

UKRAINE-RUSSIAN-CIS IN THE CONTEXT OF MODERN EUROPEAN SECURITY



After the galloping crisis and unexpectedly quick collapse of the Eastern block and its driving force - USSR - one sixth of the Earth surface, which during all the postwar years was associated in the world with a notion of a single centralized superpower, instantly transferred into a somewhat amorphous and not always obvious category named "post-Soviet countries". The attempt to create a new institution, i.e. the CIS, for various reasons did not unite the former USSR republics. Almost at once the

THE SECURITY QUADRANGLE
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NATO, NATO PARTNERS,
RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

leading actors of the post-Soviet countries began to show, at least in the area of the security issues, namely, Russia and Ukraine. Their ambitions and actions in the world arena, activities within the CIS framework, and, finally, their bilateral relations all together quite quickly became one of the most prominent factors of the new European architecture formation.

Yet, in all fairness it needs to be noted that the appearance of almost all the newly independent states in the ex-Soviet territory (with exception of the Baltic republics and a legal successor of the former Soviet Union - Russia) has been engendered first of all by the fact of the USSR's dissolution, and not by the natural logic of their national and state development. This statement is based on the following arguments.

Firstly, in eleven out of the fifteen ex-Soviet republics traditions of the independent development within the limits of national and state formations have been practically missing. During the period of the recent history, their experience in this area has been limited by several post-revolutionary years, if any at all.

Secondly, the above-mentioned countries have been characterized by the under-developed political systems, i.e. government institutions, stable political parties, etc, and other integral institutions and functions of the independent state (army, foreign trade, availability and possibility of personnel training). The political system, borders, internal state division have been inherited mainly from the former USSR republics, which in reality have been the decorative formations within the framework of a single Union.

Thirdly, the level of economic integration of the newly created states has been extremely high. The inter-republican trade in 1998 in the USSR constituted 21% of the gross national product (14% in the EU). At the same time, if Russia, given isolated from the other republics, could ensure 2/3 of the end product output, Ukraine could ensure only 15% [1].

The latter factor has been consistently hushed up in Ukraine itself, since provided such calculations had been made public, the idea of independence to a significant degree would have lost

its appeal for the majority of ordinary people. At the same time a better selection of food products in shops - the main deficit of the Soviet era - as compared to the other regions of the USSR, was a more visible and tangible argument "pro", than the catastrophic dependence of Ukraine on external energy suppliers which was nearly inconspicuous to the "naked eye", as an argument "con".

Ukraine being one of the major "disintegrators" of the USSR oceeded not from the objective logic of social and economic development and pragmatism, but from the "mythical logic". The core element here was the "myth on origin", which characterizes the majority of newly-created countries, since the state ideology by all means has to use the elements of the live history, because without this it loses any kind of sense for the ordinary people. Therefore, it is fully natural that the first waves of democratic changes (first within the limits of the former USSR and later during the post-Soviet period) in the majority of the CIS countries, including Ukraine, have been mainly characterized by the ideology of the national renaissance. This ideology gave the republican elites a key to power and a powerful method of fighting for the republican independence.

The following developments have shown that social reality in the newly created states is far from the legend about the "single nation - source of the state", which could help to keep the power and ensure domestic stability. So all the short post-Soviet history became a history of fighting between the "ideological" and pragmatic approaches to the development of people, state and economy.

Renunciation of "ideologism" in Ukraine has been marked by the victory of L.Kuchma at the Presidential elections in 1994. Unlike in all other post-Soviet republics, after L.Kravchuk had been defeated, the leading executive government positions have been occupied by the representatives of industrial and economic complex, and not by the next nomenclature group. Ideology of economic pragmatism, which started to being firmly established in Ukraine during the first period of Kuchma's office, reduced the excessive tension in society connected with non-acceptance of the "national policy". At the same time, due to some deideologisation of the economic reforms, purely social problems became very vital - growth of unemployment, non-payment of wages, deterioration of financial state of low-income households, catastrophic situation in the areas of education and health care, etc. The developments, which took place in Ukraine over the last 5 years, can be characterized as a "civil crisis", which cannot be resolved with assistance of ideological methods only or by a change of the political mask, which was attempted at the beginning of the second office of L.Kuchma at the end of 1999 - spring 2000.

