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THE NEW SLAVIC STATES: ALTERNATIVE FUTURES FOR UKRAINE AND BELARUS

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This paper analyzes developments in Ukraine and Belarus and important external influences which can affect the future orientation of these two states. It offers two alternative futures for both Ukraine and Belarus and projects their possible economic, foreign policy, and military-security implications. It is clear that the Russian Federation's own development is one of the most important factors in determining how Ukraine and Belarus may orient themselves. Ukraine is caught between an unstable Russian Federation and a group of non-democratic states to the south, while striving to be incorporated into the Western community. It is therefore located at a critical juncture in the new Europe. Belarus will also influence (although less than Ukraine) the success or failure of reform in the former Soviet Union and stability in the new Central Europe.

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PREFACE

This paper has been prepared by the Institute for Defense Analyses for the Office of the Director of Net Assessment under the task entitled The Impact of Nationality Issues and National Differentiation in the Former Soviet Union. It analyzes developments in Ukraine and Belarus and important external influences that can affect the future orientation of these two states. Specifically, it offers two alternative futures for both Ukraine and Belarus and projects their possible economic, foreign policy, and military-security implications.

Extensive interviews have been conducted during this study both in the United States and in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus; the authors would like to thank all those who shared their valuable time and knowledge so willingly. In addition, the authors wish to thank especially the official reviewers for this paper, Dr. Stephen Blank at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, PA, and Ms. Lauren Van Metre at the Center for Naval Analyses in Alexandria, VA.

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SUMMARY

The dissolution of the Soviet Union has necessitated a redefinition of relations among the newly independent states of this region. Any expectation that the states of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus would use their common Slavic heritage as a basis for forming a new Slavic union was quickly eliminated. Ukraine has clearly expressed its determination to be free of Russian domination, while Belarus accepts (at least for the present time) that accommodation with Russia is vital for its very survival.

This paper moves beyond an assessment of current developments and projects how Ukraine and Belarus might develop in 5 to 10 years, recognizing that the Russian Federation's own development is one of the most important factors in determining how the other two states may orient themselves. The situation today is too fluid to forecast with certainty what course will be adopted. It is easiest to assume that Ukraine and Belarus (and, indeed, Russia) will simply "muddle through," following more or less their current lines of development. While such an alternative is certainly a distinct possibility, this paper offers two other alternatives for each of these states. Significantly, these additional scenarios are based on trends that are already evident to varying degrees in these countries.

In the case of Ukraine, one alternative is an exclusionary nationalist approach, which would heighten tensions between Ukraine and its neighbors and among ethnic groups in Ukraine itself. It would be largely isolated from Western contacts and assistance and would likely form some types of alliances with its non-democratic neighbors to the south. The threat of civil war and military confrontation with Russia, with Ukraine retaining nuclear weapons, would be very real. On the other hand, a Ukraine pursuing reform and integration would find itself included in the Western community of nations, would make significant improvements in economic development, and would reconcile its security concerns primarily through multilateral and bilateral commitments. The problem is that current trends are pushing Ukraine away from the latter model, toward a more isolationist stance, which could well evolve into exclusionary nationalism, especially if Russo-Ukrainian tensions increase further.

For Belarus, the sense of nationhood is much less developed than in Ukraine. Its high degree of dependency on Russia makes Belarus most likely to become (or, more

accurately, remain) Russia's Little Brother. Belarus sees accommodation with Russia as the best guarantee of stability; what happens when this accommodation does not produce continued stability (in part because of Russia's own unstable environment) remains unclear. Belarus, too, could opt for a path of reform and integration, but only in the event of one of two things: The opposition and intelligentsia become strong enough to overcome the continued dominance of the old *nomenklatura* (this could be precipated by some cataclysmic event which drives a wedge between Belarus and Russia), *or* the Russian Federation disintegrates, leaving a much smaller European Russia, with which Belarus could develop a more balanced and equal relationship.

The fate of Ukraine as an independent nation-state is critical to the outcome of the dynamics of change in the former Soviet Union, Central Europe, the Mediterranean zone, and Western Europe. It is located at an important crossroads, caught between an unstable Russian Federation and a group of non-democratic states to the south, while striving to become incorporated into the Western community. While Belarus is not located in such a pivotal position, its fate, too, will influence the success or failure of reform in the former Soviet Union and stability in the new Central European zone. In short, the fate of Ukraine and Belarus is closely tied to developmental prospects in Russia and Central Europe, on the one hand, and to the broadening of West European integration into a European-wide process, on the other.

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The policies and interests that Ukraine and Belarus will pursue in the next decade are by no means certain. A host of domestic variables, coupled with external factors, will all influence the path they follow. For each of these states, this paper examines two possible scenarios that show not only how their political and economic structures may develop, but also how their security policies may evolve, how these futures may be affected by external variables, and how these states might fit into broader European structures. It is especially important to appreciate that the underlying factors for each of these alternative futures already exist; only time will tell, however, which set of factors will prevail in the coming years.

A. PIVOTAL EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

Among the external variables that will help determine the futures of Ukraine and Belarus, the future of Russia itself is the most important. At one end of the spectrum, hard-line Russian nationalists are determined to use all means necessary to ensure that the Russian Federation does not lose any of the territory currently within its borders (and, indeed, would like to reacquire at least some of the regions of the former Soviet Union that they believe belong to Russia). Currently, the stronger trend is one of greater regionalization and decentralization, particularly in the Russian Far East, where local authorities (politicians and businessmen) assert their right to greater control over the resources in their regions. There is little identification with Moscow's European Russia and even less interest in paying to support the central government there. In effect, Russia's future centers on two possibilities: (1) It will succeed in assembling a loose confederation of more independent entities that, because of their mutual interests or recognized inability to survive solely on their own, see a utility in some form of central authority, *or* (2) the Russian Federation will splinter, as did the USSR, into smaller states asserting their right to status as independent nations. Under the second alternative, a European Russia similar in dimension to the Russia of Ivan the Terrible is likely to emerge (see Figure 1). A European Russia—broken off from its Asian resources and landmass—would perceive developments

