

## Contents

|                                          |   |
|------------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Editorial</b>                         | 1 |
| <i>Peter R. FABER</i>                    |   |
| <b>A Road Map for Ukraine</b>            | 2 |
| <i>Lionel PONSARD</i>                    |   |
| <b>NATO Defense College Publications</b> | 8 |



### Research Paper

NATO Defense College  
Collège de Défense de l'OTAN  
Academic Research Branch  
Via Giorgio Pelosi, 1  
00143 Rome – Italie

Directeur de publication:  
*Jean Dufourcq*

Assistante de publication:  
*Laurence Ammour*

web site: [www.ndc.nato.int](http://www.ndc.nato.int)  
e-mail: [research@ndc.nato.int](mailto:research@ndc.nato.int)

Imprimerie CSC Grafica  
Via Arrivabene, 40  
00159 Rome – Italie

© NDC 2005 all rights reserved

## Editorial

Ukraine's foreign policy and its security posture are indeed in a state of flux. The Kuchma regime's previous attempts to leverage Western and Russian security imperatives against each other are mercifully at an end. In what became a clear case of poorly executed opportunism, the regime sought to convince its neighbours to the west and east that it could coexist, if not outright integrate, with both their models on what constitutes a common European security space, and with differing views over what traditional spheres of influence, if any, should be permissible within that space.

However, if the era of cynical, play-them-off-each-other balancing is over, Ukraine is certainly not ready for accession into macro-level Euro-Atlantic or European structures. As Lionel Ponsard's Research Paper rightfully points out, a litany of reforms must occur first, including the most basic reforms of them all – defining Ukraine's true role in international affairs, codifying its foreign policy/security orientation, and reforming not just elements of the Ukrainian state, but the very state itself. Dr. Ponsard is additionally correct to point out that it is ultimately up to the Ukrainians to transform themselves into a democratic, rule of law-based "anchor" for each other, for their neighbours, and for the West.

And yet, Dr. Ponsard knows, as we all do, that integrating Ukraine into Euro-Atlantic structures cannot be a self-help project alone. If this "distinct partner" is to avoid slipping back into a retrograde and benighted past, Western partners must overcome their lingering Kuchma fatigue and help it weave "irreversible mechanisms" into the very fabric of Ukrainian political and social life. Treating this body politic of 50 million people as a key "European" state is certainly a step in the right direction, as Dr. Ponsard points out. But so is coordinating Ukraine's growing rapprochement with NATO and the EU together, crafting a harmonious Western message designed for Russia and Ukraine at the same time, taking a more "global" security view towards Ukraine (consider its potentially positive role in a Wider Black Sea Area, for example), and daring to consider still Taboo subjects such as Military Action Plans with NATO.

Yes, we need good faith reform efforts from the new regime in Kyiv, but it needs clearer, firmer, and more reciprocal "yes-no" messages from the West, even if its new leadership fails to provide specific "Ukraine-should-be-like-this" guidance to its own people in the near future.

*Peter R. FABER, Research Associate*

NB: The views expressed in this publication are the responsibility of the authors and should not be attributed to the NATO Defense College or the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

Les opinions exprimées dans cette publication sont celles de leurs auteurs et ne peuvent être attribuées au Collège de Défense de l'OTAN ou à l'Organisation du Traité de l'Atlantique Nord.

# A Road Map for Ukraine

Lionel PONSARD<sup>1</sup>

Ukraine's democratic revolution has brought Viktor Yushchenko to power after a convincing victory, but President Yushchenko will have to work fast. While the Ukrainian state is pervasively corrupt, he should seize this great opportunity to finally put the government at the service of the people. This paper looks at the past and current situation in Ukraine with a focus on political and economic reforms, and then goes on to explore the rationale behind the Orange Revolution. It then analyses the challenges facing Ukraine and Russia in the development of their relations. Last but not least, it highlights key elements for pursuing Ukraine's rapprochement towards Euro-Atlantic institutions, thereby providing a foundation for the concluding part of this paper – a modest outline of a road map to guide future relations between the West and Ukraine.

