's ability to resist Russian aggression in 2014 and 2022?

Conclusion

In conclusion, many analytic methodologies could theoretically help answer the proposed research question by including historical and comparative case studies. By utilizing a case study approach to answer the proposed research question, this research will use four of the fifty-six factors associated with the will to fight tradecraft, including national level popular support, government cohesion, allies/diplomatic support, and military training to include the resistance

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operating concept. By constructing each case study, going into detail about each of the four chosen variables and how each applied to both Crimea 2014 and Ukraine 2022, this, with a degree of certainty will answer to what extent did Ukraine's will to fight affect Ukraine's resistance to the Russian Federation invasion of 2022 in contrast to the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russian Federation forces in 2014. Not only will this research help inform the intelligence community in how to support the opposition to Russian aggression against sovereign nations, but due to the resistance operating concept's ever-changing and adaptive technique, this research has the potential to create sustainable models by applying quantitative and qualitative variables and applying to other nations in the future.

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CHAPTER 4

Crimea 2014 Case Study

Introduction

The primary purpose of this chapter is to examine four *will to fight* factors as they apply to Ukraine's resistance to Russia's invasion in 2014. These four factors are: government cohesion, popular support, allies/diplomatic engagement, and military training focusing on the resistance operating concept developed by the US Army in early 2013. By looking at these factors, these factors could give a better understanding of how this intangible aspect affected the resistance ability of Ukrainians during the annexation of Crimea in 2014.⁷¹ The History of Ukraine from 1991 and a brief history about Crimea from 2013 through 2014, the color revolutions and leading up to the further invasion of Ukraine in 2022 will be discussed. Ukraine's leadership will also be discussed, while comparing the political climate in Ukraine by examining President Yanukovich and his relationship with Russian President Putin during the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 by the Russian Federation.⁷² Crimea's geographic significance to Russia will also be discussed at length.

This case study seeks to answer, to what extent did Ukraine's *will to fight* affect Ukraine's resistance to the Russian Federation illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 compared to the Ukraine invasion case in 2022? The following are questions to help investigate the main research question. What was the political climate in Ukraine during the conflict in 2014? To what extent did allies and international organizations aid and support Ukraine? What military training, to

⁷¹ Office of the Research Director, *Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23*, (Washington, D.C., Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2023): 6; Ben Connable et al., *Will to Fight: Analyzing, Modeling, and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2341.html.

⁷² Office of the Research Director, *Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23*, (Washington, D.C., Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2023): 3.

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include the resistance operating concept, did the US utilize to support Ukraine before and during the annexation of Crimea in 2014? Which of the four *will to fight* factors showed to have great importance in Ukraine's ability to resist Russian aggression in 2014? These questions will be assessed after examining the four factors in the will to fight tradecraft, government cohesion, national level popular support, allies/diplomatic engagement, and military training to include resistance operations concept detailed in this case study.

Brief History of Ukraine 1991 to Present

Ukraine declared its independence from the Soviet Union on August 24, 1991, following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Ukraine has made many changes since its independence in 1991. In the early years of independence, Ukraine faced significant political and economic challenges, including hyperinflation, corruption, and political instability. The country also needed help to establish its international identity and forge relationships with other countries. Since independence from Russia, Ukraine has undertaken significant political and economic reforms, including combating corruption, improving the business climate, and strengthening democratic institutions. However, progress has been slow, and the country faces significant challenges. Ukraine's relationship with Russia has been a key issue since independence, with tensions between the two countries often running high.⁷³

The annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 following a controversial referendum and the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine has further strained relations between the two countries. In May 2014, Ukraine held presidential elections, which were won by Petro Poroshenko, which later led to Ukraine holding parliamentary elections in August of 2014, which saw the pro-European parties win a majority of seats. In September 2014, Ukraine, Russia, and the separatist rebels

⁷³ Pal Kolsto and Helge Blakkisrud, *Russia Before and After Crimea*, (UK, Edinburgh University Press, 2018): 23, 43.

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signed the Minsk Agreements, a ceasefire agreement to end the conflict in eastern Ukraine. However, the ceasefire has been repeatedly violated, and the conflict continues today.⁷⁴

Since 2014, Ukraine has undertaken significant political and economic reforms, including anti-corruption measures, decentralization, and efforts to improve the business climate. However, the country continues to face significant challenges, including ongoing conflict in the East, political instability, and economic difficulties. Significant political and economic challenges, ongoing conflict, and tensions with Russia have marked Ukraine's history since independence. Despite these challenges, the country has made progress toward building a more stable and prosperous future in recent years until 2022.⁷⁵

From the takeover of Crimea in 2014, now looking at the further invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russian Federation President Putin failed to consider the Ukrainian preparations and changes from the earlier takeover. Russian leaders did not anticipate how Ukraine had drastically been improving its training and tactics. Western allies and partners had been modernizing and training Ukraine's military since before the illegal annexation of Crimea. By comparing four factors in the *will to fight* tradecraft developed by the Defense Intelligence Agency, which is primarily based on the 2018 RAND study, Ukraine's national and combat capabilities in the *will to fight* tradecraft shows how Russian forces miscalculated the invasion in 2022.⁷⁶ Some national-level and combat-level *will to fight* factors contribute more to a nation depending on how each

⁷⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, "Explore All Countries – Ukraine," *The World Factbook*, (April 5, 2023), <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/ukraine/>.

⁷⁵ Pal Kolsto and Helge Blakkisrud, *Russia Before and After Crimea*, (UK, Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 199-203.

⁷⁶ Office of the Research Director, *Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23*, (Washington, D.C., Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2023): 7; Ben Connable et al., *Will to Fight: Analyzing, Modeling, and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2341.html.

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nation functions. Allied support, messaging, and training have proven to have more effect on how Ukraine's will to fight has been able to change its original projected fate.⁷⁷

Color Revolutions

The term "color revolution" refers to a series of nonviolent protests and political movements that emerged in several post-Soviet countries in the early 2000s. These movements were characterized by their use of color symbolism, such as the orange color used in Ukraine's Orange Revolution in 2004 and the blue color used in Ukraine's Euromaidan protests in 2013-2014.⁷⁸

The Orange Revolution was a series of protests and political events that took place in Ukraine from November 2004 to January 2005. The protests were sparked by allegations of electoral fraud in the presidential election and were characterized by their use of orange color symbolism. The protests ultimately led to a new presidential election, which was won by opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko.⁷⁹

Euromaidan refers to a series of protests and political events that took place in Ukraine from November 2013 to February 2014. These protests were sparked by then-President Viktor Yanukovich's decision to abandon plans for closer integration with the European Union in favor of closer ties with Russia. The protests were characterized by their use of blue and yellow colors,

⁷⁷ Office of the Research Director, *Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23*, (Washington, D.C., Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2023): 17.

⁷⁸ Gordon M. Hahn, *Ukraine Over the Edge: Russia, the West and the 'New Cold War,'* (North Carolina, McFarland & Company, Inc, 2018), 88.

⁷⁹ Gordon M. Hahn, *Ukraine Over the Edge: Russia, the West and the 'New Cold War,'* (North Carolina, McFarland & Company, Inc, 2018), 88.

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and ultimately led to Yanukovich's ouster and the establishment of a new government in Ukraine.⁸⁰



Figure 4.1 Protesters gather in front of burning tires, fighting government forces during clashes with riot police on Independence Square in Kyiv, Ukraine, February 18, 2014.⁸¹

Revolution of Dignity was a series of protests and political events that took place in Ukraine from November 2013 to February 2014 and culminated in the Euromaidan protests. The protests were characterized by their focus on issues of corruption, human rights, and democratic reform, and were marked by their use of blue and yellow symbolism. The color revolutions in

⁸⁰ Steven Pifer, *The Eagle and the Trident: U.S. – Ukraine Relations in Turbulent Times*, (Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 2017), 299-302.

⁸¹ Msytslav Chernov, “State Flag of Ukraine Behind a Wall of Anonymous Protesters,” Ukrainian Association of Professional Photographers (UAPF), Kyiv, Ukraine, February 18, 2014, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SState_flag_of_Ukraine_carried_by_a_protester_to_the_heart_of_developing_clashes_in_Kyiv,_Ukraine._Events_of_February_18,_2014.jpg.

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Ukraine were significant political events that helped to shape the country's political landscape and its relationship with Russia and the West.⁸²

Brief History of Crimea From 2013-2014

Crimea is the southern peninsula of Ukraine located in the Black Sea that has been a source of conflict between Ukraine and Russia for many years. In 2013, the situation in Crimea escalated dramatically, leading to a series of events that significantly impacted the region and the wider geopolitical landscape. In late 2013, protests erupted in Ukraine over the government's decision to suspend negotiations with the European Union in favor of closer ties with Russia.⁸³ The protests eventually led to the ouster of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich and the installation of a new government. In response to these events, Russian forces began to occupy Crimea, claiming that they were protecting the rights of ethnic Russians in the region. In March 2014, an illegal referendum was held in Crimea, in which most voters supported secession from Ukraine and annexation by Russia, most likely due to coercion and fear.⁸⁴

Russia deployed a number of military forces to Crimea to take over and fortify the region. These included aviation forces, Russian troops, naval forces, Russian-backed separatists, and military equipment. Aviation forces were a key component of the fortification of the region. Russia deployed a number of transport planes to Crimea, including Il-76 and An-124 aircraft. These planes were used to move troops, equipment, and supplies to the region. Russian troops,

⁸² Gordon M. Hahn, *Ukraine Over the Edge: Russia, the West and the 'New Cold War,'* (North Carolina, McFarland & Company, Inc, 2018), 99.

⁸³ Central Intelligence Agency, "Explore All Countries – Ukraine," *The World Factbook*, (April 5, 2023), <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/ukraine/>.

⁸⁴ Michael Kofman, Katya Migacheva, Brian Nichiporuk, Andrew Radin, Alesya Tkacheva, and Jenny Oberhotzer, *Lessons From Russia's Operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine*, (Santa Monica, California. RAND Corporation, 2017), 1-2.

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including special forces and airborne troops, deployed to Crimea in February and March 2014.⁸⁵ These troops disguised themselves as local self-defense forces and seized key government buildings and military installations. A significant amount of military equipment sent to Crimea, including tanks, artillery, and other heavy equipment, was made possible through the Russian aviation services. This equipment was utilized to fortify key positions and establish a strong military presence in the region.⁸⁶

Russia deployed fighter jets to Crimea, including Su-27 and Su-30 aircraft. These aircraft established air superiority over the region and provide air support for ground forces. Russia also deployed helicopters to Crimea, including Mi-8 and Ka-52 aircraft. These helicopters were for reconnaissance, transport, and close air support. UAVs were deployed to Crimea, including the Forpost and Orlan-10 drones. These UAVs were critical for reconnaissance and surveillance operations.⁸⁷

Russia also deployed more out-of-area naval forces to the Black Sea, including the Black Sea Fleet, which is based in Sevastopol, Crimea. These vessels blockaded Ukrainian naval ships and prevented them from leaving port.⁸⁸ In addition to Russian military forces, Russia sent separatist groups to Crimea, including the Crimean Self-Defense Forces and the Russian Unity movement. These groups helped seize government buildings and maintain control over the region.

⁸⁵ Embassy of Ukraine in the United States of America, "Information on Developments in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea," February 5, 2014, <https://usa.mfa.gov.ua/en/news/18929-information-on-developments-in-the-autonomous-republic-of-crimea>.

⁸⁶ Mark Galeotti, *Putin's Wars: From Chechnya to Ukraine*, (New York, NY, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), 167, 178.

⁸⁷ Joanna Frew, "On the Edge: Security, Protracted Conflicts and the Role of Drones in Eurasia," *Drone Wars UK*, January 2021, 9,12, <https://dronewars.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/DW-Eurasia-WEB.pdf>; Mark Galeotti, *Putin's Wars: From Chechnya to Ukraine*, (New York, NY, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), 177-178.

⁸⁸ Mark Galeotti, *Putin's Wars: From Chechnya to Ukraine*, (New York, NY, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), 171.

