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УКРАЇНА-НАТО: ДІАГНОСТИКА ПАРТНЕРСТВА

UKRAINE-NATO: DIAGNOSING THE PARTNERSHIP



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This study was conducted within the project Strategic Discussion Club in the Regions, implemented by the Institute of World Policy in partnership with the NATO Liaison Office in Ukraine and with the support of the Government of Norway. The Strategic Discussion Club aimed to create opportunities to hold informal but substantial public discussions on strategic matters of national security in the Ukrainian regions. Opinions expressed in this publication do not reflect the official positions of NATO and the Government of Norway.

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UKRAINE-NATO: A HIDDEN INTEGRATION OR UNDECLARED NEUTRALITY?

ALYONA GETMANCHUK

The fact of dropping its non-aligned status has not led to a definitive¹ declaration of Ukraine's course towards NATO membership. Instead, a cautious wording has been used to meet the criteria required for the accession.

Despite political statements that Ukraine must join NATO, there are still some doubts concerning which process, indeed, has been launched by the renunciation of non-aligned status – integration into NATO or a transition to Ukraine's undeclared neutrality.

In Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council Staff they are considering the Swedish model of relations with NATO as an example for Ukraine in the short and medium term²; the implementation of this model is to create conditions for full membership in the future. Namely, Ukraine must achieve complete compatibility of its security and defence sector with NATO structures. Therefore, if political conditions are appropriate, Ukraine would be ready to join NATO immediately, without any NATO Membership Action Plan and other preparatory documents. In fact, in that case we can speak of the hidden integration.

From another side, Ukraine's government circles are rather pessimistic about the existence of political conditions for Ukraine's NATO membership in the foreseeable future. There are serious doubts about the fact that the process of joining the Alliance can start before 2020. And not only Ukraine's readiness, but, predominantly, NATO's readiness for this process is in question. Kyiv understands that the consensus about Ukraine in NATO is an extremely distant prospect.³

¹ The Decree on the Fundamentals of internal and external policy states: intensification of the cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in order to achieve the criteria required for membership acquisition in this organization; (paragraph 8, second part of the Article 11, Decree edition No. 35-VIII issued on 23.12.2014).

² 2015 National Security Strategy, Decree of the President of Ukraine №287/2015, issued on the 26 May, 2015. Available at: <http://www.rnbo.gov.ua/documents/396.html>

Interview with a representative of Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council Staff, 10.04.2015.

³ Klimkin: There is no alternative to joining NATO for us, LIGABusinessInform, 25.05.2015. Available at: http://news.liga.net/interview/politics/5853822-klimkin_alternativy_vstupleniyu_v_nato_dlya_nas_ne_sushchestvuet.htm

Ukraine has never been so close and so far at the same time from NATO as today. On the one hand, probably for the first time in Ukraine's history, the society supports rather strongly Ukraine's integration into NATO. After the annexation of Crimea and the hybrid war in eastern Ukraine inspired by Russia, Ukrainians have reconsidered the threats the state is facing and understood what actually the advantage of collective security is. However, it is not evident whether this support is sustainable. It is not known to what extent this is a conscious choice, or whether it is just a reaction to an external threat.

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On the other hand, Russia has significantly complicated the potential integration of Ukraine into NATO by its military aggression against Ukraine. First, the so-called NATO's 1995 Study on Enlargement stresses that unresolved conflicts or external territorial disputes may be an obstacle to the Alliance membership. Occupied territories and a threat of further escalation in Europe make the prospect of NATO membership especially remote for Ukraine.

Secondly, Russian aggression in Crimea and eastern Ukraine has turned Ukraine from a security contributor, who participated in all, without exception, Alliance's peacekeeping operations, into its user; and, moreover, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine is a threat to European security. However, there are some things that Ukraine could offer NATO, first of all its valuable experience in counteracting a hybrid war. In particular, it would be worthwhile to open a Hybrid War Study Center in Ukraine.

Ukraine has found itself in a kind of a vicious circle. On the one hand, NATO insists to reiterate that Ukraine has the right to choose on her own, particularly in regard to integration into NATO. On the other hand, the fact that NATO reacts to the very discussion of Ukraine's membership in NATO demonstrates that, indeed, Ukraine does not have such a choice today. Instead, there is a kind of geopolitical double-dealing: there is a choice, but this choice is impossible to implement. Both Brussels and Kyiv are aware of that.

At the same time, we must understand another thing as well. For Ukraine today the membership in NATO is not an issue for the sake of which she would be willing to question the European and transatlantic unity. Especially, it concerns the current critical issues such as a unified Western position on the Russian aggression in Ukraine in general and, in

particular, the extension of the sanctions. In this context Russia should be more interested in promoting actively Ukraine's membership in NATO than Ukraine itself.

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Giving up accession to NATO and fixing neutrality in the Constitution is one of three key concessions the majority of Ukrainians are ready for in order to gain peace (the other two are: providing the territories controlled by DNR and LNR with a special status for a certain period with partial control by Kyiv and recognition of Russian as an official language on the entire territory of Ukraine. For comparison, twice less respondents (only 6%) are ready to reconsider the Association Agreement with the EU at Russia's request and to refuse further rapprochement with the EU. However, it should be noted that only 11% of Ukrainians are ready to refuse NATO, while 21% support providing DNR and LNR with a special status.⁴

“MEMBERSHIP OR NOTHING”

Since the signature of the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership with NATO in 1997, Ukraine has passed through a cycle during which she tested different formats within the Distinctive Partnership: from integration to non-alignment. None of these formats did fully justify itself, but the format of non-alignment turned out to be the most dangerous one. It is during that format a part of Ukraine's territory was annexed, and another part – de facto occupied. During the period of non-alignment Ukraine, in fact, has already tested on a model of “finlandization” when abandoning at the request of Russia its intention to integrate into NATO.

Obviously, the distinctive partnership with NATO in 2015 cannot be only a strengthened version of the distinctive partnership with NATO of the year 1997. At

⁴ Most Ukrainians support government's concessions for the sake of war ceasing in Donbass, GFK Ukraine, 13.03.2015. Available at: <http://www.gfk.com/ua/news-and-events/press-room/press-releases/pages/postupky-vlady-dlya-prypynennia-viyyny.aspx>

least due to the level of threat to Ukraine's territorial integrity and the urgent need for effective external guarantees for the security of Ukraine, as the Budapest Memorandum has not met its goal.

Over the past year Ukraine has comprehended that even a very distinctive partnership with NATO is unable to respond to the current level of threats. Only a membership in NATO provides for such security guarantees in line with the Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. That is why the Ukrainian society since the beginning of the Russian aggression has been leaning to perceive relations with NATO through the prism of "membership, or nothing". Such formula puts the question squarely: what is the added value of the distinctive partnership with NATO?

PARTNERSHIP CHALLENGES

However, the lack of membership perspective for Ukraine is not the main challenge for an effective partnership with NATO. Moreover, such a prospect was already recorded in the final declaration of the Bucharest NATO summit in 2008 and did not significantly impact Ukraine's achievement of criteria for NATO membership.

An obvious lack of mutual trust is the main obstacle, what was proved by the last year cooperation with NATO. By the way, it concerns not only the lack of trust between Ukraine and NATO, but also inside Ukraine itself – between various core agencies.

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The lack of confidence has caused, in turn, the lack of communication. Obviously, due to that we can hear different estimations of certain elements of Ukraine-NATO partnership in the Ministry of Defence, National Security and Defence Council and Foreign Ministry.

A skid of the reform process at the middle and low bureaucracy level is common for all Ukrainian departments. It is at this level we can still observe the attitudes to NATO formed during the Cold War. It is difficult to believe, but mid-level officials during talks with NATO can still let themselves to ask questions like: «Are you willing the Americans to have us down?»

Different views on current priorities are another challenge for developing an effective partnership. It was felt most acutely during active hostilities in eastern Ukraine in

a dialogue with the Ministry of Defence. NATO's strategic focus on systemic reforms fell into apparent conflict with tactical objectives of the defence department. The Ministry of Defence of Ukraine believe that the current priority in the cooperation with NATO is not to achieve interoperability but to increase as soon as possible operational capabilities of Ukraine's Armed Forces to repel aggression⁵.

The Ministry of Defence's appeal to the hostilities in eastern Ukraine does not insure anymore against the Alliance's critics concerning the unsatisfactory pace of the military reform⁶.

The irony of the situation is that it is the war in the East which was to persuade the Ministry of Defence and the General Staff of the need of systemic reform of Ukraine's Armed Forces. Some representatives of the defence department really talk about the creation of the Armed Forces with a fundamentally new philosophy, which means to introduce Western operational standards, to form a new military-administrative division and areas to station troops, to improve the structure itself and forces strength etc.

Due to the warfare in the East the most vulnerable points have been identified as well as those areas in which the Ukrainian armed forces are in need of urgent reforms. In particular, these are command and control system (C3), logistics.

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Still, over the past year a process of change in the defence department has been triggered. Extensive reforms have been commenced, but there is an urgent need for intensive reforms⁷.

In order to speed the process and make it more coordinated, the Ukrainian side decided to appoint a civil Deputy Minister of Defence, who, in particular, will deal, also, with relations with NATO. The former Head of the Mission of Ukraine to NATO, Igor Dolgov, will become that deputy. Ambassador Dolgov is to be reinforced by a number of collaborators invited from outside.

⁵ Interview with a representative of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, 6.05.2015.

⁶ NATO: The Ministry of Defence and Ukraine's Armed Forces are not enough inspired for reforms, Radio Svoboda, 1.05.2015. Available at: <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/content/news/26989043.html>

⁷ Interview with a representative of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, 29.05.2015.

IF NATO'S ASSISTANCE, THAN WHICH ONE?

Mistrust and a lack of coordination are present today in all key areas which can fill the partnership between Ukraine and NATO with practical results and not with speeches in joint working groups' general meetings.

The provision of advisory assistance to Ukraine was one of, perhaps, the most striking examples of mistrust in relations between Ukraine and NATO. It concerned an allocation of 8 advisors by NATO member states who would assist the Ministry of Defence in implementing reforms. The advisors approval process lasted, in total, about 5 months. NATO's officials claim that they had often limited access even to the information that could be hardly called confidential. Although, the official denial of access to any documents were recorded⁸. They were also not entirely satisfied with a remote approach to work because of a limited access to the premises of the Ministry of Defence, where they have to get in with an escort.

The Ukrainian side has some reservations too. The **first** it is a misunderstanding by some advisors that they are to provide advisory assistance to a country which is facing an ongoing military aggression. That is why a trip to the ATO area was initiated to let NATO's officials to feel the particularity of their work.

Second, the professionalism and relevance level of some advisors raises certain questions, not only among Ukrainian military, but also among their colleagues from NATO. For now, only two or three advisors get unambiguous appreciations from all departments (in particular, the Logistics Advisor, a representative of the Czech Republic and the Cyber Defence Advisor, a representative of Turkey).

Third, currently we see willingness of the Ministry of Defense to resolve all present issues related to the advisors' activities, including their access to the Ministry's premises. According to certain sources, a relevant instruction has been issued by the Minister willing to take this issue under his personal control.

5 Trust Funds can establish a basis of NATO's practical assistance (see infographic 1). Despite the approval of a number of NATO countries to allocate resources to fill these funds, they have not begun to work yet due to a lack of a formal framework. When this brief was being prepared, the corresponding Agreements had not been ratified yet in the Verkhovna Rada. A government representative has noted in this context that the regulation procedures of the Cabinet of Ministers are the worst enemy of a practical cooperation with NATO.

Filling the trust funds lacked an effective expectations management as some Ukrainian departments awaited a specific logistical support, while some member countries decided to spend their contribution primarily on advisory assistance and missions of their representatives.

⁸ Interview with NATO's representative, 27.05.2015.



