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# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

## Monterey, California



## THESIS

U.S. STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO UKRAINE

by

Yevhen P. Sharov

June 2000

Thesis Co- Advisors:

David Yost  
Jeanne Giraldo

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Yevhen P. Sharov  
National Institute for Strategic Studies,  
National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine  
B.L., Kyiv State University, 1991

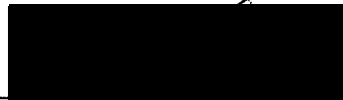
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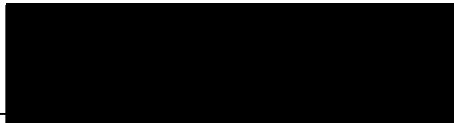
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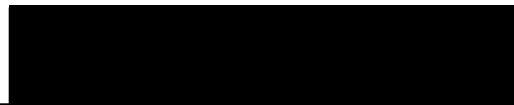


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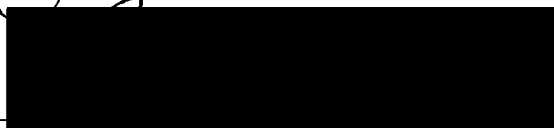
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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines U.S. strategic approaches to Ukraine in three major periods: World War I; World War II and the Cold War; and since Ukraine's independence in 1991. Several key factors and tendencies related to U.S.-Ukrainian-Russian relations are reviewed throughout these three periods. The main emphasis is on post-1991 American strategic approaches to Ukraine. The thesis attempts to define possible future U.S. approaches regarding Ukraine and possible challenges in the bilateral relationship. It concludes that the strategic partnership that the United States and Ukraine reached in the 1990s, after almost a century of American indifference toward Kyiv, is in decline because American strategic approaches toward Ukraine lack a properly balanced economic dimension. Moreover, changes in Russia's leadership, the U.S.-Russian arms control agenda, and U.S. foreign aid trends as well as negative internal political and economic factors in Ukraine are combining to lower Kyiv's place among the priorities of U.S. strategic policy. However, new business and economic initiatives, analogous to NATO's Partnership for Peace, could provide solutions.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the most of the twentieth century, American strategists and policy-makers linked the U.S. strategic approaches to Ukraine or the "Ukrainian question" with their "Russia only" approach. For geopolitical or nuclear weapons reasons, Washington pushed its policy priorities with Moscow at the expense of the Ukrainians and other peoples of Eastern Europe and Eurasia, which struggled for independence.

American strategists disregarded Ukrainian independence during World War I because of the pro-Russian orientation of President Wilson's Administration, U.S. attempts to preserve the Russian state, and its commitment to fighting on the Eastern front, and U.S. idealism about Russia's potential democratic future. The Ukrainian treaty with the Central Powers in 1918 was another negative factor in U.S. eyes.

The Americans were reasonably well-informed about the dynamics of the Ukrainian movement for independence before and during World War II. However, once again, because of war with Germany, the United States and its allies chose a preventive, anti-Ukrainian strategy, working against the Ukrainian independence movement in Europe and North America. American and British strategists understood that Ukrainian independence would lead to the collapse of the Soviet empire. Geopolitical motives prevailed over ideological and moral commitments to support the principle of self-determination. The forceful repatriation of Ukrainians by American and British military administrations from Western Europe to Stalin's Soviet Union after World War II represented a continuation of the Anglo-American strategic approach to the Ukrainian question. The Soviet Union thereby received the opportunity to survive for the next forty-

six years (1945-1991), causing the Cold War and Soviet expansionist efforts around the world. During the Cold War, the U.S. strategic approaches to the “Ukrainian question” could be characterized as neutral at best; the United States did not attempt to challenge the existence and unity of the USSR.

The Bush Administration attempted to preserve and reform Gorbachev’s Soviet Union, and therefore resisted Ukraine’s independence. Various factors—nuclear disarmament priorities, American-Ukrainian diaspora pressure, growing ties between Ukraine and other countries, the inability of Gorbachev and Yeltsin to keep Ukraine in the Moscow-controlled union—pushed the Bush Administration to recognize the independence of Ukraine. Bush Administration and early Clinton Administration policies nonetheless were based on negative perceptions of Ukraine and pursued a strategy exclusively focused on nuclear disarmament. At the same time, these U.S. administrations made idealistic mistakes regarding Russia, helping it economically and politically, while closing their eyes to Russian behavior and demands in relations with the other former Soviet republics.

Ukrainian nuclear bargaining and Russian anti-Western policies led to the re-education of American strategists regarding Ukraine and to the U.S.-Ukrainian strategic partnership. This partnership, primarily oriented on the security and defense sphere, has helped to develop significant U.S.-Ukraine military cooperation as well as the NATO-Ukraine distinctive partnership. In contrast, America’s limited economic engagement in Ukraine has created imbalances in the U.S.-Ukrainian relationship. Such imbalances can not be sustained for a long period of time and may cause a decline in the strategic partnership. In addition, the changes in the Russian leadership, the U.S.-Russian arms

control agenda, the unpopularity of foreign aid among U.S. policy-makers, and domestic problems in Ukraine (the slowness of economic reforms and accusations in corruption) could create an unfavorable dynamic in Washington-Kyiv relations.

This thesis concludes that Ukraine and other non-NATO and non-EU countries could become a *cordon sanitaire* between Russia and the West without organized international initiatives in the business and economic sphere, similar in weight and value to the Partnership for Peace program.

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**Dedicated to my parents Pavel I. Sharov and Lybov M. Sharova**

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The difficult circumstances in Ukraine have put a special responsibility on our "transitional" generation in connection with the future of our country. It is hoped that this thesis addresses some of the important issues in U.S.-Ukrainian relations, and that it may help Ukraine and the United States to re-evaluate specific historical lessons and better understand each other.

For this achievement I feel a deep sense of gratitude:

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## I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the origins and content of U.S. strategic approaches toward Ukraine from World War I to the present. It also offers judgements about the probable future dynamics of U.S. strategic approaches toward Ukraine.

The terminology employed in this analysis should be clarified at the outset. The word "strategic" in this analysis means having to do with core security interests. The word "approach" means the basic policy attitudes and objectives. The phrase "strategic approach" therefore means policies and actions intended to promote favorable conditions for the defense and/or pursuit of core security interests. In other words, when we speak about the strategic approaches of some states toward others, we are referring to their policies about important national interests. In its analysis of U.S. strategic approaches to Ukraine, this thesis examines basic national interests, historical experiences, and perceptions. The evidence considered includes policy actions as well as official declarations.

During a process underway since 1991, Ukraine has become a strategic partner of the United States and a significant contributor to European as well as global security. During his August 1991 visit to Ukraine, U.S. President George Bush expressed doubts about the likelihood of Ukrainian independence and indicated a preference for Moscow. In contrast, four years later, President Bill Clinton stated that "For America, support for an independent Ukraine secure in its recognized borders, is not only a matter of sympathy, it is a matter of our national interest as well. We look to the day when a

democratic and prosperous Ukraine is America's full political and economic partner in a bulwark of stability in Europe."<sup>1</sup>

Why have American policymakers changed their approach toward Ukraine?

According to U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, "Everything we've done for Ukraine—and everything we will do in the future—we do not just because we Americans are a generous people, although that is certainly the case. We've done it and we'll keep on doing it also because it is in our own nation's interest to see an independent, secure, democratic Ukraine survive, succeed and prosper."<sup>2</sup>

Why has the independence of Ukraine become important for U.S. strategic interests? What are the interests that make Ukraine so significant for the United States?

For most of the twentieth century Ukraine was not on the U.S. strategic agenda. Even though American decision-makers were well-informed about "the Ukrainian question," they saw no need to support the Ukrainian national movement. Furthermore, during most of the Bush administration, American officials passively supported Gorbachev and Yeltsin instead of Ukraine's independence and reacted negatively to Ukrainian efforts to win freedom from Moscow's control. The United States recognized the independence of Ukraine because of strategic necessity (including factors such as the START I and START II treaties) and not because of the moral imperative to support the principle of self-determination.

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<sup>1</sup> William J. Clinton, *Remarks by the President to the People of Ukraine*, Volodymyrs'ka Street Plaza, Schevchenko University, Kiev, Ukraine, 12 May 1995, available [online]: <http://www.pub.whitehouse.gov/>; accessed 17 March 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Strobe Talbott, *Ukraine at Five: A Progress Report on U.S. Policy*, Speech to The Washington Group 1996 Leadership Conference, Washington, DC, 11 October 1996, available [online]: <http://www.state.gov/>; accessed 17 March 2000.

The Bush administration's approach changed in part because of a new strategic concern—Russian instability. Uncertainty about Russia's future security policy has been a crucial factor in the United States strategic approach toward Ukraine. The United States is helping to secure Ukrainian independence because the stabilization of Ukraine and its integration into the key transatlantic and European institutions such as Partnership for Peace will prevent Russia from re-establishing its Eurasian empire. Moreover, Ukraine's independence reinforces the NATO enlargement process and enhances the American position in Europe. Beyond broad objectives such as these, the United States does not have a general strategy regarding Ukraine.

The new American approach toward Ukraine since 1991 has developed in parallel with growing uncertainty about the future of Russia and Moscow's opposition to NATO enlargement. U.S. strategists belatedly recognized the important role of an independent and stable Ukraine for the security of the NATO enlargement process as well as for frustrating Russian efforts to create an anti-NATO military bloc on the basis of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The events that will shape the U.S. strategic approach toward Ukraine in the future are unclear. The role of Ukraine in U.S. strategic policy may change because of various developments—for example, events in Russia, further pursuit of the START process, and/or the construction of new national missile defense capabilities. But Ukraine will probably continue to be the strategic partner or the "strategic pivot" of the United States in the former Soviet space, depending in part on events in Russia.

U.S.- Ukrainian relations in the twentieth century concluded with partnership in the 1990s. Because of its geographical location, and its economic, political, and military

weight, Ukraine can significantly influence European security issues. Moreover, relations between Ukraine and the United States, as a leader of the Western world, could lead to different security arrangements in the post-Cold War era. Because of uncertainty about the future of Russia and Russian-Ukrainian relations, the politics of the major Western powers toward Ukraine have become one of the long-term transatlantic and European security issues.

The organization and methodology of the thesis reflect the focus on three major historical periods in the twentieth century: the conclusion of World War I, which led to the collapse of the Russian Empire and the brief appearance on the European map of the Ukrainian Republic; “the Ukrainian question” in the period before, during and after World War II; and, finally, the period encompassing the collapse of the Soviet Union, America’s uneasy recognition of Ukrainian independence, and the pursuit of Ukraine’s nuclear disarmament and partnerships with the West, including the United States. The thesis concludes with an analysis of the current strategic approaches of the United States toward Ukraine and with reflections on the probable dynamics of the bilateral relationship in the future.

## II. AMERICAN STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO UKRAINE DURING WORLD WAR I

The inability of the Ukrainian *Rada* to gain widespread legal and political recognition during the turbulent years 1917-1921, for example, was a decisive factor in the collapse of the Ukrainian Republic.<sup>3</sup>

The “Ukrainian question,” the issue of Ukrainian independence, has a long history for American strategic decision-makers. Paradoxically, the moral foundation of American strategic culture did not apply to Ukraine during the most of the twentieth century, even though top-level politicians and executives were well informed about the existence and nature of the “Ukrainian question.” Great American principles such as self-determination and human rights were not applied by Washington to Ukraine. As Alexander Motyl has observed,

The West’s attitude toward Eastern Europe in this century provides little support for the view that morality drives policy. In general, the West has traditionally supported the political status quo in Eastern Europe, even when its own proclaimed principles—whether self-determination or human rights—militated against such a position.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter seeks to explain why the United States ignored the principle of self-determination and refused to recognize Ukrainian independence during World War I.

This thesis argues that the American strategic approaches regarding Ukraine during World War I should be viewed as dominated by a “Russia only” approach for many reasons.

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<sup>3</sup> Luciuk, Lubomyr Y. and Bohdan S. Kordan. *Anglo-American Perspectives on the Ukrainian Question 1938-1951: A Documentary Collection* (Kingston, Ontario: The Limestone Press, 1987), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Motyl, Alexander J., *Dilemmas of Independence: Ukraine After Totalitarianism* (New York: Council of Foreign Relations Press, 1993), 175.

During the 1917-1918 period, America attempted to preserve the Russian state from total collapse and to support as the legitimate Russian government the political leaders who would restore order in Russia and who would continue the war. In this case, the Ukrainian independence movement challenged the war aims of the Entente, endangering the Entente's military position on the Eastern and Western fronts, as well as the European status quo. During the years from 1918 to 1921, the United States considered the government in Ukraine illegitimate, because of American expectations about the restoration of Russian rule and because of the Ukrainian peace agreement with the Central Powers (the Brest-Litovsk Agreement of 5 February 1918).

Additional factors greatly contributed to America's non-recognition of Ukraine and the collapse of the Ukrainian National Republic. First of all, American allies like France and Britain had an imperial agenda based on a division of territories and spheres of influences. Ukrainian independence contradicted the Entente powers' World War I interests and their plans regarding the post-war European order. Also, the Ukrainian treaty with the Central Powers (the Brest-Litovsk Treaty of 1918) became a crucial argument for not recognizing Ukrainian independence on the Entente side. Furthermore, anti-Ukrainian propaganda by the Poles and by the White Russians contributed to the Entente powers' position on this matter.

Moreover, the absence of prominent personalities in the American-Ukrainian diaspora able to influence the position of the U.S. Congress and Administration during World War I became a negative factor. Finally, the inability of the Ukrainian government to consolidate state power as well as the social-democratic and pacifist orientation of the



new state contributed to the distance between Ukraine and the Entente powers.

At the beginning of the break up of the Russian Empire and the emergence of an independent Ukraine, the United States tried to preserve the Russian state as a counter to German expansion. This was certainly the case during World War I when Russia was its war ally and the Entente powers needed the Eastern front to ease the German pressure on the Western front. Consequently, even when the Russian Empire collapsed, the United States was the first Western power that recognized with "enthusiasm" the first and second provisional governments in Russia in March-May 1917.<sup>5</sup>

This enthusiasm can be explained particularly by American idealism and naïveté about Russia's democratic future. This naïve idealism repeated itself many times during the twentieth century. Secretary of State Robert Lansing, greeting the new Russian provisional government, declared that the goal "to stand side by side, shoulder to shoulder against autocracy, will unite the American and Russian peoples in a friendship for ages."<sup>6</sup> In this matter, Secretary Lansing ignored or did not understand the simple fact that Russia's colonial possessions in Eastern Europe and Eurasia gave it only one option: to be autocratic or to disintegrate and lose all its territories, with peoples like the Ukrainians and the Georgians gaining independence.

The high level of idealism regarding Russia's future was evident in President Woodrow Wilson's war message of spring 1917: "Does not every American feel that assurance has been added to our hope for the future peace of the world by the wonderful

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<sup>5</sup> Bemis, Samuel Flagg. *The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy*. Vol. X. (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1963), 107-108.

<sup>6</sup> Lansing quoted in *ibid.*

and heartening things that have been happening within the last few weeks in Russia?

