



**B | S | T** The Black Sea Trust  
for Regional Cooperation  
A PROJECT OF THE GERMAN MARSHALL FUND

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# **FOREIGN POLICY AUDIT:**



**UKRAINE-  
USA**

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Presidential Administration,  
Verkhovna Rada,  
Cabinet of Ministers

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

During the last two years, Ukraine has consistently been among the top 5 priorities of foreign and security policy of the US. President Obama admitted during private talks with the Prime Minister of Ukraine that no bilateral partner had have not been taken as much of his attention during the past twenty months as Ukraine, except Syria.

The prominence of the Ukrainian issue has been stipulated by crises rather than interests. There is a risk that in the future Ukraine is unlikely to get as much attention from the US as it had in the past two years, unless there is another wave of escalation of violence or Ukraine fails to become an obvious “success story.”

The Ukrainian government should assess the importance of Ukraine to the United States realistically. There should be a clear understanding that Washington views Ukraine primarily in a wider European context. United States has no vital interest that cannot be ensured without Ukraine. Russian aggression against Ukraine is usually not considered a direct existential threat to the United States – except for the threat that it poses to the post Cold War European security architecture.

The United States-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership, signed during the last months of the previous US administration, clearly states that “cooperation between our two democracies is based on shared values and interests.”<sup>1</sup>

However, currently shared values are voiced in the bilateral dialogue much clearer than shared interests. Washington and Kyiv have practically reached the limit in terms of political rhetoric, top-level summits and important symbols<sup>2</sup>. Implementation of the strategic partnership mentioned in the Charter also requires articulation of realistic interests of both parties in the short, medium and long term

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1 *United States-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership, December 20, 2008, <http://ukraine.usembassy.gov/strategic-partnership.html>*

2 *Are Ukraine and the U.S. allies or not? Reuters, January 13, 2015, <http://in.reuters.com/article/rojansky-ukraine-idINL1N0YY23820150612>*

perspective in order to identify common ground and work in this direction. Otherwise, the Ukrainian-American partnership can better be described in a form of patronage.

The objective of this analysis is to go beyond the crisis management diplomacy and analyze Ukraine's current interests towards the United States and the US interests towards Ukraine.

The interests of Ukraine toward the US that are expressed by Kyiv are as follows:

- 1) security and military-technical cooperation with the United States that would allow Ukraine to become an important security ally of the US in the region in the long term perspective;
- 2) US assistance with implementation of reforms, including supervision over a certain block of reforms (police, prosecution office, customs service) in close coordination with the EU member states;
- 3) international facilitation by the US in deterring Russian aggression, including coordination of sanction regime against Russia;
- 4) financial support, including through the international financial institutions and primarily the IMF;
- 5) US assistance in strengthening the energy security of Ukraine. "More US in Ukraine" is the long term vision of the Ukrainian diplomacy.

The United States outlined two key interests regarding Ukraine. The basis for the first is that the importance of Ukraine is not Ukraine itself. The main interest of the United States is reflected in a principle of "Europe whole, free and at peace," and Ukraine is currently an important element for the implementation of this principle. Ukraine is important to the US since European security matters. The second interest is Ukraine as a model of successful reforms and democratic development for other countries in the region, especially Russia. Thus, it is also not only about Ukraine but about the regional dimension, where Ukraine is a crucial piece of the puzzle.

Therefore, concurrence of security interests and the role of the US in promoting reforms in Ukraine is apparent. However, it should be emphasized that both sides have different understandings and prioritizations of security challenges for Ukraine. While the US views corruption as a paramount security challenge, Ukraine deems Russian aggression as the top priority.

There is a difference in what each side is looking for from the other to build trust. The American side is looking to Ukraine to fulfill the obligations related to fighting against corruption, whereas Kyiv is looking to the US to protect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine.

There should be more focus on the economic dimension of relations. The visible presence of American investors in Ukraine could substantially contribute to the realization of other interests, including security.

The following analysis presents the key interests of Ukraine in terms of their relevance for the short and medium-term US and Ukraine agenda.

## 2. UKRAINE AS A PARTNER AND THE US AS AN ALLY

“The US is safety.” This approach has been prevailing in the Ukrainian governmental circles for years and still remains dominant. Already today, Ukraine views the US as an ally and in the long term sees itself as one of the key allies of the US in the region. Ukraine lacks an understanding of the fact that the “ally” status is not an element of political rhetoric for the US.

The US views Ukraine not as an ally, but as a partner. In the long term, Washington sees Ukraine more integrated into the European and Euro-Atlantic space; however, there is no clear vision of how Ukraine should be strategically placed between Russia and the West. This does not automatically mean Ukraine’s membership in the EU and NATO.

Moreover, some members of the US foreign policy establishment name integration into European political and economic space among the important, but not sufficient, and even not obligatory conditions for constructive relations with the US. For instance, Armenia’s relations with the US were not affected by the fact that Yerevan refused to sign the Association Agreement with the EU.

The temptation to view Ukraine as a bridge that separates NATO and anti-NATO (i.e. Russia) by a safe distance is observed not only among the representatives of the American school of realism. It is symptomatic that Ukraine is described as a bridge between Russia and Europe in the latest book by Hillary Clinton, the presumptive Presidential nominee of the Democratic party<sup>3</sup>.

Is the US an ally or only a partner for Ukraine? Since the occupation of Crimea and part of Donbas, this question is, and most likely will remain, a major irritant in the security dialogue. It is in the interest of both states to make this dialogue as constructive as possible.

The logic of Ukrainian side stipulates that the United States should have been the first international partner of Kyiv to stand up for the

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<sup>3</sup> *Hillary Rodham Clinton, Hard Choices, Simon&Shuster paperbacks, 2015, p. 216.*

territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine with regard to the US role in the initiation of the process of the nuclear disarmament of Ukraine and the signing of the Budapest Memorandum. It is important to emphasize that the Budapest Memorandum is a document signed by the presidents of both states (President Clinton on behalf of the United States) while the US-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership has been signed at the level of the Foreign Minister of Ukraine and the US State Secretary.

The US and Ukraine have different visions regarding commitments under the Budapest Memorandum. Many Ukrainian officials (not to mention the ordinary Ukrainians) were surprised that the Budapest Memorandum was not about security guarantees for Ukraine, but only about security assurances. It contains not the legal, but political commitments, implemented through appropriate consultations.

Such consultations were first initiated in Paris (unsuccessfully, due to the destructive position of the Russian side) and then held in Geneva. Some experts suggest to consider American assistance in strengthening the defensive capabilities of Ukraine, as well as initiation, maintenance and coordination of sanctions against Russia with international partners as an implementation of the Budapest Memorandum. No other document other than the Budapest Memorandum urges Washington to provide such assistance. The Budapest Memorandum grants the US political and moral obligation to be involved in the process of conflict resolution, and assist Ukraine/. This should be voiced more clearly in both international context and dialogue with the new US administration. Considering the aid which was already provided, it becomes obvious that among all signatories of the Budapest Memorandum, the US takes it the most seriously.