## Overcoming Past Legacy

Almost fifteen years after achieving independence, Ukraine continues to undergo a difficult transition, seeking for its identity as either a fully independent state or as a special subservient partner of Russia, with which it has close cultural and historic ties. During the Kuchma era, Kyiv was constantly trying to find an equilibrium between the Russian and the Western paths, while struggling for an independent Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> On the regional side, Ukraine was characterized by profound political and socio-economic cleavages between the East and the West. Today, Ukraine's landscape is still often presented as a black and white picture where the East is *russified*,<sup>3</sup> while the West is home to new liberals advocating pro-Western democracy and market economy. Since Yushchenko<sup>4</sup> drew his support mainly from the Western part of the country, this fragile equilibrium between Russia and the

West promoted by Kuchma will probably not be maintained to the same extent. As the new President stated on the occasion of his first visit to Russia after the elections, Ukraine's relations with Russia will be first and foremost perceived through the prism of Ukrainian interests. On this occasion, Yushchenko also made clear that his main priority would be to pursue Euro-Atlantic integration and that he would subordinate any participation in the Russian-led Single Economic Space to this goal.<sup>5</sup>

While the new leadership is expected to re-establish confidence internally and externally, Ukraine is far from stabilised, let alone democratic and prosperous. Despite being a country of about 50 million people with considerable economic potential and steady economic growth since 2000, the country has regressed in terms of actual reforms in the last few years. We should not forget that Ukraine has inherited power structures from the USSR<sup>6</sup> and overcoming this legacy requires strong determination and political will. While the Western approach favours the "horizontal approach", Ukraine still concentrates on the so-called "administrative vertical" extensively used by President Putin in Russia. It is widely recognized that this Soviet style approach does not always offer the most adequate means for developing effective institutions. The magnitude of the challenges at hand should therefore not be underestimated. Furthermore, Ukraine is still a source of asymmetric security threats to the West, such as transnational organized crime and illegal immigration.

No one of course expects Ukraine to become a real functioning democracy overnight. Everyone understands that just the fact of consolidating democracy in Ukraine could take another few years. Nevertheless, if the new government sets the right course, its first priorities

<sup>1</sup> Research Advisor, Academic Research Branch, NATO Defense College, Rome.

<sup>2</sup> This strategy balancing pro-Western and pro-Russian moves used to depend on the side from which the Kuchma regime was feeling the greatest pressure at a particular time.

<sup>3</sup> Eastern Ukraine has an important population of ethnic Russians and most of the ethnic Ukrainians speak Russian as their first language.

<sup>4</sup> On the personality and the political background of President Yushchenko, see Johathan Eyal, "Russia, Ukraine and the West", *Rusi Newsbrief*, vol. 25, no. 1, January 2005, pp. 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> For abstracts of Yushchenko's speech during his first visit to Russia as President, see several newspapers dated 24 January 2005, including *Kyiv Post* and *The Russia Journal Daily*.

<sup>6</sup> See Carlos Pascual and Steven Pifer, "Ukraine's Bid for a Decisive Place in History", *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 25, no. 1, Winter 2002, pp. 176-181.

will be to carry out urgent reforms. Apart from improving its political system, Ukraine needs to reform its economy and to find a solution to the corruption problem. Just like countries of Central and Eastern Europe did some years ago, Ukraine needs to undergo a transformation process. Illegal practices will need to be seriously examined. But in order to reach a state of affairs where corruption is only a matter of choice and not an absolute necessity,<sup>7</sup> it will be mandatory to take some resolute actions and to implement urgent reforms.

### Need for Further Reforms

Above all, Ukraine is in need of profound political reform in order to improve transparency, increase the legitimacy of power, and strengthening the role of political parties. A new system of check and balances changing the balance of power between the President, the government and the Parliament is of course crucial in ensuring future stability. In addition, despite the ongoing economic growth, with further good prospects for this year, Kyiv still needs to implement significant economic reform for the benefit of the economy, but also to satisfy its ambitions for EU and NATO memberships. Although Ukraine successfully introduced a new currency, the hryvnya, in 1996, it is still struggling with macroeconomic stabilization. Ukraine needs to make greater progress in such areas as agricultural reform, energy sector reform, and restructuring of the banking sector. Obviously, privatization of agriculture has progressed since the abolishment in December 1999 of collective farms, but this has not led yet to a significant impact on the sector's productivity. In addition, economic reforms should not only aim at supporting stable economic development, but also at respecting international standards in capital and trade regulations. In the same vein, privatisation should be continued in a transparent manner. As for the investment climate in Ukraine, it is still perceived as precarious and rather unstable, as evidenced by increasing capital flight from the country.

