

UKRAINE, THE TURKIC WORLD, AND CENTRAL ASIA

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From the very beginning the relations between Southern and Western Rus/Ukraine have been far from simple and can be best described as ambivalent. We all know that Rus as a political unit came into existence amid incessant clashes with nomadic Turkic tribes—Pechenegs (Becheneks), Torks (Uzes), and Polovtsians (Kumans or Kypchaks)—pressing in from the Asian steppes. The Kievan rulers were no “meek lambs” either: they destroyed the Kingdom of the Khazars, the state with Turkic ethnic roots. Prince Svyatoslav’s inroad in the 960s into their lands when he captured Sarkel and plundered Itil and Semender was a weighty contribution to the Khazars’ sad fate.

The *Povest’ vremennyh let* Chronicle, a key work that shaped the Eastern Slavs’ idea of history, offers a detailed account of the unrelenting struggle against the Polovtsians, who as time went on became actively involved in the Rurikoviches’ dynastic squabbles between the “elder” and “alienated” princes. In the 1080s-1090s the Kypchak pressure on Rus reached its peak to become intolerable; Grand Duke of Kiev Vladimir Monomachus and his sons were forced to march into the steppes in 1103, 1109, 1111, and 1116.¹

¹ See: M.S. Grushevskiy, *Istoria Ukraini—Rusi*, Vol. 2, Naukova dumka Publishers, Kiev, 1991, p. 533 (in Ukrainian).

Anyone wishing to understand Ukrainian mentality should take into account that it was affected by the latent fear of the Turkic world instilled in the course of history and intensifying under pressure of the Ukrainians' prolonged experience of armed conflicts with all sorts of Turks and the fiercest of them, the Crimean Khanate, dated to a later period. The legend of Polovtsian Khan Boniaka quoted by Mikhail Dragomanov and later by Mikhail Grushevskiy was borrowed from the medieval chronicles. Appropriated by Ukrainian folklore, it was registered in the 18th century as a story about a real historical figure who lived at the turn of the 12th century and who was transformed into a mystical supernatural being or even an evil spirit.²

Hostility alternated with periods of military and political partnership, while mutual cultural impact was inevitable. In 1223, Rus and the Polovtsians led by Yuri Konchakovich and Daniil Kobiakovich fought side by side on the River Kalka to oppose the Mongolian expansion. This is one of the most frequently used, yet by far the only example of their cooperation.

It was cemented by close kinship between the Rurikoviches and the Polovtsian nobles. Over time, Eastern Slavic names—witness Vasily Polovchanin, Lavr Polovchanian, Gleb Tireevich, Yaropolk Tomzakovich, and Yuri Konchakovich and Daniil Kobiakovich already mentioned—gained popularity among the Turkic top crust.³

The Turks settled in great numbers in the Kievan and Chernigov lands, became subjects of the Rurikoviches (the Torches Princedom was considered to be their center), and gradually drew close to the local Slavs. Mikhail Grushevskiy wrote on this score that the Turkic element (described by the blanket term “Black Caps” or “Karakalpaks”) was a fairly important political factor of the time. The chronicles of the mid-12th century, for example, invariably used the formula “all Russian land and all Black Caps”⁴ while the latter in their address to Grand Duke of Kiev Yuri deemed it necessary to enumerate their special, including military, services to Rus: “We die for the Russian land and give up our lives in your honor.”⁵

A monument to the Polovtsian language that came down to us as a 14th-century manuscript (Codex Cumanicus) contains numerous borrowings from the language of the Eastern Slavs: izba, kukel, samala (smola), peč (pech), yrs (rys).⁶

Political and cultural influence cannot be a one-way road: since the time of the Khazars it has been mutual. An analysis of contemporary literary monuments of Rus such as *Povest' vremennykh let*, the Kievan and Galitsko-Volynskaia chronicles, and *The Lay of Igor's Host* contain about 1,500 identified Turkic borrowings of Pecheneg and Polovtsian origin.⁷

Oriental (Turkic) influence became even more pronounced in the epoch of the Cossacks, who played an extremely important role in Ukrainian ethnogenesis. On top of this, as a military-political structure the Ukrainian Cossacks were very much needed to protect the Ukrainian lands against the attacks of the Crimean Khanate, which became especially frequent beginning in the late 15th century. Many historians (N. Karamzin, H. Pogodin, D. Bantysh-Kamenskiy, and S. Soloviev) traced the Cossacks back to the “Black Caps;” the term “Cossack” first appeared in Codex Cumanicus.⁸

The military, administrative and everyday vocabulary of the Ukrainian Cossacks brims with Turkic borrowings, their usage confirmed by Turkish influence. The following terms used to describe

² See: *Ibid.*, p. 83.

