

## **Ukrainian Foreign Policy: Orange leadership priorities and potential changes stemming from the country's 2006 parliamentary elections**

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### **A new framework**

Almost two years have passed since the Orange Revolution set in motion a major shift in Ukrainian foreign policy toward western-based democratization and away from the Russian (and Belarusian) model of Post-Soviet political regime development. The country's March 26, 2006 parliamentary elections stood as hallmark for the peaceful transfer of power. It occurred on an ideological base of European integration, known as "Eurointegration." Unfortunately, roughly one third of the Ukrainian voters rejected such values.<sup>1</sup> The election results heavily influenced developments in 2006 and affected the country's foreign policy. This raises the question whether the Ukrainian government managed to take advantage of all the opportunities provided to it by the Orange Revolution. Certainly, it was burdened by the "old" parliament, which was elected under the regime of President Leonid Kuchma and under the significant influence of certain "old" foreign policy and economic objectives. Later on, two controversial and contradictory evaluations of Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko's first Orange government foreign policy emerged. These were the approval of its accomplishments and frustration due to exaggerated expectations.

The former foreign policy of Ukraine distinguished itself by efforts to fill "free niches" and act in all possible directions at the same time. This so-called "multi-vector" approach was labeled rational and the only possible way forward for a newly independent country. Others considered it as chaotic and devoid of meaning. Ukraine's leadership was inconsistent

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<sup>1</sup> See the article of Klemens Büscher in this booklet.

in achieving announced “priority“ objectives, namely entry into NATO and EU integration. But Ukraine had to balance and maneuver between the West and East, i.e. Russia. This meant that a certain “movement to the West“ in Kuchma times continued until it started to conflict with Russian interests. The “Russian factor“ still has a considerable political, cultural and informational impact on Ukraine. Around 17 percent of the Ukrainian population is ethnically Russian and about 60 percent of all energy resources in the Ukrainian market originate in Russia.

Today’s Ukrainian leadership demonstrates another variant of external policy implementation. The major objectives have been determined as follows: integration into the EU, membership in NATO and WTO. Almost all efforts are oriented towards the achievement of these goals, sometimes to the disadvantage of other objectives. Opponents call such foreign policy strategies “idealistic” and say that no one in Brussels is waiting for Ukraine. Indeed, Ukrainian accession to the EU is not expected to occur within the next few years. Nevertheless, Ukrainian Minister of Defense Anatoli Grytsenko speaking about the country’s foreign policy proclaimed that “sometimes the process is more important than the result.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, Ukraine has to pass through the process of reform according to the standards put forward by the WTO, NATO and EU, a process necessary for its development as a modern country.

Officials of the newly elected Orange leadership declared the following major foreign policy priorities of Ukraine:

- European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine as a gradual process of strengthening national defense, consistent economic development and of support of democracy, human rights and freedom.
- Development of strategic partnership with the United States, Russia and Poland and the enhancement of bilateral economic relations with other countries.

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<sup>2</sup> Grytsenko at a meeting of the Konrad Adenauer Club (“The difficult way of Ukraine into European and Euroatlantic structures: Developments and perspectives“), February 24, 2006, in Kiev.

- Efficient external regional policy aimed at strengthening security in the Black Sea region;
- Active participation in resolution of the “frozen” conflicts in Moldova and the South Caucasus, which is a specific direction of Ukrainian foreign policy.
- The activation of GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova) and of the relations with the Visegrád Group, the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), the Central European Initiative (CEI) and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.
- Participation in the work of the UN, the OSCE and the EU.
- Protection and support of Ukrainian citizens abroad.
- Entry into the WTO and initiation of international scientific, cultural and educational cooperation.

To realize these goals, Ukraine has significantly upgraded its international activity. Trying to make up for lost time over the previous five years of isolation Ukraine’s leadership hosted 130 visits at the level of the President and the Foreign Minister in 2005 alone.

The 2005 annual report of “Freedom House,” an American-based democracy advocacy group, classified Ukraine as “free,” the first member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to be classified as such. For the first time, an ideology for external policy was formulated. The Ukrainian government could now successfully demonstrate a direct link between adherence to democratic principles inside the country and its foreign and economic activities. Ukraine presented itself as a country that, besides building up its own democracy, could promote democratic values farther to the East.