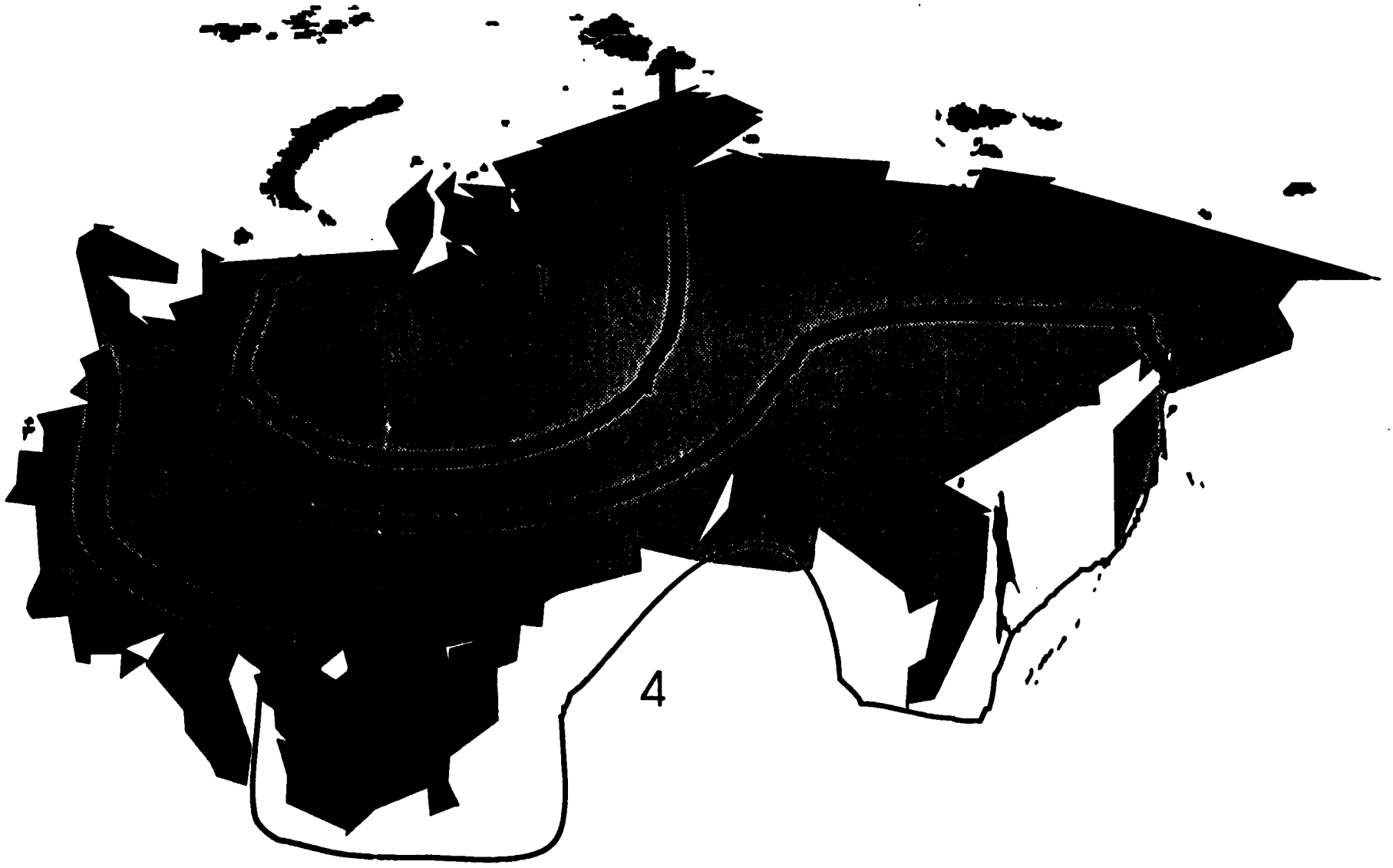

Figure 1. The Expansion of Russia

1 Russia at the time of Ivan the Terrible
2 Asian Expansion
3 First European Expansion
4 Central Asian Expansion
5 Second European Expansion

in Ukraine and Belarus in a fundamentally different way from the perceptions of the current Russian Federation.

A second external variable of critical importance is the role of Europe and the success—or failure—of greater integration. Given that even the Central European states of Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland face a long process of further economic development before they will be incorporated as full partners in Western Europe, it is reasonable to assume that this process will be much longer for Ukraine, Belarus, the Baltic states, and Russia. In the interim, these states would benefit from the development of a Central European zone, where all (or many) of them could find sufficient mutual interests to further their own efforts at integration. Only through such collective efforts will these nations be able to move toward integration with the other countries of Europe. In this context, the idea of creating a Central European zone should be understood as a broader concept than the post-World War II notion of "Central Europe." The more appropriate construction may resemble a Central Europe based on its historical antecedents from the 16th century (see Figure 2). Belarus and Ukraine were carved out of the Polish and Lithuanian kingdoms. These kingdoms faced the Teutonic order to the north, the Brandenburg and Bohemian kingdoms to the west, the Hungarian Empire to the southwest, and the Ottoman Empire to the south. The intellectual elite of the region was dominated by Polish, not Russian, culture. Only over the next three centuries did the Russians assert their dominance in the region.

A final external variable, particularly with respect to Ukraine, is pressure from the South. While Ukraine seeks to move toward democratic Europe, it may not be able to easily ignore developments in close-by non-democratic states. Conflict continues in the former Yugoslavia and tensions and hostilities persist in Moldova regarding the Dniester region, as does uncertainty about the role of Russia and Romania in this dispute. Such pressures could well impede Ukraine's ability to focus on Europe in a positive, integrationist way.

From Ukraine's perspective, it sees at least five possible strategic directions in the evolution of its foreign policy relations, which in turn will affect the evolution of its domestic policy. In one direction lies Russia, which presents the following significant issues: How will Kiev's relations with Moscow develop, i.e., will the Moscow leadership eventually come to accept Ukraine as an independent state and deal with it as a (relative) equal? *and* How will the emerging split between European Russia and the resource-rich Russia Far East affect Ukraine's interests? To the north are Belarus, the Baltic states, and