INFOGRAPHIC 1. NATO TRUST FUNDS SUPPORTING UKRAINE

IN 2014, NATO HAS ESTABLISHED FIVE NEW TRUST FUNDS SUPPORTING UKRAINE IN CRITICAL ASPECTS OF SECURITY AND DEFENSE



26 MEMBER STATES HAVE DECLARED THEIR INTENTION TO CONTRIBUTE OVER EUR 4 MILLION INTO THE TRUST FUNDS FOR UKRAINE



A TRUST FUND IS A KIND OF A SAVINGS BOX FOR THE VOLUNTARY DONATIONS MADE BY THE NATO MEMBER STATES

In general, today, there are two attitudes to NATO's assistance in Ukraine. Some prioritize the logistical assistance. Others believe that NATO is not a charitable organization and that a mutual cooperation is much more important for Ukraine in relations with the Alliance, particularly in the form of joint military exercises and staff training. A fortiori, the efficiency of joint military exercises with NATO member countries has been proved also when introducing Ukrainian Armed Forces to perform tasks as a part of the Anti-terrorist operation in eastern Ukraine (see infographic 2). Namely, those units that were regularly involved in multinational military exercises and NATO-led operations have demonstrated a high level of training and combat readiness. The most telling example is the 95th Airmobile Brigade.

Those units that were regularly involved in multinational military exercises and NATO-led operations have demonstrated a high level of training and combat readiness

REFORMS THROUGH A STRATEGY

At this stage Ukraine prepares and revises strategic documents that will govern relations, NATO included, since they will shape a vision of how to reform the armed forces.

Strategic documents preparation has been significantly accelerated after the National Security and Defence Council assumed a coordinating role. An interagency working group to prepare strategic documents has been created, the National Security Strategy – approved. It is significant that in the final text of the document some wording on NATO have been noticeably strengthened. When the draft of the Strategy's objectives contained a blurred formula on «ensuring European future of Ukraine», the final version refers specifically to «ensure Ukraine's integration into the European Union and the creation of conditions for joining NATO.»⁹

A particular challenge is the Comprehensive Security and Defence Review, the previous work on which was found to be unsatisfactory at the highest level. At this moment the work is de facto completed on other documents, in particular the Security and Defence Sector Development Concept, the Military Doctrine (Military Security Strategy).

Strategic documents preparation was another test of confidence-building between partners from NATO and between different departments in Ukraine itself. The fact of the involve-

⁹ Ukraine's National Security Strategy. Available at: <http://www.rnbo.gov.ua/documents/396.html>

INFOGRAPHIC 2. UKRAINE IN THE JOINT INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EXERCISES WITH NATO MEMBER STATES



WITHIN 2011-1014:



37
joint military exercises



9271
Ukrainian soldiers have participated in the exercises



17700
military officers from at least 32 countries



12
participating states provided their territories for the exercises

PARTICIPANTS OF THE MILITARY EXERCISES



Maksym Klunnyk,
Senior Officer:
For the first time,
I've experienced
a real team work.



Oleksii Dametskyi, Cadet:
For the first time,
I've seen our military men respected
by the whole world.



Anastasia Ielynevska, Cadet:
For the first time,
I've realized that I want
to continue my service
and become an officer.

A MAP OF THE MOST PROMINENT JOINT MILITARY EXERCISES



UKRAINE
Rapid Trident, Sea Breeze, Cossack Steppe, Safe Sky,
Blonde Avalanche, Maple Arch



BULGARIA
The Black Sea region rotation forces, Saber Guardian



DENMARK
Northern Falcon



LITHUANIA
Maple Arch



FYR MACEDONIA
Cooperative Longbow/Lancer



GERMANY
Joint Force, Exercises on training the forces
to join rotation within the KFOR mission



NORWAY
NATO Computer Exercises



ROMANIA
Blonde Avalanche



POLAND
Maple Arch



SLOVAKIA
Blonde Avalanche



HUNGARY
Blonde Avalanche



CZECH REPUBLIC
Czech National Exercise



TURKEY
REGEX



ITALY
Trident Juncture



STATES TO HOST THEIR FIRST JOINT MILITARY EXERCISES IN 2015:

BELGIUM CMX
SPAIN, Trident Juncture
PORTUGAL, Trident Juncture

18 joint military exercises in 11 countries are expected in 2015

This infographics have been developed on request of the Institute of World Policy and with support of the NATO Information and Documentation Centre in Ukraine (NICU)

ment, by the Presidential Administration, of a well-known international organization in the preparation of some strategic documents (including the Comprehensive Security and Defence Review) is quite eloquent by itself, and once again demonstrates the level of confidence in the internal expertise. A positive aspect is that eventually a mechanism of coordination has been built, both between Ukrainian authorities and at the level of involvement of NATO's representatives in strategic documents development.

The efficiency of the implementation of the Annual National Programme between Ukraine and NATO is still in question. Some ministries frankly admit that this document will be executed only formally, until "a more rigid system for monitoring its implementation appears".

Therefore, today we can affirmatively state the following:

- The fact of the dropping the non-aligned status in principle is not able by itself to shift the relations between Ukraine and NATO to a qualitatively new level. The same applies to the increase in defense spending to 5% of GDP
- The key challenges for establishing effective cooperation between NATO and Ukraine are the lack of trust between Ukraine and NATO, and the lack of proper coordination and communication within Ukrainian government
- The events in the East have discovered the weakest spots in Ukraine's Armed Forces. There is an understanding that the process of reforming the security and defence sector of Ukraine is irreversible and should proceed in accordance with NATO standards
- Communication efforts are needed to explain the benefits of Ukraine's partnership with NATO. The formula "membership or nothing" is not able to fill relations with practical content.

Alyona Getmanchuk –

Director of the Institute of World Policy, Ukraine

NATO AND UKRAINE: THE LIMITS OF CONSENSUS

JAMES SHERR

There is a consensus among the NATO member states on perception of the threats coming from Russia's aggression. However, Ukraine should realize that the Alliance does not have the same level of certainty regarding providing Kyiv with membership. Instead of falling into the new wave of the "NATO-mania", Ukrainian government should focus on implementing the real reforms in the field of security. Those reforms require neither accession to the Alliance, nor the Membership Action Plan.

A SOFT SPOT IN UKRAINE'S INTEGRATION INTO NATO

There have been profoundly significant changes in the global political landscape since the seminal year 1997: the year in which the NATO-Ukraine Distinctive Partnership was concluded and the NATO-Ukraine Commission established. It was also the year in which the Russia-Ukraine State Treaty and three intergovernmental agreements on the Black Sea Fleet were signed. With these steps, Ukraine secured legally binding recognition of its territorial integrity, existing borders and sovereignty, including that part of its territory where Russia's fleet was based. Whilst there was no official relationship between this cluster of agreements, the political linkage was clear. Boris Yeltsin sought to 'keep Ukraine out of NATO's embrace' and believed this would be achieved by conciliation rather than threat. By conceding Ukraine's most fundamental demands, he vindicated Leonid Kuchma's 'multi-vector policy'. He also demonstrated NATO's importance as a means of regulating Russia's relationship with its far weaker neighbour.

In those years both NATO and Ukraine were careful to distinguish between 'deepening cooperation' and membership. To Kuchma and Ukraine's military establishment, the object of the multi-vector policy was to anchor Ukraine into the Euro-Atlantic system by stages and with Russia's acquiescence. De facto integration was the goal. De jure integration, i.e. membership, risked imposing pressures on a new and weak state that it would not be able to withstand. This policy demonstrated cool judgement not only of Yeltsin's Russia, but of Ukrainian public opinion and lines of division inside NATO.

By comparison, the Yushchenko years present a cautionary tale. Following the Orange Revolution, NATO membership was no longer subject to cost-benefit analysis. It became an end in itself. The judgement of a former head of the NATO Liaison Office in Kyiv is worth quoting: 'the focus on MAP [Membership Action Plan] proved to be the Achilles' heel of Ukraine's west-

ward integration policy'.¹⁰ The preoccupation with NATO deepened established divisions across Ukraine and diverted energy and attention from the internal reforms demanded by the Maidan's supporters. It showed a misunderstanding of NATO itself, which made no secret of its view that Ukraine's highest security priority should be success in internal policy. By the end of 2006, Moscow concluded that the 'Orange threat' had crumbled. Putin's Russia became revanchist in action as well as in spirit, and when it dismembered Georgia in August 2008, it provided a warning of what could happen elsewhere.

The preoccupation with NATO in the years of Viktor Yushchenko's presidency deepened established divisions across Ukraine and diverted energy and attention from the internal reforms demanded by the Maidan's supporters

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONSENSUS AND UNANIMITY IN THE NATO

The times we live in now are the product of the times that existed then. Those who make NATO policy and guide it are burdened by this recent history and still struggle to absorb its lessons. Those who ignore them will do so at their peril and endanger others. The differences (and similarities) between Putin's Russia and Yeltsin's Russia should have been known well before 2008, but hopefulness was more appealing and comfortable than realism.¹¹ The architects of the US-Russia 'reset' (and its European analogues) after 2008 did not welcome health warnings and, after Crimea's annexation in March 2014, they pretended that none were given.

It is well understood that NATO makes decisions by consensus. But inside NATO the distinction between consensus and unanimity is also understood. The admission of any member state requires unanimity. If Greece under the leadership of Syriza is sufficiently determined to block Ukraine's membership, it can do so. But other decisions, including many

¹⁰ Greene, James. *Russian Responses to NATO and EU Enlargement and Outreach*, Chatham House Briefing Paper REP RSP BP 2012/02, June 2012, P. 11.

¹¹ If the reader is interested in monuments to inconvenient truths, he is welcome to consult two publications by the author: 'A New Regime? A New Russia?' in Anne Aldis, ed., *The Second Chechen War (Strategic & Studies Combat Institute & Conflict Studies Research Centre, RMA Sandhurst, 2000)*. *Russia and the West: A Reassessment*, Shrirenham Papers No 6, UK Defence Academy, January 2008.

vital to Ukraine's future, require consensus: the agreement of a preponderant majority of stakeholders with a direct and active interest. These include joint planning, coordination and operational level collaboration. Still other decisions fall within the prerogatives of individual members. Neither Lithuania nor the United States require agreement of the NATO Council to provide military assistance to Ukraine, lethal or non-lethal. These are national decisions.

Today there is a robust Alliance consensus on several key points:

Russia is pursuing a war of aggression against Ukraine in violation of its treaty obligations and the conventions and agreements that underpin the post-Cold War security order;

Its military intervention constitutes a mortal threat to Ukraine and a significant threat to Europe as we know it and wish to preserve it;

- The conflict poses dangers that are systemic in character. Vladimir Putin cannot afford to lose in Ukraine, yet he cannot be allowed to win. An escalation of hostilities beyond Ukraine cannot be ruled out;
- In response, NATO must bring the tools and techniques of deterrence into conformity with 'new generation' requirements, including 'informational struggle' and 'hybrid warfare' scenarios in vulnerable states susceptible to penetration, provocation and subversion;
- Deterrence and defence in Europe as a whole will prove significantly more difficult if Russia achieves its objectives in Ukraine. For this reason, all feasible steps must be taken to prevent Ukraine's territorial disintegration or its descent into chaos;
- The 'Russia challenge' is likely to be long-term.¹² Success and a sustainable political settlement will demand firmness, wisdom and patience.

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So long as this consensus endures, dissenters inside NATO (whether they be states or networks within states) will be marginalised and constrained. Yet such dissenters do exist, and they are well credentialed and vocal. A failure by Ukraine to meet general Alliance expectations – capable national leadership, internal reform and fidelity to European

¹² For a multifaceted overview of this challenge, see *The Russian Challenge* (Chatham House Report, June 2015).

values – will strengthen their credibility and influence. For this reason if none other, even its most dedicated supporters believe that Ukraine must shoulder the principal burden of its own defence and the preservation of its hard won democratic freedoms.

On one vital issue, there is little consensus or none: providing Ukraine with the tools to defend itself. At the humanitarian level, the supply of military assistance ruffles no feathers. Supply of food ration packs, winter clothing, durable footwear and uniforms is not a subject of discord. Even the provision of advisory groups and training arouses little controversy, particularly when such assistance is provided under a national rather than a NATO flag.

