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AID IN WAR OR AID TO WAR? FOREIGN AID IN THE 2022 WAR IN UKRAINE

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Abstract: Aid has confirmed itself as a key instrument of foreign policy in the first year of the Ukrainian war, as it had earlier in the pandemic, pursuing in the first instance the national interests of the state donors. However, when compared to other similar cases, such as the outbreak of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992, exactly 30 years before Ukraine, state funded aid policies in the new scenario show a number of absolute novelties, such as: 1) the speed of reaction of Western state donors at the beginning of the war; 2) the primacy and leading role of state donors over the non-governmental sector; 3) the quantity and diversification of aid mobilised; 4) (Russian) food as a weapon vs. (Western) weapons as legitimate aid; 5) broad anticipation of post-war planning; and 6) sanctions (to the enemy) becoming an aid (to the friend). Each of these aspects has been linked to specific foreign policy issues and interests of state donors to such an extent as to confirm the relevance of using an institutional-realist approach to understand their political-utilitarian motivations in organising aid in the war scenario in question. Thus, providing elements to support the thesis of this article, namely that aid to Ukraine in 2022 has primarily been driven by state donors' realistic foreign policy objectives, aimed at implementing their geopolitical strategies.

Keywords: foreign aid; foreign policy; geopolitics; Ukraine; Bosnia and Herzegovina; war; military aid; Russia; European Union.

Pandemic, War, Aid

The outbreak of COVID-19, in February/March 2020, and only two years later of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, in February/March 2022, created a double-crisis scenario of unprecedented global impact in recent history. In both cases, *aid* was

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among the most frequently occurring words, after *virus* and *war*, respectively (Pellicciari 2022; Antezza et al. 2022).

As in the case of the COVID-19 outbreak, the conflict came as a surprise, at least in its modalities, creating situations of need and laying the groundwork for initiatives to mitigate them (Dräger et al. 2022). In both crises, the pandemic and the war, aid has become an all-encompassing term that is used in different contexts and associated with multiple actions. It is heterogeneous both in terms of the assistance provided and the characteristics of the donors and beneficiaries involved.

The 24-hour infotainment of the media, more interested in the audience than in data, has not distinguished public from private types of interventions. As a result, non-governmental initiatives have been lumped together with others born in the public-state sector, perpetuating a common feeling of difficulty in recognising differences between initiatives that are often poles apart, to the detriment of the emergence of a shared understanding of the idea of aid.

The *mare magnum* of humanitarian and solidaristic initiatives from the private and non-governmental sectors (praiseworthy in intentions, much less so in effectiveness) was, as usual, difficult to evaluate accurately and thus also to comment on as a whole. It requires painstaking case-by-case reconstruction, often made almost impossible by the lack of certain, homogeneous, and accessible data. If non-governmental action was on the whole parcelled out and of a symbolic rather than practical nature, a different matter concerned state-funded aid: assistance interventions traceable to governmental decisions and financed with public funds.

As for the pandemic, the spontaneous orientation towards aid – given and requested – in the face of a health emergency looming over the whole of humanity without distinction was predictable. This was the ideal terrain for the spread of a wide and transversal sense of solidarity (Kobayashi et al. 2021).

It was less obvious that aid played a role in the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, as this was a context of open military opposition that was less predisposed to the idea of international cooperation. In this case, the powerful imposition of assistance narratives and initiatives took place, with peculiarities destined to affect the way aid between states was conceived politically and communicated institutionally. Interventions during the emergency phase of the pandemic and the following geopolitical clash of vaccine diplomacy have shown how aid has become central in defining the balance of power in the international system (Fidler 2020; Chohan 2021; Hyndman 2021; Pellicciari 2022).

The thesis proposed here is that in the first year of the war in Ukraine, *State-Funded Aid* was also driven by strategies on the part of donors determined to use their assistance interventions as a primary tool for the pursuit of their foreign policy objectives. In support of this thesis, a direct comparison is proposed here between *State-Funded Aid* in 2022 in Ukraine and that which exactly three decades earlier in

1992 characterised the first year of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) (Pellicciari 1998; Pickering 2014, 31–43; Gilbert 2016, 717–729). This comparison, as well as the thesis it proposes to support, takes its cue from, and in fact, stands as an ideal continuation of the approach that guided a recent reconstruction of the evolution of *Foreign Aid* from the collapse of the Berlin Wall to the COVID-19 outbreak (Pellicciari 2022).

