Determinants of Ukrainian Foreign Policy:

Foreign Policy-Making Since Independence

Christopher Dunnett

March 25, 2013

Research funded by:

The Woodrow Wilson Undergraduate Research Fellowship

Advisors: Dr. Robert Freedman and Dr. Steven David
Introduction

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 resulted in the emergence of fifteen newly independent states. With the exception of the Russian Federation and the Baltic States, none of these new nations had any prior experience with state-building. After the dissolution, most post-Soviet states were still governed by Soviet-era local elites, many of whom had occupied republican-level party or government positions in the Soviet Union, and had little experience in actual governance.

Previously, the highly centralized Soviet system delegated important decision-making to the federal center in Moscow, primarily leaving the Soviet republican governments to the tasks of policy implementation. The republican-level Communist elites were traditionally subordinate and closely tied to Moscow, uninterested in the creation of national political institutions autonomous from the center. Nationalism and identity separate from pan-Soviet identity were often a confused affair during Soviet times, officially denounced as “bourgeoisie nationalism,” and actively suppressed until the dying days of the Union. However, the Soviet state tolerated the usage of local languages and traditions to varying degrees, at times even promoting these identities.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, these republican-level Communist elites emerged as the leaders of independent states. In many of the republics, these elites re-crafted themselves as nationalists during the last days of the Soviet Union, hoping to enhance their power in the republics as the Union unraveled. They suddenly found it necessary to start the process of state-building, building the institutions of independent states from the shells of republican governance. The process of foreign policy-making, particularly in regards to the new
states’ relations with Russian Federation, the Commonwealth of Independent States, and the Western nations, were important for the newly independent states of the western regions of the former Soviet Union. The states found it necessary to establish their statehood vis-à-vis the Russian Federation, while simultaneously ensuring stable relations with their neighbors and former compatriots.

Ukraine, the most populous newly independent state aside from the Russian Federation, is a particularly interesting case study. Several Ukrainian states emerged briefly during the Russian Civil War following the Bolshevik coup in 1917, but these states held little precedent for the new Ukraine. In 1991, the Ukrainian elites, like those in other post-Soviet states, found it necessary to build the state from the ground up and assert Ukrainian sovereignty simultaneously. The process of state building in newly independent Ukraine has required maintaining positive relations with Russia while also establishing economic and political ties with Western states and institutions. Ukraine established relations with NATO and the European Union soon after independence.

This paper seeks to explore the determinants of Ukrainian foreign policy since independence. Ukrainian foreign policy has undergone substantial shifts since independence, despite the continued relevance of the necessity of smooth relations with both Russia and the West. In recent years, Ukrainian foreign policy has shifted to be more reflective of internal power dynamics, rather than a purely strategic foreign policy between East and West. Fractured politics and lack of political pluralism ultimately impedes Ukrainian foreign policy from settling in equilibrium, which would pull the country closer to Europe.
The Orange Revolution in 2004 was a cataclysmic event in Ukraine’s history, signaling the growing assertiveness of Ukrainian civil society and ushering in a new constitution that distributed power more evenly between the President and parliament. Despite growing disillusionment with the Orange Revolution, and evidence of democratic regression under the current Yanukovych Administration, the legacy of the Revolution on Ukrainian politics is still important. This thesis will also explore the potential impact of Ukrainian civil society and political pluralism on foreign policymaking between East and West.

First, it is necessary to briefly explain the history of the Ukrainian state, beginning with the rise of Ukrainian nationalism in the 19th century and under the Soviet Union. Then, this thesis will explore Ukrainian foreign policymaking during the era of Ukrainian state-building in the 1990s. During this period, the requirements of state-building dominated the country’s foreign policy priorities. After that, the paper will account for the necessity of Ukraine’s policy of “balancing” between Russia and the West and the desire for closer integration with the EU and Western institutions, even while maintaining cordial relations with Russia. It will also explore the effects of the Orange Revolution on civil society and foreign policymaking, and Kyiv’s progressive emphasis on modernization and European and Western integration. Lastly, it will discuss foreign policymaking during the Yanukovych Administration and potential future trends in Ukrainian foreign policy.

Roots of an Independent Ukraine

Despite the diversity of cultures and huge land mass, the concept of a Ukrainian nation dates back to the 19th century, much like other nationalist movements throughout Europe. The
early Ukrainian nationalist movement is personified in the figure of Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861), the Ukrainian national poet who first expressed Ukrainian identity and language through his writings. It wasn’t until after Shevchenko’s death, however, that Ukrainian nationalism first emerged as an independent political movement within the Russian Empire. The Ukrainian language, which differed significantly from Russian in its written and spoken forms, served as an important foundation for nationalists during the 19th century.

The Ukrainian language, dress, music, cuisine, and communal organizations were all celebrated as distinct and separate from that of the Russians and other regional ethnicities. Ukrainian identity, like most other manifestations of nationalism, also depends upon a national myth which evokes “a common historical tradition, the claim that the Ukrainian people, once great and independent, had lost their heritage.” This myth claims the historical-political legacy of Kievan Rus’ for Ukraine, and emphasized that Ukraine’s lost sovereignty under the Russian Empire and other states was forced and involuntary.

Early Ukrainian nationalists, as well as modern nationalists, idealized the Cossacks as a distinctly Ukrainian social community that had once enjoyed independence and sovereignty. In reality, the Cossacks never formed a state in the modern sense, but were instead distinct warrior societies that operated in the hinterlands of Ukraine and southern Russia. Present-day Ukrainian nationalists often point to the supposed democratic character of the Cossack Hosts as evidence of Ukraine’s distinct and democratic political history, particularly as a contrast to Russian autocracy. Like many other distinct nationalisms, Ukrainian nationalism was developed in opposition to Russian identity and alternative socio-political allegiances. Ukrainian nationalists in the Russian Empire were keen to emphasize the differences between Ukrainians
and Russians, asserting that Ukraine and Russia were actually “diametric opposites, and their
cultures and histories essentially antagonistic.”

Nationalists revered the memories of Cossack leaders like Bohdan Khmelnytsky and Ivan
Mazepa, who fought the Poles and Russians respectively. Khmelnytsky’s 1654 Treaty of
Pereyaslav with the Russians during his Cossack uprising against the Polish-Lithuanian
Commonwealth is often cited as the beginning of Ukraine’s subjugation by the Russians. The
Treaty was supposed to secure the autonomy of the Zaporizhian Cossack Hosts from the Poles,
and Ukrainian nationalists claim that the Russians abused the nature of the agreement by
gradually undermining the Cossacks’ sovereignty instead. It is this myth of Ukraine’s lost
sovereignty and cultural subjugation to Russia that served as the basis of Ukrainian nationalism
as it emerged during the late 19th century. This Ukrainian nationalist mythology, which
originated in the Ukrainian lands of the Russian Empire, soon gained credence in other areas
with Ukrainians, most significantly in Galicia and other areas of Western Ukraine in the Austro-
Hungarian Empire.

Ukrainian nationalism enjoyed a considerable following among Ukrainian urban
intellectuals during the latter years of Tsarist rule. The Tsarist government, fearful of divergent
nationalism in a multinational state, actively suppressed the Ukrainian identity. Russian elites
remained wary of Ukrainian identity, preferring instead to perceive the Ukrainian nation as an
integral part of a broader ‘Great Russian’ nation. Ukrainians officially remained “Little Russians”
to the Russian government, and identification with a Ukrainian nation was dismissed as
subversive and historically fallacious. Ukrainians in Western Ukraine in the Austro-Hungarian
Empire, unlike those in Tsarist Russia, were given considerable ethnic autonomy and political
space for the more natural evolution of ethno-nationalism and independent Ukrainian civil society. Nationalist tendencies were allowed to flourish in the region, so much so that later oppression of Ukrainian ethno-nationalism in Western Ukraine under Poland during the interwar period and in the USSR after the Second World War was unable to stamp them out, particularly in Galicia. vi 

Despite enjoying significant support among elements of the urban intelligentsia during the late Tsarist period, Ukrainian nationalism competed with several other powerful intellectual movements, such as socialism and Russian nationalism. The urban centers of Ukraine in the Russian Empire were overwhelmingly inhabited by ethnic Russians during this period, making Ukrainian nationalism particularly weak in the cities except within a small, nationally-conscious intellectual class. Lacking a strong base, Ukrainian nationalism remained notably weaker than comparable nationalist movements in the Russian Empire—in the Baltic states, Finland, and Poland. vii Some areas of Ukraine were also noticeably resistant to Ukrainian ethno-nationalism, particularly the eastern and southern regions of the country, such as the areas around Donbas or Odessa. Regional differences in identity throughout Ukraine were apparent early in the Ukrainian nationalist movement, and regional differences only became more pronounced during the Soviet period. Up to the present, there remains a substantial anti-nationalistic Ukrainian population that remains wary of ethno-nationalism and believes that Ukrainians and Russians can share many important cultural and historical traditions. viii 

Nationalist groups in Eastern Ukraine, previously suppressed under the Tsarist government, emerged in force after the 1917 February Revolution that deposed the Tsar. Ukrainian nationalism and Marxism gained adherents among urban-dwelling intellectuals
throughout the country during the revolutionary period. Nationalists from the former Russian
and Austro-Hungarian Empires were briefly successful at establishing several governments in
Ukrainian territory, including three separate governments in Eastern Ukraine. The Ukrainian
People’s Republic, with its capital in Kiev, was probably the most successful of these short-lived
Ukrainian states, although another Ukrainian government also briefly existed in Western
Ukraine, which was under Austro-Hungarian control before the First World War. Symon
Petliura, the last President of the Ukrainian People’s Republic, was the most prominent leader
of the Ukrainian nationalist movement during the chaos of the Russian Revolutions and civil
war. However, independent Ukrainian governments were short-lived and relatively
inconsequential as Eastern Ukraine was repeatedly overrun by the Bolsheviks and the
counterrevolutionary White movement during the Russian Civil War. The Bolsheviks eventually
regained control of Ukraine, and Ukraine entered the Soviet Union as one of the original Soviet
Socialist Republics in 1922.

Assessing the impact of Soviet rule on Ukrainian identity and culture is a complicated
affair, as the Soviet government often wavered between outright suppression of Ukrainian
culture and language and tactic promotion of Ukrainian customs. The Soviet government
officially recognized Ukrainians as an ethnic group, and the creation of the Ukrainian Soviet
Socialist Republic delineated the borders of modern Ukraine, giving the republic state
structures, however impotent. Early Soviet policy in the 1920s actually encouraged the
indigenization of elements of Ukrainian culture in local administration, supporting the
development of Ukrainian literature, arts and Ukrainian-language schools, and tolerated a
Ukrainian political elite to control republican-level affairs. Compared to the Tsarist era, the
mid-1920s Soviet Union was a time of relative leniency and even encouragement of Ukrainian identity and lifestyle. Of course, outright Ukrainian nationalism and activism for an independent Ukrainian state were suppressed, but Soviet policy also sometimes promoted indigenization if it did not conflict with state objectives.

Ironically, the USSR and the creation of the Ukrainian SSR may have consolidated some elements of Ukrainian identity in several important ways. The Ukrainian SSR created a clear Ukrainian territorial-political unit, complete with Ukrainian symbols, recognition of the Ukrainian language, Ukrainian political elites, and even UN membership following the Second World War. However, Stalin’s rise to power in the late 1920s, and particularly the imperatives of collectivization, signaled the beginning of the end of Soviet tolerance of a unique Ukrainian identity and culture.

During his dictatorship, Joseph Stalin brutally suppressed nationalist movements and divergent identities in the Soviet Union, and Ukraine was certainly no exception. Stalin and Communist officials concluded that latent Ukrainian nationalism needed to be crushed in order for collectivization—the transfer of privately-held and peasant land to collective farms, the kolkhoz and sovkhoz—to succeed. The Ukrainian peasantry was threatened by the collectivization effort, as it entailed the end of their traditional lifestyles and relatively privileged status. The Soviet authorities intimidated and brutalized the peasantry to force their compliance with collectivization, in Ukraine and elsewhere, and undermined the “kulaks,” the relatively affluent peasant class who particularly predominated in Ukraine.

The period of the Holodomor, which means “death by hunger” in Ukrainian, was the period of mass starvation in the early 1930s in Ukraine. The starvation was a direct result of
Stalinist policies that targeted the Ukrainian peasantry to punish them for their resistance to the collectivization process. Soviet troops forcibly requisitioned grain from starving peasants, resulting in millions of deaths from starvation. To this day, many proud Ukrainians consider the Holodomor a genocide, a pre-meditated policy by the Soviet Union to murder and punish the Ukrainian people en mass. The Holodomor has great lasting significance, and nationalistic Ukrainians often cite the Holodomor as proof of the Russian state’s malevolence towards the Ukrainian people.

The Second World War was particularly devastating for Soviet Ukraine, and Ukraine suffered a German invasion and occupation and some of the most destructive warfare of the conflict. The Soviet Union annexed Polish-held Western Ukraine after the Molotov-Ribbentropp Pact in 1939, and retained this territory at the end of the war. Even during the Polish-era, Western Ukraine had always been a hotbed of Ukrainian nationalism, with many of the most radical Ukrainian nationalists hailing from the Galician region of Ukraine. The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) was formed in Galicia, then part of interwar Poland, before the outbreak of the Second World War and supported terrorist attacks against the Polish state. During the war, a particularly militant faction of the OUN, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, under the leadership of Stepan Bandera fought a protracted guerrilla campaign against the Poles, Soviets, Nazis, and other groups in Western Ukraine. Bandera’s fighters have been implicated in acts of ethnic cleansing of Poles and other nationalities.

Bandera’s military wing of the OUN continued a bloody struggle against the extension of Soviet power into Western Ukraine well into the 1950s. The legacy of Stepan Bandera and the UPA remains a contentious issue in contemporary Ukraine, highlighting ideological differences.
between Eastern and Western Ukraine. Many Ukrainians, especially those in Eastern Ukraine, fought in the Soviet Army and revile the UPA as a treasonous and murderous group. However, significant numbers of Western Ukrainians admire Bandera and his cohorts as national heroes who fought for an independent Ukrainian state.

In the post-Stalin Soviet period, outright suppression of Ukrainian identity was not quite as severe as during the Stalin era. However, the post-Stalinist Soviet Union was never particularly conducive to Ukrainian culture or traditions, despite ostensible support for Ukrainian political and cultural institutions. Soviet policy in the post-World War II era emphasized the unity of the diverse Soviet people, discouraging “bourgeoisie nationalism” and other supposedly subversive ideas. During the post-Stalinist USSR, Ukrainian culture and language largely declined in use and relevance throughout the territory of Soviet Ukraine. From the 1920s to 1950s, ethnic Ukrainians in the Ukrainian SSR largely studied in Ukrainian-language schools according to Soviet policy. However, educational reforms under Nikita Khrushchev gave parents the freedom to enroll their children in the schools of their choosing, and many parents opted for Russian-language schools. In 1989, only 47.5 percent of Ukrainian school children went to Ukrainian schools. In the same year, Soviet census data indicated that only 40 percent of the Ukrainian SSR’s population spoke the Ukrainian language. Regions in eastern and southern Ukraine, in particular around the Donbas and Odessa, became increasingly “Russified” during the Soviet period because of large numbers of Russian immigrants and the regions’ geographical proximities to Russian-speaking regions. In contrast to much of Eastern Ukraine, the Ukrainian language and cultural traditions still remained strong in Western Ukraine during the Soviet period.
Mikhail Gorbachev’s reforms during the late 1980s signaled a new era for Ukrainian institutions—permitting sufficient political and economic space for the re-evaluation of Ukrainian identity and national ideals. Like many areas of the USSR, Ukraine was profoundly affected by the reforms of perestroika and glasnost. Ukrainian intellectuals revived traditional Ukrainian cultural practices and traditions. The Ukrainian language also experienced a revival in much of the country and civic organizations began to propound Ukrainian identity. Unsurprisingly, Western Ukraine and its cultural capital of Lviv became a center of secessionist tendencies in the USSR, alongside Georgia and the Baltic states.

At the beginning of Gorbachev’s reforms, most of Ukraine was not particularly ripe for either secession or even a strong nationalist movement. The Soviet government had spent considerable effort suppressing the emergence of a nationally-conscious elite in Ukraine. Ukraine’s large size and economic importance to the USSR meant that authorities in Moscow throughout most of the Soviet period were particularly suspicious of local communist administrators in the Ukrainian SSR government. In the period after Stalin’s death, elements of the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) pressed for Ukrainianization of CPU and greater republican discretion in local affairs. The end of the Khrushchev era and the resultant leadership transition in Moscow gave the CPU Ukrainian elites greater leeway in Ukraine’s affairs. First Secretary Petro Shelest (1963-1972) was particularly supportive of greater cultural and economic autonomy vis-à-vis Moscow. Leonid Brezhnev eventually removed Shelest from his position and purged the CPU, re-establishing greater control over republican-level administration in Ukraine. Volodymyr Shcherbytskyi, the successor to Shelest, served as the First Secretary of the CPU until 1989 and proved a hardliner eager to toe the Moscow line.
Thus, the CPU during the early years of perestroika was particularly resistant to assertions of autonomy.\textsuperscript{xix}

The last period that the lands of Ukraine were relatively free from foreign influence was during the 17\textsuperscript{th} century in the time of the time of the Cossacks. Ukrainian nationalism certainly glorified the history of the Cossacks and appropriated Cossack symbols and mythology, but the Cossack Hetmanates were never nation-states or even clearly Ukrainian. Ukrainian nationalists revived the myth of Kievan Rus’ as the precursor to the Ukrainian nation, but parallel Russian claims to the legacy of Kievan Rus’ complicated the Ukrainians’ ability to appropriate this symbol.

Demographics in Ukraine also put Ukrainian nationalists at a disadvantage compared to some other ethno-territorial units of the USSR—particularly the Baltic countries. Ukraine’s historical internal divisions and external sympathies between foreign powers complicated the possibility of a cultural and uniquely Ukrainian center for the nation.\textsuperscript{xx} Ukraine’s large size and diversity allowed regional differences and identities that overlapped with a broader national identity. The history of religious schism among Ukrainians—the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Western Ukraine and Orthodox Christianity in the East—also undermined a singular Ukrainian nationalism. Large numbers of Russians and other ethnic groups throughout much of the territory of Ukraine was similarly problematic.

Decades of Soviet rule had also produced divergent identities among the popular masses and the intelligentsia. In Eastern Ukraine, especially in the Donbas and other largely Russian-speaking regions, heavy industrialization had produced a strong working-class culture very much insulated from a Ukrainian identity. Many Ukrainians were deeply suspicious of
nationalism and overt identification with Ukrainian culture and institutions. The Ukrainian peasantry, once overwhelmingly Ukrainian-speaking and the foundation of Ukrainian identity, was largely wiped out during the collectivization of the 1930s, the Holodomor, and subsequent urbanization. The Ukrainian urban intelligentsia was split. Some of the intellectual elites supported a revival of the Ukrainian language and culture. Others within the intelligentsia were largely Russian-speaking, and had strong emotional bonds to the Russian-Soviet center. xxii

Taras Kuzio and Andrew Wilson identify three primary obstacles to state-building and identification with a modern, independent Ukraine. Ukraine’s regional and cultural pluralism complicated the revival of Ukrainian national symbols, culture, and a resurgent nationalism during the Soviet reform period of the late 1980s and early 1990s. xxii Ukraine had never existed as a modern unified nation-state, and thus strong regional identities and overlapping loyalties undermined a revival of a uniform national project. The medieval history of Kievan Rus’ could potentially serve as a unifying myth of national Ukrainian memory. Unfortunately, official Russian historiography also claimed descent from Kievan Rus’, undermining its distinct mobilizing potential. Second, the presence of significant ethnic minority populations resistant to Ukrainianization and a national revival further complicated the issues of identity and national loyalty. Eastern Ukraine’s large Russian population, in particular, was resistant to revived nationalism and Ukrainian identity. A significant portion of Ukraine’s population, ethnic Ukrainian or otherwise, identified or sympathized with Russia after long periods of ‘Russification’ under the Tsars and Soviet power. Third, a revived Ukrainian nationalism lacked any history of national political institutions or civil society. It’s notable that only Western Ukraine, from this view, entertained the right conditions for modern state-building. Western
Ukraine is largely mono-ethnic, at least since World War II, and much of the population strongly identifies with Ukrainian national symbols and mythology. Western Ukraine experienced nascent civil society organizations and political institutions prior to World War II, which remain an important reason explaining why Ukrainian ethno-nationalism is much stronger in Galicia and other western regions to this day.\textsuperscript{xxiii}

Given the relatively poor environment for Ukrainian nationalism, perestroika “not so much released pent-up forces waiting to assert themselves as it created them.”\textsuperscript{xxiv} The revival of an independent Ukrainian identity and political institutions required the unlikely cooperation between a nationally-conscious intelligentsia and republican-level Communist political elites. As perestroika opened significant political space in the Ukrainian SSR, nationally-conscious segments of the Ukrainian intelligentsia revived elements of unique Ukrainian identity, cultural, and political symbols. The Ukrainian cultural intelligentsia formed the Ukrainian Helsinki Union to advocate and monitor political, cultural and economic reforms.\textsuperscript{xxv} Former Soviet Ukrainian dissidents and political prisoners founded other political and cultural groups, including the Ukrainian Popular Movement for Re-structuring (Rukh) and the T. Shevchenko Ukrainian Language Society.\textsuperscript{xxvi}

The horrific environmental and human costs of the Chernobyl disaster in 1986 spawned an assortment of protests and civil society groups during perestroika, as well. Environmentalist associations, such as ‘Green World,’ played a major role during perestroika.\textsuperscript{xxvii} The disaster demonstrated what can only be characterized as criminal mismanagement at the Soviet center – before, during and after the catastrophe – and accelerated Ukrainian demands for greater autonomy or even independence.\textsuperscript{xxviii}
Cultural movements and Ukrainian political groups became important facilitators for revived Ukrainian nationalism and advocates of an independent and unique Ukrainian identity. Rukh re-interpreted and re-appropriated Russian-Ukrainian historiography, rejecting the official Soviet-era discourse that emphasized Ukraine’s beneficial incorporation into the Russian Empire and Soviet Union. The Ukrainian cultural intelligentsia re-interpreted the history of the OUN, the occupation of Western Ukraine following the Molotov-Ribbentropp Pact, and other historical encounters between Russia and the Ukrainians. However, “the cultural intelligentsia was not strong enough to achieve power and universalize the national message alone.” Only support from opportunistic local Communists would create significant momentum for Ukrainian autonomy from the Soviet center in Moscow. Communist elites in the Ukrainian SSR slowly adapted their discourse and advocated for Ukrainian privileges from the Soviet center during perestroika. The retirement of the loyal Soviet Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Shcherbystski in 1989 marked a new era for the CPU, as did the transformation of the previously conservative party into a pluralistic institution divided between communist hardliners and flexible ‘national communists’ who became increasingly willing to assert Ukrainian autonomy as the Soviet Union unraveled.

Rukh and the rest of the democratic opposition to the CPU gradually emerged as a powerful political movement as Gorbachev’s reforms continued and political events in Eastern Europe and Moscow put pressure on local authorities. Gorbachev’s pressures on republican-level governments for reform and popular pressure convinced the CPU to allow the formation of Rukh and other pro-democratic groups. In February 1989, the CPU condoned the foundation of Rukh as an apolitical ‘cultural group,’ that would serve “as a unifying link between the
[program] of perestroika proposed by the Party, and the initiative of the broad mass of mass of the people.” Initially, Rukh remained a cautious actor in the political sphere, and Ukrainian nationalists downplayed their ideology in order to attract democratically-minded activists of all ethnicities and loyalties into the movement. In particular, Rukh didn’t want to alienate the eastern and southern regions of the country. Rukh also avoided conflict with the CPU, recognizing the constitutionally-guaranteed primacy of the Party in the political and social sphere.

The March 1990 elections for the Ukrainian parliament proved a turning point for the radicalization of the democratic movement and the emergence of ‘national communists.’ The Communists prevented Rukh from running in the elections, but the coalition Democratic Bloc managed to win almost 30 percent of the seats. The elections invigorated the democratic opposition, which was encouraged by its electoral victories in spite of tampering and manipulation by the Communists. Rukh became increasingly nationalist, pressing for the outright independence of Ukraine. The radicalization and growing strength of the democratic opposition put increasing pressure on the CPU.

Divisions within the CPU became particularly salient following the March 1990 parliamentary elections and the radicalization of democratic activists. An opportunistic, flexible wing of the CPU increasingly perceived the economic and political benefits of establishing greater autonomy from the Soviet authorities in Moscow. Even before the March 1990 elections, the CPU’s platform “incorporated sovereignty for Ukraine within a renewed Soviet federation.”
As the Soviet center increasingly weakened in 1990 following Boris Yeltsin’s election as President of Russia, the ‘national communists’ in the CPU distanced themselves from communist ideology and formed an alliance of convenience with democratic forces. The ‘national communists’ revived the legacies of Ukrainianization in the 1920s and Petro Shelest in the 1960s to justify their support for greater Ukrainian autonomy. By 1990, Leonid Kravchuk had become the leader of the CPU and the most outspoken ‘national communist.’ The reformists in the CPU borrowed practices from the democratic opposition, re-appropriating Ukrainian national symbols and a unique Ukrainian heritage. Kravchuk and his supporters clashed with hardline communists in the local party, which reached its apogee after the January 1991 Soviet military massacre in Lithuania when the ‘nationalist communists’ and communist hardliners took opposing viewpoints.