Russia was known by those who knew it best to have been always in fact democratic at heart... and now... the great, generous Russian people have been added in all their naïve majesty and might to the forces that are fighting for freedom in the world, for justice, and for peace.... The world must be made safe for democracy.”<sup>7</sup>

Even when the Bolsheviks came to power in November 1917 and started to negotiate with the Central Powers about withdrawal from the war in 1918, the United States continued to treat Soviet Russia as a friendly state. President Wilson held the idea of “letting Russia work out her own destiny, partly in the hope that she might yet re-enter the war.”<sup>8</sup> The American Ambassador to Russia, D.R. Francis, stated that “his government still considered America ‘an ally of the Russian people,’ and as late as May 31, 1918, Lansing cabled Francis, for publication in Russia, assurances of ‘the friendly intentions of the United States toward Russia.’”<sup>9</sup> So, the neglect of ideological differences in pursuit of *Realpolitik*, when the potential allies were involved in a war with Germany, was born during World War I and repeated itself during World War II. The U.S. refusal to recognize Lithuania and Estonia was consistent with the desire to preserve the territorial integrity of Russia. In 1919, Secretary Lansing “declined to recognize the independence of Lithuania on the ground that ‘it has been thought unwise

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<sup>7</sup> Wilson quoted in *ibid.* 98.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

and unfair to prejudice in advance of the establishment of orderly, constitutional government in Russia the principle of Russian unity.”<sup>10</sup>

In the case of Estonia, according to Matvii Stakhiv, Secretary of State Lansing opposed recognition of Estonian government during the Paris Conference of 1919. “On behalf of the United States, he announced, ‘The recognition of *de facto* governments on the territories which have belonged to Russia, would be to some measure a partition of Russia, and the United States has carefully avoided this, with the exception of Poland and Finland.’”<sup>11</sup>

The weight of American commitments to Russia, despite America’s proclaimed support for national self-determination, is evident in the following analysis:

President Wilson had repeatedly manifested his sincere and profound friendship for the Russian nation and the Russian people. Russia never had a better friend than Woodrow Wilson. Evidences of that friendship are too numerous for citation *in extenso*, but reference may be made to the following: (a) the prompt recognition of the provisional Government on the fall of tsarism; (b) the American mission to Russia headed by ex-Secretary of State Root; (c) the President’s address to Congress, January 8, 1918, with its statement of Russia’s rights in the peace settlement; (d) the Prinkipo proposal at the peace conference, January 1919; (e) Secretary Lansing’s replies to the Lithuanian National Council, October 15, 1919, January 7, 1920, with their friendly protection of Russia’s territorial sovereignty. Secretary Colby fully shared the President’s friendship for the Russian nation and the Russian people, and one of his first important official acts was a manifestation of that friendship.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>11</sup> Stakhiv quoted in Shcherbak, Yuri. *The Strategic Role of Ukraine: Diplomatic Addresses and Lectures (1994-1997)* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University, 1998), xi-xii.

<sup>12</sup> Bemis, Samuel Flagg. *The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy*. Vol. X. (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1963), 199-200.

United States relations with Bolshevik Russia subsequently became complicated, but this fact did not change the American position on the “Ukrainian question.”

As a result, the United States attempted to preserve the territorial integrity of Russia and to restore the Russian state. Washington therefore resisted recognition of Ukrainian independence. In this regard, the former Ukrainian Ambassador to the United States, Yuri Shcherbak, alluding to Matvii Stakhiv’s research on Secretary of State Lansing’s position regarding Ukrainian independence, wrote that:

Lansing was resolutely set against the principle of national self-determination that was expounded by President Woodrow Wilson among his famous ‘Fourteen Points,’ which played a decisive role in the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and 1920. As the Ukrainian historian Matvii Stakhiv has recently confirmed, “Lansing often concealed from Wilson intelligence reports that were favorable toward Ukraine and presented to Wilson only those that were unfavorable.” Lansing, being an ardent Russophile, came out decisively in favor of the inviolability of the Russian Empire.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, in 1920, Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby even proposed a plan of “the voluntary return of Russia to the family of nations.” This plan was to negotiate with

Lenin’s government about “the voluntary liquidation of the dictatorship, the basing of the government of Russia upon ‘the sanction of the authentic organs of Russian people,’” and Western economic assistance.<sup>14</sup> This plan failed, but it showed the depth of U.S. commitment to a unified Russia.

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<sup>13</sup> Stakhiv quoted in Shcherbak, Yuri. *The Strategic Role of Ukraine: Diplomatic Addresses and Lectures (1994-1997)* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University, 1998), xi.

<sup>14</sup> Bemis, Samuel Flagg. *The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1963), 206.

In sum, Ukraine's hopes to secure recognition of its independence from the United States and the other Western powers were doomed from the beginning for many reasons. The Entente powers valued Russia's military potential and recognized the political forces which were attempting to restore the Russian state and continue the war as the only legitimate Russian government.

During the crucial period the Allies in Paris, including the American Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, categorically refused to recognize Ukraine's independence and to extend any assistance to the Ukrainian army. The Allies regarded Kolchak and Denikin as exclusive spokesmen for the whole of Russia. The Directory, the Ukrainian democratic government since December 1918, was rebuffed by the Western democracies that preferred to support the remnants of the tsarist Russian autocratic regime.<sup>15</sup>

Given the refusal of the United States and the Entente powers to recognize Ukrainian independence and the real threat of a Bolshevik invasion from the North, in collaboration with the Ukrainian Bolsheviks, the Ukrainian government was forced to search for allies to guarantee its survival. Ukraine reached a peace agreement with the Central Powers during the Brest-Litovsk Peace Conference. In fact, "The Treaty of Peace between the Ukrainian National Republic and the Central Powers" of 9 February 1918 reached in Brest-Litovsk, also known as the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, was the first international act recognizing the independence and legitimacy of the Ukrainian government. This fact became the foundation for further international recognition from the neutral states and for military assistance from the Central Powers against the Bolsheviks. The Brest-Litovsk Treaty thus became an additional reason for the United States to refuse to recognize Ukrainian independence.

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<sup>15</sup> Horak, Stephan M. *The First Treaty of World War I: Ukraine's Treaty with the Central Powers of February 9, 1918* (New York: East, 1988) 157.

Once Ukraine signed the peace treaty, it foreclosed any possibility of U.S. recognition. An independent Ukrainian state, with its political and pacifist orientation to World War I, could change the status quo in Europe by decreasing the feasibility of a restoration of the Russian Empire or of a strong Russian state, on the one hand, and, on the other, would increase the likelihood of German expansion eastward. Moreover, the fact of Ukrainian independence and the disintegration of the Russian Empire combined to collapse the Eastern front and endangered the Western powers by freeing German divisions from the Russo-German front. In these circumstances, America naturally would support any Russian regime that would continue the war on the Eastern front.

Furthermore, all the major powers in World War I had imperial ambitions—desires to acquire new territories and spheres of influences. It is doubtful whether the American military intervention in Siberia, Murmansk and Archangel in 1918 can be viewed as an attempt to get a “piece of pie” on the ruins of the Russian Empire. But it is a historical fact that France and Britain simultaneously attempted to divide some of the territory of the ex-Russian Empire for their spheres of influence, and Japan landed its forces in Vladivostok for the same purpose at the same time.

According to Stephan Horak, Britain and France concluded secret agreements regarding the Russian Empire in their attempts to create “spheres of action.”

The chain of events leading to Brest-Litovsk was unlocked in Moscow and not in Kiev. Besides, France and England, too, conspired to divide the borderlands of the Russian empire into “spheres of action” as agreed upon at the Paris Anglo-French convention of December 23, 1917. The French sphere included Ukraine, Bessarabia, and the Crimea; that of England

consisted of the Don and Kuban regions, as well as the Caucasus. Innocence and altruism were not the primary virtues of either side.<sup>16</sup>

An independent Ukrainian state contradicted the desires of London and Paris for influence over the territorial heritage of the Russian Empire.

Finally, the United States did not recognize the independence of Ukraine for several reasons. The main reason for non-recognition was the "Russia only" approach. From a *Realpolitik* point of view, the United States was evidently interested in promoting the existence of a Russia able to balance Germany and its allies. Moreover, the Entente powers would not accept German dominance in Eurasia. The existence of an independent Ukraine was contrary to the strategic interests pursued by the Entente powers.

Other factors reinforced the *Realpolitik* approach. American leaders had a pro-Russian orientation and considered Russia a war ally that was expected to continue the fight on the Eastern front. President Woodrow Wilson and Secretaries of State Robert Lansing and Bainbridge Colby believed in Russia's democratic future and attempted to preserve Russian territorial integrity after the collapse of the Russian Empire and even when the Bolsheviks came to power.

Furthermore, the Anglo-French convention of 23 December 1917 could be viewed as the division of the Russian Empire between France and Britain, while the U.S. role was unclear. This Anglo-French convention gave additional complexity to the "Ukrainian question." Ukrainian independence was not consistent with the Entente powers' desires for "spheres of action." Ironically, the British and French failure to recognize Ukraine and the Ukrainian peace treaty with the Central Powers endangered

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 155.

Entente positions. This treaty improved the Central Powers' resource conditions and pushed German expansionist interests toward Eurasia, including Russia as a whole.

Canadian historian Orest Subtelny has pointed out other causes that explain the refusal of the Entente powers to recognize Ukraine. Among the reasons are the following: "ignorance of actual conditions in Ukraine, the energetic and effective anti-Ukrainian propaganda of the Poles and Whites, the association of the Central Rada and Hetmanate with the Germans, and the leftist ('Bolshevik') tendencies of the Directory."<sup>17</sup>

In summary, Ukraine did not have any chance for recognition of its independence from the United States and the Entente powers mainly because of their war aims and their position on Russia and because of the Ukrainian treaty with the Central Powers.

The principle of self-determination was a powerful tool in international relations applied by the great powers for the purpose of *Realpolitik* during World War I. Ukrainian self-determination became a tool between the Entente powers and the Central Powers. Recognized by one side, Ukraine was rejected by another.

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<sup>17</sup> Subtelny, Orest. *Ukraine: A History*. 2d.ed. (Toronto: University Toronto Press, 1994), 379.



### III. AMERICAN STRATEGIC APPROACHES DURING WORLD WAR II AND THE COLD WAR

The Anglo-American powers never wanted, nor felt they needed a free Ukraine.<sup>18</sup>

The American strategic approach to Ukraine did not change in principle between World War I and World War II. The traditional American "Russia only" approach was maintained without question during the Second World War, because of geopolitical interests and the common goal of defeating Nazi Germany. The importance of the Soviet Union for the United States and its allies rose in parallel with the increasing power of Nazi Germany and was connected to pre-World War II geopolitical realities.<sup>19</sup> As Alexander J. Motyl has pointed out, Ukraine continued to suffer under Stalin's repressions at the time of the Western diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union and its admission into the League of Nations in 1934. Russian territorial integrity was supported by the diplomacy of the Anglo-American powers. In contrast, the "Ukrainian question" became part of the geopolitical struggle between the Western allies and Russia on one hand, and Germany on the other. The Western attitude toward the Ukrainian question benefited Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. The Ukrainian question became a highly regarded war tool for Nazi Germany, while it postponed the USSR's disintegration for forty years.

During the Cold War, the U.S. strategy of containment was targeted against Soviet expansion, but not against the existence of the Soviet Union. Once again, the

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<sup>18</sup> Luciuk, Lubomyr Y. and Bohdan S. Kordan. *Anglo-American Perspectives on the Ukrainian Question 1938-1951: A Documentary Collection* (Kingston, Ontario: The Limestone Press, 1987), 12.

Ukrainian movement for independence was sacrificed in order to preserve Yalta's European status quo.

## A. WORLD WAR II

At the beginning, it is necessary to point out that the American approach toward the Ukrainian question was similar to that of Britain and Canada. As during World War I, the United States and its allies were well-informed about the dynamic of the national movement of the Ukrainians prior to World War II, but focused on the balance of power in Europe and the ability of the Soviet Union to defend the Eastern front.<sup>20</sup>

The only new component was an increasingly negative view of the Ukrainian national movement by the U.S., British, and Canadian governments. The Ukrainian independence movement was viewed through the prism of Nazi war aims and in fact was identified as synonymous with them. As a result, the Allies acted against the Ukrainian diaspora in their countries during the war, and repatriated Ukrainians from Western Europe according to the Yalta agreement after the war. The Anglo-American powers believed that the Ukrainian national movement would support the German war plans to weaken the Soviet Union and its war efforts.

The American and British strategists understood that they needed the Soviet Union to balance Germany's power, despite the ideological system of the USSR. Ukrainian independence could challenge this status quo assumption and weaken their Soviet ally.

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<sup>19</sup> Motyl, Alexander J. *Dilemmas of Independence. Ukraine After Totalitarianism* (New York: Council of Foreign Relations Press, 1993), 176.

<sup>20</sup> Luciuk, Lubomyr Y. and Bohdan S. Kordan. *Anglo-American Perspectives on the Ukrainian Question 1938-1951: A Documentary Collection* (Kingston, Ontario: The Limestone Press, 1987), viii.

The character of the Allies' position on the "Ukrainian question" was preventive. Ukrainian statehood and the Ukrainian national movement contradicted key Anglo-American interests before World War II. The allies feared a repetition of the World War I experience—the collapse of Russia and Ukraine's cooperation with Germany as the only power that would recognize Ukrainian independence. Ukrainian statehood could thus increase Germany's survivability and power during the war. In response, the allies during World War II chose a preventive strategy against the possibility of Ukrainian independence and the people who supported this movement in Europe and North America.

The Ukrainian national movement was viewed as a factor that could disturb the geopolitical balance in Europe in the 1930s:

Ukrainian nationalism, as a force which favored a restructuring of the political geography of Europe, was generally considered a destabilizing factor by the policy-making elites of those states which sought to maintain the European *status quo*. To reduce the political effectiveness of Ukrainian separatism, decision-makers – whether in London's Whitehall or Warsaw's Ministry of External Affairs – often put forward arguments intended to counter Ukrainian claims; challenged the idea of a distinct Ukrainian nation in ethnological terms; or simply gave precedence to geopolitical considerations, suggesting that further territorial fragmentation in eastern Europe would promote regional instability.<sup>21</sup>

The British were so concerned about the emergence of an independent Ukraine and its impact on the Soviet Union during the war that the British Department of Overseas Trade prepared a report for the Foreign Office in February 1939.<sup>22</sup> The report concluded that:

The loss to the USSR resulting from an independent Ukraine, re-oriented as far as possible in a German direction, would be far greater than would the economic gain to Germany. It might greatly improve Germany's

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 49.

position in peace or war but would not solve all her economic problems. On the other hand, since the existence of the Soviet Union depends primarily on the maintenance of an interlocked Union-wide economic balance, the destruction of this balance *would presumably entail the collapse of the Soviet regime and therefore a general disintegration of the USSR.*<sup>23</sup>

As a result of such assessments, American and British diplomatic and intelligence activities in connection with the “Ukrainian question” increased prior to World War II and had a preventive character against the attempts of the Germans to exploit the Ukrainian national movement.

The British used Ukrainian nationalist organizations as a tool in the struggle against Germany and considered them a possible political and military factor had the Soviet Union collapsed... But neither Britain, nor later America and Canada, was much interested in the real claims of Ukrainian nationalist groups, although all three were interested in harnessing their economic and social influence.<sup>24</sup>

Washington, London and Ottawa coordinated their positions with regard to the Ukrainian national movement in Eastern Europe and Ukrainian communities in North America and the United Kingdom. In most cases, the position of one ally was adopted as the position of the others.