This analysis was linked to an adaptation of the theoretical foundations for studying aid in the international system and their readjustment so as to make them suitable for a historiography of international relations focused more on the system of interests than the values underlying the policies of assistance between sovereign states. This resulted in an approach geared primarily towards reconstructing the dynamics of power and political obligation between donors and recipients, based on an idea of aid understood above all as a political-institutional category between the states involved. And on concept of *International Aid Public Policy* (IAPP) preferred to the traditional one of *Foreign Aid* because it is open to considering any form of transaction on favourable terms between a state donor and a state recipient on the basis of the basic relationship (D>R) as aid (Pellicciari 2022).

The result is a historiographic analysis where aid is an instrument of foreign policy on a par with war and trade and responds to the power politics of state actors competing for primacy in providing assistance to selected scenarios of geopolitical importance. Where state donors have, on the whole, higher political interests than recipients. It is a historical (descriptive and not prescriptive) approach to the dynamics of inter-state aid that is set within the general framework of realist thinking in international relations, from its classical origins such as in Niccolò Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes, to its variants that matured primarily in the Cold War (Kennan 1947; Morgenthau 1962; 1978; Huntington 1971; Waltz 1978), to its contemporary evolutions (Kissinger 2014).

Comparing the *LAPPs* in Bosnia in 1992 and in Ukraine in 2022, one looks for elements that bring the actions of state donors back to motivations linked to the pragmatic pursuit of their own geopolitical interests rather than to the formally declared aim of sanctioning the non-observance of a basic principle of international law.

The comparison attempts to capture the features of three key elements of aid in the two historical cases, namely:

- (a) The intervention scenario,
- (b) The interacting actors (Donors and Recipients),
- (c) The aid provided.

A table (Table 1) of striking differences emerges, which helps to grasp in detail the specificities of the Ukrainian case and also gives substance to the thesis argued here.

Table 1: Comparing the IAPPs in Bosnia in 1992 and in Ukraine in 2022

	<i>Bosnia 1992</i>	<i>Ukraine 2022</i>
Scenario		
<i>Internal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *) Provisional sovereignty *) Weak, divided statehood *) Internal conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *) Consolidated sovereignty *) Institutionalised Statehood *) Centre-periphery + East/West tension
<i>International</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *) Changing international context *) Bilateral diplomatic action *) Russia politically absent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *) Defined geopolitical dispute *) Cohesive Western Front *) Russia active militarily
Actors		
<i>Donors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *) Non-governmental *) Specialised multilateral agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *) Bilateral State Actors *) Multilateral Institutions
<i>Recipients</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *) New, occasional, fragmented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *) Public sector related \ pre-existing \ institutionalised
Aid		
<i>Amount</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *) Limited \ Symbolic *) Humanitarian \ Emergency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *) Numerous \ Consistent *) Wide-ranging (financial, political, military)
<i>Type</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *) Neutrality \ Pacifism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *) Interventionism \ Declared political objectives
<i>Politics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *) Sanctions strategies separated from aid policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *) Sanctions strategies integrated with aid policies

Source: Author.

Bosnia 1992

Born out of the ruins of the broken and violent collapse of the former Yugoslavia, the conflict in BiH was set in the chaotic context following the end of the bipolar order that had governed international relations from the end of World War II until the collapse of the Berlin Wall (Fagan 2006, 406–419; Hill 2011; Gilbert 2016, 717–729). A decades-old system of international balances has broken down without a new one ready to replace it. Both the constitutional and geopolitical frameworks of BiH that emerged from the former Yugoslavia suffered as a result of present weakness and total uncertainty about future changes, which were seen as inevitable due to a widespread perception of instability and impermanence of the *status quo* (Fagan 2006; Belloni and Strazzari, 2014).