The CPU moderates continued to propound an ambiguous middle ground between the democratic opposition and the communist hardliners until the August Coup in 1991. Prior to the coup, Kravchuk stated that “if we wish to preserve the Union it can only be as a union of sovereign states” and the “aim is not to destroy the Soviet Union, but we don’t want to see it once again become a formal union of ‘sovereign states’ where powerless governments and powerless parliaments would once again be required to rubberstamp dictates from the center. ‘National Communism’ reflected the hopes of a significant segment of the political elite to stay in power and maximize local control during a period of revolutionary political changes in Soviet Union.” As long as it seemed that the USSR would remain intact under a re-negotiated Union, CPU moderates sought to maximize their influence by pressing for greater Ukrainian autonomy in local economic, political, and social affairs. They pursued an alliance of
convenience with the democratic opposition to exert greater pressure on communist hardliners and the Soviet center in Moscow.

The 1991 August Coup was the turning point in pressing the ‘National Communists’ away from support for a devolved, re-negotiated Union treaty with extensive Ukrainian autonomy and towards outright independence for Ukraine. The hardliner coup in Moscow that sought to re-implement centralized Soviet control threatened to undermine the communist moderates’ objectives of finding a middle ground between Gorbachev’s ideals of a re-negotiated Union and outright independence. At first, Kravchuk was hesitant to denounce the coup before its failure was apparent. As the coup began to fail in Moscow, Kravchuk finally came out against the plotters. The failed coup undermined the credibility and political clout of the communist hardliners in Ukraine, illuminated the drawbacks of remaining in the Soviet Union, and accelerated popular political support for outright independence. On August 24\(^{\text{th}}\), the ‘national communists’ and their democratic allies in the Supreme Council used their newfound political initiative to suspend the CPU and declare independence.  

On December 1, 1991, more than 90 percent of the people of Ukraine ratified Ukrainian independence in a national referendum. Leonid Kravchuk was also elected the first President of an independent Ukraine. A week later, Kravchuk, Yeltsin, and the Belorussian president formalized the dissolution of the USSR and the founding of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Ukraine emerged as an independent state with political institutions and state structures largely under the control of the traditional communist elite. Despite overwhelming support for Ukrainian independence, Ukraine very much remained a divided nation, split between different
conceptions of identity and ideological loyalty. Anti-nationalism was still a potent political and social force, particularly in eastern and southern Ukraine. Instead of expressing support for an ethnic-based national state, the December referendum reflected widespread distrust with the incompetence of authorities in Moscow and perceptions that the Soviet center had undermined local economic interests in Ukraine. A significant majority of the ethnic Russian population also voted in favor of Ukrainian independence. Many Ukrainians thought that the dire economic situation in the Soviet Union would improve in Ukraine post-independence. To this day, even Russophone Ukrainians in the East value Ukrainian independence.\textsuperscript{xI} Thus, Ukraine emerged as a newly independent state without the backing of a powerful ethno-nationalist movement or deeply entrenched civic identity. The ex-communist national elites found it necessary to initiate a process of state-building and secure Ukrainian independence through an independent foreign policy.

**Foreign Policy and State-Building in an Independent Ukraine**

After the dissolution of the USSR and the independence of Ukraine, there remained pressing concerns requiring resolution with the other post-Soviet states, and most importantly, the Russian Federation. Ukrainian foreign policy in the first few years of independence supported the Ukrainian state’s broader state-building objectives.

An impotent nationalist movement, a multiethnic and potential fractious population, a powerful Russian neighbor, and the uneasy socio-economic situation in post-Soviet Ukraine exacerbated the state’s security concerns. In the absence of a consolidated Ukrainian ethno-identity and a multicultural population, Ukrainian leaders needed to emphasize an eclectic mix
of ethnic and non-ethnic identities. State officials portrayed Ukraine as a country for all of its inhabitants, regardless of ethnicity. Loyalty to Ukraine would take the form of civic citizenship, rather than ethnic citizenship. At the same time, however, Ukraine adopted historical Ukrainian national symbols, such as the Ukrainian trident and national flag, in the process of consolidating a unique civic Ukrainian identity, separate from that of Russia and the post-Soviet states.

Given the absence of a historical Ukrainian state, and lingering identification with the Russian and Soviet orders among a significant portion of the country’s population, Ukrainian leaders re-appropriated national symbols for the state. During the dying days of the Ukrainian SSR, Kravchuk had emphasized that Ukrainian state symbols “should satisfy everyone—those who live in the east and those who live in the west, as well as those in the north and south.”

However, given the imperatives of nation-building post-independence, Kravchuk and the political elites reneged on this early promise, finding it necessary to utilize uniquely Ukrainian symbols, often with ethnic Ukrainian undertones. Important national symbols—the Ukrainian flag, national anthem, and coat of arms are drawn from important ethno-political Ukrainian lore. For example, the state revived the yellow-on-blue flag of the Ukrainian People’s Republic.

The Ukrainian language became the sole official language of Ukraine, a contentious issue even today in the largely Russian-speaking eastern and southern regions of the country. The state promoted Ukrainian-language schools and greater use of Ukrainian in social and political life. Although the Kravchuk Administration avoided heavy-handed Ukrainianization, President Kravchuk argued that “Ukrainian culture, language, national self-consciousness, and historical memory have been subject to so much damage for so long, that we must apply
enormous force in order to revive them.” Revival of the Ukrainian language became an important component of the nation-building project in the realm of domestic policy. At the same time, the Kravchuk Administration avoided extensive market reforms, fearing potential backlashes against the government in heavily ‘Russified’ eastern and southern regions by Soviet-era industrial enterprises.xliii

Simultaneously, Ukrainian foreign policy during the Kravchuk Administration, like many aspects of domestic policy, reflected the state and nation-building objectives of the state. The Kravchuk Administration’s foreign policy emphasized the demands of Ukraine’s sovereignty and security concerns, particularly with regards to Moscow. In the early 1990s, Ukraine and Russia had many contentious issues to resolve, all directly related to the swift dissolution of the USSR and the problems therein. Ukraine needed to exercise its sovereignty by emphasizing Ukrainian ties with international institutions, distancing itself from the Russian Federation and Russian-supported institutions such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Ukraine would have to sacrifice smooth Russia-Ukraine relations in the short-term in order to assert independent Ukrainian sovereignty.

However, there still existed particular political constraints on Ukrainian policy-makers, making too bold a move away from Russia inadvisable. A large ethnic Russian minority, a significant segment of the population with strong emotional and cultural attachments to Russia, fears of separatism in Crimea and the Donbas, Russian military power, Ukrainian economic dependence on the Russian Federation, and Western indifference towards Ukraine also discouraged Kyiv from loosening Russia-Ukraine ties. Russian cultural sympathies among a significant segment of the Ukrainian population is also an important factor in understanding the
continued salience of Russia-Ukraine relations. Dr. Valeriy Khmelko, the former president of the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) at National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, explained that the “divisions of Ukraine are very deep,” and this does have important policy implications in the country. xlv

Ukrainian security policy during the first years of independence emphasized consolidating and strengthening the Ukrainian armed forces, as well as reinforcing the unity and the inviolability of Ukraine’s territorial borders. The state demanded oaths of loyalty from former Soviet military personnel who stayed behind in Ukraine, and was for the most part successful at encouraging a smooth transition from Soviet to Ukrainian military authority. Only the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol, Crimea, remained a challenging obstacle in the construction of a loyal Ukrainian military. Ukrainian policymakers were immediately suspicious of Russian claims to Ukrainian territory and Russia’s ability to de-stabilize Ukraine’s internal security. In Crimea, in particular, a largely Russian population, strong Crimean identification with the Russian state, and nationalist rhetoric in the Russian political system fostered a potentially dangerous and unstable situation. Ukrainian resistance to Russian-led attempts to turn the CIS into a permanent, cohesive system also worsened Russia-Ukraine relations. Ukraine’s vacillations about giving up Soviet nuclear weapons on Ukrainian soil because of outstanding security concerns similarly damaged relations with Russia, and also temporarily isolated Ukraine from the West and the international community.

Early Ukrainian foreign policy reflected the state’s nation-building and sovereignty objectives, and necessarily entailed problematic Russia-Ukraine relations in the short-term. Ukraine’s foreign policy “balancing” between Russia and the West did not emerge until after
Ukraine’s sovereignty was sufficiently entrenched and immediate security concerns following the Soviet dissolution were resolved. Ukraine’s early foreign policy aimed to develop relations in four categories: “international relations, broad European regional cooperation, CIS cooperation, and membership of international organizations.”\textsuperscript{xliv}

At first, the West largely ignored or downplayed Ukraine’s security needs, instead focusing on smooth relations with Russia. On the other hand, Ukraine’s possession of nuclear weapons attracted negative Western attention.\textsuperscript{xlv} Only after worsening Western relations with the Russian Federation in the mid-1990s would the United States and other Western countries begin to value a secure and independent Ukrainian state.\textsuperscript{xlvi}

In the early 1990s, three topics of importance dominated the agenda of Russia-Ukraine relations—the Commonwealth of Independent States, nuclear weapons on Ukrainian soil, and the Crimea. Other issues, such as the status of ethnic Russians and the Russian language in Ukraine, while important features of Russia-Ukraine relations, remained secondary concerns.

One of the most hotly contested issues in early Russia-Ukraine relations involved the role and scope of the Commonwealth of Independent States on former Soviet territories. As previously mentioned, the CIS was created at the Belavezha Accords that officially negotiated the dissolution of the Soviet state in December 1991. The new Russian regime, although it occasionally had its own doubts about the usefulness of the CIS, perceived the institution as a permanent means to preserve Russian influence and stability in the former Soviet Union. In contrast, Ukraine only supported the CIS insomuch as the body promoted a smooth and orderly Soviet dissolution. Ukrainian policy makers hoped for a temporary CIS, an institution that would work out pressing issues that remained from the Soviet period as a ‘civilized means for
divorce’—economic relations, energy issues, and the maintenance of smooth multilateral relations within the former Soviet space. The Ukrainian parliament ratified the CIS after Belavezha, but made sure to stipulate reservations with the organization and emphasize Ukraine’s inviolable borders, independent security forces, and unique foreign policy. \textsuperscript{xlviii}

The Ukrainian regime stipulated that “the CIS was not some kind of a new state and that there were no junior and senior members.”\textsuperscript{xl}ix Ukraine would remain in the CIS only for economic cooperation; Ukraine fiercely resisted any attempts to turn the CIS into a more closely integrated confederacy or collective security agreement under Russian stewardship. Kyiv was deeply suspicious of Russian attempts to maintain political and security influence in the ‘Near Abroad,’ especially during the inchoate stages of nation-building and institutional weakness in Ukraine.

Ukraine’s deeply held suspicions of Russian intentions in the CIS certainly exacerbated Russia-Ukraine relations in the early 1990s. Many Russian politicians and nationalist Russians expressed anti-Ukrainian sentiments, angered at Ukrainian unwillingness to accept CIS confederacy and deeper integration. Nationalist and communist Russian parliamentarians already blamed Ukraine for the dissolution of the Soviet Union at Belavezha, and now Ukraine prevented the re-integration of the former Soviet states. Alongside the issue of Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet, Ukraine’s resistance to the CIS engendered Ukrainophobic attitudes among some Russians.

Emerging Ukrainian foreign policy clearly articulated Ukraine’s intended role in the CIS, preventing participation in CIS collective security agreements or deeper integration scheme. The official foreign policy document, “Fundamental Guidelines in Ukrainian Foreign Policy” was
adopted by the Ukrainian parliament in 1993. The document states that “Ukraine will avoid participation in the institutionalizations of forms of multilateral cooperation within the framework of the CIS which might transform the CIS into a supranational structure of a federal or confederate character.”¹ Ukraine rejected significant Russian and other CIS states’ pressure to join the CIS’s Collective Security Agreement, signed in Tashkent in May 1992.² As will be discussed later, Ukraine instead sought closer relations with Western security institutions, becoming the first CIS member to join NATO’s Partnership for Peace. Kravchuk remained amenable to economic agreements within the CIS, originally signing an Economic Union Treaty. In May 1993, Ukraine signed another Economic Union treaty with the Russians and Belarusians. Significant political opposition in the parliament to the Economic Union treaties accused CIS economic integration of subjugating Ukrainian national interests and reviving Soviet federal structures. The Kravchuk Administration compromised, and Ukraine finally settled on ‘associate member’ status within the Economic Union.³

Domestic pressures, insecurity, and even fears of separatism also constrained Ukrainian policymakers when it came to negotiating the country’s relations with the CIS. Strong pro-Russian sentiments in the easternmost and southernmost regions of the country, particularly dangerous separatist tendencies in Crimea in the early 1990s, effectively limited foreign policy options. As previously mentioned, strong domestic pressures influenced the government in reaching a compromise—joining the Economic Union as ‘associate member,’ rather than a full-fledged member as pro-Russian politicians wanted or refusing any membership association as the nationalists wanted. Incidentally, it was the nationalists’ and moderates’ pressure to refuse the Economic Union that made the state vacillate to a compromise position. However, for the
most part, it was the state’s fear of unrest in ‘Russified’ parts of Ukraine, and Ukrainian energy
dependence on Russia that moderated Ukrainian foreign policy towards the CIS. Policy makers
feared that a foreign policy that unnecessarily exacerbated Russia-Ukraine relations could
undermine Kyiv’s nation and state-building objectives in eastern and southern Ukraine, and
accelerate secessionist tendencies in the Crimea.

Dependence on Russian oil and natural gas supplies similarly threatened Ukrainian
national security should relations deteriorate over the CIS and other outstanding issues. These
pressures likely prevented Ukraine from completely rejecting the CIS during the state and
nation-building early years. Thus, foreign policy “balancing” between the West and Russia
started to emerge even during the early stages of Ukrainian nation-building.

The second issue of importance in Russia-Ukraine relations during the nascent nation-
building era, and probably the most divisive and emotional topic, was the status of Crimea and
the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol. Crimea, which had never existed as part of the ethno-
territorial area of Ukraine, was transferred from the Russian Soviet republic to the Ukrainian
SSR in 1954 by Nikita Khrushchev in an act of goodwill to mark the 300th anniversary of the
Treaty of Pereyaslav. Historically inhabited by the Crimean Tartars, the Tartars ruled the
peninsula until 1783, when the Russian empire annexed Crimea. The Tartars inhabited Crimea
in significant numbers until the Stalinist deportation of 1944, when Soviet authorities accused
the local Tartar population of collaborating with the Nazi invaders and deported the entire
ethnic group to Siberia and Central Asia in an act of collective punishment. Since 1989, the
Crimean Tartars have slowly returned from exile, now comprising about 10 percent of the
Crimean population.
Crimea is an area of special, mythical importance to the Russian historical memory. The site of the Crimean War, the base of the Black Sea Fleet, and the two heroic defenses of Sevastopol—Crimea is a representation of Russian military prowess and empire. After the Soviet dissolution, most ethnic Russians of all political stripes—from ultranationalist to liberal—thought of Crimea as an integral part of the Russian homeland. Many Russians perceive the 1954 transfer of Crimea to the Ukrainian SSR as an illegitimate act, one which unfairly gave Ukraine sovereignty over Russian land. Crimea’s population remains a majority ethnic Russian, with Ukrainians comprising only a small minority of the local population. After Ukrainian independence, the Russian population of Crimea still felt deep emotional and political ties to Russia, complicating Kyiv’s control over the area. Strong separatist tendencies amongst the Crimean population, particularly in the city of Sevastopol, the site of Black Sea Fleet and Soviet/Russian military facilities, posed a particular challenge to policy makers in Kyiv. A separatist Crimea could damage Ukraine’s sovereign legitimacy, encouraging instability in other heavily Russian areas of Ukraine. Crimean separatism also carried the risk of worsening Russian-Ukrainian tensions, deepening an already troubled relationship following the Soviet collapse or even precipitating an armed conflict. Even more acutely, the Soviet Black Sea Fleet remained in Ukrainian territory post-independence. Russia claimed the Black Sea Fleet as its own, pressuring Ukraine to rescind its claims to partial ownership of the fleet and indefinite leasing of naval facilities in Sevastopol.

Crimean separatism and Russian intentions emerged as an existential threat to Ukrainian sovereignty almost immediately upon independence. In Russia, broad public dismay over the loss of the Crimean peninsula made the issue a popular political concern in the Russian
parliament. As early as January 1992, a “Russian parliamentary committee circulated a draft resolution proposing that the Supreme Soviet declare the 1954 transfer invalid,” attempting to claim Russian sovereignty over Crimea. In May, the Supreme Soviet officially declared the 1954 decision illegal, although this retroactive act was largely symbolic.

Liberal politician Vladimir Lukin believed that Russia should openly question Ukrainian sovereignty over Crimea, putting military pressure on Ukraine to relinquish its ownership claims. Russia should only accept Ukrainian sovereignty in Crimea in return for the Black Sea Fleet. The Russian vice president, Alexander Rutskoi, suggested that Khrushchev and the Soviet authorities responsible for the 1954 transfer had “suffered from a hangover or sunstroke.” Rutskoi expressed broader Russian popular sentiments when he exclaimed that “Crimea must never be allowed to be Ukrainian,” because “from time immemorial it has been Russian land, and it is soaked in the blood of our ancestors.” In reality, the peninsula didn’t come under Russian influence until the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca with the Ottoman Empire in 1774. But in July 1993 the Supreme Soviet became even more provocative, declaring that Sevastopol was a Russian city, under Russian sovereignty and jurisdiction.

President Yeltsin denounced these displays of nationalistic populism in the parliament, referring to parliamentary provocations as deeply embarrassing and illegal. However, the growing strength of nationalists in Russia and Yeltsin’s waning popularity worried Kyiv. Ukrainian policymakers feared that a new nationalist government would become even more assertive regarding Crimea, or that Yeltsin would cross over to appease the nationalists. Ukraine strongly denounced the aggressive and nationalist acts of the Russian parliament, emphasizing the inviolability of Ukrainian borders and past Russian agreements to respect Ukraine’s
sovereign integrity. Russian populist politics were not merely rhetorical, as it threatened to exacerbate the Crimean political situation and unravel the achievements already made in Ukrainian nation-building.

A January 1991 referendum in Crimea, held before Ukrainian independence, had re-established Crimea as an autonomous area within the Ukrainian SSR. Upon Ukrainian independence, Crimea had its own local government, parliament, and presidency under the broader authority of Kyiv. In May 1992, Crimea half-heartedly declared independence from Ukraine, likely using the declaration to enhance Crimean leverage with Kyiv. Kyiv managed to ameliorate the situation in Ukraine by allowing the Crimean region a high degree of political autonomy while still under Ukrainian sovereignty. However, as long as Crimean leaders were supported by Russian politicians and could hope for a more nationalistic Russian government, the separatist threat remained.

By 1994, following the 1993 Constitutional Crisis in Moscow, populism in the Russian parliament had abated. Russian officials stressed that it would never recognize Crimean separatism, as this would undermine Russian interests in a denuclearized and cooperative Ukraine. Moscow also hoped to use Crimea to pressure Kyiv over the CIS, denuclearization, and Black Sea Fleet ownership.

Crimea was heavily dependent on Ukrainian subsidies and budgetary assistance; Kyiv’s pressures induced Yuriy Meshkov to back off from a secession referendum. Ukraine doubled its military presence in the region. Economic and political difficulties in Crimea sapped Meshkov’s authority, undermining separatist ideology. Russia-Ukraine relations stabilized during the mid-1990s, and Russia’s Chechnya imbroglio distracted Moscow, giving Kyiv the
necessary political space to assert its authority in Crimea. In 1995, Ukraine abolished the Crimean presidency.\textsuperscript{lxx}

The most important area of contention between Russia and Ukraine involving the Crimean peninsula in the 1990s was the fate of the Black Sea Fleet and naval facilities in the Crimean city of Sevastopol. The Black Sea Fleet, founded in 1771 by Catherine the Great, and the naval facilities in Sevastopol are of emotional, political, and martial importance to Russia.\textsuperscript{lxiii} At the time of the Soviet dissolution, the Black Sea Fleet included “6 cruisers, 34 frigates and destroyers, 18 submarines, 106 small combat vessels, and 140 support and miscellaneous ships,” based in Sevastopol and other locations, including Odessa and Poti in Georgia.\textsuperscript{lxii} The Black Sea Fleet contained 26 percent of Soviet naval surface ships, 7 percent of the Soviet submarine fleet, substantial ground forces, roughly 100 helicopters, and more than 400 combat aircraft.\textsuperscript{lxii}

As previously mentioned, Ukraine’s independence declaration in August 1991 claimed all Soviet military forces on Ukrainian soil for the Ukrainian government. Most Soviet troops quickly professed their loyalty to Ukraine or left the armed forces; indeed, most of the ground and aviation forces of the Black Sea Fleet accepted Ukrainian ownership in 1992.\textsuperscript{lxiv} However, Russian claims to the naval fleet and demand that it retain the entire port of Sevastopol for Russian naval purposes put Russia and Ukraine in direct, emotional confrontation during the early independence era. Ownership disputes over the Black Sea Fleet were also deeply intertwined with the broader Crimea-Russia-Ukraine imbroglio, and many sailors were much more hesitant to accept Ukrainian sovereignty.\textsuperscript{lxv} Only a small number of Black Sea Fleet officers agreed to swear allegiance to independent Ukraine.\textsuperscript{lxvi}
The issue of the Black Sea Fleet, although of geopolitical importance to both Russia and Ukraine, primarily reflected emotional bonds and domestic political pressures rather than outright security concerns. The poor state of the Fleet and its many outdated military assets highlighted the primacy of political, rather than strategic, concerns. Ukrainian claims to the Black Sea Fleet were less driven by security prerogatives than by the state’s primary objective of sovereignty preservation during the early independence period. Ukraine feared that a timorous response to Russian posturing over the Black Sea Fleet would weaken Ukrainian claims to the whole Crimean peninsula and encourage separatism in regions of eastern and southern Ukraine.\textsuperscript{lxxvii}

Nevertheless, Ukraine’s steadfast support for partial ownership of the Fleet and resistance to many Russian demands were subsumed in the broader nation-building objectives of the nascent state—territorial inviolability was a necessary prerequisite to preserve Ukrainian sovereignty and engender citizens’ loyalty across the country. Ukraine, suffering from economic catastrophe, could never hope to utilize or even maintain a fleet of more than 300 vessels. Instead, Ukraine hoped save face by pressing a hard bargain with the Russians, selling off a significant portion of the Fleet in return for hard currency or debt forgiveness.\textsuperscript{lxxviii} Russian intransigence over the Black Sea Fleet, similar to that of Russian sovereignty claims to the entire Crimea in the parliament, was very much influenced by political pressures and popular emotional sentiments. Unsurprisingly, the Russian populace and parliamentary politicians were overwhelmingly united in their desire for the Black Sea Fleet and naval installations in Sevastopol to remain under Russian control.
In April 1992, Ukraine unsuccessfully tried to nationalize the Black Sea Fleet and bring the naval forces under Ukrainian control. With the exception of land-based forces in Crimea, pro-Russian sentiments in the Black Sea Fleet thwarted Ukraine’s attempts. Bilateral negotiations in 1992 and 1993 between Russia and Ukraine attempted to reach a consensus on dividing the Fleet between both countries, establish basing rights, and a “fleet-for-debt” swap that would alleviate economic pressure on Kyiv.

In 1992, Russia and the CIS offered Ukraine 20 percent of the Black Sea Fleet in return for basing rights in Sevastopol, an amount that proved unacceptable for Ukrainian officials, who unrealistically pressed for control of 91 percent of naval forces. In September 1993, Kravchuk and Yeltsin met in Massandra, Crimea to discuss the fate of the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol and Ukraine’s de-nuclearization. The Massandra meeting was supposed to “include three major elements: Moscow's forgiveness of Kiev's large debt, mostly for gas and oil, in return for Ukraine’s share of the Black Sea Fleet; a Ukrainian guarantee of Russian access to ex-Soviet nuclear weapons for dismantlement in exchange for Russian nuclear fuel for Ukraine's power reactors; and a Russian lease on Sevastopol, the Black Sea Fleet headquarters.” Instead, the deal foundered and Russia-Ukraine relations became even more bitter after Massandra than before.

It wasn’t until 1997, during the Kuchma Administration, that Russia and Ukraine reached a deal that temporarily resolved the contentious issue of the Black Sea Fleet and the Sevastopol naval facilities. The primary provision of the deal allowed Russia to lease its share of the Fleet in Sevastopol for a period of twenty years, until 2017. Ukraine kept 18 percent of the Black Sea Fleet’s military assets, and both Russia and Ukraine based their portions of the Fleet in
Sevastopol. Ukraine agreed to lease the Sevastopol naval facilities to Russia for about $100 million every year, which would be used to help cover Ukraine’s “huge unpaid debt to Russia for oil and gas supplies,” which had “reached more than $3.5 billion.”