State institutions influencing the foreign policy of Ukraine have also changed. During Kuchma’s rule, the Presidential Administration or the President himself and his inner circle preferred behind-the-scene-policy making. Following the Orange revolution, the Cabinet of Ministers, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Council of National

Security and Defense of Ukraine (CNSD), adopted far more transparent procedures, making Ukrainian foreign policy more open and professional.

### **European integration**

As mentioned earlier, one of the main strategic objectives of the Orange leadership was “Eurointegration.” Subsequent to the Orange Revolution expectations concerning the EU among the population were simply too high. Initially, some representatives of the highest levels of leadership announced that Ukraine was about to submit an application for EU membership, even though it was obvious that such statements were premature. It can also be seen, however, as a tactical move. Later, Ukraine abstained from submitting of an application to the EU and agreed with recommendations made by the European Commission to defer such an application until the realization of the Action Plan Ukraine-EU in 2005-2007. Successful execution of the Action Plan would in turn demonstrate that Ukraine has completely rejected a policy of empty declarations, proceeding instead to practical activities aimed at complex reforms of state institutions, the court system and economy. Ukraine unfortunately failed to fulfill this plan for 2005, meeting only 70 percent of its targets.<sup>3</sup>

Frustration toward the attitudes of Brussels on the “Ukrainian question“ is obvious in Kiev. Ukrainian authorities have officially accepted the European Neighborhood Programme, but remain deeply dismayed that their geographically and culturally European country is placed within the same category as North African and Middle Eastern countries. It was certainly painful for Ukrainians to listen to comments made by the Deputy Head of the European Commission, Guenter Verheugen, in response to a journalist’s question concerning the future of a united Europe. “In 20 years, all European countries will become members of the European Union, except for those that are former USSR states and have not been

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<sup>3</sup> Between Contentment and Disillusionment: EU–Ukraine Relations a Year after the Orange Revolution. The Stefan Batory Foundation, Warsaw 2005, p.21.

accepted to EU yet.”<sup>4</sup> Although it may well be justified to speak of Ukraine as unprepared to enter the EU or about noncompliance with relevant criteria, but it is a clear setback for pro-European Ukrainian politicians and citizens to see their country still tied to the former Soviet Union. Nevertheless, despite all these problems, relations between Ukraine and the EU have increased in quantity and activity. Mutual interests of Ukraine and the EU have led to cooperation on issues of regional and international defense, particularly those associated with international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the prevention and resolution of international crises.

Some of these issues are linked with Ukrainian initiatives on the resolution of the Dnestr question in Moldova where Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko came up with a plan of “settlement through democracy” with the involvement of the EU and the USA. Ukrainian mediation also played a pivotal role in resolving a conflict between Belarus and Poland, resulting in the return of the Polish ambassador Minsk, following his controversial absence.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, Kiev expressed its readiness to send peacekeeping contingents to the frozen conflicts in the Georgian provinces Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as an alternative to Russian troops. The government in Tbilisi favors of such an initiative. Moscow and the pro-Russian separatists, however, disapprove any Ukrainian involvement.

In addition to these and other accomplishments, several important agreements in economic, financial, science and technology, and humanitarian spheres have been reached with the EU including receiving recognition as a country with a market economy; and in 2005, Ukraine unilaterally canceled compulsory visas for EU citizens.

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<sup>4</sup> Ukraina zvydovana zajavamy Ferhojgena. BBC Ukrainian Service, February 21, 2006. Available online at: <[http://www.bbc.co.uk/ukrainian/domestic/story/2006/02/060221\\_tarasyuk\\_eu\\_nk.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/ukrainian/domestic/story/2006/02/060221_tarasyuk_eu_nk.shtml)> (assessed on April 17, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> The State Security Committee (KGB) had declared that the Polish embassy to the Belarus capital of Minsk had become a “center of espionage created by foreign secret services.” In 2005, Belarus expelled three Polish diplomats, prompting Poland into tit-for-tat deportations of Belarusian diplomats. The Polish ambassador to Minsk was recalled for “consultations.”

