

## UKRAINE'S FOREIGN POLICY AFTER THE ORANGE REVOLUTION<sup>1</sup>

Sergey TOLSTOV

*Leading research associate,  
Institute of World Economy and International Relations,  
National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine  
(Kiev, Ukraine)*

Throughout the 1990s, Ukraine balanced between the world's main centers of power in an effort to preserve its officially declared European and Euroatlantic course along with a high level of mutually advantageous economic cooperation with Russia and other CIS members.

This policy meandered along with the changing conditions and the nature of bilateral relations with the country's key partners—America, Russia, the EU, and NATO. Nuclear disarmament and curbed hyperinflation (1994) helped Ukraine overcome international isolation and establish cooperation with the United States and NATO: in 1996, it received the status of the U.S.'s strategic partner, and in 1997 Ukraine signed the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Ukraine's stronger position in the West and its contacts with the Central European structures helped it settle certain conflicts caused by the Soviet Union's disintegration. I have in mind the Ukrainian-Russian agreements on the Black Sea Fleet, the basic state agreements with Russia and Rumania, and the country's permanent contacts with Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Moldova.

Looking back, it can be said that Kiev has been consistently and successfully moving ahead in the Euroatlantic and post-Soviet directions. Ukraine has obviously been trying, more or less consciously, to adapt itself to the emerging international system. However, although under President Kuchma Ukraine's relations with NATO were an obvious priority, they were still hampered

by negative domestic processes and a depressed economy. The economic community became convinced that the state should work hard to mend the holes and restore Ukraine's economy to its former health. There was also the firm conviction that economic rebirth could be attained through mutually advantageous relations with Russia, long-term cooperation with Asian countries, and energy projects with Azerbaijan and Central Asia (primarily Turkmenistan, as well as Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan). The 1998 financial crisis interfered with the economic cooperation programs being implemented with Russia for 1998-1999; in 1999-2000 the devalued grivna (the Ukrainian monetary unit) helped the Ukrainian economy revive: in 2004 its growth reached a record rate of over 12 percent.

In this context, the official course for European integration looked like a declaration of intentions, the fulfillment of which demanded much faster growth of the GDP and democratic developments. The political crisis of 2000 cut short the country's contacts with the West and worsened its relations with the United States, which hastened to voice its unfounded suspicions that Ukraine sold Kolchuga detectors to Iraq in 2002. Naturally enough, Kiev's foreign policy lost much of its previous drive and concentrated on purely technical matters. The conflict, however, unfolded in the context of sustainable economic growth.

In February 2003, President Kuchma shocked the government and the parliament by accepting Vladimir Putin's invitation to join Bela-

<sup>1</sup> This article was written prior to the government crisis in the first half of September 2005 in Ukraine.

rus, Kazakhstan, and Russia in forming a Single Economic Space (SES). No political issues were discussed during the negotiations of the framework conditions. The agreement itself does not presuppose an international status.

The domestic political conflict reached its boiling point during the presidential elections of 2004 and brought a new group to power, which completely changed the country's foreign policy and its macroeconomic ideas.

## New Foreign Policy

In the first half of 2005, the new Ukrainian leaders made it clear that the country would follow in the footsteps of the Central and East European countries, the new NATO and EU members. This explains the new leaders' frequent imitations of the foreign policy stereotypes and preferences demonstrated by Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and others.

The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry is convinced that the Orange Revolution and the victory of the Iushchenko-Timoshenko bloc at the presidential election, as well as the Rose Revolution in Georgia, ushered in a new stage of democratization and promoted "democratic standards" in Eurasia. In a certain sense this approach is based on the post-modernist theories of "social construction" formulated, in different forms, by F. Fukuyama, A. Toffler, Z. Brzezinski, S. Huntington, and N. Ferguson. In their joint declarations, the presidents of Ukraine and Georgia, Viktor Iushchenko and Mikhail Saakashvili, described their common political aim as "the fourth wave of democratization" following the second and third waves.<sup>2</sup>

All post-modernist theoretical constructs reject the well-established political concepts and stereotypes and insist that adequate efforts designed to change mass consciousness will trigger desirable changes in real life. According to them, in the next ten years the post-Soviet expanse will develop into a scene of radical geopolitical changes which will drive out the wilting authoritarian regimes. By the same token, Russia will be forced not only to abandon its "neo-imperial" designs, but also to drop the very idea of empire altogether.