Other provisions of the 1997 agreement sought to stabilize Russia-Ukraine relations. Russia promised to respect the complete territorial inviolability of all of Ukraine, including Crimea. Likewise, both countries agreed to refrain from forming alliances against one another or using the divided Black Sea Fleet naval forces against one another. The temporary nature of the leasing agreement, lasting only twenty years, failed to permanently resolve contention over the Black Sea Fleet and Sevastopol. The future of the Black Sea Fleet in Crimea would once again emerge as a contentious issue, in both the Russia-Ukraine relationship and domestic Ukrainian politics, barely a decade later.

The last great political issue stemming from the Soviet dissolution that constrained Russia-Ukraine relations, as well as Ukraine’s relations with the West and the broader international community, was the presence of nuclear weapons in Ukraine. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine possessed approximately 5,000 nuclear weapons, the majority of which were tactical. Thus, Ukraine was in possession of the world’s third largest nuclear stockpile, behind only the United States and Russia.

Ukraine’s August 1991 declaration of independence promised a nuclear weapon free nation, and its intent to fully cooperate with and ratify the Non-Nuclear Proliferation Treaty and completely relinquish control over Soviet weapons. Indeed, in April 1992 the Ukrainian parliament reiterated the state’s intention to become a nonnuclear weapon state, and more than half of the country’s tactical weapons were quickly transferred to Russia. By May 1992,
176 intercontinental ballistic missiles with 1,600 nuclear warheads remained in Ukraine. These weapons soon became a primary concern of the West and the Russian Federation, and Ukraine’s relations with the West were initially framed in the context of the nuclear issue. The presence of tactical weapons, in particular, became of special concern to the international community and the West, which feared that such weapons could more easily be misplaced or fall into the hands of non-state actors, such as terrorist organizations.

But Ukraine’s initial promises to relinquish control of tactical and strategic nuclear weapons were soon subsumed by the state’s greater security objectives and nation-building. Ukraine, fearing Russia’s increasingly aggressive posture towards Crimea and Ukrainian sovereignty in general, began vacillating on the prospects of transferring the weapons to the Russian Federation. Ukrainian hesitation towards immediate nuclear disarmament was thus intimately interconnected with broader security concerns and nascent nation-building initiatives that sought to solidify Ukrainian sovereignty. In 1992 and 1993, the government suspended additional weapons transfers to Russia, asserting its right to control the weapons systems remaining in the country and demanding security guarantees and compensation for additional disarmament. Kyiv cited insufficient Russian guarantees of the weapons’ destruction, demanded assurance of the weapons’ non-use, and asked for greater international supervision of the process. The government preferred the dismantlement of the weapons on Ukrainian soil, under international supervision, rather than their transfer to the Russian Federation.

Ukraine’s intransigence over the nuclear weapons, despite resulting international isolation, served several short-term interests for Kyiv. As mentioned, nuclear weapon
possession enhanced Kyiv’s initial security, particularly vis-à-vis Russia during an uneasy period in Russia-Ukraine relations. Even lacking operational control over the weapons, the uncertainty surrounding the future of the weapons provided Kyiv with a powerful bargaining chip in relations with Russia, and in particular over the fate of the Black Sea Fleet and Sevastopol. Even nuclear possession, notwithstanding lack of technical know-how to actually use them, was thought to greatly constrain Moscow’s options towards Kyiv. The weapons also served important ideological and immediate nation-building goals. Policy makers may have perceived the weapons as a vital validation of the Ukrainian state; the weapons were a reflection of state power and capabilities in a period of economic and political uncertainty. A nuclear power, even a fledging state with contested ideological legitimacy, could hardly be dismissed as irrelevant.

Lastly, the nuclear issue drew much needed international attention to the situation in Ukraine, at a time when the United States and the rest of the West was primarily concerned with maintaining smooth relations with the Russian regime.\textsuperscript{\textnormal{lxxxviii}} Ukraine’s nuclear vacillations were a headache for the West and the broader international community, temporarily isolating Kyiv and relegating Ukraine to near-pariah status. Ukrainian policymakers, however, were well aware that they would eventually need to transfer or dismantle the weapons.

The West’s relations with Kyiv in the early 1990s were dominated by denuclearization concerns, and many Western policy makers were deeply distrustful of Ukrainian intentions. The United States and other actors in the international community feared an unreformed post-communist Ukrainian state, one still ruled by old guard communist elites who would refuse cooperation with the West. The West and the broader international community called upon Ukraine and the other two non-Russian post-Soviet nuclear states (Belarus and Kazakhstan) to
ratify the START I treaty and the Lisbon Protocol, which demanded that the non-Russian post-Soviet states sign and abide by the rules of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty by renouncing all nuclear capabilities. Kravchuk always declared Ukraine’s intention to dismantle the weapons and accede to the Non-Nuclear Proliferation Treaty, but hoped to decelerate the process and maximize Ukrainian security interests.

The United States and other states slowly began to appreciate the validity of Ukrainian security concerns vis-à-vis the Russian Federation. Initial unabashed American support for the Russians in denuclearization negotiations gave way to a more balanced approach during the Clinton Administration. Political instability in Russia worried American and European policy makers; Ukraine’s geopolitical position could serve as an important buffer in the case of regime change or a more aggressive Russia. The Western community took Ukrainian concerns more seriously, and in this environment the Ukrainian denuclearization process was completed.

In 1994, Ukraine reached a trilateral denuclearization agreement with the United States and the Russian Federation. Ukraine agreed to dismantle and transfer all Ukrainian weapons, both strategic and tactical, to Russia. In return, Russia compensated Ukraine by providing fuel for its nuclear power stations. The United States provided Kyiv with economic aid and technical assistance during the dismantlement process, also providing somewhat vague guarantees of Ukrainian security and the inviolability of the nation’s borders. Ukraine signed the Non-Nuclear Proliferation Treaty in 1994. In 1996, the last Ukrainian weapons were transferred to Russia and dismantled.

The partial or complete resolution of the three primary problems of Soviet dissolution in Russia-Ukraine relations—the scope of the CIS, the fate of Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet, and
the Ukrainian denuclearization—during the mid-1990s signaled a more stable era in bilateral relations between the two countries. As the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and ideological legitimacy of the new Ukrainian state became assured, Kyiv’s perceptions of Moscow became less suspicious. There remained many problematic aspects of Russia-Ukraine relations—perhaps most saliently Ukraine’s dependence on subsidized Russian gas and other energy imports. Complete denuclearization in 1996 also relieved Ukraine’s diplomatic isolation from the West and the broader international community. The completion of Ukrainian denuclearization in 1996 and deteriorating relations between Russia and the West opened sufficient political space for Ukraine to emerge from isolation. During the mid-1990s, Ukrainian foreign policy entered into a period of constructive “balancing” between the West and the Russian Federation, seeking to maintain smooth relations with both blocs without moving too far towards either side.

To this day, many pro-Western Ukrainians express disappointment that the European Union never expressed much interest in Ukraine during the 1990s. A top-ranking diplomat at Ukraine’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs complained that the EU never treated Ukraine like “Poland, Romania, or the Czech Republic,” for example.$x^{ci}$ These states were given clear signals that it could join the EU after certain steps were taken. According to some Ukrainian policy-makers, this made the reform process much easier for many of the former Warsaw Pact countries of Eastern Europe. There is certainly a semblance of truth in Ukrainian complaints about their treatment by the EU. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine was never psychologically perceived as an integral part of Europe in the West. Whereas Poland and the Czech Republic were ‘re-entering’ Europe after decades of externally-imposed dictatorship,
Ukraine’s long tutelage under the tsars and Soviets never quite made the country “European.” Western pre-occupation with political developments in Russia, concern about the Ukrainian leadership’s democratic credentials, and Kyiv’s possession of nuclear weapons all further alienated Ukraine from the EU during the crucial years of the 1990s.

**Ukraine under Leonid Kuchma- The Rise of “Balancing” Foreign Policy**

Leonid Kuchma’s 1994 presidential election victory over Leonid Kravchuk corresponded with the start of the stabilization of Ukrainian foreign policy and the inchoate stages of “balancing” between East and West. President Kravchuk’s 1994 electoral defeat was in many ways reflective of economic mismanagement and crisis during the first few years of Ukrainian independence.

Ukraine’s citizens had held high hopes for the country’s economic potential following the Soviet collapse. At the time of the dissolution, Ukraine was among the most developed Soviet republics, in possession of a well-educated and highly skilled workforce. In 1989, independent economic observers forecast that Ukraine, alongside the Baltic states, had the most economic potential of the Soviet republics. Overwhelming popular support for Ukraine’s 1991 independence referendum was very much reflective of the economic optimism of Ukraine’s populace, who believed that Ukrainian independence from a crumbling and economically destitute Soviet Union could bring concrete material benefits.

Benefits were slow in coming, however. During the first years of Ukrainian independence, Ukraine’s economy continued to deteriorate. Ukraine experienced hyperinflation, a currency crisis, and a sharp decrease in the standard of living. Corruption and
economic opportunism flourished, as a powerful oligarchic class emerged from the confusion and opacity of half-hearted privatization. The poor economic situation of the early 1990s, as well as Ukraine’s diplomatic isolation and divisive Ukrainianization policies shattered President Kravchuk’s popularity, paving the way for Kuchma’s victory. Leonid Kuchma was widely considered the election’s ‘pro-Russian candidate,’ someone who could restore positive relations with Russia after several years of acrimonious tensions with the Russian Federation over divisive political issues. Many citizens of Ukraine from the eastern and southern regions of the country, whether of Russian or Ukrainian origin, expected Kuchma to scale back the process of Ukrainianization.

Under the Kravchuk Administration, Ukrainianization had played a vital role in the efforts of nation-building and in ‘nationalizing the state’—entrenching the newly independent state with a sense of national mission and ideology. Unsurprisingly, many Russophone Ukrainians resisted Ukrainization efforts, resenting state efforts to impose the Ukrainian language on their schools and workplaces. Russophone citizens of Ukraine, many of whom only had a cursory knowledge of the Ukrainian language, felt that their customs and self-identity had come under attack by the new Ukrainian state. Residents of these ‘Russified’ areas of Ukraine still maintained strong Soviet-era identity and nostalgic political loyalty to the Soviet Union. The Russophone east and south exhibited greater propensity towards socialism, Soviet and Russian identity, and authoritarianism. These ‘Russified’ regions remained largely skeptical of Ukrainian nationalism, which was seen as a reactionary product of Western Ukraine, foreign to the eastern regions of the country. Russophone regions of the country, on the whole, remained ideologically predisposed towards the Russian Federation, remaining more distrustful than
western regions of Western institutions such as the European Union and NATO. The election returns largely mimicked the cultural and political divisions already apparent in Ukraine; the regions of Ukraine west of Kyiv and the Dnipro River voted overwhelmingly for Leonid Kravchuk, while the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine supported Leonid Kuchma in the second round of the 1994 presidential election.

Despite widespread perceptions of President Kuchma’s Russian sympathies, domestic and foreign policy prerogatives under his administration did not represent a paradigm shift from the policies of his predecessor. Commonly-held beliefs of Kuchma as ‘pro-Russian’ were patently false, the result of Kravchuk campaign tactic that sought to galvanize the Ukrainian-speaking population and stoke unfounded fears of Ukraine’s re-absorption into Russia.\textsuperscript{xcii} In fact, Kuchma made a concerted effort to master the Ukrainian language before the 1994 election campaign, trying to placate unfounded fears among the nationalist and Ukrainian-speaking population.\textsuperscript{xciii} Kuchma did support instituting the Russian-language as a second official language in order to appeal to the Russian-speaking population, but eventually dismissed this objective upon election to the presidency.

Regardless of the President’s cultural or linguistic affinities, Leonid Kuchma hardly wanted to become a subordinate to Moscow. Most Ukrainian politicians of all political stripes had learned to cherish their independent role on the world stage. Most citizens of Ukraine would probably not countenance a subordination of Ukrainian interests to Moscow. Nation and state-building efforts continued under President Kuchma—the Ukrainian language remained the sole state language, Kyiv continued to emphasize its sovereignty over the Crimean peninsula, and President Kuchma continued to forge close relations with Western states and
institutions during his first term. As the first stage of state-building came to a close during the mid-1990s, President Kuchma emphasized that the next stage of state-building necessitated political and economic reforms, rather than the previous primacy of security prerogatives and nationality policy, that would strengthen the Ukrainian state and nation.

President Kuchma’s domestic and foreign policy priorities downplayed the divisive Ukrainian cultural policies that had existed during the first years of an independent state during the Kravchuk-era. Relative to the Kravchuk Administration, the government was more receptive to socio-cultural tensions permeating post-independence Ukraine, particularly in the ‘Russified’ regions of the country. Although the Administration ostensibly promoted the Ukrainian language and national identity, the new President was less keen to exacerbate the nation’s political situation or more overtly support the nationalist ideals that dominate the western areas of the nation.\textsuperscript{xciv} A crisis of national identity under the Kuchma Administration remained a problem throughout his presidency, with only minute progress in solidifying national pride and patriotism across the entire country.

On aggregate, the people of Ukraine identify with the state and as citizens of Ukraine, and approximately 65 percent of the population identifying themselves as Ukrainian citizens in 2005. However, despite relatively normal levels of civic identity towards the Ukrainian state, the Ukrainian population remained skeptical about national patriotism and ethnic pride. Among the citizens of fourteen post-communist states polled about the intensity of national pride, Ukraine ranked a disappointing thirteenth, as only 61 percent of Ukrainians reported even minimal feelings of national pride. Less than 75 percent of the Ukrainian population even
favored Ukraine’s independence from the Russian Federation. However, Ukraine lagged behind Belarus in national pride, a state with notoriously low-levels of national identification.\textsuperscript{xcv}

The Kuchma Administration’s lack of success surrounding this issue reflects both the ideological motivations of the regime and other, more elusive variables. President Kuchma’s ideological disposition towards Russian cultural issues doubtlessly affected his administration’s policies towards the Ukrainian ethno-national issues relative to that of his predecessor. Kuchma’s desire to secure political and economic reform, certainly important aspects of state-building, trumped divisive linguistic and cultural policies aimed at enhancing civic and ethno-national identity. Whereas President Kravchuk needed to immediately solidify civic nationalism and loyalty to the state, this objective was not quite as exigent several years into independence. Regardless, there was progress in national identity and pride during the ten years of the Kuchma presidency. The promulgation of the post-independence constitution solidified identity, and further Ukrainianization of the school system were important national achievements during the era. By 2005, 75 percent of Ukraine’s schools were Ukrainian-language schools, and support for the country’s independence increased by 10 percent.\textsuperscript{xcvi}

Ukrainian foreign and domestic policy under Kuchma largely reflected a change in tone and realpolitik circumstance, rather than a fundamental pro-Russia shift. Kyiv-Moscow relations certainly improved during President Kuchma’s first term in office; however, this shift was reflective of the resolution of the three outstanding problems of Soviet dissolution rather than ideological change in Kyiv. The reconciliation process that occurred between Moscow and Kyiv actually started under President Kravchuk; Russia-Ukraine negotiations over the fate of the CIS, denuclearization agreements, Crimean autonomy, and the Black Sea Fleet originated under his
administration. President Kuchma continued these negotiations, culminating in Ukraine’s complete nuclear disarmament in 1996 and the Black Sea Fleet agreement in 1997.

The temporary resolution of these daunting political issues, begun under Kravchuk and continued during Kuchma’s first term, greatly improved Kyiv’s relations with Moscow. By the mid-1990s, Ukraine’s immediate security and sovereignty concerns, despite many outstanding issues, were largely resolved as the chaotic initial stages of state-building entering a more stable period. President Kuchma’s more conciliatory and pragmatic rhetoric, especially in comparison to Kravchuk, towards Moscow and Russian cultural issues placated some of the fears of Ukraine’s significant pro-Russian population, but it was not a significant factor in stabilizing Russia-Ukraine relations. Moscow and Kyiv continued to butt heads over several contentious topics, including the role and scope of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the role of the Russian language in Ukraine, Ukraine-NATO relations and NATO expansion, and Ukraine’s relations with other post-Soviet countries. Despite the stabilization of bilateral relations, Russia’s political power and relative strength precluded closer Kyiv-Moscow relations during Kuchma’s first term. President Kuchma’s desire to balance Moscow’s regional strength pressed the Ukrainian administration to establish closer relations with the West and other post-Soviet states resisting overbearing Russian influence in the former Soviet space.

Kuchma’s specific foreign policy accomplishments in Russia-Ukraine relations largely followed the trajectory set by his predecessor. President Kuchma emphasized that improved ties with Moscow would parallel constructive relations with the West and the international community as a whole. As a candidate and president, Leonid Kuchma argued against economic integration with Russia and the CIS via a customs union or a monetary union.
Under the Kuchma Administration, closer economic cooperation with Russia and post-Soviet states never served as the means for integration, but instead was utilized to promote neighborly relations and reap economic benefits. Russian policy-makers, many of whom had too readily believed the campaign accusations of Kuchma’s pro-Russian sympathies, were sorely disappointed when President Kuchma adamantly resisted political, economic, and security integration with the CIS. Kuchma was no Lukashenko, the integrationist and somewhat eccentric president of Belarus. Unlike Minsk, Kyiv would not sacrifice its sovereignty, security, and economic independence to revive a pan-East Slavic regime in the place of the Soviet Union. Even today, the example of Belarus serves as a poignant reminder to Ukrainian policy-makers across the political spectrum of hazards inherent in Eurasian political and economic integration. Belarus’ sacrifices of sovereignty and economic independence have not brought the political and economic favors that Minsk expected; Belarusian expectations of a single currency zone, growth through economic integration, and the benefits of collective security never quite panned out. Instead, Belarus remains an authoritarian backwater, thoroughly isolated from Europe and largely unappreciated by the Kremlin. Oleksandr Sushko, the Research Director at Kyiv’s Institute for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation, explained that the “case of Belarus [is] a good example of the costs of integration” with Russia. Most pro-Russian Ukrainian politicians are loath to follow the example of Belarus’ President Lukashenko and lose Ukrainian sovereignty.

President Kuchma’s policies towards CIS diplomatic structures proved slightly more pragmatic than Kravchuk’s, given the stabilization of Russia-Ukraine relations during his first term in office. Kuchma was not necessarily opposed to upgrading Ukraine’s status in the organization from associate membership to full membership in the CIS Economic Union, with
the understanding that Ukraine would never accede to political or military integration. Kuchma’s outlines for closer economic cooperation within the CIS remained vague, but it was clear that Kyiv wouldn’t surrender its economic independence or European aspirations by joining a full-fledged customs union. Kuchma framed cooperation with the CIS as an economic necessity; Ukraine’s economic vitality depended on re-establishing smooth economic relations with the CIS. Kuchma thought that Ukrainian support for the CIS Inter-State Economic Committee could placate Moscow’s calls to join a CIS customs union, an unacceptable outcome because of Ukraine’s state objective of economic and political integration with the European Union, an impossibility if Ukraine integrated with the CIS.

During the Kuchma Administration, Ukraine still rejected security collectivization and political integration with the CIS but looked more favorably upon amiable cooperation and conflict management within the body. Kyiv still rejected the Tashkent Collective Security Agreement, which established the Collective Security Treaty Organization—a military alliance among several post-Soviet states within the CIS. Ukraine would not join any military alliance with Russia, but this did not preclude Kyiv’s limited security cooperation with Russia and the CIS.

Ukraine indications that it was willing to improve its relations and cooperation within the CIS eased some of the Kremlin’s political pressure for integration, and Russia instead concentrated on improving bilateral relations through cooperation and diplomatic goodwill. In 1995, the Russian Defense Minister, Pavel Grachev, admitted that “bilateral relations have, of course, deteriorated to a considerable degree” and that newfound cooperation had the potential to drastically improve bilateral relations. Russia and Ukraine agreed upon various
degrees of military cooperation and assistance, such as goodwill bilateral military ties, technical support, and the possibility of joint military exercises in the future.

In a controversial move among right-leaning and national political elements, Ukraine also joined the CIS Joint Air Defense Agreement in 1995, which obliged members to cooperate with their air defense systems. The 1997 Black Sea Fleet agreement continued to normalize security relations between Ukraine and Russia. Despite significant stabilization, contentious issues remained in Russia-Ukraine bilateral relations—the war in Yugoslavia, NATO expansion into former Warsaw Pact countries, Eurasian integration, and Ukraine’s dependence on Russian energy supplies.

The first term of President Kuchma’s administration not only witnessed the stabilization of Russia-Ukraine bilateral relations, but also the emergence of Ukraine from diplomatic isolation and closer bilateral and multilateral relations with the West. Stabilized Russia-Ukraine relations and Kyiv’s largely positive relations with the West during Kuchma’s first term allowed the first emergence of foreign policy “balancing.” The end of Ukrainian denuclearization, deteriorating Western-Russian relations during the mid and late-1990s, and newfound appreciation in the United States and elsewhere for Ukrainian security concerns also resulted in strengthened Ukrainian relations with Western capitals and multilateral institutions.

During the early years of Ukrainian independence under President Kravchuk, the West was largely distrustful of Ukraine and the seemingly unreformed ex-communist political elite that ruled the country. Kyiv’s apparent intransigence over denuclearization had unfairly earned Ukraine the reputation of a near-pariah state in Washington and European capitals. The West had actually never supported Ukrainian independence, fearing that Ukraine’s secession could
unleash chaotic revolutionary disintegration in the Soviet Union that could jeopardize regional security and nuclear containment. Instead, the West initially preferred to negotiate with a single, integrated Soviet or post-communist state. Even after the first years of Ukrainian independence, Western attention remained fixated on maintaining smooth relations with the Kremlin. Ukraine’s geopolitical importance remained underappreciated, and the West was unwilling to jeopardize friendly relations with Russia.

Ukraine’s denuclearization, the stabilization of Russia-Ukraine relations, and emerging political problems in Russia were instrumental in fostering a political environment that made the rapprochement between Ukraine and the West possible. Kuchma’s Ukraine prioritized relations with the West, emphasizing the necessity of close relations with NATO, the EU, international organizations, and bilateral relations. Kuchma continued Ukraine’s policy of seeking membership in the Council of Europe, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the World Trade Organization, and the European Union (EU). In 1995 Ukraine succeeded in joining the Council of Europe. As will be explained later, Kyiv never achieved a free trade agreement with the EU, and Ukraine failed to join the World Trade Organization during Kuchma’s presidency.

In addition, Kuchma’s Ukraine cooperated with four other post-Soviet states—Georgia, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova—to form an eponymous regional organization called GUUAM in 1999. GUUAM sought to establish the newly independent states’ policy independence from the Russian Federation. These states agreed to cooperate with one another in the spheres of foreign policy, energy security, and economic cooperation. In addition, all five states sought closer relations with the EU, NATO, and international institutions. GUUAM served
as an important method for moving away from the Russian-CIS orbit, establishing greater foreign policy independence. The organization became GUAM after Uzbekistan withdrew in 2005.

Kyiv’s relations with NATO also developed during the first term of Kuchma’s presidency. Unlike his predecessor, Kuchma did not originally argue for Ukraine’s eventual membership in the Western military alliance. Instead, Kuchma tried to tread a more pragmatic course that sought cooperative relations with NATO without pretensions of eventual inclusion. Large segments of the Ukrainian population still remained suspicious of NATO, and Kuchma’s foreign policy balancing sought to avoid an acrimonious confrontation with Russia over NATO membership and expansion.

Under President Kuchma, Kyiv was more skeptical about NATO’s expansion into former Warsaw Pact nations during the 1990s, correctly predicting that it would antagonize Western relations with Russia and the CIS. Despite Ukrainian hesitations about NATO expansion and membership, Kyiv’s relations with the alliance progressed favorably during the latter half of the 1990s, and the Kuchma Administration became more supportive of NATO expansion and even the possibility of future membership. The Ukrainian foreign policy establishment increasingly perceived NATO expansion as an important opportunity, one which could force Moscow’s hand in its posture towards Ukraine. Expansion could serve as a counterweight to Russian regional clout, and the fear of future Ukrainian membership might encourage Russian conciliations towards Kyiv. Russia’s 1993 constitutional crisis, Russian political instability, and the imbroglio in Chechnya also helped shift NATO’s perceptions towards Ukraine—the organization
developed close relations with Ukraine as a hedge against the uncertainties of Russian instability.

The Kuchma Administration developed closer relations with both NATO and Washington. Ukraine became the first CIS state to join NATO’s Partnership for Peace program. The program provided for Ukraine’s “special relationship” with NATO, and according to NATO Secretary General Willy Claes, Ukraine would serve a “specific role in developing a new European security architecture.” The Kuchma Administration hoped that Ukraine’s special relationship with NATO would enhance the technical effectiveness of the armed forces, augment the country’s sovereignty and international visibility, provide Ukraine with greater security flexibility towards Russia, and could serve as an acceptable alternative to Ukrainian NATO membership.