³ See: *Ibid.*, p. 537.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 549.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 550.

⁶ See: O.M. Garkavets, “Ukrainsko-tiurkski movni kontakty,” *Entsiklopedia ukrainskoi movy*, available at [www.litopys.org.ua/ukrmova] (in Ukrainian).

⁷ See: *Ibidem*.

⁸ See: N. Yakovenko, *Narys istorii seredn'ovichnoy ta rann'omodernoy Ukrainy*, Kritika Publishers, Kiev, 2005, p. 177 (in Ukrainian).

the military and administrative structures, utensils, clothing, and weapons enumerated by D. Yavornitskiy are especially illustrative: *kosh*, *ataman*, *asaul*, *chaush*, *chaban*, *palanka*, *khорunzhiy*, *bunchuzhnyy*, *dzhura*, *kantarzhey*, *chekmen*, *sagaydak*, *kobura*, *toroki*, *kulbaka*, *yupka*, etc.⁹ It is a well-known historical fact that there was a fairly influential pro-Turkic trend in the Ukrainian political elite represented by Hetman Petr Doroshenko (1627-1698) and later by the leaders of the Trans-Danube Sech.

On the whole, according to the *Entsiklopedia ukrainskoi movy* (Encyclopedia of the Ukrainian Language), there are about 4,000 Turkisms in Ukrainian. Half of them describe everyday objects and phenomena: *kylym* (carpet), *otara*, *tuman*, *tiutiun* (tobacco),¹⁰ etc. It would be no exaggeration to say that the Ukrainians are one of the Slavic ethnoses exposed to an exceptionally strong impact of the Oriental, particularly Turkic, culture. At the same time, partly due to the religious factor, this influence was not destined to become the center of the intellectual elite's reflections and did not irreparably damage the cultural barriers at the level of mass stereotypes.

In the new historical conditions (when Ukraine was integrated into the Russian state), ambivalence, which remained a typical feature of Ukrainian mentality, assumed a new property that changed Ukraine's relations with the Turkic world and Central Asia. As part of the Russian Empire, Malorossia (Small Russia) could be described neither as a colony nor as a metropolitan state. It was obviously a dependent segment that gradually lost the remnants of its political and legal autonomy. At the same time its religious, cultural, and historical ties to the metropolitan state supplied Ukraine with development prospects it shared with Russia and put its elite on an equal footing with the elites of the influential Great Russian provinces.

There was any number of Ukrainian nobles in the top echelons of the imperial and Soviet administrative system: Prince Alexander Bezborodko, chancellor for Catherine the Great; Field Marshal Prince Ivan Paskevich-Erivanski, who captured Erivan during the Russo-Iranian war of 1826-1828; he also took Kars and Erzurum during the Russo-Turkish war of 1828-1829; and Prince Victor Kochubey (Kychukbei), the first minister of the interior and chairman of the State Council and the Committee of Ministers of the Russian Empire. In Soviet times, under Khrushchev, who was closely connected with the Ukrainian administration, the republic enjoyed a semi-privileged status. Many of those who started their party careers in the republic's eastern industrial regions later became Politburo members.

Ukraine's status in the Russian Empire can be said to be close to that of Scotland in the U.K.: both demonstrated the intention to gain more autonomy and were actively involved in imperial projects. Both joined their respective empires on the strength of legal documents: the Act of Union in the case of Scotland and the Pereyaslav Treaty in the case of Ukraine. On the strength of this they can be described as special, "union," units.

In the 1870s and later, Ukrainian and Russian peasants were actively encouraged to move to Central Asia. The bulk of Ukrainian migrants came from the left bank of the Dnieper. Before 1914 about 2 million Ukrainians settled in Asia;¹¹ many of them went as far as the Amur River in the Far East (the Green Wedge in the Ukrainian tradition)¹² and the Steppe Area (southwest of Siberia and

⁹ See: D.I. Yavornitskiy, *Istoria Zaporoz'kikh kozakiv*, Vol. 1, Naukova dumka Publishers, Kiev, 1990, 592 pp. (in Ukrainian).

¹⁰ See: O.M. Garkavets, "Tiurkizm," *Entsiklopedia ukrainskoi movy*, available at [www.litopys.org.ua/ukrmova].

¹¹ See: "Emigratsia," *Entsiklopedia ukrainoznavstva* (Ukrainian translation), Vol. 2, Lviv, 1996, p. 631.