On the social side, Ukraine is still emblematic of pervasive bureaucracy, corruption and underhand practices, which have undermined the country since its independence. The new government has yet to demonstrate adequate skills and determination to deal with these issues, whose complexity is unlikely to be solved in the space of a few years.<sup>8</sup> Ukraine remains a difficult political-economic entity and a true democratic transformation will need to be made step by step. By the same token, independent media do play a crucial role in this transformation process. While it has attracted considerable attention from various international institutions, the freedom of media is currently one of the most sensitive issues in Ukraine.<sup>9</sup> Although Ukraine's accomplishments are still rather modest in the field of reforms, the Orange Revolution has showed a society united in demanding freedom, democracy and the rule of law.

### The "Orange Revolution"

The Ukrainian presidential election (November – December 2004)<sup>10</sup> was labelled the "Orange Revolution" in reference to the trademark colour of *Our Ukraine*, Viktor Yushchenko's political party. Thousands of people rallied in central Kyiv on Independence Square under orange banners to bring about Yushchenko's victory. Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich<sup>11</sup> lost in the end to opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko by more than 2,2 million votes, with 44 percent to Yushchenko's 52 percent. Undoubtedly, former President Kuchma's own decision not to use force to disperse the crowds of pro-Yushchenko supporters, the role of external mediators and of course the decisions taken by the Supreme Court of Ukraine were all determinant in allowing the "Orange Revolution" to exist in the first place. However, Yushchenko's victory lies first and foremost in the expression of people power.<sup>12</sup> Large demonstration of support for Yushchenko were essentially motivated by a global exasperation with rampant corruption and the willingness to enter Europe and its market economy. In

<sup>7</sup> James Sherr, "La révolution orange: un défi pour l'Ukraine, la Russie et l'Europe", *Politique étrangère*, No. 1, 2005, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> No need to say that actions taken by the new government to clean up corruption would sooner or later expose most of the oligarchs as well as some eminent figures from the former Kuchma regime to criminal prosecution.

<sup>9</sup> In November 2000, an audio tape provided by a former bodyguard of Kuchma apparently revealed the Ukrainian President's implication in the murder of the independent journalist Georgiy Gongadze, as well as his participation in other criminal activities involving also oligarchs and security services. The so-called "Gongadze affair" further tarnished Kuchma's popularity.

<sup>10</sup> For the official results of the elections, see the website of the Ukrainian Central Election Commission, <<http://www.cvk.gov.ua>>.

<sup>11</sup> It is widely recognized that Yanukovich, a representative of the powerful Donetsk clan in Eastern Ukraine, had been chosen by the oligarchs to succeed Kuchma as President.

<sup>12</sup> For a nice overview of the political context in Ukraine before the elections, see "Ukraine Before the Elections – What Will It Be Like?", *National Security and Defense* (Razumkov Centre), vol. 54, no. 6, 2004, pp. 2-15.

this respect, it is worth mentioning that Western aid to different groups supporting Yushchenko was also crucial to the victory of the Ukrainian opposition in the streets.<sup>13</sup> Since this popular support has been of key importance in finally achieving victory,<sup>14</sup> it will be hard for the new President to ignore the will of the voters who have stopped the former elite from falsifying a presidential election.

On 25 November 2004, the Ukrainian Supreme Court decided to determine the legality of the elections following an appeal from Yushchenko.<sup>15</sup> On 26 November, a mission lead by EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana<sup>16</sup> conducted joint talks with Prime Minister Yanukovich, Viktor Yushchenko, and President Kuchma. On 27 November, an important majority of the Ukrainian Parliament (*Verkhovna Rada*) approved a resolution calling the election illegal and passed a vote of no confidence in the Central Election Commission. This vote showed that the pro-regime majority in the Parliament was slowly bending to people pressure. As for the military and security structures, it was rather unclear in the beginning whether they would accept possible orders to use force against demonstrators. Leading figures in the security services were indeed held by people close to Viktor Medvedchuk, chief of the Presidential Administration. It seems that Yushchenko and his supporters finally managed to convince high-ranked officers not to use violence against protestors. In addition, some components of the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense also refused to follow instructions to use force and played a key role in ensuring the success of Yushchenko's movement. These various incidents eventually contributed to defections within the Yanukovich camp.