But how does one distinguish between ‘assistance’ and ‘arms’? Secure communications are not arms, yet even a well-armed force can be annihilated without them. Infrared sites, night vision goggles, counter-battery radar and counter-battery strikes all serve the same purpose: to protect one’s forces and defeat the enemy. Because these distinctions are easily blurred, lines of argument are also blurred.

NATO SHOULD PROVIDE UKRAINE WITH “AS MUCH ASSISTANCE, AS IT CAN SWALLOW”

It is easy to forget that armament, like war, is a tool of policy. What is our political objective? To many, including the present author, it is to deter further Russian aggression, render the existing occupation regime untenable and create, by stages, a political solution that restores Ukraine’s territorial and constitutional integrity. To these ends, a structure of deterrence must be established inside Ukraine and not only on its western borders.

For many proponents of arming Ukraine, principle as well as policy is involved. The right of a state to bear arms and purchase them is an inalienable attribute of sovereignty. Yet even some who dispute this principle’s universality nonetheless argue that without a credible threat to arm Ukraine, there can be no credible diplomacy. This view has latterly been advanced by Wolfgang Ischinger, perhaps Germany’s most distinguished Russlands Versteher.

The opponents of arming Ukraine are also diverse. They include those, like Angela Merkel, who are determined that Russia fail, yet believe that sanctions offer the best hope of achieving this end. Nevertheless she, like President Obama, also harbours the apprehension that armament will produce escalation, rather than deterrence, and open the path to war between Russia and NATO.

The danger of a NATO-Russia conflict has been present since Russia annexed Crimea. It is intrinsic to the present conflict and the Kremlin’s febrile view of the world. Western ‘reasonableness’ will not diminish it. Hints to the effect (in Lavrov’s words) that ‘Moldova and the Baltic states need to consider events in Ukraine and draw conclusions’ under-

score the wider significance of what is taking place. Psychologically, Russia is already in a state of war with NATO. By strengthening deterrence in the Baltic states, NATO is acknowledging this fact, as well as the Roman axiom: ‘if you want peace, prepare for war’. Yet inside NATO member states no war fever exists, and there is no appetite for one.

NATO’s cohesion derives from the interests and values that unite its members. Yet NATO is a security organisation, not an ethical project. No state will be invited into the Alliance unless it is clear that its membership will strengthen NATO’s security as well as its own. In present or readily foreseeable conditions, Ukraine’s membership would not meet this requirement. It would confront the Alliance with the immediacy of an Article 5 situation and a palpable risk of nuclear war. It is beyond common sense to imagine that an Alliance divided about the merits of arming Ukraine would unite in favour of Ukrainian membership.

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But if membership is not possible in today’s conditions, it also is not necessary. NATO and Ukraine share a common strategic interest in denying Russia the fruits of aggression, supporting Ukraine’s recovery and restoring its sovereignty throughout its territory. To these ends, NATO and Ukraine must establish a structure of containment and deterrence inside the country (and not only on its western border); they must work together to reform Ukraine’s defences and improve them, and ensure that Ukraine is provided (in Yeltsin’s celebrated words) with ‘as much assistance as it can swallow’. Neither MAP nor membership are required to accomplish these goals. A fresh round of NATO mania in Ukraine will only divert attention from these challenges and weaken the consensus that currently exists.

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HOW HAS THE UKRAINIAN ISSUE RESHAPED THE NATO ALLIANCE?

BJØRN OLAV KNUTSEN

One of the most important lessons learnt so far from the conflict in Ukraine is that 25 years after the end of the Cold War, Europe is no longer at the centre of the United States' security calculations. Consequently, the US will only judge NATO's usefulness by its concrete results in terms of how the European allies themselves make a substantial contribution in handling the conflict¹³. In the current security situation, therefore, the US will be prepared to support European security and even European military action, but will expect Europe through the EU to take the initiative. Hence, European strategic autonomy is one of the most debated themes in today's security discourse¹⁴. The aim of this chapter is primarily to explain how the Ukraine conflict has uncovered quite interesting trends in Euro-Atlantic security, including trends in NATO governance, and to conceptualise the strategic autonomy debate in Euro-Atlantic relations. The Ukrainian military conflict has altered the global security agenda; in this respect, it can be regarded as one of the most significant signs of the new global multipolar order that has emerged in the early parts of the 21st century.

The Ukrainian military conflict can be regarded as one of the most significant signs of the new global multipolar order that has emerged in the early parts of the 21st century

UNDERSTANDING EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

To start with, Europeans need to overcome their current strategic myopia. This phenomenon has arisen as a corollary of strategic dependence on the US. Hence, safe under the US security umbrella, Europeans through the global role of the EU have enjoyed the luxury of aspiring to play a world role without the backing of military force¹⁵.

¹³ Major, Claudia (2015): *NATO's Strategic Adaptation. Germany Is the Backbone for the Alliance's Military Reorganisation*. SWP Comments 16. Berlin: SWP; Simón, Luis (2015): "Understanding US Retrenchment in Europe", *Survival*, 57(2): 157-172.

¹⁴ Biscop, Sven (2014): *Game of Zones. The quest for influence in Europe's neighbourhood*. Egmont Papers 67. Brussels: Egmont Institute; Howorth, Jolyon (2014): *Security and Defence in the European Union*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

¹⁵ Howorth, Jolyon & Anand Menon (2015): "Wake up, Europe!", *Global Affairs*, 1(1): 11-20. – P.13.

In fact, the traditional US predominance in NATO has given the European governments little reason to bolster their own militaries¹⁶, and consequently given the European NATO member states and the EU strong incentives for freeriding. Some analysts have consequently argued that this conflict is all about the future US position in Europe¹⁷. Therefore, and important to emphasise, when several policy analysts and researchers underline that the US is prepared to support European military action, but expects Europe to take the initiative, the real implications are that the US will insist that the more powerful European NATO countries must play a greater role in reassuring their Central and Eastern European allies. The NATO Wales summit declaration from September 2014 on a Readiness Action Plan and the reform of NATO Response Force (NRF) with the establishment of a Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) is of importance in this regard¹⁸. As stated by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in November 2014, the Readiness Action Plan is the "... biggest reinforcement of our collective defence since the end of the Cold War. And it is my top priority to implement this plan in full and on time"¹⁹. Therefore, when analysing the framework for the debate on European strategic autonomy, the main point of departure is that US retrenchment and the pivot towards Asia is not about leaving Europe behind. Instead, it is to use the resources that has been freed up after the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to strengthen not just the US position in Asia, but also potentially in Europe²⁰.

In addition, to understand fully the debate on US retrenchment and European strategic autonomy it is necessary to obtain a new understanding of Germany's changing position in NATO. Germany's role explains why the debate on US retrenchment has not been significantly altered by the conflict. In fact, Germany's strengthened position in NATO's strategic adaptation is the other side of the coin of the US pivot towards Asia²¹. Germany is therefore providing the foundation for the successful implementation of the 2014 Wales decisions. The Ukraine conflict happens to be taking place at a time when Germany's political elite is actively formulating a more proactive foreign policy. From a German perspective, the decline of US power, combined with the world's growing multi-polarity and fragility, calls

16 Valasek, Tomas (2011): *Surviving Austerity. The Case for a new approach to EU military collaboration*. London: Centre for European Reform. – P.2.

17 Techau, Jan (2015): "European security after Ukraine", Carnegie Europe. Available at: <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategicEurope/?fa=59025>

18 NATO (2014a): *Wales Summit Declaration. Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales*. Brussels: NATO.

19 NATO (2014b): *NATO's Readiness Action Plan. Fact Sheet, December*.

20 Simón, Luis (2015): "Understanding US Retrenchment in Europe", *Survival*, 57(2). – P.160.

21 Major, Claudia (2015): *NATO's Strategic Adaptation. Germany Is the Backbone for the Alliance's Military Reorganisation*. SWP Comments 16. Berlin: SWP.

for more responsibility in Europe and by the EU in the world²². Therefore, when assessing the outputs from NATO's summit in Wales they would hardly be feasible without German involvement. For example, the most significant German initiative during recent years has been the Framework Nation Concept (FNC) from 2013. In FNC smaller armies plug specific capabilities into a larger framework nation that forms the foundation for the collaboration²³. This concept is also an important element in the transatlantic burden-sharing debate which has always been present, reinforced in 2011 when the outgoing US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates complained about a "two-tiered alliance"²⁴. In such an alliance, Gates complains, there are members who specialises in the "soft" humanitarian, development, peacekeeping, and talking tasks, while others conduct the "hard" combat missions.

The Ukraine conflict happens to be taking place at a time when Germany's political elite is actively formulating a more proactive foreign policy. From a German perspective, the decline of US power, combined with the world's growing multipolarity and fragility, calls for more responsibility in Europe

The Ukrainian conflict has therefore illustrated how Germany has become the strongest US partner in Europe and in several ways replaced the United Kingdom in European security. However, German policymakers have also on several occasions noted how the US has become a more unreliable partner in European security. As one German official at the Munich Security Conference in February 2015 complained: "Because the stakes are so low for [the Americans], we never know where Washington will end up. It could escalate the sanctions and arm Ukraine now. But in a few years, it could reset the relationship to secure Russia's cooperation on an unconnected issue, such as Islamic State"²⁵.

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- 22 Meister, Stefan (2015): "How Russia lost Germany (and how it can win it back). EU foreign policy and the Ukraine crisis. *Russia in Global Affairs*, (January/March 2015). Available at: <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/How-Russia-Lost-Germany-17365>
- 23 Major, Claudia & Christian Mölling (2014): *The Framework Nations Concept. Germany's Contribution to a Capable European Defence*. SWP Comments 52. Berlin: SWP.
- 24 Gates, Robert (2011): "The security and defense agenda (Future of NATO)", as delivered by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, Brussels, Belgium, Friday, June 10, 2011. Available at: <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1581>
- 25 Krastev, Ivan & Mark Leonard (2015): "Europe's Shattered Dream of Order. How Putin is disrupting the Atlantic Alliance", *Foreign Affairs*, 94(3). – P. 50.

Interesting to note is also the US “special relationship” with the United Kingdom, which has gone through dramatic changes. United Kingdom’s inability to make decisive contributions to the stabilisation phases in Afghanistan and Iraq, for example, gave rise to major disappointments in Washington, and British officials and policymakers have been equally disappointed by their inability to make a visible difference to US policy²⁶. Assessing the Ukrainian conflict from a strategic perspective, it might even be argued that the United Kingdom, at least to some extent, is retreating politically from Europe. France, the other main actor in European security and defence, is the key to a closer relationship between the EU and NATO, but this country has side-lined itself in this conflict due to Germany’s leading position and also due to domestic weaknesses²⁷.

Nevertheless, assessing the debate on the US retrenchment and European strategic autonomy is not about predicting an emerging strategic rift between Europe and the US. In fact there is fundamental agreement between them on how to handle the conflict where the US wants Europe and the EU to take the lead. However, US retrenchment and Europe’s growing strategic autonomy will have consequences for NATO and how the alliance in the future will be governed. In this situation, NATO is not the main institution where the Euro-Atlantic partners formulate and make policy responses. Therefore, the Ukrainian conflict is also about the future of the European security order, including how this order will be institutionalised. At the same time the European countries, including the EU, have been unwilling to understand the basic strategic dilemma they face in terms of how to handle this conflict.

NATO’S ABILITY TO RESPOND

The first part of this strategic dilemma has to do with the continuing demilitarisation of Europe. Large parts of the general public and the political class are averse to military force and the risks that go with it. Undoubtedly, this has gone from a blessing in the 20th century, but has more become an impediment to achieving real security and lasting peace in the 21st²⁸. The second part of the dilemma has to do with the financial crisis that began in 2008, making the European ability to promote stability in its geographical proximities in North Africa, the Middle East and in the Balkans, far more remote. Even though the EU’s neighbourhood policy has been fairly successful, the real strategic dilemma European

26 Jakobsen, Peter Viggo & Jens Ringsmose (2015): “Size and reputation – why the USA has valued its ‘special relationships’ with Denmark and the UK differently since 9/11”, *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 13(2). – P. 136.