¹² It is interesting to note that in the 1930s Japan tried to inspire an independence movement among the Ukrainians in the Far East in the hope of setting up an independent Ukrainian state in the Ussuri Territory with the prevailing (60 percent) Ukrainian population patterned on the Manchukuo buffer protectorate. Japan spared no effort to convince the leaders of the 11 thousand-strong Ukrainian colony in Manchuria that "the Ukrainians' hopes for independence coming from the West are unreliable and that an independent Ukrainian state can be set up only in the East." The Japanese military mission

Northern Kazakhstan), known as the Grey Wedge in the Ukrainian tradition. The largest number of Ukrainians who settled in Central Asia preferred Kirghizia. By 1926 Ukrainians comprised 14 to 15 percent of the total population of Kirghizia and Kazakhstan. In Soviet times Ukrainian specialists were sent to Central Asia in great numbers to contribute to the industrial modernization efforts. Later Ukrainians went to Kazakhstan to develop virgin and unused lands.

The independence declared in 1991 supplied Ukraine's ambivalent political role with another dimension, which affected its contacts with Central Asia, the Black Sea basin, and the Caucasus. For a long time the republic was seeking a balance between NATO headed by the United States and Russia (the multi-vector policy). This approach, which can be described as meandering between stronger actors with alternating biases, survived until the Color Revolution of the late 2004.

Ukraine, in particular, tried to tap its transit potential to contain Russia and send energy resources from Central Asia and the Caucasus to Europe bypassing the Russian Federation. This was expected to decrease the post-Soviet states' transit dependence on Moscow. The 675 km-long Odessa-Brody oil pipeline built in 1996-2002 at a cost of \$500 million and intended to move Caspian oil to Gdansk on the Baltic, is one of the most illustrative examples of this policy.

As the Ukrainian stretch of the planned Eurasian "bypassing" transportation corridors that would connect the Caspian, Black, and Baltic seas, it attracted the attention of the European Union. Moving in this direction, Ukraine joined the TRACECA project intended to revive the Great Silk Road and connect the ports, highways, and railways of the European Union, Turkey, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and China. The project stirred up displeasure among Russian experts because, they argued, it would have deprived Russia of its transit role and would have undermined its interests connected with the Trans-Siberian Railway.¹³ In 1996 Ukraine, Georgia and Azerbaijan signed an agreement on a Poti-Ilyichevsk railway ferry; in 1997 China, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan reached an agreement on the Andijan-Osh-Kashgar railway with the prospect of joining a trans-Chinese railway to Shanghai.

In 1997 Ukraine was involved in setting up the GUAM (Georgia-Ukraine-Azerbaijan-Moldova) organization. At first Washington actively supported it as an element of the energy game on the Caspian-Black Sea area intended to diversify the routes of energy transportation. It was expected to extend into Central Asia (in 1999-2005 Uzbekistan was one of its members adding another "U" to its name). "In July 2002 the presidents of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova signed an agreement on a free trade zone that required adequate infrastructure and a ferry system in the Black Sea."¹⁴ Ukraine regarded the GUUAM expanse, at least in its official declarations, as potentially the strongest link in the chain that connected Europe with the APR.

Typically enough, in its New York Memorandum GUUAM described the Europe-the Caucasus-Asia transportation corridor (TRACECA) as an absolute priority; the GUUAM Yalta summit of 6-7 June, 2001 discussed its prospects. This and other declarations were inevitably accompanied by statements about the importance of cooperation with NATO.

At the same time Kiev tried to alleviate the negative effects of the GUAM activities in its relations with Russia. Early in 2000 Ukraine was prepared to set up a GUUAM peacekeeping battalion staffed with Ukrainians, Azeris, and Georgians to be trained at the Odessa Institute of Land Forces; later the plans were quietly shelved.

disseminated leaflets among the Red Army men of Ukrainian extraction trying to capitalize on their discontent with the tragic results of collectivization (see: L.V. Kuras, *Ukrainskaia etnicheskaia gruppirovka v Harbine v 30-e gody*, available at [www.vyborny.org/articles/54.html]).

¹³ See: "Evroaziatskiy transportnyy koridor (proekt TRACECA)," available at [www.in.mid.ru].

¹⁴ A. Yaz'kova, "Summit GUAM—namechennyye tseli i vozmozhnosti ikh realizatsii," available at [www.inion.ru/product/eurosec/st3vp16.htm].