It should be added that according to the powers that be, at the early stage of its independent development (first half of the 1990s) Ukraine was busy establishing itself on the international scene as an independent democratic state. By the mid-1990s, Ukraine had already formulated its basic aims and charted the routes leading to them. The multivectoral nature of Ukrainian policies, however, was too vague and was soon exhausted and replaced with the strategy of European integration announced in 1998 and the Euroatlantic integration which began in 1997 and was officially proclaimed in 2002.

During the second period, between 1998 and 2004, the democratic and patriotic forces were fighting for their country's right to become a European state. The Foreign Ministry of Ukraine sided with the opposition, it did everything to preserve the country's European future and prevent its slipping down to the "gray zone," meaning its dependence on the "revived Russian Empire."

Iushchenko is convinced that 2005 ushered in the third period of Ukraine's foreign policy, which is expected to last for at least 10 years and be crowned by its membership in NATO and the EU. At the same time, the ruling group has to dampen the hope of speedy successes by admitting that due to the country's regional and domestic specifics it will not be able to join these structures as easily and speedily as the Central and East European countries. The conclusion was obvious: in order to convince the EU and NATO to let some of the post-Soviet states join them, Ukraine must work hard to change the situation in the CIS zone.

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<sup>2</sup> A. Toffler, *The Third Wave*, New York, 1980; S. Huntington, *The Third Wave. Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1991, 366 pp.

The new foreign policy rested on two interconnected ideas: first, Ukraine's new role as a regional leader (promotion of anti-authoritarian democratization and liberation of Ukraine, as well as the East European states and other CIS countries from Russia's influence) is seen as a contribution to regional stability and to extending the zone of security due to NATO's more active involvement; second, Ukraine and some other countries of the sub-region should achieve political compatibility (homogeneity) at the first stage and full NATO and EU membership in the future.

Encouraged by a series of Moscow's grave failures in the post-Soviet expanse—aggravated problems and systemic contradictions in Russia; deteriorated relations with the West; Vladimir Putin's obvious miscalculations during the presidential campaign in Ukraine, and the regime change in Kyrgyzstan—Kiev stepped up its foreign policy activities. Russia made some bad tactical errors when implementing Dmitry Kozak's plan of conflict settlement in Transdnistria in 2003; the Moscow-oriented Democratic Bloc lost the parliamentary elections in Moldova; Belarus carried out a referendum unsanctioned by Russia (2004); the Moscow-supported presidential candidate was defeated at the 2004 elections in Abkhazia, etc.

Certain Western analysts and NGOs speak of Russia as a former superpower no longer capable of checking democratic processes in the CIS countries or dominating them. The opposition political movements in some of the CIS countries have opted for Euroatlantic orientation as an inevitable alternative to Russia's domination. This convinced the experts close to the new Ukrainian authorities that their country could snatch the role of regional leader away from Russia in order to extend political support to the anti-regime movements and the new governments brought to power in CIS countries through coups. It was in May 1992, when the Collective Security Treaty was being signed, that Russian observers started talking about Ukraine's possible rapprochement with a group of CIS countries. Today, however, it is commonly accepted that such an alliance should be based on the criteria of political compatibility and involvement in the "advance of freedom." While the EU and NATO countries are gradually changing their ideas about the Russian Federation and other post-Soviet states, it is very possible that some of the CIS countries may join the Euroatlantic structures (the Euroatlantic political and civilizational expanse).

Ukrainian executive power is convinced that Ukraine's chances of becoming an equal NATO and EU member are hampered by the opinion still lingering in Europe that it belongs to the zone of Russia's influence. To change this, Kiev is working hard to demonstrate its absolute independence from Russia. It was believed that Ukraine might even leave the CIS, which both the president and foreign minister described as a useless and ineffective structure. This step, however, would have deprived Ukraine of its influence on CIS members and undermined its efforts to describe itself as a political center alternative to Russia.