27 Fiott, Daniel (2015): “The EU and NATO at last united – by Putin”, *Europe’s World*. Available at: <http://europesworld.org/2015/02/23/eu-nato-last-united-putin/#.VVYhgEOcRaQ>; Techau, Jan (2015): “European security after Ukraine”, *Carnegie Europe*. Available at: <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategic-europe/?fa=59025>

28 Krastev, Ivan & Mark Leonard (2015): “Europe’s Shattered Dream of Order. How Putin is disrupting the Atlantic Alliance”, *Foreign Affairs*, 94(3). – P. 51.

policymakers are facing now is to make “peace without money and war without the Americans”, as Sven Biscop²⁹ puts it.

The Europeans must therefore increase their defence spending and spend the extra funds more wisely through significantly more cross-border defence cooperation, coordination and integration (see infographic 3). This implies to pool and share their defence resources and thereby spend the economic resources in a smarter way; i.e. the Smart Defence concept in NATO. But even now, during the worst European security conflict so far in the 21st century, several European countries are still cutting their defence budgets. In fact, most NATO members are doing little to reverse the decline in their defence spending. A report by the European Leadership Network (ELN) found that six countries, including two of the biggest defence spenders in Europe, Great Britain and Germany, will cut their defence expenditure in 2015³⁰. Defence spending in France, the third big spender in Europe, will remain static. In this perspective, NATO has so far not been able to react adequately to the new challenges posed by Russia.

The Europeans must therefore increase their defence spending and spend the extra funds more wisely through significantly more cross-border defence cooperation, coordination and integration

Nevertheless, NATO has suspended cooperation and reduced its communication with Russia to a minimum. In this sense, NATO is more an instrument to protect European member states from Russian provocations than a platform for managing the Ukrainian conflict. This is a natural development. The US, NATO, the EU and the European member states must in the current situation prioritise to protect the institutionalised European security order, instead of conducting nation building operations outside Europe. NATO gave itself three essential core tasks in its 2010 Strategic Concept – collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security – but crisis management has in reality dominated during recent years³¹. The main danger with this development was that the NATO member states

²⁹ Biscop, Sven (2013): “Peace without money, war without Americans: challenges for European strategy”, *International Affairs*, (89) 5: (1125-1142).

³⁰ Raynova, Denitsa & Ian Kerns (2015): *The Wales Pledge Revisited: A Preliminary Analysis of 2015 Budget Decisions in NATO Member States*. European Leadership Network. London: ELN.

³¹ NATO (2010): *Active Engagement – Modern Defence. Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation*. Brussels: NATO.

INFOGRAPHIC 3. DEFENSE EXPENDITURES OF THE NATO MEMBER STATES

How did the military expenditures change after Russian aggression?

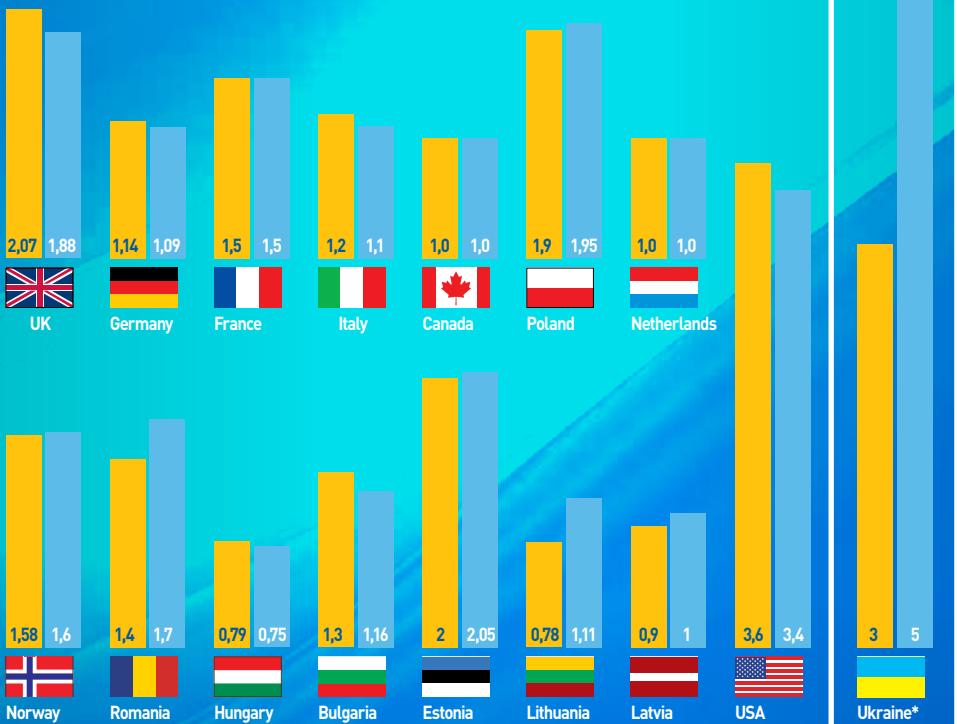
The states that increased their military expenditures:

- Ukraine
- Poland
- Norway
- Romania
- Estonia
- Lithuania
- Latvia

The states that decreased their military expenditures:

- USA
- UK
- Germany
- Hungary
- Bulgaria
- Italy

■ military expenditure (% of GDP) in 2014
 ■ military expenditure (% of GDP) in 2015



Source: data on defense budgets of 15 NATO member states, according to the European Leadership Network report

*Source: Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, National Security and Defense Council

over the years gave priority to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan and as a consequence lost sight of what NATO originally was all about. The result was an “alliance adrift”, a multi-layered alliance structure, and a lack of alliance cohesion³².

For NATO to be more relevant during this conflict, and not just an insurance policy, the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) could have served as a channel for crisis communication and practical communication. Such a reformed NRC might therefore be a channel for trust building. The problem so far, and as the Russian analyst Alexander Goltz pointed out long before the Ukraine conflict broke out, is that NATO and Russia can come to mutual understanding and mutual decisions even without the NRC³³. As a consequence, and in reality, during its 13 years of existence NRC has so far not been an institution for joint NATO-Russian decision making. Therefore, and for the time being, NATO’s focus is collective defence, also including “hybrid warfare”, where the Wales summit declaration states that “... We will ensure that NATO is able to effectively address the specific challenges posed by hybrid warfare threats, where a wide range of overt and covert military, paramilitary, and civilian measures are employed in a highly integrated design”³⁴. The ability of all the allies, both in the EU and in NATO, to understand and respond to this new type of warfare, consisting of regular, irregular and criminal elements that operates across real and virtual spaces, will therefore be essential to safeguarding the peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic area³⁵.

NATO AND UKRAINE IN A MULTIPOLAR WORLD

Some scholars and policy analysts, especially within the realist school of thought, have for a long time already predicted the coming of the multipolar world³⁶. When assessing the Ukrainian conflict from such a geostrategic perspective, the events so far have, at least to some extent, proved them correct. The US pivot towards Asia is a clear sign of such a development. EU’s emerging strategic actorness has not been that of a great power either, but of a “small power”³⁷, thus indicating that much of the world is losing their interest in what is going on in Europe. This has certainly also added urgency to debates

³² Knutsen, Bjørn Olav (2012): *NATO, the renewed emphasis on Article V and the EU’s common defence and solidarity clauses – an analysis of the changing nature of the transatlantic security community*. FFI-rapport 2012/00955. Kjeller: FFI. – P. 7.

³³ Webber, Mark, James Sperling & Martin A. Smith (2012): *NATO’s Post-Cold War Trajectory. Decline or Regeneration?* London: Palgrave Macmillan. – P. 135.

³⁴ NATO (2014a): *Wales Summit Declaration. Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales*. Brussels: NATO.

³⁵ NATO (2015): *NATO and New Ways of Warfare: “Defeating Hybrid Threats”*. Rome: NATO Defense College. – P. 6.

³⁶ See Layne, Christopher (1993): “The Unipolar Illusion – Why new Great Powers will Rise”, *International Security*, 17(4): 5-51; Waltz, Kenneth (2000): “NATO Expansion: A Realist’s View”, *Contemporary Security Policy*, 21(2): 23-38.

³⁷ Toje, Asle (2011): “The European Union as a Small Power”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 49(1): 43-60.

concerning the place of the West in the international system. A former foreign policy advisor to the Russian president, professor Sergey Karaganov³⁸, has tried to explain the origins of the conflict by pointing out that the West is much weaker and Russia far stronger than many imagine. Furthermore, he points out, for Russia the conflict is about stopping NATO's eastward expansion into areas that are of vital importance to Russia's survival. While such a statement could be characterised as an exaggeration, it nevertheless seems to be a fact that most non-European states in the world, apart from the close EU and US allies, tend to follow their own national interests in this conflict. Consequently, they will not side with either the East or the West in the struggle over Ukraine. From a geostrategic perspective, such a development is a manifest sign of the emerging multipolar order that is reshaping the global agenda, which furthermore will impact Ukraine in terms of security. Hence, the Ukrainian conflict has not had significant global consequences. This will most certainly affect Ukraine's future possibilities for joining the Western institutions.

Denying Ukraine membership in NATO, as some realists like Henry Kissinger advocate, will consequently be in fundamental breach of the OSCE Helsinki Final Act

For example, at the NATO 2008 summit in Bucharest the leaders welcomed Ukraine's and Georgia's aspirations for membership³⁹. The summit also initiated a process that would have prepared these countries for a Membership Action Plan (MAP). As a consequence, the summit initiated a process of intensive engagement with both countries to address the questions still outstanding pertaining to their MAP applications. As of 2015, both countries are still far away from becoming members of NATO (and of the EU). In such a perspective, Ukraine will for the foreseeable future stay in this intermediate state or condition. This is most clearly a sign of a multipolar order where the Western values do not seem to have the same universal appeal anymore.

This leads us to a very serious paradox for Ukraine. The OSCE Helsinki Final Act from 1975 states that every European state has "the right to belong or not to belong to international organizations, to be or not to be a party to bilateral or multilateral treaties includ-

³⁸ Karaganov, Sergey (2014): "Western delusions triggered this conflict and Russians will not yield", *Financial Times*, 14 September.

³⁹ NATO (2008): *Bucharest Summit Declaration*. Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Bucharest on 3 April 2008. Brussels: NATO.

ing the right to be or not to be a party to treaties of alliance; they also have the right to neutrality”⁴⁰. This statement has since the end of the Cold War not just been a principle, but also a norm underpinning the very existence of the current European security order and fundamental to European security and cooperation at large. Denying Ukraine membership in NATO, as some realists like Henry Kissinger⁴¹ advocate, will consequently be in fundamental breach with this norm. Nevertheless, NATO’s study on enlargement from 1995 also emphasise that “.... States which have ethnic disputes or external territorial disputes, including irredentist claims, or internal jurisdictional disputes must settle those disputes by peaceful means in accordance with OSCE principles. Resolution of such disputes would be a factor in determining whether to invite a state to join the Alliance”⁴². In such a perspective, Ukraine’s relationship with the Euro-Atlantic security community will be a test-case for the very future of this community pertaining that Ukraine gets it acts together and develops a system of good governance and democratic conduct.

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⁴⁰ Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (1975): Final Act. Helsinki: CSCE.

⁴¹ Kissinger, Henry (2014): “To settle the Ukraine crisis, start at the end”, Washington Post, 5 March.

Available at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/henry-kissinger-to-settle-the-ukraine-crisis-start-at-the-end/2014/03/05/46dad868-a496-11e3-8466-d34c451760b9_story.html

⁴² NATO (1995): Study on NATO Enlargement. Brussels: NATO.

ARE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AN OBSTACLE FOR UKRAINE'S INTEGRATION IN NATO?

