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“THE FOUNDATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE
UKRAINE-NATO RELATIONSHIP”

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Abstract

This thesis examines the puzzle of NATO-Ukraine relations and the uncertainty that characterizes the nation's integration into NATO. Despite Ukraine's considerable progress towards establishing democracy since 1991 and relationship with NATO, democratic advances, quite long and fruitful relation, Ukraine's bid to get the NATO Membership Action Plan was not satisfied by NATO at the Bucharest Summit in April 2008. In addition, the majority of the Ukrainian population holds a distorted and negative image of NATO and objects to the idea that their nation will join the Alliance.

The examined realm of international relations theory offers a framework to demonstrate the importance of how NATO and Ukraine perceive each other explains the puzzling nature of Ukraine's relationship with the Alliance. Historically, NATO's perception of Ukraine focused on Ukraine's international behavior and foreign policy motivations, and this perception affected the forms of cooperation the Alliance proposed to Ukraine. Unless Ukraine is perceived as a stable ally, it will not be invited to be part of the NATO Membership Action Plan, and the main priority of Ukraine's foreign policy—full integration into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions—will remain impossible to achieve. Being seen as a NATO ally, as well as reversing the Ukrainian public's negative view of the Alliance, is a major responsibility of the Ukrainian leadership. However, it is also crucially important that Western democracies keep the door open for Ukraine.

Introduction

It is not easy for a state to establish democratic governance, popular sovereignty, political unity and a market economy while maintaining a good standard of living for its people. The case of Ukraine illustrates the difficulties of such transitions. After gaining independence in 1991, Ukraine began a gradual rapprochement with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) just as the Alliance itself reached out to Central and Eastern Europe, first with the North Atlantic Cooperation Council and later through the Partnership for Peace (PfP). At the start of a new century, Ukraine faces considerable difficulties in its pursuit of NATO membership because of the complex link between domestic politics and changes in the state system in Central and Eastern Europe. Although Ukrainian leaders repeatedly asserted the nation's willingness to join the Alliance, stressing considerable recent democratic advances and appealing to NATO's Article X, which presents the possibility of membership, NATO has been hesitant to invite Ukraine to join the Membership Action Plan. The most popular explanation for this state of affairs is that NATO is not sure that Ukrainian aspirations to join NATO are genuine.¹

In January 2008 Ukrainian leaders sent an application to NATO's Secretary General for Ukraine to join the Membership Action Plan. But because of the significant disagreements between members at NATO's Bucharest Summit, the definitive decision-making around the "Ukrainian question" was transferred to a later period. And again

¹ "Ukraine: Kyiv's Pro-Western Policy in Doubt," Radio Free Europe, 16 Jul 2006, available from <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/07/a29ac932-4f29-4a8d-affb-ed8ca08d5d89.html>, accessed 25 April 2008.

among others, the doubt that Ukraine has matured to make a decisive step on its way into NATO was not the least reason for rejection.

Why has Ukraine, which in the current year will celebrate its 17th anniversary of its independence, not managed to convince Western Europe of its irrevocable endeavors?

Why is the future of Ukraine in Europe still uncertain for some West-European countries?

Why has the process of transformation been going slower in Ukraine compared with other democracies in the post-communist space in Eastern and Central Europe?

The examined realm of international relations offers a framework to explain the importance of images in NATO-Ukraine relations as a function of domestic and international policy and politics. Tracing the chronology of NATO-Ukraine relations since 1991, the thesis explains how such images have shaped the framework of NATO-Ukraine relations historically, and addresses current perception and their influence over the Ukrainian aspiration for membership in the Alliance.

The image of Ukraine and its impact on NATO-Ukraine relations

After obtaining independence, Ukraine faced a number of domestic problems which prevented it from developing an effective foreign policy strategy. Along with a deep socio-economic crisis after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine inherited a set of problems which required considerable resources to resolve. Ukraine was practically left on its own to deal with the consequences of the 1986 Chernobyl catastrophe, which

required 20 percent of the limited Ukrainian budget to clean up contaminated areas.² Considering other factors like radiation and related diseases affecting almost 10 percent of the population, contamination of 2.45 million square hectares of fertile soil, and the like, it is hard to imagine how Ukraine, struggling with a deep economic crisis, could manage the situation.³

At the same time, the Chernobyl catastrophe and its disastrous consequences were among the main reasons for Ukrainian authorities' unprecedented decision to get rid of the nuclear arsenal they had inherited from the former Soviet Union, the world's third largest at that time. Although the initiative was supported financially by international donors, its implementation required considerable allocations from the state budget. In addition, Ukraine inherited 900,000 military personnel and a lot of surplus military equipment from the Soviet Union. The necessity to maintain while at the same time reducing such a huge military force required considerable financial outlays, again from the scarce national budget. And these are only some the problems that Ukraine has been facing since its independence.

These and other difficulties characterized the conditions under which Ukraine established statehood and created preconditions for its further participation in the European security architecture. In addition, the state's ability to conduct independent foreign policy was very restricted. A Ukrainian state apparatus was manned almost completely by former Soviet Ukrainian communist elites. The new generation of

² "Chernobyl 'Costs'" available from <http://www.ecn.cz/c10/costs.html>, accessed 24 April 2008.