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Russia's aviation forces along with the rest of the military forces and separatist groups forward deployed to Crimea in 2014 were considered key factors in its takeover of the region and subsequent annexation by Russia.⁸⁹

The annexation of Crimea was widely condemned by the international community, with many countries imposing economic sanctions on Russia in response. Russian actions in Crimea drove an expansion of the conflict to Eastern Ukraine, where pro-Russian separatists declared independence and began fighting against Ukrainian government forces.⁹⁰ Since 2014, Crimea has been under Russian control, with the Russian government investing heavily in the region's infrastructure and economy. However, the annexation of Crimea remains a contentious issue, with Ukraine and many other countries continuing to view it as a violation of international law.⁹¹

The situation in Crimea remains tense, with ongoing human rights abuses and political repression reported by international organizations. The conflict in eastern Ukraine also continues, with heavy fighting reported between Ukrainian government forces and pro-Russian separatists, and overall, the events of 2013 and 2014 have had a significant impact on the region, with the annexation of Crimea, the conflict in eastern Ukraine, and further invasion into Ukraine of 2022 continuing to shape the political and economic landscape of the area.⁹²

⁸⁹ Mark Galeotti, *Putin's Wars: From Chechnya to Ukraine*, (New York, NY, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), 167-178.

⁹⁰ Pal Kolsto and Helge Blakkisrud, *Russia Before and After Crimea*, (Edinburgh University Press, 2018) 57.

⁹¹ Central Intelligence Agency, "Explore All Countries – Ukraine," *The World Factbook*, (April 5, 2023), <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/ukraine/>.

⁹² Mark Galeotti, *Putin's Wars: From Chechnya to Ukraine*, (New York, NY, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), 182,184.

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Russian President Vladimir Putin

The former KGB officer Vladimir Putin has been the leader of Russia since 1999, serving as both President and Prime Minister during this time. Vladimir Putin's experience as a KGB officer undoubtedly had a significant impact on his leadership style and soft power skills. As a KGB officer, Putin was trained in intelligence gathering, counterintelligence, and covert operations, which gave him a deep understanding of how to manipulate information and influence people. One of the key skills that Putin developed as a KGB officer was the ability to read people and situations, and to adapt his approach accordingly. This skill has served him well in his political career, allowing him to navigate complex political situations and build alliances with a wide range of actors.⁹³

Another important aspect of Putin's leadership style is his emphasis on loyalty and discipline. These are values that are deeply ingrained in the KGB culture, and Putin has carried them with him into his political career. He is known for being highly disciplined and demanding of his subordinates, and for rewarding loyalty and punishing disloyalty.⁹⁴ Finally, Putin's experience as a KGB officer has given him a deep understanding of the importance of propaganda and information warfare. He has used these tools extensively in his political career, both domestically and internationally, to shape public opinion and advance his agenda. Putin's experience as a KGB officer has had a significant impact on his leadership style and soft power skills, shaping his approach to politics and his ability to influence people and events.

⁹³ John Ehrman, "Intelligence in Public Literature," *Studies in Intelligence* Vol. 57, No 4, *CIA*, December 2013, 39-41, <https://www.cia.gov/static/e530e07b076ddbdf52c095ff7b58ad2f/Mr-Putin.pdf>.

⁹⁴ John Ehrman, "Intelligence in Public Literature," *Studies in Intelligence* Vol. 57, No 4, *CIA*, December 2013, 39-41, <https://www.cia.gov/static/e530e07b076ddbdf52c095ff7b58ad2f/Mr-Putin.pdf>.

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President Putin's leadership style has also been characterized by a strong centralization of power, a focus on national security and sovereignty, and a commitment to economic growth and stability.⁹⁵ One of Putin's achievements as a leader has been his ability to stabilize the Russian economy after the turmoil of the 1990s. Under Putin's leadership, Russia has experienced a period of steady economic growth, with a focus on developing key industries such as energy, technology, and manufacturing.

Russia's foreign policy has been characterized by a focus on protecting Russian interests and asserting Moscow's influence on the global stage. From a Western perspective, President Putin's leadership, known to be ruthless and dominating, has violated internationally recognized laws concerning human rights, freedom of the press, and political opposition in Russia.⁹⁶ Putin has been accused of suppressing dissent and cracking down on political opposition, creating a system of authoritarian rule in Russia. His leadership has significantly impacted Russia's relationships with other countries, particularly in Europe and the United States.

While he has been criticized for his approach to human rights and political opposition, Putin remains a popular figure in Russia and has maintained a firm grip on power for over two decades. Putin's leadership has led to a more assertive and confrontational foreign policy for Russia. While this has led to tensions with other countries, particularly in Europe and the United States, it has also allowed Russia to assert its influence on the global stage and protect its interests.

⁹⁵ John Ehrman, "Intelligence in Public Literature," *Studies in Intelligence* Vol. 57, No 4, *CIA*, December 2013, 39-43, <https://www.cia.gov/static/e530e07b076ddbdf52c095ff7b58ad2f/Mr-Putin.pdf>.

⁹⁶ John Ehrman, "Intelligence in Public Literature," *Studies in Intelligence* Vol. 57, No 4, 39-43, *CIA*, December 2013, 43, <https://www.cia.gov/static/e530e07b076ddbdf52c095ff7b58ad2f/Mr-Putin.pdf>.

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Putin's close relationship with Yanukovich may have contributed to his government's decision to intervene in Ukraine, and to the perception among some Ukrainians that Russia was actively working to undermine their country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It is also possible that Putin's relationship with Yanukovich contributed to a sense of disillusionment and frustration among some Ukrainians, particularly those in the east, who saw Yanukovich as a legitimate leader and felt that his ouster was unjust. This may have affected their willingness to fight against the separatist rebels and Russian-backed forces in the early stages of the conflict. While it is difficult to say with certainty what impact Putin's relationship with Yanukovich had on the *will to fight* in Ukraine in 2014, Yanukovich's ties to Russia and his ouster were major factors in the outbreak of the conflict, and that Putin's government played a significant role in the conflict's escalation.⁹⁷

Geographic Strategy

Many aspects of geography affect Russia's armed forces and control of military operation. Russia has illegally invaded parts of Ukraine, based on international world order and law, to secure geographic areas that Russia has declared necessary for protection, denazification, and strategic and tactical gain. One significant aspect that influences Russia's need for expansion is its maritime situation, specifically the lack of warm water ports. Russia has the largest land mass in the world, with potential conflict surrounding its vast borders. Russia's perceived border threats have been more advertised with propaganda and disinformation from Russia.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Steven Pifer, *The Eagle and the Trident: U.S. – Ukraine Relations in Turbulent Times*, (Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 2017), 266.

⁹⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, “Explore All Countries – Russia,” *The World Factbook*, (April 5, 2023), <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>.

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Russia has had many issues surrounding its geography, feeling the constant need to fortify and defend its borders while also invading nations that have become closer to the NATO alliance. After the separation of its territories in 1991, Russia saw the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) as a significant loss of territory and influence. The breakup of the Soviet Union and the independence of the Baltic States were seen by many in Russia as a major blow to Russian prestige and power. In the years following the separation, Russia's relationship with the Baltic States was marked by tension and mistrust. Russia was critical of the Baltic States' efforts to join NATO and the European Union, viewing these moves as a threat to Russian security and influence in the region.⁹⁹

Russia also accused the Baltic States of mistreating their Russian-speaking minorities and sought to maintain close ties with these communities. At the same time, the Baltic States were wary of Russian intentions and sought to distance themselves from Moscow's influence. They viewed Russia's continued interest in their affairs as a threat to their sovereignty and independence and sought to build closer ties with the West as a way of balancing against Russian power. Russia's view of the Baltic States after the separation of its territories in 1991 was shaped by a sense of loss and a desire to maintain influence in the region. However, the Baltic States were determined to assert their independence and build closer ties with the West, leading to ongoing tensions between Russia and the Baltic States.¹⁰⁰

The Suwalki Gap is a narrow strip of land roughly eighty miles long that connects Poland and Lithuania and is considered a strategic vulnerability for NATO. If Russian and Belarusian

⁹⁹ Tim Marshall, "Russia and the Curse of Geography," (Boston, MA, *The Atlantic*, 2015), 22.

¹⁰⁰ Gordon M. Hahn, *Ukraine Over the Edge: Russia, the West and the 'New Cold War,'* (North Carolina, McFarland & Company, Inc, 2018), 54.

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forces were to connect this gap, it would effectively cut off the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania from all but one member state of NATO, the newest member Finland, making it more difficult for NATO to defend these countries in the event of a potential conflict.¹⁰¹ The Suwalki Gap is a critical transit route for NATO forces and supplies and an important regional economic corridor. If Russia and Belarus were to gain control of this area, they could disrupt NATO's ability to move troops and equipment into the Baltic states or use the gap as a launching point for further aggression. In addition, the Suwalki Gap is in a region that has historically been a flashpoint for conflict, and tensions between Russia and NATO have been high in recent years.



Figure 4.2 Suwalki Gap with the Baltic States representing a combined NATO exercise.¹⁰²

NATO has also responded by increasing its military presence in the Baltic states and Poland with more air patrols and troop rotations. The NATO alliance is defensive, and with the Suwalki Gap still considered a contested territory in Russia's eyes, the added patrols, and NATO

¹⁰¹ Charles Kemper, et al., "Design to Execution Into the Suwalki Gap," *Military Review Online Exclusive*, (January 2018): 2, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GOVPUB-D110-09dc020427be1505e79dc67ed75975ff/pdf/GOVPUB-D110-09dc020427be1505e79dc67ed75975ff.pdf>.

¹⁰² Timothy P. Lewpin and Marc S. Melfi, "Fire Support in Time and Space, Lessons From the Ivy Division's Joint Air-Ground Integration Center," *Military Review*, US Army University Press, (May-June 2021), <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/May-June-2021/Lewin-Fire-Support/linkId/119522829/>.

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rotations help ease Baltic security concerns. The Baltics are small countries that could be easily taken over if not for protection and the alliance that NATO brings. Increased combined exercises have been conducted in the Suwalki Gap, ramping up after Russia's invasion into Georgia in 2008 and illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014.¹⁰³

Russia's constant need to fortify does not stop at its landmass but extends to its substantial maritime borders. The country has nearly 38,000 kilometers of coastline, including multiple fresh and saltwater lakes, major rivers, and numerous ports. However, there is one thing missing from Russia's immense range of coastline, warm-water ports.¹⁰⁴



Figure 4.3 Russia's vast landmass and ports, from CIA's *The World Factbook*.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Charles Kemper, et al., "Design to Execution, Into the Suwalki Gap," *Military Review Online Exclusive*, (January 2018): 2, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GOVPUB-D110-09dc020427be1505e79dc67ed75975ff/pdf/GOVPUB-D110-09dc020427be1505e79dc67ed75975ff.pdf>; NATO, "Relations with Ukraine," April 3, 2023, 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_37750.htm.

¹⁰⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, "Explore All Countries – Russia," *The World Factbook*, (April 5, 2023), <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>.

¹⁰⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, "Explore All Countries – Russia, Details," *The World Factbook*, (May 22, 2023), <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/map>.

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Although Russia has an extensive naval presence with multiple ports strategically located, some of those ports are in areas that regularly freeze, leaving an overwhelming number of the fleet unable to get underway for multiple months at a time. This has hindered Russian naval flexibility needed to protect its borders, which leaves the fleets focusing more on breaking up ice packs than conducting any type of operations.¹⁰⁶ Kaliningrad has some of Russia's only ports that do not freeze during the winter.¹⁰⁷ Due to its lack of freezing, the primary training area for Russian aviators and naval troops attached to the Baltic Sea Fleet is based out of Kaliningrad. Saki Airbase, located on Crimea, is home to a ski ramp-based training range, which is necessary when the Kuznetsov is in dry dock. The airbase was seized by Russian forces in



Figure 4.4 Russian Aircraft Carrier, the Admiral Kuznetsov, performing sea trials in the Black Sea, 2017, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP90T00784R000100300001-1.pdf>.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Tim Marshall, "Russia and the Curse of Geography," (Boston, MA, *The Atlantic*, 2015), 24.

¹⁰⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, "Explore All Countries – Russia," *The World Factbook*, (April 5, 2023), <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/russia/>.

¹⁰⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, "Short Take-Off Ramp Completed, Saki Airfield, USSR," *Reading Room*, (February 1, 2011), 4, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP90T00784R000100300001-1.pdf>.

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Figure 4.5 Saki Airfield ski-ramp at training range completed. August 30, 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP90T00784R000100300001-1.pdf>.¹⁰⁹

March 2014, shortly after the annexation, and was subsequently used to support Russian military operations in the region.¹¹⁰ If Russia can secure more warm water ports, Moscow will be more able to conduct military operations and exercises year-round, which is necessary to remain competitive on the global stage. Securing warm water ports is a concern for military operations and transporting goods for survival and trade purposes to Russia's allies and partners worldwide.