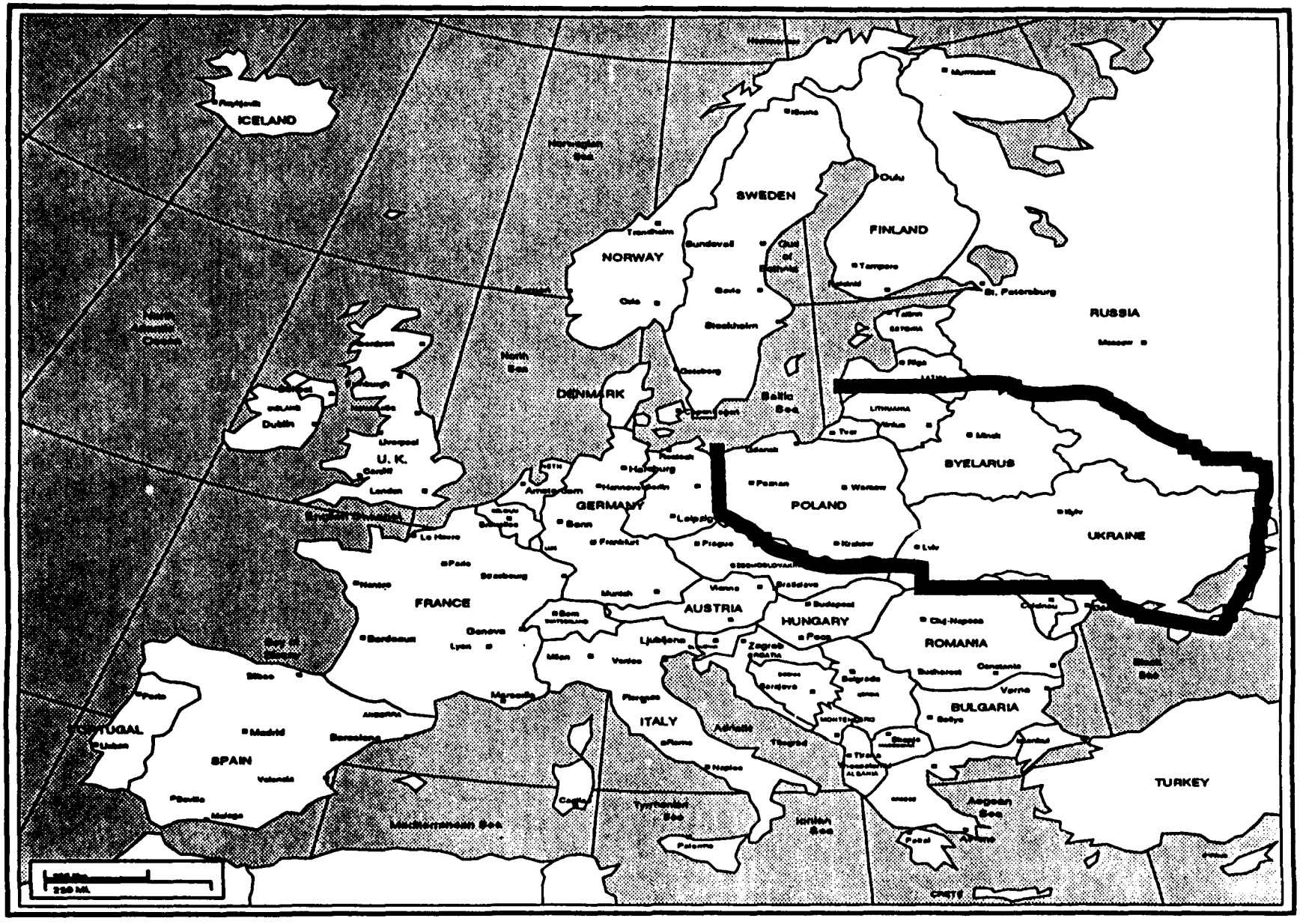

Figure 2. The Polish and Lithuanian Kingdoms in 1500
(Superimposed on a contemporary European map)

the Central European countries which can offer another path for Ukraine's economic and political development. To the southeast—in parts of Russia's Black Earth region and in Kazakhstan and some of the other Central Asian states—Ukraine could turn for its energy and some raw materials supplies. Energy requirements could also be filled by some of the Persian Gulf states, which have, in exchange, indicated some willingness to purchase weapons and military equipment from Ukraine (as well as from Russia). Ukraine would obviously prefer payment in hard currency, but even a barter arrangement (oil-for-arms) would be in its interests given the reduced volume of energy supplies it is receiving from Russia. And finally—and perhaps most troubling—is a zone of reactionary states to Ukraine's south and west. Over the next 5 to 10 years, the possible emergence of reactionary regimes in countries such as Romania, Serbia, and Albania—and their spillover effects on countries to the north and east—could present Ukraine with serious challenges to its own security and national interests. An important point in considering these strategic directions is that Ukraine finds itself in the difficult position of being involved in two arcs of crisis: to the east and to the south.

For Belarus, the picture is simpler. It, too, faces the Russia factor. The prospects for increased instability in Russia bring with them the likelihood of resulting pressures of emigration to Belarus and porous borders (i.e., Belarus will find it increasingly difficult to control what flows into and out of its territory in the form of weapons, drugs, etc.). In addition, the future shape of Russia depends largely on the resolution of the struggle between Moscow and many regions of the Russian Federation (such as Tatarstan, Sakha, and the 19 regions belonging to the Siberian Association) over control and authority. Russia's shape and size can fundamentally affect Belarus' future development. Besides Russia, Belarus has at least two other strategic directions to pursue. In the Northern European region, it could seek to define mutual interests with the Scandinavian countries (and perhaps with St. Petersburg, if there is even a "split" between it and Moscow). In Central Europe—which comprises Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia—Belarus, Ukraine, and the Baltic states may strive to be included. The dilemma for Belarus lies in its need to avoid confrontation with Russia while at the same time distancing itself from Russia enough to allow the West to draw a better distinction between the two.

As for relations between Ukraine and Belarus, the sharing of a common Slavic heritage has not proved sufficient to establish the foundation for a bilateral politico-economic alliance. In fact, at the present time, Belarus finds itself in the middle of a contest of influence between Ukraine and Russia as they elaborate their security visions for the new Central European zone. While Ukraine and Belarus have a natural, mutual interest in

amicable relations (for economic, diplomatic, and security reasons), their approaches to the changed domestic and international environment differ in several important respects. First, the process of political development in Belarus lags behind that in Ukraine (much more of the old *nomenklatura* remains in place in the former). Second, the definition of Belarus as a nation-state also lags appreciably behind that in Ukraine. Third, Belarus has placed less emphasis on economic reform and the development of a market economy than has Ukraine, primarily in the interests of preserving greater stability. And, fourth, while both countries have committed themselves to neutrality, non-bloc status, and existence as nuclear-free states, Ukraine's commitment to nuclear-free status is increasingly in doubt. In April 1993 Belarus decided to sign the collective security treaty previously agreed upon by several other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). This latter decision has raised serious questions about Belarus' continued commitment to neutrality and non-participation in blocs, and will draw Belarus into closer security cooperation with Russia and the other treaty signatories.[1]

This paper now turns to possible alternative futures for the development of Ukraine and Belarus, projecting some 5 to 10 years in the future. While these are hardly the only possible scenarios for their development, they have been selected as representative of the range of potential futures and ones grounded in reality even today. Given the magnitude of change in the area of the former Soviet Union over the last 7 years, no serious scholar would be willing to forecast unconditionally how these states will evolve. Indeed, the ultimate reality will likely fall somewhere between these two alternatives. What is certain is that future development will be fundamentally affected by intense pressure from both within these countries and from without.

B. UKRAINE

In examining the development of an independent Ukrainian state, one possibility is a state defined along ethnic lines, excluding non-Ukrainians. In other words, Ukraine would be the homeland only of ethnic Ukrainians. Alternatively, Ukraine could push forward in political and economic reform, making integration with other European states a realistic aspiration. Some of the defining features of both alternative futures for Ukraine discussed in this paper ("exclusionary nationalism" and "reform and integration") are

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[1] To date, the collective security treaty has only been initialed by Russia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan; it has been ratified by Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, and Tajikistan.

outlined in Table 1, as are key variables that would contribute to the emergence of this alternative.

Table 1. Ukraine: Alternative Futures

Key Variables	Scenario	
	Exclusionary Nationalism	Reform and Integration
Economic reform process	Floundering	Viable
Foreign economic involvement	Autarchic	Attract foreign investment
Foreign policy orientation	Isolated	Balanced integration
Key Relationships	Persian Gulf	Central Europe
Military force	Personnel build-up	Smaller More contract personnel
Nuclear weapons	Likely	None
Military mission	Aggressive Domestic use	International activities
Military equipment	Own	Diversified

1. Exclusionary Nationalism

One of the greatest challenges for Ukraine since its declaration of independence has been (and continues to be) defining a mutually beneficial relationship with Russia. Initially Ukraine felt compelled to adopt a fairly aggressive position toward Russia, given the latter's reluctance to accept the new realities. Since then, the leaders of both governments have sought to find more common ground and understanding. The current Ukrainian leadership, particularly with President Leonid Kravchuk's appointment of Leonid Kuchma as Prime Minister in October 1992, has signaled its desire to (re)establish good working relations namely in the area of economic cooperation. The realities of strong economic interdependence between these two states dictates that they find ways to work together for the foreseeable future; otherwise, both economies will suffer even more than they are presently.