In 2003-2004, with Victor Yanukovich as prime minister, Ukraine, still devoted to the multi-vector policy, supported the Caspian pipeline project in which Russia was interested: "The pipeline was initiated by the never realized International Consortium for Developing Ukraine's Gas Transportation System set up on a parity basis by Gazprom of Russia and Naftogaz of Ukraine. At the first stage it was expected to increase the carrying capacity of the 'narrow' Dashava-Uzhgorod stretch; at the second a new gas pipeline was expected to reach Dashava from Novopolotsk in the Lugansk Region; and at the third stage Novopokrov and Alexandrov Gay would be connected with a gas pipeline across Russia. It was planned to conclude the fourth stage with a Caspian pipeline along the Caspian coast across Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan."¹⁵

Ukraine's interest in the Caspian pipeline was partly explained by the fact that the Odessa-Brody project stirred up no interest in the West, Poland included; there were enough rivaling projects. As a result the Odessa-Brody had to function on Russian oil. Vitali Kulik, a Ukrainian analyst, has offered the following comment: "The oil terminal in Yuzhny and the Odessa-Brody oil pipeline drew Ukraine into the race with Turkey, Bulgaria, Rumania, and Russia for the Caspian oil routes to Europe."¹⁶

In its relations with Moscow Kiev was seriously limited by its dependence on Russian gas: Ukraine covered about 25 percent of needs by locally extracted gas and had to import the rest (75 percent); the republic uses about 76 billion cu m of gas every year.¹⁷ To decrease its energy-related dependence on Russia and for several other reasons Ukraine tried to buy large amounts of gas from Turkmenistan. However, in the absence of alternative transportation routes Ukraine could receive Turkmenian gas only with the permission and under control of the companies working together with Gazprom, which means that no real balance could be achieved in this way no matter how high the Ukrainian stakes in its energy-related dialog with Central Asia.

Partnership with Central Asia in the energy sphere added vigor to the dialog with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan, however Kiev for a long time "remained amazingly passive when it came to realizing its highly promising potential in the Central Asian region."¹⁸

This is best illustrated by Ukraine's relations with Turkmenistan: "Until 2000 Ukraine imported the bulk of the gas it used from Russia... The vigorous pace of its relations with Turkmenia in 1992-1993, when Ukraine bought about 26 billion cu m of gas, slackened by 1994. This happened for various reasons mainly because, as was stated, Ukraine failed to pay for the gas it used... The history of their relations knows of breakthroughs: in 1995, still owing Turkmenistan \$700 million Ukraine, represented by Kuchma, signed another contract with Niyazov under which Ukraine received 20 billion cu m of gas (a quarter of its needs). ...In 2000 Turkmenistan became Ukraine's main source of gas... It sold Ukraine about 35 billion cu m for \$44... By 2004-2005 Turkmenistan was supplying Ukraine with about 44 percent of its needs; Russia added 30-33 percent. Late in 2004 relations hit the last crisis: Turkmenistan increased the price for 2005 by 32 percent. Ukraine refused to accept the new price—Turkmenistan stopped gas deliveries. Several days later Naftogaz Ukrainy and Turkmenneftegaz signed an agreement under which Turkmenistan promised to sell Ukraine 36 billion cu m for \$58, which established complete idyll in their relations."¹⁹ Ukraine also signed gas agreements with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

The fact that for a long time gas trade with Turkmenistan was barter-based was very important for Ukraine and taught it to regard Central Asia as an important market for the products of its food,

¹⁵ P. Orlovtssev, "Vozvrat k epokhe gazovoy mnogovektornosti," *Komentarii*, No. 48, 2008.

¹⁶ B. Kulik, R. Syrinskiy, D. Prots, "Ukrainskie perspektivy Tsentral'noy Azii," available at [www.eurasianhome.org].

¹⁷ See: A. Beliaev, "Ukraina i gazovye otnosheniya s postniazovskoy Turkmeniyey," available at [www.centrasia.ru].

¹⁸ R. Zhanguzhin, "Pro tsentralno-aziatskiy vector zovnishn'oeconomichnoy politiki Ukraini," available at [www.politdumka.kiev.ua] (in Ukrainian).

¹⁹ A. Beliaev, op. cit.

machine-building, and metallurgical industries. Under President Kuchma Ukrainian construction companies—Ukrtransbud, Interbudmontazh, and UkrAsiaBud—worked in Turkmenistan.²⁰

The Agreement on Mutual Encouragement and Protection of Investments of 28 January, 1998, the Joint Decree of the Presidents of Ukraine and Turkmenistan on Cooperation and Financing of the Investment Projects of State Importance in Turkmenistan of 4 October, 2000, and the Agreement on Further Development of Interstate Relations of 29 April, 2002 served as the foundation of the two countries' trade and economic partnership.

The Treaty between Ukraine and the Republic of Kazakhstan on Economic Cooperation in 1999-2009 and Programs and Measures Applied to the Program of Economic Cooperation for 1999-2009 supply the basis for the Ukrainian-Kazakhstan dialog.

Relations with Uzbekistan are based on the Treaty on Friendship and Further Development of Multisided Cooperation of 19 February, 1998; the Treaty on Economic Cooperation for 1999-2008 of 7 October, 1999, and the Protocol on Amendments and Addenda to the Agreement on Free Trade between the governments of the two countries signed on 25 June, 2004 that introduced a free trade regime with no exceptions and restrictions.