Ukraine is known for its grain and precious metal exports, and its primary access for shipment of these exports is through the Black Sea. Ukraine's main port in the south, Odessa, accounts for 75 percent of its trade.¹¹¹ Ukraine's Russian-occupied southern borders also include

¹⁰⁹ Central Intelligence Agency, "Short Take-Off Ramp Completed, Saki Airfield, USSR," *Reading Room*, (February 1, 2011), 4, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP90T00784R000100300001-1.pdf>.

¹¹⁰Brad Lendon and Paul P. Murphy, "Seven Russian Warplanes Were Destroyed in Huge Blasts at Crimean Air Base," *New Satellite Images Show*, *CNN News*, (August 11, 2022), <https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/11/europe/crimea-saki-air-base-explosions-russian-warplanes-intl-hnk-ml/index.html>.

¹¹¹ Tim Marshall, "Russia and the Curse of Geography," (Boston, MA, *The Atlantic*, 2015), 26.

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multiple warm water ports on the peninsula of Crimea. The appealing geographic features of Crimea are among the factors that led to Russia's illegal invasion and quick annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Although Ukraine has many connections with Russia through strong historical, cultural, and religious roots, Kyiv has slowly been able to cut many of its ties with Moscow. Russians sees Ukraine as part of Russia, referring to Ukraine as *The Ukraine*, meaning the borderland. In 1991, The Ukraine became its own nation and revised its name to simply *Ukraine*. Nevertheless, Ukraine has remained a strategic focus for the Russian Federation throughout Russia's history.¹¹² For over two centuries there has been a distinct focus and desire in Russia to secure warm water ports in the Black Sea region for military and economic purposes. Unfortunately for Ukraine, Russia has long seen Crimea as prime real estate for its Black Sea Fleet.¹¹³

Since the occupation of Crimea in 2014, Russian forces have bolstered their capabilities in the peninsula. Many aggressive and unprofessional maneuvers have been made toward multiple types of vessels and aircraft from the United States and its allies in international airspace and waters in the Black Sea.¹¹⁴ The public reports about the Black Sea fleets' aggressive and total disregard for international law have led Russians to refer to the Black Sea as an "internal Russian

¹¹² Saul Bernard Cohen, "Russia and the Eurasian Convergence Zone," In *Geopolitics: The Geography of International Relations*, (Blue Ridge Summit: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014), 38-39.

¹¹³ Tim Marshall, "Russia and the Curse of Geography," (Boston, MA, *The Atlantic*, 2015), 26.

¹¹⁴ US Senate Committee, "Russia's Violations of Borders, Treaties, and Human Rights," *Hearing of the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations* Opening Testimony, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Michael R. Carpenter, (April 5, 2023), 2, https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/060716_Carpenter_Testimony.pdf.

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lake.”¹¹⁵ Control of Crimea gives Russia direct access to the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea.¹¹⁶ With Ukraine's government having a pro-Russian influence in 2014, Crimea was quickly secured by Russian forces. Since then, Russia has maintained control of Crimea's ports and fortified the region.

Russia's vast geographic issues have influenced its drive for expansion and its need for warm water ports. Russia has repeatedly proven that if it feels threatened by NATO or any other alliances, Russia will invade and remain aggressive. Russia has sought to control the Black Sea, seeing Ukraine as legally Russian territory. Russia continues to fortify the Crimean Peninsula for military gain and economic trade capabilities expanding with its unsustainable mindset that Ukraine will soon belong to Russia. Russia's perceived threats and disinformation surrounding the further invasion of Ukraine have driven President Putin to war with Ukraine and the need for warm water ports.

Ukraine's Will to Fight Factor 1 National Level Popular Support

Viktor Yanukovich is a former Ukrainian politician who served as the President of Ukraine from 2010 to 2014. Yanukovich's lack of popular support and leadership significantly impacted Ukraine's relationships with other countries, particularly in Europe and the United States.¹¹⁷ During his presidency, Yanukovich pursued policies focused on improving relations with Russia, which strained Ukraine's relationships with the West and within his own party. One of Yanukovich's first orders of business as president of Ukraine was making a deal with Russia,

¹¹⁵ Glen Howard and Matthew Czka, *Russia's Military Strategy and Doctrine*, (Washington, D.C., Jamestown Foundation, February 2019), 1.

¹¹⁶ Tim Marshall, "Russia and the Curse of Geography," (Boston, MA, *The Atlantic*, 2015), 26.

¹¹⁷ Michael Ray, "Viktor Yanukovich, President of Ukraine," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (February 28, 2023), 2, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Viktor-Yanukovich>.

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extending its lease of the port at Sevastopol, where the Russian Black Sea Fleet was based, until 2042. In exchange, Russia would give Ukraine a reduced price for Russian natural gas.¹¹⁸ This lease and new conditions from Russia went over poorly to say the least in Ukraine's parliament, leading to outburst across the aisle that included the throwing of eggs and even lighting and throwing of smoke bombs. The pro-Russian stance Yanukovich had established early on in his presidency set the tone for the remainder of his presidency.¹¹⁹



Figure 4.6 Ukraine's pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich (left), seen with Russian President Putin, 2014. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29761799>.¹²⁰

Yanukovich's presidency created tensions with the EU and the West. His popularity in Ukraine had been declining for some time prior to the Crimean crisis, due in part to his perceived

¹¹⁸ Gordon M. Hahn, *Ukraine Over the Edge: Russia, the West and the 'New Cold War,'* (North Carolina, McFarland & Company, Inc, 2018), 161.

¹¹⁹ Michael Ray, "Viktor Yanukovich, President of Ukraine," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (February 28, 2023), <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Viktor-Yanukovich>, 3.

¹²⁰ British Broadcasting Corporation, "Russia Helped Yanukovich to Flee Ukraine," *BBC News*, (October 24, 2014), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29761799>.

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corruption and authoritarianism. His decision to abandon the EU association agreement was widely criticized by pro-European Ukrainians, who saw it as a betrayal of the country's aspirations for closer ties with the West. His decision to abandon plans for closer ties with the EU in favor of closer ties with Russia in 2013 sparked widespread protests and political unrest, ultimately leading to his removal and exile following the Euromaidan protests 2014.¹²¹

Yanukovich's level of popular support during the Crimean crisis was low, as his ouster and the subsequent events were highly polarizing and divisive in Ukraine. However, his government's decision to abandon the EU association agreement and move closer to Russia played a significant role in the events that led to the crisis. Yanukovich's presidency marked a significant turning point in Ukrainian politics and paved the way for a new era of pro-Western leadership in Ukraine over his pro-Russian stance.¹²²

Yanukovich's actions and policies did contribute to a sense of disillusionment and frustration among many Ukrainians, which may have affected their willingness to fight. Yanukovich was a deeply unpopular president, particularly among Ukrainians in the western part of the country, who saw him as corrupt and beholden to Russian interests. His decision to abandon a proposed association agreement with the European Union in favor of closer ties with Russia sparked widespread protests in late 2013 and early 2014, which eventually led to his ouster in February 2014. Yanukovich's ouster was followed by a period of political turmoil and uncertainty, as Ukraine struggled to establish a new government and address the ongoing conflict in the eastern part of the country. During this time, there were concerns about the loyalty of

¹²¹ Cory Welt, "Ukraine: Background, Conflict with Russia, and U.S. Policy," *Congressional Research Service*, R45008, (October 5, 2021), 15, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R45008>.

¹²² British Broadcasting Corporation, "Putin: Russia Helped Yanukovich to Flee Ukraine." (UK, *BBC News*, October 24, 2014), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29761799>; Gordon M. Hahn, *Ukraine Over the Edge: Russia, the West and the 'New Cold War,'* (North Carolina, McFarland & Company, Inc, 2018), 128.

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Ukrainian military and security forces, particularly in the east, where many personnel were believed to have sympathies with Russia.¹²³

It is possible that Yanukovich's lack of support and the political turmoil that followed his ouster contributed to a sense of disillusionment and frustration among some Ukrainians, which may have affected their willingness to fight. However, it is important to note that many Ukrainians did continue to fight against Russian aggression, and that Ukraine has made significant progress in building a more cohesive and effective military in the years since the conflict began.¹²⁴

Ukraine's Will to Fight Factor 2: Ukraine's Government Cohesion

Following Yanukovich's removal, the new government in Kiev took a strong stance against Russia's annexation of Crimea, and the majority of Ukrainians supported this position. However, there were also some Ukrainians, particularly in the Russian-speaking regions of the country, who supported Russia's actions in Crimea and opposed the new government in Kiev. After initially fleeing to the Eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, unable to establish a foothold, he ultimately fled to Russia, where he has remained in exile ever since. His leaving had a positive effect for change in Ukraine with government cohesion. After the ouster of Yanukovich, Oleksandr Turchynov, who was the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada (Ukraine's parliament) at the time, assumed the duties of the President of Ukraine on an interim basis. He was able to rally and keep the government functioning while continuing to focus on what the people of Ukraine wanted, to be part of the EU and have closer ties with NATO, strengthening Western influence on

¹²³ Steven Pifer, *The Eagle and the Trident: U.S. – Ukraine Relations in Turbulent Times*, (Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 2017), 299-300.

¹²⁴ Steven Pifer, *The Eagle and the Trident: U.S. – Ukraine Relations in Turbulent Times*, (Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 2017), 304.

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Ukraine.¹²⁵ Turchynov served as acting President until the election of Petro Poroshenko in May 2014. Poroshenko served as President of Ukraine from 2014 to 2019.¹²⁶

The events of the Crimean crisis and Yanukovich's exit had a significant impact on the political and social landscape of Ukraine. Some of the key impacts included political instability, conflict in eastern Ukraine, a shift towards the West, rise of nationalism, and economic challenges. The ouster of Yanukovich and the subsequent events led to a period of political instability in Ukraine. The new government in Kiev faced significant challenges in establishing its legitimacy and maintaining control over the country.¹²⁷ The crisis also led to a conflict in eastern Ukraine, where pro-Russian separatists seized control of several cities and declared independent republics. The conflict has resulted in thousands of deaths and has had a significant impact on the region's economy and social fabric.

The exit also led to a shift in Ukraine's foreign policy towards the West. The new government in Kiev sought closer ties with the European Union and the United States, and Ukraine signed an association agreement with the EU in 2014, ultimately leading to a rise in nationalism in Ukraine, particularly among those who supported the new government in Kiev.¹²⁸ Ukraine experienced significant political turmoil and unrest, which led to tensions between the new government and several ethnic minority groups. Some of the ethnic minorities that had

¹²⁵ Office of the Research Director, *Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23*, (Washington, D.C., Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2023): 7; Steven Pifer, *The Eagle and the Trident: U.S. – Ukraine Relations in Turbulent Times*, (Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 2017), 305.

¹²⁶ Steven Pifer, *The Eagle and the Trident: U.S. – Ukraine Relations in Turbulent Times*, (Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 2017), 305.

¹²⁷ Michael Kofman, Katya Migacheva, Brian Nichiporuk, Andrew Radin, Alesya Tkacheva, and Jenny Oberhotzer, *Lessons From Russia's Operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine*, (Santa Monica, California. RAND Corporation, 2017), 20-21.

¹²⁸ Gordon M. Hahn, *Ukraine Over the Edge: Russia, the West and the 'New Cold War,'* (North Carolina, McFarland & Company, Inc, 2018), 158.

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tensions with the new government in Ukraine included Russian-speaking Ukrainians, Crimean Tatars, ethnic Russians in Crimea, and ethnic Hungarians.¹²⁹

Russian-speaking Ukrainians, who make up a significant minority of the population in eastern and southern Ukraine, felt that the new government was hostile to their interests and sought to marginalize them politically and culturally. Ethnic Hungarians, who make up a significant minority of the population in western Ukraine, felt that the new government was not doing enough to protect their interests, particularly regarding language rights.¹³⁰

Ethnic Russians in Crimea, who make up a majority of the population in the region, felt that the new government was hostile to their interests and sought to marginalize them politically and culturally. The Crimean Tatars, a Muslim ethnic group that is native to the Crimean Peninsula, opposed Russia's annexation of Crimea, but also felt that the new government in Ukraine was not doing enough to protect their rights and interests. These tensions between the new government in Ukraine and these ethnic minority groups were a significant factor in the political turmoil and unrest that characterized Ukraine in 2014.¹³¹

The 2014 crisis had a significant impact on Ukraine's economy, which has struggled to recover in the years since 2014. The country has also faced challenges in addressing corruption and implementing economic reforms. The events of the Crimean crisis and Yanukovich's ouster have had a profound impact on Ukraine, shaping its political, social, and economic landscape in significant ways. After Yanukovich fled, President Obama broke his silence by Publicly backing

¹²⁹ Aram Terzyan, "Minority Rights in Ukraine After the Maidan Revolution: Change or Continuity?" *Open Political Science* 5, no. 1 (2022): 1-12, 2, <https://doi.org/10.1515/openps-2022-0001>.