Having declared its independence at the outbreak of the war crisis, the new Bosnian statehood found itself very weak in its institutional and constitutional foundations. Its sovereignty, which was in fact non-existent in a country divided into three parts in open military conflict – each with its own weak but distinct state organisation – was but formal (Hansen 2006; Azarkan 2011).

From a geopolitical point of view, the picture was equally confusing. The Western Balkans were an important hub, but it was unclear – and in fact the subject of a heated international debate – what their future status should be. Traditional national interests were moving independently to improve their status and secure influence over new, geopolitically accessible areas (Hansen 2006). These initiatives acted at the politico-diplomatic level, with the effect of limiting the political legitimacy and room for manoeuvres of the international community of the time, which was dominated by Western bloc countries after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the slide into substantial irrelevance of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The year 1992 was characterised by the evident political impotence of both the United Nations and Brussels (at that time still the European Economic Community) in limiting the degeneration of the crisis into a chronic military confrontation, aggravated by the fact that it was both an ethnically-motivated civil war and a conflict between three former Yugoslav states – Croatia, BiH, and Serbia (Craven 1995; Radeljić 2012).

Initial aid interventions suffered from this framework of uncertainty over the country's future political-institutional position and diplomatic competition from the main international players of the time. Faced with the cautiousness and tactics of the Western states, the first donors to become active in the dramatic Bosnian conflict came from the galaxy of the non-governmental sector. It was they, together with specialised agencies of the main multilateral organisations, who were the only donors present in the field at the dawn of a war that had no precise start date, resulting in a progressive slide towards increasingly bloody clashes (Fagan 2006; Belloni and Strazzari 2014).

The common trait of these donors was the concentration of their efforts on emergency humanitarian aid, called upon to cover the very serious situations of basic needs brought about by a conflict responsible for casualties – mainly among the civilian population (Hill 2011; Gilbert 2016).

Non-governmental interventions were often disconnected, symbolic, and clearly insufficient to deal with the magnitude of the rifts and basic needs created by the war. Nevertheless, they played an important role in raising Western public awareness of a crisis that was otherwise neglected by the mainstream and unchallenged in the pre-social media era. They were also almost exclusive bearers of a pacifist message associated with a distinct political neutralism that, in the name of caring for the

victims of war, believed it was not necessary to take a stand on the ongoing crisis (Hill 2011; Pickering 2014; Gilbert 2016).

The multilateral aid of classic international organisations such as the United Nations, traditionally active in the field of emergency crises through their autonomous agencies (the initial presence of the UNHCR was followed by UNOPS, UNDP, WHO, etc.), was more structured in terms of hardware and better organised. However, even this aid suffered from high rates of dispersion and ineffectiveness, both because of the instability and complexity of the war scenario and because of the mechanical transposition of a *third-world* type of intervention in BiH, which had entered a purely political crisis with high levels of socio-economic development (Pickering 2014; Gilbert 2016).

Multilateral aid focused on an exclusively humanitarian dimension, so apolitical that it distanced itself from the active pacifism of the non-governmental sector. The international organisations suffered from the confused Balkan context and a clear political mandate from their headquarters, which were blocked by internal diplomatic competition between their member states. Under these conditions, they shifted from the active neutrality of the non-governmental sector, deliberately confusing it with a redundant “always-on” equidistance to the parties in the conflict; so much so that the multilateral donors at the time organised their own presence and action in all countries involved in the conflict, without distinction. That is to say, not only in BiH but also in Serbia, although it was already at loggerheads with the Western world, having been accused of triggering the (para) military escalation of the Balkan crisis. This resulted in a clear separation between sanctions and aid. The harsh sanctions that the international community imposed on Serbia had no intersection with aid policies in Sarajevo, nor did they stimulate initiatives of political and/or military support, dropping the hypothesis of military aid to the new-born Bosnian army in an anti-Serbian function. Similarly, proposals to immediately admit BiH together with Croatia into the European Economic Community were considered useful provocations to draw attention to the scenario, but with no prospect of coming true (Craven 1995; Radeljić 2012).

