LESSONS IDENTIFIED DURING THE CONFLICTS IN UKRAINE AND GAZA IN THE DIPLOMATIC FIELD

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Abstract: Resilience within the diplomatic domain ensures sustained and adaptive efforts to manage and resolve conflicts, support humanitarian needs and maintain international cooperation and stability in regions affected by conflict. Long-term diplomatic engagements build trust among conflicting parties and the international community, which is essential for sustainable peace. Resilience in diplomatic efforts is essential for navigating the complexities of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, where deeply contrasting objectives between the two nations have made negotiations challenging. Despite the difficulties, sustained diplomatic engagements are critical for maintaining international cooperation and addressing humanitarian needs. Ukraine's persistent use of international organizations, such as the United Nations and the European Union, has been influential in garnering global support and isolating Russian Federation diplomatically, even when immediate resolutions to the conflict remained elusive.

The role of diplomacy in this conflict underscores the importance of adaptability and endurance in negotiations. While Ukraine seeks to restore its territorial integrity and hold Russia accountable for war crimes, Russian Federation's goals of consolidating territorial gains and limiting Western influence have complicated peace talks. However, the continued diplomatic dialogue, supported by multilateral organizations, remains crucial for managing the conflict and working toward a potential resolution, even if the path is long and fraught with setbacks.

In the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, resilience in diplomacy is also critical for balancing military objectives with humanitarian concerns. Israel has employed a complex approach, crossing external pressures from international actors like the United States, while also adapting its military strategies to minimize civilian casualties and address international criticism. Meanwhile, diplomatic efforts continue to focus on negotiations, involving regional mediators and international organizations, seeking to create conditions conducive to both immediate relief and long-term conflict resolution, despite the deeply entrenched political and ideological divisions that make such efforts challenging.

Ultimately, resilience in diplomacy is not just about achieving immediate results, but also about maintaining consistent efforts over time to build trust and create conditions for a sustainable peace. The ongoing conflict illustrates that while diplomacy may not always prevent war, it plays a vital role in managing the

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crisis, coordinating international responses and laying the groundwork for eventual peace, no matter how distant it may seem.

Keywords*: resilience, diplomacy, conflict, lessons, Ukraine, Gaza.*

Lesson 1: The role of negotiations during crisis

The main lesson identified underscores the important role of diplomacy in managing conflicts and the complexities of achieving peace when opposing sides have deeply contrasting objectives. The stark contrast between Ukraine's and Russian Federation's peace negotiation objectives underscores the inherent complexity in diplomatic conflict resolution. While Ukraine seeks full territorial sovereignty and accountability for war crimes, the Russian Federation aims to solidify its territorial gains and limit Western influence near its borders. This divergence makes diplomatic negotiations exceedingly complex, often prolonging the conflict rather than resolving it.

In the context of the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, a critical lesson identified is the importance of balancing military objectives with diplomatic efforts to address humanitarian concerns. The Israeli government's approach highlights the necessity of adapting military strategies to reduce civilian casualties and mitigate international criticism.

Throughout history, diplomacy has been a key instrument of power. Diplomatic maneuvering shifts focus depending on whether it is in the pre-conflict stage, active conflict or post-conflict: from deferring or circumventing the onset of hostilities, creating support among partners for one's own side, isolating the adversary from their partners to expediting the advantageous resolution of ongoing crises.

In the context of Ukraine, diplomacy, as employed by Ukraine and its Western partners, failed in its objective to prevent the full-scale invasion, but it did manage to generate consensus among allies about the necessity of swift action when hostilities did begin in earnest.

Similarly, the diplomatic approach regarding the on-going conflict presents significant challenges. Currently, any cessation of hostilities would likely result in the solidification of the territorial advances made by the Russian Federation, an outcome that starkly contradicts international treaties and the national interests of Ukraine. Consequently, both Ukraine and the Russian Federation have repeatedly communicated their respective peace negotiation objectives to the international community.

In the context of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, diplomacy has played a multi-layered role, shaped significantly by each nation's affiliations and actions within various international

organizations, as well as the broader international community's response, particularly through sanctions.

Ukraine's diplomatic efforts:

* <u>United Nations (UN)</u>: Ukraine has actively sought support through the United Nations (UN) to condemn Russian Federation's actions and leverage the UN platform for global outreach. Despite Russian Federation's veto power in the Security Council, which has blocked resolutions condemning its invasion of Ukraine, Ukraine has found significant symbolic support in the General Assembly.

The UN General Assembly has adopted several resolutions condemning Russian Federation's invasion and actions in Ukraine[1]. For instance, in October 2022, the General Assembly overwhelmingly condemned Russian Federation's "attempted illegal annexation" of four regions in Ukraine, with 143 countries voting in favour and only 5 against. This resolution called on all states and international organizations not to recognize any changes in the status of these regions and demanded Russia reverse its annexation declaration[2]. Furthermore, on February 23, 2023, the General Assembly passed a resolution demanding Russian Federation's immediate withdrawal from Ukraine, with 141 member states voting in favour, 7 against, and 32 abstentions. This resolution called for an end to the war and underscored the importance of solidarity among member states to address the global impacts of the conflict[3]. These actions in the General Assembly highlight the international community's stance against Russia's actions, despite the non-binding nature of these resolutions. They serve to isolate Russia diplomatically and showcase broad international support for Ukraine.

* <u>International Criminal Court (ICC)</u>: Ukraine has actively engaged with the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Russian forces. Although neither Ukraine nor Russian Federation are full members of the Rome Statute, Ukraine has twice accepted the ICC's jurisdiction under Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute. This acceptance allows the ICC to investigate

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[1] UN a., *UN General Assembly calls for immediate end to war in Ukraine*, available at https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/02/1133847, february 2023, accessed on 01.09.2024.

[2] UN b., *Ukraine: UN General Assembly demands Russia reverse course on 'attempted illegal annexation'*, available at https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/10/1129492, october 2022, accessed on 01.09.2024..

[3] UN c*., With 143 Votes in Favour, 5 Against, General Assembly Adopts Resolution Condemning Russian Federation's Annexation of Four Eastern Ukraine Regions*, la https://press.un.org/en/2022/ga12458.doc.htm, 12 octombrie 2022.

crimes committed on Ukrainian territory from November 21, 2013, onwards[4].

The ICC's involvement was formalized after Ukraine's government made two declarations in 2014 and 2015, accepting the court's jurisdiction. This paved the way for the ICC Prosecutor to open a preliminary examination, which concluded in 2020 with findings that reasonable grounds existed to believe war crimes and crimes against humanity had been committed in Ukraine[5]. On February 28, 2022, following the escalation of the conflict, the ICC Prosecutor announced the initiation of a full investigation into the situation in Ukraine, which encompasses both the earlier incidents and new alleged crimes related to the 2022 invasion[6]. This move was supported by referrals from 43 state parties to the Rome Statute, expediting the process. The ICC has issued arrest warrants for several high-profile Russian officials, including President Vladimir Putin and Maria Lvova-Belova, the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights in Russian Federation, for their roles in the unlawful deportation of Ukrainian children. These warrants mark a significant step towards holding Russian officials accountable under international law[7]. However, the ICC faces challenges in enforcing these warrants, as Russian Federation is not a member of the Rome Statute and does not recognize the court's authority. This non-cooperation complicates the apprehension and prosecution of those indicted[8]. Despite these hurdles, the ICC's actions underscore the international community's efforts to seek justice for the alleged crimes committed in Ukraine and to hold perpetrators accountable.