IULIAN CHIFU

There were lots of interpretations how Ukraine – NATO relations will develop taking into account the dramatic changes in the region in the last year and a half. The general perception in Ukraine's think tank world is that there's an informal condition for each state on the way of becoming NATO member: the state should not have any open conflicts with neighbours. But the new framework present at the gates of the Western World and the war proposed by Russia creates the perspectives for a new line of defense and de facto border inside Ukraine as a defendable demarcation line that will supposedly also be the new border between East and West for the decades to come.

NATO'S ACCESSION: TERMS AND CONDITIONS

NATO is an organisation that didn't modify its founding Treaty since Washington 1949. The text is written so well, in a juridical English so general and broad that the text could be applicable during the fall of the Berlin wall, the end of the Cold War, the explosion of Soviet Union into independent states, the formal disappearance of the Warsaw Pact and the enlargement policy, which included former communist states in order to achieve the vision of Europe as a whole, free and at peace. For comparison purposes, the EU Treaty has been amended each time when a new wave of enlargement took place and at each step of further integration of existing member states or when a new institution was put in place.

Enlargement is stipulated in Article 10 "The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty". Here the conditions are clear: unanimous decision by the member states, respecting the principles of the Treaty and to contribute to the security of North Atlantic Area. In real terms, a country can accede to NATO if it respects the principles and contribute to the security of the Alliance. And there are conditions imposed by the Alliance and member states regarding the level of democracy, human rights, minority rights observance, as well as market economy, rule of law, independence of the judiciary and fighting corruption.

In this case, I think that a broad range of effective reforms, civilian control of armed forces, a comprehensive security sector reform, a professional and qualitative army and related security and intelligence services, observing democratic rules and an effective control, not politicization, of Armed forces, security and intelligence agencies is requested. Second, the added value of the new aspirant country should be proved according its geography, military capability and added value to the Alliance. In order for Ukraine to make its case, reforms in all the fields of activity are requested, including those already started under the Association Agreement and the DCFTA with the EU, as well as those undertaken for obtaining visa liberalization.

The new aspirant country should prove its added value for NATO. In order for Ukraine to make its case, reforms in all the fields of activity are requested

But there is a very specific one related to the territory of the state that is supposed to enter NATO, because any aspirant member is joining the Alliance as a country, meaning it has a certain people, territory, control of its borders, political will and it is will of the citizens to join NATO. There is no precedent when a country could join NATO without the full control of its borders or its capacity to defend itself and bring an added value to the common defense of the allies. However that does not mean that Ukraine could not join NATO if the Washington Treaty conditions are met. But this would require the member countries to take an open minded approach and accept some conditions. This has to be true for all the member countries.

COMING BACK TO THE BASICS: TERRITORIAL DEFENSE

Ukraine is a partner of the Alliance, it's a member in the Partnership for Peace, developed its own individual partnership plan, has an Individual Dialogue and Distinctive Partnership with the Alliance and NATO has emphasized the relation between Ukraine and NATO in the field of defense. For instance, in Art.24 if the Wales Summit Declaration it is already stated that "An independent, sovereign, and stable Ukraine, firmly committed to democracy and the rule of law, is key to Euro-Atlantic security. At a time when Ukraine's security is being undermined, the Alliance continues its full support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally

recognised borders.” Those are the conditions of a recognised contribution to the Alliance’s security and defense.

There is no precedent when a country could join NATO without the full control of its borders or its capacity to defend itself and bring an added value to the common defense of the allies

Regarding the same path of reforms, Art 26 notes that “We (NATO – our note) encourage Ukraine to further promote an inclusive political process, based on democratic values and respect for human rights, minorities, and the rule of law”. And the relation is further described in Art. 29:“Ukraine is a long-standing and distinctive partner of the Alliance. At our meeting here in Wales, we met with President Poroshenko and issued a joint statement. We highly value Ukraine’s past and present contributions to all current Allied operations as well as to the NATO Response Force. We encourage and will continue to support Ukraine’s implementation of wide-ranging reforms through the Annual National Programme, in the framework of our Distinctive Partnership. We have launched additional efforts to support the reform and transformation of the security and defence sectors and promote greater interoperability between Ukraine’s and NATO forces. These efforts are designed to enhance Ukraine’s ability to provide for its own security. We welcome Ukraine’s participation in the Partnership Interoperability Initiative and Ukraine’s interest in the enhanced opportunities within the Initiative, and look forward to its future participation.”

So NATO does not only take into consideration the will of the Ukrainian people and political class to join the Alliance, and does not only repeats the conditions to get closer to the alliance, but also takes concrete steps in order to assist Ukraine meet the conditions needed in order to defend itself and to eventually join the Alliance, if it wants to do so. And the commitments can be found everywhere in the documents of the 2014 NATO Wales Summit and following reunions, at all levels.

This is linked with the Alliance’s return to the original and most important mission, that of defending the citizens and territory of its member states. In this regard, I think that Ukraine can make a case of its contribution to the security and common defense of the Alliance once its reforms are concluded: it could play the role of the defender of Western values and the new border of the Alliance between East and West.

Ukraine can make its contribution to the security and common defense of the Alliance once its reforms are concluded: it could play the role of the defender of Western values and the new border of the Alliance between East and West

THE BORDER OF EUROPE: ENFORCED, MILITARIZED, DEFENDABLE

We are coming back to the very core argument of this evolution: the will of the political class and the citizens of Ukraine to join NATO. We are talking about those citizens living under the rule of the legitimate authorities from Kyiv, because in NATO's case it's about sovereignty, not limited sovereignty, about independent decision, not the one of people leaving in occupied territories, expressing their will under the threat of a gun.

In fact, Russia has changed the spiritualized border between East and West, described by the EU Eastern Partnership as an area of passage and influences for all the actors, where citizens of the independent states should choose their path and solutions for security and prosperity (according to the Paris Chart for a New Europe, agreed and signed by Russia). Moscow launched a military attack to fight the free will expressed by the Ukrainian people and the legitimate elected Ukrainian authorities to join the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area of the EU, a step that was supposedly blocking Putin's aspiration to rebuild the Soviet Union in a different format under its authoritarian control.

This type of action was followed by the consecutive militarization of the annexed territory of Crimea and territories of Eastern Ukraine, subject to the military aggression of Russian troops, with Russian weapons, under Russian command and with Russian proxies all around, in a hybrid war led by Russia against Ukraine. It announced that the next type of border between East and West that Moscow proposes to the World and to Europe is an enforced, militarized, and defendable one. This border is effectively a new Berlin Wall, but with a length of a few thousand kilometers.

In this context, Ukraine has to be offered the possibility to defend itself and to that end a line of defense west of the existing demarcation line in Donbas and North of Crimea should be put in place as soon as possible. I am in favor of a transfer of defensive weapons and training of the National Guard, Defense Forces and Interior Forces of Ukraine in order to allow them to be able to face a new potential continuation of the aggression, involving Russian troops and its proxies, beyond the area currently controlled by Russia.

The weapons delivered to Ukraine for defense could not be used in order to free the territory of Donbas by force. This is not possible since every upgrade of troops and weapons and any attempt to liquidate the separatist region will make Russia introduce more troops and weapons, and to lead a bloodshed in any direct confrontation. On the other hand, it is legitimate to assist Ukraine in order to create the capabilities, both military trained personal and necessary defense weapons, needed to defend itself against any further attack and attempt to take more of its territory. And this could constitute the future ad hoc – de facto border between East and West.

This doesn't mean that Ukraine should ever give up its rights to the territories defined by international law and internationally recognised borders. All NATO documents mentioned the fact that in Crimea we are witnessing an annexation by Russia of a territory of Ukraine and in Donbas the solution should include Ukraine retaking the full control of its border. Kyiv's will to improve its capacity to control and defend the part of the territory that is free now, with NATO's help and assistance, while reforming its government bodies and embracing EU's and NATO's principles, if that is the choice of its citizens, is not harming, neither altering, the perspective of regaining, in time, control over all its territory.

UKRAINE: THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES

This perspective comes with an important threat. If the conflict is here to stay, which seems to be the case, the population that lives in Eastern Ukraine and in Crimea will be cut from the sovereign space of Ukraine for some decade or so and will be alienated as it is the case in other frozen conflicts such as Transnistria, in the Eastern districts of the Republic of Moldova, for instance. This population will become dependent on the financial allocations from Moscow and will be de facto integrated in Russia.

On the other hand, the territory that could be defended and stays under the control of the legitimate authorities in Kyiv could be reformed, norms could be adopted, institutions created and a real presence of those democratic European and euro-Atlantic institutions could be enacted. It is a major step towards accession to EU and NATO. By sticking to the commitments undertaken in the Association Agreement, DCFTA and those needed for Visa liberalization Ukraine is seizing an opportunity to get closer to EU and NATO and, why not, with a decision adopted sometimes on the mid to long run by the member states, to become full member of both the organisations. This can happen even before Kyiv regains full control over its internationally recognized territory. One cannot offer to an actor external to the Alliance the veto right on the internal decision linked to Ukraine's accession, at least the decision referring to the part of the territory controlled by the legitimate authorities.

Ukraine can on the mid or long run become full member of both the EU and NATO. This can happen even before Kyiv regains full control over its internationally recognized territory

In Crimea the strong disapproval of the territorial annexation by force of weapons and this type of Anschluss with guns pointed at the local population is a good strategy to adopt. The oppression of human and minority rights can also be invoked, especially those of the Crimean Tartars. In Donbas, on the other side of the de facto internal border, the Minsk agreement should be implemented. This means the withdrawal of all military/paramilitary groups, forces and weapons from the area, and the restoration of full control of the Russian – Ukrainian frontier. It also implies the observance of the principles that Moscow recognizes at least in speech, according to its Ministry of Foreign Affairs: the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of Ukraine. It rules out any conditions requested for “the Russians beyond the borders”, any pretended rights that support some great power interests and any new type of Brezhnev Doctrine of limited sovereignty that Russia wants to impose on Ukraine and on other post-soviet independent states.

If Russia rejects this perspective, the cease fire, the full observance of the Minsk agreements, or tries to create a new situation in which it trades peace in exchange of limiting the sovereignty of Ukraine regarding its choices and options for security, namely joining NATO, or prosperity, namely joining the EU, there is solid ground and good arguments for Kiev to proceed with asking for EU/NATO admission. Even if it does not have control over its entire territory at that moment, this does not exclude the perspective of reclaiming its full territory in time. It is a hard choice for Ukraine, it will be an equally hard choice for NATO and the EU, once reforms are done and a formal request is filed to join these organisations, but extraordinary conditions and special times require extraordinary solutions. And this could be one such situation, provided that the Ukrainian sovereign decision making bodies decide so and the population supports the decision⁴³.

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⁴³ For more information, see other publications of the author: Iulian Chifu, *Decizia de securitate în Republica Moldova*, Bucharest, 2009; Iulian Chifu, *Gândire Strategică*, Bucharest, 2013; Iulian Chifu, Britta Ramberg, *Crisis management in Transitional Societies*, Stockholm, 2007. Iulian Chifu, Oazu Nantoi, Oleksandr Sushko, *The Breakthrough Crisis of a quick solution in Transnistria, a cognitive institutional approach of the crisis decision-making*, Bucharest, 2008; Iulian Chifu, Oazu Nantoi, Oleksandr Sushko, *The perception of Russia in Romania, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine*, Bucharest, 2010

NATO AND THE UKRAINIANS: DOES THE PUBLIC OPINION MATTER?

SERGIY SOLODKYY

Never before had Ukrainians support their country's integration into NATO so massively. According to some opinion surveys⁴⁴, the rate of support for Ukraine's membership in NATO has recently crossed the 50% mark. However, this increase in number of supporters of the country's accession to the organization has not managed to bring the both sides together. The Alliance keeps emphasizing the lack of consensus among the Ukrainians. Nevertheless, even 90% of Ukrainians supporting the government's course towards NATO would be unlikely to force the Western countries to actually open their doors to Ukraine in the short run.

