

UKRAINE IN THE GUAM SYSTEM

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Consolidation of GUAM. *Aims and Tasks.* A political consultative forum of four post-Soviet states (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova) was set up on 10 October, 1997 in Strasbourg where their presidents attended a summit of the Council of Europe to discuss the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. The Strasbourg declaration signed by the four presidents registered the level of political rapprochement and practical cooperation inside the group and identical positions on the key international issues and processes unfolding in the post-Soviet expanse. They described their common aim as promotion of European stability and security based on respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of frontiers, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

Two years later, on 24 April, 1999, Uzbekistan joined the structure at the Washington summit of the Council of Euro-Atlantic Partnership; in 2005, it left it for a number of reasons. Between 1999 and 2005 the alliance was called GUUAM.

Propelled by the shared economic and political interests of the five members, the new structure moved ahead at a fast pace. Indeed, the member states needed alternative routes for Caspian oil and the Euro-Asian transportation corridor; they were looking forward to closer cooperation with the European and Euro-Atlantic structures.

The processes going on in each of the GUAM members are not free of national specifics, however, there are many common features that underlay the shared interests:

- The similar transformation processes unfolding in the socioeconomic and political systems launched by the collapse of socialism and the Soviet regime and moving toward democracy;
- The search for new forms of civilizational and national identity, as well as their own statehood models (not free from the danger of ethno-confessional conflicts);
- The newly independent states' intensive involvement in the world economic processes and information flows, which calls for new foreign policy patterns;
- Regional consolidation stimulated by the geopolitical forces' pronounced interest in its resource and geostrategic potential and their intensive penetration into it in pursuance of their own interests.

As a member of the newly born regional organization, Ukraine became actively involved in its consolidation for political and economic considerations of its own: Kiev badly needed diverse contacts and new forms of international cooperation to promote its influence in the Black Sea region.

The changes of the last decade visible throughout the world demonstrate that states aware of their common interests within regional frameworks tend to boost their cooperation. Indeed, the idea of traditional globalism has been devalued; the conception of the world balance of power and bipolar

confrontation is rapidly growing obsolete, while the nature of the security threats concentrated at the regional level is changing rapidly. In the context of the mounting globalization, which is pushing information and sociocultural forms of cooperation instead of force to the forefront, it is no longer important whether confrontation involves two poles of power (a bipolar world), or the world center and the periphery (a unipolar world dominated by one superpower), or several rivaling economic, political, or civilizational centers. On the international scene traditional geopolitics is being rapidly replaced with regional geopolitics.

For a while the inertia forced the elites of post-Soviet states to look toward Moscow, the traditional dominant force in the post-Soviet expanse. Later, however, the Kremlin's gradually mounting reintegration ambitions and the authoritarian trends in Russia itself forced the post-Soviet states to seek new models of cooperation based on harmonization of national interests. Post-Soviet states developed new foreign policy orientations; they started looking for reliable partners and allies to survive in the rapidly changing world politics. The GUAM states are growing increasingly aware of the security deficit: Moscow no longer looks like a desirable patron, while the international security systems are either ineffective (the U.N. Security Council and OSCE) or not yet ready to fill the security vacuum (NATO and the EC).

The CIS's organizational inefficiency (it still unites some of the former Soviet republics) and its obvious inability to acquire new forms and to provide its members with a mechanism of consultations and cooperation called to life new regional organizations that belong, as a rule, to one of two types. They are either a lever of Moscow's economic and political control in the post-Soviet expanse designed to replace the CIS that failed to justify the hopes placed on it (the Russia-Belarus Union, the Customs Union, EurAsEC, SES, etc.), or the structures of the second type, which are based on equality and serve as a tool of the post-Soviet states' integration into the world economic and political system (the Central Asian Alliance, GUAM, BSECO, etc.).

GUAM/GUAM can be interpreted as the answer of a group of states resolved to defend their sovereignty in the face of the challenges Russia formulated in its strategic documents and its resolution to perpetuate its domination in the post-Soviet expanse.

The GUAM countries are determined to exploit their geographic advantages, which make them the best transit countries for new transportation and energy routes across Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. This serves as a solid geo-economic foundation for their cooperation designed to promote their interests and realize joint economic projects, which in turn strengthens their cooperation in the security sphere.