Unlike Ukraine, Russia had a long-term state and even imperial traditions, and from the very beginning it did not require any artificial enforcement of "national and renaissance" mythical logic, so it focused, first of all, on purely "civil" aspects of its development, and on the implementation of non-ideological social and economic reforms.

However, the state which was "the most democratic in the Commonwealth" and "not infected with the virus of nationalism" in reality appeared to be one of the most conservative in relation to political changes. Year in and year out the Russian policy reproduced one and the same scheme: kind ruler (with almost czarist constitutional powers) and a bad but weak and tractable opposition (like the old time boyar dumd). Foreign policy priorities of Yeltsin's Russia have also been somewhat inconsistent: strategic partnership with the West - and attempts to play a role of the world superpower, claims of regional leadership in CIS as a voluntary association - and attempts of trivial economic pressure of neighbours, similar to the behaviour of a feudal lord in his relations with a vassal. Situation was also aggravated by the internal disintegration of the Russian Federation, which more and more reminded collapse of the USSR in 1990-1991: Chechen war, economic separatism of regions (Tatarstan, Primoriye, Sakha-Yakutia and others).

V.Putin's acquisition of power did not change the situation radically. Meanwhile it is necessary to understand that geopolitical and ideological crises, which have gripped Russia, can become fatal for all the CIS, if Moscow does not overcome its complex of historical duality. Today Russia is a chief creditor of the majority of the CIS countries, and trade and cooperative relations with it are playing a key role for practically all of its member-states. Therefore, the stability in Russia and the end of crisis (both the economic one and the crisis of the Russian political elite) - is not only a condition of the CIS development but also a guarantee that the economic and social stability is preserved in all the former Soviet republics.

As to the area of external relations one can state that, in spite of some eclecticism of both Russian and Ukrainian foreign political doctrines, they have been essentially different almost from the very beginning. Differences in understanding of their roles in international relations, place in the system of modern geopolitical coordinates, forms and methods of diplomacy are manifested in the bilateral relations of these states.

Ukraine in her relations with Russia has chosen a strategy of transferring from relations of dependence and subordination to mutual relations between the equal parties. Ukraine's interest in normal relations with the Russian Federation is caused, among other reasons, by understanding that huge material resources of Russia are necessary for Ukraine as much as the financial support and advanced technologies of the developed Western countries. Besides, if Russia becomes a powerful and economically robust country in the future (which may not be excluded albeit theoretically), it will be much better for Ukraine if Russia becomes her partner and not an enemy. Yet the way to the partnership, which is one of the most important political tasks, is paved with many subjective difficulties, connected with complex processes of national self-identification and the necessity to improve the domestic and foreign policies, and hardly effective restructuring of social and economic life.

The first group of factors, which complicate the equal partnership of Ukraine and Russia, is as follows. Ukrainian factors: unfinished formation of the national state, excessive, unbalanced integration of the national economy into the economies of the CIS states, unilateral dependence on Russian energy sources and some kinds of raw materials, insufficiently developed feeling of national identity and patriotism among the considerable part of Ukrainian population, presence of a certain "complex of little significance".

Yet, the position of Russia is not a lesser obstacle for the formation of equal inter-state relations. First of all, the Russian population and the governing elite are convinced that, whatever the odds might be, Ukraine is an integral part of Russia; Slavonic origin of the two peoples enforces such opinions. Such feelings are most strong in Moscow, which for a long time has been establishing itself as a capital of the over-centralized authoritative state, subordinating the neighbouring territories in different ways. Secondly, it is necessary to understand that after the euphoria of victory over the State Committee for Emergency Situation (GKChP) and "a free give away of sovereignties" even the traditionally democratic part of the Russian establishment started to understand the huge losses caused by the collapse of the USSR, the main of which was the loss of a superpower status by Russia. Therefore, Moscow is painfully reacting to any cooperation and integration formations created without its participation, which can be demonstrated by the initiative of Ukraine to institutionalize GUUAM, the appearance of which created a somewhat new situation in the process of the CIS integration.

