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Strategy Versus Statecraft in Crimea

Lukas Milevski

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ABSTRACT: The March 2014 annexation of Crimea may be interpreted as a contest between Russian strategy and Western statecraft. The respective natures of strategy and statecraft differ substantially, which predetermined the parameters and outcome of the Crimean crisis. This makes an excellent case study of the interaction between strategy and statecraft, and shows why strategy trumps statecraft in direct confrontations.

Even as Russia continues to undermine eastern Ukraine with provocateurs from within and massed troops from without, it is fair to say the Crimean component of the ongoing Ukrainian crisis has concluded. This clearly important historical event will be mined for further insight into Russian foreign policy, as well as statecraft and international relations, for years to come. Contemporary commentary on the crisis ranges from blame to the vociferous defense by Russia's premier international propaganda arm, *Russia Today*. Academics blogged throughout to consider political, economic, and other implications in real time as the crisis developed.

With Crimea now annexed by Russia (even though questions about Russian intentions toward the rest of Ukraine continue), it is possible to step back and consider the crisis as a whole. Why and how did Russia so easily impose its will upon the course of events? Why did the statecraft practiced by the Western powers appear so weak and anemic?

This article suggests the dynamics and outcome of the Crimean crisis were determined by disparate assumptions and methods of thinking on the part of the West and of Russia. The West practiced statecraft. Russia entered into Crimea anticipating the need for strategy as classically understood—using force to gain its political ends though ultimately their threat of force sufficed. This difference between statecraft and strategy dominated the entire affair. To illustrate the importance of this distinction, the respective natures of strategy and statecraft will be explored as lenses through which to examine the crisis. Finally, because strategy and statecraft differ so significantly, the real and anticipated post-crisis consequences of statecraft will be considered, even though that statecraft now no longer opposes strategy in any immediate sense.

Strategy and Statecraft: Respective Natures

Although classical strategy is a subset of statecraft, their natures are different. The nature of strategy differs significantly from that of statecraft, even though both ultimately subscribe to André Beaufre's proposal that "[a]ny dialectical contest is a contest for freedom of action."¹

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1 André Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, trans. R.H. Barry (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), 110.

However, strategy approaches the question of freedom of action differently from statecraft, a divergence stemming from the fundamental assumptions and ways of thinking which respectively underpin the two, particularly concerning the role of military force. It is because of the sheer difference between the nature of force, on the one hand, and all other instruments of political power, on the other hand, that one must make a clear distinction between the threat or use of force and the employment of all other political tools. This difference renders many modern definitions of strategy obscure by implying functional equality between all instruments of power. Strategy, in its classical sense (as a concept solely dedicated to understanding and mastering military force) when employed side-by-side with the wider concept of statecraft, adopts the natures of the instruments available.

Force and its political utility are thus the primary concerns of strategy. Colin Gray has defined strategy as “*the use that is made of force and the threat of force for the ends of policy.*”² Threatened (or actual) violence is, therefore, the first instrument in the strategist’s toolkit. Such threat of or use of force may well be reciprocated by the opposing party, giving rise to the adversarial, reciprocal nature of strategy. Beaufre has similarly defined strategy as “*the art of the dialectic of force or, more precisely, the art of the dialectic of two opposing wills using force to resolve their dispute.*”³ A strategic mindset focuses on directing violence in a context where the other party is likely to respond in kind. But for what purpose?

Clausewitz clearly understood the purpose of force, encapsulating it in his definition of war. “War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will.”⁴ A strategist uses force to impose an unwelcome situation upon his enemy. The American admiral and strategic theorist J.C. Wylie similarly asserted “the aim of war is some measure of control over the enemy” and further clarified “control sought in war should be neither so extreme as to amount to extermination...nor should it be so tenuous as to foster the continued behavior of the enemy as a hazard to the victory.”⁵ The threat, or actual use of force is meant to be converted to a non-violent purpose or end. “[T]his dilemma of currency conversion is central to the difficulty of strategy.”⁶ This difficulty is, of course, eased when force does not actually have to be used.

