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**THE GREAT ORANGE HOPE:  
UKRAINE, NATO, AND THE DILEMMA OF EUROPEAN  
INTEGRATION AFTER THE ORANGE REVOLUTION**

by

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AFTER THE ORANGE REVOLUTION**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the dilemma of Ukrainian integration into Europe and analyzes the significance and prospect of Ukrainian membership in NATO following the 2004 “Orange Revolution.” The extraordinary election of Victor Yushchenko became a powerful catalyst for Ukrainian integration efforts into Europe and amplified Ukraine’s geopolitical plight between Europe and Eurasia. Although Russia remains Ukraine’s “eternal strategic partner,” President Yushchenko affirmed his intention to integrate Ukraine into the EU and the NATO. However, EU accession remains improbable due to years of empty Ukrainian reform efforts coupled with recent setbacks within the EU. Consequently, the Ukrainian path into Europe starts with NATO integration.

Despite periods of political discord, Ukraine and NATO share a history of military cooperation, and Ukraine would be an asset within the transformed Alliance. After the Orange Revolution, NATO quickly moved to consolidate democracy, promote reforms, and facilitate future Ukrainian integration into Europe. With support, Ukraine may fulfill the necessary conditions for NATO accession in the coming years. However, the notion of NATO membership is still unpopular among Ukrainians, and anti-NATO influence in Ukraine remains significant. The onus remains on Ukraine to take the actions needed to join the Euro-Atlantic and European communities, and long-term success remains uncertain.

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

On January 23, 2005, Victor Yushchenko delivered his inaugural Presidential address to the Ukrainian people in Kyiv's Independence Square. His investiture followed a contentious campaign and election that ultimately led to the "Orange Revolution," in which hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians mobilized on the streets of Kyiv to protest the results of the 2004 presidential runoff election. Prime Minister Victor Yanukovich was initially declared the winner of the November vote, but due to widespread allegations of voter intimidation and election fraud, Yushchenko officially disputed the results of the election. Based on credible evidence of fraud and the dramatic public uprising, the Ukrainian Supreme Court nullified the results of the November vote, and Yushchenko won the court ordered revote on December 26, 2004.<sup>1</sup>

During his inaugural address, President Yushchenko declared his goal of "Ukraine in a United Europe."<sup>2</sup> Previous attempts to incorporate Ukraine into Western structures lacked the requisite political commitment, but as a result of the Orange Revolution and the subsequent election of Yushchenko, efforts to integrate Ukraine into European and Euro-Atlantic political, economic, and security institutions gained considerable momentum. President Yushchenko outlined vigorous domestic reform plans and traveled to Europe in order to lobby formally for both European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership consideration.

As the Orange Revolution approaches its first anniversary, what are the prognoses for these aspirations? Despite the initial fervor, this thesis outlines the emerging predicament that may hinder Ukrainian integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures. First, Ukraine cannot discard the innate diplomatic, economic, and social ties to Russia. Tellingly, Yushchenko's first foreign trip as President was to Moscow to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Yushchenko has referred to Russia as

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<sup>1</sup> Steven Woehrel, *CRS Report for Congress: Ukraine's Political Crisis and U.S. Policy Issues*. (Washington, DC: Library of Congress), 01 February 2005, RL32691, 7-8.

<sup>2</sup> "Quotes of the Week," *RFE/RL Belarus and Ukraine Report 7*, no. 4 (26 January 2005).

Ukraine's "eternal strategic partner."<sup>3</sup> Second, it has become clear that Ukraine's ultimate goal of accession into the EU remains improbable due to years of reform efforts in Ukraine that amounted only to rhetoric, coupled with expansion issues within the EU. Though the European Union supports the new government and has upgraded its bilateral relationship with Ukraine, the EU has yet to acknowledge an official "open door policy" towards Ukraine or establish a timeline for accession talks.

On the other hand, NATO supports the renewed integration aspirations resulting from the Orange Revolution. Despite periods of political discord, Ukraine and NATO share an impressive history of military cooperation, and Ukrainian assets augment critical NATO capability shortfalls. President Yushchenko even elucidated his priority for Ukraine: "It is only logical that we target our efforts toward the integration into NATO."<sup>4</sup> Consequently, the Ukrainian path into Europe starts with NATO, and this thesis specifically examines the NATO-Ukraine relationship and analyzes the prospects of Ukrainian membership in NATO.

## **B. IMPORTANCE AND METHODOLOGY**

This thesis is relevant for two primary reasons. First, it examines the complex geopolitical and strategic relationships that exist in Ukraine. The widespread international interest in the 2004 Ukrainian presidential election underscored the important geopolitical and strategic role of Ukraine in Europe and Eurasia. Due to its eclectic borders, Ukraine walks a geopolitical "tightrope" between Western and Eastern interests, and the Orange Revolution only amplified these dynamics.<sup>5</sup> Although Ukrainian relations with NATO are not novel, Russia opposes formal Ukrainian membership in Western security institutions and NATO accession would dramatically alter the geopolitical and strategic maps of Europe and Eurasia.

Second, both NATO and the EU continue to conduct enlargement debates and both institutions impart specific requirements and considerations for membership. This

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<sup>3</sup> "Kyiv Remains Wary of 'Deeper' Integration with Moscow," *RFE/RL Newline* 9, no. 34 (22 February 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Ukraine's Yushchenko Addresses Joint Session of U.S. Congress, April 6, 2005, <http://usinfo.state.gov/usino/Archive/2005/Apr/06-111471.html> (accessed 20 August 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Alexander J. Motyl, "Ukraine, Europe, and Russia: Exclusion or Dependence?" in *Ambivalent Neighbors: The EU, NATO, and the Price of Membership*, ed. Anatol Lieven and Dmitri Trenin (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003), 28.



thesis identifies these requirements and analyzes the likelihood of Ukrainian integration in these terms. Moreover, this thesis identifies areas of leverage like location, strategic airlift, and weapon nonproliferation that bolster Ukrainian integration efforts into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions.

This thesis uses primary and secondary sources that examine the dynamics of the Orange Revolution, Ukrainian geopolitics, Russia, the EU, and NATO enlargement. Primary sources include official speeches, NATO and EU documentation, and formal legislation. Secondary sources include journals, databases, and published literature that focus on Ukrainian reform efforts, former Soviet relations in Eastern Europe, and NATO and EU enlargement.

Chapter II examines the geopolitical importance of Ukraine, the significance of the Orange Revolution, and the emerging dilemma of European integration. Ukraine and Russia share deep structural roots that date back many centuries, and Russia has long viewed Ukraine as a “little brother.” However, Ukraine quickly pursued its own relationships with the West after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The Orange Revolution served as a catalyst for European and Euro-Atlantic integration, which ultimately amplified the geopolitical and strategic dilemma for Ukraine. The EU presents Ukraine with a novel set of political, economic, and implied security guarantees, but membership requirements for the EU are extensive and years of rhetorical cooperation with the EU damaged the chances of Ukrainian integration with the EU. Additionally, disagreements about continued EU enlargement and the rejection of the European Constitution will further hamper Ukraine’s chances for membership. As a result, Ukrainian short-term aspirations for integration hinge on NATO.

Chapter III examines Ukraine’s relationship with NATO. This relationship has proven to be very successful, and cooperation between Ukraine and NATO occurred fairly quickly after the fall of the Soviet Union. The dismantling of the Ukrainian nuclear arsenal led to implicit security guarantees from the West – specifically the United States. The Orange Revolution coupled with Ukrainian cooperation with NATO has led to an Intensified Dialogue with NATO; however, many issues still remain unresolved. Ukraine offers NATO vital strategic airlift capability and prime geopolitical airspace and location

for fighting the GWOT and implementing the terms of NATO's 2002 Prague Capabilities Commitment, which outlined critical Alliance shortfalls. Most importantly, the democratic revolution elicits a response from the Alliance founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law, and the United States and Poland strongly support Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations. However, there are still significant obstacles for Ukraine.

Chapter IV discusses these obstacles for NATO accession. NATO accession is still unpopular among Ukrainians, and an influential Russia remains unsupportive of Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic security ambitions. In addition, the "Revolution" is losing critical momentum, and Ukraine must still commit to difficult reforms before it is prepared for accession talks for NATO.

Chapter V is the conclusion in which this thesis reiterates the significance of the Orange Revolution on long-term European and Euro-Atlantic integration and recaps the dilemma that Ukraine must overcome. Ukraine still has some very critical and encumbering obstacles to address, and the possibility for integration depend on Ukrainian actions during the coming year. This chapter concludes with some suggestions to help Ukraine emerge from its European dilemma.

## **II. THE ORANGE REVOLUTION AND THE (RE)EMERGING UKRAINIAN DILEMMA**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter has three purposes. First, this chapter explains the geopolitical significance of Ukraine for both Europe and Eurasia. The evidence shows that the structural connections between Ukraine and Russia are abundant, but Ukraine quickly expanded its policy to pursue European and Euro-Atlantic options shortly after its 1991 independence. Second, this chapter examines the far-reaching significance of the 2004 Ukrainian presidential election. The “Orange Revolution” and ensuing election of Victor Yushchenko bolstered Ukraine’s European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations and amplified the geopolitical predicament. Lastly, this chapter explains that despite the democratic gains and renewed efforts in Ukraine, European Union (EU) membership is simply not a near-term possibility due to strict accession requirements and enlargement debates inside the EU. Consequently, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has emerged as the first logical step of Western integration.

### **B. “THE GEOPOLITICAL PIVOT”**

Before examining the specific events of the 2004 Presidential election, it is important to explore the question: why is Ukraine so important to the Great Powers? Strategically located at the “crossroads between Europe and Asia,” Ukraine plays an integral role in both regional and inter-continental stability.<sup>6</sup> On the one hand, as a former republic of the Soviet Union with ties to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Ukraine appears to lie within the Russian “near abroad” sphere of influence. On the other hand, Ukraine is formally a European country, and Western political institutions like the EU and NATO have established meaningful relationships with Ukraine. Located in the geographic center of Europe, Ukraine is the second largest country in Europe with an area of 603,700 square kilometers (slightly smaller than the state of Texas) and robust national security considerations. Ukraine is situated between Russia to the east; Poland, Moldova, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia to the west;

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<sup>6</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “CIA World Factbook: Ukraine,” <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/up.html> (accessed 30 August 2005).

Belarus to the north; and the Black Sea to the south.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the literal English translation of the word “Ukraine” is “borderland.”<sup>8</sup> Because of these diverse borders and influences, Ukraine has been called the “keystone in the arch” for Central and Eastern European security.<sup>9</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski has labeled Ukraine as one of the five “geopolitical pivots” in the world based on its “sensitive location” and “vulnerable position” in relation to the formidable powers in Europe and Eurasia.<sup>10</sup> As a result, any significant policy shift of Ukraine could dramatically alter the geopolitical and strategic map of Central and Eastern Europe, which, in turn, could affect the security environments in Asia, Europe, and even North America.

### **1. Eurasian Connections**

To the East, Ukraine represents the remnants of the evaporating Russian Empire. Brzezinski even argues that an independent Ukraine almost single-handedly prevents Russia from reemerging as a Eurasian empire.<sup>11</sup> Though Russia ruled over most of Ukraine nearly continuously for over 300 years, the two countries share a history of Slavic heritage that spans much longer. Kiev (now commonly spelled “Kyiv”) was the historical center of the Eastern Slavic region called Kievan Rus – the “ancient area of Slavdom, the cradle of the Russian Orthodoxy, and the symbol of Byzantine succession.” Although some Ukrainian nationalists and historians argue that the Ukrainians are from “Rus” and the Russians are latecomers from Scandinavian “Ros,” it is generally accepted that the Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Russians all came from Kievan Rus. Mongols sacked Kiev in 1240, and Moscovy (Moscow) emerged in the fifteenth century as the new geopolitical center for the Eastern Slavs.<sup>12</sup>

The Russian Empire gained control over much of present-day Ukraine following the 1654 Treaty of Pereiaslav, and Russia acquired more of Ukraine after the second and

<sup>7</sup> CIA World Factbook: Ukraine.

<sup>8</sup> Mikhail A. Molchanov, *Political Culture and National Identity in Russian-Ukrainian Relations* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 111.

<sup>9</sup> Sherman W. Garnett, *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the Emerging Security Environment of Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1997), 7.

<sup>10</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 40-41.

<sup>11</sup> Brzezinski, 46.

<sup>12</sup> Molchanov, 59-62, 112; and Anatol Lieven, *Ukraine & Russia: A Fraternal Rivalry* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999), 11-16.

third partitions of Poland in 1793 and 1795. Not surprisingly, Russian nationalists saw the treaty as a voluntary Slavic reunion, while some Ukrainian nationalists viewed it as an annexation.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, Russia has long viewed Ukraine as a “little brother,” and one high-ranking Russian diplomat even publicly referred to an independent Ukraine as “temporarily lost territory.”<sup>14</sup>

Christianity emerged in Rus around 988 A.D., and both Ukraine and Russia are primarily Orthodox Christian states. Within the Eastern Orthodoxy, there are two major patriarchates – Kiev and Moscow. Of the 46 percent of Orthodox Ukrainians, nine-percent still follow the Moscow Patriarchate. Approximately six percent of the population still recognizes the Pope due to Polish and Lithuanian influence that emerged in Ukraine after the fall of Kievan Rus. In addition to the Christian population, both Russia and Ukraine have relatively small but vocal groups of Muslims.<sup>15</sup> Along this theme, Samuel Huntington draws the modern day “fault line” for future world conflict between Western Christianity, Orthodox Christianity, and Islam just inside the western border of Ukraine. Interestingly, Huntington’s model connects Russia and Ukraine ideologically against the West in the next stage of world conflict.<sup>16</sup>

Ukraine first emerged as an independent state in 1917, but was consolidated under Russian control again in October 1920 and officially became a Soviet Republic in 1922.<sup>17</sup> During the Soviet era, Ukraine played vital roles in the Soviet political, economic, and security systems. Due to its fertile land and favorable climate, Ukraine came to represent the “breadbasket” of the Soviet Union. Ukraine produced more than a fourth of the agricultural output of the Soviet Union, provided numerous raw materials, and housed a large portion of the Soviet military and heavy industry. Ukraine also encompassed crucial geopolitical and strategic space for the Soviet Union during the Second World

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<sup>13</sup> Molchanov, 67.

<sup>14</sup> “Ukrainians Worry Serb Win Augurs Conflict with Russia,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 26 (May 1993); and Paul Kubicek, “Russian Foreign Policy and the West,” *Political Science Quarterly* 114, no. 4 (Winter, 1999-2000), 557.

<sup>15</sup> CIA World Fact Book: Ukraine.

<sup>16</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 159, 163-168.

<sup>17</sup> Lieven, *Ukraine and Russia*, 28-29.

War and the subsequent Cold War with the West. Therefore, it is no surprise that Ukraine's 1991 defection was a key factor in the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Under the leadership of Leonid Kravchuk, the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament) declared its independence from the Soviet Union on August 24, 1991, just days after the failed *coup-de-tat* against the Soviet leadership in Moscow. Ukraine followed the declaration with a national referendum on December 1, 1991, in which 90 percent of Ukrainians voted to support independence. Eight days later, leaders from Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus annulled the 1922 treaty that established the Soviet Union, and the Union officially dissolved on December 25, 1991.<sup>18</sup>

Due in part to its large common border, structural commonalities, and Slavic heritage with Russia, the obvious choice for Ukrainian security and policy allegiance after the fall of the Soviet Union was with Russia and the newly formed CIS, which provided political ties and implicit security guarantees without the despotism of the Soviet Union. In addition, Ukraine remained strategically essential for Russian security after the collapse of the Soviet Union for at least three major reasons: First, Poland quickly embraced a European integration strategy. In the spirit of Yalta, Ukraine served as the new buffer between Europe and Russia.<sup>19</sup> Second, Ukraine still housed large numbers of former-Soviet troops and equipment, including over 4,400 nuclear weapons from the arsenal.<sup>20</sup> Though Ukraine did not gain positive control of these nuclear weapons, it could have feasibly disrupted their use. Third, Ukraine inherited Sevastopol, the homeport for the former Soviet Navy's Black Sea Fleet (BSF).