³ "Chernobyl, Ukraine" available from <http://www.blacksmithinstitute.org/site10a.php>, accessed 24 April 2008.

Ukrainian politicians and diplomats was just emerging and did not participate in state building.

Under these conditions, Ukraine began relations with NATO in 1992 by joining the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), which was NATO's initiative for all non-NATO European countries and in 1994 Ukraine joined the "Partnership for Peace" (PfP).

Cooperation with NATO within the PfP Program opened a lot of doors for Ukraine. It was a unique opportunity for the state to develop its own policy towards one of the most important security organizations in Europe and the world, independently defining the goals of cooperation and implementing them. This greatly contributed to the reaffirmation of Ukraine as an independent state capable of conducting its own foreign policy. Since 1995, the year after Ukraine joined the PfP program, Ukraine has been engaged in the NATO-led operation to carry out the UN resolution in the former Yugoslavia (Implementation Force, IFOR, later Stabilization Force, SFOR). This was not Ukraine's first peacekeeping experience since independence, but it was the first time that the Ukrainian Armed Forces performed missions within the NATO format and according to NATO operational procedures.

After the fruitful and mutually beneficial relationship that began with the PfP program, NATO changed its perception of Ukraine. Ukraine's new image as a partner and its appropriate international behavior pushed the Alliance to seek enhanced cooperation with the state.

In 1997 NATO's Secretary General Javier Solana said, in a statement preceding the signing of the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between NATO and Ukraine in Madrid on July 9, 1997:

The Alliance acknowledges that Ukraine has an important and even unique place in the European security order. An independent democratic and stable Ukraine is one of the key factors of stability and security in Europe. Its geographical position gives it a major role and responsibility. NATO attaches a special importance to its relationship with Ukraine.⁴

After the Charter was signed, Ukraine entered a new era of cooperation with NATO. This cooperation was specifically shaped for Ukraine and was influenced by the evolution of Ukraine's image held by NATO. Of course, the strategic geographic location of Ukraine, its political and military potential played an important role. But again, the status of a distinctive partner and the benefits related to this status could not become a reality without positive changes in how Ukraine was perceived.

The new cooperation format created unique opportunities that Ukraine used for its rapprochement with NATO. The Ukrainian military performed their missions in close cooperation with their NATO colleagues. In the case of KFOR missions in Kosovo, the Ukrainian military acquired valuable experience of interoperability with NATO forces as a part of UKRPOLBAT (a hybrid Ukrainian and Polish unit). The foreign policy motivations of Ukraine, its dedication to insuring regional peace and stability and its

⁴ Xavier Solana, NATO Secretary General, Speech at the Madrid Summit, 7 May 1997, available from <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1997/s970507a.htm>, accessed 19 April 2008.

international behavior all contributed to its new image of a strategic partner and potential ally.

However, Ukraine's active rapprochement with NATO lost momentum after 2000, when it faced both internal and external obstacles. Power shifts in Russia and Vladimir Putin's presidency marked the beginning of considerable changes in Russian foreign policy, including its policy toward NATO enlargement. During the presidency of Boris Yeltsin in Russia from 1991 to 1999, Ukraine, with its heavy economic dependence on Russian energy resources did not face serious obstacles in developing an independent foreign policy towards NATO. When Putin, who is less tolerant of NATO, came to power, Russian energy supplies to Ukraine became a tool to influence Ukrainian foreign policy. Therefore, starting in 2000, the rapprochement between Ukraine and NATO faced an external obstacle, the Russians, which produced a partial drift of Ukrainian foreign policy priorities back to the East.

As a consequence, NATO-Ukraine relations slowed down considerably and in 2000 began to deteriorate due to a series of scandals involving former Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma. The West could not tolerate the situation in Ukraine. It became clear that Ukraine under Kuchma authoritarian regime was not a candidate to join NATO and other Western security structures.

The next important event in NATO-Ukraine relations came on May 23, 2002, when the Secretary of the Ukrainian National Defense and Security Council, Yevhen Marchuk, announced Ukraine's intention to seek NATO membership. Ukraine's ambitions were given a cautious welcome when NATO Secretary General Lord George Robertson, then head of the North Atlantic Council delegation, arrived in Kyiv on July 9,

2002. However, Robertson warned that “membership was at least five years away.”⁵ NATO-Ukraine relations in 2002 were far from those typical of potential allies, and the image of Ukraine held by NATO was far from the image of an ally.

Ukrainian authorities declared their aspirations to join NATO in May 2002, knowing that NATO would not under any circumstances invite Ukraine to join the Membership Action Plan during the Prague summit. This might be considered a tricky political move by Kuchma to maintain his legitimacy with the Ukrainian population by blaming the West for marginalizing Ukraine.