Yushchenko's victory will have consequences across the CIS and in Russia itself. On the economic side, the Single Economic Space would lose much of its weight without the Ukrainian participation. In addition, Ukraine's rapprochement towards Euro-Atlantic

structures not only irritates the Russian General Staff, it is also potentially detrimental to Putin's project of a Single Security Space in the CIS. Indeed, Putin has always tried to develop well-defined zones of Russian interest, while pursuing in parallel a partnership with the West. Critics of Russian foreign policy underline that Russian interference in Ukrainian domestic issues should not be seen as an isolated event. They believe indeed that Russian attempts to re-establish control in the former Soviet Union are also very explicit in Georgia and Moldova, where Moscow maintains military forces and supports armed separatist regimes. Yushchenko's success puts this whole policy into question. Although Russian concerns explain the intensity of the Kremlin's intervention in Ukrainian politics, Putin's decision to endorse Yanukovich,<sup>17</sup> by visiting Ukraine during the campaign, not only looked inappropriate, it finally resulted in a complete failure. However, the interpretation of Russia's relationship with Ukraine should not be limited to that of a power trying to exert influence on its neighbour for its own purposes.

#### Ukraine's Relations with Russia

From the very dawning of its independence, Ukraine had to deal with a multitude of very serious problems. One of them was the creation of institutions from the scratch in a nascent sovereign state. Another real problem was the need to define Ukraine's place on the international scene and to determine the orientation of its foreign policy. In doing so, Ukraine had firstly to decide the nature of its relations with Russia.<sup>18</sup> The two states not only share a long common history, but Russia also feels emotionally linked to Ukraine, insofar as it finds its historical origins in the ancient Kievan Rus'.<sup>19</sup> Therefore Russia and especially the Russian leadership found it hard to accept the developments following the disintegration of the USSR. There was a clear perception that Ukraine was seeking to establish a foreign policy independent from Moscow. At the same time, according to the Russian geopolitical thinking,

<sup>13</sup> No need to say that Russian officials, many of whom still consider Ukraine as some kind of "Russian province" and certainly not as an independent country were quite furious about what they perceived as Western neo-imperialism.

<sup>14</sup> See Grygoriy Nemyria, "Ukrainian End Game", *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, 30 November 2004.

<sup>15</sup> For more information on the re-run presidential election, see "At Last, President Yushchenko", *The Economist Global Agenda*, 5 January 2005. See also Adrian Karatnycky, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution", *Foreign Affairs*, March-April 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Apart from Javier Solana, Polish President Aleksandr Kwasniewski and Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus also served as mediators in several rounds of talks in Kyiv with President Kuchma and both candidates.

<sup>17</sup> It is important to note that a large number of Russian political consultants linked to the Kremlin advised Yanukovich's campaign.

<sup>18</sup> See Marta Dyczok, *Ukraine: Movement Without Change, Change Without Movement* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000), p. 142.

<sup>19</sup> For more information on the Kievan Rus', see Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 24. See also I. Froianov, *Kievskaja Rus: ocherki sotsialno-politicheskoj istorii* [Kievan Rus': Essays on Socio-political History], (Leningrad: Izdatelstvo Leningradskogo Universiteta, 1980).



maintaining Ukraine within its sphere of influence was crucial to ensure Russia's predominant role in its near abroad and to a greater extent to rebuild its superpower status. Indeed, Ukraine not only fell within Russian sphere of interests, but also soon became the most important country of the post-Soviet era.<sup>20</sup>

Not surprisingly, Ukraine's attempts to establish a West-orientated policy were considered by the Russian political elite and by most of the population as a betrayal to their common history. The relationship with Ukraine reached an all-time low in the course of the negotiations for the revision of the Black Sea Fleet and for the rights of the stationing of the armed forces in the Crimean peninsula. In both fields, Kyiv demonstrated its autonomy. It was only when Russia started to exert growing pressure that Ukraine agreed to moderate its stance. Many indeed feared that Ukraine would not be able to withstand the political and economic might of the big neighbour.<sup>21</sup> As for the recent Ukrainian presidential elections, there is no doubt that Russia considers the new leadership in Kyiv as antagonistic to Russian interests. Moscow basically considers the "Orange Revolution" as a Western-baked exported revolution. Even the charges of electoral fraud were seen by Russian officials as the Western intention to interfere in Ukraine's internal affairs and to gain influence in the post-Soviet space at Russia's expense.