* <u>International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)</u>: Ukraine's membership in the IAEA has been critical amid concerns over nuclear safety, especially given the situation around the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. Ukraine has sought the IAEA's assistance to ensure nuclear facilities' safety and prevent nuclear accidents.

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[4] International Criminal Court, *Situation in Ukraine*, available at https://www.icc-cpi.int/situations/ukraine, 2022, accessed on 02.09.2024.

[5] Lopez Jaime, Worthington Brady, *The ICC Investigates the Situation in Ukraine: Jurisdiction and Potential Implications*, available at https://www.lawfaremedia.-org/article/icc-investigates-situation-ukraine-jurisdiction-and-potential-implications, march 2022, accessed on 02.09.2024.

[6] Idem.

[7] Ashby Heather, Baillie Lauren, Glantz Mary, *How the ICC's Warrant for Putin Could Impact the Ukraine War*, available at https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/03/how-iccs-warrant-putin-could-impact-ukraine-war, march 2023, accessed on 03.09.2024..

[8] Lopez Jaime, Worthington Brady, *The ICC Investigates the Situation in Ukraine: Jurisdiction and Potential Implications*, available at https://www.lawfaremedia.-org/article/icc-investigates-situation-ukraine-jurisdiction-and-potential-implications, march 2022, accessed on 04.09.2024.

The IAEA has been working to stabilize the critical nuclear safety and security situation by maintaining a continuous presence of technical experts at the site and advocating for uninterrupted access for its personnel. The IAEA's involvement underscores its commitment to preventing nuclear accidents and ensuring the safety of nuclear installations in Ukraine during the conflict[9]. Overall, Ukraine's engagement with the IAEA highlights the importance of international cooperation in managing nuclear safety risks, particularly in conflict zones. This collaboration aims to protect not only the local population but also broader regional and global communities from potential nuclear hazards[10].

* <u>Western sanctions</u>: The West's response, notably from the EU, UK, and USA, has involved comprehensive sanctions targeting the Russian economy, individuals, and sectors vital to Russia, such as energy. Ukraine has worked closely with Western partners to advocate for these measures, aiming to isolate Russia economically and diplomatically.

Since February 2022, the EU has implemented extensive sanctions, banning over €43.9 billion in exports to Russian Federation and €91.2 billion in imports from Russian Federation, significantly impacting nearly half of their trade volumes compared to 2021. These sanctions include prohibitions on high-tech goods, machinery, transportation equipment, and energy industry supplies. Additionally, the EU has imposed restrictions on Russian crude oil, refined petroleum products, coal, and various other commodities[11]. The US has similarly imposed a wide range of sanctions targeting key sectors and entities supporting Russian Federation's defence and military operations. These measures include export controls on advanced technology and critical industrial goods, alongside significant asset freezes and financial restrictions. The US Department of Commerce has listed numerous entities supporting Russian Federation 's defence sector, imposing stringent export control measures to further constrain Russia's economic capabilities[12]. The UK has aligned its sanctions with the

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[9] IAEA, Nuclear Safety, Security and Safeguards in Ukraine, available at https://-www.iaea.org/topics/response/nuclear-safety-security-and-safeguards-in-ukraine,   s.a, accessed on 04.09.2024.

[10] UN d., *Briefing Security Council, International Atomic Energy Agency Director Outlines Five Principles to Prevent Nuclear Accident at Zaporizhzhia Power Plant in Ukraine*, mai 2023.

[11] Council of the European Union, *EU sanctions against Russia explained*, available at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions-against-russia/sanctions-against-russia-explained/, s.a, accessed on 05.09.2024.

[12] Tamer A. Soliman, John J. Sullivan, Nikolay Mizulin, Paulette Vander Schueren, Jason Hungerford, Yoshihide Ito, Timothy J. Keeler, Warren S. Payne, Matthew J. Mcconkey, Dylan Geraets, Paul Whitfield-Jones, Gretel Echarte Morales, Ivan Baranenko, James Ford, Michelle J. Ng, *US, EU, and UK announce wide-ranging additional sanctions and export controls targeting Russian war efforts, in coordination with broader G-7 commitments*,

EU and US, imposing severe restrictions on Russian financial institutions, individuals and industries. The sanctions aim to cut off Russia's access to international markets and advanced technology, crucial for its military and economic infrastructure[13].

Russian Federation's diplomatic maneuvers:

* BRICS: Russian Federation has sought to deepen ties with BRICS countries (Brazil, Russian Federation, India, China, South Africa) as a counterbalance to Western influence. Through BRICS, Russian Federation has aimed to demonstrate it is not globally isolated and to secure economic and diplomatic support.

Through the BRICS alliance, Russian Federation has aimed to deepen economic partnerships and enhance trade relations. For instance, Russian Federation has significantly increased its trade with China, which includes substantial exports of energy resources, reinforcing their economic interdependence. At the same time, China has politically supported Russian Federation 's stance in various international forums, including the UN Security Council[14]. India, another key BRICS member, has maintained a nuanced stance. While strengthening its security cooperation with the West, India has continued its economic and military engagements with Russia, reflecting a strategy of balancing relations between competing global powers[15]. This balancing act by India is indicative of the broader BRICS approach, which seeks to foster multipolarity and reduce dependence on Western economies. Moreover, the BRICS nations collectively aim to establish a new kind of globalization that reduces reliance on Western financial systems, such as through the development of local currency swap agreements and alternative financial institutions. This shift is part of a broader strategy to create a more diversified and resilient global economic order[16].

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available at https://www.mayerbrown.com/en/insights/publications/2023/02/us-eu-and-uk-announce-wideranging-additional-sanctions-and-export-controls-targeting-russian-war-efforts-in-coordination-with-broader-g7-commitments, february2023, accessed on 05.09.2024.

[13] Idem.

[14] Elias Khalil Jabbour, *BRICS+ and the future of the international order*, available at https://geopoliticaleconomy.com/2023/12/16/brics-future-international-order-china/, december 2023, accessed on 05.09.2024.

[15] Chester A. Crocker, Ryan Conner, Kelly Mcfarland, *U.S. diplomacy after the Russo-Ukrainian war*, available at https://warontherocks.com/2023/09/u-s-diplomacy-after-the-russia-ukraine-war/, september 2023, accessed on 06.09.2024.

[16] Elias Khalil Jabbour, *BRICS+ and the future of the international order*, available at https://geopoliticaleconomy.com/2023/12/16/brics-future-international-order-china/, december 2023, accessed on 06.09.2024.