Another important factor, which was mentioned earlier, is a domestic instability of the Russian Federation, connected with aspirations of different political elites and groups to attain power, and with desire of some autonomies to achieve even more autonomy, if not independence. Russia is concerned about its own integrity and therefore it somewhat weakened the reintegration policy with reference to the former Soviet republics. However, if the Russian statehood strengthens, and its domestic situation stabilizes (or in case there appears a sustained tendency of this)

the post-Soviet countries are not guaranteed against the practical manifestations of imperial domination.

As to Ukraine, the Russian foreign policy permanently aims to keep her under its influence, to preserve real levers of pressure. Traditional ways of implementing this mandate are represented by attempts to draw Ukraine into the new integration structures under the Russian leadership, for example, the union of Russia and Belarus, or strengthening of organizational CIS structures by way of soft transformation of this association from the commonwealth of states into the state commonwealth. Lately, the policy of Russian leaders has generally toughened and it became possible to observe one more method, which can be called "a contrario". Thus, it is proposed to refuse from the notions of "close foreign countries" and "far foreign countries" in its foreign political doctrine and to establish relations with the former Soviet republics on the so-called "general basis", without any privileges, excuses or references to the "common historical Past". In this case, it is expected that the post-Soviet countries, which still continue to be firmly integrated into the single economic and political organism, will gradually decide to integrate with Russia on the subordination basis. In that context there appeared so far an unofficial proposal to establish a direct dependence between the requirements of the full payment of the Ukrainian debts for the Russian energy sources and granting of the state status to the Russian language in Ukraine and creation of a single (Russian speaking) information environment.

At the same time, it is necessary to point out that Ukraine and the Russian Federation really have significant common interests. The most important, of course, is preservation of peace and stability in the European continent in spite of any differences of tactical character. Today, in principle, the basic legal and political problems in bilateral Ukrainian-Russian relations are resolved. A comprehensive Agreement on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between Ukraine and the Russian Federation and a number of the agreements on the Black Sea Fleet came into effect in 1999. There is every reason to believe that these documents may be considered as an important contribution into stabilization of the European security.

The two countries may cooperate in the following areas: conversion of the military and industrial complex, ecology, and development of some scientific and technical areas.

Apart from the above issues, the Ukrainian-Russian relations are influenced by some other subjective factors. In this connection it is necessary to remember about the differences in the professional characteristics of the political and intellectual elites of the two countries. The Russian Federation has inherited from the Soviet Union a highly professional elite, which had a considerable history of establishment and a rich experience of work on the general state level. The former Soviet elite over a long period of time was maintaining close contacts with the elite groups of the other states, including the developed ones, and therefore is much closer and naturally integrated into the world political and intellectual elite. In its relations with Ukraine and other post-Soviet republics, a considerable part of the Russian elite did not give up their position of state arrogance and political unceremoniousness, which is manifested, for instance, in the perception of the Ukrainian independence as a random and temporary phenomenon, and in the readiness to take some measures in order to restore the status quo (including by force).

Ukraine, which never enjoyed a real statehood, was deprived of a possibility to develop a fully-fledged elite group. It started appearing only at the beginning of the 90s and so far is undergoing a stage of its formation. Today you can hardly speak about the existence of the political elite in Ukraine as a single category. It can be provisionally divided into two subgroups, each laying claims to its own monopoly (here we do not mean a formal power only, but the ability of the political elite to define the state development for the long-term perspective).