Joint military cooperation, peacekeeping, technical assistance, and diplomatic benefits were appreciated by Ukrainian policy-makers. Kyiv also demonstrated clear support for Russia's inclusion in the program, hoping that both states’ mutual participation in the body could help mitigate potential territorial disputes. Washington’s relationship with Ukraine, in particular, improved dramatically after Ukrainian denuclearization and problematic political developments in Moscow. Washington’s greater appreciation of Ukraine’s geopolitical importance was reflected in American foreign aid to Ukraine. Whereas overall American aid to former Soviet states declined during the 1990s, US aid to Ukraine increased from 17.8 percent of aid to the post-Soviet Union in 1995 to 35 percent in 1996. The amount of US aid to Ukraine—$225 million—ranked Ukraine behind only Israel and Egypt in total US assistance. Former US Ambassador to Ukraine (1993-1998), speaking in Kyiv at a panel hosted by Ukrainian think tank
Institute of World Politics, explained that “over the twenty years of Ukraine’s existence as an independent country, US has viewed Ukraine as central to a peaceful Europe.” Although this statement glosses over American indifference towards Ukraine in the early 1990s, the United States has certainly emerged as a vital partner for Kyiv since the late 1990s.

Ukrainians as a whole remained unconcerned about Ukraine’s foreign policy priorities. Contrary to some literature, which emphasizes Ukraine’s cultural divisions between ‘Russified’ eastern Ukraine and nationalist western Ukraine, foreign policy has never registered as an exigent political issue for Ukrainian voters. As with citizens in many nations, Ukrainians remained most concerned about domestic policy—the post-Soviet economic crisis, rampant corruption, inflation, a convoluted tax system, pensions, criminal activity, and education. Although the cultural schism between the eastern and western regions of the country is an important political reality, one with salient affects in some domestic policy, the effect of this division on foreign policy priorities is questionable. The people of Ukraine, whether Ukrainian-speaking or Russian-speaking, prioritized bread and butter issues over ethnic-based security policy.

Most Ukrainian citizens, regardless of cultural affinity, were not enthusiastic about CIS security integration. The bloody conflagration in Chechnya and the somber memory of the Afghanistan fiasco made many Ukrainians deeply wary of military alliance with Russia that might drag the nation’s youth into a new endless quagmire. Political unrest and organized crime in Russia similarly discouraged even many Russian-speakers from advocacy of closer integration with the Russian Federation. During my own experiences in Kyiv in the summer of 2012, I befriended a Crimean-born university student living in Kyiv. She had clear cultural
affinities towards Russia, and had only limited mastering of the Ukrainian-language despite partial Ukrainian heritage. She complained about the difficulties facing her family transitioning to Ukrainian in the workplace and in school. Despite this, she remained skeptical about economic or political integration with Russia, and expressed distrust towards the Russian political system and economic situation. Her positions likely reflect that of many Ukrainian citizens, even in Russian-speaking regions of the country.

**Political and Economic Reform in the Kuchma Era**

The Kuchma Administration’s priorities upon coming to office included far-reaching economic and political reforms. Given the depth of the economic crisis under President Kravchuk, the Ukrainian economy was in need of serious reform. Unlike Russia, Ukraine hadn’t attempted serious privatization efforts during the early 1990s. In the new geopolitical environment, the more immediate needs of state-building—strengthening the military and institutionalizing the capacities of the Ukrainian state—gave way to exigent economic reforms. By the mid-1990s, the weakness of the Ukrainian economy, rather than regional separatism or a weak military, was the primary threat to the state. This was not lost on incoming President Kuchma, who made economic reform a top priority of the new administration. However, the president argued that political reforms were a necessary prerequisite for wide-reaching economic reforms and privatization. Ukraine was still governed by its Soviet-era constitution, in which all power was legally enshrined in the parliament, the soviets of the communist era.

Given the preponderance of left-wing parties and opposition to privatization and other necessary political reforms in the Rada, Kuchma adopted President Yeltsin’s strategy in Russia.
Ironically, Kuchma and his supporters argued for a strengthened, hyper-powerful presidency in order to solidify economic reforms and entrench democracy.

Upon obtaining office, President Kuchma tacked the issue of political and constitutional reforms very quickly. Kuchma’s quest to strengthen the office of the president relative to that of parliament was not unique to his administration; Kravchuk had vocally propounded the need for a stronger Ukrainian presidency in the face of parliamentary obstructionism. Two draft constitutions were submitted to parliament during Kravchuk’s tenure, but left-wing opposition to both proposals prevented their passage. The main areas of contention for the left-wing opponents to the draft constitutions included the structure of parliament (unicameral or bicameral) and the strength of the presidency. The opposition feared that a bicameral system would weaken the power and unity of the parliament relative to the president and threaten the territorial and political integrity of the state.\(^\text{cx}\)

Once in office, President Kuchma vigorously pursued political reform as a means to the end of economic reform. As early as December 1994, Kuchma drafted a new “Law on Power” designed to grant the presidency greater power. Opposition to the “Law on Power” prevented its implementation, because the strengthening of the presidency required the parliament’s two-thirds approval to pass the necessary constitutional amendments to the Soviet-era constitution. The Ukrainian people largely supported the President in his endeavor to introduce reform to the political system and overcome parliamentary obstructionism; Kuchma threatened a referendum to overcome parliament’s opposition.\(^\text{cxi}\) Kuchma’s threat effectively pressed parliament’s hand, given the unpopularity of the Rada, and parliament instead agreed to a “Constitutional Agreement” in lieu of the adoption of a post-Soviet Ukrainian constitution. The
Constitutional Agreement served as a rough framework for the eventual 1996 Ukrainian constitution, strengthening Kuchma’s political capital by managing a consensus on a unitary (rather than federal) political system with checks and balances between the presidency and parliament.\textsuperscript{cxii}

After the June 1995 Constitutional Agreement, Ukraine progressed towards the adoption of a post-Soviet constitution. The same disagreements that had plagued the draft constitutions of the Kravchuk-era impeded the quick adoption of a much-needed modern constitution. In March 1996, a new draft constitution was submitted to the Rada by a Constitutional Assembly. The structure of the parliament remained the biggest topic of contention. President Kuchma lobbied for a bicameral parliament, as a divided legislature would weaken the institution. Parliamentary opposition finally forced a concession, and Kuchma agreed to a unicameral body. The 1996 draft constitution more clearly divided power between the three branches of government.\textsuperscript{cxiii}

The post-Soviet Ukrainian constitution was finally adopted by parliament on June 28, 1996. The constitution established clear boundaries between the post of president and legislative authority in the parliament. The constitution stipulated that both the president and members of parliament are independently elected to fixed terms. Kuchma’s position of power during the constitutional process ensured that strong presidential powers were granted to the presidency. According to the 1996 constitution, the President has the power to “issue decrees, veto laws passed by parliament, introduce draft laws that would have priority status for parliamentary consideration,” to “nominate and dismiss the prime minister, appoint or dismiss members of cabinet and other executive agencies, and make appointments or nominations in
the judicial branch, diplomatic corps, central bank, and a number of other government agencies.⁷⁴

Although the adoption of a modern Ukrainian constitution was surely necessary and proved instrumental in political institutionalization and the passage of a host of economic reforms, the legacy of the strengthened presidency that emerged from the process had a corrosive effect on the state of Ukrainian democracy and political accountability.

Political reform paralleled economic reform under the Kuchma regime. According to Kuchma, Ukraine had gained independence but it “achieved only the attributes of a sovereign state” and under Kravchuk “it was unable to fill it with real content.” Political and economic reform was to serve as the backbone of a more developed stage of state-building, one which sought to enhance state capacities and modernize the Ukrainian economy. Kuchma saw privatization as a necessary component for new economic policy, which would turn Ukraine away from the crumbling Soviet command economy and towards a modern market economy. “Private ownership is the basis for the radical rebirth of our economy,” President Kuchma argued.⁷⁵

Kuchma’s economic goals included widespread privatization, the development of agriculture, reforms to the tax system, and financial reforms.⁷⁶ President Kuchma needed to implement these wide-ranging reforms, even while confronting significant political pressure and popular opinion that desired the retention of social programs and assistance to protect Ukrainians most vulnerable during economic transition. This remained extremely challenging given the opposition to the dismantlement of comprehensive benefits.⁷⁷
President Kuchma’s reform agenda sought to stabilize the economy and secure the international financial support of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The IMF demanded budgetary reforms in return for credits from the IMF Stabilization Fund. Kuchma’s economic reform program, entitled “Along the Road of Radical Economic Reform,” sought to appease the international financial community and modernize the Ukrainian economy. Despite vocal opposition to some of these stipulations, the Kuchma Administration supported IMF proscriptions, passing a 1995 budget with large subsidy cuts and reductions in spending.\textsuperscript{cvi}iii

Despite the initial promise of Kuchma’s reform platform and market liberalization, economic and political problems continued to plague the country. Economic output continued to drop precipitously, and during Kuchma’s first term, from 1994 to 1999, “Ukraine’s real GDP declined by a cumulative 88.4 percent.” Most Ukrainians’ living standards continued to fall throughout during the period, despite asset privatization that enriched a handful of Ukrainians, enhancing and largely creating an oligarchic business class that mirrored the emergence of Russia’s economic elites earlier in the decade.\textsuperscript{cvi}x Popular discontent with the economy and parliamentary opposition discouraged the Kuchma Administration from continuing the ‘radical reform’ as supported by the IMF. The President moderated the reform agenda, slowing the pace of privatization and other vital reforms. Reneging on the quick transition to a market economy that Kuchma propounded earlier, by late 1995 the president argued that “Ukraine could not ‘blindly copy the West’s economic model.’”\textsuperscript{cvx}xii Ukraine instead adopted economic protectionism, continued social spending, and state involvement in the economy.

As Kuchma’s time in office progressed—and despite some notable successes—economic problems continued to plague the country. Ukraine continued to experience inflation, falling
living standards, and other problems. The tax system remained complicated and largely unreformed, as Kuchma’s tax reform proposals in 1997 failed, with high levels of tax evasion and a large underground economy. Excessive government regulation of Ukrainian businesses similarly impeded economic development, as tedious regulations increased uncertainty and drove economic activity underground. Regulatory compliance alone cost the Ukrainian economy about three percent of GDP annually.\textsuperscript{cxxi} By some estimates, the underground economy was as large as 50 percent of GDP.\textsuperscript{cxxii}

The strong hand of the state in private business also fostered corruption and an uncomfortable business climate. During my discussions with the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine, Policy Manager Yaroslav Voitko complained of the persistence of a Soviet mentality towards business in the country. A “very cumbersome” tax system impedes private sector growth and drives the economy into the shadows. The judiciary remains highly corrupt and labyrinth. In this environment, the protection of private property remains poor, scaring away Ukrainian and foreign investors alike. The agricultural sector and land remained insufficiently privatized and de-collectivized.\textsuperscript{cxxiii} Russia’s sovereign debt default and resultant currency crisis in 1998 also affected the Ukrainian economy, triggering a 60 percent devaluation of Ukraine’s new currency, the hyrvnia.\textsuperscript{cxxiv}

Despite the economic problems that continued to plague Ukraine, some positive developments emerged from the Kuchma era. The Ukrainian currency was eventually stabilized, ending the rampant inflation that had troubled the country. Ukraine successfully introduced a new currency, the hyrvnia, in 1996. Prime Minister, and future president, Viktor Yushchenko’s government steered a new course for economic reform upon his appointment as Prime
Minister at the end of 1999. His economic program, titled “1,000 Days of Reform in Ukraine” was unprecedented in its commitment to market economic reforms. Ukraine started to experience encouraging economic growth under the Yushchenko government. Opposition to his reforms from the left-wing opposition and some self-interested business elites toppled his government in 2001.\textsuperscript{cxxxv}

\textbf{Ukrainian Democratization and Civil Society Before the Orange Revolution}

The August Coup in 1991 and Ukraine’s subsequent declaration of independence gave birth to a new nation-state nearly overnight. The challenges confronting Ukrainian leaders in the realm of state-building and strengthening the political and economic institutional capacities of the nascent state has already been discussed. There remain two interconnected crucial elements of the Ukrainian socio-political system with important influence in Ukraine’s foreign policy outlook yet to be discussed—the transparency and accountability of Ukrainian governance and the state of the country’s civil society organizations.

Independent Ukraine inherited a Soviet political system and political culture; hardly an auspicious beginning for an accountable democratic system or vibrant civil society organizations independent from government. Leonid Kravchuk and other former communist apparatchiks continued to run the country even after independence. Every Ukrainian president to the present-day was once a member of the Communist Party during the Soviet Union. Despite the declared national and political transformation of ex-communist leaders like Leonid Kravchuk and his inner circle, Ukraine’s leadership lacked prior experience or appreciation of transparent
democratic politics or a free market economic system. Civil society organizations existed after the country’s independence but remained alarmingly ineffectual for well over a decade.

Ukraine’s ex-communist political culture and impotent private organizations resulted in deleterious consequences for accountability in Ukraine’s political decision-making processes. On the one hand, the state needed skilled and experienced administrators to manage the country and tackle the myriad of concerns facing Ukraine. On the other hand, these bureaucrats, appointed officials, and elected politicians retained the political practices that prevailed under the Soviet government. Extremely high levels of corruption continued to plague the political system and hinder the fledging private sector, undermining citizens’ trust in their government and elected officials. Hard-handed political tactics, abuse of power, and bureaucratic inefficiency were ubiquitous throughout the various government ministries and agencies. Ihor Shevliakov, a Senior Analyst at one of the largest think tanks in Ukraine, the International Center for Policy Studies (ICPS), explained in an interview that despite Ukraine’s political transition “the bureaucracy didn’t go through the democratic transformation” and Soviet political culture is still ubiquitous throughout government agencies. The President of ICPS, Vira Nanivska, further noted that “none of us had worked inside a democratic government” and had any experience with democratic accountability. Even so, the foreign policy is among the most professional areas of policy-making. In the absence of comprehensive economic reform through privatization, economic resources remained intimately tied to the government, impeding the development of economic independence from the coercive power of the state. Political parties remained weak, under institutionalized,
distrusted by the population, and highly personalized during the presidencies of Kravchuk and Kuchma.

During the Kravchuk presidency, the exigency of state and nation-building co-opted the democratization of the Ukrainian political system. President Kravchuk and his allies in government emphasized the primacy of the state-building initiatives mentioned previously—constructing the military, establishing Ukrainian sovereignty in the post-Soviet space, security initiatives, and formalizing a more concrete Ukrainian identity and civic loyalty.\textsuperscript{CXXIX} The alliance between the ex-communist ‘party of power’ and nationally-conscious democratic forces, such as Rukh, facilitated the government’s state and nation-building efforts without necessitating comprehensive political reform. Significant segments of Ukraine’s democratic political forces remained loyal to President Kravchuk during the period of nascent state-building as “a substantial portion of the movement felt that it was wrong to oppose President Kravchuk on the grounds of democratic reform because this might weaken the new state’s independence or its nation-building project.”\textsuperscript{CXXX} The democrats supported the strengthening of the presidency relative to the parliament, fearing the strength of the Communist opposition and other anti-nationalist and pro-Russian political groupings.

Paradoxically, the democrats’ support of a strong presidency during the Kravchuk years impeded the development of ‘checks and balances’ between the branches of government, undermining healthy democratization and encouraging even greater authoritarianism during the Kuchma Administration. Prior to the introduction of the country’s post-Soviet constitution in 1996, Ukraine’s political structure remained largely informal and uncertain, without clear divisions of power between the parliament, the government ministries, and the president.\textsuperscript{CXXXI}
The Kravchuk Administration gradually accumulated greater executive power in the informal political system that emerged from Ukraine’s unexpected independence, mostly through political arm-twisting and heavy-handed tactics. Political parties remained impotent, unable to effectively serve as instruments of particular political agendas or public discourse. Parties were, and still are today, highly fluid, with high rates of party switching and low levels of party discipline. The one exception to the ubiquity of party weakness was the Communist Party, which maintained a clear platform and strong electoral base in eastern Ukraine.\footnote{cxxxii}

Despite the Communist exception, Ukraine lacked strong, institutionalized political parties coalesced around particular sectoral or regional interests and most political parties remained highly personalized. Local oligarchs or Soviet enterprise managers, rather than political parties, dominated Ukraine’s parliament. Many members of parliament retained the decidedly undemocratic and nepotistic political behaviors of the Soviet period. The parliament was perceived extremely negatively by a majority of the population, and parliament’s approval rating was as low as 1.8 percent in 1994. Public perceptions of corruption in parliament was especially noticeable, and Ukrainians complained of deputies who “were solely concerned with making a living for themselves” and “stole cars from the people and shamelessly took over apartments as if extra living quarters had appeared out of nowhere.”\footnote{cxxxiii} The economic crisis exacerbated citizens’ faith in the political system, and many Ukrainians became disaffected from politics.

Although there are many potential factors that can account for Ukraine’s disappointing political transformation in the decade after independence, M. Steven Fish’s analysis of Russia’s failed transition in his book Democracy Derailed in Russia: The Failure of Open Politics offers
many comparable insights into domestic Ukrainian politics during the same time period. Fish blames Russia’s democratic failing on three primary variables—natural resource abundance, insufficient economic liberalization, and a weak legislature. Two of these variables were also present in Ukraine during the same time period—insufficient economic liberalization and a weak legislature. Ukraine’s economic liberalization occurred later, and was even more impotent, than Russia’s liberalization drive under President Yeltsin.

Ukraine inherited a weak legislature after the ratification of the 1996 constitution, which entrusted significant powers to the president at the expense of the parliament. It is interesting to note the similarities between the 1993 Russian constitution and the 1996 Ukrainian constitution. Both documents established strong presidential systems designed to undermine a rebellious parliament. Similarly, political pluralism and democratic transparency diminished after the respective ratifications of the new constitutions.

Without sufficient economic pluralism in Ukraine, economic resources remained tied to the state. Ukrainian civil society and the emergence of consolidated political parties remained constrained as long as the state controlled, either directly or indirectly, much of Ukraine’s economy. A truly independent civil society requires economic resources that are independent of state coercion, and needs citizens with the disposable income necessary to voluntarily participate in civic organizations. There is substantial evidence of a direct correlation between economic liberalization and political openness. The problems stemming from Ukraine’s incomplete economic liberalization are patently obvious, even in the present day. A small number of Ukrainians intimately connected to the state—the oligarchs—possess a disproportionate amount of the country’s economic resources. In this environment, many
important aspects of Ukraine’s nominally independent private civic sector are indebted to the oligarchs and the state. Prior to the Orange Revolution, and even today, Ukraine’s press, civic organizations, and television stations are controlled by the oligarchs and influenced by state prerogatives. During my discussions with journalists and editors at a major Ukrainian newspaper, they complained about oligarchic control of most major press organs since independence. The oligarchs often depend on the state for their livelihoods or to stay out of prison. Journalists at many media outlets are forced to toe an editorial line that glosses over government incompetence or misdeeds.

The strong presidential system that emerged from the 1996 Ukrainian similarly impeded the country’s democratic development. Fish provides ample evidence of a correlation among post-communist states between strong legislatures and democratic institutions. Even pro-democratic presidents in strong presidential systems may inadvertently stifle political pluralism and democracy, and President Kuchma was far from a committed democrat. Political parties depend upon a strong legislature to exercise their influence. Without an influential legislature, political parties fail to adequately develop. Political parties are vital in creating political pluralism and checking the abuse of power. An unchecked, strong presidency can result in a plethora of political ills—encouraging corruption, discouraging potentially skilled public servants from seeking political office, and making the system vulnerable to autocratic abuse. A state with a strong presidency is far more likely to be corrupt and unaccountable, as a dearth of important elected offices encourages opportunistic behavior within the bureaucracy.

A comprehensive definition of civil society, an oftentimes opaque catch-all, is necessary before continuing. This thesis will use Nadia Diuk’s definition of civil society as found in her
chapter in Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine’s Democratic Breakthrough. According to her definition, civil society is thus “the part of a polity that is the mechanism comprising civic groups, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), associations, trade unions, political parties, movements, and other freely associating collectives of citizens that interact with institutions of the state for the greater good of the citizen and the state.”

Civil society organizations in Ukraine struggled to influence politics during the years following the nation’s independence. Civil society remained without much political influence or mobilization capabilities from the time of the Kravchuk presidency until President Kuchma’s second term. That is not to say that Ukrainian civil society was necessarily weak; in fact, Ukraine possessed among the most vibrant civil societies of all the post-Soviet and post-communist European states. Ukraine’s civil society, which operated in the midst of post-Soviet semi-authoritarianism, established complex networks meant to inform citizens and spread information without the interference of the authorities. The Ukrainian civil society that operated during the Kravchuk and early Kuchma years was largely a product of the diverse protest movements of the late Soviet period. During the Kravchuk, and even the early Kuchma years, civil society’s political potential was constrained by the tacit alliance between the ex-communist ‘party of power’ and the nationally-conscious democrats. Ukrainian NGOs and other civil society organizations remained largely committed to the principles and ideals of the Ukrainian democrats—themselves a product of the late Soviet protest movements and western Ukrainian civic nationalism. It wasn’t until the further entrenchment of authoritarianism during the President Kuchma’s second term, and particularly the end of the apparatchik-democrat alliance in 2001, that civil society began to blossom. By 2002, civil society was clearly re-
emerging as the vital link between Ukrainian citizens, anti-Kuchma protest movements, and the democratic political opposition in the parliament.\textsuperscript{cxxxix}

News organizations, including television stations and newspapers, remained controlled by a small oligarchic class during the first decade of Ukraine’s independence. Shortcomings in the democratization of the media meant that the dissemination of information was largely controlled by a small number of businesspeople with ties to the regime. Although important exceptions existed, Ukrainian media sources were under significant state pressure and subject to self-censorship or intimidation. Ukraine’s complex taxation administration served as an important pressure point for the government against the media and other sectors of civil society. Authorities would intimidate the owners or editors of various media outlets, threatening to use the tax authorities to punish non-compliance.\textsuperscript{cxl}

The oligarchs also relied upon the state for important business deals and purchases; these media owners were unwilling to risk their economic livelihood for the sake of accountable journalism. Ukrainian media, like other civil society groups, truly began to emerge as an opposition to the regime during President Kuchma’s second term, a period of growing authoritarianism.

\textbf{Entrenched Authoritarianism and Ukrainian Foreign Policy During Kuchma}

President Kuchma’s later years in office, following the adoption of the 1996 constitution and his re-election in 1999, marked an abrupt shift in Ukrainian domestic policy and political accountability. The Ukrainian regime regressed from a highly flawed semi-democratic state to an increasingly authoritarian system. The democratic progression of the Ukrainian state
reached its zenith during the smooth transition from Kravchuk to Kuchma, before regressing sharply towards the end of President Kuchma’s first term. A worsening economic situation, public disaffection, and Kuchma’s withering approval rating encouraged the Kuchma Administration to use all of its political levers to stay in power. The 1996 constitution’s hyperpresidential system, as well as the state’s coercive power over economic resources was crucial in Kuchma’s authoritarian consolidation. Political regression during the latter period of the Kuchma era had important effects on Ukraine’s foreign policy strategy, undermining the administration’s “balancing” strategy between East and West. Thus, the onset of the Orange Revolution and resultant democratic institutionalization had important consequences for Ukraine’s foreign policy strategy.

Ukraine’s slide into authoritarianism became most evident at the beginning of the new decade, in 2000. The administration increasingly flexed its muscles to bully the political opposition, or restrict alternative sources of information that might challenge the regime. Kuchma’s problematic political reform agenda and insufficient economic liberalization fostered an environment in which the president controlled ample means to intimidate dissenting voices and civil society groups. Opposition figures increasingly complained of widespread corruption and oligarchic influence in the president’s inner circle. Although the Ukrainian government had always exercised some level of coercion over private organizations, the state-building project that culminated during Kuchma’s first term had successfully enhanced the coercive power of the state.

In April 2000, Kuchma tried to further consolidate his control over Ukrainian politics through a proposed four-part referendum designed to further strengthen the presidency at the
expense of the parliament. The referendum was passed by the electorate only after extensive vote-rigging and intimidation; however, the measures were never adopted because the reforms weren’t approved by the necessary two-thirds of the Rada.\textsuperscript{cxlii} The insidious trajectory of Ukrainian politics was made patently clear during the so-called Cassette Scandal. The scandal rocked the very foundation of Ukrainian politics, galvanizing civil society, and foreshadowing the transcendent events of the Orange Revolution five years later. Oleksandr Sushko credits the political activism of the early 2000s for making the Orange Revolution possible in 2004. Oleksiy Melnyk, the Co-director at Foreign Relations and International Security Programmes at Ukraine’s Razumkov Center claimed that the Orange Revolution in 2004 was “a significant stage, but it didn’t start in 2004.”\textsuperscript{cxliii} The anti-Kuchma protest movements of the early 2000s proved an important step in the development and assertiveness of Ukrainian civil society.