Ukraine 2022

The Ukrainian war context was radically different, beginning with the domestic and international scenario in which the Russian invasion in February 2022 matured (Antezza et al. 2022; Hashimova 2022). Compared to BiH, the main difference was in the different levels of institutionalisation of the two countries’ statehood at the time the war began, as well as in the international balances against the backdrop of the two crises. Unlike BiH, Ukraine entered the conflict a full three decades after it had gained internationally recognised sovereignty and consolidated its own political-institutional system (Kubicek 2008; Subtelny 2009). In the turbulent early 1990s,

while the Federated Socialist Republic of BiH experienced a traumatic breakaway from the former Yugoslavia, the Soviet Socialist Republic of Ukraine achieved unhindered independence after the dissolution of the USSR (Craven 1995; Radeljić 2012). It retained its original internal borders from the Soviet period (Kubicek 2008; Subtelny 2009).

As unexpected as the Ukrainian war was in its modalities in February 2022, the institutional and political, as well as domestic and international, terms of the issues that precipitated it were long known; they were as clear as the underlying geopolitical dispute and opposing sides. Domestically, Ukraine arrived in 2022 after a long course of institution building, assisted by massive Western technical assistance financed primarily by the US and the EU (Milner 2006; Milner and Tingley 2012; Antezza et al. 2022; Hashimova 2022). Although it has been an intense and often poor track record, which is common for many countries in post-communist transition, it has contributed to strengthening an established perception of Ukrainian statehood fully integrated into the international community. In the face of established sovereignty, the main unresolved political-institutional problem over the years has concerned the difficult balancing act between the centre in Kiev and the peripheries in the west and east of the country, composed of Ukrainian and Russian ethnic majorities respectively (Kubicek 2008; Subtelny 2009).

Internationally, Ukraine has been the theatre of a constant and prolonged geopolitical contest between a pro-Western option (initially only pro-European, with time expanding to the Atlanticist side) and a pro-Russian one, tending to stay in Moscow's orbit (Kubicek 2008; Subtelny 2009).

These two international orientations have become intertwined with the internal center-periphery and regional East-West questions, alternating in Kiev between radically opposed governments and policies: one in tune with the western part of the country and thus closer to the EU and NATO, the other with the eastern part of the country and more interested in relations with Russia (Kubicek 2008; Subtelny 2009). The crystallisation over time of the opposition of these opposing options was behind two important structural features of the war scenario in 2022, which were completely absent from BiH in 1992:

- a) an initial political compactness of the Western front on the Ukrainian question with a community of vision and intent, which in the Bosnian case appeared only towards the end of the conflict, marked by the US intervention in the scenario;
- b) Russian determination to use force in foreign policy as opposed to the low political-military profile held by Moscow in the Balkan scenario of the 1990s.

Compared to the BiH, the main aspects of the Ukrainian scenario have been very clear since the dawn of the crisis, starting with the certain date of the outbreak of the conflict: February 24, 2022 – the beginning of the Russian military invasion.

Strengthened by unprecedented political cohesion and mutual coordination, bilateral (from the US to the UK, from France to Germany) and multilateral (from NATO to the EU) Western state actors have had a common political stance, clearly condemning Moscow's action. Faced with such a well-defined (geo) political framework, their timing was unusual and opposite to that recorded in BiH, when the same actors moved very late after the start of the clashes. They struggled to recognise the war from its onset and in fact contributed to its protracted nature – so much so that the Dayton Peace Accords fell more than three years after the iconic start of the tragic siege of Sarajevo (Dahlman and Tuathail 2005).

Reluctant to get formally militarily involved on the ground, they acted as donors in the new crisis scenario, intervening with their own aid initiatives. The experience gained during the massive aid given to Ukraine in the three post-Soviet decades after 1991 facilitated the rapid response of Western state donors, thus relying on institutional and logistical networks developed and consolidated over time, with local recipients already defined and known beforehand, often from the Ukrainian state sector (Gorodnichenko 2001; Dimitrova and Dragneva 2013).