We may note that under Putin's presidency, Russian policy towards Ukraine has become more pragmatic than during the Yeltsin's era. Instead of conducting vague talks on partnership, Russia has more and more focused on immediate requests such as the repayment of Ukrainian energy debt. In this difficult context, Ukraine tried inter alia to reduce its dependence on Russian oil by building a pipeline from Odessa to Brody in Poland. This pipeline will carry oil shipments from Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan to Western Europe, instead of pumping crude from Russia to the Black Sea port of Odessa. The Russian government also exerted pressure on Ukraine to hand over control of the Ukrainian pipeline system to Russian owned companies in payment for Ukraine's energy debts to Ukraine. The unresolved border issue between Russia

and Ukraine has further contributed to increase tensions. Moscow and Kyiv are still negotiating over this issue including the tiny island of Tuzla, as well as the use of the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait.

The improved relations with the European Union further reflected Ukraine's ambitions to defend its interests and to demonstrate its independence from the Russian Federation. The foundation of the GUUAM alliance,<sup>22</sup> designed to limit Russia's influence on the successor states of the former USSR, should be considered in the same context. In Moscow, the GUUAM was obviously considered as a hostile organisation acting against the interests of the Russian Federation. By the same token, Ukraine's approach towards NATO also fundamentally reflected its overall foreign and security policies aimed at seeking closer ties with the West while taking into account its special relationship with Russia.

### Ukraine's Relations with NATO

NATO-Ukraine relations have sustained a major crisis of confidence during the Kuchma era when this relationship was often instrumentalized for both political and geopolitical advantage. On the one hand, it was used to soften Western reactions to increasing autocratic trends in Ukraine; on the other it was helpful in rebuffing quite powerful pressures from Russia. Nevertheless, the Alliance recognized behind this political rhetoric a real Ukrainian determination to pursue Euro-Atlantic integration. Unlike Russia, the Ukrainian leadership never opposed the enlargement process or the possibility of a future NATO membership for Ukraine. The Atlantic Alliance therefore recommended the working out of new mechanisms and conditions based on the Charter of Special NATO-Ukraine partnership that would bring mutual relations to a higher level.

In this way, Ukraine's rapprochement towards NATO took another dimension. Mechanisms and procedures were set in place, especially for the so-called Defense Review,<sup>23</sup> where achievements are open for evaluation. Kyiv seemed to be first and foremost preoccupied by

<sup>20</sup> For analysis, see also Adrian Karatnycky, "The Ukrainian Factor", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 71, no. 3, Summer 1992.

<sup>21</sup> For this argument, see especially Paul J. D'Anieri, *Economic Interdependence in Ukrainian-Russian Relations* (New York: University of New York Press, 1999); and I. S. Koropec'kyj, *The Ukrainian Economy: Achievements, Problems, and Challenges* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

<sup>22</sup> The GUUAM gathers Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova. According to official statements, events in Georgia and Ukraine could lead Uzbekistan to pull out of GUUAM. Uzbekistan had previously suspended and then reaffirmed its membership in GUUAM.

<sup>23</sup> For a full picture of the current status of Ukrainian Defense Reform, see in particular the article drafted by *Global Security*: <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/ukraine/doctrine.htm>>. For a full overview, see the *Ukraine's Strategic Defense Bulletin until 2015* also called the *Defense White Paper*.

the development of military-political cooperation at a working level. In this context, Ukraine made indeed a significant contribution to NATO-led peace support operations by assigning several contingents of forces – by 2004 over 20,000 Ukrainian servicemen had served in peace support operations under the aegis of NATO or the UN. The crucial reform of the Defense sector has shed light on the difficulties that Ukraine currently faces. Ukraine's Armed Forces are still reluctant to accept the reality of democratic accountability and civilian democratic control, but at least they do accept the principle of it. No doubt that in the eyes of the authorities, Defence reform has brought real and tangible benefits to Ukraine. We should also not forget that the Ukrainian leadership tended to favour military cooperation with Euro-Atlantic security structures, at the expenses of other cooperation opportunities with Eurasian security structures such as within the CIS Collective Security Treaty. Kyiv also paid utmost attention to the NATO-Russia relationship. Indeed, the Ukrainian view was that NATO-Russia rapprochement might ease Moscow's stance with regard to an increased NATO-Ukraine relationship. Reciprocally, should Russia-NATO relationship break down and should Moscow strongly oppose Ukraine's integration efforts long before any real integration into NATO structures, Ukraine could be eventually compelled to put its NATO membership ambitions aside.