British unwillingness to accord legitimacy to the concept of Ukrainian statehood had its origins in at least several other preconceptions about the nature and intentions of the nationalist movement. There was, for example, concern over the growing use of violence by Ukrainian nationalists against Polish state institutions and representatives. Equally important was the British view that Ukrainian irredentism might somehow be exploited by Germany... Since it was felt that Ukrainian nationalism could become a potential political force, British officials decided that it would be bear more careful scrutiny. Just before the outbreak of the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 49; emphasis added.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., xxii.

Second World War, they would inform their American counterparts of their point of view. The latter would, essentially, adopt it.<sup>25</sup>

The Allies' unwillingness to respond to Ukrainian suffering under Stalin's regime and to honor moral demands in connection with self-determination is described in a letter from Mr. T. Philipps, a Canadian official, to T. C. Davis of the Canadian Department of National War Services dated 13 April 1941, on "Ukrainian-Canadian Political Attitudes toward the War and Allied Position on Ukrainian Independence."

Dr. Archer says the Ukrainians [in Canada] are confused about the issue in E[astern] Europe. Most of *us* are too. We still cannot tell their 40 million kindred in Europe what we will do for them when we win. By caution, we do not even tell them that we should like them... to be able to throw off dictatorship, tyranny and enslavement. Our sauce is for geese but not for ganders. But Hitler is promising and showing them something quite definite. Whatever the Germans offer Ukrainians, it will be better than what they suffer now. So the months pass, until a day something will "surprise" us.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, the Allies forcibly repatriated Ukrainians from post-war Western Europe to the Soviet Union according to the Yalta agreement.<sup>27</sup> There many of the forcibly returned Ukrainians were treated as traitors and sent to Soviet prison camps as criminals. Both Western recognition of the Soviet Union and the Yalta world order made the Ukrainian issue an internal affair of the USSR, with Moscow the only judge as to Ukraine's destiny.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 11.

## B. THE COLD WAR

After World War II, the United States and its allies continued their policy of non-recognition of Ukraine. Some interest in Ukraine and the Ukrainian resistance movement was raised after World War II. As Alexander Motyl has pointed out,

Ukrainians and other non-Russians began to attract the West's explicit attention—not unexpectedly, for exclusively geopolitical reasons.... American, British, and West German intelligence services attempted to cultivate the subversive potential of Ukrainian, Baltic, and other anti-Communist resistance movements.<sup>28</sup>

This approach was, however, quite limited and did not form part of the political agenda or lead to strategic plans for supporting Ukrainian independence. Alexander Motyl has discussed the limits of the U.S. approach.

American attitudes toward Ukrainians assumed clearer form after the outbreak of Cold War hostilities. As Washington first toyed with 'rollback' and finally settled on 'containment,' some policymakers came to perceive the Ukrainians as a potential source of Soviet vulnerability. Limited American encouragement of Ukrainian restiveness—through Radio Liberty (née Radio Liberation) or lukewarm CIA support of émigré groups and guerrilla movements—continued non-recognition of the incorporation of the Baltic states, and the visible brutality of the USSR's domination of its Central European satellites culminated in the passage of the Captive Nations resolution in the late 1950s.... But that was all.<sup>29</sup>

Even the beginning of the Cold War, a period of antagonism and distrust between the West and the Soviet Union, did not create alternatives for the Ukrainian people in their struggle for independence.

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<sup>28</sup> Motyl, Alexander J. *Dilemmas of Independence. Ukraine After Totalitarianism* (New York: Council of Foreign Relations Press, 1993), 177.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

The Ukrainian Question – even as a military strategic question – faded into obscurity, thereafter being discussed only from the viewpoint of what advantages might accrue from establishing diplomatic ‘listening posts’ in Ukraine. Any kind of brinkmanship involving the Ukrainian Question was overruled in the uneasy atmosphere of coexistence which came to characterize postwar relations between the Anglo-American powers and the Soviet Union... Preserving the international status quo, and distancing themselves from any political movements challenging it, became and remained cornerstones of Western geopolitical thinking. In this context it becomes clear that the Anglo-American powers never wanted, nor felt they needed a free Ukraine.<sup>30</sup>

Another telling illustration of the U.S. approach to Ukraine during the Cold War is the official response of the State Department to the British Chancery in Washington, D.C., on 16 December 1949 about the purpose of President Truman’s special message to the Fourth Congress of Americans of Ukrainian Descent.

The State Department also assured us that their policy toward the Ukrainian émigré organizations and the Ukrainian separatist movement in general remained as before – namely one of neutrality. They did not propose at this stage either to play up, or to discourage, Ukrainian separatist feeling.<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, during the Cold War the United States pursued indirect anti-Soviet activity, but did not attempt to challenge the existence of the Soviet Union—even though the hostile intentions of Moscow regarding the West were obvious.

The direct consequence of *Containment* was, therefore, that nationalist resistance in eastern Europe, and above all in Ukraine, never received more than contingent assistance from the Western powers... Even such *sub rosa* intervention as did occur was more or less abandoned when the Korean War generated new military and political demands, although it is also clear... that it was periodically reviewed as an ‘indirect strategy’... Hence, despite many differences over how to operationalize *Containment*; the creation of a permanent conservative caucus in the West which has never accepted Yalta; and much rhetoric about ‘Rollback,’ ‘Liberation,’

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 231.

and 'Human Rights,' there has never been a time when any British or American government has been willing to sacrifice the bones of its Grenadiers to retrieve national societies dominated by Soviet power.<sup>32</sup>

The Anglo-American powers viewed Ukrainian nationalism as weak and incapable of challenging Stalin's regime without direct Western assistance.

In the main, however, nationalist resistance in Eastern Europe was regarded as a futile, fanatical struggle which could not lead to the defeat of Soviet Power without war, assisted directly by the West (Document 49). That would have meant atomic war, carrying risks and consequences which these powers were not prepared to contemplate, even while the United States enjoyed a monopoly on nuclear weapons.<sup>33</sup>

The last argument, attempting to put the main responsibility for Western policy on the Ukrainian side, looks realistic in retrospect. When the Ukrainian movement for independence did not receive support from the Western democracies, it was suppressed. The analysis above shows that twice during the first half of the twentieth century the Ukrainian movement for independence was frustrated by Western "Russia only" policies that let Germany manipulate the Ukrainian issue as a war tool and that let Moscow repress Ukrainian revolt.

Hugh A. Macdonald has identified four factors affecting the Anglo-American approaches regarding Ukraine during this period. First, Ukrainian nationalism was not regarded as politically strong. Second, there were many Western suspicions about links between Ukrainian nationalist groups in Europe and in Germany in particular. Third,

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<sup>32</sup> Luciuk, Lubomyr Y. and Bohdan S. Kordan. *Anglo-American Perspectives on the Ukrainian Question 1938-1951: A Documentary Collection* (Kingston, Ontario: The Limestone Press, 1987), xxi; emphasis in the original.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, xxi.



Britain and the United States had little power in European affairs. Finally, the West's postwar strategy was not to challenge the Soviet Union.<sup>34</sup>

In summary, the Ukrainian movement for independence was not a high priority for the Anglo-American powers during and after World War II for the following reasons. The West needed the Soviet Union to fight Germany, and the Anglo-American powers did not intend to challenge the USSR's territorial integrity. It was assumed that the USSR would collapse if Ukraine gained independence. Because they feared a repetition of the German-Ukrainian cooperation during World War I, America and its allies tried to discourage the Ukrainian movement and used preventive measures against its possible links with the Germans. The U.S., British and Canadian governments coordinated and acted against the Ukrainian diaspora in their countries during World War II. As during World War I, the Anglo-American powers, not willing to support the Ukrainian independence movement, viewed Ukraine through the prism of German war aims and as a potential German ally. Possibly for this reason (among others) the allies repatriated Ukrainians as German supporters after World War II and sent them back to the USSR, where they suffered from Stalin's repressions.

During the Cold War era the United States and its allies were not supportive to the Ukrainian movement for independence, except for secondary CIA and other Western intelligence services initiatives oriented mainly to "verbal support" through the Voice of America and other radio stations.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., xxii-xxiii.

The U.S. approach on the Ukrainian question can be characterized as neutral during the Cold War. During this period, the United States did not challenge the USSR on the “Ukrainian question.” The United States did not even explore Stalin’s mistake about Ukrainian representation to the United Nations. As Alexander Motyl has pointed out, “Not surprisingly, when Ukraine’s Mission to the United Nations in New York began taking an independent line in 1990-1991, [U.S.] policymakers could not grasp something so seemingly anomalous.”<sup>35</sup>

For the second time during the twentieth century the Ukrainian people were rejected by the Western democracies and lost their chance to gain independence. They would not have another chance until the end of the Cold War. The U.S. response to this third effort at independence is analyzed in the following chapter.

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<sup>35</sup> Motyl, Alexander J, *Dilemmas of Independence. Ukraine After Totalitarianism* (New York: Council of Foreign Relations Press, 1993), 178.

#### **IV. THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO UKRAINE (1991-1992)**

The Bush Administration's strategic approaches to Ukraine can be divided in two periods: before U.S. recognition of Ukrainian independence on 25 December 1991 and after it.

During the first period, the U.S. approach to Ukraine continued to be overwhelmingly shaped by the desire to preserve the Soviet Union or any union under Russian central control. President George Bush and his aides attempted to discourage the Ukrainian movement for independence and attempted to help Gorbachev and Yeltsin keep Ukraine inside the union. As during World War I and World War II, it was clear for American strategists that Ukrainian independence would lead to the collapse of a Moscow-directed empire. In this case, officials in Washington assumed that the collapse of the Soviet Union would be violent (as in Yugoslavia) and that nuclear weapons located in breakaway republics could jeopardize world stability. The Soviet movement toward nuclear disarmament in the framework of START I, democratization processes in the USSR, and Soviet non-interference in the Gulf War were seen as evidence of the value of cooperation with a reforming Soviet Union. Finally, personal relations between Presidents Bush and Gorbachev strongly influenced American and other Western views on Ukraine. American strategists neither wanted, nor attempted, to understand Ukrainian movements for independence. They viewed Ukraine negatively through the prism of "suicidal nationalism," and considered it a country that could endanger the whole nuclear disarmament process, and hence global and regional security.

Despite this stance, the United States eventually recognized the independence of Ukraine on 25 December 1991. This chapter suggests that several key factors pushed the administration of President George Bush to recognize the independence of Ukraine. Among them are the following: the nuclear weapons on Ukrainian territory, the American-Ukrainian diaspora pressure on the administration, the Ukrainian referendum of 1 December 1991, the inability of Gorbachev and Yeltsin to get control over Ukraine and preserve a union, and the growing recognition accorded to Ukraine by countries around the world. It was a great reversal of the twentieth-century American approach which had attempted to preserve the unity of a Moscow-directed empire at the expense of the Ukrainian people's struggle for independence.

The United States' reluctant recognition of Ukrainian independence, however, did not represent a fundamental change in U.S. policy toward the region. It continued to be characterized by a "Russia only" approach, which viewed Russia positively and Ukraine negatively.

In contrast with its attitude to Ukraine, the United States viewed Russia as a "trustworthy" country that was moving toward democracy and that needed international economic assistance in that transition. Washington policy makers continued to entertain the possibility of Russia founding a new union or a confederation in the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

U.S. relations with Ukraine were conditioned on nuclear disarmament. In addition, the United States coordinated an anti-Ukrainian campaign with its Western allies, which isolated Kyiv economically from the West. Some Russians interpreted this campaign as a signal of support to Russia for its "near abroad" policy toward newly

independent states in exchange for Russian central control over nuclear weapons. In fact, the Bush Administration accepted Russia's sphere of influence over the former Soviet republics.

#### **A. THE FIRST PERIOD**

The United States viewed the possibility of Ukrainian independence negatively because it wanted to preserve the Soviet Union, out of a fear that the Yugoslav scenario would repeat itself in the case of a violent collapse of the USSR and that central control over nuclear weapons would be lost.

The strategic assumptions during the Bush Administration's initial period regarding the USSR were the following.

Initially, American strategists assumed that the Soviet Union would remain stable for the foreseeable future. For example, the Atlantic Council of the United States' Working Group on Strategic Stability, co-chaired by Brent Scowcroft and R. James Woolsey, in cooperation with its other working groups on U.S.-Soviet relations, wrote that "By the year 2000, the two nations will still be the world's only superpowers. Their ideologies and political and economic systems will remain radically different and in competition. Neither side will 'collapse' nor fail to maintain strong and effective defenses. Rival alliances will remain intact."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Goodpaster, Andrew J., Walter J. Stoessel, Jr., and Robert Kennedy. *U.S. Policy toward the Soviet Union: A Long Term Western Perspective 1987-2000* (New York: University Press of America, 1988), 33.

This assumption of Soviet stability led the United States to treat the USSR as the main interlocutor in the region on arms control and human rights cooperation. As the Atlantic Council group noted:

The United States must continue to seek an active and productive dialogue with the Soviet Union... The dialogue must also emphasize America's determination (1) to reduce the risk of war by enhancing our ability to maintain a stable environment during crises; (2) to reduce and stabilize armament levels through sound and verifiable agreements, and ultimately to ease the burdens of military spending; (3) to improve bilateral relations on the basis of reciprocity and mutual interests; (4) to manage and resolve regional conflicts based on the principles of non-intervention and the self-determination of peoples; and (5) to seek improvements in human rights and encourage the Soviet Union to recognize the advantages of joining us in this effort.<sup>37</sup>

In addition, President Bush and his administration believed that reform of the Soviet Union was possible. "Bush believed that Gorbachev could do what he said he would do: create a liberal empire. Gorbachev believed that communism could gradually be reformed to embrace both democracy in the republics and a strong center that controlled it. Vilnius and Riga demonstrated, though, that with reform come raised popular expectations, revolt, and the need for harsh measures to reinstate control."<sup>38</sup>

Close interaction with Gorbachev took place at a time when Bush needed to take a hard line against communism in order to be elected as the President of the United States and yet not damage his relations with the Soviet leader. Bush asked Gorbachev to

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>38</sup> Fink, Susan D., "From 'Chicken Kiev' to Ukrainian Recognition: Domestic Politics in U.S. Foreign Policy toward Ukraine," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. XXI, Number 1 / 2 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, June 1997), 18.

“ignore” his hard anti-communist statements during the election campaign, which were intended for the U.S. internal agenda.<sup>39</sup>

In short, the United States viewed the USSR as a reliable and increasingly democratic partner in its foreign policy goals (especially with respect to nuclear weapons).

Gorbachev’s offers of Soviet backing during the Gulf War and his cooperation with the START I and Conventional Armed Forces in Europe treaties were repaid by George Bush in several ways. Bush’s repayment included his unconditional support to Gorbachev in connection with the “Bloody Sunday” tragedies in Lithuania and Latvia in January 1991, the “Chicken Kiev” speech of August 1991, anti-Ukrainian diplomatic activity among the Western powers and coordination of this activity with the Soviet leaders in 1990-1991, attempts to preserve the Soviet Union, and delaying the U.S. recognition of Ukraine until 25 December 1991.<sup>40</sup>

The best illustration of the Bush administration’s approach to Ukraine during this period was Bush’s “Chicken Kiev” speech on 1 August 1991, shortly before the attempted coup against Gorbachev by Communist party hard-liners. The speech was prepared in coordination with Gorbachev and attempted to prevent Ukrainian independence.<sup>41</sup> Jack F. Matlock, Jr. has described the coordination between American and Soviet officials over Bush’s visit to the Ukrainian capital and has pointed out that

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 16-17, (see also Bush, George and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 223, 512.).