Statecraft is the use of power in international relations. As the larger idea, it subsumes strategy within it. However, statecraft beyond the realm of strategy rests upon contrasting assumptions and ways of thinking, being typically conducted via diplomacy, “a field where success, in the last analysis, was best assured by agreements that provided mutuality of advantage.”⁷ It tends, therefore, toward persuasive means of achieving political objectives, though as a whole statecraft constitutes a spectrum ranging from persuasion to coercion. Yet, even coercive diplomacy is

2 Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 17.

3 Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, 22.

4 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 75.

5 J.C. Wylie, *Military Strategy: A General Theory of Power Control* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press 1989), 66, 70.

6 Colin S. Gray, *The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 136.

7 Gordon A. Craig and Alexander L. George, *Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Problems of Our Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 15.

closer to diplomacy than to strategy. “Coercive diplomacy needs to be distinguished from pure coercion. It seeks to persuade the opponent to cease his aggression rather than bludgeon him into stopping. In contrast to the crude use of force to repel the opponent, coercive diplomacy emphasizes the use of threats and the exemplary use of limited force to persuade him to back down.”⁸ Coercive diplomacy, thus, overlaps with strategy to some extent—the primary difference stemming from how force is understood.

One may engage in coercive diplomacy, or at least attempt to do so, without understanding the nature of military force as an instrument, or the nature of strategy. Such use tends to rely on force as bluff. If force must actually be employed in coercive diplomacy, it is frequently ineffective. This is an important distinction because “[t]he declaration of war, and more immediately the use of violence, alters everything. From that point on, the demands of war tend to shape policy, more than the direction of policy shapes war.”⁹ The reciprocal use of force can and does take on a life of its own which may be mastered only with difficulty. Strategy accepts this reciprocity; whereas diplomacy and statecraft rarely do. The presence of force also changes the significance of all other instruments of statecraft, including diplomacy, economic or financial pressure, propaganda, and so on. These instruments do not wholly lose their worth—far from it—but their actual specific utility is inevitably modified by the serious threat of or use of force.

The principal differences between strategy and statecraft are the sets of fundamental assumptions and ways of thinking respective to each. Strategy is by definition adversarial and seeks victory; whereas statecraft is merely competitive and seeks common ground and agreement, even within the coercive use of force. Most writing on strategy assumes the presence of a reciprocating enemy; most writing on statecraft assumes common ground may be found and reached through diplomacy and persuasion. Their accepted mechanisms to resolve conflict differ fundamentally, giving strategy the advantage due to the respective images each side of the conflict has of the other. The mindset of the strategist is thus at odds with, perhaps even opposed to, the manner of thinking inherent in most of statecraft. Moreover, their mutual interaction has not been extensively investigated. What happens when one political actor enters into a confrontation with strategic assumptions, and his opposite with the assumptions underpinning statecraft? The Crimean takeover of March 2014 makes an excellent case study not only of such a confrontation, but of why statecraft fails in the face of classical strategy.

The Crimean Crisis

The Crimean crisis began with a Russian move. Yanukovich ordered snipers to shoot into the crowds at Maidan (Independence) Square. When this act of violence inflamed the protestors’ passions rather than suppressing them, he fled or, as reported by Ukrainian investigators, was perhaps abducted to Russia. Russian armed forces thereafter moved into Crimea, an invasion that violated the sovereign territory of another

8 Ibid., 189.

9 Hew Strachan, “Strategy in the Twenty-First Century,” in *The Changing Character of War*, eds. Hew Strachan and Sibylle Scheipers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 508.

state. Together with Russian and pro-Russian paramilitary forces, they besieged Ukrainian army and navy posts and attempted to disarm those inside, limiting their freedom of action. Thereafter, Russian armed forces largely remained a tactically latent threat but one being up by constant reinforcement. Ukrainians did not resist with force, which suited Russian purposes. After all, as Clausewitz noted, “[t]he aggressor is always peace-loving...he would prefer to take over our country unopposed...To prevent his doing so one must be willing to make war and be prepared for it.”¹⁰ The result in Crimea was a foregone conclusion as soon as Ukraine had chosen not to reply to the Russian invasion with armed force. Ukrainians were not willing or able to make war, rightly or wrongly, and so could not prevent the loss of Crimea.