The speed of reaction of the state donors was the driving force behind the action of the remaining non-governmental donors, who found themselves in an unusual secondary role following narratives and values far removed from the neutralism and political pacifism of the Bosnian context. Consequently, in Ukraine, aid actions went far beyond simple emergency humanitarian interventions in support of war victims and declared themselves opponents of the Russian invasion, in open support of one of the parties involved, namely, the government in Kiev.

The leading role of state donors influenced the quantity, variety, and political impact of aid. Firstly, the increased financial resources available to the public sector led to a significant increase in the amount of assistance, mobilised or even just announced, which is unusual for a conflict in its early stages (Gorodnichenko 2001; Dimitrova and Dragneva 2013; Antezza et al. 2022). At the same time, the strong politicisation of the scenario spilled over into the type of aid provided, resulting in its strong diversification (Dimitrova and Dragneva 2013). Faced with the common and decisive objective of countering the Russian invasion *whatever-it-takes*, assistance varied in sectors and used instruments far removed from the classic practices commonly associated with *foreign aid* in emergency situations. It was a consistent series of direct financial, military, and political aid, distinguished by its variety, consistency, and type of accompanying institutional communication (Gorodnichenko 2001; Dimitrova and Dragneva 2013; Antezza et al. 2022).

The novelty was not so much in the content of these interventions but in the manner and timing with which they were presented, as in the case of armaments, which were openly promoted as a legitimate form of aid. Although military assistance between states has existed for a long time, in the Ukrainian case, for the first time,

donors such as the European Union and its member states placed it in the formal category of *state-funded aid* and presented it as such to their own public, to such an extent that on the Western side, the question of which weapons to send as aid to Ukraine has surpassed the remaining traditional humanitarian initiatives in visibility, which have taken a back seat in politics and in the media. This is exactly the opposite of the timing seen in BiH in 1992, when the international community debated for a long time, undecided, on the advisability and forms of involvement in the Bosnian context, as well as on the advisability of sending armaments to the Sarajevo government to strengthen its army and better oppose Belgrade (Dahlman and Tuathail 2005; Hansen 2006; Azarkan 2011). When military supplies were finally given, it all took place in the shadows, with a discretion bordering on secrecy and without such an intervention being presented as an integral part of assistance policies.

With regard to the political-institutional aid to Ukraine, the peculiarity was in putting typical post-war issues, such as the issue of post-conflict reconstruction, which the European Union raised as early as May 5, 2022, at the Donors' Conference in Warsaw, at the centre of the Western agenda, with the fighting still raging and the outcome of the war largely uncertain (Service of the Republic of Poland 2022; Antezza et al. 2022).

Alongside emergency and humanitarian interventions, which in the Ukrainian crisis meant urgent support for refugees and internally displaced persons (7.7 million internally and 5.2 million abroad), the conference opened up the programming of an initial allocation of 6 billion for the reconstruction of Ukraine's infrastructure and economic system. The issue of Ukraine's accession to the EU, another form of political aid linked to the war, gave a similar feeling of an early theme (Kirsch 2022). With an incomplete path to many *EU acquis* standards despite dozens of Brussels-funded technical assistance projects over three decades, on June 23, 2022, the European Council granted Kiev the coveted status of candidate country along with statements from numerous Western leaders in favour of an imminent Ukrainian entry into the EU (Bosse 2022; Kirsch 2022).

It was an acceleration that was the result of a political decision taken in the midst of war, unrelated to the level of European harmonisation reforms achieved by Kiev, and that was conceived rather as compensation for the invasion suffered by Moscow.

A final peculiarity of Ukrainian aid in comparison with the Bosnian experience concerns sanctions and their use, with important quantitative and even more qualitative changes. On the first aspect, there was the speed with which the pre-existing sanctions framework from 2014 (since the annexation of Crimea) was strengthened at the outbreak of the war, filling it with content and giving it a much broader scope (Mamonov et al. 2022; Huang and Lu 2022).