Two weeks after Ukraine declared its intentions to join NATO, NATO’s Secretary General Lord Robertson stated on a visit to Kyiv on July 9, 2002 “The task before us now is to concentrate on building upon and enhancing our Distinctive Partnership ...A lot will depend on Ukraine's resolve to take reforms forward. But we are ready to go as far as Ukraine can.”⁶ The Ukrainian declaration of its NATO membership aspirations was not ignored by the Alliance. Both sides were waiting for the approaching NATO summit. The approaching summit would invite Ukraine to join the Membership Action Plan (MAP) during the Prague summit. The MAP was a set of conditions that Ukraine had to meet in order to be eligible for NATO membership. The MAP was a key element of NATO’s strategy to integrate Ukraine into the Alliance. The MAP was a set of conditions that Ukraine had to meet in order to be eligible for NATO membership. The MAP was a key element of NATO’s strategy to integrate Ukraine into the Alliance. The MAP was a set of conditions that Ukraine had to meet in order to be eligible for NATO membership. The MAP was a key element of NATO’s strategy to integrate Ukraine into the Alliance.

the Alliance reacted to the Ukrainian declaration by signing the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan. The Plan, although lacking a clear position on Ukrainian membership in NATO, is similar in content to the NATO Membership Action Plan. It contains principles and objectives which, if implemented by the state, prepare it to meet all the criteria of NATO membership. Thus, NATO kept the door open for Ukraine, but not with Kuchma in the President's office.

After Ukraine's Orange Revolution, the hopes of the new Ukrainian political leadership to obtain membership in NATO moved closer to reality. On April 20, 2005, NATO Secretary General Jaap De Hoop Scheffer stated in an interview with the *Financial Times* that “membership standards can be much more easily fulfilled by the Yushchenko government than by the former Kuchma government.”⁷ The change in NATO's attitude toward Ukraine can be explained by the change of the state's image in the eyes of the Alliance. Ukraine had never been so close to being seen as an ally as in 2005. After 15 years of half-measures and false starts, Ukraine embarked on a path of comprehensive reforms and Euro-Atlantic integration.

However, what took place in Ukraine after the Orange Revolution presents many lessons. The Orange Revolution is part of the popular wave of democratization in Eastern Europe. Political instability in Ukraine following the revolution resulted from the power struggle between the political groups that had propagated the ideas of the Revolution and democratic transformation.

⁷ Taras Kuzio, “Ukraine moves closer to NATO Membership,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 29 April 2005, available from http://www.jamestown.org/edm/article.php?volume_id=407&issue_id=3316&article_id=2369682 accessed 25 April 2008.

Such political instability could not be ignored by NATO. Although the new Ukrainian government ensured a steady flow of reform focused on integration into NATO, the Alliance leadership was concerned with the political instability. As a confirmation that Ukraine's image was damaged, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer stated after his meeting with newly appointed Prime Minister of Ukraine Yuriy Ekhanurov in October 2005 that Ukrainian integration into NATO should be a performance based process and not only an events-based process.⁸

Unfortunately, the great Orange hope became a great Orange disappointment due to immature behavior by the political elite, who missed a chance to further democratic development and whose legitimacy among the Ukrainian people was greatly undermined. As a consequence, parliamentary elections in March 2006 were won by the opposition Party of the Regions of Ukraine headed by Yushchenko's main opponent Victor Yanukovich, Kuchma's successor. Before Yanukovich's appointment as Prime Minister on August 4, 2006, his party openly opposed Ukraine's move to join NATO, describing the process as an inexplicable rush.

Since the beginning of NATO-Ukraine relations in 1991, cooperation has been influenced by the Alliance's perception of Ukraine. Changes in foreign policy motivations and international behavior, which are the main components of image formation, influenced the evolution of NATO-Ukraine relations starting with the NACC and later the PfP programs, the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership, the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan and the invitation to join in Intensified Dialogue with NATO. The fact that

⁸ NATO's Secretary General, Mr. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, available from <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2005/s051007b.htm>, accessed 20 April 2008.

Ukraine was not invited to join the MAP during the Riga summit in November 2006 is explained by Ukraine's current image, which is marred by unclear foreign policy motivations and unpredictable international behavior. If not improved, this negative image will block the state's integration into NATO even if all official criteria for NATO membership are met.

Effect of NATO members' foreign policy towards Ukraine

NATO is an organization comprising 26 allies. Consequently, the image of Ukraine held by NATO as an organization and the Alliance's policy toward Ukraine results from commonly accepted policy, elaboration of which is based on consensus. Without minimizing the importance of any NATO member, for all practical purposes, the foreign policy of several specific NATO members determine NATO's general policy. The important states include the U.S., Germany and France.

The U.S.

The policy of the U.S. towards Ukraine has always been crucially important to NATO's cooperation with the country. The history of U.S.-Ukraine relations demonstrates variations in American interests and strategy. The US's initial strategy in establishing relations with Ukraine was characterized by active participation to support Ukrainian development as a stable and democratic European state. Considerable financial assistance to Kyiv during that period can be considered investments, primarily in U.S. strategic security on the European continent. The history of U.S.-Ukraine relations and the changing U.S. strategy reveal that the U.S. took a lead in shaping NATO's approach to cooperation with Kyiv, and specifically in securing Ukraine's status as NATO's

Distinctive Partner in 1997 and inviting Ukraine to join Intensified Dialogue in 2005 and strongly supporting Ukrainian endeavors to join the Membership Action Plan at the Bucharest Summit.