    * <u>Partnerships with North Korea, Iran, China</u>: The Russian Federation has strategically leveraged its relationships with countries like North Korea, Iran, and, to a lesser extent, China to counteract Western sanctions and maintain its economic and military capabilities. These relationships illustrate a strategic alignment among these countries to counter Western economic pressure and maintain their sovereignty against perceived Western hegemony. By leveraging these partnerships, Russian Federation has managed to sustain its economic and military operations despite the significant sanctions imposed by Western nations[17]. This kind of partnerships have played an important role in circumventing economic sanctions, securing military and technological cooperation and forming a united front against Western influence.

    <u>North Korea</u>

    Russian Federation's partnership with North Korea has been significant in securing military supplies. North Korea has supplied munitions and related technologies to Russian Federation, which are often based on Soviet designs originally provided by Moscow during the Cold War. These supplies have been critical in replenishing Russian Federation's stocks depleted by the conflict in Ukraine. Additionally, North Korea's methods of sanction evasion, such as using complex financial networks and front companies, have been adopted by the Russian Federation to mitigate the impact of international sanctions[18].

    <u>Iran</u>

    Iran has also been a key ally for Russian Federation in avoiding sanctions. The two countries have cooperated extensively in the military domain, with Iran supplying combat and "kamikaze" drones to Russian Federation. In return, Russian Federation has provided Iran with advanced military components. This cooperation extends to economic strategies, where both nations have worked to develop alternative currencies and electronic banking systems to facilitate trade outside the global SWIFT network. These efforts are part of a broader push towards de-dollarization and establishing more resilient trade networks among sanctioned states[19].

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[17] Darya Dolzikova, Daniel Salisbury, *Triple threat: Russia, Iran, and North Korea trade arms to get around sanctions*, available at https://thebulletin.org/2022/12/triple-threat-russia-iran-and-north-korea-trade-arms-to-get-around-sanctions/, december 2022, accessed on 06.09.2024.

[18] Michael Scollon, *'A Terrible Club To Be In': Russia, Iran, And The Bloc Of Sanctioned Nations*, available at https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-iran-sanctioned-states-burma-north-korea-belarus/32205382.html, ianuary 2023, accessed on 06.09.2024.

[19] Henry Ridgwell, *Russia Copying Iran to Evade Western Sanctions*, Report Claims, available at https://www.voanews.com/a/russia-copying-iran-to-evade-western-sanctions-report-claims/7125028.html, ianuary 2023, accessed on 07.09.2024.

China

China's role has been somewhat more cautious, but nonetheless significant. While China benefits from discounted Russian oil and energy imports, it also plays a delicate balancing act to avoid violating Western sanctions directly. Chinese entities have facilitated trade and financial transactions that support Russian Federation, including through the use of local currencies and cryptocurrencies. China's involvement is crucial as it provides a substantial market for Russian exports, thus helping to stabilize the Russian economy amid Western sanctions[20].

However, despite their close ties, the Sino-Russian relationship has its limitations. China is cautious not to be dragged too deeply into Russian Federation's conflict with Ukraine, as it seeks to maintain its global image and avoid secondary sanctions from the West. While China provides diplomatic and economic support, it stops short of offering direct military assistance to Russian Federation, reflecting a calculated approach to safeguard its broader global interests.

During Xi Jinping's state visit to France, on May 6 and 7, 2024, significant discussions regarding the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine were held, particularly focusing on China's role and influence in the conflict. Xi Jinping's visits to France and other European countries can be seen as part of China's broader strategy to assert its influence in Europe and present itself as a potential mediator in global conflicts, including the one in Ukraine. By engaging with European leaders, China aims to strengthen its ties with Europe, potentially weakening the transatlantic alliance between Europe and the United States.

All in all, China has occasionally hinted at the possibility of mediating the conflict, offering a 12-point peace plan earlier in the year. However, its close ties with Russian Federation cast doubt on its neutrality. European leaders, including those in France, have shown cautious interest in China's proposals, recognizing that while China could play a role in ending the conflict, its true motivations remain aligned with maintaining a balance of power that favours Russian Federation.

Turkey

Turkey's involvement in the conflict is characterized by a pragmatic approach, aimed at safeguarding its national interests, maintaining regional stability and playing a constructive role in international diplomacy. Turkey has positioned itself as a key mediator between Ukraine and Russian Federation. Turkey has hosted multiple rounds of peace talks, including significant meetings in Istanbul. As a NATO member, Turkey has

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[20] Michael Scollon, *'A Terrible Club To Be In': Russia, Iran, And The Bloc Of Sanctioned Nations*, available at https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-iran-sanctioned-states-burma-north-korea-belarus/32205382.html, ianuary 2023, accessed on 07.09.2024.

supported Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in line with NATO's stance. It had supplied Ukraine with military equipment, most notably the Bayraktar TB2 drones, which have been effectively used by Ukraine in its defence efforts. These drones have gained international attention for their impact on the battlefield, including destroying Russian armour and artillery. However, Turkey has also been careful not to provoke Russian Federation excessively, reflecting its balancing act. Unlike many Western countries, Turkey has not imposed sanctions on Russian Federation. This neutral stance allows Turkey to maintain open lines of communication with Moscow and continue its role as a mediator.

* <u>Counter-sanctions and public relations</u>: In response to Western sanctions, Russian Federation has imposed its own counter-sanctions, targeting Western businesses and countries. Moreover, Russian Federation has engaged in a global public relations campaign to justify its actions in Ukraine, utilizing state media and diplomatic channels to sway international opinion.

Throughout the conflict, both Ukraine and the Russian Federation have utilized their diplomatic arsenals to advance their respective agendas, seek international support, and navigate the complex web of global politics. The contrasting diplomatic strategies - Ukraine's alignment with Western organizations and principles of international law versus Russian Federation's focus on strengthening ties with non-Western powers and leveraging strategic partnerships - underscore the geopolitical rifts and the pivotal role of diplomacy in the ongoing conflict.

The diplomatic front between Ukraine and the Russian Federation has seen Russian Federation articulating several demands as prerequisites for ending the conflict. Key demands include ending NATO's military activity in Eastern Europe and particularly in Ukraine, barring Ukraine from NATO membership, and not deploying intermediate or shorter-range missiles that could reach Russian territory.

The principal aim of the costly military operations mounted by the Russian Federation seems to be to expand as much as possible their control over Ukrainian territories, so as to have increased leverage in forthcoming negotiations, for which they hinted they would be ready, in back-channel discussions with the United States[21]. The Russian Federation has stipulated conditions directly to Ukraine, which, if met, are claimed to potentially stop the fighting "in a moment". These conditions include, among others, Ukraine ceasing all military actions, amending its constitution to preserve neutrality and hence rejecting any aims to join blocs like NATO and the EU,

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[21] Ashby Heather, Lauren Baillie, Mary Glantz, *How the ICC's Warrant for Putin Could Impact the Ukraine War*, available at https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/03/how-iccs-warrant-putin-could-impact-ukraine-war, march 2023, accessed on 07.09.2024.

acknowledging Crimea as Russian territory, etc.[22] These demands reflect Russia's strategic interests in the region and its desire to limit Western influence near its borders. This approach aligns with the diplomatic principle of "*uti possidetis*", a doctrine under which a state retains possession of territories it has acquired at the conclusion of a conflict. Russian diplomatic efforts are increasingly oriented towards garnering support from a broad spectrum of non-Western nations, particularly those in the Global South[23]. Many of these states are significant purchasers of Russian exports such as arms, oil, and grain, and often share historical reservations regarding policies of the United States and European nations[24].