The meeting of the heads of the Ukrainian, Georgian, Moldovan, and Azerbaijani delegations in Washington in October 1998 at the annual WB-IMF meeting specified the new group's aims and tasks. It shifted the accents to the Trans-Caucasian transportation corridor as an important mechanism of regional integration and a factor of the members' stronger economic and political sovereignty. In this context, the practical issues of developing the Caspian oil fields and creating a network of pipelines to move oil to the world markets came to the fore. This, in turn, raised the question of security of the transportation corridors.

The GUAM statement adopted in Washington outlined its principles and charted the main directions in which the new structure was ready to move: stronger diverse cooperation with international organizations and forums, including the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and NATO's Partnership for Peace Program, cooperation in security and developing cooperation in the Europe-Caucasus-Asia transportation and energy corridors.

The Yalta Charter dated 7 June, 2001 identified the cooperation priorities as closer trade and economic relations; development of the transportation corridor infrastructure and related legal principles; unification of customs tariffs to bring them closer to the world standards; cooperation in the

energy security sphere; and combating international terrorism, organized crime, illegal migration, and drug trafficking.

Speaking at the Chisinau GUUAM summit in 2005, Ukrainian President Yushchenko offered his country's idea about the organization's basic values—democracy, economic development, and security. By promoting democratic values, developing cooperation with the EU, being involved in international projects (particularly in the transport and energy spheres), implementing the Free Trade Agreement, and successfully dealing with unsettled conflicts, international terrorism, extremism, and organized crime, the member states will be able to integrate into European structures.

The GUAM conception perfectly fits the general trends of the European continent's regional development. Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus has pointed to the parallel processes now underway within the Baltic Three and the Vilnius Ten designed to achieve the common aim of integration into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures. These processes are expected to create a regional Black Sea-Baltic system of cooperation and security, one of the pillars of the European security architecture.

It should be said that this philosophy, which found its way into the alliance's fundamental documents and was accepted by the international community, caused doubts in some Russian political experts. Moscow remains very negative about GUAM as an integration unit: the structure is seen as America-orientated set up to expand the pro-Western sphere of influence in the post-Soviet territory. Sergey Markov, well-known Russian political scientist, is more outspoken than his colleagues: he has described GUAM as an "anti-Russian" coalition set up under the U.S. aegis to isolate the Kremlin from Europe and control Russia's resources.

Those who describe GUAM as an alternative of sorts to Russia's ambitious intention to remain the center of the integration processes and retain control over the security processes in the post-Soviet expanse are quite right. Its military-political presence in the conflict zones allows the Russian Federation to pursue its main aim: political influence and monopoly on the energy resource market of the GUAM states. Indeed, if realized the Trans-Caucasian transportation corridor and transit of Caspian oil across Georgia and Ukraine will significantly undermine the position of Russian oil and gas companies on the world markets. Ukraine badly needs stronger regional ties to achieve diversification of energy sources and decrease its dependence on Moscow.

Perhaps those Moscow politicians who insist that GUAM threatens their country's domination in the post-Soviet expanse are right to a certain extent: a group of independent states determined to defend its interests and security independently of Russia does not fit Russia's general official strategy in relation to the post-Soviet states. Objectively speaking, however, a stronger GUAM perfectly fits Russia's national interests—it preserves security and stability on its southern borders. In fact, regional mechanisms of civilized conflict settlement could somewhat defuse tension in the Northern Caucasus and ensure stable functioning of the transportation corridors in Russia's south. If approached superficially, Russia's tactical interests are threatened by intensive development of the post-Soviet south. Strange as it may seem, in the strategic perspective Russia might gain a lot economically by joining the building of transportation infrastructure and involving its southern areas in the emerging system of worldwide communications.

To accept this, the Russian political elite should abandon some of the old foreign policy stereotypes: domination in the post-Soviet expanse, confrontation with the Euro-Atlantic community, incorrect tactics of seeking trade advantages, etc.

Institutional development of GUAM. It was Ukraine that suggested that the GUAM heads of state should meet at least once a year, as well as at U.N., OSCE, CIS and other summits; the ministers and experts of all the member states should also meet regularly. Later this practice was further developed and registered by the Yalta Charter of 2001, which also described how the GUAM institutions were supposed to function.