The result of the crisis was a foregone conclusion because the Russians understood a basic tenet of strategy: “[T]he ultimate determinant in war is the man on the scene with the gun. This man is the final power in war. He is in control. He determines who wins.”¹¹ Russia established control in Crimea through its military and paramilitary presence. It is immaterial that this presence did not begin causing bloodshed and inflicting casualties upon Ukrainian armed forces in the region; control had been established.¹² With this move, Russia had achieved two conditions. First, it had unambiguously demonstrated its political resolve by going to the extreme of introducing military force into the situation, a resolve unlikely to be shaken by countermeasures short of force. Second, the end result could not be in doubt as long as Russian forces remained. They would have prevented Ukraine from exercising its sovereignty in the region in any case, with or without bloodshed, much as the United Nations and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe were prevented from entering Crimea to observe the situation.

Having imposed control over the future of Crimea, Russia could allow the slower-acting non-military instruments of political power to guide the peninsula toward its fate. Russia could afford to take its time because it was already in effective control of Crimea, a control which further amplified the efficacy of its slower non-military tools. This fact also gave the false impression that the crisis could still be resolved through western statecraft in some manner other than that desired by the Kremlin. Russia employed two primary non-military instruments to consolidate its hold on Crimea: propaganda, as conveyed internationally by *Russia Today* as well as across large swaths of eastern Europe by Russian media such as the First Baltic Channel; and local and imported pro-Russian supporters in Crimea, who took over the power structure and bent it to Putin’s will.

Russia has disseminated propaganda in Ukraine for years through print media, television, and radio. It has deep roots in Ukraine and many, particularly in the south and east of the country, may read, watch, or listen only to Russian media for all their news consumption. For example, in 2009 Russian newspapers accounted for 66.7 percent of all those circulated. This “creates a threat to Ukrainian national security

10 Clausewitz, *On War*, 370.

11 Wylie, *Military Strategy*, 72.

12 Russian forces did slowly assault border posts in Crimea to evict the guards and their families, and gradually assaulted all Ukrainian army posts after the conclusion of the internationally unrecognized referendum.

due to the aggressive informative policy of some Russian TV channels in relation to Ukraine and its citizens.”¹³ This aggressive information flow aims to influence Ukrainian policy toward Russia, such as by agitating against joining NATO and promoting the Russian language as an official language while casting a defamatory shadow by accusing various Ukrainian center-right parties of ultra-nationalism or even fascism.¹⁴ Russian propaganda, therefore, lent local legitimacy to its invasion of Crimea; and reciprocally the Russian invasion of Crimea lent credence to its propaganda. Why else would the Russian armed forces be in Crimea, save to protect ethnic Russians from the Ukrainian government?

Russia’s supporters in Crimea, its second non-military tool, were—and are—led by Sergey Aksyonov. He illegitimately assumed power in Crimea largely due to the presence of Russian forces. He was allegedly supported by fifty-five of the sixty-four invited delegates, of the one hundred who normally make up the legislature. Yet controversy persists as to whether a physical quorum was reached. A number of the delegates alleged they were not actually present—“at least 10 votes...were cast for people who were not in the chamber.” The utility of latent force becomes apparent, given that Aksyonov received only four percent of the vote in the most recent election in Crimea in 2010.¹⁵ This practice has been the pattern in Crimea throughout the crisis. Gallup conducted a public opinion poll amongst the residents of Crimea in May 2013, which revealed 23 percent of Crimea’s inhabitants believed the peninsula should be separated from Ukraine and ceded to Russia. This actually indicated a downward trend, as 33 percent held such views in 2011.¹⁶ Yet the results of the internationally unrecognized referendum in Crimea indicate over 95 percent voted for joining Russia. Only the threat of Russian force enabled these results, based in large part on widespread propaganda and further rigging of the outcomes.

Ultimately, once Russia had introduced armed force into Crimea, it was virtually impossible for it to fail to annex it, barring an effective armed response from Ukraine or the West. When this move was not forthcoming, the game was up—and Russia had won Crimea through non-military instruments whose utility and effectiveness was entirely premised upon the presence of Russian forces.