Immediately following its emergence as an independent nation in 1991, Ukraine fell into the orbit of U.S. strategic interests. As Celeste Wallander, director of the Russia program at the Center for Strategic and International puts it,

Ukraine is a key European country with geopolitical importance in Europe, the Black Sea region, and the Caucasus. Its location makes it a vital country in geoeconomic terms, as well as a potential trade corridor between Europe and Asia. Ukraine's economy is more diversified than many in the post-communist region, with potential in the energy, defense, scientific-technological manufacturing, and agricultural sectors ... Consolidating Ukraine's future as a democratic country is important to U.S. national interests and requires a strong and sustained strategy.⁹

Ukraine was not perceived as a probable ally but rather as a partner requiring assistance with stable and safe democratic development. The transition to democracy requires time and considerable reforms.¹⁰ Accordingly, the initial strategy of the U.S. toward Ukraine was not focused on Ukraine's integration into NATO.

⁹ Celeste Wallander, "Challenge and Opportunity: A U.S. Strategy on Ukraine," *CSIS Publications*, 28 June 2006, available from <http://www.ukrweekly.com/Archive/2005/270514.shtml>, accessed 12 April 2008.

¹⁰ Burkhard Koch, "American and German Approaches to East Central Europe: a Comparison," *World Affairs*, September 1993, available from <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-14728649.html>, accessed 20 April 2008.

Between 1997 and 2004, U.S. policy toward Ukraine was characterized by cautiousness. At that time, the U.S. Government perceived Ukraine as dominated by President Kuchma and the oligarchic “clans” supporting him. The U.S. repeatedly expressed concern about Ukraine's fitful economic reforms, widespread corruption, and deteriorating human rights record.¹¹ The first Ukrainian declaration of its NATO membership aspirations in 2002 was cautiously welcomed by the U.S. The odds of the U.S. supporting Ukraine's bid for NATO membership in 2002 were extremely low because of a series of discords between national leaders in 2000-2001. The so-called Kolchuga-gate scandal, followed by an exchange of unpleasant comments between Washington and Kyiv, are the most obvious. At the same time, while not backing Ukraine's NATO aspirations, Washington continued to provide considerable economic assistance.

The coming to power of the new pro-western leadership in 2004-2005 renewed the interest of the U.S. in Ukraine and it started to grow rapidly, accompanied by qualitatively new strategic goals reflected in increasing American scholarly publications and Congressional Research Service reports. The new U.S. strategy advocated Ukraine's integration into the family of Western democracies and NATO, and called on the EU to provide similar support and “open the door” to Ukraine.¹²

The second Iraqi campaign by a U.S.-led coalition led to open criticism of the American foreign policy by key European allies and EU trendsetters, Germany and France. Given Germany and France's political and economic potential and importance in

¹¹ “Ukraine: Current issues and U.S. policy,” *CRS Reports for Congress*, 23 August 2006, available from <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/73991.pdf>, accessed 26 April 2008.

¹² “Ukraine's Orange Revolution and U.S. Policy,” *CRS Reports to Congress*, 1 April 2005, available from <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/rl32845.pdf>, accessed 26 April 2008.

shaping the EU policy, when they change their view of the traditionally strong American position, it has the potential to become reality.

Tracing the chronology of U.S.-Ukraine relations, one can see how America's strategy and interests changed over time. Changes in U.S. policy, influenced by the evolving Ukraine's image, greatly affected NATO's proposed form of cooperation. Efforts by Washington allowed Ukraine to become NATO's Distinctive Partner and join the Intensified Dialogue. As the main proponent of Ukrainian membership in NATO, the U.S. will continue to play a crucial role. At the same time, the invitation for Ukraine to join the NATO MAP depends primarily on Ukraine's persistent pursuit of necessary reforms along with the position of European allies, especially Germany and France. Without appropriate support by key European powers, Ukrainian membership in NATO will not become a reality.

France

France has never directly expressed either support or opposition to Ukraine's membership in NATO. However, before the Bucharest Summit in April 2008, France indicated its position, the French Prime Minister, François Fillon, said, "We are opposed to the entry of Georgia and Ukraine because we think that it is not a good answer to the balance of power within Europe and between Europe and Russia,"¹³.

At the same time, one can see France's rationale for not perceiving Ukraine as an ally within NATO and the EU. Government of France understands that with regards to Ukrainian membership, the U.S., as the main proponent of NATO enlargement, will strengthen its standing in Europe. In 1996, President Chirac said, "My ambition is for the

¹³ "Bush stirs controversy over NATO membership", CNN.com/Europe, 1 April 2008, available from <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/europe/04/01/ukraine.analysis/>, accessed 5 May 2008.