New packages of measures have gradually been introduced, adding to rather than replacing those already in place, with a linear impact in areas not touched in the past. Among the most interesting aspects is the political purpose for which the restrictive measures were conceived, transforming them from a moment of condemnation for a country's non-compliance with international law into a direct instrument to help the opposing party. Sanctions designed to strike at Russian nerve centres were designed as instruments of tactical confrontation, putting the objectives to be achieved before respect for the founding principles of Western liberal democratic culture if necessary. Above all, they were solicited and coordinated directly with the Ukrainian government – questioned not only in deciding what aid to receive from the West but also what sanctions to introduce against Moscow.

The innovations in the described framework all relate to Western state donors. However, Russia has contributed to the evolution (or involution, depending on one's point of view) of the political use of aid in 2022, emerging here not from a comparison with Moscow's role in B&H 1992, where it was not a major player, but rather from its efforts in recent years to come back as a global player on the international scene, also thanks to its aid policies. In the two decades prior to the 2022 war (starting from the symbolic date of January 31, 2005, when it paid off its debts to the International Monetary Fund four years before its official expiration), Russia had in fact decided to progressively leave the role of recipient of Western aid in the post-Soviet period to become a re-emerging donor itself. The huge resources used by Moscow for this purpose had consolidated a geopolitical use of aid together with a “catch-all” approach inherited from the Soviet period that was not limited to cooperation and/or humanitarian interventions but extended to any sphere or resource of state competence.

On the one hand, the pandemic crisis fully confirmed this approach, with the geopolitical vaccine Sputnik V offered or distributed on favourable terms as aid to friendly and allied countries, following purely diplomatic rather than economic-commercial logic and channels (Pellicciari 2022). On the other hand, the Ukrainian crisis in 2022 has marked a breaking point with Moscow's aid policies in two respects. First, on a general level, because of Russia's choice to pursue its foreign policy goals with the primary use of direct military action rather than the well-established combination of “Aid+Diplomacy” frequently used in the re-emerging donor period on an international scale, thus opening the key political question of the reasons for Russia's choice of invading Ukraine to shift from the use of the “carrot” (aid) to the “cannon” (old-fashioned military action) in the pursuit of its foreign policy objectives. Second, an even greater breakthrough has been in the reversal of the logic of the use of goods to cover basic needs, which went from being a traditional instrument of aid to a tactical instrument of offence, by selectively controlling and limiting their distribution. The new approach has mainly concerned natural resources and raw materials, of which Russia is the world's leading

exporter. In the name of Soviet-derived “catch-all” aid, they have been granted on advantageous terms to friendly countries and allies, while since 2022, they have been progressively rationed against the Western side. The most emblematic case concerned wheat, which in the past was a commodity par excellence at the centre of humanitarian interventions against hunger and which in 2022 was made difficult to access, making it an object of negotiation and *de facto* transformed into a hybrid weapon for geopolitical confrontation.

Conclusions

The comparison of the two historical cases makes it possible to better isolate the absolute novelty of certain elements of aid to Ukraine in 2022 and leads to the identification of 6 main related aspects. Each of them is linked to a specific foreign policy issue with direct effects on the geopolitical interests of Western state donors to such an extent as to confirm the relevance of using an institutional-realist approach to understand their political-utilitarian motivations in organising aid in the war scenario in question, thus providing enough elements to support the initial thesis of this article, namely confirming that aid in Ukraine in 2022 has primarily been driven by state donors’ realistic foreign policy strategies, aimed at defending their geopolitical interests.

Table 2: The comparison of the two historical cases

<i>Specificities of aid to Ukraine in 2022</i>	<i>Related Political issue</i>
Speed of reaction of Western State Donors	State Donors moved by foreign policy interest
Leading role of State Donors	Aid as instrument of active Interventionism
Quantity, diversification of Aid	Flows of financial, military, and political Aid
Food as a Weapon, Weapons as legitimate Aid	Self-defence as a primary humanitarian need
Early anticipation of post-war programming	Donor competition on re-construction
Sanctions as Aid	Sanctions designed as a tactical war tool

Source: Author.