The fact that Central Asia could serve as a door Ukraine could use to promote its interests in China and Southern Asia played an important part in Kiev's great interest in the region. Central Asia and its neighbors, Pakistan and Iran, turned out to be suitable markets for Ukrainian high-tech civilian and military products.

Central Asia needs energy and oil-and-gas machine-building products: turbines, pumps, and gas compressor units. Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and the UAE are the largest importers of Ukrainian products.²¹ The stable and steadily increasing demand for these machine-building sectors is ensured by the gas- and oil-pipeline projects in which Russia and the Central Asian and Transcaucasian countries are involved.

The Frunze Machine-Building Association in Sumy, for example, is building a compressor station with an annual capacity of 2 billion cu m on the Turkmenian Caspian coast and is engaged in the reconstruction of the gas-collecting system of the Odjak-Naip group of the Naip gas condensate fields.²² The history of partnership between the Ukrainian enterprise and Central Asia goes back to 1940 when it delivered "several specially designed super-powerful nitrogen-hydrogen compressors" for the Chirchik chemical combine in Uzbekistan.²³

The 1996 contract with Pakistan on the deliveries of 320 T-80 VД tanks was a breakthrough in Ukraine's cooperation in high-tech machine-building with the countries bordering on Central Asia. Later Ukraine tried to take part in designing T-2000 tanks for Pakistan.²⁴ Ukrainian cooperation with Iran in aviation materiel is progressing. Ukrainian producers of weapons and military machines are actively working in China, India, and Myanmar.²⁵ In 1997 Ukraine joined the group of the world's ten largest weapon exporters.²⁶

Under the 1996 agreement Ukraine is actively developing its military-technical cooperation with Turkmenistan: it has already supplied Kolchuga radioelectronic equipment, carried out

²⁰ See: V. Kulik, R. Syrinskiy, D. Prots, op. cit.

²¹ See: "Ukraina: energeticheskoe machinostroenie pereroslo krizis," available at [www.abercade.ru].

²² See: V. Kulik, R. Syrinskiy, D. Prots, op. cit.

²³ See: V. Lukianenko, "Uchastie OAO 'Sumskoe NPO im. M.V. Frunze' v razvitii ukraino-uzbekskikh otnosheniy," in: *Mosty druzhby. Ukraina-Uzbekistan*, Ukrainskiy isdat. konsortium, Kiev, 2007, p. 27.

²⁴ See: V. Badrak, "Strategichni partnery Ukrainy u viyskovo-tekhnichnomu spivrobitnitstvi," available at [www.niss.gov.ua] (in Ukrainian).

²⁵ See: S.P. Kanduarov, *Voprosy voenno-tekhnicheskogo sotrudnichestva Rossii so stranami Azii. Rossia v Azii: problemy vzaimodeystvia*, RISI, 2006, p. 424.

²⁶ See: V. Badrak, op. cit.

major overhaul of MiG-29 fighter planes for the Turkmenian Air Forces (to the amount of \$3 million for one plane), helped to revive air defenses, and exported patrol launches of the Kondor (Grif-T) and Kalkan types and several loads of small arms to Turkmenistan.²⁷ According to experts, the following enterprises of the Ukrainian military-industrial complex worked on Turkmenian orders: the Artem missile holding in Kiev, the Motor-Sich engine-building association in Zaporozhye, the More shipbuilding yard in Feodosia, and the Topaz radio engineering enterprise in Donetsk.

Cooperation with Uzbekistan is unfolding on a smaller scale despite the intergovernmental departmental agreements on cooperation in the military and military-technical spheres the two countries signed in 1994, 1997, and 2000. In 1997 one of the enterprises of the Defense Ministry of Ukraine overhauled and partially modernized 40 tanks for Uzbekistan.²⁸ Later, Ukraine exported small arms and ammunition as well as military launches Giurza supplied within the American EXBS program. According to the Ukrainian expert community, Motor-Sich, Topaz and Fort in Vinnitsa, which produces firearms, worked with Uzbekistan in the military-industrial sphere.

The leading Ukrainian financial-industrial groups did a lot to promote business relations with the Central Asian countries.²⁹ The Interpipe Corporation working in the pipe production and metallurgy sphere was especially active in Uzbekistan. In 2002 it supplied 22 thousand tons of pipes for the Uzbekneftegaz project Gazli-Kagan gas pipeline.³⁰ The Industrial Union of Donbass is likewise actively involved in Uzbekistan, which it supplies with pipes and drilling and geological prospecting equipment. As a shareholder of Uzneftegazstroy it was involved in gas production and transportation.