The enabling and strengthening effect that the presence and threat of Russian armed forces in Crimea had on other Russian tools of political power may be contrasted with the weakening effect that same threat of force had on Western statecraft. The Western practice of statecraft throughout the crisis has been primarily based upon rhetoric and appeals to international norms and laws, as well as upon targeted sanctions against individuals in Ukraine, Crimea, and Russia. To a lesser but ever increasing degree, the West has also acted to shore up the confidence

13 Gatis Pelnēns, ed., *The “Humanitarian Dimension” of Russian Foreign Policy Toward Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and the Baltic States*, trans. Rihards Kalniņš (Riga: Center for East European Policy Studies, 2009), figures on Russian media share 295, quote 293.

14 *Ibid.*, 295.

15 “RPT-INSIGHT-How the separatists delivered Crimea to Moscow,” *Reuters*, 13 March 2014, <http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/03/13/ukraine-crisis-russia-aksyonov-idINL6N-0M93AH20140313>, accessed 23 March 2014.

16 Baltic Surveys Ltd./The Gallup Organization & Rating Group Ukraine, *Public Opinion Survey Residents of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea May 16 – 30, 2013* (International Republican Institute, 2013).

of the easternmost constituents of NATO—Poland, the Baltic States, Romania—through closer military cooperation. Most of the West’s actions have not, however, had much bearing on the course of the crisis.

Western statecraft throughout the early days of the Crimean crisis was variable and evidenced differences of opinion between the United States and Europe, as well as among European countries themselves, on the necessary level of stringency suitable for any response. Responses consisted largely of diplomatic and legal rhetoric, and varying degrees of condemnation. Most spoke out in support of Ukraine’s territorial integrity and deplored the introduction of armed forces into Crimean Ukraine as illegal and against the Budapest Memorandum of 1994; at times these statements were balanced by calls for Ukraine to respect the minority rights of ethnic Russians. The West largely considered the Russian intervention to be both illegal and against common norms enshrined in international law. Vladimir Putin, however, insisted his actions aligned with international law, in part because he denied the presence of any Russian forces in Crimea, save for those allowed by treaty on their leased naval base at Sevastopol. Moreover, he attempted to contrast this practice with what he considered the Western approach.

Our partners, especially in the United States, always clearly formulate their own geopolitical and state interests and follow them with persistence. Then, using the principle “You’re either with us or against us” they draw the whole world in. And those who do not join in get ‘beaten’ until they do.

Our approach is different. We proceed from the conviction that we always act legitimately...[I]f I do decide to use the armed forces, this will be a legitimate decision in full compliance with both general norms of international law, since we have the appeal of the legitimate President, and with our commitments, which in this case coincide with our interests to protect the people with whom we have close historical, cultural and economic ties.¹⁷

Russia rebuffed all of the West’s diplomatic and legal rhetoric. Having already established the facts it desired on the ground, and in doing so having created the crisis, Russia could afford to ignore the West’s rhetoric. That rhetoric could not change the parameters of the crisis unless it influenced Russian political and strategic decision-making, which, as Putin’s words clearly indicate, was not likely.

Similarly, economic considerations were unlikely ever to deter a territorially and demographically nationalistic Russia. Putin would well have known that Crimea constituted a net cost to Ukraine of \$1.1 billion a year and would for Russia as well. Moreover, Crimea’s entire infrastructure is geared toward a northward connection with Ukraine rather than an eastward connection toward Russia, requiring further investment.¹⁸ In this context of expected economic costs for Russia, the West also raised the possibility of economic sanctions in its rhetoric and, eventually, also in its actions. Economic pressures generally work slowly, and rarely take effect directly against military units in the field. Sanctions were, thus, never likely to influence the outcome of the

¹⁷ Vladimir Putin, “Vladimir Putin answered journalists’ questions on the situation in Ukraine,” Press Conference, 4 March 2014, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/6763>, accessed 27 March 2014.

¹⁸ Alexander Kolyandr, “Crimea Could Prove Expensive Acquisition for Russia,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 7 March 2014, <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304732804579425110479303926>, accessed 29 March 2014.

crisis, unless they swayed Russian political decision-making in Moscow. Their slow pace has begun affecting Russia only after the annexation of Crimea.