UKRAINIANS' EUROATLANTIC SYMPATHIES: WHAT HAS CHANGED AFTER RUSSIA'S AGGRESSION?

If a referendum on Ukraine's accession to NATO was held at the end of 2014, virtually half of Ukrainians would vote «for», and no more than a third would vote «against». Another quarter of the population could not decide or would not participate in the referendum. Last year has shown a rapid increase of support for Euro-Atlantic integration among the Ukrainians. By the end of 2014, the survey research companies have recorded unprecedented figures of more than 45%.

The debates, organized by the Institute of World Policy in Southern and Eastern regional centers of Ukraine, have revealed an increased interest in Ukraine's course towards the Alliance among the opinion leaders. Journalists, social activists and local politicians, who were advocating Ukraine's non-alignment six months before, have revised their positions today and have turned into ardent supporters of integration into NATO. The Institute of World Policy organized an indicative mini-referendum in Zaporizhzhia among the local opinion leaders; none of its participants expressed support for Ukraine's membership in the Russia-centric Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ For instance, according to the survey conducted by the «Rating» sociological group in November 2014, 51% of Ukrainians support their country's accession to the NATO. For detailed information, see: <http://www.ratinggroup.com.ua/products/politic/data/entry/14117/>

⁴⁵ An improvised referendum has been conducted during the Strategic Discussion Club session in Zaporizhzhia, on September 19, 2015. The question has been posed as follows: which security format corresponds with Ukraine's interests the most? Over 100 attendees of the debates have participated in the voting. According to its results, none of the voters have voted for the CSTO; 21% have chosen neutrality and 43% have decided on integration into NATO; 26% have selected allied relations with the USA; 10% have suggested revival of Ukraine's nuclear arsenal. For detailed information regarding the SDC session in Zaporizhzhia, see: <http://m.day.kiev.ua/ru/article/den-planety/my-vpolne-mozhem-pobedit-drugoe-delo-kogda-i-kak>

None of the participants of mini-referendum organized by the Institute of World Policy in Zaporizhzhia voted for accession to the CSTO

Meanwhile, support for NATO is expressed during the debates (it was particularly noticeable during the Strategic Discussion Club session in Odesa) through not only statements of approval, but also criticism. Odesa's opinion leaders most frequently question the member states not providing Ukraine with armaments, NATO as a whole denying Ukraine's accession into its ranks and the Alliance refraining from constant military training exercises on Ukraine's territory. The shift in discourse in Southern and Eastern regions is obvious: while two years before, the majority of local leaders in Odesa, Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia would have criticized NATO for its intention to «force Ukraine into its ranks», nowadays most journalists and activists criticize the Alliance for its lack of resolve in supporting Ukraine.

Without a doubt, such criticism should not be clearly interpreted as a support for Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine. On the contrary, there is one very popular argument among the «anti-Westernists» that «Ukraine is not welcome there». Moreover, the lack of adequate support from NATO could be used by the advocates of pro-Russian discourse as a proof that «Ukraine has been betrayed». This may confuse the Ukrainians further and discredit the very idea of a close partnership between NATO and Ukraine.

The «pro» and «contra» arguments regarding NATO are not that much different this year compared to the times before Russian aggression, although it is obvious that the factor of war waged by Russia is a prevailing motivation for supporters of the Alliance. Therefore, the main argument of those favoring at least close cooperation with NATO or full membership in the Alliance is that «cooperation with NATO would allow Ukraine to modernize its defense sector rapidly. The Alliance's experience would be useful for swift strengthening of national security. Ukraine needs allies in its fight against Russia's aggression, and alone it would not be able to counter Russian military machine».

So far, the Russian factor was not that noticeable, although it has been considered among the motives for the Euro-Atlantic integration. Since the very first statement declaring the course towards NATO in 2002, Ukrainian authorities have been constantly emphasizing that the country's vector of integration into the Alliance is in no way aimed against Russia. Moreover, we could recall that Ukrainian government has taken its first decision on integration into NATO amidst an unexpected rapprochement between the Alliance and Russia (specifically, after establishment of the NATO-Russia Council in May 2002 at the summit in Rome).

Ukrainian authorities kept stressing that Ukraine's membership in NATO would strengthen security in the region and across the whole continent. The argument regarding Ukraine's presence

among equal members of the Alliance as the best guarantee that the organization would never have accepted any decisions that could threaten Russia was among the most commonly cited by Ukrainian government officials at the times of Leonid Kuchma's and Viktor Yushchenko's presidencies. Moreover, the old version of the Law «On the Principles of National Security of Ukraine» stressed that one of the main vectors of Ukraine's policy on national security is «ensuring full participation of Ukraine in European and regional systems of collective security, gaining membership in the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization while maintaining good relations and strategic partnership with the Russian Federation»⁴⁶. This section was present in the document since 2003 (Leonid Kuchma's presidency) and it remained unchanged in the later version of 2006 (Viktor Yushchenko's presidency). NATO reference had been removed in 2010; however, integration into the EU remained linked with good neighbor relations with Russia (Viktor Yanukovych's presidency). The latest version of the law has, naturally, no reference to Russia; the priority of Ukraine's national security is «integration into European political, economic and legal space aimed at gaining membership in the European Union and integration into the Euro-Atlantic security space».

The Russian factor has mobilized the public opinion by more than doubling the number of supporters of accession to NATO, while having diminished the number of the Alliance's opponents twofold

Nevertheless, the Russian factor has turned to be the most effective in mobilizing public opinion, since Russia's annexation of Crimea has more than doubled the number of supporters of accession to NATO, while having diminished the number of the Euro-Atlantic choice's opponents twofold. Ukrainian society had witnessed the case of increasing support of integration into NATO against the background of fear of Russia before, during the Tuzla crisis of 2003. It should be noted, however, that the increase of support (although it was relatively small, only 4%) had occurred in spite of prevailing massive anti-Western hysteria initiated by the team of internationally isolated President Leonid Kuchma⁴⁷. In 2002, according to the Razumkov Centre's data, the number of supporters and opponents of NATO in Ukraine was approximately equal, with both having 32%. Since then, a steady increase in public opposition to the Alliance has been observed in Ukrainian

46 This is mentioned, specifically, in the law *On the Principles of National Security of Ukraine*, issued on June 16, 2003. Available at: <http://zakon1.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/964-15/ed20030619>.

47 How would you vote if the referendum on Ukraine's NATO accession was held the following Sunday? (recurrent, 2002–2015), Razumkov Centre. Available at: http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/poll.php?poll_id=46

media on the background of harsh criticism by the Western countries. In November 2004 (before the Orange Revolution), support for NATO had dropped to 15%, which was the lowest rate in previous 15 years. Since then, the level of positive attitude towards NATO had not exceeded 25-27%. Instead, the number of opponents had been expanding: in the last year of Kuchma's presidency almost 56% of Ukrainians did not want their country to join the alliance, and later, during Viktor Yushchenko's presidency (in September 2005), that rate had reached 60%. It was Russia's aggressive actions that have changed this trend, lasting for a decade (see chart 1).

According to the poll conducted by the Razumkov Centre, in April 2014, the number of supporters of Ukraine's accession to NATO has increased to unprecedented 36.7%, while in March 2015, the respective figure was 43.3%. Meanwhile, the number of opponents of the Alliance has decreased to 41.6% in the spring 2014 and 31.6% 2015.

The opponents of NATO in general have changed their arguments against the Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine. As noted by the regional experts from Southern and Eastern regions, the strongholds of Ukrainian opposition, older people are still captivated by the "NATO-USSR" dualism stereotype. The opponents of the Alliance also comprise a substantial group among the young people, the so-called supporters of «Anti-Maidan» viewing the events of the past year as a result of «the Western scenarios» or a «conspiracy aimed at provoking the feud between the two 'fraternal nations'»,⁴⁸ on a «popular geopolitics» level. The main argument in this context is that Ukraine's accession to NATO would provoke Russia's large-scale aggression. Many Ukrainian opponents of NATO deny Russia's aggression against Ukraine and insist that cooperation and especially integration into the Alliance would «enslave our country»⁴⁹.

The segment of citizens, unable to decide if they are already disappointed with Russia and ready to trust the West, is growing among Ukrainians of Southern and Eastern regions

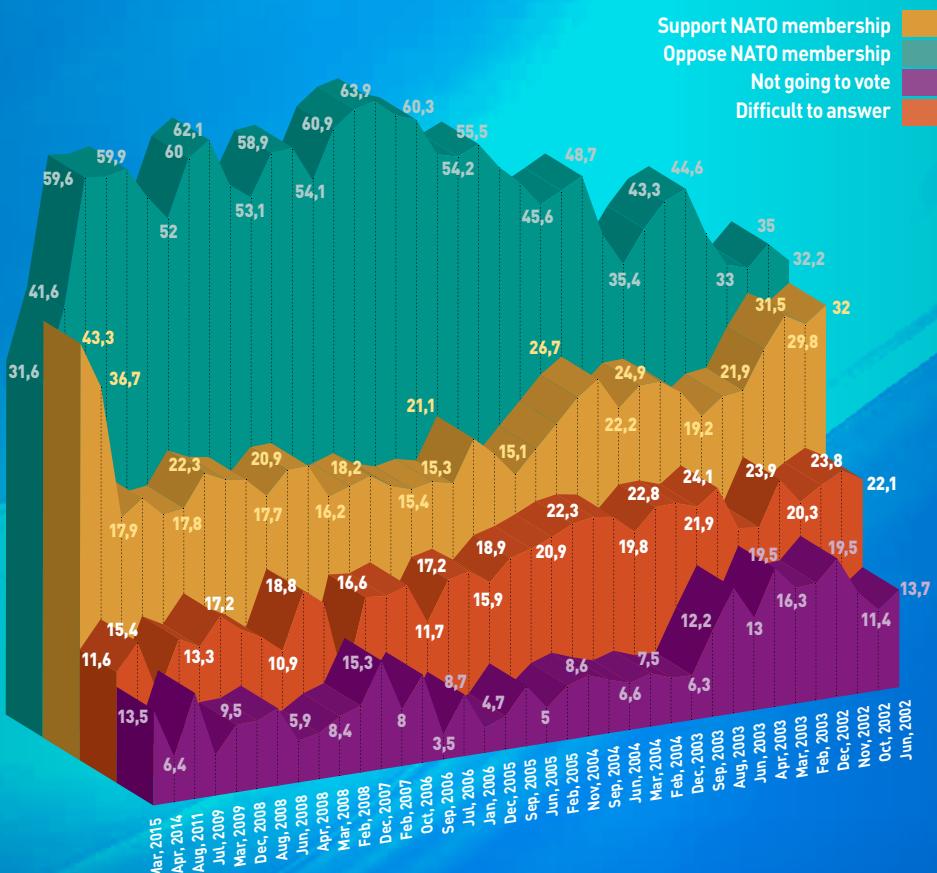
Regional experts note that the segment of citizens, unable to decide if they are already disappointed with Russia and ready to trust the West, is growing among Ukrainians of Southern and Eastern regions. For those Ukrainians, Russia is already not a friend, while the West is not yet a friend. They understand the futility of supporting integration into any Russia-centric block; however, re-

⁴⁸ Interview conducted by the Institute of World Policy with political experts Iuliia Bidenko (Kharkiv) and Ihor Zubko (Zaporizhzhia). Some thoughts were expressed during the debates within the framework of the Strategic Discussion Club project.

⁴⁹ Interviews conducted by the analysts of the Institute of World Policy with regional experts.