The annual Summit of the GUAM Member States is the structure's highest body; in the past the heads of state met within the framework of international summits. Today, they all meet in one of the countries to discuss current affairs. The Foreign Ministers Meeting is the executive structure, while the Committee of National Coordinators appointed by the foreign ministers serves as GUAM's working body. GUAM also has an institution of coordinator country for a sectoral working group. Ukraine is the coordinator country for the energy, economy, and trade working group; Georgia performs the same function in the sphere of transport, Moldova is responsible for tourism, and Azerbaijan deals with combating terrorism, organized crime, and drug trafficking.

The defense and oil and gas ministers also meet regularly, there are consultations at the ambassadorial level and consultations of experts in order to coordinate foreign policy positions and arrive at joint decisions. The information office in Kiev, which opened on the eve of the Yalta summit of 2002, serves as the GUAM secretariat. The 2007 summit adopted the provision on the Council of GUAM Foreign Ministers and passed a decision on the organization's observer status. Cooperation among the parliaments is another important field of cooperation. On 23 September, 2004, the GUAM Interparliamentary Assembly met for its constituent session in Kiev.

The Chisinau summit held on 22 April, 2005 gave a fresh boost to the alliance's institutional development; it was attended by the presidents of Lithuania and Rumania and representatives of the U.S. State Department and the OSCE Secretary General. It was at that summit that GUAM was transformed into a fully-fledged transnational organization (a fact Ukraine and Georgia considered to be of special importance). The summit also produced a declaration called "In the Name of Democracy, Stability, and Development" and a Joint Statement by the GUAM heads of state, as well as by the president of Lithuania and Rumania called "Building Democracy from the Baltics to the Black Sea."

Soon after the Chisinau summit, Uzbekistan, which did not attend anyway, announced that it intended to leave the alliance. Without its second "U," the structure became more stable and compact. It finally shed all the residual features of a post-Soviet situational state alliance and emerged as an international entity. The Uzbek leaders regarded their GUAM membership (which turned the structure into GUUAM) as a trump card in its game against the Kremlin's mounting influence in the post-Soviet expanse for America's support and benevolence. In the wake of 9/11, cooperation between the two countries in the counterterrorist struggle reached a level that made Tashkent's GUUAM membership superfluous. This decision was also suggested by the obviously intensified democratic processes in the GUUAM countries after the Color Revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine, as well as the alliance's predominant orientation toward European and Euro-Atlantic integration: Tashkent tended toward the Islamic world and was closely connected with Russia's interests. In April 2006 Uzbekistan joined the EurAsEC.

The ideas formulated at the Chisinau summit were specified at the Kiev summit: on 23 May, 2006, the members signed a declaration on setting up a qualitatively new international structure called the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development. Since the old name had already become customary in the international relations system, the new structure is usually called ODED—GUAM; its Secretariat is located in Kiev.

The United States supported the initiative and promised to extend its support in the future. In September 2005, the GUAM countries acquired national interdepartmental offices for the Virtual Center and Interstate Information-Analytical System. They also developed a regional structure engaged in operations in the law enforcement sphere. The GUAM member states set up the Secretariat of the Steering Committee on Trade and Transportation Facilitation and intensified cooperation within the project.

The Euro-Atlantic group of advisors set up after the Chisinau summit of 2005 on the American money proved its worth by implementing the U.S. Framework Program. On 22-23 May, 2006, the

GUAM countries and the United States met in Kiev within the 11th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers and the GUAM summit to discuss the future of their dialog and cooperation.

In the ten years of its existence, GUAM developed from an informal club of states into an effective and generally recognized international organization.

The very fact that GUAM was set up under Ukraine's relative leadership and with support of the other members, which are fully aware of the advantages offered by regional structures based on the principles of equality and mutual support, signifies that new and very important integration processes have been launched across the post-Soviet expanse. GUAM is neither an anti-Russian bloc nor a buffer zone between NATO and the Russian Federation. It was set up to exploit more effective and mutually advantageous patterns of regional cooperation in the post-Soviet territory.