The first subgroup consists of the former Soviet functionaries, who "radically transformed" only under the pressure of the specific circumstances, and first of all, the August 1991 putsch defeat in Moscow, which finally cleared the way for the Ukrainian independence. They are char-

acterized by a naked pragmatism and have little ideological convictions, since their principal aim is power itself, independent of its content. Both Ukrainian Presidents of the post-Soviet era can be included into this subgroup.

The second subgroup consists of more or less active opponents of the previous regime, and includes both the active dissidents and those who have been actively cooperating with the Soviet power, but who at some stage (during the Communist Party ruling) changed their political position. Such famous Ukrainian politicians as H.Udoenko, I.Drach, S.Holovaty, etc. may represent the latter category.

As to the Ukrainian-Russian relations, it needs to be mentioned that representatives of the first subgroup take more realistic and pragmatic positions, whereas representatives of the second subgroup often set no limits to the meaning of the national idea in the creation of Ukrainian state and to different degrees suffer from the political romanticism. With reference to the issue of relations with Russia the Ukrainian elite may also be divided by territory of residence. Individuals from the Eastern Ukraine have pro-Russian feelings and individuals from the Western Ukraine are openly west orientated.

The both states have an objective need to give up the idea of Ukraine-Russia's opposition. The latter is supported by the part of leading politicians both in Russia and in Ukraine and is confrontational and openly isolationistic, since it reduces the Ukrainian-Russian relations to historical mistakes and shuns the both states from the world community.

The vivid example of this is de facto present in the Ukrainian political elite dichotomy - it is a split of the Verkhovna Rada into the "majority" and "minority" (which, in view of some analysts, can become the beginning of further, deep split of the Ukrainian society). However, this may have more serious and far-reaching consequences, than one might think may have at the first glance, including the impact on the geopolitical situation in Europe.

The majority, consisting of the "nationally conscious" individuals, democrats set against the communists and representatives of the large and medium-sized business which also seem to be set against the communists, is destined to split up. The main reason of the forthcoming disintegration of the existing coalition is that the political interests of the national democrats and economic interests of the "businessmen" do not coincide and are totally different. The first see Ukraine as a part of the united Europe, the second see this prospect as negative for the three reasons. Firstly, the "European Ukraine" means additional and quite aggressive competitors. Secondly, the western rules of game will put an end to the traditionally illegal post-Soviet business, whose representatives are currently voting together with the majority of the Verkhovna Rada. And finally, introduction of the European legal framework in Ukraine can lead to the detention and arrests of individuals, whose accounts in the western banks are being blocked from time to time.

It is clear that even under the most favorable conditions Ukraine may become a member of the European community (NATO or EU) not earlier than in 2015. However, this remote possibility can make the "businessmen" chose the way opposite to the European one and (taking into account their financial and other possibilities) they may involve into this the President, executive government, and the whole country. In this case, we will have no democracy, no free market, and no rule of law. The political nature of this system will be if not dictatorship, then at least authoritarianism. One may see two scenarios of such developments, which can be provisionally called "Chinese" and "Small Russian".

The latter scenario looks most simple, since it is more habitual and understandable for the majority of the Ukrainian elite. It means a voluntary "surrender" to Moscow. In order to implement it, the "businessmen" will need a new majority, which will be created with "communists" in place of the "democrats". Ukraine will restore its former status of the "breadbasket" and will disappear from the map as an independent formation. However, after the political absorption, the

time will come for the financial absorption, when the Russian oligarchs will appropriate somewhat local Ukrainian business.

Such developments may be impeded by the "Chinese" scenario, which envisages self-isolation not only from the West but also from the East. At the early stages of this scenario, the national democrats may also participate in it under the motto of the domestic producer protection. However, the chief strategic and political leading partner will be represented by the "communists", which will unite with the "businessmen" on the basis of non-perception of the "spiritless, cosmopolitan western values". Alliance of the large business and the Communist Party should not be perceived as Utopia. It is sufficient to look at the Russian State Duma, where "Yedinstvo" together with the Communist Party of the Russian Federation have made their yesterday's right centre allies, who seemed to have shared the same views with them, outsiders.