In November 2000, Socialist Party leader Oleksandr Moroz released more than a thousand hours of taped conversations between President Kuchma and his advisors.\textsuperscript{cxliv} The recordings gave the Ukrainian public a private view into the upper echelons of a highly corrupt state with shady ties to the Ukrainian oligarchs and an obsession with power and opportunism. The tapes revealed Kuchma to be crass, obsessive, and anti-Semitic, among other worrying traits for the leader of a large and strategically important nation.\textsuperscript{cxlv} Perhaps most alarmingly, the tapes uncovered President Kuchma’s complicity in the disappearance and murder of a prominent opposition journalist, Heorhiy Gongadze. Gongadze, a writer for \textit{Ukrayinska Pravda}, was a prominent critic of the regime and President Kuchma. The recordings showed that Kuchma had “demanded Gongadze’s abduction, discussed the criminal harassment of political opponents, engaged in high-level corruption, and revealed [Kuchma] at the center of a criminal
and corrupt system of rule. The tapes uncovered the illegal sale of more than $100 million of weaponry to Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, and Ukraine’s regressive domestic polity alienated Western goodwill. As will be explained further, the scandal not only dismantled Kuchma’s already faltering domestic legitimacy, but shattered his administration’s foreign policy “balancing” strategy.

The Cassette Scandal and resultant public outrage had a galvanizing effect on Ukraine’s somnolent, yet considerable civil society. The sheer shock of the revelations in the tapes, and the horrifying corruption of the regime spawned the grassroots “Ukraine Without Kuchma Movement.” Journalists and other civil society organizations were particularly troubled by the state’s role in Gongadze’s murder, and independent journalists increasingly criticized Kuchma and the Ukrainian government. According to my contacts in the Ukrainian press, the Gongadze murder initially shocked the country’s journalist community. However, after the incident, journalists increasingly defended their rights and criticized the government, especially when the welfare or reputations of other journalists were at stake. For the first time since the Ukrainian protest movements of the late 1980s, civil society groups were successful in organizing protests with tens of thousands of participants.

Despite the remarkable success of the Yushchenko government’s economic reforms at the beginning of the decade, in which Ukraine experienced rapid growth in real wages and living standards, the Ukrainian populace still retained a largely negative outlook on the state of the economy and the direction of the country. In 2002, 81 percent of Ukrainians polled responded that they believed their living standards were lower than before the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Just before the 2004 presidential elections, 77-85 percent of the country wanted
significant change from the status quo under Kuchma. Fortunately, bleak perceptions of citizens’ economic future didn’t inure Ukrainians towards Kuchma’s authoritarianism, but instead encouraged political apathy and distrust towards the regime.

Prime Minister Yushchenko’s economic reforms, even if they failed in placating a discouraged and anxious population, left an important legacy that proved crucial in the Orange Revolution. The “1,000 Days of Reform in Ukraine,” although largely unsuccessful in its anti-corruption measures, spawned a new class of “minigarchs” and a middle class endowed with disposable income. The interests of the emergent middle class and “minigarchs” favored further economic liberalization, political transparency, tax reform, property rights, and anti-corruption measures in order to safeguard their property and economic potential against a parasitic state and oligarchic interests.

These events in Ukraine support M. Steven Fish’s conclusions about the correlation between economic liberalization and political transparency in former communist countries; Yushchenko’s economic liberalization program was vital in strengthening civil society’s mobilization capacities. Despite the relative strength of the early 2000s anti-Kuchma grassroots protest movements, these protests didn’t coalesce into a substantial political opposition until Kuchma removed Prime Minister Yushchenko from his post in April 2001 because of Communist and oligarchic opposition to his liberalization policies. After Yushchenko’s forced exit, Ukraine’s nationally-conscious reformers were removed from government for the first time since independence. Viktor Yushchenko and other reformist politicians such as Yulia Tymoshenko found common cause against Kuchma and the oligarchs in conjunction with the
grassroots protest movements. It wasn’t until 2004 that the reformist political opposition was able to unite with a single opposition platform.\cii

The Cassette Scandal and Ukraine’s regression into authoritarianism undermined Kuchma Administration’s foreign policy strategy. For the first time since Ukraine’s independence, the Ukrainian domestic policy directly impeded the state’s foreign policy goals. Unfortunately, domestic disturbances have undermined Ukraine’s foreign policy strategy for much of the period since the scandal, until the present-day under President Yanukovych.

The international political fallout from the Cassette Scandal almost immediately undermined close relations between Western nations and Ukraine. The US-Ukraine bilateral relationship, which had conscientiously flourished during President Kuchma’s first term, was severely undermined by the tapes. For one, close relations with demonstrably corrupt and criminal regime was a liability for American policy makers. Notwithstanding Ukraine’s geopolitical importance as a counterweight to Russian influence in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, it was now difficult for the United States to continue to vocally support the regime and Ukraine’s European integration objectives. Ukraine’s flouting of international sanctions through the illegal sale of hi-tech defense systems to Iraq on the eve of the 2003 invasion particularly jeopardized American relations with Kyiv. American foreign policy shifted from overt support for the Ukrainian state to tactic encouragement of Ukrainian civil society and pro-democratic forces.

The scandal and resultant political crisis also damaged Kyiv’s bilateral and multilateral relations in Europe. Ukraine’s goals of political integration into Europe and the European Union, as well as Kyiv’s special relations with NATO, were suspended almost overnight. As long as the
Ukrainian government violated so-called European values—freedom of speech, political pluralism, and the rule of law among other democratic norms—the EU and other multilateral organizations would keep Ukraine on the fringe of Europe. The long-term policy goal of EU membership seemed all but destroyed during the early 2000s political crisis.

Kyiv’s isolation from the Western states and institutions placed the Kuchma administration in a precarious and isolated security position. Without the counterweights of Western goodwill and security structures, Kuchma’s foreign policy “balancing” tilted dangerously close to the Russian orbit. Russia—the state that posed the greatest threat to Kyiv’s security and the domestic economic interests of the Ukrainian business class—now suddenly possessed a significant amount of leverage in the country. Unlike the democratic West, Russia cared little about normative values when prioritizing strategic relationships with other states. Russia’s own authoritarian regression was already apparent under President Putin in the early 2000s, and even during the more politically promising early years of the Yeltsin Administration, Russia’s foreign policy strategy had never shied from supporting regimes for the sake of geopolitical goals. In fact, the obvious similarities between the Kuchma and Putin states had probably already predisposed Russian policy makers towards officials in Kyiv.

During Ukraine’s early 2000s political crisis, Kuchma increasingly leaned on the Kremlin for ideological and political support. In the absence of cordial Ukraine-Western relations, “leaning” towards Russia served important domestic and foreign policy objectives. The Kuchma regime legitimized its challenged rule by placating the cultural concerns of the Russian minority and Russian-speaking population in the ‘Russified’ regions of the country. The sacking of Prime Minister Yushchenko had officially severed the last vestiges of a pro-democratic bloc in
government, and without the coalition between the ‘party of power’ and nationally-conscious democrats, the state needed to solicit the unmitigated support of Russian-oriented Ukrainians. A suboptimal foreign policy of “leaning,” rather than “balancing,” towards Russia was a fundamental component of a severely constrained Kuchma Administration from 2001 until the 2004 elections.

Russian policy towards Ukraine became increasingly insidious throughout the first half of the 2000s decade. Moscow used its enhanced leverage over Kyiv to solicit further Eurasian integration, and dissuade the Kuchma Administration from continuing its support for GUUAM and other bilateral and multilateral institutions that were perceived as contrary to Russian interests. In addition, Moscow and Kyiv signed several oil and gas supply deals that were advantageous to Russian interests at the expense of Ukrainian business and national security. Perhaps most alarmingly, Kyiv’s isolation augmented Russia’s ability to interfere in Ukraine’s domestic political and economic interests.

The Ukrainian political crisis allowed Russia to meddle in Ukraine’s internal affairs. For instance, there is strong evidence that Russia encouraged vote-rigging, intimidation, and other illegal activities against pro-democratic and anti-regime oppositional forces. Russian political experts illegally advised the Kuchma Administration and pro-regime candidates in their electoral campaigns for parliament. Moscow also played a key role in the suppression of Ukraine’s independent media and civil society organizations. The Putin Administration effectively applied pressure on Ukrainian oligarchs to reign in independent-minded journalists by supporting censorship instructions to major oligarch-owned media outlets.
Russia’s newfound economic and political sway in Ukraine made the Ukrainian oligarchs particularly fearful of competition from the more powerful and experienced Russian oligarchic class. On the eve of the 2004 presidential elections, Russia openly supported pro-regime candidate Viktor Yanukovych. The Putin Administration released statements that expressly endorsed Yanukovych, and the Kremlin pledged significant technical and financial support to his campaign. Among other actions, the Russian administration also attempted to pressure the Communist Party of Ukraine to endorse Yanukovych’s Party of Regions for the second round of the presidential election.\textsuperscript{cliv} The Russians spread anti-American propaganda to portray Yushchenko as a CIA puppet and re-ignite Cold War-era fears of Western conspiracy. There is also evidence of Russian security services involvement in the poisoning and attempted assassination of Viktor Yushchenko, as well as a series of small-scale terrorist attacks that the regime tried to pin on pro-Yushchenko nationalists.\textsuperscript{clv} Russian support for candidate Yanukovych was so blatant, in fact, that even after the fraudulent second round and the beginning of massive protests in Kyiv, President Putin publicly congratulated Yanukovych on his “victory” three times.\textsuperscript{clvi}

Even after the dissolution of Ukraine’s security policy of “balancing” and the resulting tilt towards Russia, Ukraine never leaned so far as to resemble Lukashenko’s Belarus. Ukrainian sovereignty remained largely intact, and Kyiv continued to resist integration into a CIS customs union that would occlude the possibility of future EU integration.\textsuperscript{clvii} Although the Kuchma Administration became more receptive to minor integration proposals, Ukrainian policy makers never seriously considered enhanced political or economic integration with Russia and the CIS that might seriously infringe Ukrainian sovereignty. In fact, Ukraine’s “leaning” towards Russia...
produced a split among the country’s oligarchs, who were fearful of pressures that might jeopardize their carefully guarded economic interests.

Oligarchic fears of Ukraine’s “leaning” foreign policy played an instrumental role in the success of the Orange Revolution, as oligarchic defections to the opposition freed up the Ukrainian media during the crisis. The oligarchs understood the greater economic potential of integration with Europe, as opposed to economic integration with Russia that might undercut their own businesses. Likewise, fears within elements of the bureaucracy and security services about Russian influence in the country may have impeded a police confrontation with the protesters in Kyiv’s Maidan Square.

Although this paper will not endeavor to explain the events of the Orange Revolution, an important socio-political phenomenon that calls for entire research papers and books of its own, the rest of this thesis will explain the indirect effects of the Revolution on Ukrainian security policy. Although previous works have mainly focused on the direct foreign policy implications of the Orange Revolution, by studying the concrete foreign policy objectives of the Yushchenko Administration, my thesis will place resultant Ukrainian security policy in a broader structural context that was altered by the events of November and December 2004. The Orange Revolution shifted Ukraine’s foreign policy westward once again.

The Orange Revolution changed the domestic policy debate in several ways that has concretely altered the nature of Ukrainian security policy post-revolution. As mentioned previously, Ukraine’s compromised foreign policy strategy during the end of Kuchma’s rule provoked significant anxiety among the country’s powerful oligarchic class. Although most of the oligarchs remained ideologically and culturally attuned towards Russia, rather than Europe,
many of Ukraine’s business leaders feared their larger and more powerful oligarchic counterparts in Russia. Kuchma’s policy of “leaning towards Russia” worried Ukrainian oligarchs about predatory competition from the Russians, undermining Kuchma and Yanukovych’s support from these powerful business interests.\textsuperscript{clix}

The Orange Revolution thus in part reflected changing attitudes among Ukrainian business about the country’s foreign policy approach, signaling greater willingness to ‘enter’ Europe and reap the greater economic benefits of European, rather than Eurasian, economic and political integration.

Henceforth, oligarchic opposition to European integration strategies remained muted, and much of Ukraine’s business interests began to look favorably upon a potential free trade agreement with the EU or even eventually membership. Similarly, the Ukrainian bureaucracy and even apolitical Ukrainian citizens had resented the degree of Russian meddling in the country’s politics during the 2004 elections and the latter half of the Kuchma presidency. The Orange Revolution represented a mass political awakening that succeeded in juxtaposing the Ukrainian and Russian political history. Whereas, Russian history recounts the role of autocracy and the Tsar, many Ukrainians began to emphasize the supposed democratic and consensus-building of the medieval Cossack tribes. This is a common theme in Ukraine. Even Ukrainians who are highly skeptical of the government emphasize Ukraine’s democratic political culture compared to Russia. Vira Nanivska stressed that “Ukraine was not a feudal society like Russia,” and thus the country’s ‘democratic’ Cossack past has important implications for Ukraine’s protest culture.\textsuperscript{clx} In addition, my contact at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs claimed that his
experiences in Russia proved to him the vast differences in political culture between Ukraine and Russia, and that Ukraine’s system of governance is far more accountable and pluralistic.

Perhaps most importantly for Ukrainian security policy, the Orange Revolution partially reversed the structural problems inherent in the 1996 constitution that created a hyperpresidential system. As part of a compromise between Kuchma’s ‘party of power’ and the Yushchenko campaign, the Yushchenko camp agreed to constitutional amendments that devolved the power of the presidency. President Kuchma and his entourage feared legal retribution for their crimes by a victorious Orange coalition; thus, the strengthening of the parliament relative to the presidency would strengthen the hand of the parliamentary anti-Yushchenko opposition and potentially protect the outgoing administration from criminal prosecution. The Orange forces agreed to the terms of the agreement in order to end the political crisis and ensure a clean third election round that would almost certainly guarantee a Yushchenko victory.\textsuperscript{cix}

The repositioning of Ukraine’s constitutional balance of power had a substantial impact on Ukraine’s political system. According to M. Steven Fish’s analysis of presidential-parliamentary power in the post-communist world, this development was possibly the most important, albeit indirect, result of the Orange Revolution. Likewise, the Revolution pointed to the growing independence of the Ukrainian judiciary. The Supreme Court resisted substantial pressure from the executive and the Yanukovych campaign when it nullified the results released by the Central Electoral Commission and ordered a third election round.

The Revolution also galvanized and strengthened Ukraine’s civil society, empowering the influence of organizations independent from the state. Civil society emerged victorious and
confident from Yushchenko’s third round electoral victory, finding more receptive and transparent administrators under President Yushchenko. The enhanced influence and activism of civil society, an invigorated population, a schism among the country’s business elite, and a partial correction of structural imbalances in Ukraine’s political constitution had important effects on the trajectory of Ukrainian democracy and security policy. Andreas Umland, a professor of Political Science at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy in Kyiv, described for me the lasting effects on Ukrainian politics since the Orange Revolution. Civil society is now “more independent and outspoken” and “standards for elections have risen.” Ukrainian policy-makers are now confronted with greater constraints, he explained, and are more accountable as citizens’ expectations for clean politics have increased. clxii

Ideologically, the Revolution certainly strengthened public support for European integration and even fostered greater identification with European normative values. The Revolution similarly sparked renewed interest in Ukraine among the Western states, particularly in Europe, which now perceived Ukraine as a potential partner and aspiring member of the European community. A strengthened civil society has increased the transparency of the Ukrainian state, at least partially breaking the strangle hold of oligarchic business interests on domestic and foreign policy. The Orange Revolution marked the “peak of social activeness” in Ukraine, and permanently “raised expectations,” according to Shevliakov. Long-term economic and political interests, rather than the immediate concerns of well-placed bureaucrats, held more sway among policy makers in the incoming Yushchenko Administration.

The Yushchenko Administration and Foreign Policy- A New Direction?
Upon President Yushchenko’s inauguration, the country’s foreign policy almost immediately signaled a shift from the direction of the past several years. The Orange Revolution put Ukraine back on the European map; weeks of intense media scrutiny of the transcendent political developments in Kyiv immediately drew Western interest in Ukraine and a sense of responsibility for the country’s suddenly more hopeful future. The Revolution removed Ukraine from the self-imposed isolation of the later Kuchma years, re-igniting long-term strategic goals for European integration that had been all but abandoned. In turn, the Yushchenko camp made clear that ‘returning’ to Europe and emerging from diplomatic isolation was one of the new administration’s primary goals. This was unsurprising, given the European orientation of the pro-Orange political coalition, and the strategic need to re-establish close ties with the West in the face of pressure from the Russians. President Yushchenko travelled to the EU and the United States soon after inauguration, bypassing a trip to Moscow, in a clear ideological sign to the Kremlin and Western capitals. Yushchenko also fostered personal ties with the Georgian president, Mikheil Saakashvili, who had emerged as a democratic and anti-Russian leader after the success of Georgia’s very own 2003 Rose Revolution.

Unfortunately, the Orange coalition honeymoon between President Yushchenko and firebrand Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko proved short-lived. Despite concrete moves towards a nuanced foreign policy shift that placed greater emphasis on close relations with the West, political fragmentation impeded a greater institutionalization of a “leaning towards the West” strategy. Domestic politics, similar to the problems inherent in the Kuchma Administration, inhibited the implementation of concrete political and economic reforms that would have positioned Ukraine closer to Europe and provided meaningful leverage against
Russia. The following section will illuminate the pragmatic shift towards Europe in Yushchenko’s Ukraine, only to be undermined by political infighting and continued Russian influence over Ukraine’s foreign policy choices.

Unsurprisingly, the results of the Orange Revolution and Yushchenko’s electoral victory shocked and humiliated Moscow. The Kremlin, including President Putin personally, had put significant weight behind Viktor Yanukovych’s candidacy. The outbreak of mass protests and the reversal of the Central Electoral Commission’s original results after Putin’s public congratulations to Yanukovych were deeply embarrassing. The Russian regime’s embarrassment, as well its overt support for the Yanukovych and even electoral fraud, immediately soured relations between Kyiv and Moscow on a more personal level.

In turn, the Russian authorities feared the exportation of revolutionary fervor from Kyiv to Moscow. The pro-democratic “Color Revolutions in post-Soviet and post-communist space—including Serbia’s revolution in 2000 and Georgia’s 2003 revolution—deeply unsettled the increasingly authoritarian regime in Russia. It’s possible that the Orange Revolution accelerated Russia’s slide into authoritarianism, as Putin cracked down even harder on internal dissent. Ukrainian policy makers were now deeply distrustful of Russian influence in domestic politics, necessitating a break in close diplomatic relations. The Orange coalition’s victory likewise demonstrated that Ukraine had re-emerged from isolation, and that the short era of Moscow’s exclusive influence in Ukraine was over.

During the beginning of the Yushchenko Administration, Ukraine attempted to capitalize on international intention and goodwill to accelerate the country’s drive towards matters of European compliance and integration, attempting to foster close ties with the West while
Russia-Ukraine relations remained precarious because of the fallout from the Orange Revolution. The long-term national goals of EU and NATO membership, which were both propounded but forgotten under Kuchma, were suddenly reinvigorated. These once distant and seemingly impossible official foreign policy goals suddenly appeared possible—even likely—over the course of a decade or two. Many Western political observers and media commentators expressed the widespread belief that Ukraine had finally turned solidly westward, breaking its psychological and political dependence on the Russians. These proclamations ultimately proved more hopeful than insightful, lacking knowledge of the geopolitical nuances of the region. Even so, popular Western optimism did recognize Ukraine’s fundamentally westward reorientation, just not to the extreme extent commonly purported. Ukraine’s geopolitical reality made it necessary to ‘lean towards Europe,’ “while not overlooking its Eastern neighbor.”

The Yushchenko Administration and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs put NATO membership, once a more or less empty strategic goal, at the top of the new regime’s security agenda. Ukraine’s vulnerability to Russian political, security, and economic pressure highlighted the importance of membership in the military alliance. Despite the rupture of close relations between Kyiv and Moscow, Russia still had significant leverage over the Ukrainians. Ukrainian dependence on Russian energy imports, Russia’s cultural appeal to a significant numbers of Ukrainians, and the disproportionate military strength between the two states made Kyiv particularly vulnerable without concrete linkages to the Western security structures. Yushchenko and his associates claimed that Ukrainian participation in NATO could contribute to
an “area of stability and security” in Eastern Europe through area of stability and security” through a “gradual integration into NATO.”

Many Western capitals cautiously welcomed Kyiv’s enhanced interest in Euro-Atlantic security integration; NATO had supported the membership of post-communist Eastern European states for the purposes of maintaining regional stability in the former Warsaw Pact area. Some member states saw Ukraine as a possible next step in regional expansion, alongside other countries such as Georgia. The United States under the Bush Administration was particularly supportive of Ukraine’s Euro-Atlantic drive and democratization following the Orange Revolution. President Bush’s emphasis on worldwide democratization following the Iraq invasion particularly endeared Ukraine to American policy-makers. The Yushchenko and Bush Administrations were particularly cooperative in mid-2000s. However, it should be noted that vehement Russian opposition to the first round of NATO expansion into the former Warsaw Pact had elicited caution for some NATO states, particularly France and Germany, who valued their relationship with the Kremlin.

Future Ukrainian membership in NATO required significant unilateral compliance initiatives, as the nation’s armed forces needed to modernize to better reflect Western military standards. The Yushchenko Administration launched the “State Programme for the Development of Ukraine’s Armed Forces” (2006 – 2011), which aimed “at transforming the Ukrainian Armed Forces into a modern professional army” along the lines of NATO military forces. President Yushchenko acknowledged the difficulties inherent in accomplishing significant military reforms to enable NATO operational cooperation, although past Ukrainian cooperation with NATO structures under the previous two administrations assisted Kyiv in this
endeavor. Yuschenko continued to try to convince NATO states to disregard Russian political pressure. However, there were no guarantees that Ukraine could join the organization, even in the event that Ukraine’s military reforms proved successful. Nonetheless, NATO assisted Ukrainian military reform aspirations through the NATO-Ukraine Joint Working Group on Defense Reform, which was established under Kuchma in 2002.\textsuperscript{clxxi}

In addition to deeper NATO cooperation and the membership aspirations of the Yushchenko Administration, Ukraine’s bilateral and multilateral diplomatic efforts under the new regime also reflected a subtle shift towards a Western-oriented foreign policy posture. Kyiv stepped up its cooperation within GUAM. The CIS encountered problems following the ‘color revolutions’ in Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan, heightening the exigency of some level of regional cooperation without Russian participation. After Yushchenko’s election, GUAM increasingly became a vehicle for multilateral cooperation over matters such as energy, democracy, trade, and security.\textsuperscript{clxxii} In 2006, the organization reformulated itself as the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development, which was indicative of its newfound impetus.

Ukraine-EU cooperation and membership aspirations became a staple of the Yuschenko regime’s foreign policy objectives. Ukraine’s potential EU ascension has always been less divisive, both domestically and internationally, than the goal of Ukrainian participation in the NATO alliance. Whereas Moscow has always vehemently opposed the further expansion of NATO into Ukraine, Russian objections to European Union expansion has been more muted. Most political forces within Ukraine are also supportive of EU membership, to varying degrees.

The Ambassador of Ukraine to the United States, Oleksandr Motsyk, speaking at an event
hosted by the Baltimore Council on Foreign Relations in December 2012, explained that “overwhelming [numbers of] members of parliament support European integration.” The Ministry of Foreign Affairs described European integration as a “key priority in the foreign policy of Ukraine that integrates the whole complex of efforts both inside the country and beyond its borders.” Integration measures are “aimed at moving Ukraine closer to the EU and creating preconditions necessary for the future accession of the state to the EU.” Although EU membership had always been a cornerstone of Ukrainian foreign policy, the Orange Revolution enhanced the impetus for the necessary structural and economic reforms required. Upon President Yushchenko’s inauguration, many political and economic issues remained before Ukraine could even hope to join the EU. The EU acknowledged Ukrainian membership intentions and potential under Yushchenko, and assisted Ukraine’s integration efforts without making any overt promises.

Unfortunately, Ukraine remains a highly corrupt country by any standard, with poor property protection and inadequate rule of law. A representative of the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine told me that the poor judicial system remained a problem for the future of the Ukrainian economy. The European integration measures that would prove necessary to join the EU have the additional benefit of helping eradicate the legal and economic problems that have hindered the country’s development since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Ukraine-EU cooperation under Yushchenko “opened up the possibility of negotiating a free trade zone,” which would serve as an important stepping stone for further integration and membership. Despite Yushchenko’s particular emphasis on EU cooperation and integration relative to his predecessors, Ukraine’s aspirations for anti-corruption measures and other
economic reforms ultimately floundered for a myriad of political reasons that will be further explained.

Despite Ukraine’s subtle move towards the West under the rubric of “leaning towards the West,” relations with Russia remained a top priority, despite the wishful thinking of certain Ukrainian nationalists. The Ukrainian state’s external security depends on manageable and constructive relations with the Russian Federation, even with the end of strategic “balancing” as a foreign policy goal. Russian military strength and economic strength still make Russia a significant regional power, and a successfully transitioning post-Soviet Ukraine will rely on strong economic and diplomatic ties with its Russian counterpart. Yushchenko remained cautious in his dealings with the Russians, and despite clear cooperative signals towards Western capitals, the President’s foreign policy priorities never sought to isolate Moscow. Ukraine emphasized that its new policy reflected its European emergence, but “one that does not overlook its Eastern neighbor.” Kyiv’s policy remained multi-pronged, highlighting Ukraine’s European identity and aspirations, even while expressing understanding of Russia’s geopolitical requirements. Ukraine’s European integration instead sought to enter “Europe with Russia.” In an interview with a Russian newspaper, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, Yushchenko explained: “Ukraine does not want to introduce an ‘either/or’ foreign policy formula. Such a formula is mistaken. Kiev should say honestly that Russia is our northern close neighbor, our strategic partner, and we must integrate with it. But the Western market also interests us and it does not conflict with rapprochement with Moscow.”