The presence of Russian forces in Crimea, and the political will behind it, largely muted much of the West's practice of statecraft. The approaches the West and Russia took in relation to Crimea reflected their respective political wills. Russia had the will to employ force, and therefore also had the will to ignore the anticipated consequences of Western statecraft, though it also attempted rhetorically to mitigate those consequences. The West had no plausibly effective levers with which to pry Crimea away from Russia short of the use of force, but it was not nearly as invested in the status of Crimea; and, therefore, practiced statecraft, even though such a course of action could never change the outcome. If the West had had the will to maintain Crimea as Ukrainian territory, it also would have practiced strategy—and war would have resulted. Strategy thus trumped statecraft both in defining the range of possible outcomes in Crimea, and in ensuring the actual end result as well. Western statecraft, due both to its slow escalation and to the nature of the instruments used and actions chosen, has become more about punishing Russia for its action in Crimea than trying to prevent or reverse what occurred. Actions taken to reassure Poland and the Baltic States are also meant to deter Russia from considering similar interventions. These wider, punishing, effects of the Western reaction will now be considered as one final aspect of statecraft and its interaction with strategy.

Post-Crisis Consequences

In conflict, statecraft and strategy are mismatched, as the former generally cannot overturn the latter due to the natures of their respective instruments. Strategy, focused on force, is about consequences and conclusions. Strategy must end; sooner or later force must be lifted. "It is the *threat* of damage, or of more damage to come, that can make someone yield or comply. It is *latent* violence that can influence someone's choice—violence that can be withheld or inflicted, or that a victim believes can be withheld or inflicted."¹⁹ It may also achieve effects quickly—indeed, the rapid achievement of effects is usually supremely desirable, as strategy assumes the mutual imposition of damage.

Statecraft, by contrast, usually employs means which take effect only slowly. Economic sanctions mean nothing if implemented for a single day. Statecraft is also, like strategy, about consequences. But unlike strategy, statecraft is less about conclusions than about continuation. The coercive tools of statecraft may come to an end if the policy goal is achieved, but persuasive or rewarding instruments do not necessarily conclude. For this reason western statecraft has taken on the character of imposing punishment after the end of the crisis rather than of preventing it from reaching the conclusion desired by Russia. Economic pressure and diplomatic isolation are long-term instruments which comprise the major elements of Western statecraft for punishing and restricting Russia, alongside NATO's military reassurance of its easternmost constituents.

19 Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 3.

One aspect of the West's diplomacy—in both rhetoric and action—was the threat of diplomatic isolation. All cooperation between NATO and Russia has been suspended, including a joint mission to escort chemical weapons out of Syria.²⁰ However, diplomatic isolation is not an instrument which can achieve effects quickly—if at all. It impinges upon the target's freedom of action during the time it is in effect and therefore increases the difficulty of accomplishing foreign policy goals. It can only sway the target's policies if the increased difficulty and costs of achieving policy outweigh the benefits of the policy itself. For this reason, diplomatic isolation must be sustained even to have a chance at achieving effect. Yet even difficulty fulfilling policy does not guarantee actual change in policy. Moreover, not all are in agreement with the aim of diplomatically isolating Russia. Russia's fellow BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) members have diplomatically supported it, denouncing the West's rhetoric and asserting Russia's right to attend the G20 (Group of Twenty) summit in Brisbane in November 2014.²¹ The BRICS are also in the process of establishing institutions whose functions parallel those of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, a sign that Russia's ability to practice statecraft has been only partially damaged. This partial isolation will provide even less possibility for effect. Given its stated foreign policy goals of looking after ethnic Russians beyond its borders, Russian foreign policy is unlikely to be influenced by diplomatic isolation in any case. Indeed, some observers have drawn parallels between Russia's actions in Crimea in light of these foreign policy goals and the Soviet Union's old Brezhnev Doctrine.²²