GUAM has also made good progress in the international context: the member states are actively cooperating in transnational organizations (particularly the U.N. and OSCE) by holding regular consultations and identifying common positions. In 2003, GUAM acquired an observer status in the U.N. General Assembly, which again can be described as a step forward; it is invariably present at the OSCE-sponsored economic forums, conferences on security, globalization, and regional integration.

The GUAM member states proved to be most active within the OSCE: they not only regularly synchronized their approaches, statements issued by GUAM were also discussed on a weekly basis. The experience is a unique one: out of the many international structures, only the EU practices such procedures.

Ukraine in GUAM's projects and affairs. Cooperation within the GUAM structures is unfolding in the following directions:

- Political consultations and coordination of efforts when dealing with common security issues; and political cooperation in international organizations—the U.N., OSCE and NATO, including the Partnership for Peace program;
- Development of the Eurasian transportation corridor, cooperation in oil production and transportation to Europe;
- Stronger multilateral cooperation in the security sphere and combating international terrorism, separatism, and drug trafficking as the main threats of our time;
- Military and military-technical cooperation further developed by setting up a multinational peacekeeping battalion; Ukraine's stronger involvement in peacekeeping activities and settling ethnic conflicts.

The member states' common economic interests are concentrated in the transportation of Caspian energy resources and the new trans-Caucasian transit routes. Ukraine's transport and communication infrastructure and oil-refining capacities make it the key strategic transit country for energy sources for Europe. The route across Ukraine is more than twice as short as the route that connects the Middle East and Europe. The money earned from fuel transit will pay for Ukraine's fuel imports, thus helping it, in turn, to achieve energy security.

Mutual investment activities, joint ventures in processing agricultural products, machine building, energy, and transport are other promising directions of economic cooperation. Some time in the future, GUAM might develop into a self-sufficient zone of regional economic cooperation.

Transport, energy, and internal security have been the three most actively developing spheres of cooperation. In full accordance with the U.S. Framework Program of Trade and Transport Facilitation, Border and Customs Control, Combating Terrorism, Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking, the GUAM countries are working on developing trade and transport communication, as well as on the

project for a virtual center and an interstate information-analytical system in the struggle against international terrorism.

The GUAM countries believe it important to ensure security and stability in the region: each of the countries has its own experience of conflict situations with more or less similar origins (some of them are inspired by outside forces). The common problems call for similar approaches to conflict settlement. Large-scale economic projects call for sub-regional security structures that form the common platform of cooperation in this sphere.

Ukraine is strong enough to shoulder part of the peacekeeping functions in the Caspian-Black Sea region. Its own interests as an extra-bloc state are identical to the regional interests of peace and stability. The republic has everything needed for training peacekeepers: centers, structures, personnel, and methods. It is prepared to cooperate in the peacekeeping operations conducted under the U.N. and OSCE aegis; it is accepted that such operations should involve multinational peacekeepers operating under international staffs.

The progress achieved within the OSCE is a logical outcome of its involvement, which is greater than of any other international structure, in discussions of the frozen conflicts in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova and regional security—issues of key importance for three out of the four GUAM members.

Ukraine's technical and humanitarian assistance and closer military and military-technical cooperation are two most important issues that promote regional stability and security. Ukraine offers higher military education at its higher military educational establishments for officers of the member states' national armies; and it extends technical assistance indispensable for the development of the national armies, border guards, and navies. It offers its vast industrial potential to the GUAM partners for the maintenance and repair of military equipment, expands military-industrial cooperation, and extends its material and technical support in the event of a direct military threat to any of the member states.

The GUAM members are resolved to maintain peace and security: in January 1999 in Baku the defense ministers of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova discussed the draft Agreement on Setting up a Joint Peacekeeping Battalion to maintain peace and international security, as well as a draft decision of the measures needed to form such a battalion. If adopted, these and similar decisions will invigorate military cooperation and strengthen regional security.

At the same time, as long as its priorities remain uncoordinated, GUAM is unable to fully tap its potential. Indeed, for some time, Ukraine remained convinced that it belonged to a purely economic organization that resulted in the structure's stable association with the Baku-Supsa-Odessa-Brody pipeline. This deprived the transit states' continued membership of any reason to remain within GUAM. There is a shared understanding that the energy corridors need foreign policy support (GUAM in this particular case): all transportation projects promote both political and economic cooperation. Today, the trans-regional energy projects TRACECA and INOGATE largely depend on effective cooperation among the GUAM member states: the former is related to the Europe-Caucasus-Central Asia corridor; the latter is a program of fuel transportation within which Ukraine and the other member states signed a framework agreement on 22 July, 1999 on the institutional principles of an interstate oil and gas transportation system.