During his visit to Tashkent in June 2004 Premier Yanukovich signed the free trade agreement mentioned above and identified as priorities cooperation in the Eurasian transport corridors, agricultural machine-building (particularly export of machines produced at the Kharkov Tractor Works and cooperation with the Tashkent Tractor Works); energy machine-building, projects in non-ferrous metallurgy, and the activities of Ukrainian companies in the oil and gas market. At this time, the Uzbek expert and business communities looked at cooperation in oil and gas production, machine-building, transportation, and rehabilitation in Afghanistan as the most promising sectors of cooperation with Ukraine. The idea about an oil and gas concession to Ukraine the Uzbek leaders put forward in 2000 was especially important.

Ukraine's continued relations with Central Asia and other Asian regions confirmed that those who warned against its excessive concentration on the West were quite right. Orientation toward the Eastern markets was very much in line with President Kuchma's idea of national capitalism: he insisted on independent metallurgical and machine-building sectors based on national financial industrial groups.

In the first years of independence Ukraine displayed no interest in Central Asia, which allowed the rivals to become entrenched in the region: "The several years of inadequate attention to or even underestimation by Ukraine of the Central Asian countries, the Republic of Uzbekistan in particular, are still felt today when the Ukrainian business community is displaying a growing interest in the region. It has realized that it should return to the markets where Ukrainian products were invariably present

²⁷ See: V. Badrak, "Kolchuga dlia Saparmurata Niyazova," available at [www.vpk-news.ru].

²⁸ See: V. Badrak, "Strategichni partnery Ukrainy u viyskovo-tekhnichnomu spivrobitnitstvi."

²⁹ According to Ukrainian experts, eight of the largest financial-industrial groups with assets amounting to billions of dollars and connected mainly with Eastern Ukraine were involved in Central Asia: the Privat group of I. Kolomoyskiy; the SKM group of P. Akhmetov; the Interpipe company of V. Pinchuk; the Industrial Union of Donbass of S. Taruta; the UkrSibbank group of A. Yaroslavskiy; Ukrprominvest of P. Poroshenko; the Energo group of V. Nusenkis; and Ukrkreditbank of G. Surkis (see: I. Guzhva, "Deti gaza i stali," *Ekspert-Ukraina*, No. 1, 2004).

³⁰ See: "Korporatsia 'Interpipe' postavila v Uzbekistan 22 tys. tonn trub," available at [www.atlanta.com.ua].

and appreciated and the prices for which were considered reasonable. Today, the lost niches are filled with enterprises and companies from Russia, Germany, China, Japan, Turkey, etc.”³¹

In Central Asia Ukraine is competing against actors with much richer historical experience, interest, and potential in promoting its political, trade, economic, transport, and communication interests: Russia, America, China, the European Union, and others. On the other hand, Ukraine’s multi-vector foreign policy made cooperation with it free from political risks, which can be described as an important advantage.

During Leonid Kuchma’s presidency Ukraine’s ambivalence strongly affected its role in the Central Asian countries. Its attempts to diversify energy resources and the energy transportation routes to Europe within the Great Silk Road project perfectly suited its European partners and their long-term objectives, although this clashed with Russia’s interests. Ukraine’s presence on the Central and South Asian markets promotes the interests of its high-tech sectors, machine-building in particular. They competed with Russian colleagues while, on the whole, needing continued partnership with Russia.

The Color Revolution of late 2004 upturned the country’s foreign policy priorities and affected its position in Central Asia: the combination of European choice and idealism, on the one hand, and the realism based on multi-vector approach proclaimed by President Kuchma, on the other, were replaced with an idealistic idea of the world and foreign policy aims of the state that proceeded from “Euro-Atlantic values.” For the first time since independence the country tried to get rid of its traditional foreign policy ambivalence, which caused displeasure abroad, for the sake of a demonstratively uni-vector policy.

Ukraine tried to join the ranks of New Europe (Central and East European countries: Poland, Rumania, and the Baltic states) that looks toward Washington rather than Brussels. In the post-Soviet expanse (as a political entity it was earmarked for liquidation in expectation of Russia’s diminishing role), Ukraine, together with Georgia, identified its mission as “promotion of democracy” (“widening the sphere of freedom”) and building up a political structure of the Baltic-Black Sea-Caspian energy-transportation project. As distinct from the previous period, when an interest in energy transportation routes was very much pronounced, under President Yushchenko it became completely subordinated to Euro-Atlantic interests.

In an effort to realize their new priorities the Ukrainian leaders tried to invigorate GUAM as a political instrument that in the future might be transformed into a military instrument to defend the East-West energy transportation routes. The GUAM summit convened in Kiev in May 2006 was also attended by Poland, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, the U.S., OSCE, and BSEC as guests.