However, Ukraine’s intentions of preserving cooperative relations with Russia were difficult to fulfill without reciprocation from the Kremlin. Russia’s embarrassment over the
Orange Revolution, and the regime’s fear of a similar movement on Russian soil, undermined Russia-Ukraine relations for most of President Yushchenko’s tenure. Russian politicians lobbed abusive epithets at Ukrainian leaders, accusing the new regime of catering to dangerous ethno-nationalism and radicalism. Russian leaders accused the West of illegally orchestrating the Revolution, and unfairly meddling in Ukraine’s politics by stealing the election from Viktor Yanukovych. This charge was highly ironic, given the level of Russian interference in Ukrainian politics as compared to the West’s relatively benign support for transparency and pro-democratic civil society groups. The Russian government’s accusations of Western conspiracy were instead designed to cover up the regime’s embarrassing miscalculations about the resolve of Ukrainian civil society and citizens to protest flagrant election fraud.\textsuperscript{clxxviii}

Fear of Ukraine’s European integration heightened the Kremlin’s anxiety about its ability to manage relations with the post-Soviet states and construct a more integrated CIS or CIS alternative. Regardless of President Yushchenko’s amicable intentions, Russian domestic politics and mostly unfounded geopolitical fears contributed to a dangerous decline in relations between Russia and Ukraine. Two Russia-Ukraine natural gas crises, in 2006 and 2009, as well as Russia’s 2008 military invasion of Georgia, ultimately constrained Ukraine’s foreign policy objectives of simultaneous European integration and smooth relations with Russia.

Political problems in Ukraine, as well as Russian pressure, greatly constrained Ukrainian foreign policy during the Yushchenko Administration, undermining Kyiv’s turn towards Europe and integration strategy. After the third and final round of the 2004 election that brought Viktor Yushchenko to power as President, a firebrand politician and former gas oligarch became Prime Minister. Yulia Tymoshenko, a successful but controversial businesswoman, had played a
central role during the Orange Revolution, delivering inspiring emotion-laden speeches in Maidan Square.

At first, Tymoshenko’s fiery personality contrasted with and complimented Yushchenko’s more reticent demeanor. But the honeymoon was short; Tymoshenko’s aggressive style and cutthroat politics often overshadowed her boss and created tensions within the Orange coalition. Yushchenko proved a weak and indecisive leader during his stint at President, particularly compared to his time as Prime Minister, leading to speculation that his poor health because of dioxin poisoning was hurting his job performance. Thus weakened, Yushchenko was unable to prevent a quick collapse of the Orange coalition due to infighting between its numerous factions and political parties. Yushchenko and Tymoshenko began to clash publicly over policy. 

A political crisis occurred only months after the Orange government came to power, and in September 2005 Yushchenko sacked Tymoshenko as Prime Minister and dissolved the Orange government in the parliament. Yushchenko’s move fractured the Orange Coalition in the run up to the March 2006 parliamentary elections, alienating the electorate by diminishing faith in the Ukrainian government and the outcome of the Orange Revolution. Yushchenko’s inability to control his own political allies enhanced the appeal of the defeated Viktor Yanukovych’s Party of Regions just months after revelations of his complicity in flagrant vote rigging and election fraud.

The Party of Regions performed remarkably well during the March 2006 parliamentary election, as the party’s support grew “from 15-20 percent of the electorate in 2005 to 32 percent,” obtaining the largest number of seats in parliament. Yushchenko tried to prevent
Yanukovych from becoming Prime Minister by reaching out to the former Orange-allied Socialist Party, but Yushchenko’s sloppy overtures alienated Oleksandr Moroz, the Socialist Party leader. The Socialists instead entered into a coalition with the Party of Regions and the Communist Party. President Yushchenko reluctantly nominated Viktor Yanukovych as Prime Minister after an extensive political agreement between Yushchenko and the Party of Regions. In return, Yanukovych agreed not to impede the President’s domestic policies and foreign policy agenda of further integration with the European Union, NATO, and other priorities. Thus, less than two years after a rigged election and the Orange Revolution, Viktor Yanukovych became Prime Minister of Ukraine under President Yushchenko. Now, Ukraine’s political divisions were obvious for the entire world to see, particularly undermining the Europeans’ faith in the depth of Ukraine’s EU aspirations.

Ukraine’s political problems continued for the remainder of Yushchenko’s term, greatly constraining Ukrainian foreign policy initiatives. Unsurprisingly, Yushchenko and Yanukovych’s cooperation proved short-lived. In April 2007, Yushchenko dissolved the parliament and ordered new elections. After the elections, a revived Orange coalition re-emerged from the ashes, as the Yushchenko and Tymoshenko factions agreed to cooperate by forming a new coalition in parliament. Despite the new coalition, personal and political antagonism remained between Yushchenko and Tymoshenko. Political infighting undermined the pace of economic and security reforms. The Orange parties fundamentally differed on questions of economic reform and other domestic issues, ultimately dooming Yushchenko’s legacy.

Despite lofty promises of Ukraine’s European drive and reciprocation from the West, few substantive agreements were concluded under the Yushchenko Administration. Most
importantly, Kyiv failed to reach a free trade agreement with the EU. In 2008, NATO refused to grant Ukraine a Membership Action Plan, which would have firmly put the country on the track towards membership in the near future. Similarly, in 2008, the EU “sidestepped” the issue of Ukrainian membership at an EU-Ukraine summit, abandoning any hope of ascension in the foreseeable future. Ukraine leaned towards Europe, but ended up floundering instead. One of Ukraine’s few foreign policy accomplishments during the Yushchenko presidency was Ukraine’s World Trade Organization (WTO) entry in 2008. In an interview, Vira Nanivska criticized the Yushchenko Administration’s Euro-Atlantic integration record, saying that the Orange coalition “had no clue what they had to do.”

Significant Russian economic and security pressure also undermined Ukraine’s European tilt under the Yushchenko Administration. Ukraine’s dependence on subsidized oil and gas supplies from Russia was instrumental in limiting Kyiv’s foreign policy choices and long-term decision making. Also, Russia’s 2008 military intervention in Georgia, although probably not designed to intimidate Kyiv, certainly had the additional effect of discouraging Ukrainian NATO aspirations. Ultimately, Ukraine’s optimal policy of “leaning towards the West” failed because of a plethora of domestic political problems, continued reliance on energy imports from the Russian Federation, and the asymmetry of military power in Russia and Ukraine.

The political problems stemming from Ukraine’s reliance on Russian energy imports, particularly oil and natural gas, became obvious after the breakdown of amicable Russia-Ukraine relations after the Orange Revolution. Ukraine’s energy infrastructure is also extremely outdated and inefficient.
In 2005, Russia’s state-controlled natural gas company, Gazprom, announced that it would increase the price of natural gas imports to Ukraine more than fourfold over the previously-negotiated price, to $230 per 1,000 cubic meters. Kiev refused to give in to Russian demands, accusing Gazprom of catering to the Kremlin’s anti-Ukrainian political pressure following personal and geopolitical standoffs between the two countries. On New Year’s Day, 2006, Gazprom shut off the gas pipelines to Ukraine. Since about 80 percent of Russian natural gas exports to Europe come through Ukraine, the crisis similarly affected the Central and Western European countries that are downstream on the pipeline.

Ukrainian and American officials immediately condemned the move as political blackmail. The US State Department painted the crisis as a clear picture of Russian bullying in its “Near Abroad”—the former Soviet Union. Kyiv and Washington accused Moscow of punishing Ukraine for its European tilt and political reformation. Although the Europeans were more muted in their assessment of the ordeal, the EU warned Russia to take a more practical approach to the dispute, particularly since the gas shutoff resulted in skyrocketing energy costs and supply concerns throughout the continent in the middle of winter.

In reality, Russia’s intentions were most likely multifaceted and opportunistic. Geopolitical concerns and a desire to “punish” Ukraine certainly factored in to Russian considerations. The Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, announced that intransigence in the ‘Near Abroad’ would elicit consequences, and “countries that did not respond to Russian interests would no longer enjoy economic benefits in the form of lower oil and gas prices” among other services. Russian concerns about Ukraine’s political trajectory and European integration had certainly exacerbated the Kremlin’s desire to extract revenge on the Ukrainian...
leadership. Russian worries about Georgia and other countries of the former Soviet Union moving away from the Russian orbit was furthering anxiety about its ability to strengthen the CIS and post-Soviet bloc through a Customs Union and other integration strategies.

Despite Ukrainian and American insistence on purely political motives behind the crisis, economic concerns were important as well. It’s particularly telling that Russia also demanded higher import prices from Belarus, a staunch supporter of Eurasian integration efforts, several months after the 2006 crisis. The Russia-Ukraine gas crisis was finally resolved in three days after EU and American diplomatic outreach, negotiating a deal that increased gas prices from $50 to $95 per 1,000 cubic meters.\textsuperscript{cx}

Russia-Ukraine bilateral frictions continued for the remainder of the Yushchenko presidency, and on the third anniversary of the first gas crisis—January 1, 2009—a second gas crisis broke out between the two countries. The 2009 crisis, like the 2006 natural gas row, was probably the result of both political and economic considerations in the Kremlin. However, the fact that the 2009 crisis occurred on the heels of the global financial crisis and economic turbulence in Russia, lends some credence to Moscow’s claim that Gazprom’s demanded price hike was economically motivated and designed to back up Russia’s foreign currency reserves. Once again, Russia accused the Ukrainians of shirking on payment obligations to Gazprom. Unlike in 2006, however, Ukraine and much of Europe had anticipated future supply troubles and had saved a sufficient amount of natural gas for the winter.\textsuperscript{cx1} After nearly three weeks of the 2009 gas row, the prime ministers of both countries, Tymoshenko and Putin, signed an agreement that ended the crisis. The contract provided that Ukraine would pay 20 percent of the price of natural gas supplied to Europe for a year before the elimination of the subsidy, and
that Ukraine would charge half price for the natural gas transit for one year. Many critics panned the agreement as a poor one for Ukraine.

Ukraine’s gas disagreements with Russia certainly undermined Ukrainian foreign policy strategy under the Yushchenko Administration. The crises underscored Ukraine’s energy dependence on Moscow, a particularly sensitive point of political leverage for the Kremlin. Even if the gas crises didn’t explicitly elicit a reversal towards greater “balancing” during the Yushchenko presidency, Russian pressure certainly highlighted the risks involved in Euro-Atlantic political and security integration at the expense of Moscow’s interests. The crises also undermined faith in the Ukrainian government and the country’s efforts to move to Europe, both domestically and in Europe. For much of Ukraine’s populace, particularly in central and eastern Ukraine, the gas crises smacked of public officials’ incompetence and unnecessary squabbling with the Russian Federation. The gas disputes, and Ukraine’s poor bargaining in the 2009 agreement, shattered faith in already polarized and highly inefficient Ukrainian politics. Perhaps most importantly, the crises undermined the West’s confidence in the potential benefits of Ukrainian integration strategies. In the same manner as Russia’s war with Georgia, the gas crises highlighted the potential combustibility of Russia-Ukraine relations, a potential liability for both the EU and NATO. The Yushchenko Administration’s handling of both gas disputes, as well as the country’s dysfunctional politics, did not engender confidence in Ukrainian integration into the EU or NATO.

Russia’s war against Georgia, ostensibly to protect Russian passport holders in the breakaway republic of South Ossetia, also had important effects on Ukrainian decision making. For one, Russia’s resolve and military intervention in Georgia further convinced some European
capitals of the risk of NATO expansion. Several important European countries were already hesitant to risk further Russian vitriol for NATO expansion into the former Soviet Union, namely Ukraine and Georgia. Although NATO had shown interest in Ukrainian membership just after the Orange Revolution, European doubts about this process were increasing even before the Russia-Georgia War. While the Yushchenko Administration denounced Moscow’s actions as inflammatory, Europe failed to articulate a cohesive response to the Russian aggression. Russia’s assertive security stance, and the liabilities involved in NATO expansion on the Russian frontier hurt Ukraine’s NATO endeavor.

The Georgia War also produced further political polarization within the Ukrainian political system, and resulted in alarm among various political groupings about the troubled state of Ukraine’s relations with the Russian Federation. Prime Minister Tymoshenko was more hesitant and reserved than President Yushchenko in denouncing Russia’s actions, highlighting once again the split between the President and Prime Minister. Several political blocs also broke from the official government stance by supporting Russian actions. Most of Yanukovych’s Party of Regions and the entire Communist Party in parliament backed Moscow. The war not only worsened Ukrainian political dysfunctionality, but also highlighted the dangers inherent in Kyiv’s strained bilateral relations with Russia.

The Georgian conflict also stoked fears of Russian intentions in Crimea, a region that bears important similarities to Georgia’s South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Like those two breakaway republics, Crimea has a strong separatist movement and many Russian passport holders. The Georgian crisis particularly pressured Ukraine on the issue of the Russia’s basing of the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol, a lease that was set to expire in 2017 under the conditions of the 1997
agreement. Russia’s actions stoked fears that Moscow would refuse to withdraw its forces or intervene militarily in the case that there wasn’t an extended basing agreement. This scenario, although remote because of international pressure and the relative strength of the Ukrainian military as compared to Georgian forces, seemed entirely possible in 2008. After the Russia-Georgia War, Russia began to more assertively pressure Ukraine and the EU against Ukrainian ascension to the EU. Ambassador Steven Pifer, speaking to Ukrainian students in Kyiv explained that now “Russia wouldn’t be happy with Ukraine joining the European Union.” Russian diplomatic isolation following the conflict augmented Moscow’s perceptions of geopolitical encirclement and hostility.

Ukraine’s subtle shift in its long-term security strategy after the Orange Revolution and the victory of Viktor Yushchenko in 2004 were undermined by a plethora of factors—mainly Ukrainian political dysfunctionality and Russia’s continued possession of significant political pressure over Kyiv. The polarizing divisions within the Ukrainian political system, as well as the incompetence of President Yushchenko and his officials, were probably the most instrumental factors that prevented Ukraine from achieving meaningful objectives in the strategic goal of European and Euro-Atlantic political and security integration. Ukraine’s inability to harness the ‘Europeanizing’ potential of the Orange Revolution produced a ‘Ukraine fatigue’ in many Western capitals that were already wary of worsening bilateral relations with Russia. My contact in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed the existence of ‘Ukraine fatigue’ in the West, along with frustrations about Ukrainian political dysfunctionality and integration failures.

Ukraine’s dependence on Russian energy imports remains a serious problem for a state seeking to break from the grip of Russian regional dominance. The imperatives for Kyiv for
smooth relations with Moscow did necessitate repairs in bilateral relations. During the latter half of the Yushchenko’s term, his administration placed greater emphasis on improving relations. After the 2006 gas crisis, Russia-Ukraine relations gradually improved through the creation of presidential summit meetings and an “inter-state commission” for developing normal relations between the two states.

Despite the many shortfalls and unrealized ambitions of the Orange Revolution, there were substantial long-term changes in Ukrainian society that have indirect effects on strengthening the trajectory of Ukrainian security policy. The strengthening of parliament relative to the presidency after the Orange Revolution, although it may have somewhat exacerbated political dysfunctionality, certainly enhanced government transparency and political pluralism in the country. Political parties, which remained weak institutions during the pre-Orange Revolution era, were strengthened following the 2004 constitutional changes and experienced a period of institutionalization under President Yushchenko. Parties became more influential in Ukrainian politics, starting to more closely resemble the role of political parties in Western democracies. In 2006, the international political monitoring group Freedom House rated Ukraine as “free,” the first time the organization had given a CIS state this ranking.

Civil society was strengthened tremendously by the events of the Orange Revolution and the subsequent political openness that followed President Yushchenko’s victory. The experience of the Orange Revolution, in and of itself, encouraged greater citizen participation in independent political and non-political organizations. The collective euphoria in many parts of the country after the success of the Revolution enhanced citizens’ faith in democracy and in government’s receptiveness to popular input. The failings of the Yushchenko Administration
and Ukraine’s subsequent political dysfunction certainly increased disaffection with politics in the years following the events of 2004. However, Ukrainian civil society, which was already significant compared to other post-communist states before the Orange Revolution, received a major boost after Yushchenko’s election. The role of civil society in the reversal of the Central Election Commission’s decision empowered these organizations, and renewed organizational faith in the ability of citizen groups to make an impact on policy making decisions.

In addition, the Yushchenko Administration was much more receptive to civil society input than past Ukrainian administrations. Civil society groups started to play an important role in informing the government about policy decisions, particularly in domestic policy, but also when it came to foreign and security policy. Civil society organizations that I interviewed in Kyiv, such as ICPS or the Ukrainian Foundation for Democracy "People First," reported that they had established significant contacts with government institutions, advising government policy about matters as diverse as agricultural privatization and political reform. Although foreign policy is generally a low priority for civil society policy organizations in Ukraine, which is also true in consolidated liberal democracies, many aspects of domestic policy are extremely relevant when it comes to European integration strategies. For example, independent organizations have advised the Ukrainian government about the economic effects of a free trade agreement with the European Union and other economic reforms that are essential for Europeanization objectives.

The Orange Revolution also spurred open discussions about the merits of different foreign policy objectives throughout the country; many civil society organizations in the Ukrainian capital often host round table discussions or invite speakers to discuss government
foreign policy. When I travelled to Kyiv last summer to conduct research and interviews, it seemed that there was a new speaker discussion or public debate about contemporary political developments or EU integration almost every day. Although these kind of events certainly existed before the Orange Revolution, civil society organizations reported that public interest in these events increased significantly since 2004. Several organizations also indicated the government receptiveness to outside policy input has substantially increased since the Orange Revolution, continuing to the present-day under the Yanukovych Administration.

The development and greater institutionalization of civil society and political transparency has almost certainly had an effect on Ukraine’s foreign policy objectives. Foreign policy is no longer the exclusive reserve of government bureaucrats and oligarchic economic interests. Civil society organizations provide meaningful information about European integration strategies and other foreign policy options. For the most part, civil society’s role as an important advisor on Ukrainian foreign policy decision making has enhanced the government’s and people’s perception of the benefits of European integration relative to Eurasian integration through Russia’s proposed Customs Union or other means. Over the past five years, the Ukrainian people’s support for Eurasian integration with Russia and Belarus has decreased from 58 percent five years ago to 47 percent currently, according to polling figures obtained by KIIS. However, public support for European integration has also decreased over the same time period, albeit to a slightly lesser degree, from 47 percent to 40 percent. This data likely reflects growing public disaffection with the Ukrainian political process, creating cynicism and isolationist tendencies.
Despite the political and economic problems inherent in the EU, Ukraine’s policy makers have still committed themselves to EU membership in the long-term. The Orange Revolution certainly resulted in greater appreciation of the benefits of Europeanization, particularly given the autocratic political and economic regression of the Russian regime. Even Ukraine’s oligarchic business class, historically associated with pro-Russian political and economic interests, suffered a split during the Orange Revolution. Ukraine’s influential oligarchs, many of whom are associated with Yanukovych’s Party of Regions, are more fearful of Russian economic predation than the more benign strategy of European economic integration. Many oligarchs, varying by economic sector, even encourage potential benefits in a free trade agreement with the EU and other important measures.

All of these structural changes in Ukrainian political society did influence a pragmatic shift Westward in Ukraine’s foreign policy strategy. Ukrainian political dysfunctionality, as well as Russian pressure, prevented Ukraine from making further progress that could have accelerated and further institutionalized its declared long-term strategy of European and Euro-Atlantic economic, political, and security integration. Yushchenko’s perceived incompetence and inability to capitalize on the gains of the Orange Revolution alienated much of the population, dooming his presidential re-election bid in 2010. Yulia Tymoshenko and Viktor Yanukovych emerged as the front runners of the 2010 race, and faced off against one another in the second round of the election. After a bitter and protracted campaign, and close second election round, Yanukovych emerged as the undisputed winner of the 2010 election, gaining the presidency. International monitoring organization largely praised the election for its transparency.
President Yanukovych and Political Regression

Viktor Yanukovych’s 2010 election victory stoked fears, in both the West and among pro-Western Ukrainians, that his administration would turn back the clock on Yushchenko’s “leaning towards the West” strategic posture. Yanukovych’s election campaign had emphasized re-establishing stable relations with the Russian Federation, a popular sentiment in much of the country that had grown disaffected with Yushchenko’s inability to correctly manage relations between the West and Russia. Yanukovych’s electoral base in eastern and southern Ukraine, in particular, was especially troubled by the negative state of Russia-Ukraine relations over the previous five years. The negative consequences of mutual and irreconcilable antagonism between both capitals had become all too apparent during the natural gas crises of 2006 and 2009.

Given Yanukovych’s electoral base and pro-Russian past, some Western commentators and Ukrainians predicted that his administration would snap sharply back into the Russian orbit. This analysis ultimately proved overly simplistic, although there have been extremely important foreign policy developments in Ukraine over the past two years of the Yanukovych presidency.

Yanukovych’s victory over Yulia Tymoshenko similarly stoked fears of a reversal of Ukraine’s democratic gains. Yanukovych’s role in the 2004 election sham, his Donetsk background, criminal convictions in his youth, and past statements reminiscing about the Soviet Union all seemed to indicate an authoritarian streak. Donetsk and the entire Donbas region of eastern Ukraine are often referred to as the ‘Belarus of Ukraine,’ a pro-Russian region with
exclusive, authoritarian political tendencies. In Donetsk, especially, the political and economic culture is clannish and controlled by regional oligarchs. Yanukovych’s suspected role in 2004 election rigging and his past ties with Putin and the Kremlin similarly undermined faith in President Yanukovych’s democratic credentials. However, despite the new President’s questionable past, some in the West remained hopeful that President Yanukovych had reformed his ways in the new post-Orange Revolution Ukraine. Yanukovych’s 2010 election was free and fair, and candidate Yanukovych had promised to restore relations with Russia even while continuing political and economic integration with Europe. In June 2012, Zbigniew Brzezinski—former National Security Advisor to President Jimmy Carter—speaking live in a videoconference call from the United States to an event hosted by Ukrainian think tank Institute of World Policy in Kyiv, which I attended, stated that there was “a lot of respect for Yanukovych in the West originally.” Unfortunately, respect for Yanukovych and faith in the stability of Ukrainian democracy was short-lived.

The first two years of Yanukovych’s presidency produced dizzying and controversial developments in the domestic and foreign policy spheres. Initially, it appeared that Ukraine’s foreign policy posture had turned decisively towards the East relative to his presidential predecessor. However, Yanukovych’s foreign policy has proved much more nuanced. Similar to the political upheaval of the Yushchenko era, political dysfunction and conflicts of interest between domestic and foreign policy agendas have undermined the optimal deployment of the foreign policy strategy of the Yanukovych presidency.

Domestic political developments during the Yanukovych Administration are far from positive. Unfortunately, fears of regressive politics during a Yanukovych presidency have proved
remarkably accurate. The questionable imprisonment of Yulia Tymoshenko, undue political pressure on the media, and other regressive trends have muddled Ukrainian politics and fulfilled the fears of many a Ukrainian democrat. Although post-Orange Revolution civil society remains independent and strong in Ukraine, political regression under the current Administration threatens to scale back some of the Revolution’s gains and the saliency of Kyiv’s “leaning towards the West” foreign policy.

In just the first two years of the Yanukovych presidency, international observers and pro-democratic Ukrainian politicians alike have noted a worrying regression of political openness and freedom in Ukraine. Yanukovych’s administration and the government consists of many former Kuchma-era officials with “disreputable pasts,” rather than the technocrats and reformers that the President had promised would compose the higher echelons of the state during the 2010 election cycle. Yanukovych’s inner circle is primarily composed of officials from his native city of Donetsk, in far eastern Ukraine, and these advisors are notable for their oligarchic ties and pro-Russian and pan-Slavic sympathies. The composition of Yanukovych’s administration alone indicates an anti-reform agenda, and a willingness to rely on Donetsk’s powerful oligarchic interests rather than on a diversity of viewpoints. Anti-Yanukovych Ukrainians are quick to accuse the administration of selling out Ukrainian interests for monetary rewards. These critics note the preponderance of non-Ukrainian (predominately Russian) advisors around the president. For example, Yanukovych’s prime minister, Mykola Avaroz, is initially from Russia. It is not uncommon to hear Ukrainians complain about the political clout of Russians in Kyiv, blaming them for pro-Russian policies. Much of the president’s inner circle is simply “not Ukrainian,” complained Oleksiy Melnyk.
As the Yanukovych presidency developed in its first year, more worrying political developments began to confirm reformist and democratic fears. Rather early on during his term, observers noted that the independence of the Ukrainian judiciary, which has demonstrated remarkable improvement under Yushchenko, was under threat. Just a month into his presidency, Yanukovych and his parliamentary supporters altered the election laws to allow individual members of parliament from other factions join the coalition. This allowed defectors from other parties, likely enticed through bribes or under threat, to join the Party of Regions and their allies to form a coalition with a slight majority. The Constitutional Court had ruled this practice illegal less than two years earlier, declaring that coalitions could only consist of political factions and not individual defectors. However, in 2010, likely under pressure from the administration, the Constitutional Court reinterpreted Ukrainian law so that independent and oppositional candidates could enter the parliamentary coalition. The Court’s reversal in such a short time span seemed to clearly indicate that the judiciary had lost its ability to act independently, and the president has resorted to “holding show trials.”