Yet this scenario is temporary because, firstly, if a geographically European country (experience of Serbia) distances itself from the Europe, this leads to the confrontation with the latter, and, secondly, it started its implementation in Russia, and existence of the two twin-neighbors, who "defend themselves in all directions" sooner or later will lead to their merger.

Thus both scenarios lead to one result: first to Moscow, and then into the dead end. Annexation of Ukraine to Russia will unambiguously and immediately transform the latter into the empire, which cannot be democratic by definition. Besides, there will remain millions of Ukrainians (and not only in Halychina), who under any perturbations and troubles will continue to consider the state independence a highest priority. Successes of the western neighbors, yesterday's socialist camp allies, will be an eternal catalyst of such opinions with all ensuing dissatisfaction and instability.

However, the above scenarios touch upon only one, although important, side of the problem, since we are now covering the domestic policy aspects. But in addition to the domestic factors, the relations between Ukraine and Russia and, more broadly, their conduct in the CIS territory, will be influenced by the external factors, and first of all, by the stand of the European-Atlantic community. One can say that during the last years the tendency of the better-balanced approaches has begun to show in the Western policies relating to Ukraine and Russia.

Now it is clear that it is not sufficient to help consolidate democracy in Russia in order to ensure a civilized development of the other post-Soviet states. This point of view may to some extent restrain the growth of chauvinistic moods in some Russian political circles, which treated the former attitude of the USA and Western Europe to the CIS countries as recognition of the prevailing influence of Russia in this part of the world.

At the same time, it is necessary to point out that relations of the western countries with the Russian Federation will remain to be the priority for them in the nearest future. This is determined by the place occupied by Russia in the world, her potential and nuclear weapons arsenal, which is second in the world. The situation may radically change in case of a sharp growth of the anti-western moods and Russia's aggressiveness. Yet, the

development of a confrontation scenario seems to be hardly possible in the real future.

As to Ukraine, here the western position is determined first of all by the ability of this country to play a role of a force, which under certain circumstances, may neutralize the influence of Russia on the European part of the post-Soviet territories, and in case the Russian Federation moves to the compulsory reintegration policy, it may become a leading country of the anti-Russian sanitary border. But Ukraine itself as well as its own legitimate interests in the area of security and economic problems will hardly become a priority for the West (if you look at the objective facts and do not rely on the complimentary provisions of the numerous declarations and communiqué).

In 1992-1993 the Western post-Soviet policy, in spite of some deviations, has been generally focused on Russia, which reduced possibilities of interaction with Ukraine. This was ex-

plained by the necessity to ensure liquidation of nuclear weapons of the former USSR, which remained on the Ukrainian territory, and by the lack of effective market reforms in Ukraine. From the beginning of 1994 the western policies towards Ukraine became more active. As the vitality of the nuclear issue has gradually subsided, the problem of motivating political and economic transformation has become more important, during this process the interests of Ukraine have been taken into account to a greater extent.

In the second half of the 90s the relative significance of Ukraine in the foreign policy of the West has grown together with their partial refusal from the exclusively Russian orientation. Ukraine started receiving indirect and sometimes direct support in the areas where her interests contradicted the interests of Russia. The western policies have been aiming to separate

Ukraine from Russia more and more, especially in the area of security. At same time the western course continues to be pro-Ukrainian only with relation to Russia, and not absolutely.

The Russian factor was and remains to be decisive during the planning of western approaches to Ukraine. If Russia tries to force Ukraine to subdue or to destabilize her domestic situation, the western countries are likely to support Kyiv. At the same time, it is clear that in spite of the wish to isolate Russia geopolitically, the West is not practically ready to oppose Russian economic penetration into Ukraine, if it takes place gradually, stabilizes the economic situation and facilitates market reforms.