The West targeted sanctions against blacklisted figures in the former Ukrainian and current Russian governments, as well as some oligarchs who support them, although Putin had reportedly already pressured some to repatriate their assets in previous years. To date, the sanctions themselves have not aimed to damage the whole of the Russian economy, but they suffice to interfere with some aspects of Russian diplomatic and commercial activity, such as blocking Bank Rossiya transactions and reinforcing Russia's diplomatic isolation. The resulting instability has led to fear in the financial markets and capital flight. The ruble has also fallen, causing Russian companies, which hold foreign currency debts amounting to over half a trillion dollars, to struggle to pay their debts.²³ To date, these sanctions have failed to influence Russia's policy toward Crimea and Ukraine, although outside observers suggest Russia may face recession if the financial and economic pressure continues.²⁴ Of all the long-term results of Western statecraft, the economic consequences in Russia may be among the most important for its future freedom of

20 Adrian Croft and Sabine Siebold, "NATO suspends cooperation with Russia," *Reuters*, 2 April 2014; John Vandiver, "NATO to cancel activities with Russia, step up military cooperation with Ukraine," *Stars and Stripes*, 6 March 2014.

21 Geoffrey York, "Putin's BRICS allies reject sanctions, condemn West's 'hostile language'," *The Globe and Mail*, 24 March 2014, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/putins-brics-allies-reject-sanctions-condemn-hostile-language/article17638238/>.

22 Rinalds Gulbis, "Putins: Krīma. Brežņeva doktrīnas atdzimšana," *ir*, 21 March 2014, <http://www.ir.lv/2014/3/21/putins-krima-breznava-doktrinas-atdzimsana>, accessed 3 April 2014.

23 Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, "Capital controls feared in Russia after \$70bn flight," *Telegraph*, 24 March 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/economics/10720226/Capital-controls-feared-in-Russia-after-70bn-flight.html>.

24 Andra Timu, Henry Meyer and Olga Tanas, "Russia Facing Recession as Sanctions Likely to Intensify," 24 March 2014, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-03-23/russia-staring-at-recession-on-sanctions-that-could-get-tougher.html>.

action. Not only do they require Russia to focus more on economic problems than on foreign policy goals, but they weaken Russia's ability to maintain its hard power and to fund its soft power. As Paul Kennedy noted in 1989, "the historical record suggests there is a very clear connection *in the long run* between an individual Great Power's economic rise and fall and its growth and decline as an important military power (or world empire)."²⁵ Only time will tell whether the economic consequences for Russia will be so great or not.

Military reassurance of NATO's eastern constituents has occurred through a handful of ways. Its Baltic and Polish air policing contingents have increased substantially with supplementary fighters and refueling aircraft from various countries. Discussion has also begun concerning the opening of a new air base, possibly in Estonia, and the adaptation of one port to suit NATO naval vessels, possibly in Latvia. Poland has also requested 10,000 troops to be based on its territory.²⁶ Explicit confirmations of adherence to NATO's article five have also been made by highly placed officials and ministers both within the alliance structure and from some member states; and consultations between the United States and NATO's eastern members have increased in frequency and visibility. Although this military reassurance has been an important aspect of the west's statecraft throughout and after the Crimean crisis, it has had no bearing on the course of the crisis itself. Rather, its purpose, besides reassuring the most potentially vulnerable members of NATO, has been to deter potential future Russian incursions into those countries. As with all attempts at deterrence, it is impossible to know whether it will succeed. Whether or not Russia may be deterred from undertaking interventions similar to the one in Crimea, such military reassurance has likely affected—and limited—Russia's future freedom of action. Yet, despite this real effect, NATO's military reassurance is the least painful of all the elements of Western statecraft, because it does not directly influence Russia, its diplomatic position, or its economic strength. Although this military reassurance response was fairly muted at the beginning, it has become one of the main pillars of Western statecraft surrounding the crisis.

Western statecraft has necessarily been practiced even after the end, through *fait accompli*, of the Crimean crisis; the nature of the instruments available to statecraft to achieve effect must be employed over a much longer duration. Because the crisis ended before Western statecraft could possibly become effective, statecraft has taken on a character meant to punish Russia and deter it from taking such actions in the future. This change of character from prevention and resolution to punishment and deterrence was due to the shift in context, as Russia effectively annexed Crimea. This is an almost inevitable result of any conflict between the practice of statecraft by one polity and the practice of strategy by another, because strategy generally achieves quicker results through the threat and employment of force to impose one's will upon the other party.

25 Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), xxii.