From the Ukrainian side, the performance of the US in fulfilling its commitments under the Budapest Memorandum is questionable since Washington failed to respond promptly and properly to the threat of violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. One of the symbols of this failure is the fact that the White House could not make a positive decision on the issue of providing lethal defensive weapons to Ukraine, albeit it left the door open.



Among the key reasons why the decision of the US administration to provide lethal defensive arms remains suspended are:

- a) the inability of supporters to convince President Obama that such a move would not provoke Putin to undertake further escalation. The argument that “Ukraine assumes the risk of escalation” voiced by Ukrainian side during talks with American partners has not been taken seriously by the White House;
- b) concerns that providing Ukraine with lethal armaments would be a serious risk of loss of the transatlantic unity, including united position towards anti-Russian sanctions;
- c) a lack of confidence in the Ukrainian army and its ability to minimize the risks that the weapons would fall into hands of Russian-separatist groups due to high level of corruption.

In regards to the issue of providing weapons to Ukraine, the US and Ukraine have different tasks: while Washington tries to do everything possible to avoid the involvement in a hybrid war with Russia, Kyiv is seeking to get not only the lethal weapons but also a political message that “America stands with Ukraine.”

There are reasons to believe that the issue of arming Ukraine with lethal defensive armaments will fare better under the next US administration, but will remain quite controversial. The next US President will have hard time making such decision due to the number of factors, including the key one, avoiding open confrontation with Russia. It is worth mentioning that the members of the Democratic Party are much more skeptical towards providing weapons to Ukraine than the Republicans. It is indicative that only 39% of members of the Democratic Party support provision of armaments, while among the Republicans, the rate of support is 60%<sup>4</sup>. At the same time, granted that Donald Trump will be nominated as a Republican candidate in the general election, it becomes increasingly unlikely that the beliefs

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<sup>4</sup> *Republicans and Democrats sharply divided on how tough to be with Russia*, Pew Research Center, June 15, 2015, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/06/15/republicans-and-democrats-sharply-divided-on-how-tough-to-be-with-russia/>

of Republican voters to supply lethal weapons to Ukraine will be converted into action by the White House.

The issue of provision of lethal weapons is not the only stumbling point in the security dialogue between Ukraine and the United States. Other sensitive issues include granting Ukraine the status of a Major Non-NATO Ally, or MNNA, which is virtually removed from the agenda, and signing a bilateral security agreement between Ukraine and the US (similar to those that the United States has with South Korea and Japan). Both ideas have been considered irrelevant by the US, which has created another irritant in Ukraine's dialogue with Washington. Obviously, the key issue is US reluctance to take on new commitments to protect the territorial integrity of Ukraine amidst the open aggression by Russia.

The formal explanations of the impossibility to provide Ukraine with the MNNA status are as follows:

- 1) Ukraine has announced its intention to integrate into NATO, and the United States does not rule out Ukraine's membership in NATO in the long term, which means that the United States regards Ukraine as an eventual ally within NATO, not outside;
- 2) MNNA status has been introduced for the states that are geographically located outside the North Atlantic region;
- 3) Ukraine exaggerates the benefits of MNNA<sup>5</sup> status (they are basically limited to obtaining military aid from the US under a simplified procedure; MNNA status of course does not provide legally binding security guarantees). For almost 27 years, the status has been provided to only 15 states, and there are constant debates on the reasonability of granting it to some of them (such as Pakistan and Egypt).

As for bilateral security agreement, the most common argument is that such agreements are the result of historic partnerships with certain countries, and have been concluded under different historical

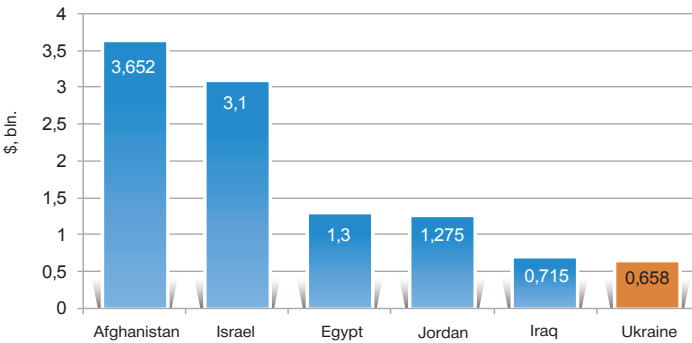
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<sup>5</sup> *Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA), Global Security, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/dod/mnna.htm>*

conditions. It is unlikely that a new US administration would have a significantly different position on a bilateral security agreement with Ukraine that would provide any new assurances in addition to the ones under the Budapest Memorandum, even if there were some alternative statements during the election campaign.

Nonetheless, we should admit the substantial progress on the behalf of the current US administration on the issue of military and technical assistance to Ukraine. After the annexation of Crimea, the majority of aid what was requested by Kyiv was discussed within the National Security Council of the United States in terms of whether that aid is “too military.”<sup>6</sup> As of 2016, Ukraine is the sixth top recipient of American military aid worldwide<sup>7</sup> (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** Top recipients of the US aid in 2016



**Source:** *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016*

<sup>6</sup> *How the Obama White House runs foreign policy*, *The Washington Post*, August 4, 2015. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/how-the-obama-white-house-runs-foreign-policy/2015/08/04/2befb960-2fd7-11e5-8353-1215475949f4\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/how-the-obama-white-house-runs-foreign-policy/2015/08/04/2befb960-2fd7-11e5-8353-1215475949f4_story.html)

<sup>7</sup> *Ivan Medynskyi, “U.S. Lethal Weapons for Ukraine: Mechanisms and Consequences”; policy brief, Institute of World Policy, <http://iwp.org.ua/eng/public/1890.html>*

The asymmetry in expectations of both sides about the format of the US aid has also decreased. From the start, the United States has emphasized the role of people and institutions (training and education, fighting corruption, strengthening civil society control), while Ukraine has been expecting weapons. Today Ukraine shows more awareness regarding the importance of training and joint exercises than in the earlier days of the aggression in the Eastern regions. Even the most ardent American supporters of providing lethal (including anti-tank) weapons to Ukraine admit that the training is more important for the Ukrainian army's capacity to defend their country than weapons<sup>8</sup>.

***From the start, the United States has emphasized the role of people and institutions (training and education, fighting corruption, strengthening civil society control), while Ukraine has been expecting weapons***

The change in focus of the dialogue with the US from providing weapons to Ukraine and towards joint defense production is equally important.