CHART 1. DYNAMICS OF PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO UKRAINE'S NATO MEMBERSHIP

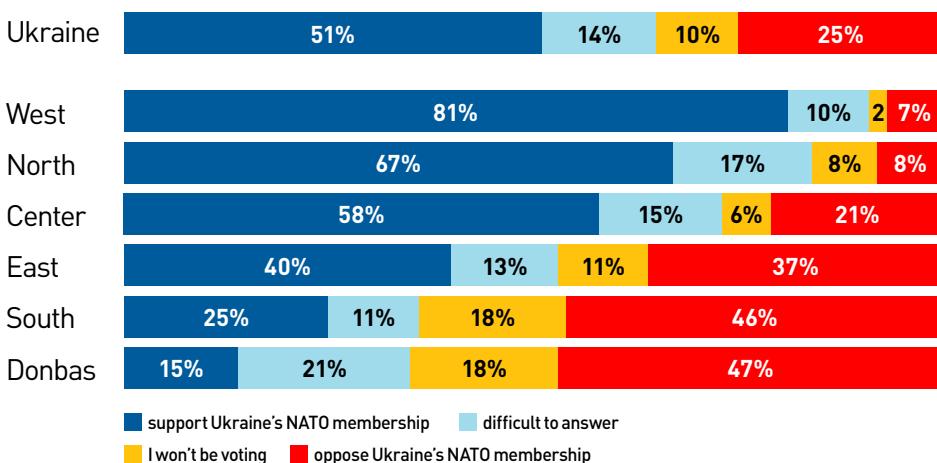
(2002-2015 YEARS)



cent events did not prove them necessity of integration into the EU and more so into the NATO. At best, those Ukrainians align with supporters of Ukraine's neutrality; still, they are most likely to join the «have not decided yet» category⁵⁰. According to the survey conducted by «Rating» sociological group, Southern and Eastern regions of Ukraine are populated with the most citizens who have not yet decided, or would not participate in the referendum on the country's accession to NATO. In Donbas, the rate is 39% (21% of the region's inhabitants have chosen «cannot answer» option and 18% would not vote). In the South, the rate is 29% (11% of «cannot answer» and 18% of «would not vote»). In Western regions, the rate of citizens unable to answer did not exceed 15% (see chart 2).

CHART 2. THE PUBLIC ATTITUDE OF UKRAINE'S ACCESSION TO NATO

Regional Dimension



Source: results of the survey conducted by Sociological group "Rating" in November 2014.

DEMOCRACY MATTERS, BUT NOT IN ALL CASES...

However, the increase in Ukrainians' support for joining NATO does not make the country closer to it. The public attitude is a relatively new factor taken into account in the process of new member's accession. At least during the Cold War, the principle of strict interest had been predominant, and the anti-Soviet camp did not focus on the attitudes of the ordinary citizens. The Western political elites acted with an understandable logic: public opinion in many Western countries

⁵⁰ Currently, this is only a hypothesis due to lack of deep sociological studies on that matter.

tended to be leftist, which in turn was perceived by the policy makers as a threat to security due to close contacts with the Communist Moscow. For instance, in 1948, there was a serious risk of Communists' coming to power in Italy, which was considered a serious risk to the transatlantic security.

Nevertheless, the Allies could not completely ignore the «voice of the people» even during their confrontation with the Warsaw Pact. In particular, after massive protests against Spain's membership in the Alliance the local authorities had eventually held a referendum on that issue in 1986, four years after the country's accession to the organization. In the end, 57% of population voted in favor of Madrid's membership in NATO. The example of Spain is also indicative in the context of the US's offer to accept the country into the Alliance at the times of Francisco Franco's regime, while other members of the organization stood against that offer due to Spanish government's neglecting democracy. Therefore, Madrid's case is a vivid evidence of the fact that the role of democratic standards mattered even in times of bipolar confrontation, although it was probably not as crucial as it was after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The project of democratization, having defined the agenda of international relations after the collapse of the Soviet Union, had lead to appropriate adjustments in the informal list of criteria for the NATO's enlargement. Hungary and Slovenia have held their referendums on joining NATO: the former in 1999, and the latter in 2003. Since their declaration of Euro-Atlantic course in 2002, Ukrainian authorities have been also stressing that a referendum on the country's membership in NATO will be conducted. Though a referendum is not a condition for membership in the Alliance (NATO officials confirm that survey results are sufficient), the issue of public attitude towards NATO in candidate countries has been considered essential in the last 20 years.

NATO's interest to public opinion is not accidental. On the one hand, it fits into paradigm of the democratization project: according to it, important political decisions should be made with high public awareness, while, consequently, the political elites have to build their position on the will of the majority of their citizens. There is also another, more rational motive: NATO cannot afford to expose itself to the threat of any country's joining and subsequently leaving the organization following the change of its political regime. Moreover, disapproval of government's decision to join NATO by the citizens may limit the scope of Euro-Atlantic security related decision-making or simply delegitimize those decisions. (Although NATO's history knows some cases of its member's secession that did not impact the effectiveness of the organization substantially; it was with France's secession from the NATO's integrated military structure in 1966, as well as with Greece's short-term secession (1974-1980) due to Turkish army's intervention in Cyprus).

All the countries that joined the Alliance in the post-Cold War times have conducted public awareness campaigns on the benefits of transatlantic partnership among their citizens. In that way, on the one hand, NATO sought to democratize the process of its enlargement, while on the other, the Alliance had actually played safe, as the governments of new member states could be constrained in their decisions on cooperation with NATO without broad public support.

UKRAINIANS' SYMPATHIES VS FEAR OF RUSSIA

The low level of public support for Ukraine's course towards NATO has been previously considered a significant obstacle to successful integration. In 2008, when the issue of providing Ukraine with the Membership Action Plan has been discussed at NATO summit in Bucharest (Romania), the lack of public support had been mentioned among the main obstacles to the progress in relations between the two sides⁵¹. The observers, however, had every confidence that the main reason was a harsh reaction of Russian authorities to the rapprochement between Ukraine and NATO, as Germany, France, Italy and the Benelux states have hoped to develop a «new security architecture in Europe» based on respecting Russia's position. Although all leaders of NATO member states claimed officially that Russia would have no veto right on the Alliance's enlargement, in fact, it seemed like Moscow had actually gained such preference. Moreover, nowadays Russia's informal veto right has been even strengthened by its aggression against Ukraine.

The diplomats representing NATO member states, as well as the officials of the Alliance Headquarters keep emphasizing that Ukraine still lacks consensus on the issue of joining NATO, and this issue effectively divides the country's population⁵². However, none of the NATO's representatives has yet explained which consensus would be considered relevant: would it be 60% of support, or a level of 70% has to be achieved. In time, obviously, NATO may offer additional arguments advocating the bad timing for talks on the prospects of Ukraine's membership in the organization, including claims on situatedness of support for the Alliance among Ukrainian public opinion. Historical experience proves that Ukrainians' commitment to NATO depends proportionally on Russia's aggressive policy. This dynamics have first become evident, specifically, amidst the aforesaid Tuzla crisis; however, the level of support had diminished after its resolution. Therefore, we could assume that normalization of relations between Ukraine and Russia might lead to decrease in NATO's popularity.

NATO is currently adhering to the ambivalent position regarding Ukraine's membership prospects: on the one hand, representatives of the Alliance's declare the «open doors» policy; on the other, certain influential member states' politicians refer to such a step as untimely. Some of NATO member states are even seriously considering adopting the *idee fixe* of Russian foreign policy regarding the «privileged interests» and the «sphere of interest» in the post-Soviet region. This can lead to a situation when even the will of 90% of the citizens to see Ukraine as a part of the Alliance would not meet any understanding among the Euro-Atlantic partners. Even one vote against among the member states is enough to block Ukraine's acces-

⁵¹ *The New York Times. NATO Allies Oppose Bush on Georgia and Ukraine, April 3, 2008. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/03/world/europe/03nato.html?pagewanted=all>*

⁵² *The opinion regarding lack of consensus on accession to NATO among the Ukrainians has been cited the most frequently during the Strategic Discussion Club session in Kherson (April 16, 2015). Reference: <http://iwp.org.ua/public/1494.html>*

sion into the transatlantic security space. One of the most vivid examples is Georgia, where the majority of citizens are supporting the country's membership in NATO, while other arguments (e.g. frozen conflicts or Russia's reaction) keep blocking any further steps.

Amid the absence of any clear answer from NATO on the prospects of its relations with Ukraine, the increase in number of neutrality supporters or those unable to decide among the citizens of Ukraine is possible. According to one of the sociologists' hypothesis, the popularity of NATO in Ukraine has reached its peak, and thus, further public awareness activities should be conducted among the citizens who never trusted and still do not trust the West⁵³. Indeed, such activities will have little effectiveness, given the inability of the West to provide Ukraine with clear signals. The position of many Ukrainians opposing integration into the Western structures is strongly affected by the low self-esteem factor: «We are not welcome there anyway». The deepening of such attitudes could lead to a threat of increasing popularity of the populist political movements taking advantage of anti-Western or even anti-democratic slogans.

Deepening disappointment among the Ukrainians could lead to a threat of increasing popularity of the populist political movements taking advantage of anti-Western or even anti-democratic slogans

Subsequently, within the framework of partnership between Ukraine and NATO, both sides are substantially responsible for maintaining positive assessments of closer cooperation. Ukrainian authorities should seize any available opportunity to reform the country's security sector with the support of the Alliance. NATO, in turn, should demonstrate greater commitment to supporting Ukraine in its fight against Russia's aggression. More examples of effective cooperation would more likely deprive the anti-Western pro-authoritarian populists of public support. NATO should treat the statements of Ukrainian officials on the membership prospects with greater patience. Neither stacking old grudges, nor distrust or fear of Russia should hinder the activation of the «Special Partnership» that would ultimately not strip the Ukrainians of a chance to become a part of the Euro-Atlantic space.

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⁵³ Interview with an expert of the Institute of World Policy and an analyst of the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation Mariia Zolkina.

SUBSTITUTE OF MEMBERSHIP: A FINNISH MODEL?

CHARLY SALONIUS-PASTERNAK

There are several hypotheses in public discourse regarding the possible security format for Ukraine if its full membership in NATO is not a realistic prospect. Among those versions, we should mention frequent claims on reasonability of the Finnish model, which means membership in the EU without a full integration into NATO. Meanwhile, after Russia's aggression, the perception of Euro-Atlantic integration has changed in Finland, and debates on the country's possible membership in the Alliance have been revived.

THE FINNISH MODEL. WHAT IS THAT?

Finland's foreign and security policies are marked by official continuity interrupted by significant changes, yet, behind the scenes, relationships with actors that are important to Finland are continuously changing. The end of the cold war and the abrogation of the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union, and entry into the European Union are two such significant changes. Through this time, Finland has maintained a broad view of security and continues to focus on national defense, relying on a military based on conscription and a large reserve. Annually more than twenty-thousand men and between three and four hundred volunteer women are trained by the Finnish Defense Forces (FDF), which during peacetime consists of more than eight thousand soldiers (8000) and five thousand (5000) civilians. The fully mobilized war-time force is around two-hundred and thirty thousand (230,000+) soldiers. The annual defense budget of around 2 700 million Euros (1.28% of GDP) used to have a better balance between procurement, operations and salaries but for 2014 about seventeen percent went to procurement, sixty eight percent for general operational costs and the remainder for salaries. Only around 1.5% of the defense budget is used for international peacekeeping or crisis management operations.⁵⁴ As a whole, it is clear that Finland continues to focus on national territorial defense, while contributing around five hundred soldiers to diverse international operations. Experiences from international operations make it clear that in terms of professionalism and capability, Finnish reservists perform well compared to all-volunteer forces, and interoperability between Finnish army, navy and air-force units and NATO-member forces is exceptionally high.

Clearly Finland's relationship with NATO has evolved significantly since 1994, when it first joined the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. This two decades long period of increased and deepened cooperation has been enabled the step by step building of trust on both sides. Fundamentally this has

⁵⁴ Numbers based on Finnish Defence Forces 2014 Annual report and associated documents. Available at: <http://vuosikertomus.puolustusvoimat.fi/>

had to do with Finland repeatedly showing that it can be relied on to deliver what it has promised, whether in crisis management operations, exercises or other forms of cooperation, and NATO for its part including Finland in many types of activities that had previously been reserved only for members.