Several factors contribute to the slowing down of the “Eurointegration“ of Ukraine, according to an experts’ poll conducted by the Center of Peace, Conversion and External Policy of Ukraine (Razumkov Center). These include issues such as 73.3 percent of the experts spoke about improper economic policy of the Ukrainian government. 53.4 percent spoke about the impact of the “Russian factor; 44.8 percent about remnants of Soviet mentality and thinking (primarily among civil servants); 38.8 percent about the influence of corruption and organized crime, and 30.2 percent about the indifference of EU leaders to Ukraine.<sup>6</sup>

### **Challenges facing Ukrainian foreign policy**

Ukraine’s recent foreign policy has encountered some serious setbacks and obstacles. Five of them bear mentioning.

- 1) The country’s foreign policy and particularly steps aimed at achieving defined priorities are not always supported by required actions and reforms. For example, there is no adequate government information policy advocating Ukrainian membership in NATO and little useful information concerning the EU. According to the data of the Razumkov Center, only around 8 percent of Ukrainians assessed their EU knowledge level as high, while 6,5 percent considered themselves well informed about NATO. As a result, 40 percent of the population supported entry to EU and only 16 percent supported entry to NATO, with 61.4 percent opposing it.<sup>7</sup> The parliamentary bill “Main principles of foreign policy of Ukraine“ has yet to be approved and therefore the 1993 document of the same name is still in effect. Insufficient personnel prove to be a challenge as well: There

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<sup>6</sup> Nataliya Parkhomenko: International Standing of Ukraine, its Foreign And Security Policy: Results of the First Half of 2005. Available online at: <<http://cpcfpu.org.ua/en/projects/foreignpolicy/polls/0205/>> (assessed on December 12, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> The New Government’s Performance in 2005: A View of Non-Governmental Think Tanks. Section 4: Foreign and Security Policy. *National Security & Defense*, no. 12, 2005, p.64.

remains a lack of specialists for European and International Law on matters of relations with NATO.

- 2) The Orange government could not avoid deteriorating relations with the Russian Federation and other CIS countries while simultaneously realizing its declared course toward European and Euro-Atlantic integration and the activation of regional cooperation.
- 3) The unsolved problem of legalizing its official borders remains a painful issue for Ukraine. It has not yet finalized border agreements with Russia over the Azov-Kerch region of the Black Sea. Belarus still has not ratified the treaty of 1997 on its border with Ukraine. Romanian claims to the Black Sea continental shelf and special economic zones have been deferred to the International Court of Justice in The Hague, but have yet to be resolved.
- 4) The lack of a national consensus with regard to European integration of Ukraine – both in the society and among the political elite – remains a serious obstacle to the country's foreign policy agenda. The parliament blocked approval of a range of important bills. As a result, Ukraine did not enter the WTO so far and did not fully realize the Action Plan with the EU.
- 5) Weak economic integration is another obstacle. The EU has made insignificant investments in Ukraine while Ukrainian investors have a minimal presence in the EU.

### **Euro-Atlantic integration**

The Orange leadership intended to focus on another strategic direction, namely Euro-Atlantic integration or simply, entry into NATO. On April 21, 2005, Yushchenko signed the decree "Issue of Military Doctrine of Ukraine" restoring the provision that declared Ukraine's intention to enter the EU and NATO, a provision that was previously excluded by Kuchma. NATO integration was subsequently included in the law "On Basics of National Defense."

According to the forecasts of some Ukrainian and Western experts, Ukraine has the opportunity to join the Action Plan concerning NATO membership in 2006, and possibly to become a member in 2008. However, as mentioned above, the idea of joining NATO is not popular among the population. The majority still has an image of NATO as of an “aggressive“ and “hostile bloc,” formed in Soviet times. Not least as a result of an aggressive election campaign of the pro-Russian opposition oriented against NATO, support for Ukrainian NATO membership remains weak. The Orange leadership failed to defend its foreign policy direction and failed to engage in discussion with the opposition. As mentioned previously, there is a serious lack of information about NATO in Ukraine. According to a poll carried out by the Kiev-based “Democratic Initiative” Foundation, 88 percent of the people think that NATO is waging the war in Iraq. In the Donetsk region, only 4 percent of the population supports NATO.<sup>8</sup> This is a consequence of the Russian “informational” impact on this region and the strong pro-Russian sentiments there.