1) Speed of reaction of Western State Donors t the beginning of the war

The responsiveness of Western state donors is the first of the peculiarities that characterise the Ukrainian scenario. Technically, they were able to leverage the experience and logistical networks gained in the uninterrupted and substantial Western aid programmes to Ukraine over the previous decades. Politically, the speed of presence on the ground benefited from an unusual commonality of positions and views of the Western front, united in opposing the Russian invasion. The central factor in spurring the donors was a declared foreign policy objective (keeping Kiev under its influence) in the face of a serious geopolitical risk (Moscow regaining control over Ukraine with military action). Had there been humanitarian motives behind Western aid in 2022, as claimed by state donors, it would not explain why, less than a year earlier, both Brussels and Washington (NATO was not even consulted) disregarded Kiev's requests for help to vaccinate its own population, in the midst of the second wave of the pandemic emergency and in the political impossibility of asking Moscow for vaccines. In other words, Western state donors' lack of response in 2021 to Kiev's request for help would not be attributable to a lack of sensitivity but rather to the fact that the pandemic health emergency in Ukraine did not have the same potential for a geopolitical crisis as the pre-war scenario of 2022.

2) Primacy and leading role of state donors over the non-governmental sector

State donors' speed of reaction granted them a primacy of action in the war crisis so that their aid interventions were the very first seen in Ukraine in 2022, well before the arrival of traditional assistance organised by the non-governmental sector. As a result, the values and narratives of aid were dictated by state donors, immediately charged with a strong political meaning and reinforcing the link between aid and foreign policy objectives, such as an active opposition to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Consequently, a) an attitude to political interventionism prevailed to the detriment of the pacifist neutralism in scenarios where the primacy of action was of non-governmental donors, b) NGOs and their humanitarian and solidarity interventions have had a secondary role and reduced visibility compared to the interventions of state donors to which they have had to adapt politically and logistically.

3) Quantity and diversification of aid mobilised

The combination of political interventionism and, by definition, the considerable number of resources at the disposal of the public sector led to a very consistent flow of aid that was unusual for a war scenario, particularly in its initial phase. Aid was also introduced in areas of intervention not usual for a conflict, going far beyond the

traditional type of assistance designed for an emergency scenario. Classical humanitarian aid has been surpassed by a number of aid interventions in the economic-financial, military, and political-institutional fields. This has created the ideal conditions for the occurrence of the distorting phenomena associated with aid in war, such as a) a high rate of aid dispersion; b) corruption; c) the overload and overlapping of aid; d) ineffective donor coordination; and e) the impossibility of taking an exact census of ongoing aid interventions in the scenario.

4) Food as a Weapon, Weapons as legitimate Aid (and self-defence as a primary need)

One of the main aid-related entanglements in the Ukraine crisis concerned food and armaments, as used by Russia and the Western side, respectively. On the one hand, Moscow has turned access to food as a tactical tool of pressure to its advantage; on the other, the European Union has put armaments at the centre of its policies to help Kiev. These are two disruptive developments in the practical application of the concept of aid, which are likely to make history and leave a legacy for the future – in the case of Russia, because it clears the way for the use as an instrument of tactical confrontation, which has been the primary form of humanitarian aid for decades; in the case of the West, by openly providing arms as aid to Ukraine, state donors have formally set at least two new key political principles. In the first place, the full legitimacy of aid was given to the provision of armaments. In other words, it overcame the tendency to consider only good aid (humanitarian or development interventions) as “real aid” – to the advantage of the idea that inter-state aid can be any kind of transfer on favourable terms between a donor and a recipient. Most importantly, since weapons were given as assistance in a time of emergency (the start of a war), the right to self-defence was indirectly recognised as a primary need, and consequently, armaments were placed on the same level of need as humanitarian aid. The main issue lies in sanctioning food as a weapon and armaments as aid on the basis of political necessity of the moment and not as the result of a conceptual evolution of state aid policies. As was the case with the US “preventive intervention” in Iraq in 2003, the risk is that a rhetorical formula imposed politically in a given case may become a precedent that can later on backfire on the very same subjects who introduced it precisely because of its inherent contradictions and weakness of definition.