In principle, GUAM was set up, among other things, to promote economic cooperation: the Free Trade Area Agreement signed at the Yalta summit was one of the important steps in this direction. The document serves as the organization's economic cornerstone, on the one hand, and encourages greater trade turnover inside GUAM, on the other.

We all know that the internal instability of any region brimming with contradictions (this fully applies to GUAM) discourages economic growth: it requires the security of each of the members and of the region as a whole before other sub-regional structures that might appear sooner or later move to

the front. Transnistria, Abkhazia, and Nagorno-Karabakh are the worst sub-regional security problems. Ukraine, which dispatches its observers with U.N./OSCE mandates to conflict zones, is better suited than its partners to initiate peacekeeping activities within the GUAM mandate. It is adequately equipped for the role of peacekeeper in the European part of the post-Soviet expanse (the republic has training centers and other structures, and also necessary forces and resources).

Specific forms of Ukraine peacekeeping involvement will be patterned on the nature of each conflict. In Nagorno-Karabakh, it will probably limit itself to mediation, technical consultations, and the military observer function. Azerbaijan can count on international support on the territorial integrity issue. In Georgia, Ukraine might expand its peacekeeping involvement beyond these limits: the Georgian side repeatedly invited Ukraine to deploy its peacekeepers in the conflict zone. Today the talks on a Georgian-Azeri-Ukrainian peacekeeping battalion are underway. Ukraine is prepared to use its contingent for the Abkhazian settlement: it counts on America's support, a country that needs greater security in the Black Sea region. Ukraine has already pledged mediation in the Transnistrian conflict and has guaranteed the sides' security.

Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and deliveries of weapons of mass destruction to the conflict zones are seen in Ukraine and other GUAM members as major security issues.

After 9/11 security problems acquired global dimensions: the events that followed this tragedy radically changed the international security context; the nature of transnational threats also changed. The more recent events revealed that the world community is not yet ready for adequate countermeasures.

The 2002 Yalta summit adopted the Declaration on Common Efforts to Ensure Stability and Security in the Region. The GUAM presidents announced that they were determined to set up structures to fight transnational terrorism and were prepared to close ranks in the face of this and other threats. They expressed their resolve to implement joint programs and improve the prevention mechanisms of terrorist threats and organized crime, as well as to resort to general measures in these spheres.

At the same summit, Ukraine formulated its initiative on the Transnistria settlement as "Toward a Resolution through Democracy" that confirmed the role of GUAM as the regional security forum. The other heads of state also spoke about fighting separatism and the new challenges to security.

GUAM's prospects. No matter how important its economic component in the short- and mid-term perspective, GUAM should concern itself with the regional security issues. Those who object to this failed to take into account two major regional factors: the internal instability and the region's great geostrategic value for foreign geopolitical players such as the United States, Russia, the EU, Turkey, and Iran.

Ukraine has never tired of demonstrating its desire to preserve peace in the Caucasus by promptly settling the Abkhazian conflict. So far, it has no direct contacts with the Abkhazian leaders and therefore is deprived of the political mechanisms needed to put pressure on the sides. Georgia has repeatedly asked Ukraine to send Ukrainian peacekeeping contingents into the conflict zone. Today, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, which have already decided to set up a peacekeeping battalion similar to the Ukrainian-Polish battalion already functioning, are looking into possible cooperation with other friendly states.

Fully aware of the importance of the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Georgia, Ukraine repeatedly demonstrated its readiness to be more actively involved in comprehensive political settlement of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict. It is prepared to join the U.N. observer mission in Georgia if the conflicting sides agree on its involvement.

The Transnistrian conflict was more or less settled by initialing the Memorandum on Essential Principles for Normalizing Relations between Moldova and Transnistria signed on 8 May, 1997 by the president of Ukraine as one of the mediators. Ukraine acts as guarantor of peace in the breakaway

region; a decision has been made to involve the Ukrainian military in the peacekeeping activities and to incorporate the country into the United Control Commission.