It is absolutely clear, that under such conditions Ukraine cannot count on a wide and full support of the west. This circumstance is an additional factor in favour of good neighborly relations with Russia, which is possible, given the Russian interests relating to Ukraine are to some extent taken into account. First of all, this refers to the interaction in the Black Sea region, decision on the future of the Black Sea Fleet, consideration of issues of status of the Crimea and Sevastopol as integral parts of Ukraine within the legal framework, etc.

At the same time the assessment of modern state and further prospects of the Ukrainian and Russian relations requires to consider the whole complex of problems connected with the foreign political tasks of the Russian Federation. From the middle of 90s the Russia geo-strategy has been based on the theoretical doctrine of "multipolar world", which according to many analysts, first of all, has applied significance and justifies a new pressure on the West in order to persuade it to take Moscow into consideration more than the others.

Russia, while denying a possibility of comprehensive domination of the USA in the world arena, underscores the creation of such a multipolar world, in which there will be no dictates on the side of one country or a group of countries. The Russian Federation considers the CIS region to be the zone of its exceptional influence, and defines "poles" as integrated groups of states. In line with the Russian geo-strategy, Ukraine has to become part of the integrated formation in the post-Soviet territory under the Russian leadership. So under the condition of a new political reality, the foreign policy of the Russian Federation is characterized by the attempt to keep the situation on the territory of the former Soviet Union under its full control, which is different from the strategic European choice of Ukraine.

Russia, which adopted the Concept of Development and Use of Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons in May of 1999, and which declared its readiness to review the basic foundations of its nuclear security, is now demonstrating its transfer from tactics of the declarative warnings, first of all to the USA, to the specific actions (which was made during the aggravation of crisis in Kosovo). Therefore, the possibility of a sweeping confrontation between Russia and the West may become a political reality (a very "decorative" statement of V.Putin during his pre-election campaign about the possibility of Russia's joining NATO should not be taken seriously). Yet this threatens current intentions of Ukraine to integrate, even if it happens in the far future, into the Euro-Atlantic structures and requires the development and implementation of a whole complex of preventive measures, which may preclude aggravation of bilateral relations. So the

"multi-vector" Ukrainian foreign policy, which has been criticized so many times may paradoxically become the only immediate palliative which could help avoid the "lethal crisis" until the effective medicine is found.

A dynamic process of the European integration also influences the international position of Ukraine and her relations with the Russian Federation in a contradictory way. The post-socialist countries of the Central and Eastern Europe, and the newly independent states of the post-Soviet territories currently need to specify their own geopolitical coordinates, which would comply with their parameters, political and economic interests, cultural values. In this connection, the strategy of the Ukrainian foreign policy for the nearest decade consists in the gradual but purposeful integration of Ukraine into the Euro-Atlantic community. This can be considered as one of the ways of strengthening her sovereignty, which, unfortunately, does not always go with the Russian claims.

Yet, today's process of Euro-Atlantic integration requires determination of its stages, rate, and, which is very important, authentic borders of the future united Europe. This is one of the key issues in the creation of a new architecture of the European security. One should take into account that some leading western politicians and experts are afraid of the accelerated expansion of NATO and EU, which, in their view, may inhibit integration in due course.

One may speak about a clear differentiation of policies of the leading western countries relating to integration of the Central and Eastern European countries with separation of the political, economic and military-political component. As to the economic integration, it is practically recognized that it is impossible to expand EU quickly, however, as far as the political and security cooperation is concerned, the western countries appear to be very interested in the increase of influence and in gradual involvement of the Central and Eastern European states in such organizations as NATO, EU etc. This statement is vividly demonstrated by the fact that Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic joined the NATO in 1999, while the specific timing of their acceding to the EU is still not defined.