Within two years since the annexation of Crimea, the United States provided Ukraine with 266 million dollars of military and security aid. This year, another 335 million dollars in training and equipment are expected. The new aid provided by the US Congress will help to expand the training in Yavoriv and Khmelnytsky as well as provide military equipment to enhance defensive capabilities of Ukraine<sup>9</sup>. The main advice to Ukraine from the US is to be a reliable partner. So far, the Americans have concluded that defense reform is being implemented much more slowly than expected. Attention is drawn to the significant difference in approaches between the civilian and military staff.

In 2016, the effectiveness of cooperation between Ukraine and the United States in terms of security and defense reform will be

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<sup>8</sup> *The Javelins should be provided in the peacetime – ex-advisor on the Head of the Pentagon, March 12, 2016, Radio Svoboda, <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/content/article/27584679.html#hash=popupRepublish>*

<sup>9</sup> *Remarks by Ambassador Pyatt at 2016 Ukraine Defense and Security Forum, February 18, 2016, <http://ukraine.usembassy.gov/statements/pyatt-inercon-02182016.html>*

measured by how the parties will move from the “emergency” military assistance to the development of Ukrainian specialized institutions according to NATO standards.

During the last two years, Ukraine has been actively positioning itself as a victim of aggression that requires aid from the whole world, especially from the US. Instead, for the sake of development of strategic partnership with the United States, Ukraine should act not only as a consumer of security but also as a security provider.

Ukraine has a unique practical experience in the hybrid war with Russia. Ukrainian military officers who have received that experience in Donbas are of great interest to American partners<sup>10</sup>. Ukraine could convert that experience into initiating joint military exercises with all partners interested in studying it, especially with those who consider Russian hybrid warfare as a real threat.

Since European security as a whole, and not the security of Ukraine alone, is the main US priority, Ukraine should develop and propose a package of proposals beyond only deterring Russia off the Eastern border of Ukraine. For instance, Ukraine could contribute to managing the inflow of refugees from the Middle East. The Ukrainian route could become at least a partial alternative to the Balkans route for some refugees.

The American partners continually emphasize the importance of Ukraine’s contribution to peacekeeping operations and missions worldwide. It seems that they appreciate that contribution even more than the Ukrainians themselves. However, the conflict in Eastern Ukraine demonstrated that the very units that had been involved in multinational military exercises and NATO-led operations showed the best level of training and efficiency (e.g. the 95th Airmobile Brigade). The American partners expect that Ukraine will continue to be an active contributor to international peacekeeping missions.

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<sup>10</sup> *Department of Defense Press Briefing by Gen. Breedlove in the Pentagon Briefing Room, March 1, 2016, <http://www.defense.gov/News/News-Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/683817/department-of-defense-press-briefing-by-gen-breedlove-in-the-pentagon-briefing>*

Ukraine has become the biggest success story in the US policy on nuclear disarmament. Despite the fact that the so-called Nunn-Lugar program has ceased to exist, it is important for Ukraine to demonstrate its commitment to the process of nuclear disarmament. For the US, it is important that nuclear technology in Ukraine not fall in the wrong hands. Kyiv should use every chance to remind the world that Ukraine gave up almost 2,000 strategic nuclear warheads in exchange for Russia's assurances to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and therefore, deserves the support of the West. Moreover, Ukraine has fulfilled its obligations under the 2010 Nuclear Security Summit in Washington (which was under Obama's administration term) to withdraw highly enriched uranium from its territory. Ukrainian officials should also emphasize that Russia's actions have completely discredited the very concept of security assurances, and therefore, in the future, formats similar to the Budapest Memorandum cannot be an instrument to address the issue of global nuclear nonproliferation.

Today, it is important for Ukraine to prevent the imposition of the political and populist discourse of restoring its nuclear weapons capability. This step would have no added value; however, it would likely push the dialogue with the US towards a destructive course.

## 2.1. THE US AS A FACILITATOR OF INTERNATIONAL UNITY

A position that "Ukraine is a part of Europe, and therefore, Europe has to take care of it" has been a common trend towards Ukraine in Washington for some time. In talks, American officials and experts admit that Ukraine is a case where geography is really crucial. However, Ukraine should explain that only through transatlantic synergy can the world counteract the two key challenges facing Ukraine: deterring Russian aggression and transforming itself into a functional democratic state.

The United States is not directly involved in the negotiation process to resolve the conflict between Ukraine and Russia. The question of what has caused the suspension of direct US involvement in the negotiations during consultations in Geneva (whether it was just

Russia's unwillingness or unpreparedness of the USA itself) has no clear answer in the US capital. There are reasons to believe that it is not only Russia's unwillingness to see the US as a party of the negotiation process but also US' reluctance to be directly involved in the negotiation format. Therefore, any appeals from the Ukrainian side about the need to involve the US in the negotiations do not sound reasonable.

American partners claim that delegating of conflict resolution to Germany has occurred naturally. For the US, it was important to have Germany, not the EU as a whole, to play a key role in this process. Besides, only the direct involvement of German (and French) leaders in talks with Putin allowed Chancellor Merkel and President Hollande to understand the level of the "negotiability" of the Russian president and his determination to proceed with his revisionist agenda.

Another possible reason for the delegation of the negotiation process on Ukraine to Germany may be related to the legacy of Barack Obama as President. The Ukrainian issue may be considered too complex to be effectively resolved by the end of Obama's second term. Thus, it was seen as appropriate to focus on issues with greater prospects for progress: in particular, Iran's nuclear program, or the resumption of relations with Cuba.

The US line of conduct towards Ukraine is set until the end of Obama's term: the Administration seeks to avoid another wave of escalation in Eastern Ukraine and try to press for progress on implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

The involvement of the US in the new negotiation formats and initiatives on Ukraine will remain questionable for the next administration as well, given the very complexity and duration of resolution of the conflict between Ukraine and Russia, the inability to achieve an apparent victory over Putin's regime, isolationist attitudes in the US, etc.

The involvement of Washington in negotiating the de-occupation of Crimea under a "Geneva Plus" format (an idea developed by the Ukrainian side that has already held preliminary consultations on that issue with the American partners) is also challenged. The United

States might be interested in this process due to the threat of militarization of Crimea for security in the Black Sea region, including the technical possibilities for placement of the elements of Russian nuclear weapons on the peninsula. Such a scenario would turn Ukraine back into a nuclear power, thus negating all long-term efforts on nuclear disarmament of Ukraine.

***It is critical for Kyiv to ensure not only the US' involvement in the negotiation format on Ukraine but also the participation of Ukraine itself***

It is critical for Kyiv to ensure not only the US' involvement in the negotiation format on Ukraine but also the participation of Ukraine itself. Despite the transparency of the American side and their willingness to keep Ukrainian partners informed on the course and content of negotiations

between the US and Russia, a parallel US-Russia negotiating track on Ukraine does not increase the level of confidence and constructibility of Ukrainian-American relations. Even if the US has no intention to decide the fate of Ukraine behind its back, the Russian side has been having such intention from the very beginning, as evidenced by a number of statements by Russian officials on the need to negotiate on Ukraine with Washington, not Kyiv.