Still, this emerging accommodation between Russia and Ukraine depends heavily on two factors that may not persevere. First, over the last 18 months the resolution of many of the disputes between these two countries has rested largely on the shoulders of Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Ukraine's Kravchuk and their ability to find a compromise. One wonders to what extent the working relationship between Russia and Ukraine depends on these men and what will happen when one or both leave the scene? Second, the Kravchuk government has been very careful to foster the notion that the Ukrainian state is for all people living in Ukraine (rather than only for Ukrainians). This constructive form of nationalism has helped define the Ukrainian state without posing a

threat to ethnic minorities living there and, consequently, has helped to keep relations with Russia on a relatively even keel. Put simply, the future of Ukraine rests on internal social choices; the decision on how to treat ethnic minorities is one of the most fundamental ones in defining the Ukrainian state.

In contrast to today's choice, there are people in Ukraine who would adopt a less constructive form of nationalism, which could be called exclusionary nationalism. Simply stated, exclusionary nationalism would define the Ukrainian state as one for ethnic Ukrainians and would implement discriminatory policies against other ethnic groups living within Ukraine. Such a policy would not necessarily aim to be anti-Russian, but could be more specifically anti-Moscow.[2] Nevertheless, Russian nationals living in both Ukraine and Russia would likely perceive discrimination against their ethnic group. Russians are not, of course, the only ethnic minority in Ukraine; exclusionary nationalism could also focus on Moldovans, Jews, Belarusians, Poles, and others.[3] As a result, the probability of domestic unrest and violence would increase considerably. Similarly, Ukraine's potential for conflict with its neighbors would heighten appreciably, especially with Russia and Moldova.

More strained relations with Russia would raise the distinct possibility of splintering within Ukraine itself. As Figure 3 shows, Eastern Ukraine and Crimea have a higher ratio of Russians in their populations than other regions have and would therefore by more likely to experience unrest.[4] Initial conflicts would involve the local populations, but with continued discrimination, Russians from the Russian Federation (with or without government support) would also become involved. The probability of exclusionary nationalism developing in Ukraine would naturally increase if Russia pursued its own hard-line nationalist policy (including attempts to regain lost pieces of its empire, such as Crimea) or, in other words, adhered to an imperialist policy. Moreover, if European

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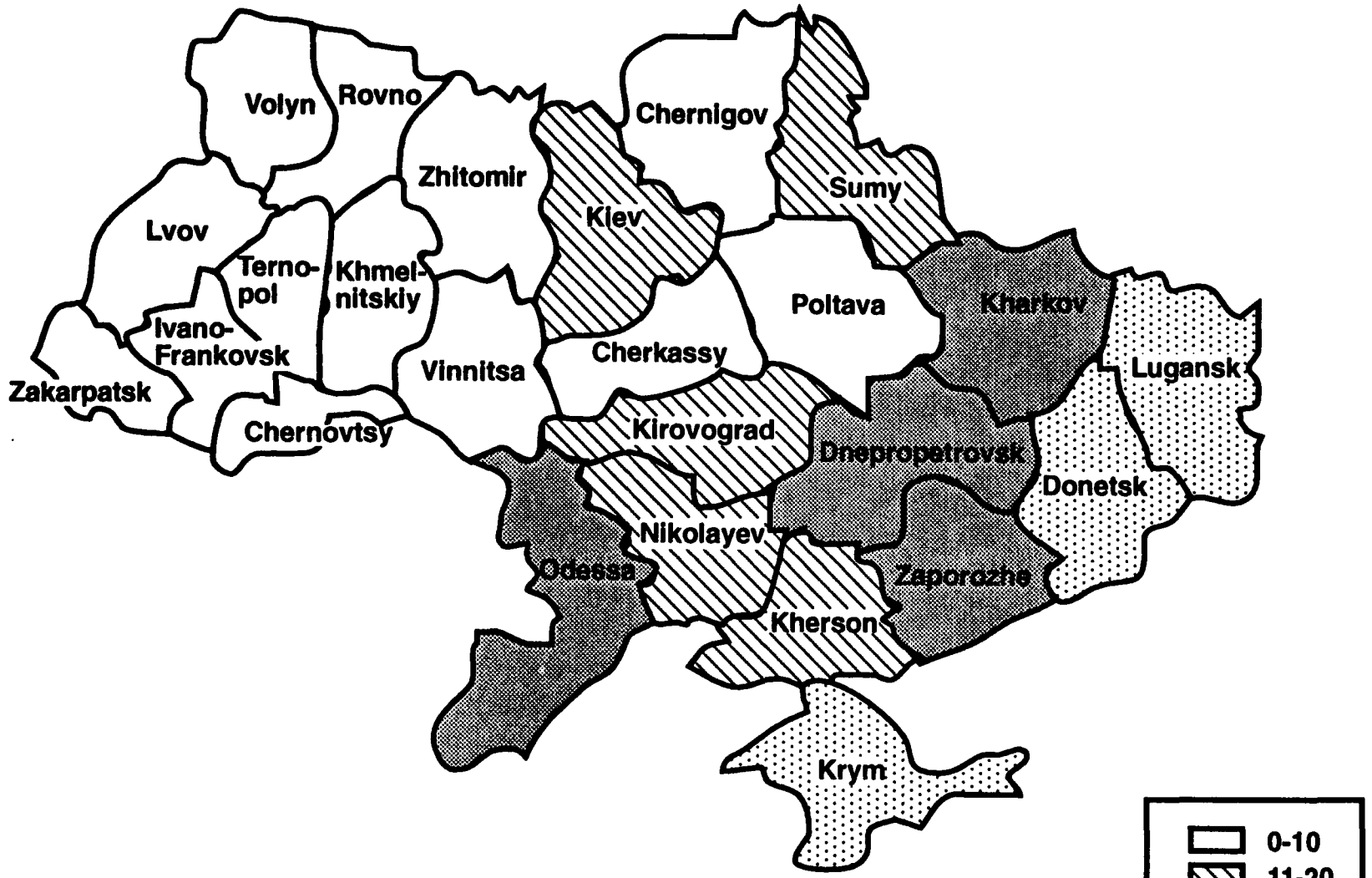
2 Many Ukrainian officials today draw a distinction in their policies: they have no arguments with the Russian people, but rather with the Russian government.

3 For a detailed breakdown of the 1989 ethnic composition of the USSR by republic and region, see USSR State Statistics Committee, *Natsional'nyi sostav naseleniya SSSR [National Composition of the USSR Population]* (Moscow: Finance and Statistics, 1991).

4 According to the 1989 census, of the other ethnic minorities, Belarusians and Jews are quite well distributed throughout Ukraine's oblasts, although almost 20% of Jews in Ukraine live in Kiev. In contrast, some 144,000 of the 324,000 Moldovans (or 44%) live in the Odessa oblast and another 26% live in Chernovtsy. Given the problems in the eastern part of Moldova regarding the Dniester region, the most probable area of conflict between Ukrainians and Moldovans would be on the border and in the Odessa oblast.