5) Broad anticipation of post-war planning

As soon as the conflict began, two initiatives ideally placed in the post-war phase were anticipated in the name of interventionist aid: a) post-war reconstruction; and b) Ukraine’s path to EU membership. In the first, the technical problem was in

planning framework aid in the face of the impossibility of quantifying resources and interventions on needs that were as yet unknown. The political issue was the beginning of positioning state donors aiming to manage the future reconstruction phase, starting a political competition that will only grow over time. Forgetting about repeated negative experiences in the past, they seemed not to care about the almost certain prospect of repeating errors in aid governance, with chronic problems of ineffectiveness and sustainability of results already seen in other scenarios, from Bosnia to Afghanistan via Kosovo. With regard to Ukraine being promoted as an EU candidate country, the technical issue was obtaining status regardless of the completion of a complex process of harmonisation with the EU acquis. The political issue again raised the matter of Brussels' homogeneity in assessing the compliance of candidate countries (as seen with the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU) and member countries (as in the case of tensions with the Visegrad group countries) with EU standards, further raising the suspicion of an arbitrary application of procedures that by definition are technical-administrative but subject to contingent geopolitical logic and objectives.

6) Sanctions (to the enemy) as aid (to the friend)

The evolution of sanctions was one of the most unexpected novelties in the Ukrainian scenario, especially because it concerned a tool that had already undergone profound transformations. In recent decades, they had already gone from being the “*last-step-before-war*” to the “*first-choice-before-war*”, which represents a change of perspective that had made their use very frequent, thus giving rise to “*Sanction Wars*” and making them one of the favourite tools of diplomacy in the post-bipolar world that were easy to set up and conversely difficult to take away, destined to last beyond the contingency that justified their introduction. Their peculiarities include the positioning of sanctions as a complementary and opposite instrument to assistance policies, a true “*anti-help*” – while at the same time being capable of coexisting with them, leading to the frequent paradoxes of “*aid-to-enemies?*” (such as in the case of the EU aid to Turkey for the Syrian refugees) and “*sanctions-to-friends*” (as in the Russia-Italian relations until the 2022 war) situations. In the Ukrainian war context, they underwent a further radical change, becoming a tactical-strategic resource in the war, aimed not only at striking one of the warring parties, but directly at benefiting the other (who acts like a recipient) as it helps to prompt, influence, and design them. After sanctions become a form of weapon and weapons are promoted to legitimate aid, it is inevitable that sanctions (to the enemy) are actually aid (to the friend).

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ПОМОЋ У РАТУ ИЛИ ПОМОЋ РАТУ? СТРАНА ПОМОЋ У РАТУ У УКРАЈИНИ 2022.

Апстракт: У првој години украјинског рата, као и раније у пандемији, *помоћ* се потврдила као кључни инструмент спољне политике, пратећи пре свега национални интерес државних донатора. Међутим, у поређењу са другим сличним случајевима – као што је избијање рата у Босни и Херцеговини 1992. године, тачно 30 година пре Украјине – политике државне помоћи у новом сценарију показују низ апсолутних новина као што су: 1) брзина реакције западних државних донатора на почетку рата; 2) примат и водећа улога државних донатора над невладиним сектором; 3) количина и диверсификација мобилисане помоћи; 4) (руска) храна као оружје против (западног) оружја као легитимна помоћ; 5) широка антиципација послератног планирања и 6) санкције (непријатељу) постају помоћ (пријатељу). Сваки од ових аспеката је повезан са специфичним спољнополитичким питањима и интересима државних донатора у толикој мери да потврђује релевантност коришћења институционално-реалистичког приступа за разумевање њихових политичко-утилитарних мотива у организовању помоћи у ратном сценарију о коме је реч. Дакле, ти елементи подржавају тезу овог чланка, да је помоћ Украјини 2022. године првенствено била вођена реалистичним спољнополитичким циљевима државних донатора, усмерених на спровођење њихових геополитичких стратегија.

Кључне речи: спољна помоћ; спољна политика; геополитика; Украјина; Босна и Херцеговина; рат; војна помоћ; Русија; Европска унија.

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