On the Western side, despite Ukraine's pro-NATO policy, the Alliance initially seemed to pay little attention to Ukraine and its security concerns. Russia remained the Allies' focal point of attention, something that only further raised Ukrainian security concerns. Obviously, in a post 9/11 world, NATO had also probably more pressing and more immediate preoccupations than Ukraine. This perceived lack of Western interest also added to the necessity of pursuing closer economic and political links with Russia – especially in the energy and trade matters – and made it difficult for Ukraine to embark on a strict pro-Western path.<sup>24</sup> For Moscow, this was a very effective way to hinder its little brother's Euro-Atlantic integration and to increase its dependence on Russia.<sup>25</sup> While the mechanisms of working level cooperation between NATO and Ukraine are very effective, the political will required to move this

relationship forward from “distinctive partnership” to “accession” may not be forthcoming in the short term. In this respect, the results of the 2004 NATO Istanbul Summit were considered with great frustration by the Ukrainian authorities. The final Istanbul communiqué did not raise the question of Membership Action Plan and referred instead to the so-called NATO-Ukraine Action Plan adopted two years before at the Prague Summit. Moreover, Ukraine was not even cited in the section on Open Door Policy, but merely mentioned after a paragraph on NATO-Russia cooperation,<sup>26</sup> which was perceived in many official circles as insulting. NATO's denial to recognise Ukraine's aspirations and efforts by holding out the promise of eventual access to the MAP was in a way echoing EU's cool attitude towards Ukraine.

### Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

The goal of fully integrating Ukraine into the West, while certainly ambitious, is not necessarily any more ambitious than the objectives the West has pursued and achieved over the last decade. In addition, the strategic benefits that would result from anchoring Ukraine in the West are considerable. When one considers the strategic challenges the West must confront in the years ahead, we would definitely gain from tackling them with a pro-Western democratic Ukraine on our side. This could possibly happen now that there is a new vision and leadership in Ukraine as well as apparently a renewed commitment in the West to making this country's integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures a major priority. In addition, serious discussions are starting to emerge in the West over how it could and should develop a more coherent policy towards the Black Sea region. In this respect, Ukraine could also have a positive impact for the global region. In addition to extending the borders of integration and stability further eastward directly to Russia's own borders, Ukraine's success could have a positive impact in the area, transforming this region into a new group of democratic and reform-minded states. A democratized Ukraine would also give the West an enhanced capacity from which to radiate its political influence and stability into the Caucasus and further into Central Asia.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> For this argument, see inter alia Vicken Cheterian, “Le pendule ukrainien”, *Le Monde diplomatique*, October 2004, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> See also Yaroslav Bilinsky, *Endgame in NATO's Enlargement: The Baltic States and Ukraine* (London: Praeger Publishers, 1999), p. 36.

<sup>26</sup> See *Istanbul Summit Communiqué*, issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council, NATO Press Release, 28 June 2004, paragraph 40.

<sup>27</sup> Ronald D. Asmus, “A Strategy for Integrating Ukraine into the West”, *Central and Eastern Europe Series*, Conflict Studies Research Centre, UK Ministry of Defence, April 2004, p. 2.

It would have been difficult to imagine any kind of fresh start without a radical and legitimate change of the leadership in the country. The West would not have seriously increased its commitment and assistance to Kyiv without clear signs of the political will within Ukraine to change itself. A true commitment to democratisation was even more essential as the West had lost much of its goodwill with regard to Ukraine. Western capitals had indeed become frustrated with the behaviour of the former leadership in Kyiv and had merely given up any real expectation from Ukraine in the field of democratisation. After a long period of "Ukraine fatigue", we should perhaps review and expand our definition of Europe to explicitly include and work for the perspective of Ukraine. A successfully democratized and anchored Ukraine is a very good incentive and guarantee that Russia will not again succumb to the imperial temptation in its relations with Europe and the West. This point deserves to be underscored at a time when there is a growing concern and debate in the West over whether Russia's experiment with democracy has possibly failed and whether Moscow is not turning into a political regime of authoritarian nature. Analysts worry indeed that a weak or unstable Ukraine could fall under Russian domination or become a focus of conflict between Russia and the West.