¹³⁰ Aram Terzyan, "Minority Rights in Ukraine After the Maidan Revolution: Change or Continuity?" *Open Political Science* 5, no. 1 (2022): 1-12, 7, <https://doi.org/10.1515/openps-2022-0001>.

¹³¹ Aram Terzyan, "Minority Rights in Ukraine After the Maidan Revolution: Change or Continuity?" *Open Political Science* 5, no. 1 (2022): 1-12, 8, <https://doi.org/10.1515/openps-2022-0001>.

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Ukraine to transition and rebuild a new government to restore order, stability, and unity to the people of Ukraine. This public announcement also came with a warning to Russia, “To respect Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, to end provocative rhetoric and actions, and to support democratically established transitional governing structures.”¹³² The United States had finally taken a stand against Russian aggression, moving into the next phase for Ukrainian support and aid, giving the Ukrainian government and the people of Ukraine more resources to resist against future Russian aggression.

Ukraine’s *Will to Fight* Factor 3: Allies/Diplomatic Engagement

There was a lack of allies/diplomatic engagement with the West until after the protests and ouster of Yanukovich took place in Ukraine. Had the international community been able to anticipate the quick takeover of Crimea, the international community might have been able to aid in Ukraine’s *will to fight*. The international community responded to the events of the Crimean crisis in Ukraine in several ways. The takeover of Crimea by “little green men,” triggered an international response through sanctions, diplomatic efforts, military support, humanitarian aid, and condemnation.¹³³ The United States, the European Union, and other countries have imposed economic sanctions on Russia in response to its annexation of Crimea and its support for separatists in eastern Ukraine. These sanctions have targeted individuals and entities believed to be involved in the conflict, as well as sectors of the Russian economy such as energy, finance, and defense.¹³⁴

¹³² Gordon M. Hahn, *Ukraine Over the Edge: Russia, the West and the ‘New Cold War,’* (North Carolina, McFarland & Company, Inc, 2018), 215.

¹³³ British Broadcasting Corporation, “Ukraine Crisis: Timeline,” (UK, *BBC News*, November 14, 2016), 5, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25182823>.

¹³⁴ British Broadcasting Corporation, “Ukraine Crisis: Timeline,” (UK, *BBC News*, November 14, 2016), 7, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25182823>.

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The international community also engaged in diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict in Ukraine, including negotiations between Ukraine, Russia, and other countries, as well as efforts by international organizations such as the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).¹³⁵ Some countries, including the United States and NATO members provided military support to Ukraine in the form of training, Provision of critical equipment, and other assistance. However, this support has been limited, and no direct military intervention by foreign powers in the conflict.¹³⁶

The international community has also provided humanitarian aid to those affected by the conflict in Ukraine, including refugees and internally displaced persons. The events in Ukraine have been widely condemned by the international community, with many countries expressing support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. However, there have also been differences of opinion and approach among different countries and international organizations. The international response to the events in Ukraine has been complex and multifaceted, reflecting the challenges of addressing a conflict that has geopolitical, economic, and humanitarian dimensions.¹³⁷

Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 have led to sanctions and diplomatic isolation from the EU and other Western countries. In the context of the conflict between Ukraine and Russia, NATO has played a significant role in responding to the annexation of Crimea and the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine. Following the events of 2014, NATO condemned Russia's actions and

¹³⁵ Steven Pifer, *The Eagle and the Trident: U.S. – Ukraine Relations in Turbulent Times*, (Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 2017), 305.

¹³⁶ Anthony J. Blinken, “The Russian Federation’s Military Operation Against Ukraine,” Permanent Council, Vienna, February 24, 2022, <https://osce.usmission.gov/the-russian-federations-military-operation-against-ukraine/>.

¹³⁷ Mark Galeotti, *Putin’s Wars: From Chechnya to Ukraine*, (New York, NY, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), 179.

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expressed support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. NATO also suspended all practical cooperation with Russia and imposed economic sanctions on the country.¹³⁸

With the support of NATO, Ukraine's government responded to the conflict in eastern Ukraine with a military campaign to retake control of the territory held by separatist rebels. The military campaign has been ongoing since 2014, involving regular Ukrainian military forces and volunteer battalions. Ukraine's government also pursued diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. These efforts have included signing the Minsk Agreements in 2015, which aimed to establish a ceasefire and a framework for a political settlement. Ukraine's government has provided humanitarian aid to those affected by the conflict, including displaced persons and those living in areas affected by fighting. The government has also worked with international organizations to provide aid and support to those in need.¹³⁹

Ukraine's Will to Fight Factor 4: Military Training

In 2014, military training in Ukraine was generally considered to be inadequate and outdated by Western viewpoints. The Ukrainian military had been neglected for many years, with little investment in modernization or training. Some key factors about military training in Ukraine in 2014 that led to the negative outcome in Crimea included Soviet-era training, limited resources, corruption, and lack of coordination. The resistance operating concept had only just been introduced from the US Army to Ukrainian forces in late 2013 and was a point of contention in

¹³⁸ Mark Galeotti, *Putin's Wars: From Chechnya to Ukraine*, (New York, NY, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), 164, 179.

¹³⁹ Gordon M. Hahn, *Ukraine Over the Edge: Russia, the West and the 'New Cold War,'* (North Carolina, McFarland & Company, Inc, 2018), 283.

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Ukraine, given the lack of government cohesion and popular support on a national level at that time.¹⁴⁰

The Ukrainian military had suffered from chronic underfunding, with little investment in modern equipment or training. As a result, many soldiers were poorly equipped and trained. Much of the military training in Ukraine was based on Soviet-era doctrine and tactics, which were seen by the West as outdated and ineffective. The Ukrainian military had limited resources for training, with many soldiers receiving only basic instruction in marksmanship, tactics, and other skills. the Soviet era, Ukraine was a part of the Soviet Union, and its military and security forces were trained according to Soviet doctrine. This training emphasized the use of large formations, such as divisions and armies, and the use of heavy equipment, such as tanks and artillery. Following the Soviet example, Ukraine's military also placed a strong emphasis on discipline and obedience to authority.¹⁴¹

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine inherited much of the Soviet-era military and security infrastructure, including its philosophy, doctrine, and training programs. Despite efforts to modernize and reform its military and security forces, Ukraine continued to rely on Soviet-era training, doctrine, and tactics in the years leading up to the 2014 crisis. However, the conflict in eastern Ukraine in 2014 highlighted the limitations of this training and the need for more modern and flexible tactics. Ukrainian forces faced a highly mobile and well-armed adversary in the form of Russian-backed separatists and struggled to adapt to the new realities of

¹⁴⁰ Steven Edwards and Peter Musselman, "Joint Special Operations University Panel: What is the Role of Special Operations in Ukraine? Signaling the Future," JSOU Future of SOF Forum FY22 Q4 SOCEUR Command Team Pre-Recorded Remarks. September 14, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8uA1STUMxE>.

¹⁴¹ Carl W. Reddel, *Transformation in Russian and Soviet Military History*, Proceedings of the Twelfth Military History Symposium, Department of History USAF Academy, 1986, 86, <https://media.defense.gov/2010/Oct/28/2001330228/-1/-1/0/AFD-101028-004.pdf>.

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modern warfare. As a result, Ukraine has since undertaken significant efforts to modernize and reform its military and security forces, including the adoption of new training programs and tactics that are better suited to the challenges of modern warfare.¹⁴²

As in Russia, corruption was a significant problem in the Ukrainian military, with many officers and officials from the highest to the lowest levels accused of embezzlement and other forms of fraud, which undermined the effectiveness of the military and eroded morale among soldiers.¹⁴³ Ukraine also failed to employ key tenets of joint doctrine, such as communication and coordination between different branches of the military and between different units, which made it difficult to mount an effective defense against the Russian annexation of Crimea.¹⁴⁴

US joint doctrine is a set of principles and guidelines that provide a common framework for the planning and execution of joint military operations. It is designed to ensure that all branches of the military, as well as other government agencies and international partners, work together effectively to achieve common objectives. Joint doctrine integrates forces effectively by providing a common language and set of procedures for joint operations. It establishes a shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities of different military units and agencies and provides a framework for coordinating their activities.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Valeriy Akimenko, "Ukraine's Toughest Fight: The Challenge of Military Reform," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, February 22, 2018, 3-5, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/02/22/ukraine-s-toughest-fight-challenge-of-military-reform-pub-75609>.

¹⁴³ Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis; What it Means for the West*, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2014), 53-8.

¹⁴⁴ Steven Pifer, *The Eagle and the Trident: U.S. – Ukraine Relations in Turbulent Times*, (Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 2017), 317-18.

¹⁴⁵ Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Joint Doctrine Development Process," CJCSM 5120.01B, Joint Staff, Washington, D.C., November 6, 2020, Enclosure 1, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/cjcs5120.01b.pdf?ver=1LGWnL_3Pj_7CtyZtA_CNBA%3d%3d.

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One of the key principles of joint doctrine is unity of effort, which emphasizes the need for all military and non-military partners to work together towards a common objective. This requires effective communication and coordination between different units and agencies, as well as a willingness to share information and resources. Another important principle of joint doctrine is flexibility, which recognizes that military operations are often complex and unpredictable. Joint doctrine emphasizes the need for military units to be able to adapt quickly to changing circumstances, and to be able to operate effectively in a variety of different environments.¹⁴⁶

Joint doctrine also emphasizes the importance of joint training and education, which helps to ensure that all military and non-military partners have a common understanding of the principles and procedures of joint operations. This includes training in areas such as command and control, logistics, and communications. Joint Doctrine is designed to ensure that all military and non-military partners work together effectively to achieve common objectives. By providing a common framework for joint operations, the common framework helps to ensure that military units are able to operate effectively in complex and unpredictable environments, and that they are able to adapt quickly to changing circumstances.¹⁴⁷

Effective leadership can help to prevent conflicts from escalating and can facilitate the resolution of conflicts when they do occur. Some of the key reasons why leadership is important in conflict include setting the example, building trust, facilitating communication, encouraging collaboration, and providing direction. Leaders set the tone for their organizations or

¹⁴⁶ Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Joint Doctrine Development Process," CJCSM 5120.01B, Joint Staff, Washington, D.C., November 6, 2020, Appendix A Enclosure E, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/cjcs5120.01b.pdf?ver=1LGWnL_3Pj_7CtyZtACNBA%3d%3d.

¹⁴⁷ Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Joint Doctrine Development Process," CJCSM 5120.01B, Joint Staff, Washington, D.C., November 6, 2020, Enclosure B, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/cjcs5120.01b.pdf?ver=1LGWnL_3Pj_7CtyZtACNBA%3d%3d.

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communities, and their attitudes and behaviors can have a significant impact on the way that conflicts are perceived and managed. Leaders who are committed to resolving conflicts in a peaceful and constructive manner can help to create a culture of cooperation and collaboration, which can reduce the likelihood of conflicts arising in the first place.¹⁴⁸ Trust is a critical component of conflict resolution, and leaders play a key role in building trust between different parties. Leaders who are seen as fair, impartial, and committed to finding mutually beneficial solutions can help to build trust between conflicting parties, which can make it easier to resolve conflicts when they do occur.¹⁴⁹

Communication is essential for resolving conflicts, and leaders can play a key role in facilitating communication between different parties. Leaders who are skilled at active listening, empathy, and effective communication can help to ensure that all parties feel heard and understood, which can reduce tensions and help to identify common ground.¹⁵⁰ Collaboration is also essential for resolving conflicts, and leaders can play a key role in encouraging collaboration between different parties. Leaders who are skilled at building coalitions and finding common ground can help to bring conflicting parties together and facilitate the development of mutually beneficial solutions.¹⁵¹

In some cases, conflicts can be complex and difficult to resolve, and leaders may need to provide direction and guidance to help parties move towards a resolution. Leaders who are skilled

¹⁴⁸ Peter G Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 7th ed. (Thousand Oaks, California, SAGE Publications, Inc. 2016), 6.