The issue of the BSF inflamed what Leonid Kuchma, President of Ukraine from 1994 until 2005, termed the "divorce syndrome."<sup>21</sup> Ukraine was not immediately willing to turn control of the fleet back over to Russia following the collapse of the USSR. In response, the Russian Duma (Parliament) repeatedly challenged the legitimacy of Nikita

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<sup>18</sup> Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation* (New Haven, CT: Yale Nota Bene, 2002), 169-171.

<sup>19</sup> Taras Kuzio, *Ukrainian Security Policy* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1995), 58.

<sup>20</sup> Leonid I. Polyakov, *U.S.-Ukraine Military Relations and the Value of Interoperability* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2004), 7.

<sup>21</sup> Roman Solchanyk, "Ukraine, Russia, and the CIS," in *Ukraine in the World: Studies in the International Relations and Security Structure of a Newly Independent State*, ed. Lubomyr A. Hajda, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 20.

Khrushchev's 1954 decision to transfer administrative control of the Crimean Peninsula (including the port of Sevastopol) over to Ukraine from Russia in order to commemorate the three hundredth anniversary of the Treaty of Pereiaslav.<sup>22</sup> The first makeshift agreement over the fleet would not occur until 1994, but dissent over Crimea and the BSF was so strong that the issue was not formally resolved until the "Friendship, Cooperation, and Partnership" between Russia and Ukraine was inked on May 31, 1997 – nearly six years after the collapse of the USSR.<sup>23</sup> Under the agreement, Russia recognized Ukrainian control of Sevastopol, and Ukraine agreed to lease the port back to Russia in order to house the Russian BSF until 2017 for approximately \$100 million a year. In addition, Ukraine sold most of its half of the BSF back to Russia to pay off some of its substantial energy debt to Russia.<sup>24</sup>

Despite the Soviet collapse, Russia and Ukraine still have enduring social connections. Over 17 percent of the 50 million residents of Ukraine during the 2001 census were ethnic Russians, and 24 percent of Ukrainians were Russophones who still spoke Russian as their primary language. Economically, Russia remains Ukraine's single largest trading partner state, accounting for nearly 32 percent of Ukraine's exports and 17 percent of its imports. In addition, Russia provides 85 percent of Ukrainian energy resources. The two countries still participate in many joint economic endeavors and in 2004 the Verkhovna Rada ratified the CIS "Single Economic Space" (SES) agreement between Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, which created an economic union between these four states.<sup>25</sup>

In spite of the numerous political, economic, and social ties that bound Russia and Ukraine together in the wake of the Soviet collapse, Ukraine has made it clear that allegiance to Moscow is not its only foreign policy and security option. By 1994, Ukraine brokered its own Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the EU and became the first state in the CIS to sign a Partnership for Peace (PfP) agreement with

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<sup>22</sup> F. Stephen Larrabee, *NATO's Eastern Agenda in a New Strategic Era* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003), 90.

<sup>23</sup> Solchanyk, 19, 34-39.

<sup>24</sup> Lieven, *Ukraine and Russia*, 128-129.

<sup>25</sup> CIA World Factbook: Ukraine; and "Moscow Steps In to Check Kyiv's European Drive," *RFE/RL Belarus and Ukraine Report* 7, no. 8 (23 February 2005).

NATO. More significantly, Ukraine did not join the Commonwealth's Collective Security Organization after it failed to sign the Tashkent Treaty in May 1992, and Ukraine remains a mere "partner" (not a *de jure* member) in the Moscow-centric CIS because the Verkhovna Rada declined to ratify the 1993 CIS Charter.<sup>26</sup>

## 2. European Ukraine

To the West, Ukraine is emerging as an important geopolitical part of "New Europe." Ukraine currently borders three EU member states (Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary), and Romania is expected to accede in 2007 or 2008.<sup>27</sup> At present, the EU is primarily an economic and political union, but the growing aspects of the Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP), European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), and robust EU border control requirements present security guarantees and may impair future Ukrainian interaction with critical border states (especially Poland) that reside in the EU.<sup>28</sup> Economically, Ukraine has one of the fastest growing economies in Europe, and collective trade with the 25 EU member states exceeds Ukrainian trade with Russia by nearly \$5 billion.<sup>29</sup> Ukraine also plays a significant role in EU security and transportation considerations. In the words of Javier Solana, the EU High Representative for the CFSP, "Ukraine's size, its large and well-educated population, its rich natural resources and important geographical location make her a partner of strategic importance for the EU."<sup>30</sup>

Hypothetical Ukrainian accession into the EU would require Ukraine to secure the long borders with Russia and Belarus, though the EU already shares borders with both mainland Russia (Latvia, Estonia, and Finland) and Belarus (Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia). More importantly, Russia does not overtly oppose Ukrainian efforts to integrate into the EU.

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<sup>26</sup> Taras Kuzio, *EU and Ukraine: A Turning Point in 2004?* (Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, 2003), 10; and Tor Bukkvoll, *Ukraine and European Security* (London: Pinter, 1997), 64.

<sup>27</sup> Mark Beunderman, "Brussels Threatens Bulgaria and Romania with Entry Delay," *EUObserver*, 25 October 2005.

<sup>28</sup> Council of the European Union, *European Security Strategy*, Brussels: 08 December 2003, 15.

<sup>29</sup> European Union External Trade Ukraine, <http://trade-info.cec.eu.int/doclib/html/113459.htm> (accessed 05 November 2005).

<sup>30</sup> Javier Solana, "The Promising Road Ahead for Ukraine and the EU," [http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/articles/83444.pdf](http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/articles/83444.pdf) (accessed 05 November 2005).



For NATO, Ukrainian sovereignty, territorial integrity, democratic development, and economic prosperity are four of the “key factors of stability and security in central and eastern Europe and in Europe as a whole.”<sup>31</sup> Previous rounds of NATO enlargement have extended the Euro-Atlantic borders to western Ukraine, and four NATO states (Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania) now share a common border with Ukraine. Ukrainian independence bolsters the security of these NATO countries to its west by limiting and separating Russian influence to its east. Unlike Russia, Ukraine does not view NATO as a threat to its security, and Ukraine never officially opposed the notion of NATO expansion into Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>32</sup> As NATO continues to expand, the question of “strategic position” remains an important issue for prospective members.<sup>33</sup> Though hypothetical Ukrainian accession would take NATO deep into former Soviet territory against the interests of Russia, the Ukrainian geopolitical position near the crossroads of Greater Europe, Eurasia, and the Middle East remains strategically beneficial for NATO power projection and global reach missions in the new era of asymmetric warfare and the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).

### **3. The Early Dilemma**

Shortly after its independence in 1991, Ukraine started walking a geopolitical “tightrope” between these Eastern and Western interests, and the competing influences ultimately fashioned a geopolitical dilemma for Ukraine.<sup>34</sup> As Ukraine pursued improved relationships with European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, Russian influence in Ukraine often affected the negotiations or stalled domestic reform efforts. On the other hand, without these relationships with the West, Russia could essentially dominate Ukraine. In response, Ukraine developed a “multi-vector” approach to foreign policy in order to balance out these competing interests.<sup>35</sup> However, this non-aligned “multi-vectorism” often translated into rhetorical promises or a lack of political commitment with NATO and the EU. Even after Ukraine officially abandoned its multi-vector policy

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<sup>31</sup> North Atlantic Council, *The Alliance’s Strategic Concept*, NAC-S(99)65, 24 April 1999, par. 37.

<sup>32</sup> Yuri Shcherbak, *The Strategic Role of Ukraine: Diplomatic Addresses and Lectures 1994-1997* (Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 103-105.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas S. Szayna, *NATO Enlargement, 2000-2015: Determinants and Implications for Defense Planning and Shaping* (Arlington: RAND, 2001), 72-73.

<sup>34</sup> Motyl, 28.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

in 2002 under President Kuchma to pursue a declared policy of “European Choice,” the Russian shadow over Ukraine still influenced Ukrainian political and foreign policy decisions. In the end, growing corruption and the lack of dedicated reforms eventually led to a condition termed “Ukraine fatigue” by Western diplomats, and the hopes of European and Euro-Atlantic integration remained unlikely under Kuchma.<sup>36</sup> However, the 2004 Presidential election and subsequent Orange Revolution in Ukraine changed the nature of this geopolitical dilemma and the course of Ukraine’s European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

### C. THE ORANGE REVOLUTION

Long before the actual voting, the 2004 Presidential election was shaping up as a pivotal event in a critical country. Many major domestic issues divided the Ukrainian electorate including language (Russian vice Ukrainian), corruption, transparency, poverty, privatization, and human rights. However, it was apparent on the macro level that the two main candidates for President offered very different plans for the future of Ukrainian foreign policy. As a result, foreign assessments of the election often deduced that the electoral struggle pertained to differences in foreign policy between the candidates and billed the election as a clash between Eastern and Western influences.<sup>37</sup>

With the support of outgoing President Kuchma and the powerful Ukrainian oligarchs, Prime Minister Victor Yanukovich and his “Party of Regions” lobbied to strengthen the existing ties with Russia and the CIS. Russian President Vladimir Putin even traveled to Ukraine on two occasions during the election to campaign on behalf of Yanukovich. Conversely, former-Prime Minister Victor Yushchenko and his “Peoples’ Power” coalition of two major parliamentary blocs sought to promote Western reforms and foster the growing Ukrainian relationships with the European and Euro-Atlantic communities.

The campaign was contentious and the election was marred by controversy even before the first round of voting. First, the Ukrainian media outlets continued to receive government mandated reporting guidelines, known as *temnyky*, during the election.

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<sup>36</sup> Kuzio, *EU and Ukraine*, 19.

<sup>37</sup> Steven Woehrel, *CRS Report for Congress: Ukraine’s Orange Revolution and U.S. Policy*. (Washington, DC: Library of Congress), 01 July 2005, RL32845, 2.

Consequently, most media reporting on Yushchenko throughout the campaign was negative, and stations that disseminated balanced information about the candidates were subject to government retribution.<sup>38</sup> Second, in perhaps the most infamous episode of the election, Candidate Yushchenko became very ill in early September after having dinner with the head of the Ukrainian security services. It was later determined that Yushchenko had been poisoned with a nearly lethal dose of dioxin. Though Yushchenko ultimately recovered and resumed his campaign, his face remains severely pockmarked as a result of the dioxin poisoning.<sup>39</sup>

### **1. The Elections**

With over 20 candidates vying for the Presidency, the first round of voting took place on October 31, 2004. As expected, Yushchenko and Yanukovich emerged as the two top candidates during the first round. Yushchenko received 39.87 percent of the vote and Yanukovich received 39.32 percent. Though Yushchenko received a majority of the vote, the first round triggered a run-off election because neither candidate received more than 50 percent of the vote.<sup>40</sup> Independent election observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), of which Ukraine is a member, declared that the first round of voting did not meet international democratic standards due to numerous instances of government interference and media bias.<sup>41</sup>

Following an additional three-week campaign period, the second round of voting occurred on November 21, 2004. Yanukovich was initially declared the winner of the November runoff with a total of 49.46 percent to Yushchenko's 46.61 percent of the vote. The results also revealed that voters in Eastern Ukraine voted overwhelmingly for Yanukovich, and Yushchenko received his support from Western Ukraine and Kyiv. However, OSCE observers again documented widespread cases of deliberate voter intimidation and election fraud.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Freedom House, *Nations in Transit 2005*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/nitransit/2005/Ukraine2005.pdf>, 14-16 (accessed 07 September 2005).

<sup>39</sup> Woehrel, *Ukraine's Orange Revolution and U.S. Policy Issues*, 2.

<sup>40</sup> Woehrel, *Ukraine's Political Crisis and U.S. Policy Issues*, 2.

<sup>41</sup> OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, *Ukraine Presidential Election: 31 October, 21 November and 26 December 2004. OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report* Warsaw, 11 May 2005, 2-4, 31.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

## 2. The Birth of the “Revolution”

On November 22, Yushchenko publicly disputed the runoff vote and vowed to challenge the results after evidence surfaced substantiating that the election was rigged. In response, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians mobilized in Kyiv and across much of Central and Western Ukraine to support Yushchenko and protest the undemocratic results of the election. Since Yushchenko’s campaign color was orange and much of the crowd donned orange clothing to show support for Yushchenko, the uprising became known as the “Orange Revolution.”<sup>43</sup> Despite foul weather and stern threats of a crackdown by government security forces, the protesters continued their campaign of non-violent civil disobedience. Yushchenko also received critical support during the revolution from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that supported the democratic efforts as well as from prominent Ukrainians like Yulia Tymoschenko, an oligarch turned Ukrainian nationalist politician who became known as the “Orange Princess” for her efforts.

In the West, reactions to the fraudulent election were unambiguous. Officials from the United States questioned the validity of the election results and threatened to downgrade its relationship with Ukraine and hamper future Euro-Atlantic integration efforts. The EU and European Parliament blatantly rejected the results of the election and offered to negotiate a diplomatic solution to resolve the election quandary. In Russia, however, President Putin quickly congratulated Yanukovich on his apparent victory before the announcement of the official results. Russian officials even condemned the charges of election fraud and viewed international calls for a repeat election as an attempt to increase Western influence in Ukraine.<sup>44</sup>

Based on credible evidence of election fraud and government manipulation, the Ukrainian Supreme Court blocked the official publication of the election results on November 25 in order to review the case. An additional week of massive public protests followed, and a vote of no confidence for Prime Minister Yanukovich in the Verkhovna Rada essentially brought the government in Kyiv to a standstill. On December 3, the Supreme Court officially nullified the results of the November runoff and ordered a revote of the second round.

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<sup>43</sup> OSCE, 5.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 8-11.

On December 26, 2004, Ukrainians went to the polls for the third time. Turnout was reported to be 77.3 percent, and despite some election irregularities, the OSCE recognized a significant improvement during the revote. With 51.99 percent of the vote to 44.19 percent, the Central Election Committee ultimately declared Victor Yushchenko the winner of the 2004 Presidential election. Yanukovich unsuccessfully contested the legitimacy of the revote and Yushchenko was inaugurated on January 23, 2005.<sup>45</sup>

### **3. Significance of the Orange Revolution**

For many Ukrainians, the Orange Revolution symbolized the triumph of democracy over tyranny and corruption. Under former-President Kuchma, Ukraine remained a semi-authoritarian “hybrid regime,” mixing democratic features with authoritarian overtones. Prior to the election, corruption was growing, the media was controlled, and democracy was manipulated.<sup>46</sup> In his analysis of the election, Taras Kuzio concludes that the Orange Revolution “represented the second and final stage in the Ukrainian revolution that began towards the end of the Soviet era.” He argues that the events in Ukraine combined three revolutions: “national, democratic, and anti-corruption.”<sup>47</sup>

Freedom House, a prominent NGO that advocates and rates democracy around the world, promptly modified its ratings for Ukraine to reflect the extraordinary results of the Orange Revolution. Freedom House improved Ukraine’s *Freedom in the World* Civil Liberties rating from a “4” to a “3” even prior to Yushchenko’s inauguration.<sup>48</sup> In addition, Freedom House praised the democratic gains in Ukraine in its *Nations in Transit* publication and called the triumph an “impressive success story for democracy in Eastern Europe.” In this publication, Ukraine received much higher marks in Electoral Process, Civil Society, and Independent Media. All three ratings improved by nearly three-quarters of a point over 2004. By comparison, Russia lost ground in all three of

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<sup>45</sup> Woehrel, *Ukraine’s Political Crisis and U.S. Policy Issues*, 7-8, and OSCE, 1.

<sup>46</sup> Freedom House, *Nations in Transit 2005: Ukraine*.