Actually, that is the reason why the Ukrainian reaction to the Nuland-Surkov parallel track could not be a priori positive, despite the intentions of the American side. This format has also not found a proper understanding in Berlin and Paris; its relationship to the Normandy format is unclear. The added value of this negotiation track has been questioned via diplomatic channels. Therefore, there are reasons to believe that the meeting between Surkov and Nuland in Kaliningrad was the final one. In the medium term, any format involving deals behind Ukraine's back is doomed to failure. The confidence of the Ukrainian leadership towards the United States is largely based on US transparency regarding its dialogue with Russia on Ukrainian issue.

The role of the US in facilitating unity on the Ukrainian issue among the European allies is much more critical. Primarily, it is about coordination of the issue of maintaining and, if necessary, the continuing the sanctions. Since the beginning of Russian aggression, the approach of the American side has been clear: any American sanctions without European sanctions would strengthen, not



weaken Putin. In the case of some EU member states (e.g. Italy), the position of the US has been and remains very significant. Ukraine should understand that this support should not be taken for granted, especially amidst the aggravation of the crisis of solidarity within the EU and weakening of Angela Merkel's position. The attitude of the United States is also an important factor in the continuation of sanctions against Russia in June 2016.

Due to American well-developed horizontal diplomacy, virtually every US ambassador in the EU member states has a good command of the Ukrainian dossier. The ambassadors of Ukraine to the EU should establish regular contact with their American counterparts (in some EU states such dialogue has been already launched, and it is quite effective in strengthening Ukrainian positions). The coordinating visits to the EU capitals conducted by Daniel Fried, the sanction policy coordinator of the US Department of State, also have played an important role.

The US is an important facilitator in Europe in regards to strengthening the energy security of Ukraine. The American side has a clear stance on the fundamentally political, not economic, orientation of Nord Stream-2 and the risks it poses to certain Central and Eastern European states. Another important role played by the US has been its dialogue with individual European states on establishing the process of reverse-flow natural gas deliveries to Ukraine. This allowed Ukraine, for the first time, to significantly strengthen its independence from the direct supply of gas from Russia.

The position of the American side is significant in terms of further support for Ukraine by international financial institutions, including the IMF. So far, the IMF program has proven to be the most powerful motivator of reforms in Ukraine since after the Revolution of Dignity.

The US is also an important facilitator of unity on the Ukrainian issue within the G7. At certain stage, the American side has played an important role in consolidating the position of Japan towards Russia (in particular, the de facto cancellation of the visit of Vladimir Putin to Tokyo).

## 2. 2. THE US AS A SUPERVISOR FOR REFORMS

US support for Ukraine is contingent on the Ukrainian government demonstrating the willingness to implement reforms. This is evident in Washington, but not sufficiently evident in Kyiv. There is a lack of awareness among Ukrainian authorities that it is not sufficient to be a victim of Russian aggression and a “pro-European” government; it is critically important to be a very “pro-reform” government to ensure constructive cooperation with the US. The “pro-European” politicians have already been in power in Ukraine after the Orange Revolution; however, that failed to transform Ukraine. Today, it is crucial to prevent another wave of disappointment with Ukraine in Washington, as in such case this disappointment will be much stronger than the one after Orange Revolution due to much higher expectations and the price that Ukraine has paid for the chance to return to the track of reforms.

For a long time, Ukraine has been managing to cultivate the image in the United States, of a sympathetic misfit with noble intentions and constant failures thus attracting sympathy. Now that misfit image is threatened to be overcome by a loser image that will not gain American sympathy. Americans like winners. To remain in sight of the interests of the United States, Ukraine has to prove that it can be a winner. It can become a winner only by demonstrating the wonders of reforms. In turn, wonders of reforms are only possible within political consolidation, not political chaos.

***While the confidence of Ukrainian side towards the US is shaped by the US' dialogue on Ukraine with Russia, the confidence of American side towards Ukraine is influenced by the impact of the fight against corruption***

The United States considers the current government of Ukraine to be more motivated for reforms than the previous one, but not motivated enough in terms of their commitments before the Revolution of Dignity and Ukrainian

needs. Washington believes that Ukrainian side's tendency not to take seriously the concern of Washington on the pace of reforms, especially in regard to the fight against corruption, is a serious mistake. Furthermore, in the view of Washington, the Ukrainian side's confidence that the American side does not notice the enrichment of a number of key political stakeholders in Ukraine is a short-sighted

position. While the confidence of Ukrainian side towards the US is shaped by the US' dialogue on Ukraine with Russia, the confidence of American side towards Ukraine is influenced by the impact of the fight against corruption.

The capacity of the Ukrainian leadership for practical implementation of a strong anti-corruption program will be crucial for relations with the United States, regardless of the American administration. Obviously, no state in the world focuses or invests as much of their own political capital into the fight against corruption in Ukraine as the United States does. American support is not limited to political statements; it also has specific practical dimension. The US has, for example, delegated advisors from the Internal Revenue Service to Ukraine to work with the National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU). Furthermore, an anti-corruption expert from the FBI is consulting the NABU. The US also provides 500,000 dollars for the establishment of the case management system and development of evidence base grounded in the American experience, which will be transferred to the NABU and the Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's office<sup>11</sup>.

Corruption is seen in Washington as the main reason for the extremely difficult situation in Ukraine. American officials

***American officials believe that corruption is the main reason that has made Ukraine a victim of Russian aggression two years ago***

believe that corruption is the main reason that has made Ukraine a victim of Russian aggression two years ago.

There is a great risk that the fight against corruption will also be a test of Ukraine's willingness to develop a strategic partnership with the US. Establishing and launching anti-corruption institutions is not sufficient to pass this test. Fighting corruption on terms of the US should be based on principles that are reduced to three Ps: prevent, publicize, punish. The major problem in Ukraine, according to the US, is the third P, punishment. During the Ukraine-US Business Forum, in July 2015, the Vice President of the US openly appealed to the

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<sup>11</sup> Remarks by Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt at the Dragon Capital Investment Conference Panel Discussion "Ukrainian Civil Society and the Fight against Corruption", March 10, 2016, <http://ukraine.usembassy.gov/statements/ambpyatt-dragon-capital-invest-03102016.html>

Prime Minister of Ukraine: “This is it, Arseniy... Ukraine has a strategy and new laws to fight corruption. Now you’ve got to put people in jail.”<sup>12</sup> Vice President Biden repeated and strengthened his signal later, during his stay in Kyiv and his speech in the Parliament. The fact that the Vice President had to resort to such rhetoric (to put people in jail) indicates the lack of indicators for the successful fight against corruption on the Ukrainian side.