Kiev was expected to confirm its new foreign policy course by fulfilling certain informal conditions formulated by the EU and NATO: conflict settlement in Transdnistria and active involvement in the regime change in Belarus. Some people are convinced that, after stumbling on political obstacles, Ukraine will be forced to step up its political involvement in the CIS zone to preserve its European and Euroatlantic course. To confirm its intentions, the Iushchenko team presented its own moderate and peaceful plan of conflict settlement in Transdnistria on 19 May, 2005.<sup>3</sup>

Ukraine's sub-regional role should be supported by its greater involvement in ensuring stability and bringing democracy to the Black Sea zone, its greater impact on the political processes in and "Europeization" of Russia, and tighter border control in order to stem illegal migration. The country is expected to play an auxiliary role in Eastern Europe and the Black Sea area described officially as

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<sup>3</sup> For further detail, see: [<http://www.mfa.gov.ua/information/?mfa/>].

the mission of active promotion of European values. The conflict settlement in Transdniestria and the revived political activity of GUAM are seen as absolute priorities.

Those in power are fond of repeating that the post-Soviet expanse is dying as a political reality, while the post-Soviet structures (CIS and others) with no role to play should be disbanded. Ukraine and other independent democratic post-Soviet states (Georgia and Moldova) should work toward eliminating the remnants of Soviet regional identities to show the world they are part of Europe.

In real life the road to new foreign policy aims is bumpy: smooth progress is hampered by decisions and measures that may worsen the economic situation and stall economic dynamics. The coalition now in power obviously consists of several rivaling decision-making centers, which is made evident by what the president, the National Security and Defense Council, and the cabinet and ministries are doing.

## The GUAM Phenomenon (*“Alliance for Democracy and Development”*)

The organizations and alliances functioning in the post-Soviet expanse can be divided into several groups: representative structures of regional cooperation (the CIS, SCO); sub-regional economic structures (EurAsEC, Central Asian Cooperation, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization); functional organizations and political and military-political alliances (the CSTO and GUAM, which unites Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova, and the Caspian Guard); integration structures (the union state of Belarus and Russia).

The majority of them are instruments of Russia's politics, while the United States and its allies can potentially manipulate others. In fact, viewed in the context of the present international system American policies present an interesting blend of idealistic conceptions used to influence international relations and political realism invoked to encourage interstate structures designed to balance out or even limit the influence of the regional centers of power. Indeed, America's extensive military presence in the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as the pro-Western alliances in the Black Sea zone, the Caspian and along Russia's western borders fit well into the pattern of limiting Russia's role and deprive it of its traditional influence.<sup>4</sup>

For a long time GUAM was seen as a mechanism Ukraine may potentially use in the Black Sea-Caspian sub-region. It was set up to ensure closer diplomatic ties between its members within the OSCE and the Council of Europe, as well as within the CFE Treaty of 1995-1996. The organization came into being when its four members made public their Joint Declaration in Strasbourg on 10 October, 1997, which registered their identical positions on all key international problems. (Uzbekistan joined the structure in 1999, thus adding another “U” to the abbreviation.) The Yalta GUUAM summit held on 6-7 June, 2001 adopted a Charter which specified the organization's aims. In July 2002 the organization signed an agreement on a free trade zone; in 2004 the organization acquired the GUUAM Parliamentary Assembly.

Since 1998, the sides have been discussing a transportation corridor Europe-the Caucasus-Asia (the TACIS program), a project which symbolized the members' shared interests. Until recently its

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<sup>4</sup> See: S.G. Brooks, W.C. Wohlforth, “American Primacy in Perspective,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 4, July-August 2002, pp. 24-25.

vague prospects did not allow the organization to step up its activities. The existing oil pipelines, Baku-Supsa (in the Southern Caucasus) and Odessa-Brody (Ukraine), were only part of the general project that, to be completed, must be extended to Plock and Gdansk in Poland. The project requires financial support from the EU governments and financial structures, Ukraine and, possibly, Kazakhstan. If realized, the project will diminish the pressure on the Black Sea straits, something that Turkey has always wanted to achieve, and create conditions for the pipeline to be extended to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. In the future, it will increase the GUAM members' security in the energy sphere and consolidate their positions at the talks with Russia on oil and gas prices and transit conditions.