Yanukovych and his parliamentary allies have since expended considerable effort to widen the President’s authority and further undermine the independence of the Ukrainian judiciary. Several laws enacted under the current government have sought to strengthen the administration’s ability to pressure judges through the threat of dismissal or other methods of interference in the judicial process. Yanukovych and his allies pressed forward with these statutes despite the concerns of the EU and individual European countries, and without waiting for a legal review from the “Council of Europe's constitutional advisory group, the Venice Commission.”
European concern about rule of law and judicial independence has remained the most salient concerns of the EU and political monitoring groups in Ukraine. David Stulik, the Press and Information Officer with the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine, discussed Ukraine’s political developments and Association Agreement prospects with me. Mr. Stulik explained that Kyiv’s declared commitment to European integration is appreciated by the EU, but there is little progress from Ukraine. Mr. Stulik discussed the release of an EU progress report on Ukrainian developments in early 2012, expressing disappointment with the country’s trends and saying that the administration’s “record is pretty bleak.” In the eyes of the EU, the “key to the current situation is in the hands of Ukrainians.”

In perhaps the most troubling political development under the current administration, the constitutional compromises completed during the Orange Revolution that strengthened parliament vis-à-vis the president were reversed in September, 2010. The compromise constitutional reform between candidate Yushchenko and President Kuchma in 2004 was pushed through parliament quickly during the Orange Revolution, and violated several minor procedural rules. However, these changes officially became part of the Constitution in 2005, and most legal scholars asserted the constitutionality of these amendments. On top of that, during the 2010 campaign, Yanukovych and the Party of Regions had promised not to seek to change the Constitution or enhance presidential power at the expense of the parliament. President Yanukovych immediately reversed this tone upon entering office and sought to expand presidential power through constitutional amendments or popular referendum. In September 2010, the President succeeded when the Constitutional Court struck down the validity of the 2005 compromise constitutional amendments that strengthened parliament,
restoring the original state of the 1996 constitution and its hyperpresidentialism. The Court’s decision thoroughly demonstrated the decline in the independence of Ukraine’s judiciary due to political pressure from the presidential administration.

The constitutional changes that emerged in 2004 had proved perhaps the most important result of the Orange Revolution. Ukraine’s hyperpresidential system poses clear risks for the state of democracy in the country, undoing many of the seen from the events of the Orange Revolution. Since the constitutional reversal in 2004, Ukraine’s political trajectory is increasingly troubling. President Yanukovych has extended central control over the parliament, the courts, and local governing institutions. Unless additional amendments are enacted to return Ukraine to a more balanced political system, the country’s political problems are likely to continue into the foreseeable future, with important effects on foreign policy making. A hyperpresidential system might weaken the influence of talented pro-Western politicians in parliament or threaten the importance of civil society groups in policy advising. In addition, the highly centralized Yanukovych presidency and Party of Regions primarily reflects the economic interests of Donbas political clans, rather than more pluralistic economic and political interests that are more favorable towards European integration.

International and domestic political freedom groups continued to note the negative political trajectory in Ukraine after the 2010 Constitutional Court decision. Local elections in October 2010, finally held after several postponements, were noted for irregularities and selective discrimination against opposition parties. The Ukrainian government dubiously changed election laws for city councils, seemingly designed to confuse and exclude political parties that were challenging the Party of Regions and theircoalitional allies. In particular, this
excluded Yulia Tymoshenko’s Batkivshina (Fatherland) party from many of the voting lists in districts throughout the country. The government’s use of election laws to exclude or disadvantage opposition parties is notably similar to the strategies pursued by Vladimir Putin and the Russian government.

The arrest and trial of Yulia Tymoshenko, ostensibly for abuse of office during her final stint as prime minister under President Yushchenko, and additional charges, have proved the most notable signs of political regression under Viktor Yanukovych. In 2011, Tymoshenko was charged with abuse of office for her role in the 2009 gas deal with Russia, as prosecutors claimed that she had overstepped her authority and undermined Ukrainian national interests in concluding the deal. The charges have always seemed dubious, and neither Europe nor the United States accepts the Ukrainian explanation for her arrest and imprisonment. The 2009 deal was likely a poor one, but poor political decisions aren’t criminal acts. Tymoshenko was found guilty in October 2011 after a rushed trial, and the state of her imprisonment has also elicited international criticism. Yulia Tymoshenko’s oligarchic and political past is far from spotless; however, the justifications for her arrest and imprisonment are “clearly politically motivated.” In March 2013, member of parliament and Tymoshenko supporter Sergey Vlasenko was removed from parliament on dubious charges, ostensibly for “improperly combining work as a legislator and a lawyer” by defending Tymoshenko pro bono. Given the amount of international and domestic criticism surrounding the Tymoshenko case, there had been speculation that Yanukovych would pardon her. Dr. Brzezinski, during his videoconference, described the Ukrainian political elite, opposition included, as “enmeshed in deeply corrupt relations” that undercut rule of law and smooth democratic processes.
The Yulia Tymoshenko case has especially damaged Ukraine’s relations with Europe and the United States. Her trial and imprisonment have proved highly embarrassing to Ukraine’s erstwhile partners; it’s difficult to imagine that an aspiring European nation would imprison the former election rival of the current president. Europe and the US have distanced themselves from Ukraine in international multilateral institutions. The Tymoshenko trial also damaged relations with the Russian Federation, and Yanukovych’s demands for a revision of the 2009 gas agreement conducted by Tymoshenko has alienated Kyiv from Moscow.\textsuperscript{ccviii}

Given the international political consequences of her imprisonment, the actions of the Yanukovych Administration seem oddly irrational. After her election loss, many Ukrainians had become disenchanted with Tymoshenko’s aggressive style and opportunistic politics. It was inconceivable that she could mount a credible challenge to Yanukovych in the next presidential election. Her imprisonment also risked galvanizing her supporters and other anti-Yanukovych political factions. In addition, the case has alienated Ukraine internationally and undermined Yanukovych’s foreign agenda. In addition to Tymoshenko’s imprisonment, Ambassador Pifer claims that there are “fifteen to twenty others in prison on politically-motivated charges.” There is much speculation about the motivations behind Tymoshenko’s imprisonment. Some experts have noted to Yanukovych’s penchant for revenge against his political rivals. Others have noted the irrationality of political revenge, and the likely inability of Yanukovych to control his political underlings.

Ukraine continued its downward spiral toward unaccountable politics and authoritarianism during the October 2012 parliamentary elections. Yanukovych’s Party of Regions emerged as the most dominant political party in parliament following the elections,
with more than 25 percent of the votes, which retained the pro-government parliamentary coalition. However, international observers and many Western foreign governments largely criticized the conduct of the elections. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe opined that Tymoshenko’s jailing and that of other opposition figures hindered the election’s transparency. Election monitoring organizations were also critical about state control of the media that largely favored pro-government candidates. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), for example, noted “the lack of a level playing field, caused primarily by the abuse of administrative resources, lack of transparency of campaign and party financing, and lack of balanced media coverage.”

The outcome of the parliamentary elections also reflects growing dissatisfaction with politics among the Ukrainian populace. One of the more worrying developments was the success of the ultranationalist Svobada (Freedom) party in winning more than 10 percent of the vote. Svobada, which is based primarily in the Galician area of Western Ukraine, espouses radical Ukrainian nationalism and xenophobia. The party’s rise is especially concerning because of its radical ethnic-based politics, most notably its anti-Semitism and anti-Russian posture. The reasons for Svobada’s success are difficult to gauge. But Ukraine’s poor economic and political climate, as well as the perceived pro-Russian cultural politics of President Yanukovych, are likely important reasons for political disaffection among many in the Ukrainian-speaking western regions of the country. Svobada’s success is somewhat comparable to the rise of radical right-wing parties in other European countries over the past decade, and especially since the 2008 economic crisis.
Political regression has also continued in other spheres of Ukrainian political life. Reporters have recently noted the increased pressure on Ukrainian print and television media. Ukrainian media is still predominantly controlled by the country’s oligarchic class, and the Yanukovych Administration has put significant pressure on oligarchs to toe a pro-administration line. The deterioration of rule of law, complicated tax laws, and insufficient property rights in Ukraine have augmented the government’s ability to control potentially dissident oligarchs.

Ukraine’s tax laws are extremely complicated and non-compliance is rampant. ICPS has noted some meaningful reforms to the tax system in recent years, including under the current administration. The American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine and other independent organizations note that many other reforms are still necessary to increase the transparency of revenue collection. Continuing inequity and opacity are advantageous for the administration, as the government can effectively pressure businesspeople and other individuals with the threat of imprisonment for tax invasion and/or other charges. Many oligarchs still remain dependent on the state for their livelihoods and property, and the Yanukovych Administration has increasingly reigned-in oligarchic independence. Fortunately, some media outlets have continued critical reporting and despite a negative trajectory in media freedom, there is still an active independent press.

One of the most lasting effects of the Orange Revolution is the vibrancy of Ukrainian civil society. Despite the worrying and regressive political trends in Ukraine, Ukrainian civil society remains relatively strong, and according to one observer is “not to be underestimated.” A small, but still notable Ukrainian middle class has emerged over the past
decade and has injected needed impetus into independent civil society organizations. Ukrainian think tanks and other organizations still play a vital role in Ukrainian policy making, even under the Yanukovych Administration. Although most Ukrainian think tanks and civil society groups focus on domestic political issues, several organizations advise the government on foreign policy making strategy, particularly the economic consequences of European integration strategies and agreements such as the Association Agreement with the EU. ICPS, for example, consults with the government on the impact of reforms that are necessary to comply with the Association Agreement and free trade stipulations with the EU. Ironically, some Ukrainian think tanks have even reported that the greater ideological and political consistency of the Yanukovych Administration has made civil society-government interaction easier. However, Yuriy Yakymenko, Deputy Director General of the Razumkov Center, noted in an interview that the Yanukovych Administration often “listens but doesn’t do.” Despite the doubts of some towards Ukrainian civil society, such as Volodymyr Dubovyk of Odessa Mechnikov National University, who claims that Tymoshenko’s continued imprisonment is “proof of no civil society,” there is still some hope in Ukraine. Given the development of civil society organizations over the past two decades, and especially since 2004, it’s unlikely that an entrenching authoritarianism will be able to fully dislodge their importance in Ukrainian policy making.

Ukrainian civil society remains weak and fractured relative to many developed Western democracies, but it will remain an important part of Ukrainian political pluralism. Economic growth and reform will remain the most vital prerequisites for the growth of civil society, as a strong middle class and economic resources independent from the state are essential. The EU continues to appreciate the role of civil society in lobbying the government for European
integration strategies. Mr. Stulik noted that feedback from Ukrainian NGOs and think tanks are crucial in the EU’s approach to Ukrainian integration.

Despite recent setbacks, there remain other encouraging signs for the future of Ukrainian democracy as well. The Ukrainian middle class, although still relatively small, has grown since the events of 2004. Economic reforms during Yushchenko’s premiership in the early 2000s, and economic growth under President Yushchenko enlarged the size and influence of Ukrainians with disposable income. The middle class, particularly in Kyiv and other urban areas, is increasingly defensive towards its political and economic rights. This group was fundamental during the Orange Revolution, and current protest movements throughout the country. While in Kyiv I was struck by the frequency of political protests, from across the political spectrum, in front of the parliament on an almost daily basis. Ukrainians often proudly mention the nation’s history and culture of protest. The contemporary emotional debate over the status of the Russian language in the Ukrainian regions, for example, has triggered large protests and counter-protests in the capital and other major urban centers, and even fistfights in the Parliament. This topic and other current political issues are highly divisive, but Ukrainians are still politically engaged. The Ukrainian government is still constrained by a politically active citizenry, even after widespread disenchantment under Yushchenko and now under Yanukovych. Perhaps this supports various assertions about Ukraine’s unique political protest and democratic culture, especially compared to Russia and Belarus.

Ideological and regional political divisiveness similarly constrains Ukrainian government action. The political differences between eastern and western Ukraine has contributed to a highly fractured political system. Political divisions have certainly impeded the effectiveness of
Ukrainian governance, which was especially obvious during the Yushchenko years. However, these political divisions also prevent the establishment of strong authoritarian regime. Ukraine is simply too politically divided and contested to support the consolidation of a centralized and highly unitary state. Diverse economic interests, even among the nation’s powerful oligarchic groups, discourage a single political group from ‘capturing’ the state and establishing centralized control.

Even under the current Administration, which is dominated by Yanukovych’s political base in the Donetsk region, the state must account for the interests of other diverse groups in order to stay in power. Ukraine has experienced a regressive return to the semi-authoritarianism present during the Kuchma era, but the eradication of political pluralism and constraints on Ukrainian policy makers seems unlikely. Ukrainian foreign policy is still more democratized and representative of diverse economic and political interests than during the first years of independence.

**Foreign Policy Under Yanukovych**

Many political observers noted an abrupt shift in Ukrainian foreign policy during President Yanukovych’s first few months in office, as noted earlier. In a clear break from Ukraine’s three previous presidents since independence, Yanukovych unsurprisingly renounced the country’s intention to enter NATO. Yanukovych’s two presidential campaigns, in 2004 and 2010, had stressed the inadvisability of Ukrainian NATO membership and the need for the country’s “non-aligned status” in international security affairs. President Yanukovych criticized Yushchenko for blindly promoting NATO membership at the expense of normalized
relations with the Russian Federation. Instead, the President pointed to NATO’s unpopularity among a majority of the Ukrainian populace and stressed that improved relations with Moscow would improve the state’s external security without the need for membership in the Euro-Atlantic military alliance. The move certainly appealed to Yanukovych’s political base in eastern Ukraine, and the Donbas region in particular, which expressed strong anti-NATO sentiment during the Yushchenko Administration.

Yanukovych’s repudiation of Ukrainian membership in NATO was certainly a notable shift in Ukrainian foreign policy trajectory. Almost overnight, a major aspect of Ukrainian European and Euro-Atlantic integration strategy was reversed. Despite the obvious importance of this aspect of Ukraine’s foreign policy shift under Yanukovych, this policy change did not represent Yanukovych’s adoption of “ideologically driven pro-Russian domestic national and foreign policymaking,” as some Ukrainian politicians and political observers claimed.

Ukraine’s repudiation of its strategic goal of NATO membership, although a break with the past, also reflected some level of pragmatism, rather than an ideological or political move towards Russian political or security structures. NATO is generally unpopular among Ukrainians, and various public opinion polls have indicated that a large majority of the country has been opposed to NATO membership over the last decade. In 2007, for instance, 78 percent of Ukrainians opposed NATO membership. The reasons for NATO’s unpopularity among Ukrainians are unclear; however, Soviet-era anti-NATO stereotypes and fears of alienation from Russia are probably major factors.

Interestingly, Ukrainian public opinion was pro-NATO prior to the alliance’s military operations in Serbia and Kosovo in 1999. According to the polling and sociological institute, Kyiv
Institute of Sociology, NATO’s actions produced broad distrust towards the organization in Ukraine. Later American military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq, although not NATO operations, further entrenched public distaste with Western security integration. Public dissatisfaction with NATO made Yanukovych’s foreign policy choice a mostly uncontroversial decision, and even some pro-Western Ukrainians expressed approval of the Administration’s decision. The official I spoke with at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, despite his implied pro-Western sentiments, declared that it was “good NATO was taken off the table” because “not many Ukrainians were behind it.” Ultimately, a government is responsible to the views of its citizens, which the official described as a “pro-Russian silent majority” in Ukraine.

Even despite President Yanukovych’s personal anti-NATO sentiment and the repudiation of Ukrainian NATO membership for a vague notion of non-aligned status, his administration continued to support cooperation with the organization within the same framework as Kuchma and Yushchenko. Yanukovych’s Ukraine continues in its close cooperation with the alliance, as Kyiv still takes “part in NATO exercises” and “partakes in NATO peacekeeping operations and training missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kosovo.”

Furthermore, Ukraine continues to use the NATO Partnership for Peace program and joint military cooperation to modernize the Ukrainian armed forces and promote trust-building and smooth relations with the NATO nations. In September 2011, Yanukovych explained: “We positively assess the current level of relations with the Alliance, and their pragmatic content and commitment to achieve a result. In our opinion, it is a solid further guarantee of further constructive partnership between Ukraine and NATO.” Ukraine-skeptic countries in NATO
likely breathed a sigh of relief that Kyiv’s NATO ascension could no longer undermine bilateral and multilateral relations with the Russians.

The Kharkiv Accords, which were signed by Yanukovych in April 2010 and extended Russia’s lease of naval facilities in Sevastopol until 2042, similarly evoked distrust and anxiety among Ukraine’s pro-Western constituency. Officially titled the Ukrainian–Russian Naval Base for Natural Gas Treaty, the Kharkiv Accords extended Russia’s lease in return for “reductions in the price of Russia’s gas and a $2 billion credit line.” Yanukovych framed the deal as a security and economic necessity. Ukraine was hit particularly hard by the 2008 global financial crisis, and the Yanukovych Administration claimed that a reduction in natural gas import prices was necessary for the Ukrainian economy. The Ukrainian government also stressed the need to stabilize bilateral relations with Moscow. As mentioned earlier, some Ukrainian policy makers feared that the Russian military would simply refuse to leave the naval facilities in the event that a new agreement wasn’t reached. In the words of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, “how could the Russians be kicked out?” Although these concerns had largely faded by 2010, Kyiv’s inability to reach an accord with Moscow would almost certainly seriously damage bilateral relations.

In a similar manner of criticism towards Yanukovych’s declaration of ‘non-aligned status,’ anti-Yanukovych Ukrainians and foreigners accused his administration of unabashed pro-Russian sympathies and a retreat from the country’s own national interests. The 1997 Black Sea Fleet Agreement, set to expire in 2017, had served as a major point of contention between President Yushchenko and the Kremlin. The Yanukovych critics have certainly made salient points in their criticism of the deal. The Kharkiv Accords were widely perceived as a “bad deal”
internationally. Although a Russian base extension was probably necessary because of geopolitical security concerns, the Ukrainians simply did not extract sufficient concessions from the Kremlin in return for the agreement.

There are several theories that seek to explain the politics behind President Yanukovych’s lease-for-gas deal with the Russian Federation. Some politicians and analysts have cited corruption in the presidential administration as a possible motivation for the agreement. Mr. Melnyk claimed that the Black Sea Fleet deal allowed Yanukovych to sell “something that didn’t belong to him.” Others have cited Yanukovych’s history of pro-Russian and anti-Ukrainian sympathies, Russians in his inner circle, his ideological orientation, or sheer administrative incompetence for the one-sidedness of the Kharkiv Accords. In reality, the most likely explanations are Yanukovych’s political incompetence on one hand, and his desire to please the Russians and improve bilateral relations on the other. President Yanukovych most likely assumed that the Russians would better reciprocate the lease-for-gas deal, immediately improving bilateral relations and throwing greater political support behind the Yanukovych Administration. According to Oleksandr Sushko, the administration was “too naïve to expect equal policies vis-à-vis Russia.” The Russians have largely ignored Viktor Yanukovych, and have even become increasingly critical of his government and Ukrainian resistance to the Russian-proposed Customs Union and greater Ukrainian economic and political integration with the CIS.

The Russians have continued to overtly pressure Kyiv over the Customs Union, and denounced his government’s imprisonment of Yulia Tymoshenko and calls to revise her 2009 gas deal with Russia. Yanukovych was bitterly mistaken if he believed that Moscow would show greater appreciation towards his administration because of the 2010 agreement, and his
administration has become increasingly alienated by their counterparts in the Kremlin because of Russian political pressure and a lack of appreciation.

Despite Yanukovych’s clear moves towards the Russian Federation during his first months in office, his administration has increasingly re-affirmed the Ukrainian government’s intention to enter the EU and continue the process of economic and political Europeanization. Viktor Yanukovych authored a Wall Street Journal Op-Ed in August 2011, titled Ukraine’s Future Is With the European Union, in which he emphasized the importance of EU membership and closer relations with the West for his country’s national interests. The President wrote: “I believe Ukraine’s future belongs in Europe. While our historical connection to Russia will continue to be very important, the key to prosperity for our people and the development of our natural and human resources lies in a deeper and more developed integration with Europe and the West.” Yanukovych continued to stress the importance of smooth relations with Russia, and that European integration and constructive Russia-Ukraine relations are not necessarily mutually exclusive objectives.

The signals and actions emanating from the Yanukovych Administration began to better reflect the continuities apparent in the foreign policy objectives of the past, as policy makers began to stress the need for “balancing” relations between East and West. Under President Yanukovych, it appears that the “leaning towards the West” policies of his predecessor are over. However, since the disappointment of the Kharkiv Accords and increasing distrust towards the Kremlin, Ukraine’s priorities have shifted decisively Westward.

Since the signing of the Kharkiv Accords in April 2010, Kyiv has resisted further pressure from the Russians for closer economic, political, and security integration with Russia and other
former Soviet states. The Yanukovych Administration may have incorrectly assumed that the renunciation of NATO membership and the Sevastopol lease extension would ease Russian pressures for Ukraine to enter the Russian-led Customs Union with Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan and other Russian integration strategies such as the Eurasian Union or Ukrainian participation in the Collective Security Treaty Organization. These efforts reflect Moscow’s desires to craft a Russian-dominated post-Soviet economic and political order after the obvious failings of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The Russian and Ukrainian governments have particularly butted heads over Ukrainian resistance to the Customs Union, arguably the least intrusive of Russian proposals and a necessary step for Moscow’s grand strategy of a post-Soviet Russian regional order. Russian policy makers understand the significance of Ukrainian cooperation. Kyiv’s refusal to accede to Russian integration proposals, even under a supposedly pro-Russian Ukrainian regime, has frustrated the Kremlin and threatened its regional planning.

Over the past two years, Ukrainian resistance to the Customs Union has oftentimes dominated Russia-Ukraine relations. Ukraine has pressed back at Russian pressure to join the Customs Union, emphasizing that Ukrainian participation in the union would undermine Ukrainian objectives of Europeanization. Ukrainian membership in the Customs Union would prevent EU membership and the finalized—albeit unsigned—Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) with the European Union. Instead, Kyiv has attempted to placate Russian anxiety by showing an interest in a still ill-defined Customs Union 3+1 formula that would allow extensive Ukrainian cooperation with the organization. The Yanukovych Administration has rejected any pretenses of becoming a full-fledged member of
the Customs Union, but has tried to deflect pressure by remaining open to economic integration with the proposed Customs Union through an agreement that would entail close cooperation between Ukraine and the union without actual membership.

Russia-Ukraine relations have cooled considerably since the Kharkiv Accords, with Vladimir Putin and the Russian press increasingly criticizing the Yanukovych’s governance. Putin, in particularly, has reacted bitterly to Yanukovych’s refusal to become a full-fledged member of the Customs Union. Putin lashed out at Ukraine’s EU intentions and refusal to join the Russian-led union, saying: “We have just talked about problems facing the Eurozone. It is difficult for me to imagine that Ukraine could be joining the EU in such circumstances. This would just be totally unrealistic. Certainly such a choice of strategy is possible. But different questions arise at this point, those of economic feasibility. What would be a better choice? At the end of the day, our Ukrainian friends and colleagues will have to decide for themselves what would be better for them—to seek entry into the Eurozone or to use the competitive advantages which already exist, those relating to large cooperation between whole sectors of the Ukrainian and Russian economies.” The Russian press and government officials have similarly criticized the Yanukovych Administration for its insistence on a renegotiation of the 2009 gas agreement between the two countries. The Russian administration and press has denounced the Yanukovych administration for trying to turn back on its legal obligations, and for wrongly imprisoning then-Prime Minister Tymoshenko for finalizing the deal. These criticisms have certainly increased tensions in bilateral relations.

Perhaps surprisingly, given President Yanukovych’s pro-Russian sympathies in the linguistic and cultural spheres, his administration has made some significant Europeanization
accomplishments that were never completed under Yushchenko. Most importantly, Ukraine completed negotiations over the Association Agreement and DCFTA with the European Union. As of 2011, Ukraine declared its intention to sign the agreement in its current form. Although still unsigned, the Association Agreement is an important milestone for Ukraine. Once completed, the free trade agreement would require significant economic reforms that would modernize the Ukrainian economy and strengthen the country’s overall macro-economy. The DCFTA is also a necessary stepping stone for further integration into the European Union, and would certainly bring the country closer to the European market, even if Ukraine never becomes a member of the EU. The Yanukovych Administration has also made progress in negotiation with the EU over visa liberalization, and Ukraine’s continued cooperation with NATO has proved strong.