While the European policy of Russia, which wants to become a renewed centre of force, is aimed at cooperation with the Euro-Atlantic community, i.e. the other centre of force, the final objective of the Ukrainian policy is a full-scale integration. One of the incentives of such course is the desire to reduce the influence of the Russian Federation in the post-Soviet territory. This determines the deepest contradiction in the Ukrainian-Russian relations as to the development of links with the European and Euro-Atlantic structures. The western states generally declare that they recognize a potential possibility of a fully-fledged integration of Ukraine into the EU (her joining NATO remains to be a more delicate topic, and if you take account of the non-block status of the country, the chief content of such declarations can be prevalingly read "between the lines"), which fully coincides with the priorities of the official Kyiv. However, the economic factor is dominating at this stage of the Eastern European integration development. Unfortunately, in spite of all the western declarations about the support of Ukraine's wish to integrate into Europe, the real state of things remains different.

Europe needs a predictable, moderately economically robust and stable Ukraine, which will ensure the absence of conflicts in the Eastern and, possibly, Northern-Eastern direction. However, in order to achieve this state, which could meet the European requirements in the future, today Ukraine is pushed by the West to expand cooperation with Russia as a geographically closest partner. The meaning of this position can be formulated as follows: Ukraine may accede to Europe only via Russia.

This approach clearly corresponds with the Russian vision, in line with which Ukraine and Russia must move to Europe simultaneously. Yet it is evident that one cannot speak about Ukraine's integration into Europe this way, since between the western and Russian visions there

exists a principal difference, which is often left without attention. Namely, the West is interested in this scenario for the economic reasons, and Russia - for the political ones.

It is extremely important for Ukraine to develop relations with the Central and Eastern European countries, which during the last years did not come into the view of the Russian Federation. Therefore, it seems to be expedient if Ukraine integrates into the Euro-Atlantic community not via Russia, but at least in parallel, and which is better - independent of it. The issue of security is high on the agenda, since unification of Europe, if it takes place without direct participation of Ukraine, may create some difficulties of political, economic and even military character in the East of Europe.

Although, as it was already mentioned, Ukraine's priority is a European direction of integration, relations with the Russian Federation will still have to be treated as being of no less importance for a long period of time. It will be difficult to unite these two directions, because Kyiv and Moscow have different understanding of relations between the two states. Ane Russian approach envisages a comprehensive integration, specifically, re-integration, while the Ukrainian vision is based on the bilateral equal and neighborly cooperation of the two independent states, generally accepted in the world community. Ukraine sees the strategy of integration, first of all, with reference to the European and Euro-Atlantic structures. In this way, contradictions in Ukrainian and Russian relations reflect on relations with the western countries.

Analyzing the complex of relations of Ukraine with different states, international communities and institutions in 1998-2000 in practical terms, one can point out that in general, if compared to the previous periods of time, their intensiveness somewhat reduced. The exception is represented by the sub-region of the Black Sea, where the Black Sea Economic Co-operation Organization has been created largely due to the efforts of the Ukrainian side.

There are reasons to believe that relations between Ukraine, Russia and other post-Soviet countries may be assessed as "slow disintegration". Signature in February 1998 of the Agreement on Economic Co-operation and Interstate Economic Relations Development Programme for 1998-2007 almost did not influence the climate of the Ukrainian-Russian relations, the intensiveness of which continues to decline. Perception of the CIS as a sub-regional international organization is more and more often characterized as an impermanent, temporary structure with no future. At the same time, you can more and more often hear in Ukraine that under the CIS Statute, Ukraine is not a member of this organization, and her relations with the post-Soviet republics continue to be more and more evidently differentiated. The CIS is interpreted by the majority of the Ukrainian politicians not as an international organization or integration association, but as an institutional form of interaction between the political elites of the newly independent countries.

As to the prospects of cooperation with the western countries, situation here is not unambiguous. During 1998-1999 the Ukrainian executive government was striving for the status of an associated member of the European Union with no result, although government officials understood that Ukraine objectively does not meet the European integration requirements. Moreover, deepening of the economic crisis in the country means the objective increase of a distance between Ukraine and Central and Eastern European states, which have been recognized as candidates for the EU membership (a differential proof of this tendency is that in 2000 the Central and Eastern European states started introducing a system of visas for the Ukrainian citizens).