In view of Rumania and Bulgaria's imminent membership in NATO, which will involve NATO directly in the Black Sea security issues, the structure acquired an obvious political bias. The presidents of Ukraine and Georgia obviously intend to use the changing situation in the Black Sea-Caspian sub-region to limit Russia's influence there and extend new energy projects to Central Asia. GUAM may be transformed into an Alliance for Democracy and Development as a link in the "promoting democracy" strategy endorsed by the U.S. National Security Council on 28 December, 2003. In this context, Uzbekistan's withdrawal from GUUAM in 2005 looks significant. This is when it became known that Kyrgyzstan might join this structure; this information came from Georgian Premier Zurab Nougaideli at a press conference following the meeting of the Council of the CIS Heads of Government in Tbilisi on 3 June, 2005. He added: "GUAM is not the only structure within the CIS—there is the Russia-Belarus union, and there is also the EurAsEC, so nobody should be amazed by Kyrgyzstan's intention to join GUAM."<sup>5</sup>

Many of the West European states are skeptical about NATO's future role in the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia, therefore America and some of the Central and East European countries regard GUAM as a regional security structure to be used in the military-political context. Washington's involvement as a permanent observer (which is the same as its role in the SENTO bloc) will make it possible to create temporary or permanent coalitions to exercise military-political control of pipeline zones and other communication lines. Military cooperation is spurred on by the smoldering conflicts in Moldova, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, which are seeking outside support for conflict settlement. Unless their territorial integrity is restored, neither Georgia nor Moldova will be able to stabilize their economies and attract investors. Tbilisi and Baku agree that conflict settlement around Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorny Karabakh is an absolute priority, yet no speedy settlement is expected. Ukraine, which needs diversified oil supplies, should become involved in the peacekeeping operations in the Caucasus even if this worsens its relations with Russia.

Ukraine needs economic cooperation, therefore the southern segment of the energy transit route under GUAM's aegis is regarded as a priority. This is why the first visits of President Iushchenko to Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan were devoted to new projects and larger direct supplies of gas and oil to Ukraine, as well as wider energy transit. In the past, Ukrainian leaders also actively discussed possible oil deliveries from Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. At the same time, the Eurasian oil transportation corridor project, which envisaged an extension of the Odessa-Brody oil pipeline to Plock, stalled because of lack of interest among the European oil consumers and Poland's very strange stance, which limited itself to declarations. However, due to America's increased direct military presence in the region, the project may acquire a military dimension.

The recent events in the Caspian, the commissioned Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, Kazakhstan's adherence to the Baku Declaration on Support of the East-West Transportation Corridor, as well as

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<sup>5</sup> "K GUAM mozhnet prisoedinit'sia Kirgizia" [[http://www.ictv.ua/ru/content/publications/world/utfu\\_gfdrtgdgh.html](http://www.ictv.ua/ru/content/publications/world/utfu_gfdrtgdgh.html)], 3 June, 2005.

the agreement on strategic partnership between Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan signed on 24 May, 2005 are very important. Kazakhstan is also a CSTO and EurAsEC member.

On 12 April, 2005, during the visit of U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to Azerbaijan, the two countries agreed on a plan to station American rapid deployment forces at three airbases, their composition being adjusted to U.S. needs in the region. In order to protect the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, there are plans to set up a tactical group called the Caspian Guard, which will include Turkish gendarmes, the State Service of Special Guards, and Internal Forces of the Azerbaijan Interior Ministry; other countries taking part in the region's energy projects will also be involved. In fact, the project will help Azerbaijan to prepare for NATO membership, especially in view of the fact that American instructors are already working in Georgia.<sup>6</sup>

This prompted Azeri analysts to predict the appearance of a new sub-regional alliance among Azerbaijan, Turkey, Georgia, Kazakhstan, the U.S., and possibly Ukraine. It might become either GUAM's territorial extension or its military-political element. In the latter case, GUAM, in the form of an Alliance for Democracy and Development, may either be transformed into a purely political organization or limit its activities to Eastern Europe.