In August 2005 the presidents of Ukraine and Georgia made public the initiative they called the Community of Democratic Choice (CDC) to bring closer the heads of the Baltic, Black Sea, and Caspian states and to help settle the “defrosted” conflicts. The CDC constituent forum was attended by the founders, as well as Poland, Rumania, Moldavia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovenia, and Macedonia. It seems that Yushchenko and Saakashvili hoped to involve Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkey and, on the whole, looked at this structure as an instrument to be used in Central Asia and the Black Sea-Caspian regions.

In May 2006 at the Vilnius CDC summit, U.S. Vice-President Cheney came out with his invective against Russia accusing it, among other things, of its intention to monopolize the energy transportation system. The Russian experts were concerned about several statements of the Declaration of the Forum of Non-governmental Organizations of the CDC that described the use of military force as acceptable: “The Euro-Atlantic community should achieve a common vision and

³¹ V.P. Krasnianskiy, “Ukraina-Uzbekistan, perspektivy sotrudnichestva,” in: *Mosty druzhby. Ukraina-Uzbekistan*, p. 28.

coordinate creative efforts that should include political, economic, social and, if necessary, military methods. Europe's force of attraction will probably not be enough to compensate for Russia-emanated coercion."³²

Ukraine did not limit its contribution in the struggle between the Euro-Atlantic countries and Russia and China for control over the energy resources to the CDC and GUAM. To add an edge to these efforts Ukraine attended the Energy Summits expected to set up a transit community in the Caspian-Black Sea-Baltic expanse and trace fuel-transportation routes alternative to the Russian ones. Four such summits were held: in Krakow and Vilnius in 2007 and Kiev and Baku in 2008. The 4th Summit held in Baku in November 2008 concentrated on the Nabucco gas pipeline and Odessa-Brody oil pipeline. It was the first summit to finally achieve some progress in relation to the Odessa-Brody pipeline: it discussed the possibility of filling it with Caspian oil in 2011. The Declaration was signed by Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Greece, Georgia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Rumania, the United States, Turkey, Ukraine, Switzerland, Estonia, and the European Union.³³

At the same time, this and similar projects designed to overcome the country's foreign policy ambivalence ran late in 2005 into serious obstacles, the most serious of them being the absence of progress in relations with the EU.

In February 2005 the European Union reached an agreement with Ukraine on the EU-Ukraine Action Plan, which dimmed Ukraine's prospects of EU membership. In 2006 the Council of Foreign Ministers of the EU members refused to specify Ukraine's European prospects. In December 2008 Brussels, on the initiative of Sweden and Poland, offered Ukraine a vague "Eastern partnership" also oriented toward Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Belarus.

Finally, the Ukrainian leaders were confronted with the fact that Gazprom of Russia had signed contracts with Central Asian countries on the gas exported to Ukraine (in 2007 Ukraine, under a previous agreement with an intermediary structure—RosUkrEnergo—expected to receive 42 billion cu m of gas from Turkmenistan, 8.5 billion cu m from Kazakhstan, and 7 billion cu m from Uzbekistan).³⁴

Ukraine does not profit from the struggle over diversification of the fuel routes within the projects of the Baltic-Black Sea-Caspian expanse: in fact, the country pays for it in a certain sense. There are two interconnected factors: the higher prices for Central Asian energy fuels (which Gazprom sells to Ukraine deprived of direct contacts with Central Asia) and the Central Asian countries' refusal to be involved in projects that bypass Russia. The Ukrainian economy pays the bills. The Russian leaders who visited Turkmenistan in the summer of 2008 to reach an agreement on the high ("European") price for local gas pointed out that this removed the bypassing issue from the agenda.

The political and business circles of Ukraine are displeased with those who imposed new foreign and domestic policies on the republic. There are numerous reasons for the mounting criticism: deliberately fanned conflicts with Russia; lack of tangible progress in the West; unjustified "idealism" of the foreign policy course; drawing the country into the games of much stronger actors who use it as "small change;" deliberate disregard of the shifts that undermine the uni-polar world and of the fact that the Eastern players are gaining political weight while Russia has partially restored its status by supplying the EU with up to 30 percent of the oil and 50 percent of the gas of the EU total requirements;³⁵ little is being done to promote the interests of Ukrainian indus-

³² "Demokratiam sleduet prilozhit' vse usilia, chtoby Rossia i Belorussia shagali s nimi v nogu," available at [www.bdg.by/news/news.htm?85933,3].