<sup>41</sup> Matlock, Jack F. Jr., *Autopsy on an Empire: the American Ambassador’s Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York: Random House, 1995), 565.

“this exchange made Bush and his staff hypercautious to avoid anything that might embarrass Gorbachev during the Kiev trip. In fact they began to think of ways it could be used to ‘help Gorbachev.’”<sup>42</sup> In his speech, President Bush sent a strong message to the Ukrainian parliament that the United States would not support independence.

Bush stated that “Americans will not support those who seek independence in order to replace a far-off tyranny with a local despotism. They will not aid those who promote a suicidal nationalism based on ethnic hatred. We will support those who want to build democracy.”<sup>43</sup>

Bush’s speech emphasized that the United States would take Gorbachev’s “democratic” side and that the Ukrainian “despotic” side would have no choice other than to go into Gorbachev’s union.

Some people have urged the United States to choose between supporting President Gorbachev and supporting independence-minded leaders throughout the U.S.S.R. I consider this a false choice.... We will maintain the strongest possible relationship with the Soviet Government of President Gorbachev. But we also appreciate the new realities of life in the U.S.S.R.<sup>44</sup>

There is evidence that the Bush administration attempted to coordinate its anti-Ukrainian campaign not only with the Soviet government but also with its Western allies. America and the West supported Gorbachev and then Yeltsin, reacting negatively to the question of Ukrainian independence. Bush’s account of his meeting with François Mitterrand on 17 April 1990 illustrates this point.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 565.

<sup>43</sup> Bush, George and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 515.



“We are in a terrible contradiction,” he [Mitterrand] began. “Our interests are in keeping Gorbachev where he is, and in supporting Lithuanian independence.” François urged that we try to negotiate to give him time to introduce changes. “Gorbachev has inherited an empire,” he continued. “It is now in revolt. If Ukraine starts to move Gorbachev is gone; a military dictatorship would result....” I told François that what worried me was the Soviet military reacting on its own.<sup>45</sup>

Once the stability of the Soviet Union was called into question, the Bush Administration did not have a clear policy. After the August 1991 coup attempt, when Ukraine declared its independence from the Soviet Union, key officials of the Bush Administration discussed America’s possible strategy on the breakup of the Soviet Union and arms control issues.

“But what should we be doing now to engage Ukraine?” asked Cheney. “We are reacting.” Scowcroft observed that Cheney’s premise was that we would be dealing with fifteen or sixteen independent countries. “The voluntary breakup of the Soviet Union is in our interest,” argued Cheney. “If it’s a voluntary association, it will happen. If democracy fails, we’re better off if they’re small.... The President asked whether we thought Ukraine would be in the new Union. “Out,” predicted Cheney. “Should we encourage that publicly?” the President asked. Cheney thought not.... Cheney thought we could do more if we knew that was the direction we wanted our policy to take. Powell was less certain. “We want to see the dissolution of the old Soviet Union,” he said. “I am not sure that means fifteen republics walking around. Some confederation is in our interest as well as seeking out bilateral relationships.”<sup>46</sup>

According to American experts regarding U.S. policy-making at this time, the overall view of Ukraine was extremely negative. Ukraine was viewed through the prism of extreme nationalism and anti-semitism, and compared to Milosevic’s Serbia. It was

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<sup>44</sup> Bush quoted in Fink, Susan D, From “Chicken Kiev” to Ukrainian Recognition: Domestic Politics in U.S. Foreign Policy toward Ukraine, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. XXI, Number 1 / 2 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, June 1997), 18.

<sup>45</sup> Bush, George and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 223.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 541-42.

assumed that Ukrainian independence would lead to a Yugoslav-style scenario on a gigantic scale. The Bush position on Ukraine during the summer of 1991 was that the Soviet Union would never let Ukraine go and that Moscow would manage this question by force, if necessary.<sup>47</sup> In addition, as Susan Fink has observed, Americans generally misunderstood nationalism. In this regard, she has quoted George Kennan, the father of America's Soviet "containment" policy, who believed that nationalism was "a terrible disease of the human spirit." Furthermore, she has argued, "the misunderstanding of nationalism helps to explain U.S. condemnation of democratic movements in Ukraine and other non-Russian republics in order to maintain good relations with the communists."<sup>48</sup>

In addition, as other U.S. experts have pointed out, it was obvious that Ukrainian independence was irreversible after the August 1991 attempted coup in Moscow. However, Washington did not want to accept it. The Americans were comfortable with the existence of the USSR, and in particular with the guarantees that had been worked out with respect to nuclear and biological weapons.<sup>49</sup>

This U.S. strategic approach supported Gorbachev in his attempts to reform the Soviet Union and resisted Ukrainian independence until the very end. On the same day Gorbachev resigned (25 December 1991) the Bush administration finally recognized Ukraine. The fate of Ukraine was thus linked to the fate of the last Moscow-based

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<sup>47</sup> Author's interviews in Washington D.C., February 22-25 and March 1-3, 2000.

<sup>48</sup> Fink, Susan D. From "Chicken Kiev" to Ukrainian Recognition: Domestic Politics in U.S. Foreign Policy toward Ukraine, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. XXI, Number 1 / 2 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, June 1997), 29.

<sup>49</sup> Author's interviews in Washington D.C., February 22-25 and March 1-3, 2000.

emperor. Even when it was obvious that the United States had to recognize Ukraine, the approach of the Bush Administration was, in the words of one American expert, “to recognize, but not to establish diplomatic relations.”<sup>50</sup>

This thesis argues that the following factors contributed to the American recognition:

1. The nuclear weapons on Ukrainian territory.
2. The pressure from the American-Ukrainian diaspora.
3. The inability of Gorbachev and Yeltsin to get control over Ukraine during the collapse of the USSR, which led to Gorbachev’s resignation.
4. The recognition of Ukraine by an increasing number of other countries.
5. The Ukrainian referendum of 1 December 1991.

The nuclear factor played one of the key roles in U.S. recognition of Ukraine. During the first period, it was one of the main obstacles to U.S. recognition of Ukrainian independence.

The strategic assumption in this case was very simple. The USSR was the only power in the world that could destroy the United States. Relations between Washington and Moscow had been built on this strategic assumption for decades. Negotiations on nuclear disarmament had continued for years and had resulted in the START I treaty of 1991. U.S. defense and security elites were experts in nuclear weapons and deterrence, but they did not know how to deal with the emerging nationalism in the region and new potential “nuclear” negotiators.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

The American point of view on U.S.-Ukrainian nuclear disarmament negotiations has been well described by Roman Popadiuk, Alexander J. Motyl, Sherman Garnett, Nadia Schadlow, and many other experts.<sup>51</sup> With all due respect to American views on this history, Ukrainian views differ on several significant points.

This thesis argues that the nuclear factor prevented pro-Moscow American strategists from rejecting Ukrainian independence for the third time during the twentieth century. The nuclear factor gave Ukrainian elites the opportunity to re-educate American security and defense elites with regard to Ukraine and helped the young state to survive despite Washington's "Russia first" policy. It helped Kyiv buy time and got Kyiv involved in high level diplomatic activity. Finally, nuclear disarmament and Ukraine's pro-Western political orientation helped to demonstrate the difference between Ukraine and Russia in foreign and security policy.

As Roman Popadiuk, the first American Ambassador to Ukraine, has stated,

For the United States, the nuclear issue had global and regional, as well as bilateral significance.... There was also a geostrategic concern on the part of the United States. With so many weapons scattered throughout the four former republics, it was feared that they could become easy targets for acquisition by terrorists.... There was also concern that Ukraine's failure to fulfill its promises could unravel the whole START Treaty as well as endanger the START II Treaty, which was eventually signed with Russia in January, 1993.... It was also feared that Ukraine's reluctance could set the precedent for increased nuclear proliferation and could have jeopardized the NPT regime which was due for review in 1995. But above

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<sup>51</sup> See Popadiuk, Roman. *American-Ukrainian Nuclear Relations*. McNair Paper 55. Washington, D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, October 1996. Motyl, Alexander J. *Dilemmas of Independence: Ukraine after Totalitarianism*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993. Sherman W. Garnett. *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the Emerging Security Environment of Central and Eastern Europe*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1997. Sherman W. Garnett and Nadia Schadlow in *Ukraine in the World*. Ed. Lubomyr A. Hajda. *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*. Vol. XX (1996) Special issue. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, 1996.

all, Washington believed that Ukraine's retention of nuclear weapons ironically endangered Ukraine's own long term security and stability, rather than enhancing it.<sup>52</sup>

Ukraine was ultimately able to deal with these concerns. The possibility of Ukraine becoming a nuclear power challenged the whole system of regional, European, and global affairs. Ukraine possessed the third largest nuclear arsenal in the world, after the United States and Russia. Automatically, the question of Ukrainian nuclear disarmament held multidimensional significance: for U.S.-Russian nuclear disarmament in the framework of START I and START II; for Russian-Ukrainian relations; for the nuclear potential of Ukraine in relation to Britain, France and China; for the survivability of the NPT regime; for the threat of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism; for relations with Central European neighbors, etc. Thus, Ukrainian nuclear weapons were priority number one for the Bush administration and influenced its view on the recognition of Ukraine.<sup>53</sup>

The administration stated five conditions which needed to be satisfied before the United States would recognize the independence of Ukraine:

The 'five principles' were not unlike those we had devised on German reunification: self-determination through democratic methods; respect for existing borders, with any changes made through negotiation; respect for democracy and the rule of law; human rights; and adherence to international law and the USSR's existing treaty obligations. To these we later added a sixth—central control over nuclear weapons, and safeguards against internal or external proliferation. These principles notwithstanding, however, we never really drafted a tight administration policy on the potential breakup of the Union.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Popadiuk, Roman. *American-Ukrainian Nuclear Relations*. McNair Paper 55. (Washington, D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, October 1996), 8-9.

<sup>53</sup> Author's interviews in Washington D.C., February 22-25, March 1-3, 2000.

<sup>54</sup> Bush, George and Brent Scowcroft. *A World Transformed*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 544.

The second most powerful factor that contributed to the U.S. recognition was the Ukrainian diaspora in the United States. At the time of its declaration of independence, Ukraine did not have specialists who deeply understood the specifics of Washington's policy nor did it have connections in Washington capable of influencing American policy on the Ukrainian issue. However, the American-Ukrainian diaspora helped the Ukrainian movement for independence become a powerful force by supplying advice, resources, and support. The diaspora organized the visits of prominent Ukrainian leaders to Washington and other American cities to meet with key officials in the Bush Administration and the U.S. Congress. With the diaspora activity, the U.S. Congress became the most powerful factor in U.S.-Ukrainian relations and provided a balance to the administration's fixation on Russia.

As Susan Fink has pointed out, Ronald Reagan's support enabled the American-Ukrainian diaspora to become a powerful force in the domestic political process; and this diaspora later became one of the most powerful challenges to Bush's pro-Gorbachev political course.<sup>55</sup>

To illustrate the contribution of the U.S.-Ukrainian community to U.S. policy, this thesis uses the example of Ukraine 2000 and its director, Robert A. McConnell, a former Reagan Administration Assistant Attorney General. McConnell knew President Bush and Secretary of State James Baker personally and had powerful connections in the

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<sup>55</sup> Fink, Susan D. From "Chicken Kiev" to Ukrainian Recognition: Domestic Politics in U.S. Foreign Policy toward Ukraine. *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*. Vol. XXI, Number 1 / 2 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, June 1997), 16.

administration.<sup>56</sup> He helped organize the visit to Washington in September 1990 by Mykhailo Horyn, a prominent Ukrainian leader for independence, and set up his meetings with top members of the administration, even though Gorbachev and Shevardnadze urged the administration to avoid high level meetings with him. McConnell organized meetings for Horyn with five cabinet members, including Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney.

According to Susan Fink,

After the 1990 meeting, Ukrainian-Americans noticed a change in the Department of Defense's (DOD's) position on Ukraine. The DOD seemed more attentive to the strategic importance of Ukraine, as well as to matters of financial aid and assistance. Thus, DOD's stand was similar to that of Congress: supporting the pro-democratic movement in Ukraine was the only way to ensure good relations with what could emerge as the second largest state in Europe.<sup>57</sup>

In cooperation with American-Ukrainians, Robert McConnell organized an unprecedented visit of Ukrainian parliamentarians—leaders who later played a significant role in independence—to the United States for the “Conference on the American system of governance for Ukrainian legislators” in April 1991, when Ukraine was not yet an independent state. The participation from the American side and the program of meetings with top American officials in the administration and the U.S. Congress were impressive.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Author's interviews in Washington D.C., February 22-25, March 1-3, 2000.

<sup>57</sup> Fink, Susan D. From “Chicken Kiev” to Ukrainian Recognition: Domestic Politics in U.S. Foreign Policy toward Ukraine. *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*. Vol. XXI, Number 1 / 2 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, June 1997), 34.

<sup>58</sup> See the brochure on the conference: American System of Governance for Ukrainian Legislators, Under the Auspices of the United States Information Agency, arranged by Indiana University and NKM Associates, Washington, D.C. Bloomington, Indianapolis, Chicago, Washington, D.C., April 4-13, 1991.

Furthermore, McConnell was present at the meeting of President Bush with fifteen American-Ukrainian leaders in the White House in November 1991. During this meeting President Bush announced the five conditions for Ukrainian recognition. McConnell immediately informed the Chairman of the Ukrainian Parliament in Kyiv about the five conditions by e-mail. This frustrated the State Department's attempt to articulate additional conditions beyond those stated by President Bush.<sup>59</sup> Also, McConnell organized the visit of the Ukrainian Minister of Defense, Konstantyn Morozov, to Washington before the Russian Minister of Defense's visit. In addition, Robert McConnell organized President Kravchuk's visit to Camp David—an event with powerful symbolic value in bilateral relations. Finally, for two years the Director of Ukraine 2000 daily advised through e-mail the Ukrainian government about what should be done to improve U.S.-Ukrainian relations. This is only one example of the role of the American-Ukrainian diaspora in U.S.-Ukrainian relations. Other Ukrainian-Americans, such as Lev Dobriansky, Nadia McConnell, the Chopivski family, Paula Dobriansky, Orest Deichakivski, and Nadia Diuk, also played an important role.

American-Ukrainian activities thus became one of the most powerful factors contributing to the recognition of Ukrainian independence. As Susan Fink has pointed out, “The meeting with President Bush was the culmination of all these efforts. First, it showed that the administration recognized the lobby as a consideration in policy making. Second, coming on the heels of Senate Concurrent Resolution 65, it indicated the Congress-lobby solidarity against the Bush stand towards Ukrainian independence.

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<sup>59</sup> Author's interviews in Washington D.C., February 22-25 and March 1-3, 2000.