It is worth mentioning that Viktor Iushchenko invited the presidents of Rumania, Lithuania, and Poland to take part in the preparatory stage of the GUAM Kishinev summit on 22 April, 2005, along with Bulgarian and Hungarian representatives. The Baltic-Black Sea Arc project, a political and economic alliance of the Black Sea and Baltic states initiated by Zbigniew Brzezinski and the Polish Right back in 1992, still has enthusiastic supporters in America, Ukraine, and the Baltic states. Even though Belarus withdrew from the project, Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia made the first feeble attempts to set up the structure in 1996-1997. Today, the project has been revived in the form of the tripartite parliamentary assembly (Poland, Lithuania, and Ukraine) and the presence of parliamentary representatives of the three Baltic states at the second meeting of the GUAM Parliamentary Assembly on 27-29 May, 2005.

It should be said that nearly all multilateral structures on post-Soviet territory in which Ukraine is involved may develop into more or less obvious anti-Russia organizations. Indeed, the Baltic-Black Sea alliance can be described as the most challenging antipode of the SES. It is set up as an alliance of the countries which use Russian gas and oil and serve as transit routes for them. This means that they will be able to agree on prices and other transit conditions based on free trade regulations and a single tariff policy in the same way as is envisaged for the SES.

In Russia, the project is described as an attempt to revive a "sanitary cordon" of the Rzeczpospolita type which existed in the 16th-17th centuries.<sup>7</sup> This trend is testified by the recent staunchness some of Russia's neighbors have been demonstrating in their relations with Russia under the U.S. Department of State's coaching. The conduct of Georgia, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania during the Moscow celebrations of the 60th anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War organized by President Putin was eloquent. Their leaders made stricter demands of Russia: they preferred to abandon common diplomatic practices for the sake of speedier solutions to certain problems (withdrawal of the Russian bases from Georgia, border agreements, etc.). It is their intention to limit Russia's influence in the neighboring countries and offer the United States better political prospects.

At the same time, Ukraine is working toward settling a number of problems: border demarcation in the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait; Ukraine wants clearer agreements on the conditions under

<sup>6</sup> See: S. Mamedov, A. Gordienko, "U 'Kaspiyskogo strazha' poiavilsia khoziain," *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, No. 19 (428), 27 May, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> See: D. Kondrashov, "Front protiv Rossii: napravlenia agressii" [<http://www.regnum.ru/news/428347.html>], 28 March, 2005.

which the Russian naval base is stationed in Sevastopol and insists on the transfer of the Russian coastal navigation infrastructure in the Crimea to Ukraine. Kiev, however, is trying to avoid obvious anti-Russian rhetoric and has never refused to take part in the SES. The reason is obvious: despite the frantic efforts to diversify oil and gas supplies, Ukraine's dependence on supplies from Russia remains all-important. This will not change in the near future.

Multilateral cooperation across the post-Soviet expanse reflects the vast variety of forms and approaches, therefore despite the seemingly mutually exclusive aims of the CIS, CSTO (the Tashkent Pact), EurAsEC, GUAM, and the Caspian Guard, they can peacefully coexist. Their efficacy remains low for the obvious reason that any of their members may either merely demonstrate its involvement or use them to prevent the hostile actions of its neighbors.

The highly diverse behavior of certain states helps them to adjust themselves to the systemic contradictions or to lower the level of conflict in interstate relations. Most of them are trying to coordinate their cooperation with the United States, NATO (Partnership for Peace program), and sub-regional alliances with their involvement in Russia-initiated structures and programs mainly in the economic sphere. The economic interests of these countries do not allow them to radically oppose these lines, therefore unambiguous military-political alliances in the CIS sphere, such as the defense union between Russia and Armenia, are an exception rather than the rule.