<sup>47</sup> Taras Kuzio, “From Kuchma to Yushchenko: Ukraine’s Presidential Elections and the Orange Revolution,” *Problems of Post-Communism* 52, no. 2 (March/April 2005): 17.

<sup>48</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2005*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/freeworld/2005/table2005.pdf> (accessed 07 September 2005). Freedom House rates Political Rights and Civil Liberties on a scale of 1 (best) to 7 (worst). The 2005 ratings concluded on December 31, 2004 and Yushchenko took office on January 23, 2005.

these categories during the same period.<sup>49</sup> Interestingly, some sources have named Freedom House as an “underwriter” of the Orange Revolution.<sup>50</sup>

The Orange Revolution also amplified Ukraine’s geopolitical predicament between West and East. For Russia, the Orange Revolution and subsequent election of Yushchenko were stinging defeats. Putin overtly supported Yanukovich during the election, and as a result, Russia lost significant political capital and influence in Ukraine. However, Yushchenko could not burn Ukrainian diplomatic, economic, and social bridges with the Russian Federation. In fact, the day after his inauguration, Yushchenko traveled to Moscow to discuss the future of the Russian-Ukrainian relationship with President Putin.

For the West, the election debacle and uprising ultimately reaffirmed Ukrainian dedication to Western values. Riding on the heels of the “Rose Revolution” in Georgia a year earlier, the Orange Revolution and election of Yushchenko provided the West with another chance to consolidate democratic gains in the former Soviet Union as well as Eastern Europe. It also afforded the opportunity for the European and Euro-Atlantic communities to revitalize their relationships with Ukraine after President Yushchenko elucidated his strategic vision for Ukraine during his inaugural address on January 23, 2005:

Ukraine will be neither a buffer nor a contest area. ...Ukraine will be a reliable partner in the fight against old and new threats: tyranny, war, poverty, natural disasters and terrorism. ...Our way to the future – is the way followed by the United Europe. We are the people of the same civilization sharing the same values. History, economic prospects and the interests of people give a clear answer – where we should look for our fate. Our place is in the European Union. My goal is – Ukraine in the United Europe.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Freedom House, *Nations in Transit 2005: Ukraine*; and Freedom House, *Nations in Transit 2005: Russia*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/nitransit/2005/Russia2005.pdf> (accessed 07 September 2005). The *Nations in Transit* publication uses the same ratings scale as *Freedom in the World*.

<sup>50</sup> Graeme P. Herd, *The “Orange Revolution:” Implications for stability in the CIS* (London: Conflict Studies Research Center, January 2005), 2-3.

<sup>51</sup> Inaugural address of the President of Ukraine Victor Yushchenko to the Ukrainian people on Independence Square, [http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/publish/article?art\\_id=11100895](http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/publish/article?art_id=11100895) (accessed 05 September 2005).

## **D. THE EUROPEAN UNION**

President Yushchenko's inaugural address makes it unequivocally clear that his Administration desires closer ties with Europe and membership in the EU. However, the question remains – is Europe ready to integrate Ukraine into the EU? Prior to the 2004 election, estimates for Ukrainian accession ranged anywhere from 2011 to 2030 due to the “less than optimal” economic and political conditions in Ukraine.<sup>52</sup> The renewed “European Choice” policy coupled with enhanced commitments to democratic values and ambitious reforms should have improved the prospects of integration into the EU. However, the probability of Ukrainian accession remains slim. In fact, the EU has declined officially to acknowledge the *possibility* of Ukrainian membership – even after the Orange Revolution.<sup>53</sup> This remains the case for two primary reasons. First, EU accession requirements are strict, and, due to lack of meaningful reforms and corruption during the Kuchma Administration, Ukrainian accession into the EU in the near term is simply not feasible. Second, the EU has internal problems related to enlargement that will hamper Ukrainian accession. These include the rejection of the EU Constitution and the fear of over-expansion.

### **1. The EU-Ukraine Relationship**

The first agreement between the EU and Ukraine occurred in June 1994 after President Kravchuk brokered the Ukrainian replacement to the 1990 Soviet Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the EU. The PCA developed some institutional connections between Ukraine and the EU, but it was not a “prescription” for EU membership.<sup>54</sup> After the initial negotiations, the EU did not immediately ratify the Ukrainian PCA. It took another four years for the PCA to come into effect, and this initial lack of interest in Ukraine set the tone for the relationship between the two. Kuzio argues that the EU viewed Ukraine as a subset of Russia and preferred to deal with Russia and Ukraine on the same dimension. Consequently, the EU was in no hurry to

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<sup>52</sup> Motyl, 15.

<sup>53</sup> Ahto Lobjakas, “Ukraine: EU Commissioner Pours Cold Water on Kyiv’s Immediate Membership Hopes,” *RFE/RL*, 16 February 2005.

<sup>54</sup> Motyl, 20.

integrate Ukraine for fear of meddling in the Russian sphere of influence.<sup>55</sup> In 1998, the EU ratified the PCA and Ukraine officially declared its intention to join the Union.

As a European state, Ukraine is technically eligible for membership in the EU under Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), but the 1993 Copenhagen Criteria outline three specific accession requirements for potential member states:

- (1) Stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities
- (2) The existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union
- (3) The ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic, and monetary union

The first two criteria are somewhat vague and open to interpretation and the third criterion involves strict economic, political, and social requirements listed in the 80,000 pages of treaties and agreements known as the *acquis communautaire*. Candidate countries must comply with the first two criteria for membership consideration and complete the *acquis* prior to accession into the Union.<sup>56</sup>

With limited U.S. assistance, Ukraine lobbied the EU in 1999 to develop a sweeping charter that would open the door for future integration, but the EU refused. Instead, Ukraine and the EU inked a “Common Strategy” that focused more on democratic support, economic transition, and strengthened cooperation than the possibility of accession.<sup>57</sup> The Common Strategy represented a marked improvement in the bilateral relationship between Ukraine and the EU; however, less than a year after the agreement, a controversy known as “Kuchmagate” became public. During “Kuchmagate,” one of the President’s bodyguards released audio tapes of Kuchma apparently ordering the murder of journalist Georgiy Gongadze. In addition, the tapes included discussions on illegal weapons sales, election rigging, and high-level

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<sup>55</sup> Kuzio, *EU and Ukraine*, 15.

<sup>56</sup> Heather Grabbe, “Challenges of EU Enlargement,” in *Ambivalent Neighbors: The EU, NATO, and the Price of Membership*, ed. Anatol Lieven and Dmitri Trenin (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003), 72-75.

<sup>57</sup> Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: NATO Relationship*, <http://www.ualberta.ca/~cius/stasiuk/st-articles/an-ukr-nato.htm> (accessed 19 February 2005).



corruption.<sup>58</sup> Democracy, rule of law, and human rights in Ukraine were slipping, and the already slim chances for European integration plummeted. Tellingly, the Common Strategy was the last major agreement between the two until after the Orange Revolution.

Ukraine and the EU continued their dialogue, but both sides adopted “*virtual policies*” towards each other. Ukraine declared its intentions to pursue integration, but adopted policies that often contradicted the declarations. In response, the EU declared its intention to work with Ukraine without agreeing to any long-term goals. This discourse produced few meaningful reforms in Ukraine and no membership carrot from the EU. It ultimately led to political stagnation and the EU contracted a case of “Ukraine fatigue.”<sup>59</sup> With a managed democracy and an oligarchic economy, Ukraine remained noticeably deficient in all three Copenhagen Criteria prior to the 2004 Presidential Election. Though the Orange Revolution made great strides for Ukrainian democracy and rule of law, the years of corruption and unproductive reforms still impinge on Ukrainian integration efforts.

## **2. Enlargement Difficulties**

In addition to strict accession requirements, the EU is also coping with internal enlargement problems that will ultimately delay Ukrainian accession. First, the French and Dutch voters rejected the European Constitution in May and June of 2005. This is significant because it has refocused much of the EU’s attention on efforts to deepen the Union.<sup>60</sup> Second, the 2004 enlargement added 10 new Member States, and the future enlargement queue already contains four Candidate States: Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Turkey.

Both of these issues limit the ability of the EU to accept more Candidate States. On November 9, 2005, EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn stated, “the EU’s absorption capacity is stretched to its limits. ...We need to consolidate our enlargement agenda but be cautious with new commitments.” Unfortunately, this agenda leaves out

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<sup>58</sup> Larrabee, 94.

<sup>59</sup> Kuzio, *EU & Ukraine*, 3-6, 10 (emphasis in original).

<sup>60</sup> Kristin Archick, *CRS Report for Congress: European Union Enlargement*. (Washington DC, Library of Congress), 11 July 2005, RS21344.

Ukraine and focuses on the Balkans and controversial talks with Turkey.<sup>61</sup> In addition, the EU is even threatening to delay the scheduled accession for Romania and Bulgaria into the Union because of increased corruption and legislative shortfalls. Rehn may recommend delaying the accession of these countries from 2007 to 2008.<sup>62</sup> This also has the potential to push back the timeline for future enlargement considerations.

On a positive note, a poll of EU citizens conducted by the European Union in May-June 2005 showed that Europeans would rather bring Ukraine into the EU than Turkey by a ratio of 45 percent to Turkey's 35 percent. Ukraine even matched the support of Romania and received 66 percent support within the ten new member states.<sup>63</sup>

### **3. After the Revolution**

Although the EU flatly rejected Yushchenko's push for membership talks, the EU and Ukraine promptly signed a three-year EU/Ukraine Action Plan in February 2005 within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) as a consolation. The Union implemented the ENP in order to "share the benefits of the EU's 2004 expansion to neighbouring countries...[in order] to prevent the emergence of dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours."

The EU/Ukraine Action Plan provides Ukraine with "concrete steps to strengthen the EU-Ukraine relationship." Though Poland, Hungary, and Lithuania lobbied to further upgrade the EU relationship with Ukraine, the agreement only recognizes Ukraine's European aspirations and does not "open the door" for EU integration and remains "distinct from the issue of potential membership."<sup>64</sup> The agreement will help prevent an economic and political "Schengen curtain" from forming between Ukraine and the new EU members on its borders by implementing ambitious political and economic reforms to aide greater European security and stability.<sup>65</sup> The agreement also includes ten points for

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<sup>61</sup> Mark Beunderman, "Blow to Kiev as Brussels Closes Door to Further Enlargement," *EU Observer*, 9 November 05.

<sup>62</sup> Beunderman, "Brussels Threatens Bulgaria and Romania with Entry Delay."

<sup>63</sup> *Standard Eurobarometer 63: Public Opinion in the European Union*, 148-150, [http://europa.eu.int/comm/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb63/eb63\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb63/eb63_en.pdf) (accessed 28 November 05).

<sup>64</sup> *European Neighbourhood Policy*. [http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/policy\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/policy_en.htm) (accessed 27 November 05); and "Ukraine, EU Sign Three-Year Action Plan," *RFE/RL Belarus and Ukraine Report 7* no. 8 (23 February 2005).

<sup>65</sup> Motyl, 36-39.

closer cooperation that were “conceived following the December election” and “substantially beyond what was originally on offer.” These proposals include early consultations with the EU, closer ESDP cooperation, visa facilitation, and a substantial increase in foreign aid from the European Community from €128 million in 2004 to €250 million in 2005.<sup>66</sup>

One of the most important aspects of the new agreement centers on World Trade Organization (WTO) membership, which is the “first and crucial step towards a Free Trade Agreement with the EU.” Since the WTO is scheduled to meet in mid-December 2005 to evaluate possible Ukrainian membership, the Action Plan offers up “further support to Ukraine’s WTO accession.”<sup>67</sup> Since January, Yushchenko has pressed many necessary reforms in Ukraine to facilitate WTO accession; however, WTO membership will likely require Ukraine to scuttle the SES agreement with the CIS, and debate over the WTO has produced literal fistfights in the Verkhovna Rada. Yushchenko remains optimistic about Ukraine’s chances for accession, but in October 2005, the Director General of the WTO Pascal Lamy commented that Ukraine will likely not be able to finish necessary negotiations in time and should “wait a bit” for WTO membership.<sup>68</sup>

In another consolation for Ukraine, the EU decided in November 2005 to grant Ukraine “market economy status” by early 2006. This is positive for integration efforts for three reasons. First, this will help boost trade between Ukraine and the EU by reducing anti-dumping duties on Ukrainian imports. Second, this helps Ukraine fulfill the second Copenhagen Criterion regarding market economies. Third, it provides an important political and economic win for Yushchenko after the re-privatization of Kryvorizhstal Steel in October 2005.

Despite the democratic success of the Orange Revolution, it is clear that Ukraine will not meet the lofty goal of rapid accession into the EU because the EU still does not

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<sup>66</sup> “EU-Ukraine: Strengthening the Strategic Partnership,” <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/57&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en> (accessed 5 March 2005).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> “Ukraine has no chance to enter WTO,” [http://en.for-ua.com/news\\_print.php?news=2524](http://en.for-ua.com/news_print.php?news=2524) (accessed 17 October 2005); and “Ukrainian Parliament Struggles with WTO Legislation,” *RFE/RL Newslines* 9, no. 216 (16 November 2005).

have an “open door policy” for Ukraine. Though Ukrainian integration into the EU is taking longer than hoped, President Yushchenko noted, “more has been done in EU relations over the past seven or eight months than in the past 10 years.”<sup>69</sup> Yushchenko’s Orange Revolution has lost some of its initial momentum over the past year, but Ukraine is still on a much better track with the EU now than it ever was under Kuchma.<sup>70</sup> Until recently, the EU viewed Russia and Ukraine as inseparable partners. Therefore, one of the most promising developments stemming from the Orange Revolution is that with the EU/Ukraine Action Plan, the EU has finally decoupled the Russian and Ukrainian strategic agendas.<sup>71</sup>

The next major event in the partnership is the EU-Ukraine Summit on December 1, 2005. This Summit is important because it will focus on economic gains and visa liberalizations. The Parliamentary Elections in March 2006 are also very important for the political development of the EU/Ukraine partnership. Without free and fair elections, Ukraine simply cannot meet the democratic standards required by the EU.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Since its independence, Ukraine has become an important component for security and stability in Europe, Eurasia and beyond. Despite early Ukrainian desires to pursue Westernization, the structural and cultural connections with Russia created a foreign and security policy dilemma for Ukraine as it became the “gray area” between Central Europe and Russia. Under the Kuchma Administration, the Ukrainian political relationships with the West stagnated due to “multi-vectorism” and “Ukraine fatigue,” but under the Yushchenko Administration, Ukraine has renewed its European and Euro-Atlantic integration efforts. However, a new dilemma has emerged.

First, Yushchenko cannot discard the important Ukrainian diplomatic, economic, and social bridges with the Russian Federation. Despite blatant Russian influence during the election in favor of his opponent, Yushchenko’s first foreign trip as President of Ukraine was to Moscow to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin. President

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<sup>69</sup> “Full Text of Financial Times Interview with Ukrainian President,” *Financial Times*, 14 October 2005.

<sup>70</sup> “Ukraine, EU Sign Three-Year Action Plan” *RFE/RL Belarus and Ukraine Report* 7, no. 8 (23 February 2005).

<sup>71</sup> Kuzio, *EU and Ukraine*, 30.

Yushchenko even referred to Russia as Ukraine's "eternal strategic partner."<sup>72</sup> Second, Ukraine ultimately desires EU membership, but accession remains unlikely in the near future. Consequently, Ukrainian aspirations for meaningful Western integration now appear to rest with NATO, and President Yushchenko says of his new priority for Ukraine, "It is only logical that we target our efforts toward the integration into NATO."<sup>73</sup>

Although Ukraine still lacks the political, economic, and social résumé required to join the EU, NATO may help to anchor democratic gains, "Europeanize" Ukraine, and increase the likelihood of EU membership in the future.<sup>74</sup> In fact, many other countries in Central and Eastern Europe have followed this path. Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and the Czech Republic have all successfully used Euro-Atlantic integration as a stepping-stone for further European integration with the EU. As a result, the next chapter explores the Ukrainian relationship with NATO.