In view of the fact that Ukraine does not comply with the criteria of EU and even of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), which Ukraine is unable to join, the political circles of the western countries increasingly consider Ukraine a European periphery. The EU representatives more and more often try to formulate joint policies as to Ukraine and Russia, and Ukrainian diplomacy has been insistently resisting this during the years of independence. Yet,

it is evident that the new architecture of the European security is considerably different from a rather idealistic concept outlined in the Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine "On Guidelines of Foreign Policy of Ukraine" as of July 2, 1993. Specifically, currently the creation of the general European mechanisms of collective security looks unrealistic.

Relations between Ukraine and NATO are more successful, however, they cannot be called clear and transparent. Due to different objective and subjective reasons, the ruling circles of Ukraine many times presented assurances that under the circumstances as of the end of the 90s the issue of NATO membership will not be raised. Yet, Ukraine's active collaboration with NATO objectively facilitates creation of pre-requisites for acquisition of such membership in the far future, in case this will correspond to the interests of the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization.

If foundations of the general European cooperation are not ruined by the Balkan crisis of 1998-2000, participation of the European countries in the European security system controlled by NATO could be recognized as the one, which has no alternative, since even in view of the specific positions of Russia and Serbia, this system would cover all the Europe. Non-participation would mean that a country refuses to defend its own interests, and for Ukraine it might mean a loss of a possibility to temper the negative consequences of the NATO and EU's expansion. The fact that the NATO's expansion considerably complicates foreign political situation of Ukraine was fully confirmed during the Kosovo crisis in spring 1999, which aggravated almost immediately after Poland, Hungary and Czech republic joined the Alliance.

On the other side, the establishment of the European security system under the auspices of NATO will to some extent ensure a non-reversal of changes in the Central and Eastern Europe. At the same time the development of multilateral relations will gradually lead to the devaluation of the neutral position. Criteria of neutrality are somewhat revised within the limits of the interstate relations in both directions of cooperation in the security area (NATO+EU+WEU and NATO+EAPC+PFP), since the traditional neutrality denies modern forms of the military and political integration which have spread during the 90s.

The degree of military policy coordination by the NATO partner states within the facilities of EAPC/PFP, which were also signed by Ukraine, is considerably smaller, than coordination among the permanent members of the Euro-Atlantic community. There are different approaches here, which are brought to life by the specific features of some countries and by the comparatively little experience of military and political integration of the majority of them.

Although the development of multilateral cooperation does not mean elimination of differences in the vision of the European security in XXI century, direct participation in the formation of new relations of cooperation and responsibility mechanisms may allow the European states to defend their national interests and implement their own vision of the future world. Ukraine in particular demonstrates a firm consistency, insisting on using the OSCE mechanisms to support peace, envisaged by the final document of the Helsinki 1992 Summit.

Assessing the contents of the non-alliance declaration of Ukraine made by her in 1990, we have to point out that under the present circumstances its renunciation (which is demanded by the significant part of the domestic political establishment) will be premature in terms of strategic considerations, and unjustified in view of the possible internal policy complications. A functional role of non-alliance may be defined as interim, transit situation between the more stable forms of security, such as membership in multilateral defense union or internationally recognized and guaranteed neutrality. The forced dichotomy of the foreign policy of Ukraine is caused by her specific geopolitical position - it is simultaneously a part of the two subregional zones - Central and Eastern Europe and post-Soviet area.

Of course, a rather unstable social and political situation, and underdeveloped economy do not allow implementing the "reasonable dichotomy" of the foreign policy in full (which, as we

again stress, has some negative features, of course, together with the positive ones). In the future everything will depend on the political and economic capacity of Ukraine, on her ability to occupy the appropriate place within the system of relations among the USA, Russia, Western, and Central and Eastern Europe.

Note:

1. Kolchin S. Russia-Close Foreign Countries: Relations, Interests, Policy Objectives // World economy and International Relations. - 1995. -№ 4.