Conversely, Ukraine's prerequisites for peace negotiations stand in stark contrast to those of the Russian Federation, rendering the prospect of resolving the conflict through dialogue exceedingly complex. Therefore, Ukraine's objectives include securing robust guarantees for its national security; the full withdrawal of Russian military forces from Ukrainian territory; the reestablishment of its territorial sovereignty, encompassing the reclamation of the Crimean Peninsula, which was annexed by Russian Federation in 2014; the imposition of punitive measures against the Russian Federation for its role in initiating the conflict (prosecuting war criminals)[25].

However, the United States Institute of Peace discussed Ukraine's position on negotiations[26], highlighting that Ukraine, with support from the US and other allies, also aimed – at that point in time – to negotiate from a position of strength, leveraging the support they received in weapons, finances, and political backing, all aspects which enabled Ukraine to push

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[22] Colchester Max, Grove Thomas, Marson James, *Document From 2022 Reveals Putin's Punishing Terms for Peace*, available at https://www.wsj.com/world/russia-ukraine-peace-deal-2022-document-6e12e093, accessed on 07.09.2024.

[23] The "Global South" is a concept that broadly includes states in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia (excluding Israel, Japan and South Korea) and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand), according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Among them are: Brazil, India, Pakistan, Indonesia and the Chinese People's Republic, which, together with Nigeria and Mexico, are the largest states in the South in terms of area and population. Most of the countries in the Global South are located in or near the tropics.

[24] Albers Finn-Ole, *Comparing Western and Russian arms exports to the Middle East and North Africa*, available at https://warsawinstitute.org/comparing-western-russian-arms-exports-middle-east-north-africa/, 2022 accessed on 08.09.2024.

[25] Deutsche Welle, *Sanctions on Russia*, available at https://www.dw.com/en/sanctions-on-russia/t-65992008, accessed on 08.09.2024.

[26] Heather Ashby, Baillie Lauren, Glantz Mary, *How the ICC's Warrant for Putin Could Impact the Ukraine War*, available at https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/03/how-iccs-warrant-putin-could-impact-ukraine-war, march 2023, accessed on 08.09.2024.

back Russian forces effectively and maintain a viable government amidst economic devastations caused by the war[27].

Israel's diplomacy between revenge and external pressure

In the context of the ongoing conflict in Gaza, Israel, under the leadership of Prime Minister Netanyahu, has taken a complex approach to diplomacy and negotiations, influenced by both external pressures and strategic considerations. However, the complex dynamics of the conflict, involving humanitarian concerns, hostage negotiations, and regional geopolitics, present a challenging landscape for diplomatic engagement.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to Israel aimed to mitigate the conflict's escalation, reflecting international concern over the humanitarian situation in Gaza and the broader implications for regional stability. A. Blinken pressed the Israeli government to protect civilians and to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches those in need, highlighting the necessity of allowing displaced Palestinian civilians to return to their homes.

This stance aligns with President Joe Biden's efforts, as he has been working "quietly" to encourage Israel to reduce its military actions in Gaza, responding to both international and domestic calls for a ceasefire[28].

Public statements from Israeli officials have indicated a commitment to a more targeted approach to the conflict, moving towards what they describe as a phase of more "targeted warfare", despite the ongoing intense military operations[29]. This suggests a tactical shift possibly aimed at minimizing further civilian casualties and international criticism while still pursuing military objectives against Hamas. Regarding hostage negotiations, Israeli leaders have communicated that any concessions, including allowing Palestinians from northern Gaza to return, would be contingent upon Hamas's agreement to release Israeli hostages taken during the conflict[30]. This stipulation underscores the complexity of diplomatic negotiations in the conflict, where humanitarian concerns intersect with security considerations.

In terms of diplomatic strategies that could be leveraged in this context, there are several avenues Israel could explore, informed by the current situation and historical precedents:

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[27] Katie Ruppert, *After Ukraine's Peace Summit, Widen Consensus With 'Middle Powers'*, available at https://www.usip.org/publications/2024/06/after-ukraines-peace-summit-widen-consensus-middle-powers, accessed on 08.09.2024.
[28] The Jerusalem Post, *What does Israel's hasbara campaign look like six months into the Hamas war?* available at https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-796709, april 2024, accessed on 08.09.2024.
[29] Idem.
[30] Idem.

* Enhanced negotiation and mediation efforts: Collaborating with regional mediators like Egypt and Jordan, who have historical ties and leverage with both Israel and Palestinian entities, to facilitate dialogue and de-escalation efforts.

* Humanitarian ceasefires: Implementing temporary ceasefires to allow for the delivery of essential humanitarian aid and to create a conducive environment for more substantive negotiations.

* Engagement with international organizations: Working with the UN and other international bodies to address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, potentially easing international pressure and creating a platform for broader peace discussions.

* Leveraging diplomatic relations: Utilizing its diplomatic relationships with countries that have recently normalized ties with Israel to garner support for a balanced approach to resolving the conflict, while also addressing the concerns of the Palestinian population.

* Given the complex nature of the conflict, which involves deeply rooted political, territorial, and ideological issues, diplomatic strategies need to be both flexible and comprehensive, addressing immediate humanitarian concerns while laying the groundwork for a sustainable long-term resolution.

The current Israeli government's approach highlights the necessity of adapting military strategies to reduce civilian casualties and mitigate international criticism. This involves considering external pressures, such as those from the United States and other international actors, which emphasize the protection of civilians and the delivery of humanitarian aid.

The conflict also demonstrates the complexity of negotiations where security concerns, such as the release of hostages, intersect with humanitarian needs. Effective diplomatic strategies must be multifaceted, incorporating temporary ceasefires, collaboration with regional mediators, and engagement with international organizations to create conditions conducive to both immediate relief and long-term conflict resolution. This underscores the need for a flexible and comprehensive approach in conflict zones where political, territorial, and ideological issues are deeply entrenched

Lesson 2: The role of multilateral organizations in conflict diplomacy

Multilateral organizations such as the UN, EU and NATO play critical roles in conflict resolution. Their ability to convene diverse member states and implement collective decisions is paramount. However, these organizations face challenges such as veto powers, as seen with Russian Federation in the UN Security Council, which can impede swift action.

Engaging these bodies effectively requires leveraging diplomatic channels to build consensus and overcome structural obstacles.

The conflict in Ukraine

The conflict in Ukraine, which escalated dramatically with the full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation in February 2022, has underscored the critical role of multilateral organizations in conflict resolution. The initial response and ongoing diplomatic efforts highlight both the strengths and limitations of these bodies.

* United Nations (UN)

As mentioned above, Ukraine has actively used the UN to highlight its plight and rally global opposition against Russia's invasion.