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<sup>72</sup> "Kyiv Remains Wary of 'Deeper' Integration with Moscow," *RFE/RL Newswire* 9, no. 35 (23 February 2005).

<sup>73</sup> Ukraine's Yushchenko Addresses Joint Session of U.S. Congress, 06 April 2005, <http://usinfo.state.gov/usino/Archive/2005/Apr/06-111471.html> (accessed 20 August 2005).

<sup>74</sup> Ian Q. R. Thomas, *The Promise of Alliance: NATO and the Political Imagination* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), 146-147.

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### **III. THE NATO QUESTION**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the next aspect of the Ukrainian dilemma – the question of NATO membership. Now that a democratic Ukraine is knocking on NATO’s door, is NATO willing to answer? The evidence shows that unlike the EU, NATO is now fundamentally prepared to open its door for Ukraine. This is the case for three primary reasons. First, despite periods of political rhetoric, empty change, and diplomatic fatigue, NATO and Ukraine forged durable ties of military cooperation and defense reform that have endured since the early days of Ukrainian statehood. The Orange Revolution was the much-needed catalyst for meaningful political reform, but the existing bonds of mutual aid and consultation are the foundation for future Ukrainian integration into NATO. Second, Ukraine offers NATO critical strategic airlift capability, key geostrategic position, and other capabilities that augment the Alliance’s shortfalls. Third (and most importantly), NATO’s overriding democratic principles and enlargement doctrine dictate that the Alliance should help consolidate the democratic gains in Ukraine. Additionally, Ukraine has powerful supporters within the Alliance that support these efforts and are pushing for intensified talks.

As a result, NATO recently upgraded Ukraine’s relationship and implemented an Intensified Dialogue with Ukraine, moving it one-step closer to the Membership Action Plan and the Open Door. With continued cooperation, consultation, and “common values,” NATO can foster meaningful reforms within Ukraine and help anchor Ukraine with the West.<sup>75</sup> Despite this support, however, NATO membership is not a foregone conclusion. Ukraine must still make difficult decisions and implement difficult reforms in order to overcome critical obstacles to Euro-Atlantic integration.

#### **B. THE COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP**

During the last fifteen years, both NATO and Ukraine have endured massive, fundamental transformations. NATO matured from a Cold War alliance focused on “keeping the peace” to a flexible and modern organization “actively promoting the

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<sup>75</sup> Thomas, 146-147.

peace.”<sup>76</sup> Meanwhile, Ukraine developed from an obscure Soviet republic overshadowed by Russia into a promising European democracy. In many ways, the relationship between NATO and Ukraine has been symbiotic, and the future success of Ukraine’s European and Euro-Atlantic integration depends largely on the cooperation and reform accomplished during these formative years.

This section analyzes the evolution of the NATO-Ukraine partnership from Ukrainian independence to the Orange Revolution in order to highlight the formal agreements, cooperation, and consultation that define the relationship and will help future integration efforts. It divides the relationship into four distinct stages of political and military cooperation, centered on three specific events that changed the political nature of the NATO-Ukraine relationship. These events are the Russian incursion into Kosovo, the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and the Orange Revolution.

### **1. Rediscovering the West**

Ukraine declared independence on August 24, 1991, but Western recognition of Ukrainian independence was unhurried. On December 2, 1991, Poland became the first state to recognize Ukrainian independence following the referendum and Canada followed the Polish lead later in the day to become the second state and, more importantly, the first NATO member to recognize Ukrainian independence.<sup>77</sup> In contrast, President George H. W. Bush expressed concerns about “suicidal nationalism” in Ukraine, and the United States did not recognize Ukrainian independence until after the Soviet flag was lowered from atop the Kremlin for the last time on December 25, 1991.<sup>78</sup>

Despite the initial lack of unity in recognition by the West, the relationship between Ukraine and NATO quickly commenced. Ukraine immediately joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), and NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner made his first official visit to post-Soviet Kyiv on February 22, 1992. Western countries and institutions began working with Ukraine shortly after its independence to help secure and remove the 4,400 Soviet nuclear weapons and associated support equipment located

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<sup>76</sup> Prime Minister John Major quoted in Thomas, 153.

<sup>77</sup> Bohdan S. Kordan, “Canadian-Ukrainian Relations: Articulating the Canadian Interest,” in *Ukraine in the World: Studies in the International Relations and Security Structure of a Newly Independent State*, ed. Lubomyr A. Hajda (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 128; and Wilson, 169-171.

<sup>78</sup> Garnett, 114.



within Ukraine.<sup>79</sup> On March 24, 1992, Ukraine signed the Open Skies Treaty to ensure arms control transparency and in May 1992, Ukraine agreed to transfer the nuclear weapons in Ukraine to Russia under the terms of the Lisbon Protocol. By October 1994, Ukraine had agreed to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I – November 1993), the Trilateral Agreement with Russia and the United States (January 1994), and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT – October 1994). After inheriting the third largest nuclear arsenal in the World, Ukraine officially became a non-nuclear state in June 1996 after the removal of the final nuclear warhead. The voluntary Ukrainian nuclear disarmament facilitated improved relations, financial assistance, and certain security guarantees from the United States and the West.<sup>80</sup> Although NATO did not directly conduct the non-proliferation talks, it “warmly welcomed” the results as a positive step in European security and stability.<sup>81</sup>

As the decade progressed, Ukraine eagerly volunteered for NATO initiatives, exercises, and missions. In February 1994, Ukraine became the first CIS country to sign up for NATO’s Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative. The goal of PfP was to improve defense planning, cooperation, and dialogue with non-NATO countries. Though countries like Poland apprehensively viewed PfP as an attempt to stall NATO enlargement, Ukraine embraced the program as a means to increase security and defense cooperation with the West.<sup>82</sup> In 1995, NATO upgraded Ukraine’s PfP status with the Individual Partnership Program (IPP), and Ukraine volunteered to participate in the first Planning and Review Process (PARP) in order to improve military interoperability with NATO.<sup>83</sup>

In 1995, Ukraine augmented NATO’s Implementation Force in Bosnia (IFOR) with 550 infantry troops, and eventually provided additional troops for the Stabilization Force (SFOR) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR). Since Ukraine deployed its first UN peacekeepers to the Balkans in 1992, 18,000 Ukrainian troops have participated in

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<sup>79</sup> Polyakov, 7.

<sup>80</sup> Garnett, 113-124.

<sup>81</sup> *NATO Handbook* (Brussels: NATO Office of Information and Press, 2001), 89.

<sup>82</sup> Larrabee, 103.

<sup>83</sup> Polyakov, 9-10.

peacekeeping missions around the world. Ukraine has garnered a reputation as a professional and reliable peacekeeping force, as well as an asset for non-Article 5 NATO missions centered on crisis management and peace operations.<sup>84</sup>

In 1996, Ukrainian cooperation and participation with NATO continued to blossom. Ukraine participated in 150 PfP activities, including 17 military exercises. Of those exercises, “Peace Shield-96,” was the first NATO multilateral exercise “in the spirit of PfP” to take place on Ukrainian territory.<sup>85</sup> By this time, the size of the Ukrainian Armed Forces had been reduced from 800,000 in 1991 to 400,000. These defense reforms were necessary to offset the large inherited Soviet force structure and major economic problems that were plaguing Ukraine.<sup>86</sup> Two years later, NATO established the Joint Working Group on Defense Reform (JWGDR) to facilitate consultation on planning, downsizing, and civil-military relations with Ukraine.

Ukraine’s apparent enthusiasm for NATO cooperation and consultation paid off when NATO and Ukraine signed the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership at the Madrid Summit on July 9, 1997 – the day after NATO invited Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to join the Alliance. The Charter affirmed the “importance of a strong and enduring relationship between NATO and Ukraine,” recognized the “solid progress...across a broad range of activities” between the two, and aimed to “promote further stability and democratic values in Central and Eastern Europe.”<sup>87</sup> The Charter did not offer membership or extend Article 5 protection to Ukraine, but it assured Ukraine an increased consultative voice through the NATO-Ukraine Council (NUC), and offered expanded areas of future cooperation with NATO.<sup>88</sup>

Interestingly, Ukraine signed the Charter less than two months after the endorsement of the NATO-Russia Founding Act on May 27, 1997, *and* the Treaty on

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<sup>84</sup> Polyakov, 9; *NATO handbook*, 89; and Ambassade D’Ukraine, “Peacekeeping, Activities of Ukraine,” [www.ukraine.be/nato/kosovo.html](http://www.ukraine.be/nato/kosovo.html) (accessed 02 September 2005).

<sup>85</sup> Shchurbak, 107.

<sup>86</sup> Polyakov, 7-8.

<sup>87</sup> NATO, *Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Ukraine* Madrid, 9 July 1997, <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/ukrchrt.htm> (accessed 25 August 2005), par. 1.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

Friendship, Cooperation, and Partnership (“The Friendship Treaty”) between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on May 31, 1997.<sup>89</sup> The former spelled out the non-adversarial relationship between NATO and Russia, and the latter normalized the Russia-Ukraine relationship and resolved the BSF issue. Although Ukraine had no official aspirations for NATO membership at this time, it appears that Ukraine strategically balanced West against East by leveraging Russian fears NATO expansion into Eastern Europe in order to acquire its own concessions from Moscow.<sup>90</sup> This episode highlighted the utility and strength of Ukraine’s “multi-vector” foreign policy.<sup>91</sup>

The NATO-Ukraine relationship took an interesting and ultimately unpleasant turn in 1999 after NATO commenced Operation *Allied Force* in Kosovo. Despite Russian calls for “Slavic unity” and NATO requests for support, President Kuchma established a position as an honest broker between NATO and the Southern Slavic Serbs in Kosovo. Following the commencement of the operation, President Kuchma proposed a three-stage peace settlement for Kosovo to President Slobodon Milosevic and the Contact Group. His proposal included an immediate end to NATO air strikes, withdrawal of Yugoslav forces, disarmament of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), and the implementation of a neutral peacekeeping force comprised of non-aligned countries.<sup>92</sup> In addition to political channels, Kuchma continued his lobbying effort by outlining his plan in a commentary published in *The Wall Street Journal* just days prior to NATO’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary summit in Washington, DC.<sup>93</sup>

On June 11, 1999, a day after the end of NATO air strikes, two hundred Russian SFOR peacekeeping troops left their positions in Bosnia en route to Kosovo to partition a Serbian-friendly zone outside the control of NATO. Russian troops seized the Slatina airfield near Pristina, but the Russian reinforcement flights with a contingent of 1,000 men never arrived. In a dramatic show of unity with NATO, Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary successfully blocked the Russian advance. The denial of Russian over-flight

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<sup>89</sup> *NATO Handbook*, 82.

<sup>90</sup> Solchanyk, 20,34-38.

<sup>91</sup> Motyl, 28.

<sup>92</sup> “Leonid Kuchma Plan on Kosovo Settlement,” *Embassy of Ukraine Press Release*, 15 April 1999.

<sup>93</sup> Leonid Kuchma, “A Peace Plan for Kosovo” *Wall Street Journal*, New York, NY: 23 April 1999, A-14.

rights by these three countries is well documented, but in a lesser-known revolt, Ukraine also refused the initial Russian request for over-flight rights.<sup>94</sup> Ukraine's geopolitical and strategic importance even in the post-Cold War environment became painfully clear for Russia.

The Ukrainian betrayal enraged Moscow, and Ukraine quickly retracted its air space restriction in the "face of Russian fury." Although the incident was subsequently blamed on a "misunderstanding," many sources make it clear that the refusal was not merely an oversight, but a short-lived display of solidarity with NATO.<sup>95</sup> Adding insult to injury for Russia, the incident occurred less than two months after NATO's initial round of expansion into the perceived Russian sphere of influence. In addition, the April release of NATO's new 1999 Strategic Concept likely amplified Russian fears of NATO intervention in Chechnya in the name of "crisis management."

The period between Ukrainian independence and the end of Operation *Allied Force* in 1999 produced significant areas of cooperation and reform for NATO and Ukraine. Ukraine was an eager partner and a formidable peacekeeping asset, while NATO established mechanisms for Ukrainian consultation and defense reform. Most importantly, NATO offered Ukraine a European political and security alternative to Russia and the CIS in the wake of the Soviet collapse. Contrary to Russian fears, Ukraine did not formally aspire to join NATO, and NATO unofficially recognized that Ukraine was beyond the "horizontal lines" of Russian influence – at least in the short term.<sup>96</sup> However, Ukraine misplayed its "multi-vector" foreign policy and made a stand against Russia at exactly the wrong moment, and the ensuing rift marked the end of the initial stage of robust cooperation between NATO and Ukraine.

## **2. Eastern Regression?**

Shortly after *Allied Force* and the failed incursion into Kosovo, President Yeltsin "invited" Kuchma to his dacha (ironically named "Rus") to discuss "the development of Ukrainian-Russian relations." To reprimand Ukraine for siding with NATO, Yeltsin was prepared to use available Russian leverage in the energy and trade sectors to ensure

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<sup>94</sup> "Ukraine Struggles Now for Neutrality," *The CDI Russia Weekly* 57 (16 July 1999): 4.

<sup>95</sup> "Ukraine Struggles Now for Neutrality"; Wilson, 294; and Molchanov, 179.

<sup>96</sup> Asmus, 171.

Ukrainian neutrality. In addition, Russia threatened to undermine Kuchma in the 1999 presidential election by overtly supporting his opponent.<sup>97</sup> Not surprisingly, upon his return from Russia, Kuchma announced that Russia and Ukraine were strategic partners, “and there cannot be an alternative” to friendly relations with Russia.<sup>98</sup> With a little tug from Mother Russia, Ukraine quickly rediscovered its Eastern roots.

Cooperation between NATO and Ukraine continued, but with less forward momentum. In August 1999, Ukraine deployed its 14<sup>th</sup> Helicopter Company to support the KFOR peacekeeping mission. The company remained in the Balkans for 19 months and completed 6,500 missions. Ukraine also deployed 334 soldiers as part of a joint Ukrainian-Polish Battalion (UKRPOLBAT) that conducted peacekeeping missions during KFOR.<sup>99</sup>

Kyiv hosted the NUC summit on March 1, 2000. The next day, the Verkhovna Rada ratified the NATO PfP Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), which facilitated increased Ukrainian PfP participation.<sup>100</sup> Ukraine also continued to participate in NATO exercises. In June 2000, ten NATO members and six partners participated in “Cooperative Partner-2000.” It was the largest NATO exercise ever conducted in a former-Soviet state.<sup>101</sup>

In November 2000, NATO distanced itself politically from Ukraine after the allegations of widespread corruption and abuse of power surfaced involving President Kuchma during “Kuchmagate.” The blatant corruption and abuses of power were not acceptable for an Alliance “founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.”<sup>102</sup> In response, NATO extended Kuchma the diplomatic snub, and hopes for further European integration were essentially stalled – at least until the attacks of September 11, 2001.

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<sup>97</sup> “Moscow to Support pro-Russia Candidate in Ukrainian Presidential Elections,” *Stratfor*, 15 July 1999.

<sup>98</sup> “Kuchma Capitulates to Russia,” *Stratfor*, 13 July 1999.

<sup>99</sup> Ambassade d’Ukraine, [www.ukraine.be/nato/kosovo.html](http://www.ukraine.be/nato/kosovo.html) (accessed 02 September 05).

<sup>100</sup> *NATO Handbook*, 88.

<sup>101</sup> Larrabee, 104.

<sup>102</sup> NATO, *The North Atlantic Treaty* Washington DC, 4 April 1949, <http://www.nato.int/docu/basic/txt/treaty.htm> (accessed 15 July 2005), Preamble.