[European] Union to assert itself as an active and powerful pole, on an equal footing with the United States of America, in the world of the twenty first century, which ... will be a *multipolar* one.”¹⁴

Competition with the United States for a leading international role is rooted in the idea of France’s grandeur, of a strong and powerful France which “must lead a global policy in the centre of the World,” in De Gaulle’s words.¹⁵ The development of a European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) within the EU, where France has strong political and economic standing, serves French national interests in achieving “equal footing” with the U.S. as a source of influence in Europe.

French Defense Minister Michele Alliot-Marie explains French objections to the U.S. proposals on the eve of the Riga summit, stating that:

the development of “global partnership” would risk diluting the natural solidarity between Europeans and North Americans ... and above all, send a bad political message: that of a campaign, at the initiative of the West, against those who do not share its conceptions.¹⁶

Therefore, France's reluctance to support Ukrainian membership in NATO is part of its general obstruction of any NATO transformation which might threaten the international standing and influence of the EU in general and of France in particular.

¹⁴ Anand Menon, *France, NATO and the Limits of Independence* (New York: Saint Martin’s Press, 2000), 130.

¹⁵ Menon, 130.

¹⁶ “France Blocks NATO Bid to Create a Global Terror Force,” *The Independent*, 4 November 2006, available from <http://news.independent.co.uk/world/politics/article1953750.ece>, accessed 26 January 2007.

Another reason France does not support Ukraine's aspirations is its unwillingness to damage its developing relations with the Russian Federation. A Polish-Lithuanian proposal to change EU-Ukraine cooperation (from the European Union Neighborhood policy to another, with long-term prospects for EU membership) was cautiously supported by Germany but rejected by France. One of the French arguments was the uncertainty of official Paris about how Russia would react, because of French dependence on Russian energy sources.¹⁷ France assigns special importance to its relations with Russia based on national interests, especially economic and energy interests.

Recognizing France's political weight in the EU and its ability to influence NATO internal processes, Russia created considerable economic incentives to enlist France's political support in the sphere of international relations. These economic incentives revolve around the stability of Russian energy resource supplies to Europe and France in particular. Specifically, two French companies, Total and Elf, have traditionally been among the largest buyers of Russian crude oil and oil products. Total was one of the first to invest in the newly opened Russian oil industry, opening the possibility for France to participate in developing the giant Russian oil fields. One of the best examples of French involvement in the Russian oil industry is the fact that Total owns half of the shares in the huge, rich Kharyaga field in Nenets territory in the Timan Pechora basin.¹⁸

¹⁷ "France Fears Putin, Obstructs Ukraine's Association with European Union," *Maidan Inform*, 7 February 2005, available from <http://eng.maidanua.org/static/enews/1107727382.html>, accessed 25 April 2008.

¹⁸ "Energy Cooperation between France and Russia: A Solid Base and Bright Perspectives," Moscow International Petroleum Club, 4 February 2006, available from <http://www.mmnk.org/journal/said.htm>, accessed 25 April 2008.

In addition to the existing cooperation, France plans to participate in developing another giant untapped gas field in Russia known as the Shtokman field. With 300 million cubic meters of gas located in the Barents Sea, it has the potential to become Russia's major gas source for both internal and export markets. France's Total is one of the four international companies involved in development of this gas field, with production expected to begin in 2010.¹⁹ Considering that Europe as a whole depends on Russian natural gas (50 percent of imports) and oil (30 percent of imports), French efforts to strengthen economic ties with Russia will not meet strong objections from most EU members.²⁰

To summarize, France's ambivalence about relations with Ukraine and Ukraine's future status in NATO and the EU can be explained by national political and economic interests. France is satisfied with NATO's current composition, tasks, roles and missions, and resists any NATO transformation that might negatively affect France's international standing. Ukrainian membership in NATO is perceived by France as strengthening the U.S. position in Europe. Reluctance to damage relations with Russia is another explanation for France's negative attitude towards further NATO enlargement and Ukrainian membership. These strong reasons and French opposition make Ukrainian prospects for membership in NATO highly unlikely.

Germany

¹⁹ "Energy Cooperation between France and Russia: A Solid Base and Bright Perspectives."

²⁰ "Russian Oil Cut-Off Prompts Europeans to Look for Alternatives," CNS News, 10 January 2007, available from <http://www.cnsnews.com/ViewForeignBureaus.asp?Page=/ForeignBureaus/archive/200701/FOR20070110c.html>, accessed 26 April 2008.

The position of Germany on Ukrainian membership in NATO is no less important than the position of France. With regards to the German position on Ukraine's NATO membership, German Government welcomed democratic transformations in Ukraine and the Euro-Atlantic orientation of its foreign policy. At the same time, in contrast to the U.S., the German leadership did not openly express a positive or negative view of Ukrainian membership in NATO. Nevertheless, several factors below indicate that Germany does not have an adequate reason to perceive Ukraine as a probable ally within NATO. Moreover, keeping the doors of both NATO and EU closed would better serve German national interests and is more rational for Germany than support for Ukraine.