Another peculiarity of the Ukrainian political scene is a notable increase in popular support for the concept of a neutral state, which was already enshrined in the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine, adopted in 1990. It should be noted, however, that Ukrainian foreign policy has never focused on this. Nonetheless, during the Orange rule, opposition parties unexpectedly became supporters of neutrality as an alternative to entry into NATO as did Viktor Yanukovich’s Party of Regions.

### **Regional initiatives**

Regional integration is the third and a new priority direction of Ukrainian foreign policy. The new leadership considers regional cooperation as

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<sup>8</sup> This data was presented by a representative of “Democratic Initiative” at the conference “A Future Parliamentary Coalition – 2006 and the Course of External Policy of Ukraine” at the Foreign Policy Institute, Kiev, March 16, 2006. See also: Prem’er doviv, chsho boitsya Putina bilshe, nizh ukrainsiv. September 29, 2006. Available online at: <<http://obozrevatel.com/news/2006/9/29/137914.htm>> (assessed October, 5 2006).



central to realizing its geo-political ambitions and economic interests. In his address to the European Parliament in February 2005, President Yushchenko called the promotion of European values the essence of Ukrainian regional policy. He continued, “transfrontier cooperation, energy networks and the like will become ways of fleshing out our cooperation in concrete terms, from Baku to the western frontiers of the European Union. In this way we can bring European standards into our region. This is clearly one of our priorities. We feel that this is the only vision that will enable our country to properly to meet these aspirations.”<sup>9</sup>

Regional leadership would give Ukraine added importance and Kiev clearly intends to create a zone of stability around the country. Ukraine’s different principle is based on equitable partnership of common and mutually beneficial interests and is directly connected to the Orange leadership’s reduction in participation in CIS activities. Meanwhile, Russia is trying to “reintegrate” post-Soviet space (or its “Near Abroad”) based on its own standards and intentions. Moreover, the Russian-dominated CIS has deteriorated into an inefficient bureaucracy suffering from stagnation while cooperation inside its framework sometimes works against the national interests of Ukraine. For example, Kiev refused to join the Treaty on Collective Defense (“Tashkent Treaty”) created in 1992 and Ukraine never ratified essential documents on accession to the CIS, meaning the country is not even a full-member.

### *The Common Economic Space (CES)*

The Common Economic Space is an integration project with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan that emerged during the Kuchma administration. From the very beginning there was strong opposition in Ukraine, even within the Foreign Ministry. The Orange leadership denounced

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<sup>9</sup> Debates. Wednesday 23 February 2005 – Strasbourg. Available online at: <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/omk/sipade3?L=EN&PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20050223+ITEM-008+DOC+XML+V0//EN&LEVEL=3&NAV=X>> (assessed on May 25, 2005).

Kuchma's course and insisted on the concept of a free trade zone without the "political interstate superstructure" favored by Russia, which clearly sought influence on the internal affairs of the other three CES member states and explains why Russia refused to consider the "14+1" trade agreement proposed by Ukraine in 2005.

The CES, however, most likely will not materialize in its initially planned shape. Following years of negotiations, the parties involved could not agree on the key issue – what exactly are they plan to build. However, the Orange leadership continued to talk about the CES. The problem was that the Orange Coalition could not entirely neglect the "Russian factor." A final rejection of the CES by Ukraine could have heightened discontent in Moscow and spark Russian accusations of antagonism by the Ukrainian government. Therefore, the Orange administration continued to *play* the integration game with Russia.