In an interesting twist of cooperation, however, the lack of deeper integration options after Kuchmagate refocused NATO cooperation mechanisms on defense reform. In 2000, Ukraine adopted the State Program of Armed Forces Development and Reform 2001-2005. Consultation with the JWGDR in 2001 helped correct “grossly out of balance” force levels, and a 2001 PARP review outlined integration and inventory issues.<sup>103</sup> These reforms reduced the projected size of the military down to 295,000 troops by 2005, and aimed to implement an all-volunteer force by 2015.<sup>104</sup>

Renewed Russian influence coupled with blatant political abuse during this period hindered the hopes of deeper Euro-Atlantic integration. However, NATO and Ukraine continued to use the previously developed military channels to cooperate and consult in order to produce worthwhile defense reforms, in spite of political shortcomings stemming from Kosovo and Kuchmagate.

### **3. From Cooperation to Ukraine Fatigue**

In addition to the fundamental shift for the Alliance as a whole, the events of September 11, 2001, dramatically changed the nature of the NATO-Ukraine relationship. NATO invoked Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty for the first time in its history on September 12, 2001 to assist the United States following the coordinated terrorist attacks on U.S. soil. Article 5 is the collective defense provision in NATO that was originally part of the Cold War collective defense strategy against the Soviet Union. Likewise, the NUC convened on September 14, 2001 to denounce the attacks, and Ukraine expressed its readiness to contribute to the Global War on Terrorism. On September 24, 2001, Ukraine agreed to allow U.S. transport aircraft to fly through Ukrainian airspace “in the spirit of the Distinctive Partnership with NATO,” and it leased An-124 *Ruslan* cargo planes to the German *Bundeswehr* for anti-terrorist operations. In the first six months of this initiative, over one thousand aircraft transited through Ukrainian airspace in support of anti-terrorist operations.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> James Sherr, “The Dual Enlargements and Ukraine,” in *Ambivalent Neighbors: The EU, NATO, and the Price of Membership*, ed. Anatol Lieven and Dmitri Trenin. (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003), 129-131

<sup>104</sup> Larrabee, 106.

<sup>105</sup> Ambassade D’Ukraine, “Participation of Ukraine in the International Fight against Terrorism,” <http://www.ukraine.be/nato/terrorism.html> (accessed 19 February 2005).

Over the course of eight months, the Ukrainian relationship with NATO rapidly changed from lukewarm to red-hot. The capstone occurred on May 23, 2002, when Ukraine formally announced its intention to join NATO as a full member and pursue a “European Choice” policy. This decision was announced after a meeting of the Ukrainian National Security and Defense Council (NSDC) determined that a nonalignment multi-vector foreign policy “holds no promise” for Ukraine in the post-September 11 world.<sup>106</sup> Out of obvious deference to Russia, however, the final green light for Ukraine to pursue formal NATO membership followed a public statement by Russian President Putin declaring that he saw nothing bad in the notion of Ukrainian membership in NATO. Not surprisingly, Putin’s endorsement came just days before the creation of the NATO-Russia Partnership at the Rome Summit.<sup>107</sup>

Despite the renewed promise of alliance, the happy engagement between NATO and Ukraine was short lived. In September 2002, on the eve of the Prague Summit, an additional Kuchmagate tape was released in which President Kuchma allegedly approved the sale of four highly advanced “Kolchuga radars” to Iraq in July 2000. In light of UN sanctions in Iraq, this revelation was an obvious affront to the UN, NATO, and the United States. After repeated episodes of corruption and blatant legal violations, Kuchma’s reputation in NATO was moribund.<sup>108</sup>

Nevertheless, Ukrainian officials drafted the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan at the Prague Summit in November 2002 in an attempt to salvage the strained relations with NATO. The Action Plan covered an extensive array of reforms, from political and economic to informational and legal issues. The Action Plan also clearly identified Ukraine’s “aspirations towards full integration into Euro-Atlantic security structures,” but many of the declarations were largely rhetorical.<sup>109</sup> For example, the first political principle in the document reads, “Ukraine will continue to pursue internal policies based on strengthening democracy and the rule of law.”<sup>110</sup> This was ironic considering that

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<sup>106</sup> Oleg Varfolomeyev, “Ukraine Turns to NATO,” *Time Europe*, 20 June 2002.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Larrabee, 100.

<sup>109</sup> NATO, *NATO-Ukraine Action Plan*, Prague, Czech Republic, 22 November 2002, <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/b021122a.htm> (accessed 25 August 2005).

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 1.a.

Kuchma was caught on tape discussing his role in election tampering two years earlier. It appeared that the Kuchma Administration was trying to declare its way into NATO. This tactic did not fool NATO, however, and in a speech to the NATO-Ukraine Consultations group on May 5, 2003, Secretary-General Lord Robertson stated, “The time for political declaration is over, and Ukraine must now take action to implement the commitments it made in Prague.”<sup>111</sup> As with the EU, the propensity of the Ukrainian Government to make declaratory promises without implementation led to “Ukraine fatigue” in NATO.

A year later, in the 2004 Istanbul Summit Communiqué, NATO recognized positive areas of Ukrainian military cooperation but encouraged Ukraine to “accelerate the implementation of the objectives outlined in the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan.” The communiqué also made the future of the NATO-Ukraine relationship clear: “A further strengthening of our relationship will require stronger evidence of Ukraine’s commitment to comprehensive reform, in particular with a view to the conduct of presidential elections this autumn.”<sup>112</sup> Though NATO continued to transform and expand into Eastern Europe, the dichotomy of meaningful military cooperation and political obstruction plunged Ukraine into a Euro-Atlantic purgatory in which neither integration nor exclusion seemed possible. Ukraine proffered valuable airlift assets and strategic location for the GWOT while formally lobbying for NATO membership; however, presidential corruption and a lack of necessary reforms stifled any chance of further NATO integration under Kuchma. As a result, President Kuchma changed his national strategy less than three weeks after the Istanbul Summit and removed preparations for NATO membership from Ukrainian military doctrine.<sup>113</sup>

Consequently, the 2004 election was as a crucial moment for the future of the NATO-Ukraine relationship long before the election. Accordingly, the tampered results of the November runoff election in favor of Yanukovich invoked a strong reaction from

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<sup>111</sup> NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson, “NATO and Ukraine’s Contribution to Building Peace and Security,” 05 May 2003, <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2003/s030505a.htm> (accessed 25 August 2005).

<sup>112</sup> “Istanbul Summit Communiqué,” *NATO Press Release*, 2004(096) Istanbul, Turkey, 28 June 2004, par. 40.

<sup>113</sup> “Is Ukraine Signaling a Future Course without NATO, EU Membership?” *RFE/RL Newslines* 8, no. 147 (27 July 2004).



NATO. On November 26, two days after the certification of the runoff results by the Central Election Commission, Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer proclaimed:

The democratic future of Ukraine, the Alliance's neighbor and strategic partner, is of direct and vital interest to NATO. ...NATO remains committed to doing all it can to help Ukraine...take her rightful place in the Euro-Atlantic community.<sup>114</sup>

The fraudulent election in November was the pinnacle of Ukraine fatigue, but the Orange Revolution reversed the regression and became the catalyst for Ukraine's dramatic democratic transition and integration efforts.

#### **4. The Political Catalyst**

The Orange Revolution and ensuing democratic election of Yushchenko finally provided NATO with the opportunity to augment years of comprehensive military and defense cooperation with a new administration genuinely committed to political reform and Euro-Atlantic integration efforts. Following the freer and fairer election on December 26, Secretary-General Scheffer released a statement praising the triumph of the Orange Revolution:

Ukraine is an important strategic partner for the Alliance, and we look forward to working with the new Ukrainian leadership to deepen our cooperation even further. Clearly this development is relevant to NATO's political relationship with Ukraine. Our overriding goal – to assist Ukraine to realize its Euro-Atlantic aspirations and to promote stability in the region – remains unchanged.<sup>115</sup>

On February 22, 2005, less than one month after his inauguration, Yushchenko traveled to Brussels to attend his first meeting of the NUC as President of Ukraine. This summit was particularly important because Yushchenko formally reaffirmed his desire for NATO integration during his opening remarks to the NUC:

We believe that Ukraine's participation and engagement in the North Atlantic community of democratic peoples will strengthen peace and security on the European continent. We are ready to make all necessary

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<sup>114</sup> Secretary General's position on Ukraine Crisis, <http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2004/11-november/e1126a.htm> (accessed 25 August 2005).

<sup>115</sup> "Statement following the election in Ukraine by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer," *NATO Press Release*, 2004(175), 27 December 2004.

efforts to achieve this noble goal. ... [T]he European future of Ukraine is inseparably linked with the deepening of its relationships with the alliance.<sup>116</sup>

After President Yushchenko's declaration, Scheffer replied that the Alliance was "fully committed to a rich and progressively stronger partnership with Ukraine."<sup>117</sup>

Ironically, Yushchenko delivered this speech on the anniversary of Secretary-General Woerner's first visit to Ukraine.<sup>118</sup> Over that thirteen-year period, Ukraine developed from a diffident former Soviet republic into a keystone of European security with an impressive history of NATO participation. Despite the obvious political shortcomings at times during the relationship, Ukraine's previous military cooperation efforts are paving the way for future integration.

### **C. UKRAINIAN LEVERAGE**

The second reason that the Alliance will court Ukraine centers on Ukrainian capabilities that compliment NATO shortfalls. In other words, Ukraine actually has a certain amount of leverage with NATO. At the 2002 Prague Summit, NATO created the NATO Response Force (NRF) and approved the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC). Based on the wider-ranging 1999 Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI), the PCC identified specific critical Alliance shortfalls in eight key areas. Ukraine offers NATO capabilities that support the Prague initiatives with strategic airlift and geostrategic position that augment NATO's deficiencies.<sup>119</sup>

#### **1. Strategic Airlift**

The most important tangible asset that Ukraine offers NATO is strategic airlift support. The United States has impressive strategic airlift capability, but in the spirit of burden shifting, the United States pressured the Europeans to upgrade their forces for post-enlargement power projection.<sup>120</sup> In 2002, most NATO members still had

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<sup>116</sup> Victor Yushchenko speech before the NATO-Ukraine Commission, 22 February 2005, <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2005/s050222e.htm> (accessed 27 August 2005).

<sup>117</sup> Opening Statement by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, 22 February 05, <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2005/s050222f.htm> (accessed 27 August 2005).

<sup>118</sup> *NATO Handbook*, 448.

<sup>119</sup> Carl Ek, *CRS Report for Congress: NATO's Prague Capabilities Commitment* (Washington DC: Library of Congress), 07 November 2003, RS21659.

<sup>120</sup> Thies, 192-193.

inadequate airlift resources because the Airbus A400M, the proposed replacement platform, was still in development. In fact, the A400M will not be ready for widespread operation in Europe until 2012. Meanwhile, Ukraine owns an extensive and capable fleet of heavy-lift aircraft that it leases to other countries and organizations for cargo operations. Coupled with its attractive geostrategic location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Ukraine offers the Alliance a much-needed strategic airlift stopgap with capabilities that exceed those already in NATO.<sup>121</sup>

<b>AIRCRAFT</b>	<b>Cargo Load (lb)</b>	<b>Cargo Area (ft3)</b>	<b>Range (nm)[load]</b>
*An-225	551,150	42,934.5	2,425 [440K]
*An-124	330,700	40,965	1,997 [330K]
C-5	261,000	34,765	2,982 [261K]
C-17	169,000	20,900	2,400 [160K]
*Il-76 MD	103,615	8,310	2,051 [103K]
A400M	81,570	12,570	2,450 [66K]
C-130J-30	79,291	6,022	2,832 [35K]
C-160	35,275	4,940	1,000 [35K]
Source: <i>Jane's All the World's Aircraft</i> . *Ukrainian owned assets.			

Table 1. Comparison of Strategic Airlift Assets

Table 1 demonstrates that Ukrainian Antonov and Illiushin cargo aircraft incorporate impressive strategic airlift capacities that even exceed U.S. heavy lifters and other NATO assets. In addition to scores of Il-76 Candid transport aircraft for military use, the Ukrainian government owns ANTK Antonov, which, in turn, operates its own cargo carrier. Antonov Airlines owns a fleet of eight An-124 *Ruslan* aircraft (NATO name: Condor) and the only existing An-225 *Mriya* aircraft (NATO name: Cossack). Incidentally, the *Mriya* is the largest cargo aircraft in the world and it set the world record

<sup>121</sup> Robert Wall, "Filling the Gap," *Aviation Week & Space Technology* 163, no. 1 (4 July 2005): 35

for carrying 253 tons during a flight that took place at the same time as terrorist carried out attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001.<sup>122</sup>

Due to its strategic airlift shortfalls, NATO extensively leases these cargo assets from Ukraine. Between 2002 and 2003, Antonov Airlines alone completed 440 flights for NATO carrying more than 30,000 tons of cargo.<sup>123</sup> NATO also leases heavy strategic-lift assets from Russia on occasion, but NATO prefers a long-term formal agreement with Ukraine regarding the use of its airplanes. In 2003, a group of 11 countries signed an initial letter of intent on airlift, and on June 7, 2004, Ukraine signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Strategic Lift with NATO. This MoU allows NATO to use up to six Ukrainian An-124s on short notice to transport NATO assets and other cargo to operational areas that can assist with critical NRF deployments.<sup>124</sup> In addition, the Verkhovna Rada ratified the MoU on Host Nation Support (HNS) in March 2004 to guarantee assistance for all Allied forces operating in Ukraine. For NATO, these two agreements represented significant progress in “strengthening [Ukrainian] defense and military cooperation with NATO.”<sup>125</sup>

Over the last year, Ukrainian airlift assets assisted with military and humanitarian NATO airlifts to Afghanistan, Iraq, and Darfur in addition to flights that supported Pakistani earthquake relief, and Hurricane Katrina relief. In fact, worldwide demand for Ukrainian heavy lift assets has been so extraordinary over the last few years that Antonov is planning to build up to 80 additional An-124s and may complete production of the second An-225 by way of an aviation consortium with Russia.<sup>126</sup>

## **2. Setbacks**

However, there have been setbacks with Ukrainian strategic airlift support for NATO. First, a Cypriot company named TMR Energy Ltd sued the Ukrainian State

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<sup>122</sup> Philip Shishkin. “Weighty Business: A Cold-War Plane lifts Ukrainian in Cargo Market; Antonov’s Rulsans Transport Armor, oil Rigs, Giraffes; Playing Soccer in the Hold; A Legal Snag Grounds Flights.” *The Wall Street Journal*. New York, NY: 19 January 2005, A-1.

<sup>123</sup> Henry Ivanov, “Antonov’s An-124-300 Targets NATO needs,” *Jane’s Defense Weekly*, 16 July 2003.

<sup>124</sup> “NATO Signs Transport Deal with Ukraine, Calls for More Reforms,” *RFE/RL Newslines* 8, no. 107 (8 June 2004).

<sup>125</sup> Istanbul Summit Communiqué, par. 40.

<sup>126</sup> Akexy Komarov and Michael A. Taverna, “New Life for An-124?” *Aviation Week & Space Technology* 162, iss. 15 (11 April 2005): 40.

Property Fund for \$42.3 million over oil refinery debts. A Stockholm court upheld the suit in 2002 and ruled that TMR could seize Ukrainian state assets as collateral in the case. NATO members from the United States, Canada, France, Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands formally recognized the court ruling and two of Antonov Airlines An-124 aircraft were subsequently confiscated during stopovers in Canada and Belgium in 2003. Ironically, both incidents occurred during contract flights for NATO.<sup>127</sup> These seizures crippled Antonov and severely limited the ability of Ukrainian assets to fly to certain NATO countries. In response, NATO directed Ukrainian charters out of other NATO countries like Turkey or leased Russian airlift assets (that refuse to fly to Iraq) to move cargo from the countries in question. Fortunately for NATO and Ukraine, the lawsuit was resolved on November 1, 2005, and Ukraine resumed its direct lift services to the NATO countries in question.<sup>128</sup>

The second problem deals with the MoU on Strategic Lift. Although President Kuchma signed the agreement with NATO in 2004, the Verkhovna Rada failed to ratify the MoU legislation in November 2005. Parties that opposed President Yushchenko in the Verkhovna Rada joined forces to reject the legislation. This will not keep Ukraine from leasing assets to NATO, but it stalls the long-term agreement with Ukraine that NATO was pursuing. There is a chance that the Verkhovna Rada will readdress the legislation in 2005, but the MoU will likely have to wait until after the March 2006 Parliamentary Elections for another vote. However, if Ukraine becomes a NATO member, these assets would be available for extensive NATO use.<sup>129</sup>

Incidentally, strategic airlift is also a point of important cooperation between Ukraine and the European Union. Among other points, Headline Goal 2010 outlines the Union's strategic airlift deficiencies within the Union that its CFSP requires to deploy European forces outside of Europe. Until the completion of the A400M at the end of the decade, the Union will need airlift support for these tasks. In fact, the EU needed Ukrainian assets for strategic airlift during Operation Artemis in Congo. As a result,

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<sup>127</sup> Shishkin, A-1.