¹⁴⁹ Peter G Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 7th ed. (Thousand Oaks, California, SAGE Publications, Inc. 2016), 173.

¹⁵⁰ Peter G Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 7th ed. (Thousand Oaks, California, SAGE Publications, Inc. 2016), 322-23.

¹⁵¹ Peter G Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 7th ed. (Thousand Oaks, California, SAGE Publications, Inc. 2016), 370, 378.

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at problem-solving and decision-making can help to provide the direction and guidance needed to resolve conflicts effectively. Leadership is essential for effective conflict resolution and management. Leaders who are committed to finding peaceful and constructive solutions, building trust, facilitating communication, encouraging collaboration, and providing direction can help to prevent conflicts from escalating and can facilitate the resolution of conflicts when they do occur. The hesitation of what needed to happen from Ukraine's government after the ouster of President Yanukovich left the country with little guidance or direction.¹⁵² Military training in Ukraine in 2014 was in the process of reform but was still lacking in many ways for the reasons mentioned above. These training factors contributed to the country's *will to fight* and its ability to defend against the Russian annexation of Crimea and the subsequent conflict in eastern Ukraine.

Conclusion

This chapter's case study on Crimea in 2014 identified, to what extent did Ukraine's *will to fight* affect Ukraine's resistance to the Russian Federation illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 versus the further invasion into Ukraine in 2022. What was the political climate in Ukraine during the conflict in 2014? Throughout the government cohesion and national level popular support factor sections of this chapter, the political climate in Ukraine during the 2013 and 2014 timeframe was toxic and filled with corruption. The corruption and building relationship with Russia by Yanukovich only divided the nation. Instead of focusing on building stronger ties with the EU and NATO Western mindset, what the majority of Ukrainians wanted during that timeframe, Yanukovich turned his back leading to the color revolution.¹⁵³ The protests held

¹⁵² Michael Kofman, Katya Migacheva, Brian Nichiporuk, Andrew Radin, Alesya Tkacheva, and Jenny Oberhotzer, *Lessons From Russia's Operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine*, (Santa Monica, California. RAND Corporation, 2017), 66-7.

¹⁵³ Pal Kolsto and Helge Blakkisrud, *Russia Before and After Crimea*, (UK, Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 282-285.

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during the color revolution fed into how the lack of national level popular support and lack of government cohesion ultimately led to the quick annexation of Crimea in 2014.¹⁵⁴ To what extent did allies and international organizations aid and support Ukraine? Throughout the allies/diplomatic engagement and military training factor sections in this chapter, it shows that not until after the illegal annexation of Crimea that sanctions against Russia and international support for Ukraine transpired. What military training, to include the resistance operating concept, did the US utilize to support Ukraine before and during the annexation of Crimea in 2014? Throughout the allies/diplomatic engagement and military training factor sections of this chapter, it has been revealed that Ukrainian forces had been participating in NATO led exercises prior to 2013, but after the Georgia conflict in 2008, Ukraine's involvement intensified. US forces and allied forces began training Ukraine's military members in Western tactics officially in early 2013. Open invitations for Ukraine's military to participate in combined exercises throughout NATO and the EU ramped up. Unfortunately, US forces were directed to leave Ukraine while continuing to train Ukraine's forces through proxy and combined exercises outside of Ukraine.¹⁵⁵ Which of the four *will to fight* factors showed to have great importance in Ukraine's ability to resist Russian aggression in 2014? Throughout this chapter, it was revealed that all *will to fight* factors from the DIA tradecraft was shown to have great importance on how Ukraine's ability to resist Russian aggression in 2014 and how it was limited. The lack of national level popular support under Yanukovich's reign and lack of unity of Ukrainians led into protests with the ouster of Yanukovich in February of 2014. With his ouster caused chaos in Ukraine's government and

¹⁵⁴ Gordon M. Hahn, *Ukraine Over the Edge: Russia, the West and the 'New Cold War,'* (North Carolina, McFarland & Company, Inc, 2018), 88.

¹⁵⁵ Gordon M. Hahn, *Ukraine Over the Edge: Russia, the West and the 'New Cold War,'* (North Carolina, McFarland & Company, Inc, 2018), 1, 54.

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military, leading to a lack of government cohesion. The lack of Ukraine's government cohesion had a snowball effect leading to indecisiveness on how Ukraine's military should respond to the "little green men," occupying Crimea. There was no sound of alarm or request for international support until the illegal annexation of Crimea had taken place, giving Russia the upper hand.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ British Broadcasting Corporation, "Ukraine Crisis: Timeline," *BBC News*, (November 14, 2016), 7, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25182823>.

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Chapter 5

Ukraine 2022: Case Study

Introduction

Russia's further invasion of Ukraine in 2022 shows how Russia continues to focus on regaining influence in Ukraine. Unfortunately for Russia, Ukraine's pro-Russian stance and influence have shifted to a more democratic and Western-like approach within Ukraine's government, military, and civilian sectors. After being at war since 2014, Ukrainians have hardened their stance and renounced the pro-Russian mindset, replacing it with a pro-Ukrainian mindset.¹⁵⁷

The primary purpose of this chapter is to examine the four *will to fight* factors chosen: popular support, government cohesion, allies/diplomatic engagement, and military training in Ukraine before and during the 2022 invasion by Russian forces. Looking at these *will to fight* factors in this 2022 case gives a better understanding of how these intangibles affected the ability of Ukrainians to resist the further invasion of Ukraine in 2022.¹⁵⁸ This chapter will provide an explanation of particular symbols that are important and that Ukrainians take great pride in and how symbolism has aided in receiving popular support and allies/diplomatic engagement has flourished. Ukraine's leadership style and qualities will be covered while comparing the political climate in Ukraine by examining President Zelenskyy. Zelenskyy's relationship with Russian President Putin throughout President Zelenskyy's time in office has aided in the shaping the pro-

¹⁵⁷ Michael Kofman, Katya Migacheva, Brian Nichiporuk, Andrew Radin, Alesya Tkacheva, and Jenny Oberhotzer, *Lessons From Russia's Operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine*, (Santa Monica, California: RAND Corporation, 2017): 49.

¹⁵⁸ Office of the Research Director, *Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23*, (Washington D.C., Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2023): 6; Ben Connable et al., *Will to Fight: Analyzing, Modeling, and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2341.html.

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Ukrainian stance. This shows how government cohesion has shifted from the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014.¹⁵⁹

This case study seeks to answer, to what extent did Ukraine's *will to fight* affect Ukraine's resistance to the Russian Federation illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 compared to the Ukraine invasion case in 2022? The following are questions to help investigate the main research question. What was the political climate in Ukraine during the ongoing conflict in Ukraine? To what extent did allies and international organizations aid and support Ukraine? What military training, to include the resistance operating concept, did the US utilize to support Ukraine before and during the annexation of Crimea in 2014? Which of the four *will to fight* factors showed to have great importance in Ukraine's ability to resist Russian aggression in the ongoing conflict in Ukraine? These questions will be assessed after examining the four factors in the will to fight tradecraft, government cohesion, national level popular support, allies/diplomatic engagement, and military training to include resistance operations concept detailed in this case study.

Symbolism of Ukraine

Ukrainians have used a variety of symbols and actions to show their support for their country in the face of Russian aggression. Ukraine's national flag was first adopted in 1918 when Ukraine declared independence from Russia and was approved by Ukraine in 1991 when the country declared independence from the Soviet Union. The flag of Ukraine is a simple design consisting of two horizontal bands of equal size. The top band is blue, and the bottom band is

¹⁵⁹ Office of the Research Director, *Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23*, (Washington, D.C., Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2023): 3.

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yellow. Blue represents the sky, and yellow represents wheat fields, which are essential to Ukraine's agricultural economy.¹⁶⁰



Figure 5.1 Ukraine's biggest national flag on the country's highest flagpole and the giant Motherland monument in Kyiv, taken on December 16, 2021, by drone. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/we-fear-no-one-ukrainians-raise-flags-defy-russia-invasion-fear-2022-02-16/>.¹⁶¹

During the Euromaidan protests in 2013-2014, which led to the ousting of former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, the Ukrainian flag became a powerful symbol of the movement for democratic reform and closer ties with Europe. Since then, the flag has continued to symbolize resistance against Russian aggression in Ukraine, particularly in the conflict in

¹⁶⁰ Mykola Bytyns'Kyï, Artist, "Album of the Coats of Arms of Ukraine," Ukraine, 1918, [Place of Publication Not Identified: Publisher Not Identified, to 1920], <https://www.loc.gov/item/2021669083/>.

¹⁶¹ Aleksandar Vasovic, "'We Fear No One:' Ukrainians Raise Flags to Defy Russia Invasion Fear," *Reuters*, February 16, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/we-fear-no-one-ukrainians-raise-flags-defy-russia-invasion-fear-2022-02-16/>.¹⁶¹

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eastern Ukraine, where Russian-backed separatists have seized control of parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The display of Ukrainian flags has also been a way for Ukrainians to show solidarity with each other and the Ukrainian military, which has been fighting against Russian-backed forces in the East. It has helped to foster a sense of national identity and pride. It has served as a reminder that Ukraine is a sovereign and independent nation that will not be intimidated or bullied by outside forces.¹⁶²

While displaying Ukrainian flags may not directly impact the military situation, Ukrainians are showing their support for their country and its fight against Russian aggression. The flag represents Ukrainian national identity and pride and has been used to symbolize resistance against Russian aggression in Ukraine. It is often displayed at public events, rallies, and protests and is flown alongside the flags of other countries to show solidarity and support.¹⁶³

In addition to displaying Ukrainian flags, other important Symbols of popular support include the Ukrainian coat of arms, the national anthem, the Ukrainian language, volunteerism, and social media. The Ukrainian coat of arms displays the trident or Tryzub, the national symbol of Ukraine. The trident has been used to symbolize Ukrainian identity and resistance for centuries and was prominently displayed during the conflict with Russia.¹⁶⁴ "*Shche ne vmerla Ukraina*"

¹⁶² Diana Matviiv and Inga Vyshnevskya, "How Donetsk and Luhansk Regions Fought For Ukrainian Independence," *We Are Ukraine*, 2022, <https://www.weareukraine.info/how-donetsk-and-luhansk-regions-fought-for-ukrainian-independence/>.

¹⁶³ Michael Kofman, Katya Migacheva, Brian Nichiporuk, Andrew Radin, Alesya Tkacheva, and Jenny Oberhotzer, *Lessons From Russia's Operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine*, (Santa Monica, California. RAND Corporation, 2017): 49.

¹⁶⁴ Golden Lion Jewelry, "A Short History of the Ukrainian Tryzub," January 14, 2022, <https://www.goldenlionjewelry.com/ukrainian-tryzub-history/>.

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("Ukraine has not yet died") is the national anthem of Ukraine and has been sung at rallies and protests in support of the country.¹⁶⁵



Figure 5.2 A closeup of the trident on the Ukrainian Coat of Arms, 2022, <https://www.goldenlionjewelry.com/ukrainian-tryzub-history/>.¹⁶⁶

Language has been a controversial aspect of Ukraine's heritage due to the multiple languages spoken in the different oblasts of Ukraine, with Ukrainian holding at over sixty-seven percent, with Russian following with nearly thirty percent.¹⁶⁷ Many Ukrainians grew up speaking Russian as their primary language. The official language of Ukraine has been controversial but became contentious once Russia invaded Crimea in 2014. After the illegal annexation, Ukraine's government began focusing on Western tactics and culture. The official language of Ukraine became a priority in the political realm while also being politicized? creating tension among the

¹⁶⁵ Mykola Bytyns'Kyï, Artist, "Album of the Coats of Arms of Ukraine," Ukraine, 1918, [Place of Publication Not Identified: Publisher Not Identified, to 1920], <https://www.loc.gov/item/2021669083/>.

¹⁶⁶ Mykola Bytyns'Kyï, Artist, "Album of the Coats of Arms of Ukraine," Ukraine, 1918, [Place of Publication Not Identified: Publisher Not Identified, to 1920], <https://www.loc.gov/item/2021669083/>.

¹⁶⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, "Explore All Countries – Ukraine," *The World Factbook*, (April 5, 2023), <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/ukraine/>.