* European Union (EU)

The EU has been instrumental in supporting Ukraine through economic sanctions against Russian Federation, humanitarian aid and political backing. The EU's swift and unified response, including imposing sanctions on key sectors of the Russian economy and individuals close to the Kremlin, demonstrates its capacity for collective action. Additionally, the EU has provided substantial financial and military aid to Ukraine, reinforcing the country's ability to resist aggression.

The EU has imposed multiple packages of sanctions targeting key sectors of the Russian economy, including finance, energy, transport, and technology. These sanctions also target individuals close to the Kremlin and entities supporting the war effort. Measures include freezing assets, banning transactions with the Russian Central Bank, and prohibiting imports and exports of critical goods and technologies[31]. Also, the EU has allocated substantial humanitarian assistance to help civilians affected by the war in Ukraine. This includes material assistance such as medical supplies, power generators, and shelter items, coordinated through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Additionally, the EU has provided over €926 million in humanitarian aid to Ukraine and neighbouring countries hosting refugees[32]. The EU has also provided significant financial and military aid to Ukraine. Through the European Peace Facility, the EU has mobilized funds to support the Ukrainian armed forces, including the provision of lethal and non-lethal military equipment. This aid is aimed at strengthening Ukraine's defence capabilities and protecting its civilian population. The overall EU

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[31] Council of the European Union, *EU solidarity with Ukraine*, available at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-response-ukraine-invasion/eu-solidarity-ukraine/, may 2024 accessed on 09.09.2024.
[32] European Union, *EU support for Ukraine*, available at https://european-union.europa.eu/priorities-and-actions/eu-support-ukraine_en, s.a, accessed on 09.09.2024..

support to Ukraine's military is estimated at €33 billion[33]. Politically, the EU has stood firmly with Ukraine, condemning Russian Federation's unprovoked aggression and illegal annexation attempts. The EU has been a vocal advocate for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in international forums, continuously pushing for measures to support Ukraine's defence and reconstruction efforts[34].

* North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

While Ukraine is not a NATO member, the alliance has been significant in coordinating military support and strengthening the defence capabilities of its Eastern European members. NATO's role has included bolstering defences along its eastern flank and providing intelligence, training, and equipment to Ukrainian forces. The conflict has also prompted NATO to reconsider its strategic posture and increase its readiness to respond to further aggression.

NATO has provided substantial military assistance to Ukraine through various initiatives. At the Vilnius Summit in 2023, NATO members agreed to establish the NATO-Ukraine Council to facilitate closer cooperation and decision-making between NATO and Ukraine.

This includes a multi-year support program aimed at building Ukraine's defence capabilities and transitioning its military to NATO standards[35]. In response to Russian Federation's aggression, NATO has significantly increased its military presence on its eastern flank. This includes the deployment of additional troops, aircraft, and ships, as well as the establishment of multinational battlegroups in countries such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia. These measures have effectively doubled the number of troops in the region and enhanced NATO's ability to respond swiftly to any further aggression[36].

* Challenges and obstacles

The primary challenge in leveraging these multilateral organizations effectively has been overcoming structural and political barriers. The

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[33] Idem.

[34] Council of the European Union, *Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine: EU adopts 11th package of economic and individual sanctions*, available at https://www.-consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/06/23/russia-s-war-of-aggression-against-ukraine-eu-adopts-11th-package-of-economic-and-individual-sanctions/, june 2023, accessed on 09.09.2024.

[35] NATO a., *Secretary General to Ukraine Defense Contact Group: NATO support will continue for as long as it takes*, available at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/-news_217716.htm, july 2023, accessed on 09.09.2024.

[36] NATO b., *NATO's military presence in the east of the Alliance*, available at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_136388.htm, december 2023 accessed on 10.09.2024.

Russian veto in the UN Security Council is a significant obstacle, limiting the body's ability to take decisive action. Similarly, the differing priorities and interests of EU member states can complicate unified responses, although the Ukrainian conflict has seen a notable degree of cohesion. NATO's involvement is constrained by its commitment to collective defence, which does not extend to non-member states like Ukraine.

The conflict in Gaza (Israel - Hamas)

The ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza presents another case where multilateral organizations play an important role in conflict diplomacy. The complex and protracted nature of this conflict requires robust and coordinated international efforts to mediate and resolve.

* United Nations (UN)

The UN has been actively involved in attempting to mediate the conflict, primarily through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and various special envoys. The UN Security Council often debates resolutions regarding the conflict, but these efforts are frequently stymied by the veto power of permanent members with vested interests, including the US. Despite these challenges, the UN continues to call for ceasefires, humanitarian access and a two-state solution. UNRWA provides essential humanitarian aid, including education, healthcare, and emergency relief, to millions of Palestinian refugees, significantly contributing to the humanitarian response in Gaza and the West Bank[37]. The UN Security Council often debates resolutions related to the conflict, but these efforts are frequently hindered by the veto power of permanent members, including the US, which has historically used its veto to block resolutions perceived as unfavourable to Israel[38]. This has created significant challenges in achieving consensus on decisive actions.

* European Union (EU)

The EU has consistently advocated for a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, supporting initiatives that promote dialogue and provide humanitarian assistance. The EU's diplomatic efforts include funding reconstruction in Gaza, supporting Palestinian state-building efforts, and calling for the resumption of peace talks. For instance, in 2023, the EU tripled its humanitarian aid to Gaza, increasing the funding from €25 million

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[37] UN, *'Insidious Campaign' by Israel Under Way to End Palestine Refugee Agency's Operations in Gaza, Commissioner-General Tells Security Council*, available at https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15668.doc.htm, april 2024, accessed on 10.09.2024.

[38] UN e., *Israel-Palestine crisis: Security Council calls for urgent, extended humanitarian pauses in Gaza*, available at https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/11/1143632, november 2023, accessed on 10.09.2024.

to €75 million to address the urgent needs caused by the ongoing conflict[39]. This aid focuses on providing life-saving emergency responses, including access to water, food, healthcare, shelter, and sanitation. Furthermore, EU announced €125 million in initial humanitarian aid for Palestinians for 2024[40].

Additionally, the EU supports the Palestinian Authority in its efforts to build governmental institutions and promote good governance. The EU has emphasized the importance of resuming peace talks and has called for a two-state solution as the only viable resolution to the conflict. The EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Josep Borrell, has reiterated the need for a coherent and unified approach among EU member states to effectively support peace initiatives and ensure humanitarian assistance reaches those in need[41].

However, the EU's influence is sometimes limited by the divergent views of its member states on the conflict and their varying relationships with Israel and Palestine. Despite these challenges, the EU continues to leverage its diplomatic and financial tools to promote peace and stability in the region[42].

* Regional organizations and mediators

Regional organizations such as the Arab League and countries like Egypt and Jordan have played significant roles in mediating ceasefires and facilitating negotiations between Israel and Hamas. These regional actors leverage their unique positions and historical ties to both parties to negotiate temporary ceasefires and humanitarian truces. However, achieving a lasting peace has proven elusive.