The history of NATO expansion after the Cold War revived German interest in the scope of the Alliance's enlargement. Germany took great interest in expanding NATO and EU to protect itself from potential instability in Central and Eastern Europe. As former German Defense Minister Volker Ruehe stated during Bundestag debates on NATO enlargement in 1994,

The opening of the Alliance to the East is in our vital interests. One does not have to be a strategic genius to understand this ... A situation where we are at the border of stability and security – stable here but unstable east to us, prosperity on this side but poverty on the other side of the border – such a situation is not tenable in the long run. It is for this reason that Germany's eastern border can not be the border of NATO and the

European Union. Either we will export stability or we will end up improving instability.²¹

Since Ukraine, is not Germany's neighbor geographically, Ukrainian membership in NATO does not particularly serve German national interests. It is obvious that the reason for actively advocating Czech, Hungarian and especially Polish membership in NATO cannot be applied to Ukraine. For those countries, such assistance was justified by German national interest, especially in the security sphere. For these reasons, Germany is ready to accept Ukraine as a partner with democratic transformations and West-oriented foreign policy but not as a probable ally. Assistance to Ukraine is not seen as a justified burden.

Another clear rationale for not accepting Ukraine as an ally within NATO and the EU comes from Germany's unwillingness to support Ukrainian endeavors that might harm relations with Russia. Like France, Germany has recently been active in developing relations with Russia to serve national interests in the economic and energy spheres. Former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, who signed the initial agreement with Putin to construct the North European Gas Pipeline (NEGP), is now chairman of the NEGP consortium. German companies BASF and EON together own 49 percent of the consortium shares.²² It is intended that the pipeline cross the Baltic Sea to directly connect Russia with Germany. For Germany, NEGP is advantageous because it would make Germany the primary distributor of Russian gas in Europe. The pipeline will

²¹ Volker Ruehe, Speech during the Parliamentary Debate on NATO Enlargement, 1994, quoted in Asmus, 30.

²² Ariel Cohen, "The North European Gas Pipeline Threatens Europe's Energy Security," *Backgrounder*, No. 1980, 26 October 2006, available from http://www.heritage.org/Research/Europe/upload/bg_1980.pdf, accessed 1 May 2008.

transport gas primarily to Germany with further distribution to the rest of Western Europe, as well as to the former transit countries.

Germany's reluctance to support Ukrainian integration into NATO and EU has a clear rationale. Germany does not want to threaten its relations with Russia by supporting Ukraine's membership in NATO. In addition, considerable political support and economic assistance to Ukraine would not be as well-justified by national foreign policy motivations as were such expenditures in the first round of NATO enlargement. Supporting Ukrainian integration into the EU, Germany also risks gaining an economic competitor and a dissenter. As a result, although Germany welcomes Ukraine's democratic reforms and pro-Western foreign policy, keeping the doors of both NATO and EU closed better serves German national interests.

Ukrainian public opinion

Even unanimity among NATO members to accept Ukraine into the Alliance will not guarantee success. Recent poll, which was held in Ukraine in March 2008, showed deplorable results. At this time NATO membership is supported by 22 percent of Ukrainian, while 55 percent have a negative attitude (at same period one year ago there were 17 and 60 percent, respectively)²³. Given negative Ukrainian public opinion, a national referendum on joining NATO, which is a prerequisite for membership, would probably fail. Negative public opinion undermines the sincerity of Ukraine's leaders when they assert the country's dedication to joining NATO.

²³ "Public Opinion on Ukraine's Integration into NATO," the Fund "Public Opinion", 6 May 2008, available from <http://ru.proua.com/news/2008/05/06/135926.html>, accessed 9 May 2008.

Stereotypes and fears about NATO explain the negative perception of the Alliance by the Ukrainian society. Anti-NATO propaganda, spread within the population for political purposes, keeps old stereotypes and fears active and creates groundless new myths that heavily influence public opinion and can keep the ordinary Ukrainian from making a positive choice on the referendum on Ukraine's bid to join NATO.

Notably, almost half of Ukrainians consider themselves poorly informed about NATO²⁴. A clear failure by state authorities is responsible for the public's poor understanding of NATO, its post-Cold War transformation, current tasks, roles and missions, as well as the reasons for why NATO membership is the main priority of Ukrainian foreign policy. Without a well organized information campaign, Ukraine's main foreign policy task faces failure.²⁵

Between 2002, when Ukraine first declared a desire to join NATO and 2006, when the question of Ukrainian membership was actively discussed within NATO, public opinion polls showed that support for NATO membership decreased while opposition increased.

Attitude toward Ukraine's Membership in NATO	Percentage of population
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Positive attitude	27
Negative attitude	38.8
Would not vote in the referendum	13.4

²⁴ "Ukrainians Lack Information about NATO," *Inter News*, 28 November 2006, available from <http://www.podrobnosti.ua/society/2006/11/29/372395.html>, accessed 3 May 2008.

²⁵ Nikolai Sungurovskii, "Ukraine-NATO: Problem of Conscious Choice," *Kiev Mirror Weekly*, 2 December 2006, available from <http://www.zerkalo-nedeli.com/nn/show/625/55262>, accessed 12 April 2008.