Ukraine remains loyal to the principle of non-interference into domestic affairs of its neighbor, however, it insists, in full accordance with its obligations under the Helsinki Final Act and the international laws, on Moldova's territorial integrity and sovereignty within the borders of the former Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic. The continued presence of Russia's Operational Military Group in Transnistria (which numbers from 3.5 to 3.7 thousand) is seen as a problem. Ukraine believes that the group should be pulled out as promptly as possible, while the ammunition that remains in Transnistria should be liquidated. Ukraine has already signed a transit agreement on the withdrawal of the 14th Russian military units with the Government of the Russian Federation, which can be described as the first step in the right direction.

Ukraine's involvement in GUAM. Ukraine inherited at least some of the Soviet interests, aims, and problems in the Black Sea region and as such is entitled to play a greater role in the building up a new order in this area. Ukraine finds it important to settle the local conflicts and to create models of strategic partnership with the GUAM countries. The republic needs more active multilevel sub-regional cooperation within GUAM, particularly in the transportation of energy sources and the development of trans-Caucasian transportation routes. Greater regional security calls for Ukraine's more prominent role in the region; this can be achieved through consistent support from international organizations (the U.N., OSCE, EU, NATO, and others).

The GUAM members differ in their sociopolitical systems, mentality, and foreign policy orientations. The economic development levels also differ from country to country; the same can be said about the pace of absolutely indispensable social and economic reforms. If the structure receives support from NATO and the EU and if Russia remains neutral, the differences described above will not prevent it from becoming one of the world's key geopolitical centers.

When looking into the future of any project, we should take into account the deeper-embedded realities in the post-Soviet expanse as a whole. Today, geopolitical stratification has already revealed a stable trend toward forming two groups of states: one of them can be conventionally called the Northern Alliance (the CSTO confirmed by the members' involvement in the Customs Union) and the Southern Alliance, alias GUAM.

The former tends toward Russia, the center of economic and political interests of the elites of the Alliance's other member states; there is much greater determination to consolidate and set up joint institutions of coordination and management. The Union of Russia and Belarus has moved further than the other structures within the Northern Alliance, which means that all members prefer an even closer alliance. Russia, which is building up its power component, is contributing to the general trend. The consolidation ideology is usually based on confrontation and the enemy image, "Western imperialism" and the "Islamic threat" in this case.

The Southern group is guided by common economic and security interests. Its consolidation is based on its shared orientation toward the West suggested by its social and economic problems and expectation of Western support in the security sphere. The level of internal organization, however, is much lower than in the Northern Alliance and as such leaves much to be desired. Indeed, in the absence of a dominating center, it is much harder to coordinate the members' interests; external factors too contribute to inadequate consolidation, together with the still surviving hopes that the CIS might get a second lease on life.

The GUAM members have reached a more or less identical stage of socioeconomic transformations; their foreign policy orientations are more or less similar; their economic interests are identical; and they are involved in joint projects. It is highly important, however, to assess the extent to which GUAM membership suits the interests of each of its members; how much they need one another, and whether they will be able to cope with their problems outside GUAM.

In the sociopolitical sphere, there are at least three levels of geopolitically important factors: at the first, civilizational, level the identities are distributed according to the traditions of the Islamic and Orthodox civilizations. The second level contains Soviet identities still alive in the mentalities of the elites and man-in-the-street. The third level connected with the liberal-democratic behavioral and thinking patterns is gradually spreading together with modernization, which is drawing the region into a new economic expanse. The intertwining of trends of all the levels accounts for the situational complexity of regional geopolitics, tension points, and conflicts.

Regional cooperation among the countries with different democratization degrees and different forms of political and traditional cultures is intensifying at a fast pace. At the earlier stages, the Caucasus looked toward Russia—today this orientation clashes with Western or Islamic orientation. Undeveloped internal regional ties and communication systems are responsible for the frequently contradictory trends in each of the countries; this sends up inner tension and leads to conflicts. Different economic interests do nothing to improve the situation and push forward regional integration processes. In the Caucasus, for example, the local players operate side by side with Russia, the West, and the Islamic World.