Source: Based on data in USSR State Statistics Committee, *Natsional'nyi sostav naseleniya SSSR* (Moscow: Finance and Statistics, 1991).

Figure 3. Ukrainian Oblasts, Percentage of Russian Population

Russia finds itself separated from its Far Eastern component, there could be an increased assertiveness in other regions with large Russian populations, including Ukraine. In both cases, what happens in Russia can be a determining factor in Ukraine's own policies.

On the economic front, a scenario of exclusionary nationalism would present Ukraine with a bleak outlook. The process of economic reform would flounder as the government diverted its focus toward the more pressing demands of domestic tensions and outright conflict. In addition, Western countries would distance themselves from economic investments in Ukraine. This reluctance would apply to official Western institutions and governments (which might, nevertheless, use the promise of foreign investments to try to alter Ukraine's discriminatory policies in a more favorable and democratic direction) as well as to individual businesses (which would view the domestic situation as too unstable to be conducive to any substantial investment). In short, Ukraine would find itself pursuing an autarchic policy.

An unknown factor in the economic equation would be the role of the Persian Gulf states. As is known, Ukraine relies heavily on Russia and other countries for its energy needs; Ukraine's current nuclear energy production meets only 25 percent of its electric energy requirements, and 80 percent of Ukraine's total energy imports come from Russia. Even with today's working relationship with Russia, the latter is not supplying Ukraine with the level of oil and gas Ukraine judges necessary to meet its industrial and other economic requirements; one of the main obstacles is Russia's desire to be paid world prices for its oil and gas. Under a scenario of increased tensions with Russia, these energy supplies would be reduced even further, perhaps as part of an economic blackmail campaign to induce a more "constructive" Ukrainian policy toward Russia. This would then leave Ukraine with two basic alternatives: It could seek to further develop its nuclear power industry, or it could turn to the Persian Gulf states or some of the Central Asian states. In the case of nuclear power, politicians would face continued strong public opposition (as a result of Chernobyl) and would find it difficult to increase capacity without some external assistance in either constructing new plants or improving the safety of old ones. Moreover, the lead-time in constructing new plants is extremely long, and would not therefore be able to solve the country's short-term problems. Central Asian states might be willing to provide energy, but they would likely demand competitive prices, which Ukraine would find difficult to pay given its poor economic performance; actual delivery of the energy could also prove problematic. The Persian Gulf states might afford the most opportune solution—possibly through barter arrangements whereby Ukraine would produce weapons while the Gulf states produced the energy supplies, an arrangement

which is already in evidence. If Ukraine's dependence on such reciprocity reached high enough levels, it could adopt domestic and foreign policies that would not be in the interests of Western democracies.

In the area of military-security developments, the increased chance of military conflict and overall heightened tensions both within the Ukrainian state and between Ukraine and its neighbors would spur a military personnel build-up, one that would be focused on ethnic Ukrainians to fill the forces. Personnel problems (such as low morale and hazing of conscripts) would be even greater than today, largely because it is difficult to imagine how a Ukraine in a more difficult economic position would be able to provide many of the basic necessities (such as adequate housing and food). The government would make an effort to make these provisions, however, because it would see military force as a prime instrument of enforcing its policies. Therefore, military requirements would present a significant drain on an already suffering economy. Financial constraints would further dictate that the force remain largely dependent on conscripts to fill the enlisted ranks.

As for Ukraine's military mission under such a scenario, it would have to be especially concerned about the threat on its borders and, aside from possible "alliances" with reactionary European southern states and (above all in economic arrangements) with Persian Gulf states, would find itself pursuing a largely isolated foreign policy. In addition to border concerns, there would be the problem of internal unrest between ethnic groups. As a result, despite the current commitment that Ukrainian armed forces will not be used against their own population, such a contingency could not be entirely ruled out in the event of exclusionary nationalism. Furthermore, in the event of an escalation of these clashes into a full-scale civil war, the threat of its spreading to Russia would be a distinct possibility, resulting in the creation of an ever more dangerous and unstable situation.

In terms of the types of military equipment needed and the sources of this equipment, Ukraine would have little choice but to produce most of it on its own. It certainly would not collaborate with Russia or any Central or West European states in this area. Moreover, under such a scenario, the government would be more committed to maintaining state support for the defense industries in Ukraine and for developing the capability to manufacture more independently.

Finally, with respect to nuclear weapons, those lobbying for maintaining a nuclear capability would gain strength, especially as the country would receive no security guarantees from the West and would see its primary threat, Russia, becoming increasingly hostile and unstable, thereby only strengthening the perceived need for a nuclear force.

The retention of nuclear weapons would raise several concerns, including the question about Ukrainian capability to service the weapons themselves; this, in turn, raises the threat of either radioactive leaks or even a nuclear accident. More significantly, a Ukraine with nuclear weapons fundamentally alters the entire security landscape, both on a regional and pan-European level. Yet under a scenario of exclusionary nationalism, only the possession of nuclear weapons is likely to give the Ukrainian government a sense of security.

From the West's perspective, a Ukraine following an exclusionary nationalist course would present several threats to European interests and stability. The possibility that Ukraine could retain (or develop new) nuclear weapons could be a major source of instability in the region, with the constant threat of a local conflict escalating out of control. More generally, Ukraine would be fostering a foreign policy of militarization. The need for Ukraine to struggle along economically without Western investment would perpetuate environmental concerns, from antiquated factories to greater reliance on nuclear energy, and the persistent threat of another Chernobyl-type catastrophe. Finally, the level of tension within Ukraine and between it and its neighbors, coupled with the serious economic crisis, would create tremendous pressures for migration—especially of its ethnic minorities—westward into Europe.

2. Reform and Integration

In a more positive direction, Ukraine could adopt a policy of "reform and integration" (see Table 1, above). In this scenario, Ukraine's economic reform process would have become viable. While inflation might still present a problem, it would be largely under control and certainly noticeably below the current levels of near-hyperinflation. Small businesses would take hold, developing a new "middle class" that could support further economic freedom and greater focus on possible external trading partners. Perhaps most important, the huge industrial dinosaurs that currently place a heavy burden on the economy (through continued state supports for these enterprises) would have been forced to adapt or perish, no longer receiving government subsidies. As a result, those segments of the enterprises producing useful goods would survive independently, although unemployment for many of the factories' workers would continue to drain state and local resources.

Nevertheless, the overall economic environment would be one conducive to foreign investment. In addition to Ukraine's own domestic economic situation, several other factors would dictate the level of foreign involvement in its economy. Foremost among

these, Ukraine must adopt appropriate laws and regulations that would enable foreign companies to understand the framework within which they would operate (and prevent the rules from changing weekly). Another important factor would be the level of stability and economic development in Russia. If Russia continued along the path of regionalization and ultimately disintegrated or failed to adopt its own relevant laws and regulations, a Ukraine that had held together and concentrated on developing its economy would offer a much more stable and appealing environment for foreign investors. A final factor that could influence the extent of foreign investment is the intensity with which the Ukrainian diaspora population (e.g., in the United States and Canada) involves itself in such efforts, helping to spark interest among those companies that would not necessarily have looked at Ukraine as an investment option.