Finally, the meeting brought together members of otherwise fractious components of the lobby under one banner—diplomatic recognition.”<sup>60</sup>

The third factor was the inability of Gorbachev and Yeltsin to persuade the Ukrainian leadership to join the union or to get control over Ukraine militarily. The Ukrainian movement for independence, the failure of the Moscow coup, Ukraine’s formal declaration of independence, the Ukrainian parliament’s decision to create its own armed forces, and the strong position of the Ukrainian leadership at the Bison Forest meeting which contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union and to the “peaceful divorce.”

The fourth factor, growing relations between Ukraine and other countries, has been described by the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Borys Tarasyuk. According to the Minister, “Ukraine’s foreign policy began immediately after the adoption of state sovereignty on 16 July 1990.”<sup>61</sup> Among the achievements of Ukrainian diplomacy prior to U.S. recognition were activity in the United Nations and the establishment of bilateral relations with Hungary, Poland, Germany, Slovakia, Belarus and others. With some of these countries important agreements were concluded to recognize the existing borders and the rights of national minorities. U.S. strategists could not disregard this factor.

The importance of the fifth factor, the 1 December 1991 referendum, has been underlined by almost all U.S. experts. In this referendum more than 90 percent of the

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<sup>60</sup> Fink, Susan D. From “Chicken Kiev” to Ukrainian Recognition: Domestic Politics in U.S. Foreign Policy toward Ukraine. *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*. Vol. XXI, Number 1 / 2. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, June 1997), 42.

<sup>61</sup> Tarasyuk, Borys, Ukraine in the World in *Ukraine in the World*, Ed. Lubomyr A. Hajda. *Harvard Ukrainian Studie*, Vol. XX (1996) Special issue (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, 1996), 9.

Ukrainian voters approved the country's declaration of independence. The results of the referendum enabled to the first Ukrainian President, Leonid Kravchuk, to take a strong position at the meeting in Bison Forest on 7 December 1991 and refuse to joint a Moscow-controlled Union. It showed the world the high level of popular support for Ukrainian independence and satisfied some of the five conditions the Bush Administration had set for recognition.

After the U.S. recognition of Ukrainian independence on 25 December 1991, the Bush Administration continued to pay primary attention to Moscow and placed heavy conditions on the Ukrainian state to control its nuclear arsenal. This period became the most controversial in U.S.-Ukrainian relations.

## **B. THE SECOND PERIOD**

The second period, from December 1991 to November 1992, was characterized by the overriding U.S. concern with Ukraine's possession of nuclear weapons. From December 1991 to April 1992 this concern led the United States to continue with its "Russia only" approach and to negotiate only with Russia over the control of nuclear weapons on Ukrainian soil. Only when this strategy had failed did the U.S. begin to treat Ukraine as a partner at the negotiating table. Even then, however, U.S.-Ukrainian relations were restricted to the very narrow agenda of nuclear weapons. Following the Bush-Gorbachev traditions, the American strategists emphasized the central role of Moscow in the post-Soviet space and attached importance to the possibility of a new union in the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The tradition of viewing Ukraine through the potential for instability and nationalism began with Bush's "Chicken Kiev" speech and continued during this period, which was dominated

by the nuclear issue. Nuclear disarmament was the central question in U.S.-Ukraine relations. The fulfilling of the commitments on Ukrainian nuclear disarmament became the main condition in bilateral relations with regard to U.S. economic assistance. The strategic assumption that it was Russia's business to deal with the other former Soviet republics over nuclear issues and that it would regain control over the nuclear weapons on Ukrainian territory failed, and this led to the Lisbon Protocol that made Ukraine a party to the START I treaty.

Bush gave unconditional support to Moscow and favored Russian plans to organize a new union. The resignation of Gorbachev and the Bush Administration's reluctant recognition of Ukraine's independence did not lead to a significant change in the U.S. decision to emphasize its relations with Russia and to neglect its relations with Ukraine. Before his resignation on 25 December 1991, Gorbachev in his final telephone call to President Bush suggested two key approaches to the President of the United States with regard to Russia and the Newly Independent States (NIS). He emphasized the necessity of American support to Russia's effort to organize a possible new union on the basis of the CIS:

"George, let me say something to you that I regard as very important. Of course, it is necessary to move to recognize all of these countries. But I would like you to bear in mind the importance for the future of the Commonwealth that the process of disintegration does not grow worse. So, helping the process of cooperation among the republics is our common duty.... Again, about Russia, let me say we should all do our best to support it. I will do this to support Russia. But our partners should do this too and should play a role to help and support it."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Gorbachev quoted in Bush, George and Brent Scowcroft., *A World Transformed* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 559-560.

The last Moscow-based emperor still hoped that Russia could be the center of a new Russian-dominated union. In addition, Jack Matlock has characterized the relations between Russia and the West as a honeymoon during this period.

Russia's honeymoon with the West lasted through 1992, when a second agreement to reduce strategic arms was negotiated with the United States, votes in the U.N. Security Council were in harmony with the Western Powers, and international lending organizations made large, though conditional, commitments for financial and economic assistance to Russia.<sup>63</sup>

Moreover, the United States designated Russia as the guarantor of nuclear weapons in Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, and the primary negotiator for nuclear disarmament. In fact, the West, viewing Russia as—at least in some respects—the only successor of the USSR, ignored agreements in the framework of the CIS which recognized the equality of all successor states.

This thesis argues that the “Russia only” approach of the United States and the West, particularly during the period from December 1991 to November 1992, pushed Russia toward the policy of political, economic, and military interference in the internal affairs of the other former Soviet republics. The Russian policy of direct and indirect involvement in the conflicts in Georgia, Moldova, Nagorno-Karabach and Tajikistan; Russian territorial claims; and Russian speculation about the rights of Russian-speaking minorities in the other former Soviet republics raised questions about the security and survivability of the other post-Soviet republics. This affected the nuclear disarmament issues because nuclear weapons became the most effective tool to convince the West to pay attention to Russia and the other former Soviet republics.

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<sup>63</sup> Matlock, Jack F. Jr. *Autopsy on an Empire: the American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York: Random House, 1995), 734.

In contrast with the policy on Russia, American strategic approaches to Ukraine remained negative during this period. As Nadia Schadlow has pointed out in reference to Bush's "Chicken Kiev" speech of 1 August 1991, "this speech established a legacy of mistrust that was difficult to undo over the next year."<sup>64</sup> U.S. officials continued to view Ukraine through the prism of nuclear disarmament.<sup>65</sup>

On a strategic level two competing policy approaches were represented by Secretary of State James Baker and Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney. Baker defended an approach calling for nuclear disarmament first, and pursuing other matters second. According to Nadia Schadlow,

Department of Defense officials, supported by Secretary Cheney, argued that the denuclearization of Ukraine, while important, should not be Washington's paramount goal: more important were Ukraine's ultimate independence and the need to develop a full spectrum of contacts with the new state. From the fall of 1991 through the spring of 1992, Secretaries Cheney and Baker discussed these issues often, with Cheney pressing for a broader agenda with Ukraine.<sup>66</sup>

Secretary of State Baker's position was reinforced by the narrow expertise of the U.S. community of strategic and arms control analysts and practitioners:

this group knew a great deal about nuclear weapons and little about Ukraine. By and large this group expected Ukraine to try to keep its weapons and tended to see many Ukrainian political and defense steps solely through the prism of nuclear policy. As a result, the U.S. government often looked at the nuclear problem as a matter that should and could be separated from nation building and the formation of relations between these new states. In retrospect it is clear that neither Ukraine nor

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<sup>64</sup> Nadia Schadlow in Ukraine in the World. Ed. Lubomyr A. Hajda. *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*. Vol. XX (1996) Special issue (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, 1996), 273.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.

Russia treated the nuclear question as an autonomous issue, but rather as part of whole package of issues from debt relief to the division of the Black Sea Fleet that defined Russian-Ukrainian relations.<sup>67</sup>

American policies regarding Ukraine were also affected by various analyses that predicted that Ukraine would not survive.<sup>68</sup>

The early history of the U.S.-Ukrainian nuclear relationship showed that the American "Russia only" approach in nuclear disarmament did not work. The Bush Administration approach consisted of unconditional support to Gorbachev and later Yeltsin and a disregard for the security interests of the other newly independent states. This approach endangered the process of nuclear disarmament and the survivability of the non-Russian newly independent states, and it gave Russia a misleading signal about its "near abroad" policy. Nuclear bargaining and diplomacy became the only possible response of the states that had inherited nuclear weapons from the USSR and that were facing enormous pressure from Russia. Moscow linked nuclear disarmament with other Russian demands that produced serious problems, including Russian interference in the internal affairs of the other former Soviet republics. As a result, Ukraine linked its nuclear commitments to the resolution of its problems with Russia.

Nuclear issues became the means of deepening the involvement of the Western powers in the former Soviet space and broadening bilateral relations between Ukraine and the West.

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<sup>67</sup> Sherman Garnett in Ukraine in the World. Ed. Lubomyr A. Hajda. *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*. Vol. XX (1996) Special issue (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, 1996), 104.

<sup>68</sup> Sherman W. Garnett, *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the Emerging Security Environment of Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1997) 11.

U.S. engagement made a significant difference. Without it, the most likely outcome would have been not Ukraine's seizure of the weapons—such a move would have been too destabilizing internally—but a long stalemate in Russian-Ukrainian talks that would have brought the nuclear systems increasingly under *de facto* Ukrainian control.<sup>69</sup>

Russia's inability to conclude an agreement with Ukraine about nuclear disarmament required U.S. engagement in this process. As the first American Ambassador to Ukraine, Roman Popadiuk, observed:

The United States had sought to keep the strategic nuclear weapons under Moscow's control, thus making Russia responsible for dealing with the other three nuclear republics in dismantling the missiles much as they had arrived at a formula for the tactical weapons. By April, 1992, it had become obvious that this plan would not work, as Ukraine and Kazakhstan, unable to work out their differences with Russia at CIS summits, began to insist on equal treatment with Russia. The growing conflict over the nuclear weapons had been magnified by Ukraine's aforementioned temporary stoppage of tactical shipments to Russia in March [1992].<sup>70</sup>

These factors led to the Lisbon Protocol in May 1992. Roman Popadiuk has described the importance of the Lisbon Protocol as follows: "The United States, therefore, proposed making the former republics a party to START, but with their commitments to join the NPT regime and become non-nuclear states. For Ukraine, this was an important step for separating itself from Russia and positioning itself as an independent country that should not be viewed through a Moscow prism."<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>70</sup> Popadiuk, Roman, *American-Ukrainian Nuclear Relations*, McNair Paper 55 (Washington, D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, October 1996), 6.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 6.

The protocol signed by the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs in Lisbon made Ukraine an equal partner in the nuclear disarmament process, but it did not change any other aspect of U.S.-Ukrainian relations. Conditions related to nuclear weapons continued to be applied to relations on a bilateral (U.S.-Ukraine) and multilateral basis (the Western powers and Ukraine). Russia continued to be the top priority for American and other Western assistance. In October 1992, the Bush administration aimed at persuading Kyiv to ratify the START I treaty and accede to the NPT. This attempt failed because it followed the same strategic approach—attaching conditions to improvements in bilateral relations while neglecting Ukraine’s complex situation.

The only new factor that played a key role in changing the U.S. strategic approach to Ukraine was the involvement of the U.S. Congress in the nuclear disarmament process. Senators Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar in December 1992 urged administration officials to recognize the necessity to “stay in constant communication” with the newly independent states and to “focus their energies on the Former Soviet Union.”<sup>72</sup> The involvement of the U.S. Congress in the nuclear disarmament process made the administration’s pursuit of a “Russia only” policy much harder. Moreover, it provided an opportunity to consider “the Ukrainian question” in a more comprehensive way.

### **C. CONCLUSIONS**

The Bush Administration held that it was the responsibility of Gorbachev and Yeltsin to decide what to do about the “suicidal nationalism” of Ukraine in exchange for U.S. support for Moscow retaining central control over the nuclear weapons on Ukrainian

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 22.



territory and continuing nuclear disarmament in the framework of START I and START II. From the point of view of U.S.-Russia-Ukraine relations, the U.S. approach favored Moscow at the expense of Kyiv. The recognition of Ukrainian independence was for the Bush Administration more a strategic necessity than an act of political will to support the independence of the newly independent states.

In summary, the Bush Administration's approach toward Ukrainian independence was limited by the "nuclear question," which became the overriding condition for possible future development of bilateral relations. According to Sherman Garnett,

In private, they feared—and exaggerated—what President Bush expressed publicly during his August 1991 visit to Kiev on the very eve of Ukrainian independence: the dangers of "suicidal nationalism." Formal U.S. recognition of Ukrainian independence, when it came in December 1991, was conditioned on fulfillment of Ukraine's pledge to become a non-nuclear state.<sup>73</sup>

The Bush administration viewed with suspicion any attempt by Ukraine to broaden the agenda of bilateral relations via "nuclear bargaining diplomacy." It would not be until well into the Clinton Administration that this U.S. policy would change.

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<sup>73</sup> Sherman W. Garnett, *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the Emerging Security Environment of Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1997), 114.

## **V. STRATEGIC APPROACHES OF THE FIRST CLINTON ADMINISTRATION**

**(1993-1997)**

The Clinton Administration's approach in 1993-1997 can be divided into two major periods: "after nuclear disarmament, Ukraine is important" (1993-1995) and "Ukraine as a strategic partner" (1995-1997).

The first period can be defined as a continuation of the principles of the Bush administration policy: "Russia first" and "first nuclear disarmament and then bilateral relations." From the point of view of U.S.-Russia-Ukraine relations, the United States still focused on Moscow at the expense of Ukraine, but with a growing vision of post-Cold War problems with Russia and the importance of cooperative relations with Ukraine.

The second period has been called a period of idealization of Ukraine by today's American strategists because of high expectations about the country's economic reforms and its cooperation with NATO (the belief that Ukraine was another Poland). It was a golden period in foreign, security, and defense relations between Ukraine and the West. Ukrainian nuclear disarmament as well as Russia's resistance to NATO enlargement and Russia's transfers of technologies to China contributed to the Western shift toward Kyiv. The United States and other Western countries recognized the strategic importance of Ukraine and its contribution to European security, but economic support was not significant during these years.

## A. NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT APPROACH, 1993-1995

The framework defining U.S. interests regarding Ukraine at the beginning of the Clinton administration was expressed in the statement of Walter Slocombe, the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Policy, Department of Defense, during the U.S. Senate Hearing about U.S. Policy on Ukrainian Security in June 1993. Slocombe said,

The United States has important interests in this region. In discussing these interests, these objectives are of overwhelming importance to the United States: (1) the success of President Yeltsin's reforms in Russia and (2) the denuclearization of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, and the reduction, in parallel with our own START reductions, and (3) the reduction of Russian nuclear forces to START II levels.<sup>74</sup>

In short, the American policy was mainly focused on reforms in Russia, denuclearization of Ukraine and others, and continuation of nuclear disarmament. The policy toward Ukraine was subordinated to the policy toward Russia; and this solidified the traditional U.S. approach toward Ukraine. Support to democratic reforms in Ukraine was not a priority for the administration.

During these years, American policymakers continued to view Ukraine negatively through the prism of possible proliferation and conflict with Russia. Steven Woehrel, an analyst of European affairs at the Congressional Research Service, reached researched the following conclusions about U.S. interests with regard to the nuclear weapons on Ukrainian territory:

One key concern of the United States is the fact that the 176 ICBMs on Ukrainian soil were designed to hit targets in the United States.