The Ukrainian side, in turn, is dissatisfied with American side’s tendency for excessive personalization of the reform process, and public division of Ukrainian officials and politicians on “reformers” and “corrupt ones.” An illustrative example is focusing attention on Victor Shokin, positioned by the United States as a major obstacle to fighting corruption. Ukrainian sources believe that the emphasis should be made not on staff-related matters or individual personalities, but on general principles: transparency, accountability, etc.

In the general context of reforms, since the end of Yanukovych’s regime, the United States has allocated 2 billion dollars of loan guarantees and almost 760 million dollars on security, programmatic, and technical assistance for Ukraine. During Biden’s visit to Kyiv, it was announced that after consultation with Congress, the White House plans to allocate approximately 190 million dollars of new aid to support the ambitious program of reforms in Ukraine. This broad package, according to the American side, would help Ukraine:

- **Strengthen the fight against corruption** through reform of the law enforcement and justice systems;
- **Attract investments** through simplification of the rules and transparent privatization of state enterprises;
- **Activate economic growth** through improvement of trade capacity and access to capital for the SMEs;

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<sup>12</sup> *Brian Bonner: Biden says Ukraine needs ‘to put people in jail’, Kyiv Post, July, 17, 2015, <http://www.kyivpost.com/opinion/op-ed/biden-ukraine-needs-to-put-people-in-jail-393668.html>*

- **Strengthen energy security** through increasing efficiency, transparency, and stability in the energy sector;
- **Establish a long-term democratic foundation** through constitutional reforms and public administration reforms in key areas<sup>13</sup>.

The priorities outlined by the US clearly demonstrate that focus will remain on fighting corruption, especially in the law enforcement and justice systems.

As of today, the US is the only state in the world that has managed to create a success story in the reform process, visible for Ukrainian society in two years after the Maidan, through assistance in launching the patrol police reform in Ukraine. The United States has provided 15 million dollars of financing and assisted in the selection, training, and equipment of the new patrol police. Thirty active patrol police officers from Nevada, Texas, Ohio, and California have been recruited as trainers and mentors for Ukrainian road patrols.

There is a niche in supervision on other reforms in Ukraine for the US in close coordination with the EU. For instance, in the reform of the Customs Service, which is (along with the police) one of the most evident symbols of corruption in Ukraine. This supervision is vital, as it allows the partners of Ukraine to experience the co-ownership of certain reforms in the state. However, it requires political and institutional readiness of Ukrainian government as a whole, rather than individual agents of change within it.

The successful example of the United States in facilitating reforms in Ukraine is motivating other Western countries, including the EU member states that are also ready to assist with the process of reforms in Ukraine.

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<sup>13</sup> *FACT SHEET: U.S. Assistance to Ukraine, The White House, December 7, 2015, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/12/07/fact-sheet-us-assistance-ukraine>*

### 2.3. THE US AS A BUSINESS PARTNER

*There is a popular view in the US that Ukraine should be much more interested in developing economic relations with the United States than the United States should be interested in Ukraine*

The economy is not a driving force in Ukrainian-American relations and is unlikely to have realistic chances of becoming one in the medium term. There is a popular view in the US that Ukraine should be much more interested in developing economic relations with the United States than the United States should be interested in Ukraine.

The lack of substantial economic interests of the USA in Ukraine has been mentioned in the President Obama's speech at the UN General Assembly in 2015.

However, American partners recognize that the presence of major American investments in Ukraine would increase the attention and interest in the US towards Ukraine.

The number of participants of the aforementioned Ukraine-USA Business Forum is also indicative. Despite the high level of political representation of both sides, the Forum was attended by around 150 companies. For comparison, the Ukrainian-German Business Forum held three months later in Berlin was attended by almost 700 companies. On top of that, the most common conclusion, drawn by the participants of the American side of the Forum, was that the new Ukrainian government had a good command of English.

Nevertheless, this does not mean lack of interest of American business towards Ukraine in general. In some areas, this interest is quite noticeable. First of all, it is about three priorities: **agriculture, energy sector and IT**. Cooperation in aviation also looks promising.

Today, the representatives of American business name three key obstacles to their activities in Ukraine: corruption, an unreformed judicial system, and bureaucratic barriers. Unlike investors from other countries, American businesses view corruption in Ukraine as a much more serious problem due to specific legislation in the USA (Foreign Corrupt Practice Act), which mandates strict liability for corruption abroad.

At the same time, an opinion poll conducted by the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine showed that 73% of Chamber members did not see a reduction in the level of corruption in Ukraine since 2014. 88% of respondents have directly faced cases of corruption when doing business in Ukraine, and 82% view corruption as a top priority of improving the business climate in Ukraine. The positive news is that 51% of the Chamber members are optimistic about the fight against corruption in Ukraine in 2016.

The interest of American business is also traditionally observed in the process of privatization in Ukraine. Some American businessmen have already declared their interests in the privatization process previously, in particular, regarding the Odesa Portside Factory, as well as in such fields as energy distribution and machine engineering. Transparent privatization is critical to the implementation of business interests of the United States. The state enterprises should not become prizes for the oligarchs once again, which is the major message voiced by American officials and businessmen.

The list of American companies with long-term interest in Ukraine could be derived from the composition of the delegation during the visit of the US Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker in 2015. The delegation included representatives of Cargill, Citibank, DuPont, Honeywell, NCH Capital, and Westinghouse. The Ukrainian government must work to ensure that the risks to American (and European) enterprises in Ukraine are limited to business only.

In order to increase the level of bilateral trade, American partners advise that Ukraine attracts medium-sized companies from the US, rather than focus solely on the global companies. However, it should be understood that mid-sized companies can enter the market only in case of substantial improvement of business climate as they lack financial and legal resources to endure current risks<sup>14</sup>.

A main challenge in the short term is that Ukraine's reputation as a business partner is catastrophic. Ukraine requires success stories and

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<sup>14</sup> *U.S.-Ukraine trade: moving to the next level, November 2015, Business Ukraine.*

examples to follow. One of those examples has been demonstrated by seventh richest American George Soros when he had openly stated that he is going to “invest in new Ukraine” and his private investment fund Ukrainian Redevelopment Fund LP had become one of the anchor investors for the new direct investment fund, Dragon Capital New Ukraine Fund<sup>15</sup>.

As for the success stories, they exist, but they are not very illustrative and are not many of them. For instance, Citibank is one of the most profitable banks in Ukraine.

Ukrainian business also needs success stories in the American market. The examples of companies that have already managed to successfully establish their foothold in the US market could become those stories. In particular, for certain commodity units, supply from Ukraine reaches 35-50% of the total US imports (inert gas sector).