Ukraine would be interested in investments from and economic relations with a variety of countries. For example, a reform-oriented Ukraine would not entirely preclude ties with regions of the Russian Federation or with the Persian Gulf states. Ties with the former could prove necessary because much of Ukraine's industry and natural resource supplies will still be at least partially dependent on Russia, while the latter states can offer diversification for Ukraine's energy supplies. Nevertheless, Ukraine's primary focus would be on securing its future role as part of the new Europe. It would therefore seek greater integration with Europe through diverse economic, political, and diplomatic activities. The crucial question here is whether the Central European states will determine that they have enough common interests to work together, as a means of eventually integrating into a broader European structure. The most beneficial approach for Ukraine to adopt, then, is one of balanced regional integration, with primary but not sole emphasis placed on ties with the European nations.

From the standpoint of West European security, Ukraine, if it pursued reform and integration, would pose much less of a threat than if it pursued exclusionary nationalism. A functioning Ukrainian economy would reduce emigration pressures, while Western governments, multilateral institutions, and individual enterprises would be encouraged to assist Ukraine in coping with its environmental problems, including improving nuclear power safety and conservation programs. More generally, assistance to further develop the Ukrainian economy would be channeled through both multilateral organizations (such as the European Community, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and World Bank) and national governments (providing subsidies to some of their industrial enterprises to encourage investment and intervention in the region).

The military implications of a reform and integration scenario would be similarly positive from a Western perspective. Ukraine would understandably continue to maintain its own military force as an important symbol of the nation's independence, but perceived threats to its security would be fairly minimal. And although there might be some migratory pressures from other former Soviet states if their economies were not functioning as well as Ukraine's, the concern about a direct military threat would probably be limited to areas south and west of Ukraine, where reactionary regimes might emerge. But even in this case, with Ukraine's move toward incorporation in Europe, it would not believe that it would have to meet such a threat on its own; it would be able to turn to bilateral arrangements with other European countries as well as to multilateral institutions to help resolve any such problems. As for its relations with Russia, Ukraine would be unlikely to experience serious difficulties from its Russian diaspora so long as economic stability continued, and all but extreme nationalists in Russia would see a utility in having a cooperative relationship with Ukraine. (Moreover, if hard-line nationalists came to power in Russia, Western interest in developing ties with Ukraine would only be enhanced, partly because this kind of Russia would be antithetical to Western interests and partly because Ukraine—with Western assistance—might offer a means of pressuring Russia to adopt more constructive policies.) Finally, in the event of the Russian Federation's disintegration, the threat of Russia pursuing imperial policies would be diminished (although the threat from rogue elements of the Russian military or non-official military groupings would probably increase).

Within this overall context, Ukraine's armed forces could be even smaller than currently planned, perhaps at a level between 150,000 and 200,000. In addition, the favorable economic environment would make it possible to rely more heavily on contract service personnel and less on conscripts. Given that problems of draft evasion, hazing, and other personnel problems have not disappeared even with the emergence of national armies in the former Soviet Union, the Ukrainian government would be well-disposed toward a higher percentage of volunteers in its force (indeed, it would prefer to do so even today, but the financial costs are simply too great for the government).

A functioning economy would also enable the military to improve and augment its training, which has unquestionably suffered since the USSR's disintegration. This training could be conducted not only within Ukraine's various forces but also in cooperation with other countries, especially those in Central Europe, in the form of joint exercises and the like. This latter form of training would be especially useful given that Ukraine would be interested in focusing its efforts on participation in international military activities (such as

under the auspices of the United Nations or the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe). Its other principal military mission would be protecting the state's territorial integrity. A tertiary priority would be participation in activities to "show the flag," mainly as a way of demonstrating Ukraine's integration into the world community as an independent nation.

In procuring military equipment, Ukraine would opt for a course of diversity. It would, of course, have maintained a certain level of indigenous production, particularly in aircraft. In the realm of cooperative efforts, it would be most interested in expanding production with Central European states, but assuming a working relationship with Russia persists, it would see a utility (and perhaps necessity in some cases) in continuing cooperation with Russia as well.

The reform and integration approach is probably Ukraine's most beneficial alternative future from the West's perspective. It would combine positive economic developments with participation in a broader European community, encompassing economic, political, and security relations. At the same time, Ukraine would maintain good relations with states of the former Soviet Union and would especially aim for a constructive relationship with Russia, in whatever form it might be. The vital assumption in this scenario, however, is that European integration remains viable enough that it continues to be the key goal for development in Central Europe, including Ukraine.

3. Current Assessment

The situation in Ukraine today is filled with considerable uncertainty, and this fluid environment makes a definitive prognosis about its future orientation impossible to offer. What is possible is to recognize current key trends in political, economic, and military developments and to judge where these trends fit into the spectrum of the two alternative futures outlined above.

In the economic arena, there continues to be heavy reliance on government supports for many segments of the economy, coupled with an interim currency that has proved even more unstable than the Russian ruble. Neither factor makes Ukraine a desirable place for foreign investment from a Western perspective.

While Ukraine continues to look to solidifying relations with the West as its most important long-term objective, at the same time policymakers are displaying increased frustration with the perceived lack of Western appreciation for the difficulties Ukraine is facing, especially in terms of security concerns. One consequence has been the growing

strength of those advocating the retention of some nuclear capability. The current trend appears to be pointing toward ratification and implementation of START I, but refusal to ratify the non-proliferation treaty.

In terms of conventional military forces, Ukraine is making some progress in creating its own armed forces, but it still must grapple with the legacy of the Soviet military. It must therefore work with the force it has inherited rather than being able to create what it might actually want. (Its "wish list" is, of course, seriously hampered by economic constraints as well.) Furthermore, the degree of the troops' loyalty to Ukraine is an issue the current leadership would prefer to avoid having to test.

Overall, Ukraine today appears to be moving toward a philosophy of more self-sufficiency, recognizing that its needs—both in the economic and security realms—are not likely to be met by Western support. It also believes it necessary to prepare itself for the spill-over effects of increased instability and fragmentation in the Russian Federation. While Yeltsin has won a victory in the April referendum, his opportunity for exploiting this victory may be short-lived. In short, the present inability of the Ukrainian government to foster serious economic change, combined with Western reluctance to render significant support to Ukraine, is pushing it away from the reform and integration model and toward isolationism, which could evolve into exclusionary nationalism, particularly should Russo-Ukrainian relations become even more tense.

C. BELARUS

As Belarus seeks to define its role and position in the new Europe, it must above all struggle with its relationship to Russia. Russia's own future shape and policies will be a major determining factor in Belarus' development. On the one hand, lack of political and economic reform (in the name of stability) coupled with continued heavy reliance on Russia for the very functioning of Belarus' economy would hamper the development of any notion of an independent state. Belarus would, in effect, be Russia's "Little Brother." Alternatively, a greater commitment to reform and the attraction of Western interest and investment could ultimately lead Belarus along the path of reform and integration with Europe. In the diplomatic competition, Belarus can play an important role for either Ukraine or Russia as these two countries lay out their security visions for the new Central European zone; to date, Belarus has leaned strongly toward the Russian side. The principal points of these two scenarios are highlighted in Table 2, and are explained more fully in the following subsections.