<sup>128</sup> Dispute involving Ukrainian Aircraft Seizures resolved," *Interfax*, 28 October 2005.

<sup>129</sup> "Ukraine Parliament Rejects Air Assistance for NATO," *Rueters*, 02 November 2005.

airlift cooperation is addressed in the EU-Ukraine Action Plan, and the heavy airlift assets are Ukrainian bargaining tools with the EU as well.<sup>130</sup>

#### **D. THE DEMOCRATIC EMBRACE**

The third and most important reason why NATO will open the door for Ukraine centers on the nature of the peaceful democratic Orange Revolution. Although NATO is primarily a security institution committed to collective defense, the Alliance has transformed into an expanding collection of states focused on the principles of democracy and stability in Europe. This section explains the positive ramifications of the democratic Orange Revolution on Euro-Atlantic integration in two parts. First, it will examine NATO literature and explain why the democratic gains in Ukraine augment NATO's principles. Second, it reveals the two powerful allies within NATO that support Ukraine's democratic gains and Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

##### **1. NATO Literature**

Ukraine is ultimately eligible for NATO membership under Article 10 of the Washington Treaty, which declares that, by unanimous consent, NATO members can invite other European states that further NATO principles and “contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to the Treaty.”<sup>131</sup> In the opinion of Secretary-General Scheffer, “Ukraine has shown on a number of occasions that it is a producer and exporter, rather than a mere consumer of security – that it plays a significant role in maintaining peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic area and beyond.”<sup>132</sup> Although Article 10 lays out general requirements for accession, the 1995 Study on NATO Enlargement, the 1999 Strategic Concept, and the 1999 Membership Action Plan all provide additional guidance on the enlargement process.

The 1995 Study on NATO Enlargement was the first official publication to tackle the notion of post-Cold War expansion to the East. Among its many facets, the document focuses on “encouraging and supporting democratic reforms” and “reinforcing the tendency toward integration and cooperation in Europe based on shared democratic

<sup>130</sup> “Ukraine Politics: Ukraine to Bring Military Planes to EU Bargaining Table,” *EIU ViwsWire*. 20 April 2004.

<sup>131</sup> *NATO Handbook*, 529.

<sup>132</sup> NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Opening remarks to the NATO-Ukraine high-level consultations, 7 June 2004, <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s040607a.htm> (accessed 20 August 2005).

values.” In harmony with the Preamble to the North Atlantic Treaty, the first “Principle of Enlargement” in the study states that enlargement should help to promote “the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law.” The study also recognizes the significance of the NATO-Russia relationship for European stability, but flatly rejects the notion of a Russian veto over any NATO enlargement decisions – even Ukraine. Although Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic were ultimately the only states invited to join NATO during the first round of talks in 1997, the study proclaims that NATO’s door should never close to qualified European states.<sup>133</sup>

In 1999, NATO released its new Strategic Concept at the Washington Summit shortly after the accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. This document declares that NATO “has an indispensable role to play in consolidating and preserving the positive changes of the recent past, and in meeting current and future security challenges.” In terms of expansion, the concept states, “[NATO] expects to extend further invitations in coming years to nations willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, and as NATO determines that the inclusion of these nations would serve the overall political and strategic interests of the Alliance, strengthen its effectiveness and cohesion, and enhance overall European security and stability.”

Similar to the 1995 study, the Strategic Concept also declares, “No European democratic country whose admission would fulfill the objectives of the Treaty will be excluded from consideration.”<sup>134</sup> The Strategic Concept even explicitly addresses Ukraine: “Ukraine occupies a special place in the Euro-Atlantic security environment and is an important and valuable partner in promoting stability and common democratic values.” Additionally, it reiterates the significance of Ukrainian “democratic development” on European security and stability.<sup>135</sup>

To compliment the Strategic Concept and incorporate the lessons learned during the first round of enlargement, NATO also produced the 1999 Membership Action Plan

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<sup>133</sup> NATO, *1995 Study on Enlargement*, <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/enl-9501.htm> (accessed 25 August 2005), par. 3, 4, and 30.

<sup>134</sup> *Strategic Concept*, par. 4, 6 and 39.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, par. 37.

(MAP) document in order to “further enlargement by putting into place a programme of activities to assist aspiring countries in their preparations for possible future membership.”<sup>136</sup> The document’s five main chapters focus on Political and Economic issues, Defence/Military issues, Resource issues, Security issues, and Legal issues. Ukraine even modeled its 2002 NATO-Ukraine Action Plan along the same lines of the MAP. These primary sources make it clear the democratic gains in Ukraine augment NATO’s principles, but NATO is still a security alliance. In the end, membership criteria are largely political, subjective, and based on NATO’s best strategic interests.<sup>137</sup>

## **2. Ukraine’s Champions**

To assist with the political aspect, Ukraine also has two powerful allies within the Alliance that support Ukrainian democracy and renewed integration efforts: the United States and Poland. This does not imply that other NATO members do not support the Ukrainian cause, but support from the United States and Poland is particularly noteworthy and will be instrumental for accession. Why are these two countries taking a special interest in Ukraine?

### **a. The United States**

First, the United States has long supported improvements for Ukrainian sovereignty and democracy. As the single largest state and strongest political player in the Alliance, the United States has significant leverage within NATO. Though the United States was slow to recognize Ukraine and initially adopted a policy of “Russia First” in Eastern Europe, eventual Ukrainian cooperation during nuclear reduction talks earned Ukraine important praise, political capital, and security guarantees from the United States.<sup>138</sup> In fact, the 1997 National Security Strategy (NSS) of the United States repeatedly referred to Ukraine by name and called on NATO to “create an enhanced NATO-Ukraine relationship” in a larger effort to strengthen “Europe’s east.”<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> North Atlantic Council, *Membership Action Plan*, NAC-S(99)66, 24 April 1999, par. 1.

<sup>137</sup> Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening NATO’s Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2001), 147; *Study on NATO Enlargement*; and *Membership Action Plan*.

<sup>138</sup> Sherr, 111-112.

<sup>139</sup> William J. Clinton, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1997), 21.



As with NATO, the events surrounding Kosovo and Kuchmagate muddied the bilateral relationship between Ukraine and the United States; however, Ukraine reemerged as a solid supporter of the United States and the GWOT by joining the “coalition of the willing” after September 11, 2001. Ukraine allowed for U.S. military overflight of Ukrainian territory during the early days of Operation *Enduring Freedom* (OEF) and ultimately supplied aid to the Afghan National Army for the NATO-led International Security assistance Force (ISAF). However, the repeated corruption within Kuchma Administration eventually led to Ukraine fatigue in the United States, too.

After evidence surfaced regarding the alleged sale of four advanced Kolchuga Radars from Ukraine to Iraq became public, the United States rebuked Kuchma and immediately suspended a \$55 million-a-year aid program for Ukraine.<sup>140</sup> To salvage relations with the United States., President Kuchma deployed over 1,600 troops to Iraq in order to assist with decontamination and stabilization efforts during Operation *Iraqi Freedom* (OIF). President Bush has praised Ukrainian forces for their efforts in Iraq, but relations remained irreparably strained under Kuchma. As of November 30, 2005, Ukraine had reported 18 deaths in Iraq – the fourth largest casualty rate behind the United States, Great Britain, and Italy – and Yushchenko was fulfilling his campaign promise to bring the Ukrainian troops home from Iraq.<sup>141</sup>

After the Orange Revolution, the United States was quick to support Yushchenko and the democratic gains in Ukraine. The 2002 NSS of the United States provides important insight into why. Although this NSS does not mention Ukraine by name, it declares that the U.S. will “advance freedom” and “support those who struggle non-violently for it, ensuring that nations moving towards democracy are rewarded for the steps they take.” Two years after the publications of this NSS, Ukraine embodied the Bush Administration’s commitment to spread democracy and freedom throughout the globe. In terms of NATO, the NSS even states that the United States will “expand NATO’s membership to those democratic nations willing and able to share the burden of

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<sup>140</sup> Michael Wines, *New York Times* (Late Edition). New York, NY: 24 September 2002, A-16.

<sup>141</sup> “A Look at U.S. Military Deaths in Iraq,” *Associated Press*, 30 November 2005.

defending and advancing our common interests.”<sup>142</sup> President Bush expounded on both points at a press conference during President Yushchenko’s visit to the White House in April 2005:

President Yushchenko was the first head of state I called after my [January 2005] inaugural address. I told him that the Orange Revolution was a power example – an example of democracy for people around the world. ...I’m a supporter of the idea of Ukraine becoming a member of NATO. I think it’s important. ...[The United States] want to help your government make the difficult decisions and difficult choices necessary to become available for membership in NATO.<sup>143</sup>

In addition to the White House, the U.S. Congress supports the Ukrainian cause. Within days of Yushchenko’s inauguration, both the House and Senate passed concurrent resolutions stating that Congress “commends the people and Government of Ukraine for their commitment to democracy.” More importantly, Congress pledged to assist with “Ukraine’s full integration into the international community of democracies.”<sup>144</sup> Therefore, it is no surprise that Yushchenko even mentioned NATO during his speech before a joint session of the U.S. Congress in Washington, DC:

My goal is to place Ukraine in the forefront of prosperous democracies. My vision is Ukraine in a united Europe. ...Ukraine wishes to guarantee security to its citizens, to live in peace and accord with all of its neighbors, whether in the East or in the West. It is only logical that we target our efforts toward the integration into NATO, the alliance that plays an essential role in securing peace and stability across the European continent.<sup>145</sup>

Over and above declarative support for democracy and Euro-Atlantic integration, Congress increased U.S. aid to Ukraine by \$60 million and the Senate voted in November 2005 to graduate Ukraine from the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. Passed in 1974 to punish the Soviet Union and other non-market states for limiting religious

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<sup>142</sup> George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. (Washington DC: U.S. GPO, 2002), 15.

<sup>143</sup> “President Welcomes President Yushchenko to the White House,” *Office of the Press Secretary*, April 4, 2005, the East Room.

<sup>144</sup> Congress, House, *Congratulating the people of Ukraine for conducting a democratic, transparent, and fair runoff presidential election*. 109th Cong., 1st sess., H.Con.Res 16. *Congressional Record*, 135 (25 January 05): H145-H149. The U.S. Senate passed S.Con.Res 7 with identical wording the next day.

<sup>145</sup> Ukraine’s Yushchenko Addresses Joint Session of U.S. Congress, April 6, 2005, <http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Archive/2005/Apr/06-111471.html> (accessed 20 August 2005).

immigration, this amendment still hinders normal trade relations between the United States and Ukraine. It may also help Ukraine with its WTO ambitions. Though the House of Representatives still must vote to repeal the amendment, the end of Jackson-Vanik will help Ukraine economically by fostering new trade with the United States.<sup>146</sup> As a token of appreciation for U.S. support, Yushchenko unilaterally eliminated visa requirements for United States citizens traveling to Ukraine.

Though the United States is willing to use its significant influence in NATO to support Ukraine's democracy and Euro-Atlantic integration, the U.S. has less sway in mainland Europe, especially after the trans-Atlantic rift that developed over the Iraq war. Fortunately, Ukraine also has a powerful European champion.

**b. Poland**

The second powerful ally for Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic endeavor is Poland. Poland supports Ukrainian freedom and democracy, but for different rationale than the United States. Poland and Ukraine share almost 330 miles of common border and Ukraine remains a key component of Poland's security strategy. Fourteen years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Poland still views an independent Ukraine as a critical barrier from corrosive Russian influence. Consequently, Poland has emerged as "the major advocate of efforts to anchor Ukraine" in the West.<sup>147</sup>

Poland was the first country to recognize Ukrainian independence, and the two countries signed the "Treaty on Good Neighborliness, Friendly Relations, and Cooperation" less than six months after the Soviet collapse. Though Poland occasionally put aside its relationship with Ukraine in order to pursue its own Western agenda, the two neighbors ultimately forged many important political, military, and economic ties. One of these ties is Polish-Ukrainian Battalion (POLUKRBAT). Formed in 1995, the POLUKRBAT is a joint peacekeeping battalion that has deployed to Kosovo and Iraq to

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<sup>146</sup> Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, *Ukraine: Developments in the aftermath of the Orange Revolution*, 109th Cong., 1st sess., 27 July 2005, 29.

<sup>147</sup> Marcin Zdobrowski, *From America's Protégé to Constructive European: Polish Security Policy in the Twenty-First Century* (Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, 2004), 9.

assist with peacekeeping operations. As a result, POLUKRBAT has become an important link between Poland, Ukraine, and NATO.<sup>148</sup>

After lobbying hard for initial NATO expansion in 1995 and acceding into the Alliance during its first enlargement in 1999, Poland has emerged as the center of NATO's eastern wing and the regional advocate for enlargement in Eastern Europe with its own *ostpolitik*.<sup>149</sup> Additionally, Poland joined the EU in 2004, and Poland is gaining important political and economic influence within in the Union. As a result, Poland has noteworthy influence in both primary Western institutions that will help Ukraine with its European and Euro-Atlantic ambitions.

The Orange Revolution was significant for Polish-Ukrainian relations for at least two reasons. First, it presented an opportunity to anchor a democratic and reform-minded government in Ukraine. Poland views Ukrainian freedom as a “Polish mission.” Though Poland tried to support Western reforms in Ukraine under President Kuchma, the outlook is much better now, under Yushchenko. In addition, Poland has much to lose if Yushchenko fizzles. If Ukrainian democracy retreats, Russian influence may creep back into Ukraine and damage Polish political, economic, and security interests. Second, Poland viewed the Orange Revolution as the Ukrainian version of “Solidarity.” In fact, former Polish President and Solidarity leader Lech Walesa even traveled to Ukraine during the early days of the Orange Revolution to provide important political and moral support for Yushchenko.<sup>150</sup>

NATO's overriding democratic principles and enlargement doctrine indicate that the Alliance will continue to support the new democratic gains in Ukraine following the Orange Revolution, and the resolute political support of these principles in Ukraine from the United States and Poland will facilitate Ukraine with its plans for Euro-Atlantic integration. A solid democracy in Ukraine will anchor democratic values in Eastern Europe and may even influence positive reforms and cooperation in Moldova,

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<sup>148</sup> Roman Wolczuk, “Polish-Ukrainian Relations: A Strategic Relationship Conditioned by Externalities,” in *Poland: A New power in Transatlantic Security*, ed. Marcin Zaborowski and David H. Dunn, (Portland, OR: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003), 143-148.

<sup>149</sup> Larrabee, 41-44

<sup>150</sup> Taras Kuzio, “Poland Plays Strategic Role in Ukraine's ‘Orange Revolution,’” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 1, no. 144 (10 December 2004).

Russia, and Belarus. In fact, the Belarusian defense minister affirmed in November 2005 that his country is ready to expand its cooperation with NATO within the framework of PfP.<sup>151</sup> This is quite significant considering the authoritarian regime of Alexander Lukashenko stifled previous attempts at Westernization and has commonly referred to NATO, EU, and the U.S. as external enemies of Belarus<sup>152</sup>

## **E. SINCE THE REVOLUTION**

In the months since Yushchenko's inauguration, the relationship between NATO and Ukraine has improved dramatically. First, Ukraine and NATO established a new PfP Trust Fund project aimed at destroying an estimated 133,000 tons of excess munitions and 1.5 million small arms, light weapons, and Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS) located in Ukraine.<sup>153</sup> Next, Ukraine volunteered to participate in Operation *Active Endeavour*, NATO's Article 5 mission aimed at detecting and deterring terrorist activity in the Mediterranean. Most importantly, NATO agreed to launch an Intensified Dialogue (ID) with Ukraine.