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oblasts. Since the further invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the official language of Ukraine, Ukrainian, has been embraced. The war brought the majority of Ukrainians together in this regard. The Ukrainian language has been a vital part of the country's identity and has been used to assert Ukrainian independence and resist Russian influence.¹⁶⁸ Having an official language is within the right of the Ukrainian government, but according to Human Rights Watch, for the official language to continue to be successful, Ukraine's government will need to continue to balance its policy by avoiding discrimination against language minorities.¹⁶⁹

Many Ukrainians have volunteered to support the military and aid those affected by the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Support includes providing medical care, delivering supplies, and supporting the families of soldiers. Ukrainians have used social media to share information about the conflict and to show their support for their country.¹⁷⁰ Hashtags such as “#prayforukraine and #standwithukraine” have been used to show solidarity with the country.¹⁷¹ These symbols and actions have helped to foster a sense of national identity and pride and have shown that Ukrainians are committed to defending their country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Laada Bilaniuk, “In Ukraine, Language is Political,” Editor Nancy Joseph, (The University of Washington, College of Arts and Sciences, May 3, 2022), <https://artsci.washington.edu/news/2022-05/ukraine-language-political>; Pal Kolsto and Helge Blakkisrud, *Russia Before and After Crimea*, (UK, Edinburgh University Press, 2018): 295, 299.

¹⁶⁹ Rachel Denber, “New Language Requirement Raises Concerns in Ukraine,” *Human Rights Watch*, January 19, 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/01/19/new-language-requirement-raises-concerns-ukraine>.

¹⁷⁰ Otto Fiala, *Resistance Operating Concept (ROC)*, (Joint Special Operations University Press, 2020): 47.

¹⁷¹ Best Hashtags, “Top 10 Hashtags Trending,” May 8, 2022, <https://best-hashtags.com/hashtag/prayforukraine/>.

¹⁷² United States Congress, House. 2018. Hearing before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Helsinki Commission, “Russia’s Occupation of Georgia and the Erosion of the International Order,” (July 17, 2018): 41,49, <https://www.congress.gov/event/115th-congress/joint-event/LC58583/text?s=1&r=64>.

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Ukraine's Will to Fight Factor 1: Government Cohesion

Government cohesion in Ukraine has been a significant challenge since 2014, mainly due to the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine and the country's efforts to undertake significant political and economic reforms. Government cohesion and its ability to work together is valuable to the communication process and Ukraine's *will to fight*. Some key factors that have affected government cohesion in Ukraine since 2014 are political polarization, coalition governments, corruption, and ongoing conflict. Each of these factors are discussed below such as Ukraine's political landscape has been deeply polarized since the Euromaidan Revolution 2014, with different factions and parties advocating for different approaches to the country's future. This political polarization has made it difficult for the government to build consensus and implement reforms. These coalitions have often been fragile, with disagreements and tensions leading to frequent changes in government and political instability.¹⁷³

Corruption has been a major issue in Ukraine since independence, and efforts to combat corruption have been a critical focus of reform efforts since 2014. However, corruption remains a significant challenge, undermining public trust in government and hindering efforts to build consensus and implement reforms. Since his election into office in 2019, Zelenskyy's government has prioritized fighting corruption and has taken several steps to address concerns about corruption in Ukraine. One of the key initiatives has been the establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU), which is tasked with investigating and prosecuting corruption cases. The government has also established several other anti-corruption agencies,

¹⁷³ Gordon M. Hahn, *Ukraine Over the Edge: Russia, the West and the 'New Cold War,'* (North Carolina, McFarland & Company, Inc, 2018), 163, 164.

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including the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO) and the High Anti-Corruption Court (HACC).¹⁷⁴



Figure 5.3 NABU symbol, with its name and yellow rectangular trapezoid, representing a ray of light, <https://nabu.gov.ua/en/about-the-bureau/zasadi-roboti/misiya-ta-symvolika/>.¹⁷⁵

In addition to these institutional reforms, the government has also introduced several legislative measures to combat corruption, including laws on public procurement, asset declarations, and whistleblower protection. The government has also sought to improve transparency and accountability in government, including through the publication of government data and the establishment of online portals for public access to information. While progress has been made in the fight against corruption, much work still needs to be done. Some critics have raised concerns about the independence and effectiveness of anti-corruption agencies, and there have been allegations of political interference in corruption investigations. In addition, corruption remains a pervasive problem in many areas of Ukrainian society, and there have been reports of

¹⁷⁴ National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, “Development Strategy of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine; 2021-2023,” 2021, 10, <https://nabu.gov.ua/en/>.

¹⁷⁵ National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, “Development Strategy of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine; 2021-2023,” (2021): 10, <https://nabu.gov.ua/en/>.

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continued corruption in government procurement, law enforcement, and the judiciary. Zelenskyy's government has made significant efforts to address concerns about corruption in Ukraine. However, much work must be done to ensure that corruption is effectively tackled, and that Ukraine's institutions are strengthened and made more transparent and accountable.

Ukraine's government has undertaken several reforms to address the root causes of the conflict with Russia, including efforts to combat corruption, improve the business climate, and strengthen democratic institutions. These reforms are critical to addressing the underlying grievances that have fueled the conflict. Ukraine's government has sought support from the international community to address the conflict with Russia, including military and economic aid from the United States and other Western countries. The government has also worked with international organizations such as the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to monitor the situation and support efforts to resolve the conflict with Russia. Ukraine's government has taken a multifaceted approach to addressing this conflict in eastern Ukraine and the further invasion. By combining military, diplomatic, humanitarian, and reform efforts, Ukraine's present government cohesion has unified in its efforts to resist Russian aggression, boosting Ukraine's *will to fight*.¹⁷⁶

Ukraine's *Will to Fight* Factor 2: National Level Popular Support

National level popular support is another factor to consider that shows how Ukraine's President Zelenskyy has continued to have the ability to disseminate and manage public narratives for internal and external audiences. President Zelenskyy has used national level popular support to rally his country to defend itself and fight back against Russian aggression. He has delivered speeches and made public statements emphasizing the importance of defending

¹⁷⁶ Gordon M. Hahn, *Ukraine Over the Edge: Russia, the West and the 'New Cold War,'* (North Carolina, McFarland & Company, Inc, 2018), 281.

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Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. He has called on all Ukrainians to support the military and stand up to Russian aggression.¹⁷⁷ And he's been successful/effective in these activities in promoting/bolstering Ukraine's will to fight the Russians.

The once-movie star and comedian Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the current President of Ukraine, was elected in 2019 with a large majority of the vote, reflecting widespread dissatisfaction with the political establishment and a desire for change.¹⁷⁸ His initial efforts to tackle corruption and to negotiate a peaceful settlement to the conflict in eastern Ukraine were generally well-received by the Ukrainian public. Zelenskyy's popularity had declined due to his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and concerns about his commitment to reform. Some critics have accused him of being too inexperienced, too reliant on his inner circle, and failing to deliver on his promises of change.

President Zelenskyy's leadership has received mixed reviews from the Ukrainian people and the international community. Internationally, Zelenskyy has been praised for his efforts to negotiate a peaceful settlement to the conflict in eastern Ukraine and his commitment to reform and modernization. He has also sought to strengthen Ukraine's partnerships with other countries by pursuing closer ties with the European Union and deepening relations with the United States. Zelenskyy has also faced criticism from some quarters for handling the conflict in eastern Ukraine and for his perceived lack of progress on key reforms such as anti-corruption measures and

¹⁷⁷ Office of the Research Director, *Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23*, (Washington, D.C., Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2023): 17.

¹⁷⁸ David Letterman, "My Next Guest with David Letterman and Volodymyr Zelenskyy," 44 minutes, Netflix, 2022, <https://www.netflix.com/title/81644272>.

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judicial reform. Zelenskyy's leadership has been a subject of ongoing debate and scrutiny, both within Ukraine and on the international stage.¹⁷⁹

President Zelenskyy's leadership style has been characterized by his focus on anti-corruption, economic reform in terms of foreign policy, and improving broken relationships. Zelenskyy had sought to improve relations with Ukraine's neighbors, particularly Russia. He was willing to dialogue with Russian leaders to resolve the conflict in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. However, progress on this front has become a stalemate due to the further invasion of Ukraine in 2022. One of Zelenskyy's most significant achievements as a leader has been his ability to unify Ukrainians together for a common cause, with people from all regions and backgrounds coming together to resist Russian aggression.¹⁸⁰ This unifying and adaptive leadership style has helped Ukraine build national unity and purpose. He has also become more assertive in his leadership abilities throughout the war. He has provided a clear and direct leadership stance that has encouraged, and inspired Ukraine's *will to fight* against Russian aggression. He has advocated for the people of Ukraine in a way no other politician could, demanding support and aid from allies worldwide.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Cory Welt, "Ukraine: Background, Conflict with Russia, and U.S. Policy," *Congressional Research Service*, R45008, (October 5, 2021): 6-7, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R45008>.

¹⁸⁰ Peter G Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 7th ed. (Thousand Oaks, California, SAGE Publications, Inc. 2016), 370.

¹⁸¹ Peter G Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 7th ed. (Thousand Oaks, California, SAGE Publications, Inc. 2016), 258.

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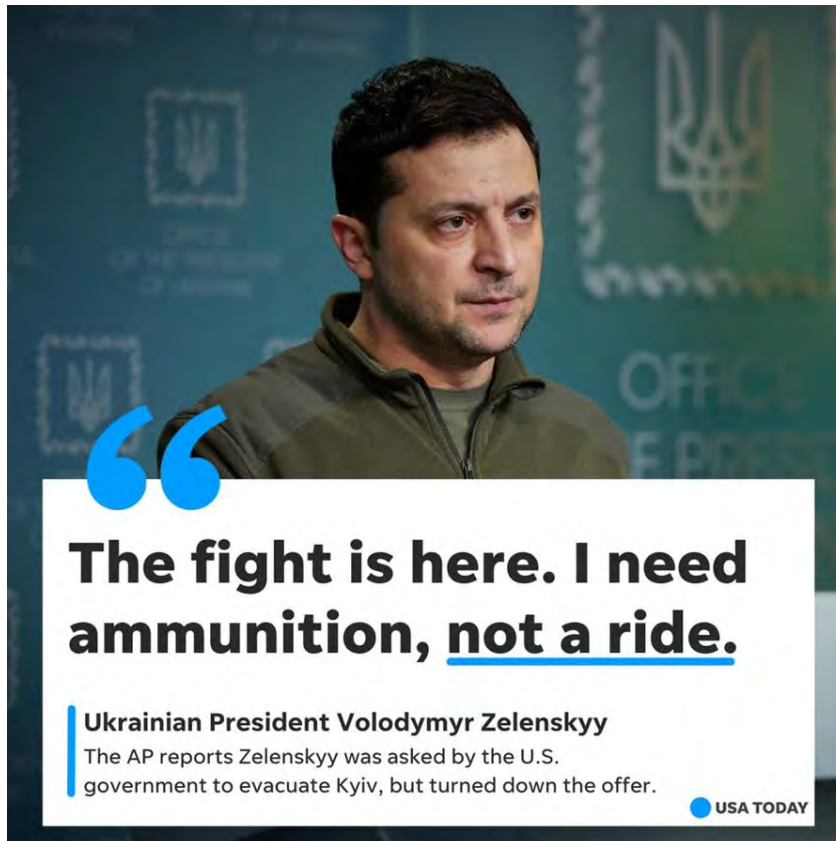


Figure 5.4 Ukraine President Zelenskyy has held firm against Russia and Putin, February 26, 2022. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2022/02/26/ukrainian-president-zelenskyy-has-held-firm-against-russia-putin/6951859001/?gnt-cfr=1>.¹⁸²

President Zelenskyy's leadership in Ukraine has been marked by a focus on anti-corruption, economic reform, and strengthening relationships.¹⁸³ While he has faced criticism for shortcomings focused on his limited political experience, he remains a popular figure in Ukraine, and much of the Western world and was named Man of the Year in *TIME* magazine.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Carli Pierson, “‘I Need Ammunition, Not a Ride’: Zelenskyy is the Hero His Country Needs as Russia Invades,” *USA Today*, March 6, 2022, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2022/02/26/ukrainian-president-zelenskyy-has-held-firm-against-russia-putin/6951859001/?gnt-cfr=1>.

¹⁸³ National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, “Development Strategy of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine; 2021-2023,” 2021, 21,39,45, <https://nabu.gov.ua/en/>.

¹⁸⁴ Simon Shuster, “2022 Person of the Year Volodymyr Zelensky,” *TIME*, December 7, 2022, <https://time.com/person-of-the-year-2022-volodymyr-zelensky/>.