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<sup>74</sup> Prepared Statement of Walter Slocombe in U.S. Policy on Ukrainian Security. Hearing before the Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Third Congress, first session, 24 June 1993, 13.

Another set of concerns deals with arms control, particularly with the implementation of START I and START II Treaties, and safeguarding the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the NPT of 1968.

Another key proliferation concern is that nuclear warheads or nuclear weapons technology could be transferred from Ukraine to countries hostile to the United States, such as Iran, Iraq or North Korea.

Another U.S. concern is the impact of the nuclear issue on Russian-Ukrainian relations. President Yeltsin and Russian military leaders charge that Ukraine is deceiving the international community about its intentions concerning the weapons on its soil and suspect Ukraine is planning to seize control of them and aim them against Russia.

Another interest involves the stability of Ukraine. Press reports cite a January 1994 CIA intelligence estimate that the catastrophic state of Ukraine's economy could ignite regional and ethnic tensions that would cause the country's violent breakup.<sup>75</sup>

Media reports reinforced these fears about the intentions of Ukrainian leaders and the country's stability. As former Ukrainian Ambassador to the United States Yuri Scherbak pointed out,

In 1992-1993 the U.S. media published a series of biased and blatantly anti-Ukrainian articles, often inspired by foreign propaganda centers whose purpose was to discredit Ukraine. These articles treated Ukraine with scorn and did not try to disguise their rejection of the very idea of an independent Ukraine.... I would only like to mention that up to mid-1993 Washington assumed a tough, almost ultimatum-like position towards Ukraine. The U.S. refused to conduct a dialogue on the basis of equality or to develop economic cooperation until Ukraine would ratify the START-I and join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).<sup>76</sup>

This ultimatum policy of the new administration raised opposition in Ukraine to the speed of the nuclear disarmament process. Nadia Schadlow has described the response of the Ukrainian parliament as follows:

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<sup>75</sup> Woehrel, Steven, *Ukraine: Nuclear Weapons and U.S. Interests.*, CRS Report for Congress (Washington D.C.: The Library of Congress, 15 March 1994).

In April 1993 a block of 162 parliamentarians drafted an open letter demanding that Ukraine remain a nuclear state until key compensation issues were resolved. The letter caused much concern throughout the U.S. government and acted as a strong impetus to the Clinton administration's determination to broaden U.S. strategy toward Ukraine. The fate of the weapons was clearly linked to Ukraine's acute economic decline, its increasingly acrimonious relations with Moscow, and internal political discord. It became apparent that Washington's sustained involvement in Ukrainian economic and security issues would be a prerequisite for removal of the weapons. Secretary of Defense Les Aspin's and Ambassador at Large Strobe Talbott's visits to Kyiv in May and June [1993] finally established this broader approach.<sup>77</sup>

After it became evident that the administration's "stick approach" was not working and that Washington would not succeed in bringing about Ukrainian nuclear disarmament through its policy of pressure, it started to review its approach. According to Ambassador at Large and Special Adviser to the Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, the Clinton Administration reviewed its policy regarding Ukraine in the middle of 1993:

After the Vancouver summit, the Clinton administration launched a comprehensive interagency review that sought to refine and broaden U.S. policy toward Ukraine. Secretary Aspin's recent visit, as well as my own earlier trip to Kiev, followed directly from that policy review. These visits are part of a larger strategy of engaging the senior Ukrainian leadership in an effort to turn a new page in relations with Kiev. We have made it clear to our Ukrainian friends that we seek a broader, deeper, and richer relationship, a multidimensional relationship that takes account of our mutual economic, political, and security interests.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Shcherbak, Yuri, *The Strategic Role of Ukraine: Diplomatic Addresses and Lectures (1994-1997)* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University, 1998), 58.

<sup>77</sup> Nadia Schadlow in Ukraine in the World. Ed. Lubomyr A. Hajda, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. XX (1996) Special issue (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, 1996), 278.

<sup>78</sup> See statement of Strobe Talbott in U.S. Policy on Ukrainian Security. Hearing before the Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Third Congress, first session, 24 June 1993: 4.

The new trading point was the nuclear disarmament of Ukraine in exchange for U.S. economic assistance and involvement in Ukraine's security arrangements.

This shift in emphasis created a wider bilateral framework. As Slocombe concluded, "The recognition of our interests in an independent Ukraine, together with our interests in the success of reform in Russia and implementation of the START Treaties, form the basis of our approach toward obtaining Ukrainian ratification and implementation of its obligations under the Lisbon Protocol."<sup>79</sup> As a result, for the first time the Clinton administration moved a bit forward from its "Russia only" approach to a "Ukraine as well" policy. In the practical sphere it meant that the new policy toward Ukraine was based on five principles, which Talbott described as follows:

As a large and resource-rich country in the center of Europe, Ukraine has a crucial role to play in the security of Central and Eastern Europe.

- Ukrainian independence and sovereignty are important to the national interest of the United States; we want to see the young Ukrainian state prosper.
- Our relationship with Ukraine is independent of our relationship with Russia; strong relationships with both countries are in our national interest, as are good relations between Russia and Ukraine.
- Ukraine, given its history and geography, has legitimate security concerns. These can be addressed through a web of bilateral and multilateral ties that will help underpin Ukraine's continued independence and sovereignty and its place in the European security order.
- We believe it is in Ukraine's own security interests to fulfill its Lisbon Protocol commitments by ratifying START I and acceding to the NPT.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>80</sup> U.S. Policy on Ukrainian Security. Hearing before the Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Third Congress, first session, 24 June 1993: 7.

Even though Washington had started to shift to a more comprehensive view of Ukraine, with broadening contacts and assistance for disarmament, the overall approach did not change in principle—Russia remained the first priority and Ukraine's positive image was linked to the speed of its nuclear disarmament. The main difference in the new approach was "not only stick, but also carrot." According to Garnett, the U.S. interagency review process in early 1993 was mainly focused on the nuclear issue.

No one in the U.S. government questioned the basic nuclear elements of the policy, and no serious player—in fact, no player at all—advocated tolerance for a Ukrainian nuclear deterrent. The nuclear elements of the policy remained: to continue to press Ukraine to fulfill its obligations and to provide financial assistance for this purpose. Differences in views did emerge, however, over whether the key to Ukrainian compliance was to expand the U.S. policy of engagement or to tighten the screw still further. The review ended with a decision to engage Ukraine in a broad discussion of improved economic, political and security ties, implementation of which would be linked to the resolution of the nuclear issue.<sup>81</sup>

## **B. FAILURE OF THE FIRST APPROACH**

The Clinton's Administration's exclusive focus on Moscow, viewing it as the successor state of the USSR responsible for nuclear weapons in the other former Soviet republics, began to produce negative results in relations between Russia and these newly independent states, and automatically influenced the nuclear issue.

Throughout 1993 tensions between Russia and Ukraine were high. The Massandra summit in September revealed disturbing implications for Ukraine, namely that bilateral resolution of important issues like the Black Sea Fleet and compensation for the warheads would be very difficult to achieve. Furthermore, tensions over Crimea were constant, with Russian Duma deputies publicly questioning the status of Sevastopol and even

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<sup>81</sup> Sherman W. Garnett, *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the Emerging Security Environment of Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1997), 118-119.

asserting Russian ownership of the city. In addition, Moscow was issuing statements about its determination to protect Russians living abroad.<sup>82</sup>

Sherman Garnett has analyzed how Russia, mixing the nuclear issue with its policy objectives regarding Ukraine, tried to exploit Ukraine's internal and external weaknesses. "At this meeting [in Massandra, Crimea], Russian leaders exerted considerable pressure on President Kravchuk to agree to a comprehensive deal on the Black Sea Fleet, nuclear disarmament, and debt relief. The centerpiece of this Russian package was a swap of at least partial debt forgiveness for Ukraine's share of the Black Sea Fleet."<sup>83</sup>

It is unclear whether Washington and Moscow coordinated their pressure toward Ukraine, but it was obvious that their national interests with regard to Ukraine overlapped. The United States wanted the nuclear disarmament of Ukraine; Russia sought the same objective, plus control over Ukraine. Both jeopardized Ukraine's economic condition and national security situation.

As a result of these pressures from both the United States and Russia, Ukraine had no choice but to move toward nuclear disarmament. However, Ukraine's precarious economic and national security situation meant that it could not disarm without seeking compensation.

Even the author of this thesis, a strong supporter of a non-nuclear future for Ukraine, realized that the Ukrainian side should gain time and attach conditions to its

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<sup>82</sup> Nadia Schadow in Ukraine in the World. Ed. Lubomyr A. Hajda, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*. Vol. XX (1996) Special issue (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, 1996), 280.

<sup>83</sup> Sherman W. Garnett, *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the Emerging Security Environment of Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1997), 117.



nuclear disarmament. This was apparent during the author's fellowship on U.S.-Ukraine non-proliferation issues at the Monterey Institute of International Studies and during his research visit to Washington in April-May 1993. This visit included meetings at the National Security Council, the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, the Department of State, and non-governmental organizations. The U.S. officials and experts were not prepared to see Ukraine other than through nuclear lenses. In a June 1993 article published in the Ukrainian newspaper, *Ukraina Moloda*, the author defended the position that Ukraine should ratify START I with conditions as the only right scenario for Ukraine's future.<sup>84</sup>

Five months later, the Ukrainian leadership took the wisest decision. As a result of the dual U.S.-Russian pressure and serious internal economic problems, the Ukrainian parliament ratified START I with conditions and demands in November 1993. As Sherman Garnett pointed out, "the November ratification became a basis for the January 1994 Trilateral Agreement."<sup>85</sup>

The Trilateral Agreement by the United States, Ukraine and Russia of 14 January 1994 changed the previous "two against one" formula and legitimized direct American involvement in Russia-Ukraine issues. As Garnett stated, "This agreement explicitly linked Ukraine's nuclear disarmament to its broader economic and security conditions.... The significance of the Trilateral Agreement was that it provided a multilateral

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<sup>84</sup> Sharov, Yevhen. *Obumovlene Maibutne-NaikraschiiYadernyi Scenarii dlia Ukrainy*. Ukraina Moloda. June 1993.

<sup>85</sup> Sherman W. Garnett, *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the Emerging Security Environment of Central and Eastern Europe* ( Washington. D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 1997), 120.

framework within which to address nuclear and other issues. It legitimized U.S. interest in issues that would ordinarily remain bilateral matters between Moscow and Kiev.”<sup>86</sup>

This agreement consisted of three main elements: a timetable for Ukraine’s nuclear disarmament, Russian compensation for the highly enriched uranium (HEU) removed from the warheads, and “security assurances for Ukraine that would be provided by the U.S., Russia, and the United Kingdom once Ukraine fully acceded to the NPT as a non-nuclear state.”<sup>87</sup> For the first time since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S. administration had made a significant shift from its “Russia only” policy. By embracing “Ukraine as well,” the United States changed its traditional approach of accepting Moscow’s sphere of influence in the post-Soviet space. “Thus, the Trilateral agreement had forced Russia to concede Washington’s involvement in Moscow’s relations with Kyiv. In doing so, Moscow was compelled, through this process, to recognize the equality of all the signatories. The agreement stated that each country would deal with each other as ‘full and equal partners.’”<sup>88</sup>

As a result of the treaty, United States strategists had to think about how to honor the security assurances to be given to Ukraine. Even though Washington continued to pressure Kyiv about accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty during 1994, the U.S. Department of Defense and the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense simultaneously developed military to military cooperation.

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>87</sup> Nadia Schadow in *Ukraine in the World*, Ed. Lubomyr A. Hajda, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. XX (1996) Special issue (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, 1996), 281.

Throughout these discussions about NPT accession, serious defense and military contacts between the United States and Ukraine were taking place. Of the former Soviet republics, Ukraine had developed the most extensive program of defense contacts. Ukrainian units participated in joint exercises with U.S. and NATO troops throughout the 1994-97 period. And by the end of 1997, the U.S. had given its financial and technical support to the creation of a Polish-Ukrainian battalion.<sup>89</sup>

Since then, bilateral cooperation in the military sphere and American support to Ukraine with regard to the NATO-Ukraine Charter and its implementation have become inseparable parts of the U.S.-Ukrainian relationship.

It should be recognized that Yeltsin's Russia "contributed" to the magnitude of the American defense and security assistance to Ukraine and unwittingly encouraged Washington's shift toward cultivating a strategic partnership with Ukraine. Russia's resistance to NATO enlargement and Russia's disagreements with the West on policy issues affecting the former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Iran, and China (among other subjects) and other issues postponed the pursuit of the U.S.-Russian strategic arms control agenda that has always had vital strategic significance for Washington.

Although Washington and Moscow maintain areas of mutually beneficial co-operation, the spirit of "strategic partnership" of the early 1990s has been undermined by increasing tensions and, during NATO's air strikes against Yugoslavia, by a sense of crisis. Besides Kosovo, there are many other difficult security issues in U.S.-Russian relations. U.S. efforts to persuade Russia that NATO enlargement is not a threat to its interests have not been effective. Moscow continues to warn that good relations will be undermined if NATO is enlarged and has declared a "red line" around other Soviet successor states such as the Baltics and Ukraine, whose admission to NATO it calls "intolerable."<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 281.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 282.

<sup>90</sup> Goldman, Stuart D. *Russia. Issue Brief for Congress*. (Congressional Research Service, 17 August 1999), 11.

Stuart D. Goldman, the Congressional Research Service's expert on Russia, identified additional problems in the security sphere between the United States and Russia: delays with the ratification of START II and problems over the ABM Treaty; Russia's transfer of nuclear reactor and missile technologies to Iran; and Russia's strong opposition to U.S. and British military action against Iraq.<sup>91</sup> When the U.S.-Russian strategic arms control agenda was postponed, issues of regional significance took first place.

One more fact may help to characterize the changing U.S. approach toward Ukraine. RAND organized two workshops on "Russia, Ukraine and European Security: Implications for Western Policy," held in Ebenhausen, Germany, June 19-21, 1994.

These workshops, sponsored and supported by the U.S. Air Force as well as other defense agencies, included discussions involving key executives, experts and other top advisory representatives from the United States, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine. During these workshops, possible key scenarios of Western policy toward Ukraine were defined as alternatives to American "bilateralism:"

1. *Finlandization.* In this scenario, Ukraine would be tied economically and politically to the West, but not integrated into Western military structures. This scenario would require a very large commitment of Western resources, which the West did not seem ready to make.
2. *Ukraine 'Light.'* In this scenario, Ukraine would be economically but not militarily integrated with Russia. This would still require a moderate level of Western engagement, but heavier than any that the West has so far indicated it is willing to make.
3. *Ukraine 'Heavy.'* In this scenario, Ukraine would be both militarily and economically integrated with Russia and the CIS.

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 11-12.