The American side has removed tariff restrictions for 3,800 commodity units from Ukraine. The following goods can already be sold in the US duty-free: pastries, vegetables, canned food, walnuts, oat and corn cereals, and flour; pigments and preparations based on titanium dioxide, carpentry, railway locomotive parts, rail cars and equipment are duty-free in the industrial sector<sup>16</sup>. This information is not sufficiently spread in Ukraine, and now the Ukrainian Embassy to the US is trying to convey it through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Ukrainian businesses.

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<sup>15</sup> *Soros Will Invest in Ukraine Through the New Fund, November 18, 2015, Ekonomichna Pravda, <http://www.epravda.com.ua/news/2015/11/18/567873/>*

<sup>16</sup> *Valeriy Chaly, the Ambassador of Ukraine to the US: Ukrainian Issue Has Emerged in the Debates of the Democrats and Republicans, Glavkom, February 26, 2016, <http://glavcom.ua/articles/38564.html>*



### **3. STAKEHOLDERS, INTEREST GROUPS, AND INFLUENCE GROUPS**

Over the last two years, Ukraine has managed to significantly intensify the dialogue with the American partners at the highest level. The very fact that Ukrainian dossier in the US government is delegated to the Vice President of the United States shows an extremely high level of attention and interest towards Ukraine. During the term of Obama administration, Vice President Biden visited Ukraine five times, and four of them were after the Maidan. The President has given Biden complete carte blanche to contact and deliver the messages to Ukraine. Ukraine is called “one of the favorite projects” of Vice President Biden. To a certain extent, Ukraine will be a part of his legacy as the Vice President, which is why he is interested in significant progress before the end of the current administration’s term.

The US State Department also demonstrates an extremely high level of involvement in Ukrainian issue, as it is for the first time that Ukrainian issue is directly managed by the Assistant (or deputy, in Ukrainian terms) Secretary of State for European Affairs, Victoria Nuland. Previously, the US has been mainly represented by the Deputy Assistant Secretary responsible for Ukraine. However, it should be noted that high level involvement does not always mean effective involvement.

Over the last two years, relations between the US and Ukraine have reached the maximum in terms of bilateral meetings and contacts, and political gestures of support. The only exception is the lack of a visit to Ukraine by President Obama (he visited Ukraine only once, as a senator). There is no reason to believe that such a visit might occur before the end of his presidency. Therefore, as of today, President Obama is the only US President, who has never visited Ukraine, since the time of its independence.

***The President Obama is the only  
US President, who has never  
visited Ukraine, for the time of its  
independence***

There is a risk that in the medium term, the dialogue between Ukraine and the USA will become more chaotic and less intense. Obviously, Ukrainian side should work on resetting the institutional mechanisms between the two states, in particular, through the resumption of the

Strategic Partnership Commission activities. Given the new realities, it would be appropriate to secure the Commission on the level of the President of Ukraine and the US Vice President (similarly to Kuchma-Gore commission), or at least, the Foreign Minister of Ukraine and the US Secretary of State.

It is important that as a consequence of Russian aggression, the dialogue in the security sector has been strengthened and brought to a new institutional level, the so-called Joint Coordination Committee for Military Cooperation and Defense Reforms as well as annual military and political consultations. The Committee's status was upgraded after the annexation of Crimea, and the Ukrainian dossier has been transferred directly to the US European Command for more prompt and effective resolution of current issues. Moreover, the Committee has been expanded through the inclusion of the UK, Canada, and Lithuania. Today it is de facto the main instrument of control over American military and security assistance to Ukraine. Another important addition to the military and political dialogue between Ukraine and the United States could be made with 900 Ukrainian officers who attended various kinds of training in the United States since independence, although many of them have never found their place in the Ministry of Defense.

Furthermore, over the last two years, Ukraine has also managed to strengthen bipartisan support in the US Congress. The Republicans have failed to deprive the Democrats of the master card that all important initiatives on Ukraine have been proposed and implemented exclusively by the GoP, although it was the representatives of the Republican Party in the Senate who voiced a proposal to grant Ukraine the US' Major Non-NATO Ally status for the first time. Another important step was that Ukraine support group, the so-called caucus, has been established in the US Senate (previously it existed only in the House of Representatives of the Congress).

Ukraine, and the Parliament in particular, often underestimates the role of the so-called staffers (the Congressmen's offices personnel), focusing on the opportunities of protocol and symbolic contacts with the individual congressmen instead of permanent working dialogue with the staffers. That is especially true in terms of the importance of the staffers in charge of foreign policy. Most of them have never

been to Ukraine, and the Ukrainian side should be interested in the organization of their visits to Ukraine and ensure their implementation and meaning.

Due to the horizontal rotation system (transfer from one department to another) that is well-developed in the US, today the experts on Ukraine are present not only in the State Department, but also in the White House, the office of Vice President Biden, the National Security Council, and the Pentagon. A similar process would be beneficial for Ukraine.

On the other hand, the circle of American experts on Ukrainian issues in the US remains virtually unchanged. Basically, they are former US ambassadors to Ukraine and former government officials, who were somehow responsible for the Ukrainian dossier in government institutions and now are representing various American think tanks. Ukrainian side should be interested in developing relations with the leading analytical centers of the United States while not prioritizing the think tanks that unquestionably support the narrative of Ukrainian government.

Ukraine has also a tendency at the political level to support relations with the long-standing supporters of Ukraine in Washington who represent the senior generation of politicians with views on this region that were formed by the Cold War dynamics. It is imperative to reach out to the new generation of decision- and opinion-makers whose worldview was shaped after the Cold War and for whom Russia is not threat and Ukraine's value is not measured exclusively by its geostrategic location. "Self-censorship" in the relations with American political and expert community is not the best way to promote the interests of Ukraine.

In order to ensure its interests, Kyiv should apply a more elaborate approach to the visits of Ukrainian delegations to Washington. The Ukrainian side requires a clearer coordination of visits to the United States with more clearly defined purposes. The representatives of the Congress and the US Government claim that the number of visits of the Ukrainian side should develop into the quality, which means that Ukraine needs fewer visits, but they should be more focused.

Quite often, the purpose of Ukrainian delegations' visits to the US is questionable. The representatives of those delegations are unable to articulate the three key messages of their visit to the United States on request of the American side.