26 Bruno Waterfield and Tony Paterson, "Ukraine Crisis: Poland Asks NATO to Station 10,000 Troops on its Territory," *Telegraph*, 1 April 2014.

Besides statecraft's need for more time than strategy, its practice by the West has also been fuelled by the ongoing activities in Ukraine's eastern portions. The crisis and context, however, have changed from the Crimean focus in March. Throughout the spring and summer of 2014 both Western *and* Russian statecraft have mutually opposed each other, while Ukraine began practicing strategy through military action against the separatists in the east. Russia's statecraft-based interventions have failed to restrain Ukraine's strategic actions, much as the West's statecraft failed to overturn Russia's strategy in Crimea. Moreover, Ukraine is making progress against the separatists in the east by finally employing force without regard for Russian statecraft, thereby upsetting Russian policy.

Conclusion

Russia and the West approached the Crimean crisis from fundamentally different assumptions and modes of thinking. Russia acted strategically, thereby instigating the crisis, and the West responded with statecraft. Russia ultimately won in Crimea thanks to its choice of approach—though this is not to argue they would not have won if the West had acted strategically as well, for the choice of approach also gives insight into relative political will and operational capability. Russia did not practice strategy in its reciprocally adversarial form only because no one actively resisted Russia's invasion with armed force—but it had entered Crimea with the assumptions, ways of thinking, and desire to impose its will upon the other party which characterizes strategy as opposed to statecraft.

Edward Luttwak has identified the apex of strategic performance as “*the suspension, if only brief, if only partial, of the entire predicament of strategy.*”²⁷ The predicament of strategy is the enemy and his independent will and capability to act against one's own purposes. The apex, therefore, is the removal of the enemy's ability, however temporarily, to influence outcomes. Judged by this narrow standard, Russia's actions in Crimea represent an effective strategy. Russia did not have an enemy in Crimea. Even Ukraine did not fight Russia. The West practiced statecraft; it explicitly discounted the threat, or actual use of force, as publicly announced by Obama and a number of other officials throughout Western countries. The West, therefore, could not influence the outcome of the crisis, it could (and can) only impose punishment after the fact in an attempt to preclude any such future interventions by Russia. This latter point, which may become an important factor for Russia in the longer term, represents the only disadvantageous consequence to Russia of its actions in Crimea; these otherwise have been *de facto* accepted. Russia's *practice* of strategy in Crimea was exemplary, but its *choice* to do so may eventually incur crippling costs arising from Western statecraft—though this remains to be seen.²⁸

27 Edward N. Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 4.

28 The Russians acted much as the elder Helmuth von Moltke preferred, combining a strategic offensive with a tactical defensive. The strategic offensive puts pressure on the other party to act to reverse its losses, but the tactical defensive places the burden of initiating the bloodshed on the opponent.

In any direct clash between a political actor practicing strategy and one practicing statecraft, strategy will always win in the short term. The polity employing force asserts its political will to enforce its political goals in the face of resistance. Moreover, the polity which employs force first establishes the parameters both of the conflict and of its possible results, unless subsequently out-strategized and outfought. Strategy, through the threat and use of force, also allows for quick action. Statecraft simply cannot achieve effects with the means available to it within the time limit set by an opposing strategy. Non-military instruments cannot directly challenge force in an immediate sense.

As a final point, because the inability of statecraft to challenge strategy effectively in an immediate situation, one might suggest employing force in Crimea against the Russians would have been acceptable according to one of the tenets of just war theory. The tenet of last resort requires that “[w]e must not take up arms unless we have tried, or have good grounds for ruling out as likely to be ineffective, every other way of adequately securing our just aim.”²⁹ This is not to argue a war over Crimea would have been a just war. Rather, such an unequal contest as between strategy and statecraft suggests when one side uses force, even if it remains latent, every means and method available to statecraft is likely to be ineffective. The policy question thereafter must be to determine which course of action is most palatable: accepting either the reciprocal employment of force, or a change to the status quo wrought by unilateral force? This time the West has chosen to accept Russia’s unilateral change to the status quo in Crimea. Will it in the future be faced with a similar choice?

29 Charles Guthrie and Michael Quinlan, *Just War: The Just War Tradition, Ethics in Modern Warfare* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), 12-13.