4. *Partition*. In this scenario, Ukraine would fragment, with the Eastern part joining Russia or a Russian-dominated CIS and Western Ukraine oriented toward the West. The West would face the dilemma of how to deal with a highly nationalistic Western Ukraine.
5. *Full Integration*. In this scenario, Ukraine would be incorporated into Russia or a Russian-dominated CIS.<sup>92</sup>

It was agreed by the U.S. and German representatives that “The first scenario—*Finlandization*—is probably unrealistic because the West is unwilling to commit the resources to achieve it.... The second scenario—*Ukraine ‘Light’*—probably is the best that the West could hope for.”<sup>93</sup> There is no direct evidence that this U.S. government-sponsored project influenced the West’s overall strategy with regard to Ukraine. But it may suggest the spectrum of possibilities examined by the Americans and their Western allies regarding Ukraine.

This thesis argues that the “Ukraine ‘Light’” scenario, the prevention of Ukrainian military integration with Russia and economic stabilization mainly based on close economic ties with Russia and other CIS states, has characterized U.S.-Ukrainian relations since 1994.

After Ukraine’s accession to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon state on 16 November 1994, the United States improved the framework of bilateral relations with Ukraine. As Garnett has pointed out, in September 1996, “the United States and Ukraine agreed to establish a standing governmental commission to advance the bilateral agenda

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<sup>92</sup> Larrabee, F. Stephen and Allen Lynch, *Russia, Ukraine and European Security: Implications for Western Policy* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1994), 22-23; emphasis in the original.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

in foreign policy, military cooperation, economic reform, and trade and investment; in October, the two declared their relationship ‘a strategic partnership.’”<sup>94</sup>

Years of negotiations over nuclear issues and, finally, the nuclear disarmament of Ukraine educated both sides and contributed to the changes in American strategic approaches to Ukraine. In Garnett’s words, “Ukraine’s now considerable ties with the United States remain the bedrock support of Ukraine’s turn to the West. These improved relations were slow to come—long stymied by the nuclear question and Washington’s initial view that placing Russia first as a strategic priority necessarily meant placing Ukraine lower on the list. The resolution of the nuclear question opened the door to an expanded U.S. engagement with Ukraine, pursued for its own sake as well as to sustain the implementation of the nuclear accords. Ukraine is now the third largest recipient of U.S. foreign assistance.”<sup>95</sup>

The first Clinton Administration’s approaches to Ukraine during the years 1993-1997 can thus be divided in two periods. The first period, 1993-1995, continued to follow the Bush Administration’s “Russia only” approach with a relatively negative view of Ukraine. This approach conditioned improvements in U.S.-Ukraine bilateral relations on Kyiv’s nuclear disarmament and accorded Russia rights to use any available means toward Ukraine. This approach was abandoned when American strategists realized the limitations of this policy.

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<sup>94</sup> Sherman W. Garnett. *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the Emerging Security Environment of Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington. D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1997), 125-126.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

This thesis argues that the Trilateral Agreement of January 1994 and Ukraine's accession to the NPT, on one hand, and the U.S.-Russian disagreements on security matters, on the other, led to the strategic partnership between the United States and Ukraine. Russia "contributed" to the deepening of the U.S.-Ukrainian relationship by postponing its ratification of START II and clashing with the West over international security issues. Ukraine was thus able to benefit from political-military cooperation with the United States and NATO.

Even though Ukraine became the third largest recipient of American foreign aid, overall the U.S. approaches to Ukraine were limited to the "Ukraine light" scenario. The new U.S. policy led to significant U.S.-Ukrainian military cooperation and American support to Ukraine in the framework of Ukraine-NATO cooperation, but it did not lead to extensive private-sector U.S. financial investments in Ukraine or to large-scale U.S.-Ukrainian trade.

### **C. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

The new U.S. approach can be defined as a "strategic pivot" approach with a "Ukraine Light" scenario. From the point of view of U.S.-Russia-Ukraine relations, it was a more balanced U.S. approach at the expense of Russia.

This approach was shaped by growing disagreements between Russia and the West about NATO enlargement, the former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Iran, Kosovo and arms transfers to China as well as the American approach toward the use of force in international affairs. An influential American strategist and former National Security Adviser to the President, Zbigniew Brzezinski, was among the first to recognize the significance of Ukraine for U.S. security policy.

Although initially the West, especially the United States, had been tardy in recognizing the geopolitical importance of a separate Ukrainian state, by the mid-1990s both America and Germany had become strong backers of Kiev's separate identity. In July 1996, the U.S. secretary of defense declared, "I cannot overestimate the importance of Ukraine as an independent country to the security and stability of all of Europe," while in September, the German Chancellor—notwithstanding his strong support for President Yeltsin—went even further in declaring that "Ukraine's firm place in Europe can no longer be challenged by anyone... No one will be able any more to dispute Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity." American policy makers also came to describe the American-Ukrainian relationship as "a strategic partnership," deliberately invoking the same phrase used to describe the American-Russian relationship.<sup>96</sup>

The key element of this approach was a vision of the role of Ukraine in constraining Russian strategic options in Europe and in preventing a restoration of Russian hegemony over Eurasia.

Ukraine, a new and important space on the Eurasian chessboard, is a geopolitical pivot because its very existence as an independent country helps to transform Russia. Without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be a Eurasian empire... However, if Moscow regains control over Ukraine, with its 52 million people and major resources as well as its access to the Black Sea, Russia automatically again regains the wherewithal to become a powerful imperial state, spanning Europe and Asia. Ukraine's loss of independence would have immediate consequences for Central Europe, transforming Poland into the geopolitical pivot on the eastern frontier of a united Europe.<sup>97</sup>

It is hard to prove that official American policy followed Brzezinski's vision and recommendations, but it was obvious that in 1996 and 1997 the role of Ukraine in the European balance of power had increased. Since then, Ukraine has become, to use the phrases employed by various commentators, "a strategic partner of the USA," "the key European state," the key of the "European security architecture," and an "important

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<sup>96</sup> Brzezinski, Zbigniew, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: BasicBooks, 1997), 113.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.



contributor of stability on the continent.” Furthermore, the EU, NATO, the G-7, the IMF, the World Bank and the U.S.-EU summits put questions about Ukrainian security, reforms and stability on their agendas.

Ukraine opened the possibility for strategic partnership by committing itself to Western democratic values and resolving the nuclear issue with the United States.

The Trilateral Statement on nuclear weapons, and the final removal of those weapons in June 1996, removed an important stumbling block in U.S.-Ukrainian relations. In recent years, a consensus appears to have emerged, echoed in statements by top U.S. policymakers, that a strong, multi-faceted relationship with a stable, democratic and independent Ukraine is a critical part of U.S. policy toward the region. U.S. and Ukrainian officials have described the bilateral relationship as a “strategic partnership.”<sup>98</sup>

This analysis argues that the U.S. strategic partnership approach to Ukraine is based on the following dimensions: securing and stabilizing the country’s independence, supporting its economic reforms, coordinating Western assistance, and supporting Ukraine’s integration into transatlantic and European institutions.

In the sphere of security and stabilization, the United States has helped to promote Ukraine’s external security through strengthening the Ukrainian military; Ukraine’s integration into European and transatlantic security structures; and US-Ukrainian military-technical cooperation and defense industry conversion.<sup>99</sup>

One of the key components of U.S. assistance to Kyiv is enhancing relations between Ukraine and NATO. The United States strongly supported Ukraine in

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<sup>98</sup> Woehrel, Steven, *Ukraine: Current Issues and U.S. Policy* (CRS Report for Congress. 8 December 1999), 11.

concluding the NATO-Ukraine Charter that created a format of special relations between Ukraine and NATO to complement Ukraine's active participation in NATO's Partnership for Peace program. Furthermore, the Clinton Administration has assured Ukraine that the door to NATO is open. In the words of Secretary of State Albright, "We have kept NATO open to you... What President Clinton and I have said is that NATO is open to all democracies and free market economies, and we are also very pleased with the special NATO-Ukraine relationship and the ability of your country to begin to work with countries in Europe and our own."<sup>100</sup>

In addition, since 1996, the United States has encouraged other European states and organizations to support Ukraine. For instance, Secretary of State Warren Christopher delivered a major speech on European security in Stuttgart in which he said, "A critical goal of the New Atlantic Community is to achieve Ukraine's integration with Europe."<sup>101</sup> The United States supported Ukraine's active participation in (or cooperation with) the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the World Trade Organization, the Central European Free Trade Area, the European Union, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

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<sup>99</sup> U.S.-Ukraine Security Committee Report, Ref. Number: No.642-96. 15 November 1996; available [on line] <http://www.fas.org/news/ukraine/bt961115.htm>; accessed 4 June 2000.

<sup>100</sup> Albright, Madeleine, Statement before the North Atlantic Council Ministerial, Luxembourg City, Luxembourg, 28 May 1998; available [online] <http://secretary.state.gov/www/statements/1998/980528.html>; accessed 4 June 2000.

<sup>101</sup> Christopher quoted in Talbott, Strobe, *Ukraine at five: A Progress Report on U.S. Policy*, Washington Group 1996 Leadership Conference, Washington, D.C., 11 October 1996; available [online]: <http://www.state.gov/www/regions/nis/10-11tal.html>; accessed 4 June 2000.

The United States added the question of Ukraine to the Transatlantic Agenda of the U.S.-EU Summit in Washington, on December 5, 1997. In the Joint Statement of the Summit the United States and the European Union

affirmed their mutual support for Ukraine's sovereignty and independence and their shared desire to help Ukraine achieve its goals of consolidating democracy, protecting human rights, reforming the economy and full integration into the international community. Ukraine's development as a prosperous democracy is a key component of European stability and security.<sup>102</sup>

In the sphere of democratization and transition in Ukraine the United States supports its economic reforms and stabilization.

A cornerstone for the continuing U.S. partnership with Ukraine and the other NIS has been the Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets (FREEDOM) Support Act (FSA), enacted in October 1992. Ukraine has been a primary recipient of FSA assistance. Total U.S. assistance since independence has been over \$2 billion. Total U.S. assistance in FY 2000 is \$216 million, of which \$169 million is FSA funding. U.S. assistance is targeted to address political and economic transformation and humanitarian needs. The U.S. has consistently encouraged Ukraine's transition to a free, democratic society with a prosperous market economy.<sup>103</sup>

The United States also is developing strong technological cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy and space research, and supports the accession of Ukraine to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

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<sup>102</sup> Ukraine, Joint Statement released in conjunction with the U.S.-EU Summit Washington, DC, December 5, 1997; available [on line] [http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eur/eu/971205\\_useu\\_js\\_ukraine.html](http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eur/eu/971205_useu_js_ukraine.html); accessed 4 June 2000.

<sup>103</sup> See Background Notes: Ukraine, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of European Affairs, May 2000; available [online] [http://www.state.gov/www/background\\_notes/ukraine\\_0005\\_bgn.html](http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/ukraine_0005_bgn.html); accessed 4 June 2000.

Finally, in order to reach all these goals, the US created the U.S.-Ukraine Kuchma-Gore binational commission. As Sherman Garnett has pointed out,

“In September 1996, the U.S. and Ukraine agreed to create a binational commission, chaired by Vice-President Al Gore and President Kuchma respectively. This commission consist of four committees dealing with foreign policy, security, trade and investment and other economic issues.”<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Sherman Garnett in *Ukraine in the World*. Ed. Lubomyr A. Hajda, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*. Vol. XX (1996) Special issue (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, 1996), 114.

## VI. DECLINE OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP OR THE LIMITATIONS OF PREVENTIVE DEFENSE APPROACH

This thesis argues that the U.S.-Ukrainian strategic partnership is in a process of decline. Even though the United States continues to recognize Ukraine's importance and supports Kyiv in many important spheres, many of Washington's experts and policy makers are disappointed with Ukrainian reforms.<sup>105</sup> The bilateral military cooperation has continued its dynamic development, but it will not be sustained without a strong economic dimension and serious U.S. engagement in this process. The election of the new President in Russia and new developments in U.S.-Russian arms control negotiations raise many concerns about future American approaches to Ukraine.

The first factor that has contributed to decline in the relationship is the situation of the economic reforms in Ukraine. The American position on the importance of economic reforms in Ukraine was clear from the very beginning of the strategic partnership. According to John P. Hardt,

The balance sheet on Ukrainian systemic reform with respect to actions needed to assure future independence, sovereignty, peace and prosperity to Ukraine is mixed. Future assurance of Ukrainian independence and sovereignty depends in large part on success of economic and political reform. Strong reform prospects may substantially improve the lot of Ukrainian citizens and encourage profitable American and other foreign investments. Continued sovereignty and independence should make Ukraine a stabilizing force in East European politics.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> This finding is based on the author's interviews in Washington, D.C., February 21-March 3, 2000.

<sup>106</sup> Hardt, John P., *Ukraine's Independence, Sovereignty and Progress in Political and Economic Reform*. (CRS Report for Congress. Washington, D.C.: The Library of Congress, 30 August 1996), 1.

Economic dimensions continue to be among the most important factors in U.S. policy regarding Ukraine. According to the October 1998 National Security Strategy approved by the U.S. President,

Ukraine is at an important point in its economic transition—one that will affect its integration with Europe and domestic prosperity. The United States has mobilized the international community's support for Ukrainian economic reform, pushed to improve Ukraine's investment climate, and championed its integration into key European, transatlantic and global economic institutions. Two other challenges stand out: first, to instill respect for the rule of law so that a more transparent, level economic playing field is established and democratic governance prevails; and, second, to gain international support as it seeks to close down Chernobyl and reform its energy sector. The U.S.-Ukraine Binational Commission, chaired by Vice President Gore and President Kuchma, serves as a focal point to coordinate bilateral relations and to invigorate Ukrainian reform efforts.<sup>107</sup>

Current views in the United States of Ukraine's economic prospects tend to be pessimistic. There is a strong position among Washington experts that Ukraine has not successfully pursued economic reforms. Problems with corruption are considered one of the main negative factors in U.S.-Ukrainian bilateral relations.<sup>108</sup> Without addressing the accuracy of these issues, this argument seems weak because the United States has engaged in relationships with Russia, China, and other countries with significant corruption. This thesis argues that the Western "Ukraine light" approach, during a period when the United States and its allies have not wanted to invest resources in Ukraine and have pursued only a limited engagement in reforms in Ukraine, is the main factor that contributed to this result.

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<sup>107</sup> A National Security Strategy for a New Century (The White House, October 1998), 41.

<sup>108</sup> This finding is based on the author's interviews in Washington, D.C., February 21-March 3, 2000.

In contrast, the programs in the military and security sphere have made significant progress. This circumstance shows that the security and defense sphere has been America's priority in comparison to the economic dimension. U.S.-Ukrainian achievements in the sphere of bilateral and multilateral political-military cooperation support this judgement. This sphere has received the most favorable attention and support from the security and defense establishment of the United States. On the other hand, the United States has been almost disengaged in the sphere of Ukraine's economic reforms.