Yanukovych’s Europeanization successes are surprising, albeit perhaps not completely unpredictable. Unlike President Yushchenko, who struggled with parliament throughout most of his term, the pro-Yanukovych coalition in the parliament has remained loyal to the president. The Party of Regions and its coalition partners have not demonstrated the factional squabbling that plagued the Orange Coalition or pro-Yanukovych governments under President Yushchenko. In this environment, the controversial economic decisions required for the DCFTA and other negotiations with the EU have proved easier. Unfortunately, the parliament’s relative discipline under Yanukovych also reflects the weakening of parliament under his leadership. Since the Orange Revolution, many of the oligarchs, including Yanukovych’s political base in Donetsk, have become increasingly wary of Russian economic predation. Ukrainian business interests have increasingly supported European economic integration, and are cognizant of the
potential economic benefits of a free trade agreement with the Europeans. Europe, in turn, has
appreciated Ukraine’s enhanced political consistency under Yanukovych, even as the European
states have protested antidemocratic political trends and the deprecation of the rule of law.

Despite the Europeanization gains of the Yanukovych Administration since the
conclusion of the Kharkiv Accords, Ukraine’s domestic developments have impeded the
country’s foreign policy strategy. Ukraine remains conflicted over its foreign policy orientation,
as President Yanukovych’s domestic political goals have prevented the realization of its foreign
policy objectives. President Yanukovych’s desire to remain in office despite his unpopularity
and turn back the tide of democratization has undermined Ukraine’s foreign policy strategy of
Europeanization. The imprisonment of Yulia Tymoshenko and other political figures, the erosion
of rule of law, and other worrying political trends have impeded Ukraine’s further
Europeanization under President Yanukovych. Although finalized, the Association Agreement
and DCFTA remains unsigned because of EU concerns with Ukraine’s domestic policy trends and
questions about the state of rule of law under the current administration. The degradation of
political freedom in Ukraine has reproduced the ‘Ukraine fatigue’ in European capitals that
plagued Ukrainian policy makers under presidents Kuchma and Yushchenko. Mr. Stulik
rhetorically asked, “is Yanukovych’s declared interest genuine?”

European policy makers have grown tired of Ukrainian political problems and repeated
policy reversals and flip-flops over the past decade, and there is a growing sense of
disillusionment, both in Europe and among Ukrainian citizens, of the chance for Kyiv’s eventual
membership in the EU or greater integration into Europe. The finalization of the Association
Agreement, DCFTA, visa-regime liberalization, and other developments will prove futile unless
Ukraine’s political situation improves to the point of encouraging Europe about Ukraine’s compatibility with European democratic values. Nonetheless, Mr. Stulik emphasized that “Ukraine is a priority country” and that the EU remains committed to the country’s declared objectives of integration.

Kyiv’s relations with Washington are severely strained since Yanukovych took office, and political regression has become more apparent. Ambassador Pifer, speaking in Kyiv, reported that “US-Ukraine relations are at a fairly low spot.” Selective prosecution, the deterioration of the rule of law, and other negative developments has similarly undermined United States-Ukraine relations. Presidents Obama and Yanukovych met briefly in March 2012 at the Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul, South Korea, after Ukraine pledged to remove highly enriched uranium from its territory. According to Ambassador Pifer, Obama sent “a very blunt message to President Yanukovych” in Seoul, raising the prosecution of Tymoshenko and hoping for a smooth and transparent October 2012 parliamentary elections. Ironically, former US Ambassador to Ukraine, John Herbst, speculated that Ukraine’s democratic regressions may have made President Obama’s initial RESET policy towards the Kremlin easier. Ukraine’s isolation from Euro-Atlantic institutions has removed a point of contention from Russia-United States relations.

Conflicts of interest between Yanukovych’s domestic and foreign policies have isolated Ukraine and produced an extremely suboptimal foreign policy outlook. Over the past eighteen months, Ukraine has become increasingly isolated because of outstanding problems with both the Russian Federation and Europe. Contemporary Ukrainian foreign policy reflects neither the “balancing” of the early Kuchma Administration, nor the “leaning towards the West” of...
President Yushchenko. Instead, foreign policy under Yanukovych has proven remarkably volatile. Initially, moves towards closer relations with Russia quickly flipped back towards the Europeanization drive evident under his predecessor. Yanukovych’s move back towards Europe likely reflected the geopolitical and economic realities facing Ukrainian policy makers. Since the Orange Revolution, Ukrainian political, security, and economic interests are increasingly conducive to European integration. The further political and economic regression of Russia has highlighted the advantages of Europeanization, even despite the political and economic problems facing the EU. Ukrainian civil society and business interests have elucidated the advantages of Ukraine’s long delayed entrance into Europe, even if a silent majority of the Ukrainian populace prefers closer relations with Russia relative to the West. Ukraine’s political problems and subsequent shunning by the West have left Ukraine remarkably isolated internationally.

Despite Ukraine’s obvious diplomatic isolation, signals emanating from the Yanukovych camp indicate that the administration appears largely ignorant in how it is regarded internationally. President Yanukovych and his foreign policy team are in denial about their diplomatic failings, and the damage that domestic regression has inflicted on its external priorities. The Ukrainian Ambassador to the United States, Olexander Motsyk, claimed that Ukraine is “not sliding, but striding towards full integration” with Europe and the West. In addition, the Ambassador emphasized the “development of relations with the US” during the Yanukovych presidency. Kyiv has refused to acknowledge the connection between the rule of law and selective prosecution and its diplomatic floundering in the West. In this environment,
Ukraine is unlikely to change course under President Yanukovych. Mr. Melnyk explained that “Yanukovych simply can’t understand European values.”

For the first time in the newly independent state’s history, Ukraine is isolated from both East and West. Yanukovych’s resistance to the Customs Union and other Russian-dominated Eurasian integration strategies has distanced Ukraine from Russia. Similarly, Ukraine’s problematic political trends have also isolated Ukraine from Europe and the West. Ukraine’s contemporary foreign policy orientation, rather than reflecting an actual strategy, is purely reflecting Yanukovych’s domestic agenda. Thus, Yanukovych’s foreign policy “neutrality,” which the president stresses as an integral part of national security, is instead “about staying in power,” says Andreas Umland. This complete lack of long-term strategic thinking is undermining Ukraine’s political and economic future, and carries the risk of entrapping Ukraine in a cycle of entrenching authoritarianism, political instability, and diplomatic isolation. Ihor Shevliakov notes the “conflicting motivations” of the Yanukovch Administration when it comes to domestic and foreign policy. The president’s domestic policy agenda and authoritarian tendencies are undercutting the foreign policy goals of the administration.

**Conclusion**

Ukraine’s foreign policy outlook has experienced substantial change, despite the presence of important continuities, since the collapse of the Soviet Union and Ukrainian independence in 1991. Ukraine’s relations with the Russian Federation on the one hand and the West on the other, has dominated the country’s policy priorities and international outlook. Given the regional influence of the United States, EU, and Russia—this continuity in Ukrainian
foreign policy will continue for the foreseeable future. Domestic political needs have always substantially affected the country’s foreign policy stance between Russia and the West. As Ukraine’s global role and security needs have evolved since independence, the country’s foreign policy priorities have similarly changed.

When Ukraine achieved independence in 1991, the new state found itself in an extremely tenuous internal and external security environment. Ukrainian national identity remained weak and complicated after more than three centuries of an imperial legacy under Russian tutelage. Popular support for Ukrainian independence, rather than indicating mass mobilization behind an independent regime, instead reflected popular discontent with the centralized Soviet system and extreme economic dysfunctionality. Ukraine lacked strong historical state precedent, and previous Ukrainian nationalist movements either failed or proved highly divisive. Identification with state institutions and patriotic ideals was extremely fractured—Ukrainian-speakers from western regions of the country largely supported the ‘Ukrainianization’ of Ukraine, while the mostly Russian-speakers from eastern and southern Ukraine were skeptical of non-Soviet Ukrainian identity. Ukraine’s new leaders, such as President Leonid Kravchuk, who were previously republican-level communist officials, were faced with the simultaneous tasks of state-building and preserving Ukraine’s fledging independence. Ukraine’s former communist ruling class, who inherited the independent Ukrainian state, formed an alliance of convenience with nationally-conscious Ukrainians for the objectives of state-building and mobilizing the population behind an independent Ukraine.

Ukrainian foreign policy during the Kravchuk Administration and early Kuchma years reflected the nation’s state-building objectives and security vulnerability, especially in the face
of a potentially hostile Russian Federation. Ukrainian security and state-building priorities during the first years of independence were paramount. Kyiv remained dangerously isolated for the first half of the 1990s because of the saliency of Ukrainian state-building and external security concerns. During the Kravchuk Administration, and also the beginning of Kuchma’s first term in office, three outstanding issues dominated Ukraine’s external relations—nuclear weapons on Ukrainian territory, Ukraine’s role in the CIS, and the status of Crimea and Russia’s Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol. Ukraine initially resisted international pressure, from both the West and the Russian Federation, to immediately transfer the weapons to Russia for disassembly. Ukrainian fears of Russian military pressure or adventurism, particularly in the Crimean peninsula or the Russian-speaking eastern regions of the country, made Kyiv extremely cautious about giving up the weapons without overt security guarantees from Russia and the West.

The dissolution of the USSR also necessitated the resolution of outstanding issues—both emotional and substantive—between Russia and Ukraine. Ukraine’s resistance to full-fledged membership and cooperation in the CIS, which Russia envisioned as a tool for Russian influence over the post-Soviet space damaged bilateral relations. The emotional issue of Ukraine’s ownership of Crimea, and the future of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in the port of Sevastopol similarly damaged bilateral relations.

Ukrainian foreign policy first started to reflect strategic “balancing” between East and West under President Kuchma, after the partial or complete resolution of the three outstanding issues in the mid-1990s. Ukraine’s important state-building successes and the normalization of Ukrainian sovereignty during the mid-1990s allowed a foreign policy orientation shift under the
Kuchma Administration. Ukraine emphasized smooth relations with both the West and the Russian Federation during this period, and Ukraine emerged from self-imposed strategic isolation. Ukraine established close relations with the United States and other Western capitals during the latter half of the 1990s, and Ukraine’s ascension into Western political, economic, and security institutions became a fundamental component of Kyiv’s state strategy.

President Kuchma declared Ukraine’s intention to join NATO, the EU, the WTO, and other organizations that would bind Ukraine to the West and international multilateralism. At first, Kyiv cooperated closely with the EU and NATO during this period. However, Kyiv made only limited progress towards membership in the EU and NATO. At the same time, smooth Ukrainian relations with Russia remained paramount. Ukraine’s external security depended, and still depends, on constructive and cooperative Russia-Ukraine relations. Relations between Russia and Ukraine were generally cooperative during the Kuchma Administration. Ukraine still staunchly protected its sovereignty and foreign policy independence, initially resisting Russian pressure to re-establish Russian influence over the former Soviet Union.

Ukraine’s domestic politics have particularly factored into the country’s foreign policy orientation since Kuchma’s second term as President. Ukrainian politics remained “stuck” in a state of partial transition to political democracy since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Ukraine needed both political and economic reforms in order to democratize the control of economic resources and promote political pluralism and civil society. Despite some encouraging political and economic reforms during President Kuchma’s first term, Ukraine’s political system remained far from ideal. Ukraine’s 1996 post-Soviet constitution strengthened the role of the presidency at the expense of parliament, ironically impeding the democratic transition. In this
environment, Kuchma’s latter years in office witnessed political regression rather than transition. This development had extremely deleterious consequences on Ukraine’s foreign policy strategy, undermining the Kuchma Administration’s foreign policy “balancing.”

The Cassette Scandal, which began in 2000 and implicated Kuchma and his inner circle in political repression and serious criminal acts, ruined Kyiv’s foreign balanced policy orientation. Ukraine’s close bilateral and multilateral relations with the West, and the United States in particular, were severely damaged. In this environment, Ukraine increasingly leaned towards Russia for political and economic support. During the latter years of the Kuchma Administration, Ukraine’s optimal foreign policy “balancing” tilted toward enhanced Russian influence in Ukraine. Russia’s role in the fraudulent 2004 elections, and Russian economic influence in the country were particularly ominous for Ukraine’s state security and sovereignty.

Thus, the Orange Revolution, the popular protest movement of 2004 that reversed the presidential election results, had important effects on Ukrainian foreign policy making. The Orange Revolution demonstrated the enhanced political clout of Ukraine’s middle class and civil society organizations. The Revolution also reflected a split among Ukraine’s oligarchic elites, who are usually perceived as having pro-Russian political and cultural sympathies. Some Ukrainian business interests had become discouraged about Russian economic influence and competition during the latter part of Kuchma’s rule, and were thus crucial in backing candidate Yushchenko during the days of the Revolution. In perhaps the most important outcome of the Revolution, the Kuchma and Yushchenko camps made a constitutional compromise to weaken the power of the presidency. The strength of the Ukrainian presidency was a crucial factor inhibiting Ukraine’s democratic transition, and the relative strengthening of parliament marked
a crucial shift towards more pluralistic and representative politics. The Orange Revolution initially galvanized Ukrainian civil society and popular political participation, producing more informed and active citizens.

The Orange Revolution and the election of pro-Western President Yushchenko had important effects on Ukrainian foreign policy strategy. The Revolution caught the attention and imagination of the West, and Ukraine’s emergence from semi-authoritarianism initially endeared Western political, economic, and security institutions towards Ukraine. Earlier, Ukrainians complained about the lack of attention afforded Kyiv from Western capitals and multilateral organizations. The Yushchenko Administration immediately re-affirmed Ukraine’s intentions to join NATO, the EU, and other multilateral institutions. For a brief time, it seemed that Kyiv had a real chance of obtaining membership in these organizations in the future, and Ukraine’s foreign policy strategy could be defined as “leaning towards the West” as Europeanization became a primary state goal. Ukrainian civil society, business interests, and policy makers increasingly favored Ukraine’s goals of Europeanization and played key roles in supporting and assisting this process.

However, domestic political problems in Ukraine continued to undermine Ukraine’s optimal foreign policy strategy. The Orange coalition that obtained power collapsed after emotional political infighting, and the rest of Yushchenko Administration was tainted by ineffectual leadership and political dysfunctionality. Unfortunately, political dysfunctionality prevented Ukraine from solidifying its drive towards Europe and Western security integration. Relations with Russia remained strained during much of the Yushchenko Administration, as well—emotional and substantive strategic differences stemming from the Revolution
prevented a necessary rapprochement in Russia-Ukraine relations. The gas crises of 2006 and 2009 demonstrated the highly strained nature of bilateral relations between the two states.

Since the election of Viktor Yanukovych in 2010, Ukrainian foreign policy has remained highly volatile. The regression of the political system and entrenching authoritarianism during the last two years has similarly impeded Ukraine’s optimal foreign policy strategy and undermined the objectives of policy makers in Kyiv. Perhaps most alarmingly, the Constitutional Court’s reversal of the 2004 constitutional compromise threatens the future of Ukraine’s political transition. The dubious trial and imprisonment of former prime minister and presidential candidate Yulia Tymoshenko have proven especially damaging.

Initially, the Yanukovych Administration moved sharply back towards closer relations with Russia, extending the Russian lease in Sevastopol and dropping Kyiv’s NATO membership intentions. However, Ukraine’s geopolitical and post-Orange Revolution domestic political reality favors Europeanization and closer relations with the West. The threat of Russian political and economic dominance has made the Yanukovych Administration wary of closer cooperation with Russia—his administration has resisted Ukrainian inclusion in the Russian-led Customs Union and other Eastward integration strategies. Over the past eighteen months, President Yanukovych has emphasized Europeanization and cooperation with the West at the expense of Russia-Ukraine relations. Unfortunately, Yanukovych’s domestic political agenda has interfered with Kyiv’s foreign policy strategy of Western integration. Negative developments in the rule of law, selective prosecution, property rights, freedom of the press, and election transparency have impeded the administration’s goals of European integration and special relations with the West.
Despite these troubling domestic political developments and current political
dysfunction, there still remains some semblance of hope for Ukraine’s political system.
Ukrainian civil society is still relatively strong for post-communist states, and independent
organizations play a key role in informing government institutions and pressing for political and
economic reform. Ukrainian citizens, although increasingly disaffected and politically fractured,
are more engaged than a decade ago. Ukrainian oligarchs and business interests are
increasingly supportive of European integration and wary of Russian control of Ukrainian
economic resources.

Kyiv is unlikely to move back into the Russian orbit anytime soon. Ukraine’s political
divisions, although often a source of political dysfunction and policy incoherence, also constrain
government officials from establishing a highly centralized authoritarian state. In this
environment, it’s important for the West to continue to engage Ukraine, despite frustration
with the country’s current direction. Dr. Volodymyr Dubovyk noted the need for “clear signals”
about Europeanization expectations and the consequences of non-compliance. The experience
of Belarus is a clear example of the inadvisability of sanctions. Sanctions are likely to isolate
Ukraine, rather than encourage the difficult political and economic reforms necessary for
integration. European integration and special relations with the West are vital incentives for
Ukrainian officials to respect the rule of law and democracy.

The EU continues to hold the most important “carrots” for Ukraine, in terms of the
benefits of Europeanization, and thus the European Union must lead the way in dissuading
Kyiv’s continued path down the road of authoritarianism. An isolated and friendless Ukraine is
more likely to continue its political regression. A Ukraine that is confident in the feasibility of its
European future is more likely to take the painful economic and political reforms that are crucial for Europeanization and the further development of a pluralistic and transparent political system. Ukraine has always proved more successful when relations with Euro-Atlantic institutions are strongest. The United States and European Union can still reasonably hope to solicit change in Ukraine, and Kyiv still takes its European aspirations seriously.
Bibliography


News Source Citations:


Rossiya 24. “Russia’s Putin Downplays Ukraine’s Decision Not to Join Customs Union.” 16 September 2011.

Interfax. “Yanukovych Upbeat About Relations With NATO.” 21 September 2011.


Some Additional Readings:


Interviews:

Rajan Menon- Professor of Political Science, City College of New York. March 21, 2012

Alexander Motyl- Professor of Political Science, Rutgers University. March 28, 2012

Steven Larrabee- Distinguished Chair in European Security, RAND. March 29, 2012


Paul D’Anieri- Dean, University of Florida College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. April 12, 2012

Anonymous- Kyiv newspaper writers and editors


Oleksandr Sushko- Research Director, Institute for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation. May 22, 2012

Yaroslav Voitko- Policy Manager, American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine. May 24, 2012
Valeriy Khmelko- Former President, Kyiv International Institute of Sociology at National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. May 25, 2012

Vira Nanivska- Director, International Center for Policy Studies. May 25 and June 1, 2012

Volodymyr Dubovyk- Director, Center for International Studies at Odessa Mechnikov National University. May 28, 2012

David Stulik- Press and Information Officer, Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine. May 29, 2012

Andreas Umland- Professor of Political Science, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. May 30, 2012

Anonymous- Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Yuriy Yakymenko- Deputy Director General, Razumkov Center. May 31, 2012


Smola Lidiya- Head of the Department of Analytical and Sociological Research, Ukrainian Foundation for Democracy "People First." June 6, 2012

Viktor Tkachuk- Former Member of the Ukrainian Parliament and Co-founder of Ukrainian Foundation for Democracy "People First." June 6, 2012

Plias Yuriii- Editor-in-chief, Ukrainian Foundation for Democracy "People First." June 6, 2012

Events Attended:


Ukraine@20 Symposium: Change and Continuity in Ukraine’s Foreign Policy, Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute. April 23, 2012

Videoconference with Zbigniew Brzezinski, Institute of World Policy. May 30, 2012

Discussion with Students by Steven Pifer, Academy of Scientists (Kyiv). June 5, 2012

Journalists’ Roundtable: Ambassadorial Quartet: Roman Popadiuk, William Miller, Keith Smith, Steven Pifer, Institute of World Policy. June 6, 2012
The Prospects of Relations Between Ukraine and the United States, Baltimore Council on Foreign Relations. December 5, 2012

ii Ibid., pg. 3.
iv Ibid., pg. 35.
v Pg. 76, Potichnyj, Peter. Ukraine and Russia in their Historical Encounter Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1992.
vi Wilson, op cit., pg. 15.
vii Ibid., pg. 9.
viii Ibid., pg. 1.
ix Ibid., pg. 11.
xii Ibid., pg. 111.
xii Ibid., pg. 18.

xiv Armstrong, op. cit.
xv Wilson, op. cit., pg. 21.
xvi Wilson, op. cit., pg. 22.

xvii Ibid., pg. 44.

xix Ibid., pg. 64.
Wilson, op. cit., pg. 18.

Ibid., pg. 9.

Ibid., pg. 65.

Ibid., pg. 67.

ibid., pg. 63.

Kuzio and Wilson, op. cit., pg. 76.

Ibid., pg. 101.

Ibid., pg. 103.

Ibid., pg. 3.

Wilson, op. cit., pg. 65.

Kuzio and Wilson. op. cit., pg. 125.

Ibid., pg. 130.


Wilson, op. cit., pg. 108.

Pg. 154, Kuzio and Wilson, op. cit., pg. 154.

Ibid., pg. 165.

Ibid., pg. 174.

Interview, former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Steven Pifer. April 5, 2012

Wilson, op. cit., pg. 111.

Ibid., pg. 112.

Wilson, “Ukrainian Nationalism in...”, Loc. cit.

Interview with Dr. Valeriy Khmelko. May 25, 2012


Ibid., pg. 72.


lxxv  Ibid., pg. 103.


lxxviii  Ibid., pg. 103.


lxxx  Karatnycky, op.cit.


lxvii  Lieven, op. cit., pg. 129.


lxxxiv  Albright and Appatov, op. cit., pg. 68.

lxxxv  Karatnycky, op. cit.


lxxxvii  Yekelchyck, op. cit., pg. 195-196.

lxxxviii  Albright and Appatov, op. cit., pg. 69.


xc  Yekelchyck, op. cit., pg. 196.

x  Interview with a Ukrainian official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.


xii  Ibid. pg. 50.


xv  Shulman, op. cit., pg. 34.

xvi  Shulman, op. cit., pg. 40.


xviii  Interview with Dr. Oleksandr Sushko. May 22, 2012

xix  Ibid., pg. 52.
ci Ibid., pg. 218.
cii Ibid., pg. 219.
civ Interview with Dr. Valeriy Khmelko. May 25, 2012
cvi Ibid., pg. 194.
cix Interview with Dr. Paul D’Anieri. April 12, 2012
cxi Ibid., pg. 102-103.
cxii Ibid., pg. 110.
cxiii Ibid., pg. 126.
cxvi Ibid., pg. 141.
cxxi Ibid.

cxxii Ibid., pg. 142.
cxxiii Interview with Mr. Yaroslav Voitko, Policy Manager at the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine. May 24, 2012
cxxiv Kravchuk, op. cit. pg. 55.
cxxv Kravchuk, op. cit., pg. 57.
cxxvii Ibid., pg. 33.
cxxviii Interview with Dr. Ihor Shevliakov, ICPS. May 22, 2012


Ibid., pg. 207.

Ibid., pg. 226.

Aslund and McFaul, op. cit., pg. 70.

Ibid., pg. 75.

Ibid., pg. 104.


Yekelchyck, op. cit., pg. 209.

Interview with Dr. Oleksiy Melnyk. May 31, 2012


Aslund and McFaul, op. cit., pg. 33.


Ibid., pg. 50.

Aslund and McFaul, op. cit., pg. 39.


Aslund and McFaul, op. cit., pg. 158.

Aslund and McFaul, op. cit., pg. 158.

Ibid., pg. 146.


Discussions with Kyiv journalists and editors

Interview with Vira Nanivska. June 1, 2012

Interview with Dr. Andreas Umland. May 30, 2012

Pg. 222, Yekelchyck, op. cit., pg. 222.


Malek, op. cit., pg. 516.

Malek, op. cit., pg. 536.

Malek, op. cit., pg. 528.

Freire, op. cit.

Malek, op. cit., pg. 529.

Freire, op. cit. pg. 246.

Malek, op. cit., pg. 516.

Freire, op. cit., pg. 242.

Freire, op. cit., pg. 238.

Freire, “Ukraine’s Multi-Vectorial…”, Loc. cit.


Interview with Dr. F. Steven Larrabee, RAND. March 29, 2012

Haran, op. cit., pg. 98.

Pardo, “Yanukovich’s Ukraine...”, Loc. cit.

Interview with Yuriy Yakymenko, Razumkov Center. May 31, 2012

Interview with Yuriy Yakymenko, Razumkov Center. May 31, 2012


Speaking with anonymous Kyiv newspaper writers and editors
Interview with Yuriy Yakymenko, Razumkov Center. May 31, 2012


Haran, op. cit., pg. 99.


Munro, op. cit., pg. 45.

Interview with Ukrainian official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs


Interfax. “Yanukovich Upbeat About Relations With NATO.” 21 September 2011.


Rossiya 24. “Russia’s Putin Downplays Ukraine’s Decision Not to Join Customs Union.” 16 September 2011.

Interview with Dr. Paul D’Anieri. April 12, 2012
Interview with David Stulik, the Press and Information Officer of the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine. May 24, 2012
Interview with Dr. Andreas Umland. May 30, 2012
Interview with Ihor Shevliakov. May 22, 2012
Former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Steven Pifer speaking in Kyiv.