Ukraine has to cope with separatist trends in some of its corners; under certain conditions they might develop into greater hazards for the country's territorial integrity. This is why Ukraine shares the concerns of the Caucasian region. Potentially, Ukraine might be confronted with the need to use force to protect its sovereignty; therefore it should strengthen its border regime and spend more on internal security.

The general trends across the CIS and, on a wider scale, the relations between Russia and the West make Ukraine's more active involvement in the Caucasus inevitable. In this context, Ukraine would have profited from GUAM's realized potential. The logic of events is pushing the country toward more active discussions of the future system of regional stability. If it stays away from them, the republic might miss the chance of building up its regional impact; at worst it will have to abandon one of its most promising foreign policy vectors.

The future of GUAM and Ukraine. Ukraine's foreign policy ideology perfectly fits the idea of a regional security system. GUAM is a group of equal states operating in the post-Soviet expanse which brings together countries with similar political and economic orientations: they resolutely support the idea of new equal and mutually advantageous cooperation structures. Its mechanisms will give the integrated and consolidated region much more possibility of defending its interests and becoming involved in international cooperation.

At the same time, in view of the new trends in the regional security system, GUAM should somewhat readjust its accents and concentrate on economic cooperation and security. This presupposes Ukraine's involvement in the regional stability system, while GUAM should increase the number of its members and correlate its activities with OSCE, on the other.

Stronger GUAM and regional mechanisms of civilized conflict settlement could have defused the ethnic tension in the Caucasus to some extent and ensure the sustainable functioning of the transportation corridors in the south of the CIS.

At the same time, the present level of interaction inside GUAM falls short of the contemporary demands, while the mechanism of their collective activity needs radical readjustment. In the future, GUAM may develop into a fully-fledged international organization with a Charter and clearly formulated criteria of involvement, obligations, and rights of the member states, as well as of the collective structures at the top, departmental, and parliamentary levels.

If actively promoted, the idea of a free trade area within GUAM might become its economic cornerstone; today it needs adequately functioning mechanisms, a common information expanse, and legal support harmonized with the national legislations. All the members are willing to remove the trade barriers inside the organization.

Stability mechanisms (especially for the safe transportation of energy) created in close cooperation with all the interested transnational structures may develop into an important trend of GUAM's activities. To achieve this, the member states should coordinate their foreign policy efforts and establish stable contacts with other international organizations (the EU, OSCE, BSECO, the CIS Customs Union, OIC, and others). In the future, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Poland, and some other countries might find GUAM membership desirable.

Cooperation among the civil structures of the member states should receive a stronger impetus; the same applies to communication and organized exchange at the NGO level. The GUAM members should close their ranks for the sake of fuller realization of their national interests and equal relations within the group.

Closer relations among the GUAM members will help resolve the following tasks:

1. Development of the fuel-and-energy and transportation complexes of related industries of the member states associated with the implementation of the transportation project designed to move Azeri (and Kazakh in the future) oil along the Baku-Supsa-Odessa-Brody-Adamova Zastava-Gdansk route. It is preferred by most of regional states as economically expedient. Much will depend on Ukraine's ability to complete the Yuzhny oil terminal and the Brody oil pipeline. This project will move *large volumes of oil and gas and upgrade the energy security* of a wide range of countries, including the transit countries. Ukraine stands a good chance of finding a worthy place among the latter.
2. The GUAM countries will pool forces to join the international transportation routes that connect Europe, the Caucasus, and Asia by using, among other things, Ukraine's transit advantages. This will result in a regional area of economic cooperation, an inalienable part of international division of the labor system, and a contemporary Silk Road. China, like the Central Asian and the Caucasian states, is also very interested in these projects.
3. The free trade area project looks promising as part of the free trade area of the CIS countries. Ukraine has a good chance of improving its political and economic situation, helping the GUAM members integrate into the world community, gaining more political weight, developing production and trade, expanding perspective markets, etc. by arranging a multilevel system of cooperation with the entities of the Black Sea-Caspian region.
4. Certain sectors of industrial production, transportation communication, scientific-technical potential, wider use of recreational resources, and international tourism look very promising for economic partnership and integration processes. Ukraine can become a factor of stronger confidence in the region and accelerated integration of GUAM in Europe.
5. In view of the unfolding negative trends and processes, regional development calls for a more effective stability system. These trends and processes are slowing down the region's economic development and threatening international and regional security.