Ukrainian leaders have proffered highly significant comments on multilateral relations. Premier Iulia Timoshenko has said in particular: "We should not look at the CIS and GUAM as a mutually exclusive alternative." Chairman of the Ukrainian Rada Vladimir Litvin repeatedly stated that Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Armenia, and other Black Sea and Caspian countries could join GUAM some time in the future.<sup>8</sup> From time to time, Tbilisi makes no less interesting comments. For example, Foreign Minister of Georgia Salome Zurabishvili has stated that Georgia will hail GUAM membership for Russia.<sup>9</sup> This sounds strange, yet this conciliatory rhetoric reflects not so much the lack of a principled approach or a deficit of conceptual thinking—it is evidence that sub-regional problems are unlikely to be resolved as long as relations and the long-term cooperation forms between the U.S., EU, and Russia remain vague.

The same can be said about the prospects for Ukraine's involvement in the SES: while in opposition, the present leaders dismissed their country's possible SES membership as high treason and insisted that it would close the doors to the EU for Ukraine. Today, after failing to rid themselves of the control exerted by Russia's Gazprom by organizing gas supplies from Turkmenistan to Ukraine, Viktor Iushchenko, after giving it some thought, agreed to join the SES. In a certain sense he is following in Leonid Kuchma's footsteps, who in 1998-2001 exploited the subject of a free trade zone within the CIS as his main argument. The "Kiev formula" set forth in the framework SES agreement allows each of the members to decide on the degree of its involvement in the integration projects. Ukraine obviously needs the free trade zone for economic reasons, therefore it will obviously remain within the negotiation process.

The economic goals of such countries as Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan force them to remain within interstate alliances irrespective of their leaders' political biases. The region's countries need closer relations between the EU and Russia, therefore their leaders try to avoid sporadic cam-

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<sup>8</sup> See: "Premier Ukrainy vyskazyvaetsia za prodolzhenie sotrudnichestva v ramkakh SNG i reformirovanie Sodruzhestva" [http://www.interfax.ru/r/B/0/0.html?idissue=11306547], 3 June, 2005; "Timoshenko: 'GUAM ne iavliaetsia alternativnoy CNG'" [http://for-ua.com/news/2005/06/03/121744.html]; S. Stepanenko, "Ukraina khochet potesnit Rossiiu s pomoshch'iu GUAM," *Vremia novostey*, No. 93, 30 May, 2005 [http://www.vremya.ru/2005/93/5/126229.html].

<sup>9</sup> See: "Salome Zurabishvili: 'Vyvod rossiiskikh voennykh baz iz Gruzii reshaet tol'ko odin iz vazhnykh voprosov v otnosheniakh Moskvy i Tbilisi'" [http://www.interfax.ru/r/B/0/0.html?id\_issue=11304479], 31 May, 2005.

paings designed to contain Russia by political means or lower its status within the international system (such attempts were recently made by U.S. senators John McCain and Joe Liberman, as well as by Zbigniew Brzezinski and some other statesmen.)

## Trends and Prospects

Kiev's rapid political re-orientation toward the Euroatlantic structures has widened the gap between its stated political aims and the country's trade and economic interests. The joint statement by President George W. Bush and President Viktor Iushchenko, "A New Century Agenda for the Ukrainian-American Strategic Partnership" published on 4 April, 2005, described Ukraine as one of the key members of the "advancing freedom" strategy (along with Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Lebanon). At the same time, Ukraine's economic relations with the CIS countries and other important trade partners, such as China and Iran, may suffer because of its striving to join NATO and the EU if no long-term efforts to ensure Ukraine's energy security and extend it large amounts of economic aid are made.

Any purposeful impact on the political processes in the CIS countries requires vast resources. As distinct from the political situation in Europe in the late 1940s and the late 1980s, there is no "critical mass" of social and political factors in the CIS republics able to shift the balance in favor of democracy. According to sociologists, democratization potential depends on the economic development level and is most obvious in the countries which have reached the threshold of an industrial and postindustrial society. Under such conditions Color Revolutions may change these countries' foreign policy orientations rather than the nature of their regimes. Indeed, "the European perspective" is highly important for the post-Soviet European republics, therefore lack of progress in this direction may bring populist groups and leaders to power and strengthen authoritarian trends. Significantly, contrary to the expectations of the new Ukrainian leaders, neither the U.S. nor the European Commission recognize Ukraine as a country with a market economy. The fact that the former Ukrainian leaders discredited Ukraine's European prospects added revolutionary zeal to the sentiments prevailing among the middle class.