³³ See: "V Kieve podpisana Kontseptsia Kaspiisko-Chernomorsko-Baltiyskogo energotranzitnogo prostranstva," available at [http://www.newsukraine.kiev.ua/news/110814]; "V Baku sostoialsia Energeticheskii sammit," available at [http://mirtv.ru/content/view/46758/15].

³⁴ See: V. Kulik, R. Syrinskiy, D. Prots, op. cit.

³⁵ See: V. Franke, "Vzgliad rusofila," *International Politic*, No. 1, 2008, p. 55.

try in the foreign markets; political instability at home that makes predictable foreign policy impossible, etc.

This raised the hope that the country would revive its multi-vector course. In 2007 these expectations were born by the fact that the country acquired a coalition government formed by the Party of the Regions, the Socialists, and the Communist Party with Victor Yanukovich as prime minister. The optimists were encouraged by the statement he made during a visit to Turkmenistan to the effect that Ukraine would support the Caspian gas pipeline and that agreements had been reached with Russia, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan.³⁶ In 2008 there was a lot of talk about how Yulia Timoshenko might prefer a more varied foreign policy.

On the whole, the critically-minded Ukrainian experts concluded: "At all times Ukraine has been pursuing a somewhat ambitious foreign policy. From time to time political documents and program statements assured the nation that the country could become a regional leader. In the last few years, however, its European status has been damaged to a great extent. So far the hope that the EU will offer Ukraine a European future is fairly dim. GUAM's greater economic role as a perspective economic and transit alliance required painstaking efforts and investments. Domestic squabbles will deprive the country of possibilities that could be used to stabilize power. The loss of direct contracts on Central Asian gas is the greatest economic failure of recent years."³⁷

The critics are also very negative about the country's relations with Central Asia: the country's leaders are blamed for the lack of adequate attention to this important region and for stirring up political conflicts with the local leaders whose positions on energy fuel deliveries are vitally important for Ukraine. In May 2005 the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry suddenly offered Uzbekistan its mediation services within the "widening the sphere of freedom" conception at the very height of the Andijan drama.

There is a group of experts that criticizes the far from smooth relations with Turkmenistan. The problems appeared when Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov came to power: "the new Turkmen government turned out to be a 'stranger' to Kiev ... those foreigners who could settle problems with President Niyazov were removed from the inner circle. The Chinese and Russians were the first to realize this: they immediately started looking for approaches to President Berdymukhammedov... the Ukrainians, who relied too much on the old contacts, were left out in the cold."³⁸

This negatively affected the Ukrainian construction business in Turkmenistan, which invited a barrage of critical fire. In January 2009, for example, President Berdymukhammedov was displeased with Interbudmontazh, earlier he criticized Ukrtransbud.³⁹

At the same time, it should be taken into account that in recent years the relations between Ukraine and the Central Asian countries have also demonstrated progress: economic cooperation and trade with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan used the former momentum and the favorable pre-crisis situation to move ahead.

In 2007 foreign trade turnover between Ukraine and Kazakhstan increased by 64.4 percent compared to 2006 to reach \$3 billion. Ukraine sells Kazakhstan products of its metallurgical, machine-building, and food industries and buys oil, gas, furniture, printed matter, copper, and chemical products.⁴⁰ Trade turnover between Ukraine and Uzbekistan increased 1.7-fold in 2007 to reach the \$ billion level. Ukraine sells machines and equipment, metallurgical, chemical, and food prod-

³⁶ See: P. Orlovtssev, op. cit.

³⁷ S. Tolstov, "Sredneaziatskie nadezhdy Ukrainy," available at [www.ng.ru/gazeta/2008-07-14].

³⁸ V. Kulik, R. Syrinskiy, D. Prots, op. cit.

³⁹ See: "President Turkmenii dav prochukhan ukrainskim budkompaniam," available at [www.pravda.com.ua/news/2009/1/17/87975.htm] (in Ukrainian).

⁴⁰ See: V. Kulik, R. Syrinskiy, D. Prots, op. cit.

ucts, and pharmaceuticals and buys energy resources, cars, non-ferrous metals, cotton, and chemical products.⁴¹

In 2007 trade turnover between Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan increased 1.7-fold to reach over \$80 million in the first nine months of 2008.⁴² The same can be said about trade with Tajikistan.

On the whole, success in Central Asia depends on Ukraine's image of a politically stable and fairly neutral player pursuing a balanced policy and sincerely interested in active and mutually advantageous cooperation with the local countries.

⁴¹ See: *Mosty druzhby. Ukraina-Uzbekistan*, p. 11.

⁴² See: "Posol'stvo Ukraïny v Kyrgyz'kiy respublitsi. Torgovelnno-ekonomichne spivrobitnitstvo," available at [www.mfa.gov.ua/kirgizia].