Difficult to say	20.2
No response	0.6

Source: *Oleksander Razumkov Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies*

Table 1. Public Opinion on Ukraine’s Integration into NATO (2002)²⁶

As Table 1 shows, in 2002, a third of the population (34.2 percent) had no clear opinion on whether to support the state’s bid for NATO membership. Ukrainian experts believed that the majority of the undecided would support NATO membership if an appropriate information campaign were conducted. In order to achieve this goal, they composed, coordinated and received state approval for a “State Program on Informing the Population about Ukraine’s Euro-Atlantic Integration” between 2004 and 2007. The program contained clear goals, mechanisms for implementation, and expected results.

However, the program did not function as expected. More recent polls demonstrate that it failed to increase the number of pro-NATO voters as expected. In fact, a renewed anti-NATO propaganda campaign resulted in a decrease in support for the policy.

Attitude toward Ukraine's Membership in NATO	Percentage of population
Positive attitude	23.5
Negative attitude	65.1

²⁶ “Public Opinion on Ukraine’s Integration into NATO,” Oleksander Razumkov Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies, 24 December 2002, available from http://www.uceps.org/eng/opros/15/?show_q_id=13&idTema=0&m_razdel=102, accessed 12 April 2008.

Source: *National Academy of Science of Ukraine*

Table 2. Public Opinion on Ukraine's Integration into NATO (2006)²⁷

Despite the prevailing negative public opinion, the majority of Ukrainian experts support NATO membership. Practically, this means that Ukraine's entry into NATO is supported by those who are best informed about NATO. So, what about the population? According to the polls conducted in November 2006 by the Oleksander Razumkov Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies, 43.1 percent of the population consider themselves poorly informed about NATO; only three percent of respondents say they have a high level of awareness of NATO.²⁸ Vladislav Yasniuk, the director of the Foreign Ministry's NATO-Ukraine Relations Department, reports that polls conducted by his ministry in October 2006 show the 24 percent of Ukrainians are completely unaware of what NATO is.

Only a well planned and smoothly conducted campaign that attracts public interest can help the ordinary Ukrainian to make a positive democratic choice. This in turn will help guarantee that anti-NATO myths and "fairytale" will not affect the decisions of the population during the national referendum on NATO membership.

Russian impact

Russia traditionally opposes any Ukrainian rapprochement with NATO and tries to influence Ukrainian foreign policy using all leverage possible, including its natural gas

²⁷ "Sixty-five Percent of Ukrainian Population are Against Integration into NATO," *RBK Ukraine*, 27 November 2006, available from <http://www.rbc.ua/rus/newsline/2006/11/27/147345.shtml>, accessed 12 April 2008.

²⁸ "Ukrainians Lack Information about NATO," *Inter News*, 28 November 2006, available from <http://www.podrobnosti.ua/society/2006/11/29/372395.html>, accessed 3 May 2008.

supplies to Ukraine. When in April 2005 NATO invited Ukraine to begin the Intensified Dialogue, there was a surge of anger from Moscow and increased statements by Russian politicians. The statements of Russian leaders became even more hostile before and after the NATO Bucharest Summit. Speeches were highly dramatic. It seemed that it was not that a neighboring state has tried to receive NATO MAP but that Russia itself was under threat of forcible implication. Political and informational pressure was taking place at every level. In a meeting with NATO leaders at Bucharest, Russia president Vladimir Putin called NATO's promise of eventual membership for Ukraine "a direct threat" to Russian security. Following him, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov reiterated that Russia would do everything possible to prevent Ukraine and Georgia from being admitted to NATO.

Those Ukrainians who are concerned about relations with Russia are not sufficiently aware of NATO-Russia cooperation (similar to ordinary Russians). Improved awareness of Russian cooperation with NATO among the Ukrainian population could lead to their re-evaluation of anti-NATO propaganda disseminated by Russian-backed groups.

The facts demonstrate that Russia outdoes Ukraine several important types of cooperation with NATO, even considering that Ukraine participates in the Intensified Dialogue. So, unlike Ukraine's "26 plus 1" format of "consultations" with NATO, Russia participates in "making decisions" with the Alliance, specifically in the area of fighting terrorism. In contrast to five working groups functioning within the format of NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC), the NATO-Russia Council consists of 20 working and

expert groups.²⁹ Other facts demonstrating practical cooperation between NATO and Russia would also surprise the poorly informed ordinary Ukrainian.

It should also be mentioned that since June 2004, the Ukrainian Parliament had failed to ratify the Memorandum of Understanding allowing NATO access to Ukrainian airlift capacity. While the Ukrainian Parliament considered for two years whether it should make friends with NATO and ratify the memorandum, the Russian company Volga-Dnepr took an interest in providing the same services for the Alliance. As a consequence, the Russian company provides 50 percent of airlift services requested by NATO.

Other facts about NATO-Russia cooperation such as - Russia's participation in NATO exercises, NATO's support for the Program of Adaptation of the Russian Retired Officers at a rate of 400,000 Euro per year,³⁰ - also exemplify how the state can pursue national goals in cooperation with NATO. Russian cooperation with NATO might even serve as an example for Ukraine.