Table 2. Belarus: Alternative Futures

Key Variables	Scenario	
	Little Brother	Reform and Integration
Economic orientation	Dependency on Russia	Greater independence
Key relationships	Russia	Central Europe
Military mission	Border protection	Borders narrowly defined International activities
Security guarantees	Russia	Western community
Military equipment	Russia	Diversified

1. Little Brother

A scenario in which Belarus would find it impossible to break ties with Moscow and to progress toward independence is quite plausible, especially if Russia's own efforts at reform falter. Although Belarus is now seeking to develop its own nation, it also realizes that accommodation with Russia is vital to its very survival. Indeed, close ties with Russia (and some may say virtual subordination to it) offer Belarus stability in today's tumultuous environment; moreover, confrontation with Moscow is seen to be tantamount to suicide.[5] The need for close working relations with Russia is only further reinforced by the continued dominance of holdover Communists within Belarus' governmental structures. At the same time, Belarus is concerned and skeptical about Russia's overall stability and Moscow's ability to control events in the Russian Federation. Belarus therefore seeks greater autonomy, but sees the need for Western assistance to achieve this objective. In dealing with the West, Belarus is determined to follow its own course and to avoid being viewed as a part of Russia. Thus, it often must balance its need to maintain good relations with Russia against its need to distance itself from Russia enough to be viewed as an independent entity. In the final analysis, Belarus hopes to pursue both components of its foreign policy; the two should not be mutually exclusive. Above all, Belarus realizes that it is heavily dependent on Russia for its military security and that current plans for the size and shape of the Belarusian armed forces dictate the country's continued reliance on other state(s) for protection.[6]

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5 The need for stability and good relations with Moscow is also conditioned by the fact that Belarus has the highest ratio of military forces to civilians in the former Soviet Union (approximately 1 military man for every 43 civilians).

6 Government officials stress that Belarus currently has no identifiable external threats. Some therefore make the argument that its forces should be evenly distributed throughout the country in order to be ready to face any possible threat.

In the case of an alternative future where Belarus is Russia's Little Brother, Belarus would depend heavily on Russia (see Table 2, above) in a number of important areas. In the economic sphere, Belarus would find its reform process bogged down and would prove unable to reform its industry, which is so heavily integrated with Russia's, assuming continued economic turmoil in Russia.[7] The lack of progress in economic reform would also deter Western interest in investing in the country, thereby exacerbating Belarus' inability to break its dependency on Russia. Similarly, it would continue to rely heavily on Russia for its energy supplies. Even assuming the implementation of the current government's plan to rely more on nuclear power, Russia will still play a vital role in supplying the energy that Belarus needs to function. In short, Belarus would seek to preserve a largely state-run economy, which would require enormous infusions of "aid" from Russia in the form of reduced energy prices, credits at low interest rates, and artificially low prices on at least some vital goods.

Particularly as a result of industrial and energy dependence, the relationship between Minsk and Moscow would become even stronger than it now is. Consequently, Belarus would find it increasingly difficult to assert its independence as a nation or to develop its own policies in many arenas. Of course, developments within Russia itself would also be an important factor. If the Russian Federation disintegrated and a European Russia emerged (see Figure 1, above), a "new Russia" could conceivably comprise Moscow and European Russia merged with (at least parts of) Belarus.

From the Western perspective, several features of a Little Brother Belarus would be troubling. With an economy that continued to flounder and remained closely linked with Russia's, the prospects for further environmental degradation that would affect other European countries would be quite strong (in the form of industrial pollution, air pollution from vehicles, etc.). Associated with this issue is the question of nuclear energy: Might Russia's current plan to build an additional 30 nuclear power stations be expanded to include construction of plants in Belarus as well? While there have been improvements to the design of the Chernobyl-type reactors, there are still significant Western concerns about the degree of safety even these new plants will afford.

Another concern for the West, also dictated by Belarus' economic difficulties, would be the likelihood of increased migratory pressures. Historically enjoying a higher

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[7] If, on the other hand, Russian state industries were forced to reform and privatization became more widespread, Belarus could improve its economic outlook—either by breaking traditional ties and forcing greater independence or by establishing new relationships based more on market economics.

standard of living than other former Soviet states, Belarus has itself been concerned about immigration into the country (especially from Russia), but in the case of continued economic stagnation—or worse—some of its own population might find itself looking westward. Ethnic Poles and Lithuanians living in Belarus would be prime candidates for emigration, depending on the relationship Belarus and Russia pursued with their native countries. Some of the determining factors here would be the future of Kaliningrad, the number of Russian troops maintained on its soil, and the level of perceived threat emanating from this enclave.

In the context of the Little Brother alternative future, the military question is a complex one, and could be largely shaped by the composition of Russia and its own policies. With its high degree of dependency on Russia, Belarus would find collaboration with (and subordination to) Russia in the military arena fundamentally necessary. It would not be able to afford a volunteer force, nor would it be able independently to modernize its weapons and equipment. (Belarus does have the advantage of acquiring quite modern Soviet equipment as a result of the Soviet Union's disintegration; like Ukraine as well, Belarus was the site of some of the best Soviet equipment, a fact Russian military officers continue to lament.)

In exchange for military security guarantees, it is entirely possible that Belarus would allow Russian forces to be stationed on its soil (as long as Russia paid for their upkeep), thereby offering the Russians a forward deployed area that could be especially useful if hard-line nationalists were in power and sought to "reintegrate" part of the lost Soviet empire. On its own, the Belarusian military would have as its primary mission protecting the country's western borders on the ground (so as to offer some sense of an independent Belarusian state, if only in appearance), while Russian and Belarusian forces would work jointly to fulfill the air defense mission. For future weapons procurement, Belarus would have little option but to purchase Russian equipment, but this arrangement would at least enable the continued operation of some Belarusian defense enterprises (namely, electronics).

The primary question in this scenario is what type of orientation this Belarus–Russia alliance would pursue. Would they largely turn to each other because there were few (if any) other options? This outcome would be most likely if a European Russia emerged, broken off from its Far East resources and not necessarily perceived by its neighbors as threatening. On the other hand, could the alliance have more of an offensive focus, complete with the threat of reexamining borders and making claims on "lost"

territory? The rise of hard-line Russian nationalists to power and the continued entrenchment of the former communist bureaucracy in Belarus' ruling elite would provide the basis for such an outcome.

2. Reform and Integration

As with Ukraine, Belarus might evolve along a path of "reform and integration," becoming more incorporated into the Western community of nations while still maintaining amicable relations with Russia (see Table 2). Under this alternative future, Belarus would see progress in its economic reform process; in contrast, the Russia economy would continue to falter. As a result, Belarus would have fewer reasons for close cooperation with Russia and would be able to pursue a policy of greater independence.

Belarus' primary focus would now be on Europe, first of all on other members of the Central European zone (again, taken in a broader sense, as illustrated in Figure 2, above). Through a variety of economic, political, and diplomatic efforts, it would become part of a regional community that would ultimately aspire to integration into the broader European arena. Such developments would entail agreements with Poland and Lithuania, in particular, over the treatment of minorities and the definition of borders between them and Belarus. In moving toward greater collaboration and integration with European states, Belarus would, nevertheless, take care to ensure that any such arrangements would not be perceived as anti-Russian. It would remain well aware that an amicable relationship with Russia is necessary for Belarus' own successful development.