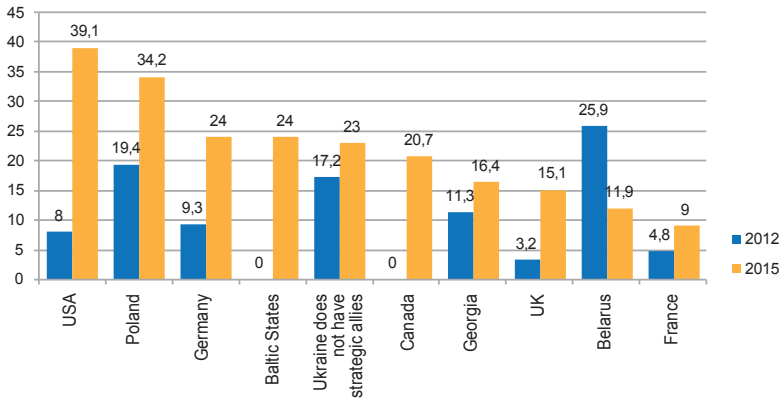
Moreover, the representatives of the Government and the Parliament should be more visible not only in Washington but also in other key states' capitals to communicate with local elites and contribute in shaping the public opinion. Establishment of communication at the level of individual states is currently quite actively promoted by the Ambassador of Ukraine Valeriy Chaly; however, his efforts should be reinforced by other Ukrainian government officials, politicians, and experts. To a large extent, the role of American states is underestimated in Ukraine, despite the fact that e.g. Californian GDP is equal to the GDP of Italy.

Despite the substantially new level of interaction between the two states, the Embassy of Ukraine to the United States has undergone significant personnel reduction. In contrast, the staff of the US Embassy in Ukraine has been increased significantly since the annexation of Crimea.

Throughout all years of independence, Ukraine has failed to hire an official lobbying structure to work in Washington on behalf of the Ukrainian state. Many American sources unanimously state that no embassy, think tank or expat organization is able to replace a professional lobbying structure that would lobby Ukraine's interests on a permanent basis. This need funds. Ukrainian oligarchs and politicians have been successful in hiring lobbying companies for themselves and their political parties. It may be time to engage such lobbyists on behalf of the state of Ukraine. However, it is obvious that no PR firm or lobbyist can do the most important thing – succeed in anti-corruption efforts and reform.

Today, the most important asset for the development of Ukrainian-American relations is the positive attitude of the average Ukrainians towards the US. Ukrainians view the US as a "strategic ally" of their country (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2.** Which countries can be considered our strategic allies?<sup>17</sup>  
(the respondent could choose multiple options)



Russian aggression has contributed to consolidation and positive attitude of the Americans towards Ukraine. 62% of them support providing Ukraine with economic aid. Same 62% support Ukraine’s membership in the NATO<sup>18</sup>. This creates a fertile ground for the strengthening of cultural diplomacy efforts that could be the subject for a separate research.

<sup>17</sup> Results of the opinion poll “Citizens of Ukraine On Security: Assessments, Threats, Solutions to Problems” conducted by the Razumkov Centre’s sociological service on November 6 to 12, 2015. The poll included 2008 respondents aged over 18 in all regions of Ukraine, except Crimea and occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, according to the sample that represents adult population of Ukraine by the basic social and demographic indices, [http://razumkov.org.ua/upload/1449050147\\_file.pdf](http://razumkov.org.ua/upload/1449050147_file.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> NATO Publics Blame Russia for Ukrainian Crisis, but Reluctant to Provide Military Aid, Pew Research Center, June 10, 2015, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/06/10/nato-publics-blame-russia-for-ukrainian-crisis-but-reluctant-to-provide-military-aid/>

#### 4. EXISTING AND POTENTIAL RISKS AND CONFLICTS

##### LACK OF COMBATING CORRUPTION IN UKRAINE DISCREDITS UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT AND UKRAINE AS A WHOLE

The US has repeatedly and clearly stated that fighting corruption is the primary indicator of the current Ukrainian government's capacity in terms of reforms. In particular, the American partners mean the fight against corruption in law enforcement institutions and judicial system. Furthermore, the fight against corruption is a test of Ukrainian authorities' interest in the United States as a strategic partner of Ukraine. Despite the fact that insufficient efforts in fighting corruption mainly discredit Ukrainian government, this situation will affect the dialogue with Ukraine in general.

**Probability.** High, given the tendency of Ukrainian authorities to delay reforms that directly affect the personal political, financial, or security interests of key stakeholders in the government of Ukraine. On top of that, the American side also lacks strategic patience towards Ukraine, which is caused, in particular, by the limited terms of the US administrations and focus on concrete results.

**How to avoid?** By demonstrating the political will to reform the General Prosecutor's Office that has been invested with a lot of American efforts during the terms of previous governments of Ukraine. The new anti-corruption agencies should demonstrate their ability to operate independently and effectively in short time. Their activities should lead to arrests and imprisonment of corrupt persons, regardless of their status and connections.

THE GRADUAL FREEZING OF THE CONFLICT IN EASTERN UKRAINE WILL LEAD TO LACK OF THE US' INTEREST IN THE ISSUE OF RESTORATION OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF UKRAINE

Even today Washington demonstrates a relatively high level of psychological readiness for the gradual freezing of the conflict in Donbas. Establishment of a sustainable ceasefire regime and the lack of clear prospects for resolution of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine and the de-occupation of Crimea in the foreseeable future will keep the US out of the negotiation process. Their role in the restoration of the territorial integrity of Ukraine will be limited to a symbolic and ritual one. Their main objective will be to ensure the ceasefire and to avoid a new wave of escalation in the region. In both issues, Crimea and perhaps Donbas, the US will base on the so-called Welles Declaration of non-recognition of the occupation of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union.

**Probability.** High. Conflict resolution in Donbas under the Minsk Agreements is currently unable to provide a sustainable resolution and conserves the threat of further polarization and destabilization of the rest of Ukraine. The Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Michael Carpenter clearly stated<sup>19</sup> that the Welles Declaration could be selected as a model for the US' behavior in case of Crimea.

**How to avoid?** Ukraine should provide convincing arguments regarding threats and risks for regional and European security triggered by lack of US involvement in the process of conflict resolution in Eastern Ukraine, and disappearance of the Crimean issue from current agenda.

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<sup>19</sup> *The Pentagon: We Will Not Provide Ukraine with Armaments Through the Third States.* "The Voice of America," March 12, 2016, <http://ukrainian.voanews.com/media/video/karpenter-krym/3220243.html>

## UKRAINE REQUIRES SECURITY GUARANTEES WHILE THE US IS UNABLE TO PROVIDE THEM

Security guarantees from the US as the initiator of nuclear disarmament will remain on the agenda of Ukrainian foreign policy with the existence of the occupied territories and further threats of violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine from Russia. The US' neglecting of the Budapest Memorandum and relevant political commitments will be an irritant in the US-Ukrainian relations and will discredit the very policy of global nuclear disarmament.

**Probability.** High. In the medium term, the chances of Ukraine to obtain new security guarantees from the United States are minimal. The signing of the bilateral security agreement is also unlikely.