* Challenges and obstacles

The diplomatic landscape in Gaza is fraught with challenges, including deeply entrenched positions, historical grievances and frequent cycles of violence. The veto power in the UN Security Council often

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[39] Suzanne Lynch, *EU triples funding to Gaza after a week of mixed messages on Israel crisis*, available at https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-triple-funding-humanitarian-aid-gaza-israel-hamas-conflict-crisis/, octomber 2023, accessed on 10.09.2024.

[40] Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), *EU announces €125 million in initial humanitarian aid for Palestinians for 2024*, available at https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/news-stories/news/eu-announces-eu125-million-initial-humanitarian-aid-palestinians-2024-2023-12-08_en, 2024, accessed on 10.09.2024.

[41] EU External Action, *What the EU stands for on Gaza and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict*, available at https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/what-eu-stands-gaza-and-israeli-palestinian-conflict_en, november 2023, accessed on 10.09.2024.

[42] Deborah Kiameh, *Europe & UN'S role in Israeli-Palestine conflict*, available at https://cose-eu.org/2023/11/01/eu-and-un-role-in-israel-palestine-conflict/, november 2023, accessed on 10.09.2024.

prevents unified international action, similar to the situation in Ukraine. Additionally, the internal divisions within the Palestinian territories, between Hamas in Gaza and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, complicate efforts to present a unified front in negotiations.

Conclusion

In both the Ukrainian and Gaza conflicts, multilateral organizations such as the UN, EU, and NATO play important roles in conflict diplomacy. Their ability to convene diverse member states and implement collective decisions is essential for peace efforts. However, these organizations face significant challenges, including political divisions and structural obstacles like veto powers. Effective engagement with these bodies requires diplomatic skill to build consensus and navigate complex international dynamics.

Lesson 3: Economic sanctions as a diplomatic tool

Economic sanctions have represented a very significant tool in modern diplomatic strategy. These sanctions aim to weaken the adversary's economy and force political concessions without direct military engagement. However, the effectiveness of sanctions depends on the unity and cooperation of the imposing countries, as well as their ability to mitigate unintentional consequences on global markets and third-party nations.

Sanctions on the Russian Federation's economy

* Comprehensive sanctions on Russian economy

Regarding the energy sector sanctions, the EU, the US and other allies imposed significant restrictions on Russian Federation's energy exports, particularly targeting oil and gas, which are crucial sources of revenue for the Russian government. The sanctions included bans on importing Russian crude oil and petroleum products and restrictions on technology transfer for energy exploration and production. The EU operates on a consensus-based approach when implementing economic sanctions, particularly those against the Russian Federation in response to the conflict in Ukraine. This consensus involves all EU member states agreeing unanimously on the sanctions package before it can be enacted.

In the financial sector, sanctions targeted major Russian banks, cutting them off from the international SWIFT payment system. This action severely limited Russian Federation's ability to conduct international financial transactions, impacting its banking sector and overall economy.

With reference to the export controls, restrictions were placed on the export of high-tech goods to Russian Federation, including semiconductors, telecommunications equipment and advanced manufacturing technology.

These controls aimed to stifle Russian Federation's technological advancement and military capabilities.

* Targeted sanctions on individuals and entities

➢ oligarchs - The West imposed asset freezes and travel bans on Russian oligarchs and business leaders with close ties to the Kremlin. These measures aimed to pressure influential figures within Russia to advocate for a change in government policy.

➢ corporations - Sanctions were also placed on key Russian corporations, including state-owned enterprises in the defence, energy and transportation sectors. These measures were designed to disrupt the operations of companies crucial to Russian Federation's economy and military infrastructure.

* Secondary sanctions and global market impact

Countries that continued to engage with sanctioned Russian entities faced the risk of secondary sanctions from the US and EU. This threat deterred third-party nations and companies from doing business with Russian Federation, further isolating its economy.

The sanctions had ripple effects on global markets, particularly in the energy sector, leading to higher prices and supply chain disruptions. To mitigate these effects, the US and EU coordinated with major energy producers to increase supply and stabilize markets. They also provided financial support and subsidies to sectors and populations affected by the economic fallout.

The case of Gaza (Israel - Hamas)
* Economic blockade on Gaza

Following the beginning of the Israel–Hamas war and attacks on and in Israel by Hamas and Palestinian militants (07 October), Israel imposed a "total blockade" of the Gaza Strip, on 9 October 2023, by cutting electricity and blocking the entry of food and fuel as part of "a complete siege" on Hamas-run Gaza, where about 2.3 million people live in one of the most densely populated areas in the world[43]. In January 2024, Israeli authorities blocked 56% of humanitarian aid to northern Gaza[44]. On 9 February 2024, UNRWA director Philippe Lazzarini said that Israel had blocked food for

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[43] Aljazeera, *Israel announces 'total' blockade on Gaza*, available at https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/9/israel-announces-total-blockade-on-gaza, october 2023, accessed on 10.09.2024.

[44] Patrick Wintour, *Israel appears to be in breach of ICJ orders on Gaza, senior UN official says*, available at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/10/israel-appears-to-be-in-breach-of-icj-orders-on-gaza-senior-un-official-says, february 2024, accessed on 10.09.2024.

1.1 million Palestinians in Gaza[45]. The blockade aimed to limit the flow of materials that could be used for military purposes by Hamas, while exerting economic pressure on the governing authority in Gaza.

* Sanctions on Hamas and related entities

In October 1997, the US and EU have designated Hamas as a terrorist organization and imposed sanctions on its leaders, freezing their assets and prohibiting transactions with them.

HAMAS (acronym for Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya / Islamic Resistance Movement) was described as the largest and most capable militant group in the Palestinian territories and one of the territories' two major political parties. HAMAS emerged in 1987 during the first Palestinian uprising, or intifada, as an outgrowth of the Muslim Brotherhood's Palestinian branch. The group is committed to armed resistance against Israel and the creation of an Islamic Palestinian state in Israel's place. HAMAS has been the de facto governing body in the Gaza Strip since 2007, when it ousted the Palestinian Authority from power[46]. These sanctions aim to cut off financial support and international legitimacy for Hamas. Measures have been taken to disrupt the financial networks supporting Hamas, including sanctions on charities and businesses suspected of funnelling money to the group. These efforts aim to reduce Hamas's financial resources for military and governance activities.

* International sanctions and diplomatic pressure

Countries and organizations that provide support to Hamas, such as Iran, have faced international sanctions. These sanctions, imposed by countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, target key Hamas officials, financial facilitators, and entities linked to Hamas's funding networks[47]. The objective is to hinder Hamas's ability to carry out its operations by cutting off external funding and resources[48]. Iran, identified as a primary benefactor of Hamas, provides substantial financial and military

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[45] Julia Frankel, *Israel is holding up food for 1.1 million Palestinians in Gaza, the main UN aid agency there says*, available at https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-unwra-bank-aid-4ed5e0652dd81b875055679a01a19371, february 2024, accessed on 11.09.2024.

[46] National Counterterrorism Center, *Foreign Terrorist Organizations*, available at la https://www.dni.gov/nctc/ftos/hamas_fto.html, september 2022, accessed on 11.09.2024.