Simultaneously, Ukraine did not refuse to develop relations with other former Soviet republics. It chose instead to convert those relationships into a bilateral format. As a result, in 2005, the total export of commodities to CIS countries amounted to 9.8 billion dollars, a sharp increase compared to 2004 of 22.3 percent. Total imports amounted to 12.9 billion dollars, an increase of 13 percent.<sup>10</sup> Predominantly, Ukraine imports raw materials and exports manufactured products. Ukraine sees the former Soviet republics within its economic interests and clearly intends to increase the volume of its economic cooperation, but it does not overlook the fact that the markets of the former USSR demonstrate low productivity and poor technological development, while the EU market is filled with highly productive economies. That is why there has been a gradual change of orientation of Ukrainian exports toward the West evidenced in commodities export figures. In the middle of the 90's, according to the Razumkov Center data, commodities exports to CIS and EU countries were 50 and 20 percent respectively. Today those figures stand at 30 and over 32 percent respectively.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The New Government's Performance in 2005, op. cit., p.72.

<sup>11</sup> Vasyl Yurchyshyn, Ukraine's path to the EU: the need for systemic transformations. *National Security & Defense*, no. 7, 2005, p.28.

## *GUAM*

The Orange leadership tried to promote the GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development consisting of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova as part of its intention to activate regional cooperation. One essential component has been the creation of a European and Asian oil transportation corridor as a means of diversifying energy supply sources. This task is especially urgent for Ukraine following the summer 2005 gas and gasoline crisis. Achieving this objective, however, requires support by both the EU and U.S., which have their own particular interests in Caspian and Black Sea region. The political content of GUAM coupled with Ukraine's obvious intention to find alternatives to Russian energy sources worsened Kiev's relations with Moscow. Thus, the April 2005 Chisinau Declaration of GUAM leaders appealing to Russia to withdraw its troops from Moldova and Georgia only added to already existing tensions between Kiev and Moscow. For Ukraine, GUAM is a key regional project and a test of its ability to execute its own and independent foreign and security policy, the success of which would also allow Ukraine to evolve from an object to a subject of foreign policy. GUAM is a difficult project and it is not at all clear whether and to which extent it can be realized. From the point of view of Ukrainian national interests, GUAM is far more desirable and feasible than the CIS. Currently GUAM is undergoing reorganization with the aim of achieving the following goals:

- Completing its institutionalization and recognition in the international arena.
- Creating an efficient secretariat in Kiev.
- Increasing the efficiency of GUAM structures concerning the regulation of regional conflicts and ensuring stability in the region. For this purpose, the formation of a joint peacekeeping unit of GUAM is planned.
- Enhancing GUAM interaction with the U.S., UN, OSCE, BSEC, and NATO.

- Increasing GUAM's economic relevance (particularly in the realm of transportation projects).
- Enhancing cooperation among the GUAM members in the humanitarian sphere, development of tourism etc.

After an ambitious start, GUAM has moved to the background, as have many other foreign policy projects of the Orange administration, due to the outcome of the elections in March 2006.

### *The Democratic Choice Community*

Another Ukrainian initiative is the creation of the Democratic Choice Community. This new union was founded in December 2005 in Kiev at a summit of the presidents of Ukraine, Georgia, Romania, Moldova, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Macedonia and Slovenia. Lower level state officials represented other countries of the Baltic-Black Sea-Caspian region. The community plans to deal with economic, humanitarian and other projects in the region as well as issues of democracy and human rights.

### **Ukrainian-American relations**

Ukraine has developed efficient bilateral relations with the U.S., earning the status of a *strategic partner* and graduating from the Jackson-Vanik amendment. On February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006 the U.S. granted Ukraine the status of a market economy country, clearing its way to join the WTO. According to many experts, however, the present state of relations between the U.S. and Ukraine is not living up to its potential, especially in the economic sphere. According to the October 2005 data of the State Statistics Agency of Ukraine, the United States comes in second behind Germany in terms of direct investments in the Ukrainian economy.