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Figure 5.5 Zelenskyy on the cover of TIME magazine, representing the people of Ukraine, Illustration by Neil Jamieson for *TIME*, <https://time.com/person-of-the-year-2022-volodymyr-zelensky/>.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ Simon Shuster, "2022 Person of the Year Volodymyr Zelensky," *TIME*, December 7, 2022, <https://time.com/person-of-the-year-2022-volodymyr-zelensky/>.

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He has led progress on several key issues, including Ukraine's relationships with other countries, particularly in Europe and the United States. Since taking office, Zelenskyy has sought to strengthen Ukraine's ties with the West and promote a pro-European and pro-Western agenda. Zelenskyy has worked to deepen Ukraine's integration with the EU. He has implemented several reforms to bring Ukraine closer to EU standards, including improving the rule of law, combating corruption, and protecting human rights. Zelenskyy had a significant positive impact on Ukraine's will to fight the Russian invasion of 2022.¹⁸⁶

Ukraine's *Will to Fight* Factor 3: Allies/Diplomatic Engagement

Social media outlets have given President Zelenskyy and the rest of Ukraine's citizens the ability to post near real-time and stream real-time videos, pictures, and information to show the world what was happening. President Zelenskyy continues to use social media platforms to plead with the United States and other allies for much-needed war resources and support through funding. President Zelenskyy hosted fellow comedian David Letterman in a metro station turned bunker in the heart of Kyiv to promote support for the people of Ukraine and to further advocate for harsher sanctions and justice against Russian aggression for war crimes in the unjust war against Ukraine.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, "Development Strategy of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine; 2021-2023," 2021, 22-23, <https://nabu.gov.ua/en/>.

¹⁸⁷ David Letterman, "My Next Guest with David Letterman and Volodymyr Zelenskyy," 44 minutes, Netflix, 2022, <https://www.netflix.com/title/81644272>.

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Figure 5.6 President Zelenskyy with David Letterman conducting an interview in a metro station in Kiev after it was transformed into a makeshift bunker in 2022, Netflix Documentary, 2022, <https://www.netflix.com/title/81644272>.¹⁸⁸

Zelenskyy's use of social media has been particularly notable/effective in bolstering Ukraine's will to fight, as he has used platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to communicate directly with the public and share his views on various issues related to Ukraine. Social media has allowed him to bypass traditional media channels and engage with a broader audience in Ukraine and abroad. He has also appeared on many awards shows to advocate for support and has made several appearances on international news programs and talk shows to discuss Ukraine's interests and to call for international support for Ukraine. Zelenskyy's social media presence has also helped raise awareness of Ukraine's ongoing conflict with Russia and promote Ukraine's global interests. Zelenskyy's ability to adapt, and show support for his people, is in stark contrast to how Russian President Putin addresses and is seen in public.

¹⁸⁸ David Letterman, "My Next Guest with David Letterman and Volodymyr Zelenskyy," 44 minutes, Netflix, 2022, <https://www.netflix.com/title/81644272>.

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Figure 5.7 Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelenskyy posted a video showing himself standing outside his office in central Kyiv, Ukraine, on February 25, 2022, along with (left to right) his defense minister, prime minister, and parliamentary leader. Staying to fight inspired his people and much of the Western world continue to fight against Russian aggression, <https://inews.co.uk/news/volodymyr-zelensky-ukraine-president-paddington-bear-fighting-russia-1488368>.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ Steve Robson, "How Volodymyr Zelensky Went from Being the Voice of Paddington Bear to Fighting Russia as President of Ukraine," *INEWS*, February 28, 2022, <https://inews.co.uk/news/volodymyr-zelensky-ukraine-president-paddington-bear-fighting-russia-1488368>.

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Figure 5.8 A contrast in leadership styles: Russia’s President Vladimir Putin sits at one end of a long table with his advisers on the other end, leading a meeting on economic issues in Moscow on February 28, 2022, taken only three days after the video posted above, <https://news.yahoo.com/photos-putin-keeps-his-distance-during-meetings-194633383.html>.¹⁹⁰

In addition to using social media and international appearances to promote Ukraine's interests, President Zelenskyy has taken several other steps to raise awareness of Ukraine's situation and to promote the country's interests on the global stage. For example, he has met with leaders from countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Poland to discuss the Ukraine situation and seek their support. This campaign for support prompted pressure on the Russian Federation through sanctions and bolstered Ukraine’s *will to fight*.¹⁹¹

Zelenskyy has also sought to promote Ukraine's culture and heritage globally to raise awareness in and build relationships with other countries. Zelenskyy has taken a range of steps to promote Ukraine's interests on the global stage, including diplomatic efforts and cultural

¹⁹⁰ David Knowles and Yahoo News Photo Staff, “Photos Putin Keeps His Distance During Meetings,” *Yahoo News*, February 28, 2022, <https://news.yahoo.com/photos-putin-keeps-his-distance-during-meetings-194633383.html>.

¹⁹¹ *Sky News*, “In Full, Ursula von der Leyen and President Zelenskyy address the European Parliament,” 03:18:27, March 1, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiwubBS1bFY>.

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diplomacy. While the effectiveness of these efforts is difficult to measure, it demonstrates Zelenskyy's commitment to promoting Ukraine's interests and improving the country's standing in the international community. By promoting Ukraine's interests to the international community, he has bolstered Ukraine's will to fight.¹⁹²

President Zelenskyy has been utilizing as many social media platforms as possible to call for aid and rally his people and troops on the frontlines. He has been able to educate the world and call to action those who can assist. In the United States, Zelenskyy has sought to strengthen Ukraine's relationship with the US government. He has successfully advocated and received aid from the United States by lobbying Congress and President Biden in his December 21, 2022, trip to Washington DC that was broadcast on CSPAN. He has over 16.9 million followers on INSTAGRAM, where you can find him @zelenkief_official. With the ability to get up-to-date news already machine translated into the language of choice, it has been easy to keep up with the ongoing war in Ukraine from his perspective.¹⁹³ Social media has played a role while reporting real-time information, informing the world of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Social media has made a difference in how the war in Ukraine is being influenced worldwide.

To the United Nations and Amnesty International, he could plead for assistance with proof of war crimes.¹⁹⁴ On September 15, 2022, Tiara Paievska, a Ukrainian medic who had recently been released from a Prisoner of War (POW) camp run by the Russian Federation, testified on a live broadcast to the horror and torture she endured even after identifying herself as a medic,

¹⁹² Central Intelligence Agency, "Explore All Countries – Ukraine," *The-World-Factbook*, (April 5, 2023), <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/ukraine/>.

¹⁹³ Volodymyr Zelenskyy, [@Zelenskiy_Official]. January 11, 2023, President of Ukraine. https://instagram.com/zelenskiy_official?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=.

¹⁹⁴ Amnesty International "Ukraine: A Devastating Human Rights Crisis." March 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/03/latest-news-on-russias-war-on-ukraine/>.

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describing her "hell" as being forced to hear and see fellow prisoners tortured without being able to give them medical services, having to watch them die, unable to fulfill her Hippocratic oath as a medic who saves lives.¹⁹⁵ This interview was also streamed on YouTube, Twitter, INSTAGRAM, and Tik Tok, trending with hashtags #RUSSIA'S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE and #RUSSIAN WAR CRIMES.



Figure 5.9 Ukrainian POW medic Tiara Paievskaya testifies on September 15, 2022, after being released from a Russian prison before the Helsinki Commission, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?522910-1/ukrainian-medic-testifies-held-russian-captivity&start=1326>.

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To the European Union, Zelenskyy continues to request support and acknowledgment of the unjust invasion of his sovereign nation. President Zelenskyy addressed the European Parliament in Brussels to tell of more horrors that included the bombing and shelling of schools, hospitals, and a square located on a college campus that is now famously known as "Freedom

¹⁹⁵ Ben Cardin, "Ukrainian Medic Testifies on Being Held in Russian Captivity," Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe hosting on *C-SPAN*, 01:19:33, September 15, 2022, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?522910-1/ukrainian-medic-testifies-held-russian-captivity&start=1326>.

¹⁹⁶ Ben Cardin, "Ukrainian Medic Testifies on Being Held in Russian Captivity," Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe hosting on *C-SPAN*, 01:19:33, September 15, 2022, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?522910-1/ukrainian-medic-testifies-held-russian-captivity&start=1326>.

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Square," which made headlines across the world with Zelenskyy bringing the Ukrainian translator to tears, with his powerful and passionate depiction and profound love for his country and how Ukraine was fighting for their freedom.¹⁹⁷ Remember that all these pleas were in Ukrainian and had to be translated through either machine translation used for NATO or through real-time translators. Zelenskyy has also expressed support for Ukraine's NATO aspirations and has sought to deepen Ukraine's cooperation with the alliance.¹⁹⁸ With Zelenskyy's ability to use social media to his advantage, broadcasting to the world of the atrocities the people of Ukraine have been enduring, this has received positive support by allies/diplomatic engagement and in turn, this support has aided in the bolstering of Ukraine's *will to fight* against Russian aggression.

Ukraine's *Will to Fight* Factor 4: Military Training

Many factors contribute to a country's willingness and ability to resist aggression. However, the concept of resistance and the principles outlined in the resistance operating concept have relevance to Ukraine's invasion. While the resistance concept was developed primarily for use by the US Army, its principles have relevance to Ukraine's situation. The resistance operating concept was designed to help the US Army and its partners prepare for and conduct resistance operations in the face of an adversary's aggression. This concept emphasizes the importance of building and maintaining a resilient and adaptive resistance force, leveraging technology and

¹⁹⁷ Sky News, "In Full, Ursula von der Leyen and President Zelenskyy address the European Parliament," 03:18:27, March 1, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiwubBS1bFY>.

¹⁹⁸ NATO, "Relations with Ukraine," May 2, 2023, 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_37750.htm; Central Intelligence Agency, "Explore All Countries – Ukraine," *The-World-Factbook*, (April 5, 2023), <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/ukraine/>.

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information to gain an advantage, and integrating resistance efforts with other military and non-military activities.¹⁹⁹

Ukraine has been in a conflict with Russian forces and Russian-backed separatists in the eastern part of the country since 2014. It has relied on military and non-military efforts to resist Russian aggression. These efforts have included building the Ukrainian military, supporting volunteer battalions, and engaging in diplomatic and economic measures to isolate Russia. Ukraine's military training and tactics have undergone significant changes. Ukraine has shifted away from the Soviet-style training prevalent in its military prior to the conflict and has adopted more Western-style training methods. This concept includes a greater emphasis on individual skills and small-unit tactics. Ukraine has placed a greater emphasis on marksmanship training, a key component of Western-style military training. This training includes individual and collective marksmanship and the use of modern firearms and optics. Ukraine has focused more on small-unit tactics, another critical component of Western-style military training. This tactical training includes fire and maneuver, room clearing, and other skills essential for small unit operations.²⁰⁰

Ukraine has also placed a greater emphasis on leadership development, which is another hallmark of Western-style military training. This training includes leadership principles, decision-making, and communication skills. Ukraine has also adopted Western-style training methods for combat casualty care, including training in tactical combat casualty care (TCCC)

¹⁹⁹ Oren Liebermann, "How Ukraine is Using Resistance Warfare Developed by the US to Fight Back Against Russia," *CNN*, (February 19, 2022): 5, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/27/politics/russia-ukraine-resistance-warfare/index.html>.

²⁰⁰ Steven Edwards and Peter Musselman, "Joint Special Operations University Panel: What is the Role of Special Operations in Ukraine? Signaling the Future," JSOU Future of SOF Forum FY22 Q4 SOCEUR Command Team Pre-Recorded Remarks. September 14, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8uA1STUMxE>.

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and other medical skills essential for battlefield medicine. Ukraine's adoption of Western-style training methods has helped to modernize its military and improve its success on the battlefield.²⁰¹

Ukraine's military has focused on mobility and flexibility in its tactics to counter the hybrid warfare tactics used by Russian forces. Ukraine's military tactics and flexibility training includes greater use of light infantry and special forces and the development of mobile armored units. Ukraine has increased its coordination with NATO in terms of training and equipment. This coordination with NATO includes joint military exercises with NATO countries and the provision of military aid and equipment from NATO countries.²⁰²

Ukraine has increased its use of technology in its military operations, including unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), electronic warfare systems, and cyber capabilities. Technology has helped to improve situational awareness and provide a more effective response to Russian aggression. Ukraine's military has undergone significant changes since the conflict in 2014, with a greater emphasis on Western-style training, mobility and flexibility, coordination with NATO, and the use of technology.²⁰³

The resilience, adaptability, and integration principles emphasized in the Resistance operating concept have been relevant to Ukraine's efforts to resist Russian aggression. By building a resilient and adaptive military force, leveraging technology and information to gain an

²⁰¹ Harold R. Montgomery, "Tactical Combat Casualty Care Quick Reference Guide," 2017, 3, https://ems.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/71/2017/07/TCCC_Quick_Reference_Guide_2017.pdf.