Returning to how the Russian factor influences Ukrainian public opinion on NATO, anti-NATO propaganda is reflected in another very interesting fact. According to the polls, the share of Russian population with a negative image of NATO is 60 percent.³¹ Considering that Ukrainians with similar views make up 65 percent of the population (five percent more than in Russia), the success of the anti-NATO propaganda campaign probably was a surprise even for its organizers.

²⁹ Volodymyr Kravchenko, "Russia-NATO: Not a Love-Match but a Marriage of Convenience," *Kyiv Mirror Weekly*, 23 September 2006, available from <http://www.zerkalo-nedeli.com/nn/show/615/54600>, accessed 3 May 2008.

³⁰ Kravchenko.

³¹ Kravchenko.

Conclusion

Having begun gradual rapprochement with NATO since independence, Ukraine today faces considerable difficulties with its bid for NATO membership. At the Bucharest Summit it was agreed that Ukraine “will become a member of NATO”³². However, NATO could not invite Ukraine to join the MAP and began a period of intensive engagement at a high political level. Decision-making regarding Ukraine was delayed to the NATO’s Foreign Ministers meeting scheduled to December 2008. The fact that more than half of Ukraine's population has a negative image of NATO aggravates the situation. If the negative perception of NATO by the Ukrainians is not reversed, a national referendum on NATO membership will certainly fail.

The problem of images in NATO-Ukraine relations can be explained by turning to the politico-psychological realm of international relations. The chronology of NATO-Ukraine relations shows how the evolution of Ukrainian foreign and internal policy motivations and changes in its international behavior changed the perceptions of Ukraine by the Alliance. Changes in the image of Ukraine, from a “stranger” to a partner and probable ally, are reflected in changed cooperation formats proposed by NATO over the history of the NATO-Ukraine relationship.

NATO’s misgiving about Ukraine is caused by Ukraine's internal political instability, which is reflected in unclear foreign policy motivations and international behavior. The legitimacy of statements by Ukraine’s governance asserting the high

³² Bucharest Summit Declaration, 3 April 2008, available from <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-049e.html>, accessed 12 April 2008.

priority given to joining NATO is regularly undermined by the political Opposition, which is backed by negative public opinion about NATO. Insofar as membership in NATO depends on the aspirant's determination and ability to integrate fully into the organization, this uncertainty at home will surely prevent NATO from inviting Ukraine to join the NATO Membership Action Plan.

Further development of Ukraine's relations with other Western democracies is crucially important for the state's self-concept and growth as an independent stable democracy. NATO's Open Door policy represents a unique opportunity for Ukraine in this regard. Unless it is integrated into NATO and the EU, Ukraine risks a return to political, economic and military domination by Russia. Practically speaking, Russian domination would eliminate Ukraine as an independent state and international actor.

The U.S., the main advocate for Ukraine's membership in NATO, has several times expressed concerns in this regard. Guided in relations with Kyiv by its foreign strategy and conscious interests, the American government continually stresses its hope that Ukraine will become a strong and independent state fully integrated into NATO. The US is also willing to provide considerable support toward the achievement of this goal. At the same time, the U.S. encourages the EU and its key members to keep the European Union door open for Ukraine as well. Without Western European support for Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic endeavors, political and economic assistance to Kyiv from Washington will remain insufficient.

Major European powers' reluctance to see Ukraine as a NATO ally and EU member derives from their resistance to NATO transformation and enlargement. Current

French and German unwillingness to accept Ukraine in NATO and the EU, to the detriment to relations with Russia, is another serious obstacle.

However, unanimity within the members of NATO would not guarantee Ukraine NATO membership if another major problem, the distorted and negative image of NATO held by Ukrainian society, is not resolved. Active anti-NATO propaganda, the main cause of NATO's poor public image, nurtures stereotypes and fears about Ukraine's integration into the Alliance which preclude a rational, conscious decision in the required national referendum. Efforts by the Ukrainian government to inform the public about Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration have obviously failed.

Resolving problems related to joining NATO is primarily Ukraine's responsibility. However, without the support of NATO and EU members, Ukrainian intentions risk failure. Negative perception of Ukraine by NATO would block the country's membership in the alliance even if all membership oriented reforms are successfully implemented. Overcoming Ukraine's internal political instability and maintaining the dynamics of comprehensive internal reform are crucially important.

Given the tension between negative public views toward NATO and Ukrainian leaders' drive to ensure NATO membership, reversing NATO's negative image must be top priority so that anti-NATO propagandists do not continue to exert a negative impact. The importance of the "Russian factor" on public opinion suggests that Russia's active cooperation with NATO should be a focus of the public information campaign. The experience of Poland and other new NATO members should be thoroughly studied by Ukrainian authorities and experts. Given the ambivalence of key European allies, Ukraine

should reinvigorate dialogue with the European powers. If the European door to NATO remains closed, Ukraine's main foreign policy priority will not be achieved.

Ukraine's path to Euro-Atlantic integration will continue to be a rocky one. The situation is difficult but not hopeless. Of course, Western support is crucial. At the same time, Ukraine's determination to do its own homework is the key to ultimate success.

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