In the future, GUAM might become one of the key components of the emerging European and Trans-Atlantic security architecture through a system of military-political agreements between the European and Trans-Atlantic security structures, on the one hand, and GUAM, on the other.

Today, the GUAM countries are still seeking European and Euro-Atlantic integration; they are obviously responsible for the present political regional balance (even though shaky), something that the European and Trans-Atlantic countries badly need in the region. Further transformations in the desired direction call for stronger security maintained by a corresponding regional structure and more active participation of the GUAM members in military-political cooperation. NATO and the European Union need these developments and will hail them: they will acquire a way of channeling the

political preferences of the GUAM states and the other CIS members which will allow them to become more deeply involved in the safe transportation of Caspian energy sources.

At the same time, more active military-political interaction between GUAM and NATO allows the GUAM members to avoid many of the problems connected with formal NATO membership. They are engaged in transformation processes designed to set up a common mechanism of conflict settlement. A well-oiled system of military-political partnership will upgrade the countries' involvement in the military-technical sphere as well.

If transformed into a fully-fledged international structure connected in a logical and intrinsic way with the European security and cooperation system, GUAM will be able to realize its stabilizing potential. This suggests that Ukraine should initiate a transfer to a new level of deeper cooperation, particularly in the military-political sphere.

Time calls for GUAM's expansion: closer involvement of Rumania, Bulgaria, Poland, and Turkey (all of them NATO members) would help to transform the alliance into a key element of regional stability and security. What is needed is an adequate expansion strategy that would preserve the form, while harmonizing national interests. Armenia, as a potential GUAM member, merits special attention—its membership will help to settle its conflict with Azerbaijan.

GUAM may perform another, no less important function: a center where mechanisms of integration in the EU are created and tested, while the GUAM member states work together on a common integration strategy. In fact, the alliance might follow in the footsteps of the Visegrad Group, a highly successful model of regional partnership set up for European integration. It created fairly efficient decision-making and implementation mechanisms in the political and economic spheres, as well as methods for dealing with prominent regional and international issues.

Today, GUAM should concentrate on its main priority: coordination of efforts designed to adjust the political-legal, economic (the free trade area), and social spheres to the EU's requirements. The European Neighborhood Policy, in which Georgia and Azerbaijan are actively involved, may serve as an instrument of European integration. Ukraine, as a state that is proving its complete dedication to democratic values daily, is already moving in the right direction, and has demonstrated its total dedication to the principles of the ENP, stands a good chance of becoming a regional vehicle of democracy and a regional leader.

The interstate relations within GUAM should be placed in the broad European context; bilateral cooperation should be based on the solid foundation of the shared strategic priority, viz. integration in the European Union. To achieve this, GUAM should demonstrate more vigor and broaden its competence with an eye to becoming an economic and military-political structure. It should fully tap its common economic, transport, and energy potential to strengthen economic relations and set up a common market based on EU principles.

On the other hand, these developments might create certain problems for Ukraine, which is determined to join the European Union: its association, as a GUAM member, with countries outside Europe (both geographically and in the minds of the Europeans) might brand it as another non-European state. This is fully understood by some experts in Moldova: its membership in GUAM and the CIS gives the country the image of a non-European state.

In the final analysis, GUAM's success as a regional organization depends on the success of the reforms and changes in each of its individual members and on the cooperation success among each and every one of them. This is especially true of Ukraine: during the next few years, the republic should work toward turning GUAM into a key international structure and the dominating element in the region's political landscape. Success will turn it from an object of European policy into one of the important European actors. Failure will not merely force it out of its present regional position—Ukraine will find it harder to realize its European and Euro-Atlantic ambitions.

In view of the very different sociopolitical systems of the GUAM member states, their vastly different mentalities, foreign policy orientations, economic development levels, and pace of socio-economic changes, the tasks outlined above cannot be described as easy. The inappropriate attitude of certain countries outside GUAM will make this task even more challenging. If the member states show their goodwill and interested European countries and international organizations give their support, the GUAM project has the great future of an efficient international structure.