## **Russia: a difficult partner**

Moscow unequivocally supported Yanukovich's presidential bid in 2004. Russian politicians and media tried to discredit the Orange movement, portraying its leader, Yushchenko, as an American puppet. Yanukovich's loss was considered by Moscow to be a serious blow to Russian interests in the "Near Abroad." President Yushchenko subsequently tried to ease tensions with Russia through several statements and steps. For example, he reaffirmed Russia's status as a strategic partner of Ukraine. In May 2005, working with Russian President Vladimir Putin to build the so-called Yushchenko-Putin Commission made up of four committees covering defense matters, international cooperation, economic relations, and humanitarian domain. Nevertheless, in 2005, Ukraine had more problems with Russia than accomplishments. Therefore, the first Orange government tried to build up a new format of relations with Russia. In Kuchma's time, bilateral relations mostly relied on private agreements, or so called *shirt-sleeved* diplomacy, and economic concessions from Russia in exchange for political concessions from Ukraine. This often took the form of an imitation of Ukrainian concessions in exchange for an equal imitation of Russian political support, a matter that should be considered an achievement for Kuchma. The Orange leadership for its part endeavored to conduct a more independent domestic and foreign policy, with the goal of breaking free from the Russian "zone of special interests" and in defense its own national interests. It is noteworthy that Tymoshenko was the first Ukrainian Prime Minister appointed without the tacit consent of Moscow.

Another problem Ukraine has to deal with is the Russian Black Sea Fleet, headquartered in the Crimean port of Sevastopol. Under the Ukrainian-Russian Agreement on the Black Sea Fleet, concluded in 1997, Russian forces will be located on Ukrainian territory until 2017. Russian officials already have indicated, however, that they intend to stay longer. Their primary concern is that NATO will otherwise "fill the vacuum." CNSD Secretary Anatoli Kinakh, Grytsenko, and other senior Ukrainian officials stressed the necessity to charge Russia market prices for the rent of Ukrainian facilities. The sum of 1.8 billion dollars per annum has been mentioned. Official dialogue over the issue began im-

mediately after the early 2006 Ukrainian-Russian gas war caused by Russia's introduction of market prices for its natural gas. Moscow's refusal to accept the same market principles in the payments for its navy demonstrated the double standard of its own policies.

Ukraine still is forced to play by Russian rules. Indeed, the Kremlin totally refuses to conduct any dialogue otherwise. Ukraine's desire to conduct a dialogue with Russia according to generally accepted, international legal foundations does not coincide with the plans of the Kremlin, which were, among other issues, illustrated by the aforementioned gas war. Overcoming this crisis was only possible through bilateral gas trade using an intermediary company, RosUkrEnergo, despite the dubious nature of its ownership and over the boisterous protest of the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc. In the end, Moscow proved its power to affect Ukraine's economy and the standard of living of its citizens.

Moscow is also keenly aware of the regional differences that exist within Ukraine. Western and Central regions such as Kiev orientate culturally and economically towards Europe. Eastern and Southern regions, with a high percentage of ethnic Russians and strong economic and cultural ties with Russia, orientate accordingly towards the East. Irresponsible political speculation and further escalation of those East-South differences could drive Ukraine's two spheres to the brink of divorce. This was demonstrated again during the presidential campaign of 2004, when some representatives of the Eastern regions made strong separatist appeals. Ukraine's regional problems will not be solved within the next few years and Moscow has a clear interest in perpetuating this unstable situation, leaving the door open for possible interference. Russia continues to pressure Ukraine at the international and internal levels. The more its influence grows in the Eastern and Southern regions, the more the Western and Central regions will strive to be integrated into the EU and NATO in response. Left unchecked, this may tear Ukraine apart.

The Moscow-based Yuri Levada Analytical Center reported in January 2006 that the number of Russians with a positive attitude towards Ukraine decreased in the one month of December 2005 from 60 to 54 percent. Meanwhile, the number of respondents with a negative attitude

towards Ukraine grew from 29 to 34 percent in the same period. However, positive attitudes towards the Slavic neighbor have a very specific character among Russians, particularly in the context of hypothetical political priorities. For example, 31 percent of the respondents opted for a return of the Crimea to Russia, 18 percent expressed the wish for unification between them and 12 percent thought that Yushchenko should be removed from office.<sup>12</sup> Ukrainian sociologists conducted a similar poll following the 2006 gas crisis. They found that 26 percent of Ukrainians thought worse of Russia after the crisis, 30 percent thought that the crisis was a Russian attempt to affect the parliamentary elections, and 24 percent assumed that it was an attempt to punish Ukraine for its independent policies.<sup>13</sup>