### **1. Intensified Dialogue**

The general purpose of the ID is to address important issues specified in the 1995 Study on NATO Enlargement, and it is apparent from the Ukrainian discourse that NATO is starting to open the door for Ukrainian membership into the Alliance. However, the ID does not imply that NATO will begin membership talks with Ukraine. Ukraine's ID outlined the following categories for urgent short-term reform:

- Strengthening democratic institutions (four initiatives)
- Renewing political dialogue (five initiatives)
- Reinvigorating cooperation in defense and security sector reform (eight initiatives)

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<sup>151</sup> "Belarus is ready to expand cooperation with NATO," <http://law.by.work/EnglPortal.nsf> (accessed 03 November 2005).

<sup>152</sup> Leonid Zaiko, "Belarus: Give a Dog a Bad Name," in *Ambivalent Neighbors: The EU, NATO, and the Price of Membership*, ed. Anatol Lieven and Dmitri Trenin (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003), 95.

<sup>153</sup> "NATO/PfP Trust Fund project to destroy surplus weapons and ammunition in Ukraine," *NATO Press Release*, 2005(021), 19 February 2005.

- Enhancing and targeting public diplomacy efforts (five initiatives)
- Enhancing support to address the socio-economic impact of defense reform (six initiatives)<sup>154</sup>

Ukraine must still implement many of the political, economic, and security reforms outlined in the Action Plan and the ID initiatives before it is prepared for accession into NATO. However, the “NATO umbrella” will help consolidate recent democratic gains and recognize the important Ukrainian contributions to Euro-Atlantic security and stability through non-proliferation, cooperation, and common values.<sup>155</sup>

More recently, the NUC held its October 2005 meeting in Kyiv to deepen the relationship and to help bolster the NATO image in Ukraine. During the NUC meeting, Secretary-General Scheffer continued to affirm that NATO is open for Ukraine as long as Ukraine continues to pursue democratic commitments and reforms. He stated that NATO should be a priority for Ukraine in order to anchor values, promote positive reforms, and bolster common security. Scheffer also placed strong emphasis on the March 2006 Parliamentary Elections as the next important benchmark for democracy in Ukraine and the NATO relationship.<sup>156</sup> Following the NUC summit, the Ukrainian Intensified Dialogue reconvened in Vilnius on October 23, 2005, to discuss the future of Ukrainian defense and security sector reforms.

## **2. Membership Action Plan?**

The next formal step in the accession pipeline for Ukraine will be the NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP). The MAP is a “practical manifestation of the Open Door” that helps aspiring countries prepare for accession, but it does not imply a time frame or a guarantee for membership. Three countries have joined the MAP and are currently in the queue for NATO enlargement. These countries are the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Croatia, and Albania. Macedonia and Albania agreed to MAPs with NATO in 1999, and Croatia joined the MAP in 2002. How does Ukraine compare to these MAP countries?

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<sup>154</sup> “Enhancing NATO-Ukraine Cooperation Short Term Actions,” *NATO Press Statement*, 21 April 2005.

<sup>155</sup> Asmus, 31, 190

<sup>156</sup> Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, “Why NATO?” 20 Oct 2005, <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2005/s050627a.htm> (accessed 20 October 2005).

Ukraine compares fairly well in basic measurements of democracy, economy, and defense when compared to the NATO MAP states.<sup>157</sup> First, Ukrainian democracy is improving. The previous chapter discussed the Freedom House gains after the Orange Revolution, and the following chart shows the 2005 Freedom House rating for each country as well as its rating at the time it joined the NATO MAP. Freedom House rates Political Rights (PR) and Civil Liberties (CL) on a scale of “1” (best) to “7” (worst), and gives an overall rating of Free (F), Partially Free (PF), or Not Free (NF).

Country	MAP (PR, CL)	2005 (PR, CL)
<b>Albania</b>	4, 5 PF	3, 3 PF
<b>Croatia</b>	2, 2 F	2, 2 F
<b>Macedonia</b>	3, 3 PF	3, 3 PF
<b>Ukraine</b>	--	4, 3 PF
Source: Freedom House		

Table 2. Comparison of Freedom House Ratings

Ukraine also had serious problems with corruption under the Kuchma Administration, but new ratings from Transparency International (TI) show that the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for Ukraine improved after the Orange Revolution.<sup>158</sup> These corruption scores are based on a scale of “0” (worst) to “10” (best). Ukraine’s corruption index for 2005 is up to 2.6 from 2.2 in 2004.

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<sup>157</sup> For a more detailed look at methodology for measuring NATO criteria, see Thomas S. Szayna, *NATO Enlargement, 2000-2015: Determinants and Implications For Defense Planning and Shaping* (Arlington: RAND, 2001).

<sup>158</sup> Corruption data compiled from Transparency International, *Global Perceptions Index* database, [http://www.transparency.org/policy\\_and\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi](http://www.transparency.org/policy_and_research/surveys_indices/cpi) (accessed 18 October 2005).

Country	MAP	2005
<b>Albania</b>	2.3	2.4
<b>Croatia</b>	3.8	3.4
<b>Macedonia</b>	3.3	2.7
<b>Ukraine</b>	--	2.6
Source: Transparency International		

Table 3. Comparison of Corruption Ratings

Two other important figures for NATO gauge economic development and defense spending. Until this year, Ukraine had one of the hottest economies in Europe, with GDP growing at a rate of over 12 percent during 2004. After the Orange Revolution, however, the Ukrainian economy has actually slowed its growth to around five percent. Based on information from the World Bank, this table shows GDP in billions of dollars and shows percent change over the previous year since 2000.<sup>159</sup> To help put the figures in context, Ukraine has a population of 46 million people, Croatia has 4.5 million people, Albania has 3.6 million people, and Macedonia has 2 million.<sup>160</sup>

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>Albania</b> (GDP \$B)	\$3.694	\$4.103	\$4.502	\$5.705	\$7.590
(% change)	7.3	7.6	4.7	6	6.2
<b>Croatia</b>	\$18.427	\$19.863	\$22.812	\$28.810	\$34.200
	2.86	4.44	5.21	4.27	3.7
<b>Macedonia</b>	\$3.587	\$3.437	\$3.791	\$4.666	\$5.246
	4.55	-4.53	0.85	3.23	2.5
<b>Ukraine</b>	\$31.262	\$38.009	\$42.393	\$50.133	\$65.149
	5.9	9.2	5.2	9.4	12.1
Source: The World Bank					

Table 4. Comparison of GDP

<sup>159</sup> All GDP information compiled from World Bank data query, <http://devdata.worldbank.org/data-query/> (accessed 18 October 2005).

<sup>160</sup> All population estimates are based on CIA World Factbook for 2005, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html> (accessed 18 October 2005).



From this GDP, NATO is interested in how much each country spends on defense. NATO advocates spending 3 percent of GDP on defense spending. Ukraine still has a Soviet-type legacy defense structure, and in his 2004 analysis, Leonid Polyakov stated that Ukraine was still years away from a modern force that could fully integrate with the West. However, NATO continues to assist Ukraine with defense reforms via the JWGDR in order to streamline and modernize the Ukrainian forces.<sup>161</sup> According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Ukraine spent 2.9 percent of GDP on Military Expenditures in 2003 (\$1.429 billion).<sup>162</sup> Despite increasing defense spending by 8 percent, the 2004 figures place defense spending at the 2.4 percent of GDP based defense spending of \$1.553 billion.

Country	MAP	2004
<b>Albania</b>	1.2%	1.0%
<b>Croatia</b>	2.4%	2.4%
<b>Macedonia</b>	1.8%	2.3%
<b>Ukraine</b>	--	2.4%
Source: SIPRI / World Bank		

Table 5. Comparison of Defense Spending

So how close is Ukraine to joining the MAP? Though Ukraine still needs reforms in critical areas outlined in the ID, it appears to parallel the basic ratings of other MAP countries. This does not necessarily mean that Ukraine will accede to the MAP process anytime soon. The process remains highly subjective and open to interpretation by NATO.

## F. CONCLUSION

For NATO, the 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine presented an opportunity to deepen the NATO-Ukraine relationship and consolidate the democratic gains in Ukraine and beyond. Although Ukraine declared its intention to join NATO in May 2002,

<sup>161</sup> Polyakov, 1-8.

<sup>162</sup> SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, [http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex\\_database1.html](http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_database1.html) (accessed 18 October 2005).

political corruption and empty rhetoric during the Kuchma Administration hindered the possibility of Euro-Atlantic integration. In spite of political shortcomings, significant military cooperation and consultation between NATO and Ukraine over the course of the thirteen-year relationship shaped a solid foundation for the future of the partnership. In fact, Ukraine is already a proven asset for NATO security tasks and crisis response operations in line with the Alliance's new Strategic Concept. Ukraine also offers NATO a prime geopolitical position between Europe and Asia and crucial strategic airlift capability that augments Alliance shortfalls.

Most importantly, the Orange Revolution and democratic election of Yushchenko supplied the missing political element needed to spur future integration opportunities. NATO's overriding democratic principles and enlargement doctrine commanded a strong response from NATO to assist Yushchenko. NATO's door is now open for Ukraine, and western reforms in Ukraine may even elicit democratic changes with Ukraine's Eastern neighbors. With significant support from the United States and Poland, Ukraine will receive the important political backing it needs to accede into the Alliance. Ukraine's inability to join the EU in the short-term also puts pressure on NATO to integrate Ukraine into the Euro-Atlantic community and stabilize the fledgling Ukrainian democracy.<sup>163</sup>

On the path of progress, NATO recently implemented an Intensified Dialogue in order to foster the reforms necessary for future Euro-Atlantic integration. Ukraine also ranks well among the MAP countries in NATO, and Ukraine may join the MAP in the near future. However, there are additional challenges associated with Ukrainian Euro-Atlantic integration that further complicate this dilemma. Ukraine must still follow through with wide-ranging reforms inline with the ID. Without them, Ukrainian European and Euro-Atlantic integration is all but improbable. Ukraine also faces difficult decisions at home and in its own "near abroad" concerning NATO membership. The next chapter outlines the obstacles that may impede Ukrainian integration efforts.

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<sup>163</sup> Garnett, 7.

## **IV. OBSTACLES TO NATO (AND EUROPEAN) INTEGRATION**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the final piece of the European and Euro-Atlantic integration dilemma for Ukraine. Although NATO appears prepared to open its door for Ukraine in the near future and help pave the way for possible integration into other European structures, there are still considerable obstacles to NATO integration that may prevent Ukraine from achieving its goals. This chapter examines three of these issues. First, Russia does not support Ukraine's bid for NATO membership. Russia remains Ukraine's "eternal strategic partner," and Moscow still yields considerable political, economic, and security leverage over Kyiv. Second, the notion of NATO membership is not popular among most Ukrainians and promises of a public referendum over accession could scuttle Yushchenko's NATO ambitions. Third, the Yushchenko Administration is losing valuable momentum in Ukraine and the Verkhovna Rada is working against certain necessary reforms.

### **B. RUSSIA**

The first of Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic constraints is Russia. The connections between Ukraine and Russia are already well documented, and President Yushchenko reaffirmed that Russia remains Ukraine's "strategic partner" during the February 2005 NUC summit in Brussels.<sup>164</sup> However, Yushchenko also noted, "it is important that our relations with the East do not block our path to Europe."<sup>165</sup>

In terms of Russia and NATO, the relationship has improved over the past fourteen years, and the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act summarizes the basis for the formal relationship between NATO and Russia:

NATO and Russia do not consider each other as adversaries. They share the goal of overcoming the vestiges of earlier confrontation and competition and of strengthening mutual trust and cooperation. The

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<sup>164</sup> Victor Yushchenko speech at the press conference, 22 February 2005, <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2005/s050222e.htm> (accessed 27 August 2005).

<sup>165</sup> "Moscow Steps In to Check Kyiv's European Drive," *RFE/RL Belarus and Ukraine Report* 7, no. 8 (23 February 2005).

present Act affirms the determination of NATO and Russia to give concrete substance to their shared commitment to build a stable, peaceful and undivided Europe.<sup>166</sup>

Despite this agreement and previous rhetoric from President Putin that condoned Ukraine's NATO membership aspirations in 2002, Russia has been very apprehensive about Ukrainian Euro-Atlantic integration.<sup>167</sup> During the initial round of NATO enlargement, Russia strongly opposed the notion of expansion into its sphere of influence. For Russia, the geopolitical situation in Europe remains a "zero-sum" game, by which any gains by the West constitute a loss of Russian security and prestige. Russia even proposed drawing "horizontal red lines" to limit the scope of NATO enlargement. In fact, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov lobbied against NATO expansion and warned NATO in 1996 that Russia would not accept Ukraine and the Baltic States joining the Alliance.<sup>168</sup>

In spite of stern Russian objections to NATO enlargement into former Soviet territory, NATO crossed Russia's proscriptive horizontal red line with the accession of all three Baltic States in 2004 without incident, and NATO continues to emphasize that Alliance decisions – including enlargement – "cannot be subject to any veto or droit de regard by a non-member state."<sup>169</sup> Though Russia has no formal veto over Alliance enlargement, Russian influence in Ukraine may ultimately hinder its membership aspirations.

### **1. The Black Sea Fleet**

The first of these obstacles is the BSF. Russia continues to house its Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol. Although the Ukrainian constitution essentially limits the longevity of the Russian fleet agreement to 2017, there is some evidence to suggest that Ukraine now wants the BSF to vacate Sevastopol early.<sup>170</sup> However, this could re-ignite a very

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<sup>166</sup> NATO, *Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation*. Paris, France, 27 May 1997, <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/fndact-a.htm> (accessed 25 August 2005).

<sup>167</sup> "Moscow Steps In to Check Kyiv's European Drive," *RFE/RL Belarus and Ukraine Report* 7, no. 8 (23 February 2005).

<sup>168</sup> Asmus, 171.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*; *Study on NATO Enlargement*, par. 27.

<sup>170</sup> Taras Kuzio, "Ukraine Asks Russia to Begin Preparations for Withdrawing Black Sea Fleet," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 2, no. 77 (20 April 2005).

contentious debate in the Crimea. As Anatol Lieven explains, “Sevastopol is perhaps the only place outside Russia for which one can imagine many ordinary Russians willingly going to war.”<sup>171</sup> Homeporting the Russian fleet on prospective NATO territory could also lead to tribulation within the Alliance, but for the time being, the question of the BSF officially remains a non-issue for NATO. According to Secretary General Scheffer, “NATO does not have an official position [about the Black Sea fleet]. The Black Sea fleet problem is the bilateral problem between Ukraine and Russia. NATO will not enter this discussion.”<sup>172</sup>

## **2. Single Economic Space**

Second, the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada ratified the CIS “Single Economic Space” between Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan in April 2004. The SES remains very secretive, and the text of the agreement has not been made public in Ukraine or the other signatory countries. According to reports, the SES forms a free-trade zone and customs union between the states. In addition, it creates deep political and economic coordination between the countries. Surprisingly, President Kuchma signed the agreement with certain reservations about provisions that contradict the Ukrainian Constitution, and the Verkhovna Rada apparently ratified the agreement without knowing the full scope of the document.<sup>173</sup>

This mysterious political and economic union will almost certainly conflict with the future of European integration. As a result, the Yushchenko Administration is already looking for ways to scuttle the CIS Single Economic Space plan in favor of a more subdued free-trade zone that will not interfere with European, Euro-Atlantic, or WTO integration.<sup>174</sup>

## **3. Energy**

The third obstacle for Ukraine is its dependence on Russia for energy and other economic trade. As was previously discussed, Russia supplies more than three-quarters

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<sup>171</sup> Lieven, *Ukraine and Russia*, 6.