The interoperability between Finnish army, navy and air-force units and NATO-member forces is exceptionally high

The most visible part of the relationship has been Finland's participation in various NATO-led crisis management operations. Starting in 1995, Finland contributed a battalion to the IFOR and subsequent SFOR (starting in 1996) crisis management operations in the Balkans. When the KFOR operation in Kosovo was launched in 1999, Finland contributed a large battalion consisting mainly of reservists. Of particular note is that Finland was the first non-NATO country to be given operational command of a NATO brigade (Multinational Brigade – Center). Finland joined the ISAF operation in Afghanistan January 2002 contributing anywhere from fifty to over two-hundred soldiers at any given time, while contributions to the follow-on mission Resolute Support is around eighty soldiers.

Finland has also actively participated in the work of the various security related groupings and committees gathered under the auspices of NATO. In 1997 Finland became a member of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), started actively participating in the Civil Emergency Planning (CEP) work, including earmarking fourteen experts for its eight sub-committees. In 1998 Finland began contributing to the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC), a Russian initiative.

Starting during the 1990s but systematically increasing during the past decade, Finland has participated in defense materiel cooperation, sought to increase interoperability by adopting NATO standards and has used the Planning and Review Process (PARP) and its Partnership Goals (PG) to develop its own national defense. For example Finland participates in the Strategic Airlift Capability project, and has participated in NATO Response Force (NRF) since 2008, partially to gain more access to NATO standards and procedures, and has since the 1990s ensured that all procured materiel fulfills NATO standards. In September 2014, Finland and Sweden signed a Memorandum of Understanding with NATO on Host Nation Support, and became a part of the Enhanced Opportunities Partnership program (EOP) enabling further cooperation.

It is noteworthy that this substantial increase in both breadth and depth of cooperation has been supported by Finnish politicians from a wide range of political backgrounds; it is not the project of just a few parties. This has enabled long-range and stable planning by the various governmental agencies and ministries involved in cooperation with NATO.

Politically ever deeper cooperation with NATO has also required Finland to adopt different concepts regarding its position in the realm of security politics. European Union

membership in 1995 is seen as a fundamental foreign, security and economic choice by Finland, and with EU membership the language of neutrality faded from official usage. It has been replaced at first by statements about Finland ‘not being militarily allied’ to more recently (post EU Lisbon treaty) Finland ‘not being a member of a military alliance’.

HOW DOES THE FINNISH SOCIETY PERCEIVE INTEGRATION INTO NATO?

Opinions on whether or not Finland should seek to become a member of NATO divide both Finnish popular opinion and politicians. The specific polls vary, but in general during the past decade 60 to 70% of the population has opposed Finnish NATO membership, while between 20 and 30% of the population supports it, with around 10% not having an opinion.⁵⁵ This contrasts with polls conducted of officers in Finland, where around half of all officers support membership, and around 70% of colonels and above ranks support membership.⁵⁶

The ordinary Finns opposed Finnish NATO membership. This contrasts with polls conducted of officers in Finland, where around half of all officers support membership, and around 70% of colonels and above ranks support membership

The main reasons the general population at large gives for being against Finnish NATO membership have to do with Russia and its proximity, and that NATO is not seen to increase Finnish security. Those who favor NATO membership give as their main reasons that membership would generally increase Finnish security and specifically address threats emanating from Russia. This is one of the aspects which make the situation difficult for politicians; both sides of the argument use the same reasons to argue for their position.

Of the political parties represented in the Finnish parliament, only the conservative National Coalition and Swedish People’s Party (liberal) openly favor Finnish NATO member-

55 Though frequent polls on Finnish security policy and potential NATO-membership are conducted, the poll with the longest time-series is conducted by the Advisory Board for Defense Information (ADBI), the most recent polls published are from December 3rd, 2014. Except when noted all polls results are from this study. All ADBI polling reports are available at: http://www.defmin.fi/en/tasks_and_activities/media_and_communications/the_advisory_board_for_defence_information_abdi/bulletins_and_reports

56 Upseerit: Resurssit eivät riitä – Nato-jäsenyydellä vahva tuki, Politikka, 14.01.2014. Available at: http://yle.fi/uutiset/upseerit_resurssit_eivat_riita_nato-jasenyydella_vahva_tuki/7031264.

ship. The Finns, Social Democratic, Center and Green parties all remain open to Finnish NATO membership but do not think it is necessary at the moment. The Left Alliance is ideologically opposed to Finnish NATO membership.

Overall, opinions regarding Finnish membership in NATO are relatively stable, though the recent negative changes and general instability in the regional security situation has moderately increased support for Finnish membership. However, this increase in support for cooperation applies to all types of military cooperation, with bilateral Swedish (94%), Nordic (94%) and EU (86%) cooperation receiving support from the great majority of the population; support for cooperation with NATO is notably less at 56% of the population. In parallel with increased support for Finnish NATO membership, polls show that more Finns think defense policy has been handled badly or very badly, with a quarter of the population now feeling this way compared to less than 20% in 2011.

More Finns think defence policy has been handled badly or very badly. A quarter of the population now feeling this way compared to less than 20% in 2011

Looking at a diverse range of polls and questions, the view among the population seems to be that while there are concerns regarding Finnish defense and security policy, the general approach is approved by a significant majority of the population. In practice this means there is no real political pressure to radically alter the pillars of Finland's defense: focus on national territorial defense, conscription and a large reserve based military, and continuing military cooperation with other countries but not belonging to a military alliance.

Despite this seeming stability, Finnish NATO membership is a constant part of security and defense policy discussions in Finland. To understand the debate, it is necessary to be aware of a few things which influence it. First, the discussion is dominated by a labeling of people as either NATO hawks or Finlandized cold warriors. This means that debates are frequently based on myths, false information or specific views regarding national identity and what enabled Finland's success during the cold war.

FINNISH FEARS AND MYTHS

Perhaps the strongest myth, that the Finnish people can never rely on assistance from other countries relates to national identity and an incomplete understanding of history. During independence (since 1917) Finland has in fact been given assistance when an assistance/defense pact existed. Without German assistance Russia would likely have succeeded in its attempt to break Finnish de-

fenses and occupy Finland in the fall of 1944. This view about the unreliability of outside assistance is in the case of NATO compounded by two remnants from the cold war: (1) that the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) and NATO were given equal billing as dangerous military alliances and tools that their largest members used for their own benefit; and, (2) that Finland's policy of neutrality kept it out of superpower confrontations during the cold war, and that NATO membership would draw it into such confrontations. Finland's EU membership has through the enactment of multiple rounds of economic and political sanctions made it obvious that it already cannot hope to stay outside of power politics. Moreover, on a purely military level, it is unclear how Finland as an EU member and close partner with NATO could, for example, imagine staying out of a conflict or crisis in the Baltic Sea region.

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Information, and its purported lack regarding the impacts of Finnish membership in NATO is often used as a reason why real debate is not possible and political decisions are not made. This is completely untrue. There are multiple official and academic studies on the military, political, and legal impacts of membership. In addition to this, there are dozens of papers and various high quality books published on the subject. Despite this, debate is frequently hobbled by patently false charges, such as Finnish NATO membership resulting in NATO nuclear weapons being placed in Finland (NATO has no nuclear weapons, some of its members do, and Nordic members of NATO have a peacetime opt-out on this), that as a member Finland would then be required to participate in American imperial wars or be required to give up its reservist based national defense system. Compounding these specific understandings of national history and incorrect information is a somewhat aged understanding of what modern warfare is like, and what it demands in terms of capabilities. This has an impact on the expectations about what kind of assistance Finland could expect if it was a NATO member.

The above suggests that while the new government led by Prime Minister Sipilä (Center Party) has returned to the position that Finland retains the option to seek NATO membership during the four year mandate period, it is unlikely that Finland will join – absent a Swedish decision to seek membership. Sweden's decision to join is frequently cited as one of two situations when Finland would seek membership. The other is if the political elite (president, government and all large parties) jointly decided to seek membership, thereby turning public opinion in favor of membership. Polling suggests such a turn in public opinion is possible, but there is little evidence that the political elite would come to such as consensus decision.

In the case that Finland and Sweden would decide to seek NATO membership, it would of course be up to the existing member states to decide if they accepted a particular state as a new member. Official and unofficial statements indicate that in the case of Finland and Sweden the membership negotiations process would be quick and accession would be successful. On the military technical level Finland's level of interoperability is higher than for a number of existing members but, membership would require changes in Finnish law, including the constitution. It is likely that some NATO member states would communicate their concerns with taking two new members, especially since Finnish accession would approximately double the land border between Russia and NATO members but it is difficult to see how two stable democratic EU members with modern and NATO interoperable forces would be rejected as members.

In the case of Finland and Sweden the membership negotiations process would be quick and accession would be successful. On the military technical level Finland's level of interoperability is higher than for some NATO members

Overall, while NATO membership is frequently a part of Finland's security policy debates, it only forms a part of the overall Finnish understanding of security. Even the strongest supporters of Finnish NATO membership only see membership as one component of national security. Finnish security is certainly enhanced and improved by the close cooperation with NATO but its foundation is built on a broad or comprehensive societal security concept. Within this concept successive governments have identified seven vital functions of society, one of which is Finland's defense capability. This broad concept of security is built on a societal 'deep security', which is based on universal literacy, economic equality, freedom of press, multi-party democracy and trusted rule of law, all of which provides a generally inhospitable environment for anyone seeking to use hybrid or non-linear warfare against Finland.

The above described relationship between NATO and Finland (and to a large extend Sweden) is quite unique, and would be difficult to replicate. Yet, few lessons or observations relevant to Ukraine can be extracted from it. A deep relationship with NATO can be very beneficial for supporting the long-term development of a robust national defense force, and even as a NATO member this national defense force must be kept strong. The relationship can best be built through continuous practical and pragmatic cooperation, showing both individual member states and NATO as an institution that one is willing to contribute to broader (cooperative, in NATO's terminology) security while seeking to strengthen one's own capabilities. This trust devel-

oping process takes time and is facilitated by strong bilateral relationships, with a NATO member country often being able to work as a ‘sponsor’ or introducing issues and areas of cooperation that are mutual beneficial to a partner country and NATO. In Finland’s case, it also made a habit of sending its best soldiers and civilians to postings, and being better prepared in many instances than some members, underlining the weight Finland put in the development of the relationship.

A deep relationship with NATO can be very beneficial for supporting the long-term development of a robust national defence force, and even as a NATO member this national defence force must be kept strong

Finland’s relationship with NATO, where in the eyes of many observers Finland takes the risks of NATO membership without receiving collective defense guarantees, is partially dependent on membership in the European Union, like Sweden, and in Finland’s case also the Eurozone. These two provide both political and economic motives for other states (including many NATO members) to support deeper cooperation and potentially consider bilateral assistance during a crisis. On the other hand, the other partners in NATO’s most exclusive cooperative program, the EOP are not EU members (Jordan, Australia and Georgia).

At the rhetorical level Finland’s relationship with Russia is frequently cited as being better and stronger because Finland is not a NATO member, but pre-Ukrainian war NATO member Norway had good relations with Russia, even cooperating militarily in Arctic search and rescue capabilities; this is in contrast to Finland which has no military to military cooperation with Russia. This suggests that there is nothing inherent in NATO membership that prevents reasonable relations between a member and Russia, though Russian ideas about identity and history clearly impact which countries it deems can acceptably become NATO members. In Finland’s case Russia has made it clear that it thinks Finland should not join NATO, and that such a move would result in serious repercussions and actions by Russia. Most extremely, Kremlin’s ‘messenger’ Sergei Markov stated in an interview in Hufvudstadsbladet in on June 8th, 2014 that if Finland wants to become a NATO member, it would decrease European security and ultimately that Finland should consider whether it wants to be the reason for the beginning of World War III. Ukraine has experienced far worse than threats for wanting to link its future with the European Union and NATO, but it suggests that membership in NATO is seen by Russia as far more dangerous than membership in the European Union.

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