[47] Donovan Kimberly, Maia Nikoladze, *Global Sanctions Dashboard: How Hamas raises, uses, and moves money*, available at https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/-blogs/econographics/global-sanctions-dashboard-how-hamas-raises-uses-and-moves-money/, Ryan Murphy, and Alessandra Magazzino, march 2024, accessed on 11.09.2024.

[48] US Department of the Treasury, *Kingdom Take Coordinated Action Against Hamas Leaders and Financiers*, available at https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1907, november 2023, accessed on 11.09.2024.

support, including the transfer of weapons and operational training through its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). This support has been a significant factor in the international sanctions against both Iran and Hamas [49]. Recognizing the humanitarian impact of the blockade and sanctions, international organizations and countries have coordinated to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza. Mechanisms have been established to facilitate the flow of food, medicine, and essential supplies while preventing their diversion for military use.

Conclusion

In both Ukraine and Gaza cases, economic sanctions serve as critical diplomatic tools aimed at weakening adversaries economically and compelling political changes without direct military intervention. The success of these sanctions hinges on the unity and cooperation of the imposing countries and their ability to manage the broader economic repercussions. Effective sanctions require careful coordination, targeted measures and robust mechanisms to mitigate unintentional consequences on global markets and civilian populations.

Lesson 4: Public diplomacy and information warfare

Public diplomacy and information warfare are increasingly crucial in modern conflicts. Both Ukraine and Russian Federation have engaged in extensive information campaigns to sway international public opinion and garner support. Ukraine has effectively used social media and global media outlets to highlight its plight and galvanize support, while Russian Federation has utilized state media and international channels to justify its actions. Effective public diplomacy can influence international perceptions and policy decisions, making it an essential component of conflict diplomacy.

Israel's approach to public diplomacy and information warfare is leveraging global media, social media, historical narratives and alliances to influence international public opinion and policy decisions. However, these efforts are met with significant challenges, including international criticism, digital activism and the complexities of the ongoing conflict with Palestinian groups. In this environment, effective public diplomacy remains an essential tool for Israel in securing its strategic objectives and maintaining support among its allies.

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[49] Idem.

Ukraine's use of public diplomacy and information warfare
** Social media campaigns*

The Ukrainian government and its citizens have utilized platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to share real-time updates, personal stories and footage of the conflict. This popular approach has personalized the war, making it more relatable and urgent to international audiences. Moreover, the Ukrainian President Volodimir Zelensky has been particularly effective in using social media to communicate directly with the global public. His frequent video addresses, often recorded in high-risk areas, have humanized the conflict and rallied international support. The hashtag *#StandWithUkraine* and related campaigns have gone viral, helping to mobilize global public opinion and secure broader international backing for Ukraine's cause.

** Global media outreach*

Ukraine has been proactive in providing access to international journalists, facilitating widespread coverage of the conflict. This has helped frame the narrative in terms favourable to Ukraine, emphasizing Russian aggression and Ukrainian resilience. Ukraine has also engaged in cultural diplomacy by highlighting its heritage, art and democratic values, contrasting them with the autocratic tendencies of Russian Federation. On the other hand, is worth mentioning that according to Ukraine's Institute of Mass Information, 45 Ukrainian media workers have been killed as a result of the full-scale invasion by Russian Federation and 21 journalists working in Ukraine have been captured and kidnapped by Russian forces[50]. Organizations such as UNESCO have implemented emergency measures to protect journalists in Ukraine, ensuring they have the necessary equipment and training to report safely from conflict zones. This support underscores the international community's recognition of the importance of accurate and independent journalism during the conflict[51].

The connection between Zelensky's public diplomacy and its media portrayal is symbiotic. Zelensky's strategic use of media amplifies his diplomatic efforts, while the media, in turn, shapes global perceptions of Ukraine's struggle, influencing international policy and public opinion in favour of Ukraine. This dynamic has been crucial in maintaining and expanding global support for Ukraine throughout the conflict.

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[50] Laura Oliver, *Breaking news: How the war impacts Ukraine's independent media*, la https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/3/9/ukraines-overnight-war-reporters-media-struggling-amid-conflict, march 2023, accessed on 11.09.2024.

[51] UNESCO, *Ukraine: UNESCO implementing new emergency measures to protect journalists*, available at https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/ukraine-unesco-implementing-new-emergency-measures-protect-journalists, april 2023, accessed on 11.09.2024.

Russian Federation's use of public diplomacy and information warfare

* State media and propaganda

Russian Federation has utilized state-funded media outlets like RT (formerly *Russia Today*) and Sputnik to disseminate its narrative globally. These channels have focused on justifying Russian Federation's actions, portraying the invasion as a defensive measure against NATO expansion and Ukrainian nationalism. This approach is part of a broader disinformation ecosystem orchestrated by the Kremlin, involving the use of state-controlled media to amplify specific narratives that support Russian foreign policy objectives[52]. This media strategy has faced significant pushback from social media platforms and international regulators. Companies like Google, Meta, and TikTok have restricted access to RT and Sputnik's content across Europe, in response to their role in spreading disinformation related to the Ukraine conflict. These measures are part of broader efforts by Western entities to counteract Russian propaganda and ensure the integrity of information related to the conflict[53].

* Disinformation campaigns

Russian Federation has deployed extensive disinformation campaigns, spreading false narratives and conspiracy theories to confuse and manipulate public opinion both domestically and internationally.

* Cyber warfare

The Russian Federation has utilized cyber-attacks and information warfare as strategic tools to destabilize Ukraine and undermine its government. Russian-affiliated hackers have targeted Ukrainian infrastructure, launching cyber-attacks on critical systems such as power grids, government websites, and financial institutions. Notable incidents include the 2015 and 2016 attacks on Ukraine's power grid, which left hundreds of thousands without electricity, and more recent cyber-attacks timed to coincide with the full-scale invasion in 2022[54]. Moreover, Russian Federation employs bot networks and troll farms to amplify its messaging

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[52] US Department of State, *Russian Disinformation*, available at https://www.-state.gov/briefings-foreign-press-centers/russian-disinformation, january 2022, accessed on 11.09.2024.

[53] Tom Bateman, *Ukraine war: Russia throttles social platforms as Big Tech bans RT and Sputnik state media*, available at https://www.euronews.com/next/2022/03/02/ukraine-war-facebook-and-youtube-block-russia-s-rt-and-sputnik-in-europe, march 2022, accesed on 12.09.2024.

[54] Grace B.Mueller, Benjamin Jensen, Brandon Valeriano, Ryan C. Maness, Jose M. Macias, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), *Cyber Operations during the Russo-Ukrainian War*, available at https://www.csis.org/analysis/cyber-operations-during-russo-ukrainian-war, june 2023, accessed on 12.09.2024.

on social media, further sowing discord within Western societies and attempting to influence public opinion. These operations are part of a broader strategy to weaken international support for Ukraine and create division among its allies[55]. Overall, these combined cyber and information warfare tactics are integral to Russia's efforts to undermine Ukraine's stability and maintain its influence over the region[56].