<sup>172</sup> “The West will Help Yushchenko to win Election-2006?” *URA-Inform*, <http://en.ura-inform.com/print?39023> (accessed 18 October 2005).

<sup>173</sup> “Moscow Steps In to Check Kyiv’s European Drive,” *RFE/RL Belarus and Ukraine Report* 7, no. 8 (23 February 2005).

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

of Ukrainian energy imports and remains Ukraine's single largest trading partner. Consequently, Russia possesses important economic leverage over Ukraine. Critical Russian oil and natural gas pipelines run through Ukrainian territory and into Europe. As compensation for the pipeline, Russia currently provides energy to Ukraine at a reduced rate. However, Moscow is looking to scrap the current barter system in order to raise Ukrainian rates for energy. In one example, Russia has proposed raising the Ukrainian rate on natural gas from approximately \$50 per thousand cubic meters to the European price of an estimated \$160 in 2006.<sup>175</sup> This three-fold increase would deal a severe blow to the Ukrainian economy and represent a significant loss for Yushchenko. Russian officials have indicated that this shift is in response to Ukraine's new foreign and security policy agenda. In the words of Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, "Russia will have to revise relations with Ukraine and not necessarily in the area of security."<sup>176</sup>

Though NATO integration will help consolidate the recent democratic gains in Ukraine, Ukrainian membership may upset the security and stability in Eastern Europe and weaken the NATO and Ukrainian relationships with Russia. However, Ukraine cannot simply disregard Russia. Though Russia may not physically block Ukrainian NATO aspirations, Russia is prepared to use its economic and political instruments of national power to keep Ukraine within its sphere of influence. As a result, Ukraine must find a novel way to strike a balance with Russia while simultaneously wooing NATO and implementing Western reforms.

### **C. PUBLIC OPINION**

The second predicament concerning future NATO membership centers on the fact that NATO, as an institution, is not popular in Ukraine. In a February 2005 opinion poll, only 15 percent of Ukrainians surveyed supported the idea of joining NATO, even after Yushchenko's inauguration. By contrast, 44 percent supported EU membership.<sup>177</sup> Even more stunning is the fact that NATO's popularity numbers are dropping after the Orange Revolution. In December 2003, 31 percent supported membership, but the number

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<sup>175</sup> "Russia, Ukraine to step up talks on natural gas supplies," *RIA Novosti*. 30 September 2005.

<sup>176</sup> "NATO, EU integration key to Ukraine's Foreign Policy," *RIA Novosti*. 17 October 2005.

<sup>177</sup> "Ukrainians want to join EU, but not NATO: poll," [http://www.eubusiness.com/East\\_Europe/050223105930.1hdhod84](http://www.eubusiness.com/East_Europe/050223105930.1hdhod84) (accessed 25 August 2005).

dropped to 27 percent in May 2004 before falling again after the 2004 election.<sup>178</sup> Strikingly, 24 percent of Ukrainians that did not support NATO membership still viewed the Alliance as an “aggressive imperialistic bloc.”<sup>179</sup>

Prior to the Orange Revolution, public opinion had little effect on foreign policy decisions in Ukraine. One study argues that foreign policy in Ukraine is largely “elite driven” and public opinion is characteristically of “minimal importance.”<sup>180</sup> However, under pressure from political opposition, President Yushchenko vowed to decide decisions like NATO and EU membership “exclusively through a referendum.”<sup>181</sup> As a result, low public opinion may ultimately scuttle NATO membership aspirations (ironically) by means of a democratic referendum.

This raises another question. Why do Ukrainians have such a low opinion of NATO? Studies show that an overwhelming majority of the Ukrainian public is poorly informed about the Alliance and views NATO as a Cold War relic. Only ten percent of those surveyed even know what NATO stands for and what it offers Ukraine.<sup>182</sup> Consequently, NATO is trying to boost its public image in Ukraine by a variety of methods. First, NATO has an Information and Document Center in Kyiv that supplies Ukrainian citizens with information and publications about the alliance. Second, NATO Secretary General Scheffer gave a speech entitled “Why NATO?” at the National University of Kyiv that outlined the purpose and benefits of the NATO partnership for Ukraine during the October 2005 NUC summit in Ukraine. In addition, NATO deployed Ambassadors across Ukraine to conduct seminars and host information activities about the Alliance. Finally, NATO engaged a group of popular Ukrainian celebrities to help

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<sup>178</sup> Ukrainian Monitor, <http://foreignpolicy.org.ua/eng/headlines/society/opinion/index.shtml?id=3328> (accessed 25 August 2005).

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Victor Chudowsky and Taras Kuzio, “Does Public Opinion Matter in Ukraine? The Cases of Foreign Policy.” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 36 (2003): 273, 287.

<sup>181</sup> Natasha Lisova, “Yushchenko Promises Vote on EU, NATO.” *Moscow Times*, 14 May 2005, 3.

<sup>182</sup> “Ukrainians don’t know what NATO is,” *Ukrayinska Pravda*, 19 October 2005.

promote the Alliance and break down Cold War stereotypes.<sup>183</sup> Clearly, changing the perception of the Alliance in Ukraine will be key aspect to NATO integration if the issue goes before a public referendum.

#### **D. LOSING MOMENTUM?**

The third obstacle pivots on recent developments in Ukraine that indicate that the Orange Revolution coalition is faltering. On September 8, 2005, President Yushchenko dismissed Prime Minister Yulia Tymoschenko and much of her government amid allegations of infighting and renewed corruption.<sup>184</sup> Yushchenko nominated Yuiry Yekhanurov to replace Tymoschenko later in the month, but Yushchenko ran into difficulties getting Yekhanurov approved by the Verkhovna Rada. Consequently, Yushchenko made certain concessions and signed the “Memorandum of Understanding between the Government and the Opposition” with his archrival, Victor Yanukovich, in order to pass Yekhanurov’s nomination.<sup>185</sup> Compounding the difficulties for Yushchenko, he will forfeit a significant amount of power to the Verkhovna Rada on January 1, 2006, when provisions agreed to during the December election standoff take effect.

The next major political test for Yushchenko and Euro-Atlantic integration will occur during the March 2006 Parliamentary Elections. If a clearly democratic and pro-NATO Ukraine emerges from the parliamentary elections, NATO may open the door even further for Ukraine in order to “further the principles of [the Washington] Treaty.”<sup>186</sup> However, a current opinion poll shows that Yushchenko’s “Our Ukraine People’s Party” without the support of the Yulia Tymoschenko bloc is very vulnerable. In fact, Yanukovich and his Party of Regions may very well win the most seats of any party in the Verkhovna Rada.<sup>187</sup> This outcome could further stifle Euro-Atlantic integration efforts by continuing to block necessary reform efforts.

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<sup>183</sup> “Ukrainian Celebrities Visit NATO,” *NATO Update*, 17 November 2005, <http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2005/11-november/e1117b.htm> (accessed 20 November 2005).

<sup>184</sup> “President Sacks Government, Offering more Questions than Answers,” *RFE/RL Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova Report* 7, no. 33 (16 September 2005).

<sup>185</sup> “Memorandum of Understanding between the Government and the Opposition,” *Ukrayinska Pravda*, 29 September 2005.

<sup>186</sup> *NATO Handbook*, 529.

<sup>187</sup> “Ukrainian Opposition Party Leads Opinion Poll,” *UNIAN News Agency*, 20 October 2005.



## **E. CONCLUSION**

Though NATO is willing to foster reforms in Ukraine and champion Yushchenko's European integration efforts, there are serious obstacles for integration. Russia will not let Ukraine go without a fight. However, NATO cannot acknowledge a "Russian veto" over enlargement due to that fact that even implicit exclusion from NATO would relegate Ukraine into the Russian "sphere of influence."<sup>188</sup>

NATO's image in Ukraine remains dismal, but efforts are being made by Yushchenko and NATO to improve the image problem. However, Yushchenko's momentum is waning, and the 2006 elections will be a significant test for Yushchenko, his Euro-Atlantic integration efforts, and Ukrainian democracy as a whole. Consequently, the onus is once again on Ukraine to overcome these obstacles to integration by making difficult choices, and implementing difficult reforms to become truly "European."

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<sup>188</sup> Asmus, 173.

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## V. CONCLUSIONS

### A. THE NEW DILEMMA

On November 22, 2005, Victor Yushchenko delivered another speech to tens of thousands of Ukrainians gathered in Kyiv's Independence Square. The purpose of this speech was to celebrate the first anniversary of the start of the Orange Revolution.<sup>189</sup> In the preceding twelve months (ten as President), Yushchenko dramatically changed the nature of Ukrainian democracy and altered the course of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. This thesis outlined these changes and explored the new dilemma that has emerged as a result of Yushchenko's strategic goal of "Ukraine in a United Europe."

Until the Orange Revolution and subsequent election of Yushchenko, the prospects of Ukrainian integration into the EU or NATO were all but improbable. The Kuchma Administration employed a non-aligned "multi-vector" foreign policy to balance developed Eastern influences in Russia with the novel Western influences in Europe and North America. Although Ukraine officially abandoned its "multi-vector" policy in favor of "European Choice" in 2002, the declarations endorsing Western integration were largely rhetorical, and Ukraine never committed to significant reforms. Additionally, corruptive politics formed a semi-authoritarian hybrid democracy in Ukraine. This combination was unacceptable for the EU and NATO, and ultimately led to a diplomatic condition in the West termed "Ukraine fatigue."

Now, the real difficulty following the Orange Revolution is that Ukraine *is* serious about democracy and European integration. At this juncture, the EU has not endorsed an accession dialogue with Ukraine because it does not meet the requirements needed to accede into the EU, and the Union is not prepared politically or economically to absorb Ukraine. Therefore, Yushchenko has focused on NATO integration as an alternate way to "Europeanize." From the early days of Partnership for Peace, NATO and Ukraine have shared a surprisingly cooperative history and Ukraine augments NATO with important defense capabilities like strategic airlift. Most importantly, the progress of democracy in Ukraine as a result of the 2004 Presidential Election and Orange

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<sup>189</sup> "Ukrainian President Calls for Orange Revolution Unity...," *RFE/RL Newswire* 9, no. 219 (23 November 2005).

Revolution are harmonious with NATO's founding principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. Consequently, NATO adopted an Intensified Dialogue in its overt "Open Door" policy towards Ukraine, and Ukraine will use NATO membership as an institutional stepping-stone on the way to EU membership similar to its western neighbors in Poland, Romania, and Hungary.

However, NATO accession is by no means guaranteed to Ukraine. Russia is opposed to the notion of Euro-Atlantic accession, NATO remains unpopular among the Ukrainian public, and Ukraine must implement critical reforms to meet NATO accession standards. Ukraine's European dilemma is further complicated by the reality that without NATO, the West is again closed for Ukraine and even a democratic and post-revolution Ukraine faces relegation to Russia by default.<sup>190</sup>

Long after Zbigniew Brzezinski identified Ukraine as a "geopolitical pivot" based on its important geographic location and innate vulnerability to the Great Powers, Ukraine remains vitally important for European and Eurasian security and stability. Brzezinski envisaged that with significant domestic reforms and a European identity, Ukraine would be ready for serious negotiations with the EU and NATO "between 2005 and 2010."<sup>191</sup> The 2004 Orange Revolution may be the catalyst to prove him correct, but important progress still needs to occur. The next section will outline some recommendations to bolster Ukrainian European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

## **B. THE WAY AHEAD**

### **1. Ukraine**

Ukraine faces two vital benchmarks for Western development in the next few months that will significantly help or hinder further integration into the EU and NATO. First, the WTO will meet in Hong Kong during mid-December 2005 to address the Ukrainian bid for membership. This is important because membership in the WTO will help reform the Ukrainian economy and enable the EU to create a free trade area with Ukraine. Without WTO membership, Ukraine may succumb to Russian instruments of economic power projection. Consequently, Ukraine must decide how its "eternal strategic partnership" with Russia will look in the future in order to readdress critical

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<sup>190</sup> Sherr, 129.

<sup>191</sup> Brzezinski, 84.

obstacles to European and Euro-Atlantic integration posed by the Black Sea Fleet, the Single Economic Space, and energy dependency.

Second, the March 2006 Parliamentary Elections are crucial for both the democratic development of Ukraine and its European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations. The elections are also important because Yushchenko will lose more of his consolidated Presidential power in January 2006, and the Verkhovna Rada becomes more important for the future of integration efforts. Additionally, the Verkhovna Rada has delivered mixed signals about its commitment to the Euro-Atlantic cause by supporting certain reforms and spoiling others. The 2006 elections may lead to stalled reforms if parties unfriendly to Western integration succeed, but as long as the democratic process prevails without media influence or voter manipulation, it will still be a victory for democratic values.

Ukraine should also leverage its valuable strategic airlift assets with the West. Ukraine airlift capability exceeds lift ability in both NATO and the EU, and this capability may give Ukraine a valuable tool in future accession debates. Passing the Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Lift will show that Ukraine is a team player and an exporter of security in Europe and beyond.

Ukrainian European integration options are dependent on NATO accession. Therefore, Ukraine must continue to focus on Euro-Atlantic reforms and public relations efforts in order to integrate into European political, economic, and security institutions.

## **2. NATO**

NATO has been very clear in its Open Door policy towards Ukraine – especially since the Orange Revolution. NATO is not only a security organization; NATO is also a collection of democracies focused on keeping the peace. As a result, NATO remains obliged by its guiding principles to encourage Ukraine towards the West. However, NATO must continue to demand that new entrants follow Membership Action Plan procedures. Consequently, the notion of a “golden carrot” for immediate accession is a bad idea for Ukraine because the government is not ready for it and the people do not want it. NATO has rightfully put the onus for reform back on Ukraine, and thus a steady domestic reform process is the best path for Ukraine. The Intensified Dialogue provides

solid guidance for necessary reforms, and NATO should consider a Membership Action Plan for Ukraine if the March election is free, fair, and pro-NATO. This will give Ukraine further incentive and guidance for its European endeavors. In addition, Ukraine's champions in the United States and Poland must continue to provide political and economic support for Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

In addition, NATO needs to make Russia comfortable with the idea of Ukrainian membership. Russia is still unprepared for Ukraine to move out of the CIS "near abroad" to the "far abroad," so Ukraine and NATO must continue to profess that the Alliance is not a threat to Russian interests.<sup>192</sup> Russia will likely continue to influence Ukrainian ambitions, but reforms and assistance from the West can help buffer Ukraine from these negative effects. In addition, NATO cannot acknowledge a "Russian veto" over enlargement because even implicit exclusion from NATO would relegate Ukraine into the Russian "sphere of influence."<sup>193</sup> More importantly, without Euro-Atlantic integration, Ukraine risks exclusion from "New Europe" and relegation to Russia.<sup>194</sup>

### **3. The European Union**

Ukrainian accession into the EU will represent the final stage of European integration. The current EU enlargement debate over Turkey and the Balkans will impede Ukrainian accession in the short term, but the EU must at least offer a light at the end of the long tunnel. The enhanced EU-Ukraine Action Plan and "market economy status" are both promising starts on the path to Europe, but the EU needs to enact a long-term accession plan with Ukraine. Yushchenko is making headway towards Europe, but in a reversal of misfortune, the continued negligence of the EU to pursue Ukraine may lead to "Europe fatigue" in Ukraine. In the meantime, the EU can assist with meaningful economic and political reform efforts. Europe must help Ukraine accede into the WTO and ultimately reduce its economic dependency with Russia – especially in terms of energy. Although European accession is clearly not a near term option, with patience, effort, and reform, Ukraine will remain on the path for Yushchenko's goal of Ukraine in a United Europe.

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<sup>192</sup> Taras Kuzio. "Ukraine Moves a Step Closer to Europe," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 2 no. 39 (25 February 2005).

<sup>193</sup> Asmus, 173.

<sup>194</sup> Sherr, 136.

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