This scenario would clearly be much more in the interests of the West European states than the Little Brother one. Migratory pressures would be appreciably reduced (if not eliminated) because of the improved economic picture and the elimination of possible tension between Belarusians and ethnic minorities. The economic environment would also be conducive to greater Western investment, including in the areas of industrial development (greater efficiency, less pollution), nuclear power development, energy conservation, and clean-up of land contaminated by the Chernobyl accident. The problem here will be the level of economic development in the Western states and the level of priority they place on such investment. Clearly, those areas which produce a direct benefit for them (such as reducing air pollution and the threat of a new Chernobyl) would be the more likely types of activities. As with Ukraine, these activities can involve multilateral institutions as well as individual national governments and private enterprises.

In the military arena, Belarus would perceive even less a threat than it currently does. The most significant concern would be the potential for serious instability in Russia and its spill-over effects. Belarus' military would remain a small force, but with a greater percentage of volunteers and less reliance on conscripts. Its mission, too, would be fairly limited, primarily to border concerns. Even with respect to border protection, however, the mission would be even more limited than it is currently or in the Little Brother scenario. In this case, there would be no border disputes, and ethnic minorities would raise little possibility of creating tensions. As a result, border concerns would be more narrowly defined, namely in the sense of controlling smuggling (of weapons, drugs, etc.) and other illegal activities.

Belarus has already cited its adherence to a position of neutrality and non-bloc status in military affairs as the reason for its refusal to participate in peacekeeping efforts undertaken by the CIS. Although it may remain reluctant to participate in such activities within the CIS framework, Belarus may find that it is pressured to join in broader international efforts of this type.[8] Such would be a symbolic gesture of its integration with the international community. In addition, Belarus could participate in some military exercises, particularly those focused on a humanitarian mission, with other Western nations. These activities would not rule out continued cooperation with Russia since Belarus would want to ensure a working relationship with this large neighbor to the east. At the same time, if developments in Russia ran counter to favorable political and economic reform, Belarus would see a utility in having a set of relations with Western states that might come to its assistance in the event of aggression. To receive these kinds of assurances, Belarus will need to demonstrate its willingness to be a partner in other international efforts.

As noted above, Belarus' military equipment needs are largely met for the foreseeable future with its share of the former Soviet equipment. In the longer term, if it manages to implement a policy of reform and integration, these needs would probably be met in a diversified way. The primary emphasis would be on cooperation with Central and other European states, but all ties with the Russian defense complex would certainly not be broken. Part of Belarus' success in this area may also depend on its ability to sell abroad that military equipment it currently possesses that is not required to be eliminated under

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[8] Belarus' decision in April 1993 to sign the CIS collective security agreement (over the objections of Stanislav Shushkevich, among others) seems likely to force its involvement in CIS peacekeeping activities as well, although it has stipulated (for now) that one of its two qualifications for participating in CIS collective security is that Belarusian forces may not be used outside the country.

CFE and that exceeds the requirements of its own force. As with the other former Soviet states, it is reasoned that hard currency earned in these transactions could help modernize or convert existing defense enterprises.

3. Current Assessment

As in Ukraine, Belarus finds itself in a period of considerable uncertainty. The most significant—and indisputable—fact is the primacy of Russia in Belarus' priorities. Although some political leaders have expressed concern on this score (for example, the negative implications of signing the collective security treaty for Belarus' own foreign and security policy commitments), this concern is not shared by the majority of the current political actors. Hence, Belarus' fate remains inextricably intertwined with Russia's own developments.

On the economic front, no real movement has been made toward economic reform. In turn, on the political, economic, and military levels, the Western countries have developed no appreciation for Belarus as an independent state; without some notable level of Western interaction on this point, Belarus is not likely to develop a greater sense of independence. And, indeed, for its part the Belarusian military appears to understand only too clearly just how dependent it is upon the Russian armed forces and military-industrial complex.

Simply put, the main indicators presently point to Belarus following the scenario of the Little Brother. This assessment has most recently been further reinforced by Belarus' decision to participate in CIS collective security arrangements. Nevertheless, the prospects for reform and integration should not be ruled out entirely; this could occur either through a better definition of nationhood precipitated by some cataclysmic event or through the fostering of a more equal relationship with a much smaller, European Russia.

D. CONCLUSIONS

The fate of Ukraine as an independent nation-state is critical to the outcome of the dynamics of change in the former Soviet Union, Central Europe, the Mediterranean zone, and Western Europe. Ukraine is located at an important crossroads, the fate of which is inextricably intertwined with the dynamics of change in two arcs of crisis: to the east and south of Ukraine.

The fate of Ukraine remains undecided. We have sketched two broad trajectories for the development of Ukraine: exclusionary nationalism and reform. Not only does

Ukraine have an important impact upon change in the former Soviet Union (FSU) and Europe, but these alternative futures are rooted as well in the processes of change in Russia and in Western Europe. If reform in Russia fails and a reactionary regime with imperial ambitions emerges, the prospects of reform in Ukraine will be seriously jeopardized. If West European integration seriously falters, leaving little likelihood that Central Europe and eventually the Slavic states of the FSU could become part of this process, Ukrainian reform would be seriously undermined as well.

Compared with Ukraine, Belarus is not as decisive in shaping the fate and future of the FSU. It is a much smaller country and is not located at the critical juncture of the twin arcs of crisis. Nevertheless, similar to Ukraine, Belarus faces reactionary and reform alternatives. The way in which Belarus develops will influence the atmosphere of success or failure for reform in the FSU. The prospects for reform in Belarus are directly tied to developments in Russia. Interdependence in currency, banking, industry, and raw material supply provide little alternative for Belarus other than maintaining a close relationship with Moscow in particular, and with Russia in general.

Notably, the fate of Ukraine and Belarus are closely linked to the evolution of European Russia and the relationship between European Russia and the key centers of raw material supplies elsewhere in Russia. If Moscow must cope with further fragmentation—this time of the Russian Federation itself—how will its actions shape policy toward the other Slavic states? What impact would the fragmentation of Russia have upon the prospects for reform or reaction in Belarus and Ukraine?

We have argued that a new Central European zone may be emerging, one which looks something like that which existed in the early 16th century. The states of the new Central Europe—Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Belarus, the Baltics, and Ukraine—face two broad alternatives: either to participate in European integration or to develop their own variants of reactionary nationalism. In actuality, the future course of development of Ukraine and Belarus will likely fall somewhere between these two alternatives, resulting in a more complicated and indeterminate outcome, subject to intense internal and external pressures.

In short, the fate of Belarus and Ukraine is closely tied to developmental prospects in Russia and Central Europe, on the one hand, and to the broadening of West European integration into a European-wide process, on the other. Their fate is part of the fabric of the new historical dynamics of Europe and Russia as a whole. And finally, their fate is a

fragment of the new historical epoch reshaping American interests and approaches to the European region and policies defined to deal with the two arcs of crisis.

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