**How to avoid?** By focusing on existing commitments of the US under the Budapest Memorandum as the basis for initiating a permanent consultation mechanism involving the signatories of the Memorandum, as well as for the US' assistance in the development of Ukraine's defense capabilities and in consolidating international and European aid around Ukraine. By working with American opinion leaders and representatives of the next administration in order to achieve a clearer understanding of Washington's political and moral commitments under the Budapest Memorandum and within the policy on nuclear disarmament in general. Ukraine could also initiate at the level of Budapest Memorandum signatories (except for Russia) a factual reassessment of commitments regarding the security assurances on which Ukraine and potentially other countries that opted for nuclear disarmament could count on. There has to be a clear understanding of exactly which commitments are or can be a part of security assurances.



THERE WILL BE THE NEXT “RESET” IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND RUSSIA, AND UKRAINIAN DOSSIER WILL BE MARGINALIZED

The Russian leadership has managed to make Russia an integral part of solving the global problems within the reach of American foreign and security policy. The cooperative nature of solving the global issues de facto (and it should be admitted) reduces the degree of the confrontational agenda imposed by Russia due to its aggressive policy towards Ukraine.

**Probability.** Low in the short term; high in the medium and long term. The crisis of confidence between Washington and Moscow has reached a record low level, which means that its restoration in a short term will be challenging. However, even critics of Russia do not dismiss a new restart. Symptomatically, the Russian factor is not decisive for the electoral choice in the current presidential race. Despite public flirting with Putin, Donald Trump is one of the leaders of the presidential race. If he is elected, it will automatically send a signal that the relations with Russia can be reset. When asked about a possible restart of relations with Russia, Hillary Clinton said that it depends on what the US gets in return<sup>20</sup>.

**How to avoid?** Dispel the myth that Putin is weak or even comical and thus does not pose an existential threat. By strengthening the position of those who believe that weak Russian regime also poses serious threat since it forces Putin to interfere in Ukrainian affairs and other countries. This undermines fundamental freedoms and makes everyone weaker and poorer. Ukrainian people and other nations deserve the right to be free and choose their own future. Any interaction with the current regime is taking away the rights of Ukrainian

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<sup>20</sup> *Hillary Clinton: New 'Reset' Possible in U.S.-Russian Relationship, January 18, 2016, The Moscow Times, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/hillary-clinton-new-reset-possible-in-us-russian-relationship/556218.html>*

people as well as people of other countries that can become the victims of Putin's "weakness."

### THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION WILL NOT SHOW PROPER INTEREST TOWARDS UKRAINE

In mid- and long term perspective US interest in Ukraine will be shaped under the influence of several factors. In particular:

- 1) the priority of the European security issue in the new administration's agenda;
- 2) the ability of Ukraine itself to implement reforms and become a "success story" in the region;
- 3) the existence of threats from Russia to the NATO allies in the region.

There are reasons to believe that the election of Donald Trump would have a far greater negative impact on the bilateral relations in contrast to Hillary Clinton.

**Probability.** Medium to high, depending on the staff of the new administration.

**How to avoid?** By strengthening cooperation with foreign policy advisors to the key candidates and (if possible) with the candidates directly. By engaging them into the discussion of Ukrainian issue and its importance for Euro-Atlantic security in collaboration with leading US think tanks and media through initiating relevant debates in the media and think tanks. By taking seriously and reacting appropriately to Donald Trump's statements, and not deeming them simply as campaign tactics.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Americans like winners. Ukraine has to demonstrate that it is not a loser state. And that can be done only through successful reforms, the most indicative of which would be reforms of the General Prosecutor's Office and the judiciary system.
2. Fighting corruption is a test of Ukrainian authorities' interest in the United States as a strategic partner of Ukraine. Ukrainian government can prove the effectiveness of its fight against corruption according to the 3P formula (prevent, publicize, punish) by transition to the "punish" stage.
3. In the security dialogue with the United States, the emphasis should be on people and institutions, not weapons. The medium-term priority should be the continuation of training and exercises, reforming Ukrainian security and defense institutions according to the NATO standards as well as investments in Ukrainian defense industry and joint defense production.
4. Ukraine could initiate at the level of Budapest Memorandum signatories (except for Russia) substantive reassessment of commitments that are foreseen by the security assurances on which Ukraine and potentially other countries that opted for nuclear disarmament could count on. There has to be a clear understanding of exactly which commitments are or can be a part of security assurances on behalf the US and other international partners.
5. Ukraine should prove that it can be not only a consumer of security but also a contributor. The image of an eternal victim of Russian aggression is not sustainable. Ukraine should formulate a package of proposals on its contribution to European and international security. Ukraine's practical experience in hybrid warfare, participation in peacekeeping operations, and contribution to the protection of the Eastern border of the EU from the potential uncontrolled influx of refugees from the Middle East could significantly strengthen Ukraine's position as a contributor to European security.

6. The Ukrainian government should appropriately communicate the security threats imposed by the militarization of Crimea, including the technical possibility of Russia placing the elements of nuclear weapons on the peninsula.
7. The US remains a key facilitator of European and international unity toward Ukraine in deterring Russian aggression and providing international financial support. The embassies of Ukraine to the EU member states should strengthen their cooperation with the US embassies in the respective capitals in order to achieve more effective advocacy of Ukrainian positions.
8. An audit of institutional mechanisms in Ukrainian-American relations, taking into account the new realities and challenges in bilateral dialogue and the region, should be conducted. The activities of the Strategic Partnership Commission should be restored by the new administration.
9. The Ukrainian side needs more precise coordination for the visits of its officials and politicians to the United States. The quality of such visits and not their number should be the focus. The representatives of Ukrainian delegations should be able to articulate three clear messages during their visits to the United States.
10. Cooperation with the US Congress should move from symbolic and protocolary to an emphasis on concrete results. A focus has to be on establishing working relations with the Congress staff responsible for drafting the foreign policy initiatives related to Ukraine (the so-called staffers). Their visits to Ukraine should be organized.
11. Ukraine should strengthen cooperation with foreign policy advisors of the key candidates in the US presidential elections and, if possible, with the candidates directly. In collaboration with the leading US think tanks and media, Ukraine should attempt to engage them in discussions on Ukrainian issue and its importance for Euro-Atlantic security by initiating debates in the media and think tanks.

12. Privatization of state enterprises in a transparent manner is an important indicator for American investors about the change in the rules of the game in Ukraine. State enterprises should not once again become prizes for the oligarchs. This is a main message voiced by both American officials and businessmen.
13. Ukrainian business should be better informed about the new opportunities to enter the US market. In particular, the actual inclusion of Ukraine in the generalized system of preferences, which removed tariff restrictions for 3,800 items.
14. Ukraine should work on the option of hiring a professional lobbying structure in Washington that would consistently work toward defending the interests of Ukrainian state in the US. Neither embassy, nor think tanks, nor expat organizations are able to fully replace a professional structure.

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## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

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