### **The parties and foreign policy: some remarks**

One of the major problems of any future parliamentary coalition will be the lack of a foreign policy consensus. The pro-Yushchenko-party “Nasha Ukraina” (“Our Ukraine”) clearly favors membership in the EU and NATO. The Socialist Party (SPU) supports the idea of a referendum on NATO entry, despite being somewhat pro-Western. Intriguingly, even the Party of Regions speaks in its program about NATO, specifically mentioning *cooperation with*, as opposed to membership in the organization.<sup>14</sup> This same party actively used anti-NATO, anti-Western, and pro-Russian slogans to mobilize its voters especially in Eastern Ukraine. Indeed, some of its leaders have business interests abroad. It is a widely held mischaracterization that the Party of Regions is rigidly Russia-oriented and anti-Western. In fact, it is quite pragmatic, and staffed by businessmen. The Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc on the other hand could turn out to be far more pro-Russian, adhering to a more traditional

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<sup>12</sup> Rossiya i Ukraina posle “gazovogo konflikta.” January 27, 2006. Available online at: <<http://www.levada.ru/press/2006012701.html>> (assessed on February 17, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Rossiyane u ukraintsy stali menshe lyubit drug druga. January 27, 2006. Available online at: <<http://www.newsru.com/russia/27jan2006/ruskr.html>> (assessed on February 17, 2006).

<sup>14</sup> Programma Partii. Available online at: <<http://www.partyofregions.org.ua/meet/program/>> (assessed on February 18, 2006).

multi-vector policy. Tymoshenko has never appeared in NATO headquarters and immediately after losing the position of Prime Minister, she traveled to Moscow in connection with business interests her party's constituents.

Any coalition, most likely, will be unstable, and lead to frequent changes of governments. One must expect contradictory policy statements emanating from various ministers within any coalition government. Nevertheless, the central foreign policy direction toward Eurointegration will not change fundamentally, no matter how much it might decelerate. Almost all of the 45 parties that participated in the last general elections favored Eurointegration. However, only three clearly supported NATO. This weak support called into question Ukraine's role as strategic partner of the U.S. Washington's backing is crucial for Ukraine as long as EU support remains weak. There are already concerns that the U.S. will shift its preferences toward Romania over Ukraine in the Black Sea region. Romania, after all, is already a member of NATO and will join EU in January 2007. Such a development would be bad for Ukraine, particularly in relation to its territorial dispute with Romania over the Snake Island. The loss of its strategic partnership with the West would significantly harm Ukraine's security. Indeed, Ukraine has little by way of external security guarantees except for the Budapest Memorandum<sup>15</sup> that Kiev relied on during the 2003 conflict over Tuzla Island<sup>16</sup> and the 2006 "gas war" with Russia.

Finally, certain trends within Ukrainian society should be considered. Rightist tendencies are increasing and, as a consequence of recent events, too, are anti-Russian sentiments. Elections trends are solid proof of these developments, with both pro-Western and highly patriotic parties achieving patently positive results. So solid is this trend that not even the new governing coalition of the Party of Regions and Communists (KPU) can change it. Indeed, the Communists saw their share of

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<sup>15</sup> Under this Memorandum, the United States, Britain, and Russia in 1994 gave Ukraine security guarantees in exchange for Kiev's renunciation of nuclear weapons.

<sup>16</sup> In late September 2003, Russia started building an earth bridge across the shallow 4 km gap between its Taman peninsula and Tuzla island, drawing furious protests from Ukrainian politicians, some of whom accuse Russia of planning an "occupation."



the vote decline in 2006, gaining only less than 4 percent of the vote in comparison with 20 percent four years earlier. Even the mythically pro-Russian Party of Regions is in many respects, at least covertly, Western-oriented. All of these factors lead us to one conclusion: Ukrainian foreign policy will increasingly grow more nationalistic, patriotic, and pro-Western.