The European prospects of any of the post-Soviet European republics depend on the degree of democratic changes in them, their economic stability, and their GDP. Their economic stability is ensured by a steady flow of energy resources from Russia, Azerbaijan, and Central Asia on favorable terms, which cannot coexist with public criticism of the ruling regimes in these countries. It is even less advisable to support the opposition movements there since not all of them are very popular with the people. At the same time, in some of the countries both the ruling regime and the opposition are demonstrating their loyalty to the U.S. and NATO (Azerbaijan is one example), which considerably extends the means and methods of American influence there.

In an effort to resolve the contradiction between its declared foreign policy aims and its economic interests, Kiev has to seek new ways to combine its new political self-identity (based on European values) and the need to preserve a mutually advantageous level of cooperation with Russia and other CIS members. The post-Soviet states' different political systems make such cooperation much more difficult: Ukrainian support of the opposition movements in the post-Soviet expanse will endanger its active economic cooperation with Turkmenistan and Belarus. It is even more dangerous to promote a Color Revolution in Russia.

There are two possible alternatives for relations with the CIS countries.



It seems that the current considerable political differences between the CIS republics will survive given the increase in the number of states subjected to political transformations and the growing threat of radical Islam in Central Asia. It is less probable that most of the CIS countries will form a "democratic community." To realize the second alternative the system of power in Russia should be changed, while the country should undergo political modernization. According to Russian experts, the present "plebiscitary" manageable democracy is unlikely to be replaced with the rule of pro-Western monetarist liberals. They predict the rule of a national-populist regime, which the West might find much less palatable (as far as structural relations are concerned) than the predictable and stable bureaucratic regime of Vladimir Putin.

The White House is resolved to limit Russia's military-political role within the CIS; in the wake of the Bratislava summit between the two presidents on 24 February, 2005, America stepped up its cooperation with Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Georgia, and Moldova. Washington is exerting much stronger influence on the processes taking place on the post-Soviet territory and is directly coordinating some of the countries in their contacts with the Russian Federation. This predicts further fragmentation of the structures of multilateral cooperation within the CIS in the form of latent Russian-American rivalry.

The defrosted local conflicts in the Caucasus are potentially dangerous: they will cause destabilization and bloodshed. Our recent experience, however, has taught us that not all defrosting schemes end in civil wars. The option the EU offered to Cyprus in 2003 presupposes purely political forms of conflict settlement, yet this approach will probably fail in the case of Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorny Karabakh. Moreover, the leaders of the breakaway Georgian provinces enjoy the firm support of the Kremlin and the State Duma of Russia.

It is in Ukrainian interests to promote political processes in the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia that will help avoid prolonged confrontation and instability. We all know that open and sharp contradictions between the United States and Russia might cause confrontation by forcing the sub-regional countries to take sides. It appears that today such contradictions could move into the political and legal sphere (demands that international norms be observed, and stirring up discussions on human rights within the CIS). The first success (by which I mean the agreement on the withdrawal of Russia's military bases from Georgia) failed to improve the situation because the bases were moved to Armenia. Nobody knows how long American and Russian bases will coexist in some of the region's countries. The regimes brought to power by the Color Revolutions will find it hard to preserve the status quo for a long time with the help of a dual foreign military presence on their territories. Today it looks as if sooner or later America and NATO will supplant Russia.

It is hard to predict how NATO will enlarge its presence in the Black Sea and Caspian area, where the U.S. Administration seems to prefer alliances and coalitions under its direct control. The political leaders of France and Germany obviously prefer to limit NATO's participation to its traditional set of functions and avoid its development into a global military-political structure. Indeed, NATO's presence in the Caspian will transform it into one of the sides in the contradiction among Russia, Armenia, Iran, and Turkey. In the near future, NATO will limit itself to the Black Sea zone as a side in the interim coalitions involving the Central and East European countries. The EU will only be directly involved if the question of the Transdnistria settlement arises and could also have indirect influence on the developments in Belarus.