Now that Yushchenko has taken office, the EU will be faced with the issue of whether to revitalize its relationship with Ukraine, including whether to offer the possibility of membership. The EU Neighbourhood Policy involving countries such as Ukraine does not include any prospect of membership and President Yushchenko's intention to sign an association agreement with the EU by 2007 seems for the time rather unrealistic. Some EU countries, with the notable exception of Poland and the Baltic States, are still very much concerned by the reaction of Moscow in case of possible membership for Ukraine. Furthermore, most EU members just do not want Ukraine to become a candidate for EU membership in the near future, given its slow progress on political and economic reforms. In addition, the EU has still to digest recently integrated countries and is still struggling with Turkey's possible future accession.

In terms of its relations with NATO, Ukraine should perhaps consider the proposal for intermittent joint sessions of the NATO-Russia Council and the NATO-Ukraine Commission especially on issues such as the fight against international terrorism. Ukraine's participation in Operation Active Endeavour provides rationale *per se* for closer cooperation on this matter. As for actual membership, it depends above all on Ukraine's reform efforts. It is thus up to Ukrainian authorities to determine how quickly to achieve progress should they wish to be considered a credible candidate for NATO membership. Reforming the state is undoubtedly at the heart of any recommendation. Steady economic growth is the engine behind Ukraine's recent successes, but the state remains a failure. Political reform making democracy a reality and the implementation of the rule of law should become immediate priorities. A clear division of powers needs to be pursued and decision makers must finally be made accountable. A functioning public administration deprived of persistent corruption must be created and civil servants should receive decent salaries instead of living on eventual bribes. Another way to fight corruption also consists in suppressing the numerous loopholes in the different permits required to conduct business, and eventually to pursue the privatisation process.

In parallel, new Eastern member states can also play a significant role in the development of NATO-Ukraine relations. As former members of the Soviet bloc, the Visegrad countries have a good grasp of the issues Ukraine has to face. Moreover, the fact that they have come through the transformation process earlier than Ukraine means that they are in a perfect position to share their expertise on post-Soviet political transformation and the implementation of reforms. NATO should perhaps consider the possibility to facilitate this process with different kinds of assistance. 2005 will be a key year for Ukraine's destiny. It will be the beginning of a new political period after Leonid Kuchma's presidency. It will be of paramount importance that the new political configuration will carry out a consistent and resolute policy designed at integrating Euro-Atlantic structures.

## NATO DEFENSE COLLEGE PUBLICATIONS

Full electronic version of NDC Publications is available at the following addresses:  
web site: [www.ndc.nato.int](http://www.ndc.nato.int), e-mail: [research@ndc.nato.int](mailto:research@ndc.nato.int)

### Next Issues

#### RESEARCH PAPERS

- NATO and EU in crisis management
- NDC Senior Course 105 Best Research
- On North Africa

#### OCCASIONAL PAPERS

*Security Strategies: NATO, the United States and the European Union*

#### SEMINAR PROCEEDINGS

*Common Security Interests and Challenges in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, 7<sup>th</sup> Mediterranean Dialogue International Research Seminar, Rome, 29-30 November 2004*

#### FELLOWS RESEARCH

*Gheorghe CIASCAI, Quelle approche pour l'OTAN dans les Balkans à la lumière des tendances sécuritaires régionales?*

### Previous Issues

#### RESEARCH PAPERS

##### No. 14, December 2004

- Cees M. COOPS, *Editorial*
- Gheorghe CIASCAI, *Quelle approche pour l'OTAN dans les Balkans à la lumière des évolutions de la sécurité dans la région?*

##### No. 15, February 2005

- Cees M. COOPS, *Editorial*
- Peter R. FABER, *Thinking about Geography: Some Competing Geopolitical Models for the 21st Century*
- Vasile SECĂREȘ, *The New Strategic and Security Landscape of Southeast Europe: The Case for a Wider Black Sea Area*

##### No. 16, March 2005

- Jean DUFOURCQ, *Editorial*
- Şule NIŞANCI, *Turkey's Role in NATO in the Post-Cold War Security Environment*

#### OCCASIONAL PAPERS

##### No. 2, September 2004

*After Istanbul: A Preliminary Assessment*

##### No. 3, November 2004

*Fighting Terrorism: Financial and Economic Aspects*

##### No. 4, November 2004

*The Mediterranean and the Middle East*

#### SEMINAR PROCEEDINGS

##### July 2004

*The South Caucasus: Promoting Values through Cooperation, 13<sup>th</sup> Partnership for Peace International Research Seminar, Helsinki, May 2004.*

#### FELLOWS RESEARCH

##### November 2004

*Pavel NECAS, Beyond Tradition: New Alliance's Strategic Concept*