²⁰² Steven Edwards and Peter Musselman, "Joint Special Operations University Panel: What is the Role of Special Operations in Ukraine? Signaling the Future," JSOU Future of SOF Forum FY22 Q4 SOCEUR Command Team Pre-Recorded Remarks. September 14, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8uA1STUMxE>.

²⁰³ Otto Fiala, "Resistance Operating Concept (ROC)." *Joint Special Operations University Press*. 2020, 7, 11, 31.

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advantage, and integrating military and non-military efforts, Ukraine is better able to resist Russian aggression and defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The resistance concept's principles relate to Ukraine's situation and its efforts to resist Russian aggression. The resistance operating concept has significantly influenced Ukraine's will to fight against Russian aggression. The concept is based on using small, mobile, and highly trained units to conduct guerrilla-style operations against Russian forces.²⁰⁴ This concept allows Ukrainian forces to operate in areas where they are outnumbered and outgunned by Russian forces. Using hit-and-run tactics and avoiding confrontation, Ukrainian forces damage Russian forces while minimizing their casualties. The concept has also helped to boost morale among Ukrainian forces. The concept has helped instill a sense of purpose and determination among Ukrainian soldiers by giving them strategy and tactics. These tactics have been particularly important given Ukrainian forces' challenges in the conflict.²⁰⁵

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that four key factors in DIA's *Will to Fight* tradecraft have made a significant difference in Ukraine's willingness to fight the Russians in Ukraine since February 2022. What was the political climate in Ukraine during the conflict of 2022? Throughout the national level popular support and government cohesion factor sections, Zelenskyy has provided a clear and direct leadership stance that has encouraged, and inspired Ukraine's *will to fight* against Russian aggression. He has tackled the corruption issues through multiple means to include focusing on the establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine and working

²⁰⁴ John Friberg, "SOCEUR and Resistance Operating Concept (ROC)," *SOF News*, July 19, 2019, <https://sof.news/uw/resistance-operating-concept/>.

²⁰⁵ Office of the Research Director, "Analyzing Will to Fight, Tradecraft Note 02-23, (Washington, D.C., Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2023): 7.

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with Ukraine's government to establish several other anti-corruption agencies, including the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO) and the High Anti-Corruption Court (HACC).²⁰⁶

To what extent did allies and international organizations aid and support Ukraine? Throughout the allies/diplomatic engagement and military training factor sections in this chapter shows how Ukraine's allies had continued to support Ukraine through continuing to add pressure to Russia not only through sanctions dating back from the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. There has also been international support through outside organizations investigating war crimes, POW exchanges, and ways to resolve the conflict. Zelenskyy campaigns have achieved his goals for support while bolstering Ukraine's *will to fight*.²⁰⁷

What military training, to include the resistance operating concept, did the US utilize to support Ukraine before and during the conflict in Ukraine in 2022? Throughout the allies/diplomatic engagement and military training factor sections of this chapter, research shows the resistance operating concept has significantly influenced Ukraine's *will to fight* against Russian aggression. The resistance operating concept has given Ukrainian forces the resources to reform training techniques and procedures to mirror western warfare. The Ukrainian military has been able to utilize the multiple joint and combined exercises with the US, NATO, and other allied forces.

Of the four factors discussed above; national level popular support, government cohesion, allies/diplomatic engagement, and military training to include the resistance operating concept,

²⁰⁶ National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, "Development Strategy of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine; 2021-2023," 2021, 10, <https://nabu.gov.ua/en/>.

²⁰⁷ *Sky News*, "In Full, Ursula von der Leyen and President Zelenskyy address the European Parliament," 03:18:27, March 1, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiwubBS1bFY>; Amnesty International "Ukraine: A Devastating Human Rights Crisis." March 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/03/latest-news-on-russias-war-on-ukraine/>.

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this analysis shows that while all factors have been present and have motivated change and the will to fight among the people of Ukraine, the most important factor has a focus on national level popular support. Without having a strong voice to rally troops, inspire allies to support, and continue to protect Ukrainians rights, there would be weak resistance to the Russian aggression threatening Ukraine.

When researching Ukraine's ability to resist Russian aggression in the 2022 conflict, this chapter discovered that Zelenskyy was a common theme associated with all of the *will to fight* factors from the DIA tradecraft. His willingness to stay in Kiev instead of becoming a leader in exile during the Russian invasion shows his degree of longevity and dedication to Ukraine. He has led his country with charisma, passion, and consistency. He has proven his ability to adapt to changes as a strong leader and is not afraid to advocate for his people while challenging the Russian aggression.

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CHAPTER 6

Findings and Recommendations**Findings**

Ukraine has faced an armed conflict with the Russian Federation since the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, followed by Russian-backed separatists in the eastern part of the country, resulting in the further full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The four *will to fight* factors examined in this thesis were *government cohesion, national level popular support, allies/diplomatic engagement, and military training* to include the resistance operating concept. By evaluating those factors in the Crimea in 2014 and Ukraine in 2022 case studies, evidence has shown in this thesis that exhibiting these factors have made a significant change in how Ukraine has been able to continue to resist against Russian aggression.

National level popular support refers to the level of public approval or endorsement of a government or political system within a country. Government cohesion refers to the degree to which different parts of a government work together effectively towards common goals. Allies are countries or organizations that have formed a formal or informal partnership or alliance with another country or organization for mutual benefit. Diplomatic engagement refers to building and maintaining relationships between countries or organizations through diplomatic channels

Government cohesion has been essential to Ukraine's efforts to resist Russian aggression. In the early days of the 2014 conflict in Crimea, Ukraine faced significant political turmoil, with protests and political unrest leading to the ouster of President Viktor Yanukovich. However, since then, Ukraine has made significant progress in building a more stable and cohesive government. Under President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who took office in 2019, Ukraine has made efforts to reform its political system, fight corruption, and strengthen democratic institutions.

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International partners, including the United States and the European Union, have supported these efforts. The cohesion of Ukraine's government has been an essential asset in its efforts to resist the Russian invasion. By presenting a united front and working together to address the challenges posed by the conflict, Ukraine has been better able to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity, boosting its confidence in the *will to fight*.

Likewise in Ukraine, *national level popular support* has been important since the color revolutions leading up to the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, Ukraine has seen a surge in national pride and patriotism, with many Ukrainians rallying around the cause of defending their country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. High levels of popular enthusiasm have been reflected in consistently with high levels of support for the Ukrainian military and government. National level popular support has been essential in Ukraine's efforts to resist Russian aggression in several ways. First, national support has helped to bolster the morale of Ukrainian soldiers and civilians on the front lines of the conflict. Second, public enthusiasm has helped to mobilize resources and support for the Ukrainian military, including volunteer battalions and donations of equipment and supplies. Finally, has helped to build international support for Ukraine, with Ukrainians many countries abroad, encouraging other populations, governments, and organizations in expressing solidarity with Ukraine and aiding in various international fora, such as the UN forms.

Since the conflict began in 2014, Ukraine has received significant support from its *allies/diplomatic partners*, including the United States, the European Union, and NATO. This support has taken many forms, including diplomatic pressure on Russia, economic sanctions, military aid, and training for the Ukrainian military. Ukraine's successful diplomatic engagements with allies and partners has been important for Ukraine in several ways. First, international

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engagement has helped to isolate Russia and limit its ability to escalate the conflict. Second, diplomacy has resulted in Ukraine gaining much-needed resources and support, including military equipment and training. Third, it has helped to build international support for recognizing Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and for countering Russian propaganda and disinformation.

Finally, enhanced *military training* has also made a critical difference in Ukraine's willingness to fight the Russians since 2014. Ukraine has undertaken significant military reforms to modernize and professionalize its armed forces. These reforms have included improving training and education, streamlining command and control structures, and modernizing equipment and weapons systems. Western military assistance and training have been essential to Ukraine's military reform efforts. The United States, Canada, and several European countries have provided Ukraine with significant military aid and training. Military reform/not training improvements utilizing the resistance operating concept developed by the US Army has been significant for Ukraine in several ways. First, it has helped to improve the effectiveness, confidence, and professionalism of the Ukrainian military, making it better able to resist Russian aggression. Second, it has helped to build international support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity by demonstrating Ukraine's commitment to modernizing and professionalizing its armed forces. Finally, this concept has helped to build confidence among the Ukrainian people by demonstrating that the government is taking concrete steps to defend the country against external threats.

Summary of Findings

The Ukrainian government has shown strong leadership in its response to the crisis, with President Zelenskyy and other officials demonstrating a clear commitment to defending the

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country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Commitment as helped to rally the population and the military behind the government's efforts. When taking a deeper look at the different leaders in power? during the annexation of Crimea in 2014 (Yanukovych) and the further invasion of Ukraine in 2022 (Zelenskyy), this researcher found a great deal of useful information to compare. Researching the kind of domestic/popular support these two leaders had and how they were seen by their people and the rest of the world provided insights into how the *will to fight* and national level popular support weighs resistance, for example President Yanukovych worked very closely with President Putin using Putin's power from Yanukovych's pro-Russian stance led to his fleeing in exile. Compliance with Russia through trade deals, treaties, and a working relationship mixed with corruption explains Ukraine's lack of will to fight in 2014, and thus how easily Crimea was taken over by Russian Forces and illegally annexed.

The events of 2014, including the annexation of Crimea, the conflict in eastern Ukraine, and the further invasion in 2022, all eventually galvanized Ukrainian society and led to a surge of national pride. The national pride has translated into strong popular support for the government's efforts to defend the country against Russian aggression. Ukraine has received significant international support in defending against Russian aggression, including military aid, economic sanctions against Russia, and diplomatic support. This has helped bolster Ukraine's morale and ability to resist Russian pressure. In 2014, Ukraine's military was poorly equipped, trained, and unprepared to defend against the Russian annexation of Crimea. However, in the years since, Ukraine has made significant efforts to modernize and reform its military, with support from the United States and other countries. As a result, Ukraine's military was better prepared to defend against the Russian invasion in 2022.

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Lessons Learned

After completing the research and getting everything down on paper, I thought about what I could have done better throughout this process. The key limitation of this study is the exclusive reliance on unclassified information. Using only publicly available internet documents and social media was helpful, but those sources can lack objectivity. Social media is full of unvetted and unfiltered information. Lack of vetting/filtering opens the door to the spread of Propaganda and untrue, unchecked information. The information cannot be verified quickly while looking at the strategic and tactical gains regarding both parties involved in the conflict. To students who wish to pursue a similar study in the future, I recommend utilizing classified *and* unclassified resources. Utilizing both types of information would help confirm information and provide the ability to give a less biased conclusion than using unverified or unvetted information.

Recommendations for Further Research

The *will to fight* tradecraft created by the DIA has been a helpful product to my research. Had I had more time, I recommend looking at both sides of the parties or countries involved in a potential or ongoing conflict. By utilizing the *will to fight* tradecraft, updating it as new information emerges, and continuing to utilize the Intelligence Community Directive (ICD) 203 analytic tradecraft standards documentation, this could help aid the United States Agency International Development (USAID) Conflict Assessment Framework (CAF) 2.0 framework.²⁰⁸ The framework provides a detailed way to analyze a conflict by objectively observing both perspectives. This tool has a deliberate process to follow to allow for sound assessments.²⁰⁹ By

²⁰⁸ James Clapper, Director of National Intelligence, *Intelligence Community Directive (ICD) 203: Analytic Standards*, January 2, 2015.

²⁰⁹ United States Agency International Development (USAID), "Conflict Assessment Framework, version 2.0." 2012

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utilizing the USAID CAF 2.0 framework along with the will to fight tradecraft and ICD 203 analytic tradecraft standards, it will look at the critical factors for escalation, grievances and resilience shown, key mobilizers responsible, triggers and trajectories from the beginning of the invasion up until now, and how the relevance to the Intelligence Community has triggered support to a country in conflict while providing near real-time conflict resolution options based on the will to fight factors for negotiations. In turn, this research could help identify neutral countries to aid in negotiating processes for reconciliation and a way forward from conflict.

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