In this context, bot networks and troll farms are tools of disinformation, having the main role of influencing public opinion. Bot networks are automated bot accounts which are programmed to flood social media platforms with large volumes of content. These bots can generate posts, retweet or share existing content, and amplify specific narratives or hashtags. By creating the illusion of widespread consensus or popularity around certain topics, bot networks can manipulate public discourse and make fringe views appear mainstream. The troll farms are human-operated troll farms, through which individuals create fake profiles and engage in online discussions. Trolls can pose as ordinary users, infiltrating online communities and spreading disinformation, divisive rhetoric or pro-Russian narratives. These actors are adept at exploiting social and political fault lines within target societies.

This type of operations are an integral part of Russian Federation's broader approach to asymmetric warfare, where the battle for hearts and minds is fought through the manipulation of information on a global scale. Addressing this challenge requires a coordinated effort between governments, social media platforms, and civil society to counteract the pervasive influence of disinformation. By controlling the flow of information and spreading disinformation, Russian bots and trolls can influence how the conflict is perceived globally. For instance, they may downplay Russian atrocities, shift blame onto Ukraine, or portray Russia as a victim of Western aggression. Such narratives can erode public support for sanctions against Russia or military aid to Ukraine. In some cases, these operations aim to influence elections or policy decisions by swaying voters' opinions. By amplifying divisive issues or promoting candidates who are sympathetic to Russian interests, troll farms and bots can indirectly shape the policies of Western governments, potentially leading to a reduction in support for Ukraine.

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[55] Keir Giles, Chatham House, *Russian cyber and information warfare in practice*, available at https://www.chathamhouse.org/2023/12/russian-cyber-and-information-warfare-practice, december 2023, accessed on 12.09.2024.

[56] Lee Chase, Standford University, Russian Cyber Operations Against Ukrainian Critical Infrastructure, available at https://fsi.stanford.edu/sipr/russian-cyber-operations-against-ukrainian-critical-infrastructure, mai 2023, accessed on 12.09.2024.

Israel's use of public diplomacy and information warfare
* *Strategic communications*

The Israeli government has effectively used strategic communications to justify its military actions in Gaza by emphasizing its right to self-defense against Hamas rocket attacks. This messaging is disseminated through official channels and is reinforced by Israeli embassies worldwide. Israeli officials and institutions maintain a significant presence on social media platforms like Twitter, where they provide updates, counter misinformation, and highlight humanitarian efforts, such as warning civilians before strikes [57]. In addition to   traditional media outlets, Israel's digital diplomacy efforts involve a comprehensive social media strategy aimed at Western audiences. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs manages a significant digital presence, utilizing shock factor and sensationalism to counter pro-Palestinian narratives and to maintain Western sympathy and support. This approach includes targeted ads and posts in multiple languages, reaching millions of people globally [58].

* *Engagement with international media*

Israel frequently engages with international media through press briefings and interviews with key officials. These interactions aim to shape the global narrative by presenting Israel's perspective on the conflict and its efforts to minimize civilian casualties. For instance, Israel has hosted thousands of foreign reporters, providing them with comprehensive tours and briefings to ensure that the international community receives firsthand accounts of the situation and Israel's justifications for its military actions [59]. Furthermore, Israel leverages its global diaspora networks to build support and counter negative portrayals in international forums and media outlets. These networks play a crucial role in advocating for Israel and disseminating information that supports Israel's narratives, emphasizing its right to self-defense and highlighting humanitarian efforts, such as warning civilians before strikes [60]. Through these strategic communications and the

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[57] Kylie Cheung, Wartime propaganda experts explain why Israel's social media strategy is targeting the West, available at https://prismreports.org/2023/11/29/why-israels-social-media-targeting-west/, november 2023, accessed on 12.09.2024.

[58] Idem.

[59] The Jerusalem Post, *What does Israel's hasbara campaign look like six months into the Hamas war?* available at https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-796709, april 2024, accessed on 12.09.2024.

[60] John Chipman, Laith Alajlouni, Hasan Alhasan, Emile Hokayem, John Raine, Rym Momtaz, Dana H. Allin, Nigel Gould-Davies, *IISS experts assess the Hamas–Israel war and its international implications*, available at https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/online-analysis/2023/10/iiss-experts-assess-the-hamas-israel-war-and-its-international-implications/#:~:text=URL%3A%20https%3A%2F%2Fwww.iiss.org%2Fonline, october 2023, accessed on 12.09.2024.

use of digital platforms, Israel aims to maintain and strengthen international support while countering disinformation and unfavourable media coverage.

Hamas's use of public diplomacy and information warfare
* Media and social media tactics

Hamas's military wing, the Al-Qassam Brigades, runs its own media operations, releasing statements, videos, and reports that highlight their resistance against Israel. These materials are circulated through various online platforms to galvanize support among Palestinians and sympathetic audiences worldwide. Hamas frames the conflict as a struggle for liberation and resistance against occupation, using emotional and historical narratives to gain international sympathy and support[61]. They often highlight civilian casualties and destruction in Gaza to criticize Israeli military actions. Hamas uses emotional and historical narratives to gain international sympathy and support. They often highlight civilian casualties and the destruction in Gaza to criticize Israeli military actions and portray their cause as just and humanitarian[62]. This media strategy is coordinated with allied organizations and media outlets in the region, such as Al Jazeera, to ensure their perspective on the conflict reaches a broad audience[63].

* Cyber Activities

Israel's public diplomacy is increasingly challenged by digital activism, particularly on social media platforms, where pro-Palestinian voices and global activists mobilize to criticize Israeli policies. Hashtags, viral videos and online campaigns often sway public opinion against Israel, presenting a significant challenge to its information warfare efforts.

On the other hand, Hamas has engaged in extensive online propaganda campaigns to also influence public opinion, rapidly disseminating their messages through social media. These efforts are coordinated with allied organizations and regional media outlets, including Al Jazeera, to ensure widespread dissemination of their perspective on the conflict. By leveraging these platforms, Hamas aims to shape narratives, counter Israeli messaging and garner support for their actions among broader audiences[64].

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[61] Middle East Monitor, *Al-Qassam video captures release of 6th batch of Israeli hostages in Gaza*, available at https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20231130-al-qassam-video-captures-release-of-6th-batch-of-israeli-hostages-in-gaza/, november 2023, accessed on 12.09.2024.
[62] Almanar, *Al-Qassam Brigades Fighters Strike IOF in Beit Hanoun: Video*, available at https://english.almanar.com.lb/1980134, november 2023, accessed on 12.09.2024.
[63] Aljazeera, *Israel vs Hamas: Battle for narrative supremacy*, available at https://www.aljazeera.com/program/the-listening-post/2023/11/25/israel-vs-hamas-battle-for-narrative-supremacy, november 2023, accessed on 12.09.2024.
[64] Idem.

Conclusion

In both the Ukrainian and Gaza conflicts, public diplomacy and information warfare are vital components of the broader diplomatic strategy. These efforts aim to shape international perceptions, garner support and influence policy decisions. The effectiveness of these campaigns depends on the ability to communicate compelling narratives, counteract misinformation and maintain a persistent and adaptive media presence. The successes and challenges faced by Ukraine, Israel and Hamas in these endeavours highlight the complexities and importance of information warfare in modern conflict diplomacy.

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