For example, the briefing materials of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Under Secretary for Policy, prepared for the Joint Staff's NIS Conference of February 2000 show that the Department of Defense's view of Ukraine is positive; and the progress in bilateral military cooperation has become prominent and sustainable over the long-term. This document describes a politico-military vision for Ukraine as follows:

Ukraine is an independent and sovereign nation, fulfilling its legitimate security needs and playing a constructive role in promoting regional political, military, and economic stability, including cooperation with international and regional security organizations. To this end, Ukraine has a rationally-developed, civilian-controlled defense establishment increasingly interoperable with Euro-Atlantic security organizations.<sup>109</sup>

Furthermore, this document shows that the program of bilateral cooperation has been developed for the long-term and that the U.S. Department of Defense has a particular role in its realization. The program sets objectives for the next five years of cooperation and beyond 2005. To illustrate this point, after one year it intends to achieve the following results: "better align events with programs; build more quality programs—jointly; energize [the] NATO-Ukraine relationship." After five years, the program aims to

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<sup>109</sup> Engaging Ukraine: The Keystone in the Arch. Briefing, Office of Secretary of Defense, Undesecretary for Policy, Joint Staff's NIS Conference, February 2000, 10.

meet the following goals: “initial programs bear measurable results; engagement is institutionalized; Ukraine is a premier Partner with NATO.” Beyond 2005, the following objectives are envisaged: “Ukraine’s national security establishment is a progressive force in national defense and nation building; period of formative engagement [leading to] partnership; Ukraine is a constructive regional leader.”<sup>110</sup>

Another illustration of the same approach is the statement of the U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine K. Albright, at the Ministerial Meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission in Florence, Italy, on 25 May 2000. The Secretary, emphasizing the importance of the distinctive partnership between Ukraine and NATO for stability in Europe, stressed the necessity of further economic and defense reforms in Ukraine,

Changes this basic will take courage. But these steps clearly are required. Just as NATO is adapting and enlarging to meet the needs of a world transformed, so must Ukraine’s defense establishment adapt as well. Since we first came together in Madrid, the progress of this partnership has been a quiet success story. But the time has come to accelerate this progress. We must move from making plans and pledges to carrying out commitments.<sup>111</sup>

In fact, Mrs. Albright’s references to Ukraine’s participation in KFOR, SFOR and the Partnership for Peace program as well as the deployment of the Ukrainian-Polish Peacekeeping battalion planned for July 2000 show the significant achievements in interoperability and cooperation between the NATO and Ukraine armed forces, and security and defense establishments, since this area became a priority in 1994. In contrast, how many Ukrainian factories and companies (not speaking about entire industries) have

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 18-20.

<sup>111</sup> Albright, Madeleine K. *Statement at the Ministerial Meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission*. Florence, Italy, 25 May 2000; available [online] <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2000/s000525i.htm>; accessed 1 June 2000.



become interoperable with American and other Western business and industrial partners in the same period of time? It was not only America's defense and security support to Germany and Japan after World War II that helped these nations recover. American investments in industrial development and trade in these countries helped to make them stable and prosperous. Interoperability of their armed forces was one of the lower priority issues and benefited allies later. Ukraine, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and its unified and ineffective economic system, faces similar difficult economic challenges.

These examples show that there is an imbalance between the U.S. military and security approach to Ukraine and the U.S. economic programs, which are self-limited by the "Ukraine light" approach. It is unclear whether this inconsistency is a product of the latest strategic approaches built on the Preventive Defense concept described by Ashton B. Carter and William J. Perry.

As a guide to national security strategy, Preventive Defense is fundamentally different from deterrence: it is a broad politico-military strategy, and therefore it draws on all the instruments of foreign policy: political, economic, and military. But the role of the U.S. Department of Defense is central: the department's contacts with counterpart militaries in Russia, China, and Europe will influence their views of themselves and thus their propensity to threaten U.S. interests.<sup>112</sup>

If the current U.S. strategic approaches are based on the Preventive Defense concept, in which the DOD plays the key role in bilateral cooperation, these approaches seem limited and unbalanced. This is because the U.S. defense and security establishment is trying to deal only with security and defense issues while neglecting the economic

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<sup>112</sup> Carter, Ashton B. and William J. Perry, *Preventive Defense: A New Security Strategy for America*. (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), 18.

dimension. Moreover, the DOD's involvement, even limited, in the sphere of economic reforms will probably not lead to the desired results.

Another factor of continuing significance in U.S.-Ukrainian relations is Russia. The circumstances have changed after the election of Vladimir Putin as President of Russia and the Duma's ratification of START II. The ambitious U.S.-Russian arms control agenda could in some circumstances return the "Ukrainian issue" to the forefront in relations between America and Russia.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This thesis concludes that several significant factors challenge the U.S.-Ukrainian strategic partnership. The prominence of the vital strategic interests connected to nuclear weapons may lower the relative significance of U.S.-Ukrainian relations. Accusations of corruption and slowness in Ukraine's economic reforms have extended the distance between Washington and Kyiv at a time when the Washington-Moscow strategic dialogue may become more prominent.

This thesis argues that the "Preventive Defense" approach and the previous vision of strategic partnership based on security and defense support to Ukraine (including bilateral U.S.-Ukraine and multilateral Ukraine-NATO cooperation) with the "Ukraine light scenario" (limited Western engagement in Ukrainian reforms and economic assistance) led to the mixed outcome. This outcome features good bilateral and multilateral military and security cooperation in conjunction with a weak, limited, and corrupted economic dimension.

It is necessary to emphasize that two schools of American strategic culture struggle for influence over U.S. security policy toward Eastern Europe and Eurasia. The first school traditionally emphasizes the relations with Russia for reasons of nuclear disarmament or geopolitics. The second school recognizes the necessity of building long-term sustainable relations with Ukraine and the newly independent states. Both directions require long-term commitments and resources. With drastically limited foreign aid funds and commitments of the U.S. government and the arms control agenda at stake, the second, regional, direction becomes dependent on the first, more vital one. Ukraine became a model for post-Soviet states, because it has committed itself to Western

democratic values for the last ten years and has become an example of cooperation with the West for countries such as Georgia, Moldova, and others. With the current U.S. administration's approaches, this direction is likely to become dependent on the traditional approach holding that "Russia is more important." Even if the Euro-American "Russia only" approach failed, there could still be reasons to hope for the emancipation and democratization of Russia with time. In contrast, the failure of "Ukraine as a model" could lead to a chain of negative consequences not only for Russia and other NIS, but also for the West. Attempts to balance the Preventive Defense model with a limited economic dimension will inevitably lead to the failure of the "Ukraine as a model" approach.

#### **A. AMERICA'S POSSIBLE FUTURE STRATEGIC APPROACH TO UKRAINE**

America's possible future strategic approach to Ukraine will depend—among other factors—on the situation in Russia, the progress of Ukrainian economic reforms, and developments in the United States itself. If the situation in Russia features a stable process of democratization, and if promising arms control negotiations are underway, the U.S. attention to Ukraine may decrease. In these circumstances a return to the scenario of improved U.S.-Russian relations at Ukraine's expense might be conceivable. Kyiv might then lose its importance for American strategists.

The situation in Russia may, however, be unpredictable for the West because of the continuing economic crisis, which continues to damage internal stability with effects on nuclear and security issues. The U.S. strategic approach to Ukraine in this case may be

a mixture of “strategic pivot” and “multinational and institutional support” with the “Ukraine Light” scenario.

In terms of the future of U.S.-Ukrainian relations, Sherman Garnett identified four main obstacles:

[1] Ukraine’s internal political and economic situation; .... [2] the state of Ukrainian-Russian relations.... [3] [the fact that] key European states and institutions have yet to acknowledge Ukraine’s strategic significance or to fashion policies which are commensurate with that significance.... [4] the instability of the current U.S. policy consensus on Ukraine.<sup>113</sup>

Another possibility deserves consideration. Future U.S. policy may be more oriented than the present approach toward the management of the “Russian threat.” In this case, Ukrainian integration into the transatlantic and European structures may become essential. The official U.S. approach in this case is to keep an “open door” for possible future Ukrainian NATO membership. According to U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, “We respect and accept Ukraine’s position that NATO membership is not on its agenda at this time...But we also believe that should Ukraine one day decide to seek entry into the Alliance, the door will remain open.”<sup>114</sup>

In support of Ukraine’s stabilization, the United States continue to provide incentives for economic reforms. In the words of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright,

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<sup>113</sup> Sherman W. Garnett in *Ukraine in the World*. Ed. Lubomyr A. Hajda, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*. Vol. XX (1996) Special issue (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, 1996), 115-117.

<sup>114</sup> Talbott, Strobe. *The New Ukraine in the New Europe*. Address at the Workshop on Ukraine – NATO Relations sponsored by the Harvard University Project on Ukrainian Security and the Stanford-Harvard Preventive Defense Project . Washington, 8 April 1998; available [online] [http://www.state.gov/www/policy\\_remarks/1998/980408\\_talbott\\_ukr\\_nato.html](http://www.state.gov/www/policy_remarks/1998/980408_talbott_ukr_nato.html); accessed 4 June 2000.

Ukraine must pursue the economic and political reforms that will bring the prosperity and stability it needs to be a full and reliable partner. Market democracy is a key aspect of Ukraine's integration into the Euro-Atlantic community, and all of us here are committed to ensuring that it succeeds.<sup>115</sup>

In this case, the economic dimension of the U.S. approaches to Ukraine should become one of the main priorities.

In addition, the United States will encourage Ukraine to urge Russia to be more cooperative with NATO. As Talbott has observed, "Under both Presidents Kravchuk and Kuchma, Ukraine has been generally supportive of NATO's efforts to reach out to Russia—and rightly so. After all, it is very much in Ukraine's interest that Russian reform and integration with the West remain on course."<sup>116</sup>

The current American approaches differ from those in the mid-1990s, when the question of a possible Ukrainian neutral status was frequently evoked. The current approaches are mainly focused on the development of the NATO-Ukraine partnership and possible Ukrainian membership in NATO and the EU.<sup>117</sup> In addition, Zbigniew Brzezinski has suggested that the link between Ukraine and a trilateral pivot in Europe may be important for future Ukrainian security.

In the meantime, it is likely that Franco-German-Polish collaboration within the EU and NATO will have deepened considerably, especially in

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<sup>115</sup> Albright, Madeleine K., Statement at the Ministerial Meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission Brussels, Belgium, December 9, 1998; available [online] <http://secretary.state.gov/www/statements/1998/981209a.html>; accessed 6 June 2000.

<sup>116</sup> Talbott, Strobe, The New Ukraine in the New Europe, Address at the Workshop on Ukraine – NATO Relations sponsored by the Harvard University Project on Ukrainian Security and the Stanford-Harvard Preventive Defense Project, Washington, 8 April 1998; available [online] [http://www.state.gov/www/policy\\_remarks/1998/980408\\_talbott\\_ukr\\_nato.html](http://www.state.gov/www/policy_remarks/1998/980408_talbott_ukr_nato.html); accessed 4 June 2000.

<sup>117</sup> Brzezinski, Zbigniew, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: BasicBooks, 1997), 84.

the area of defense... Given the special geopolitical interest of Germany and Poland in Ukraine's independence, it is also quite possible that Ukraine will gradually be drawn into the special Franco-German-Polish relationship. By the year 2010, Franco-German-Polish-Ukrainian political collaboration, engaging some 230 million people, could evolve into a partnership enhancing Europe's geostrategic depth.<sup>118</sup>

There are other modalities of U.S. cooperation with Ukraine. These include U.S.-Polish-Ukraine cooperation and U.S.-Turkish-Ukraine cooperation, but they will not be sustained along without comprehensive and balanced long-term economic and political support to Ukraine.

The "Ukrainian question" is ultimately an aspect of the "Russian question" for many American strategists. Continuing instability in Russia and its protracted struggle with the United States about the vision of the new international order and European affairs will in all likelihood keep the "Ukrainian question" on the strategic agenda of American policy. In fact, U.S. policy toward Ukraine has become a long-term strategic approach because of these factors. The U.S.-Ukrainian strategic partnership can not be sustained, however, without a balanced economic dimension.

## **B. CONCLUSIONS**

For most of the twentieth century Ukraine was not a part of the U.S. strategic agenda. Even though American decision-makers were well-informed about the existence and nature of "the Ukrainian question," "the moral foundations" of U.S. strategic culture ignored the necessity to support the Ukrainian movement toward independence.

Furthermore, President Bush initially supported Gorbachev and Yeltsin against Ukraine, and reacted negatively to any kind of Ukrainian independence movement. The United

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 85

States recognized the independence of Ukraine because of the strategic necessity (including START I and START II) and not because of the moral imperative.

The U.S. approach changed again during the first Clinton administration in accordance with a new strategic necessity—Russian instability. Another crucial factor in the United States strategic approach to Ukraine is therefore geopolitical necessity, which is based on uncertainty about Russia's future security policy.

The United States is helping to secure Ukrainian independence because the stabilization of Ukraine and its integration into the key transatlantic and European institutions will help to prevent Russia from regaining its former Eurasian hegemony. Ukraine's independence also reinforces the NATO enlargement process, and enhances American weight in the former Soviet space.

American-Ukrainian ties have developed in parallel with uncertainty about the future of Russia and its opposition to NATO enlargement and other NATO (and U.S.) policies. U.S. strategists eventually recognized the important role of an independent and stable Ukraine for the security of the NATO enlargement process as well as for the frustration of Russian efforts to create an anti-NATO military bloc on the basis of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The strategic partnership between the United States and Ukraine will probably decline if the economic dimension of the U.S. approach is not strengthened to balance the military and security dimensions.

It is unclear what future strategic necessities will shape the U.S. approach to Ukraine. The significance of Ukraine for American strategists may increase because of



events in Russia, or it may decrease because of other factors, such as the further implementation of the START process and the creation of new national antiballistic missile capabilities. Ukraine will nonetheless probably continue to be the strategic partner or the "strategic pivot" of the United States in the former Soviet space for at least the next ten years.

It is clear that the current U.S. approach can not be sustained for a long period because it is economically unbalanced. Prescriptive solutions are not popular in academic research, but a responsible scholar should examine alternatives and address possible solutions. The Partnership for Peace (PfP) program showed the post-Cold War world methods of cooperation between former adversaries in the sphere of security and defense. There is a strong necessity for a similar program for international economic cooperation with broad business involvement. For example, a multinational program such as a Business Partnership for Reforms and Democracy (BPRD), similar to PfP in its weight and value, would not only balance America's "Preventive Defense" approach, in conjunction with NATO and EU enlargement, but would also bolster already existing local and regional economic initiatives such as those dealing with the transportation of Caspian Sea Basin oil, and with Black Sea and Eastern European economic cooperation.

In this way, the transatlantic partnership process and the EU integration process would no longer exclude countries, but would gain a new mission in Eastern Europe and Eurasia. The possible integration of PfP and the proposed BPRD could lead to a post-Cold War Marshall Plan model with the involvement of many countries and business organizations on the Western side. It would not rely solely on American foreign aid funds and the U.S. defense and security establishment. It could involve multinational

corporations and international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. It is not proposed here that states would control business and market activities, but governments, supporting the BPRD in international structures like the G-7, NATO, and the EU, could help to focus international economic initiatives and corporations on the quest for local reforms and business solutions. Moreover, such a balance between geopolitics and new global economic trends could decrease the threat of new dividing lines in Europe and diminish the risks of Russian isolationism in a context of Russian opposition to NATO and EU enlargement toward Russian and NIS borders.

Without such a comprehensive and balanced approach, there is a strong possibility of the repetition of the pre-World War II *cordon sanitaire* approach, based on a sort of preventive defense approach. This could lead to new Munichs and regional struggles. These struggles could arise if the West failed to extend its economic and security commitments. In such circumstances, Russia might try to regain control over Eastern Europe and Eurasia, especially if the EU and NATO tried to “close the door” to new partners. In this case, countries such as Ukraine could become the victims of *Realpolitik* predators.

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