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UKRAINE, RUSSIA AND  
EUROPEAN SECURITY:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR  
WESTERN POLICY

————— *Peter van Ham* —————

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## **UKRAINE, RUSSIA AND EUROPEAN SECURITY: IMPLICATIONS FOR WESTERN POLICY**

**Peter van Ham**

**February 1994**

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## **PREFACE**

Among the range of problems which have arisen following the breakup of the Soviet Union, those of Ukraine and its relations with Russia, particularly in the nuclear field, are among the most difficult. They present particular dilemmas for West European security policy-makers endeavouring to develop a satisfactory mix of approaches to the two countries.

Peter van Ham, a research fellow of this Institute, has both set out the problems and examined the record of Western policy to date before making some proposals for the future policy of the West. The Institute is grateful to the participants in its workshop which considered an earlier draft of this paper in November 1993, and hopes that the paper will make a useful contribution to the wider debate on this subject.

**John Roper**  
**Paris, February 1994**

# INTRODUCTION

The dissolution of the Soviet Union -- which started with the failed coup of August 1991 and was formalized in December of that year -- has fundamentally transformed the European security setting. Whereas past decades of Cold War were dominated by concerns about a massive invasion by the Warsaw Pact and global thermonuclear war, Western policy-makers are now worried about a myriad of less tangible threats to their security. Instead of having one 'clear and present danger', the post-Cold War period has been characterized by diffuse perils, varying from resurgent nationalism, problems of minorities and the threat of mass migration, to nuclear proliferation and outright war. Although most of the actual fighting in Europe is taking place in regions like the Transcaucasus, the case of Yugoslavia has demonstrated that wars are not necessarily confined to such far-away places about which we know little; they can even take place on Western Europe's doorstep.

This study will examine several problems resulting from the end of the Cold War which have, until now, not escalated, but which could become one of the most significant sources of instability in Europe in the years to come: Ukraine's problematic relationship with Russia and its reluctance to become a non-nuclear power. The Russian-Ukrainian dispute involves several elements which, taken together, make for a volatile situation. Since this relationship is likely to become the most serious test case in which Russia has the opportunity to prove that it has shed its century-old imperialist mode of conducting foreign policy, the West should pay particular attention to this area of friction. Western security interests are directly involved because of Ukraine's reluctance to ratify all aspects of the START 1 disarmament agreement and the Lisbon protocol,<sup>(1)</sup> and to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear weapon state.<sup>(2)</sup> Since Moscow has made it clear that it will not enforce START 1 (or START 2) until Kiev has ratified them fully, the post-Cold War nuclear disarmament process might come to a standstill. What is more, by holding on to its inherited nuclear arsenal, Ukraine might well become an 'instant nuclear power', which is likely to erode the global nuclear non-proliferation norm. A nuclear Ukraine would constitute a precedent which other countries with nuclear ambitions might emulate.

This study is in two parts. The first part is a *tour d'horizon* of the Ukrainian-Russian dispute. It argues that this dispute is a multifaceted one, and that Kiev's nuclear policy is at the same time a source of conflict and the corollary of several underlying sources of friction between Ukraine and Russia. It also stresses the importance of domestic factors in both countries. The second part of the paper examines the policies that Western countries and institutions have devised in an effort to alleviate security concerns over Ukraine and Russia, and to ensure that this dispute does not escalate. It includes the United States, West European countries and international organizations like the European Community (EC), NATO, Western European Union (WEU), the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and the United Nations (UN).

In July 1993, Flora Lewis asserted that Ukrainian-Russian friction contained all the ingredients needed to lead to violent confrontation, arguing that this 'is the kind of conflict that requires foresight, lucid preventive diplomacy of the type that could have

been applied to Yugoslavia.<sup>(3)</sup> This study examines the role of major Western players as well as international organizations, and it concludes with several policy suggestions, indicating the combination of Western policies that should be seriously considered in order to limit the chances of an escalation of this dispute. There are two main conclusions: (1) that the West should do more to support Ukraine's precarious quest for sovereignty and security. This also implies that the West should encourage Russia to acknowledge the end of the Soviet empire as the best way to dismiss Ukrainian paranoia about Russia's alleged imperialism; and (2) that the West must recognize that Russia has legitimate security interests in the former Soviet Union (FSU), and hence also in Ukraine. It will be difficult to blend these two, somewhat conflicting, policy axioms into a consistent strategy. The West must, however, realize that a more active involvement in this part of Europe is required, not only to safeguard global disarmament and bolster non-proliferation efforts, but also to nip a regional (and potentially nuclear) conflict in the bud while this is still feasible.

## PART ONE

### UKRAINE AND RUSSIA: A TROUBLED RELATIONSHIP

In 1992 François Heisbourg argued that in 'the emerging non-Metternichian, post-Cold War security system, a country's interests are not exclusively, or even primarily, dictated by such external factors as geographical location, access to resources and markets, or the ambitions of outside powers.'<sup>(4)</sup> Although this might be a fair assessment of the security situation of some West European countries, this statement does not apply to Ukraine following its declaration of independence in August 1991. In many respects, Ukraine's position clearly illustrates the well-known 'return of geography', since its policies have from the start been dominated by external factors. Since its independence, Kiev has oriented itself towards the West (with the slogan *Nasha meta: Evropa!* -- Our goal: Europe!), trying to forge close ties with Western and Central Europe, as well as with the United States. But reality has made it necessary for Ukraine also to maintain close economic, and hence political, links with its former hegemon. Ukraine's security predicament results mainly from its precarious geographical situation: it is a peripheral country for the West as well as for Russia.

The break-up of the Soviet Union has taken place surprisingly peacefully and with relatively little bloodshed. Still, many psychological and practical difficulties have still to be resolved. Part one of this study examines three issues. First, it looks at the new security patterns in the FSU, focusing upon Russia's ambivalence regarding the legitimacy of Ukrainian sovereignty, and Ukraine's search for national identity. It also examines the different approaches by Ukraine and Russia towards integration within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The second issue is the controversy over the control and dismantling of the nuclear weapons stationed on Ukrainian territory. Thirdly, the paper examines several other elements of this dispute, including Russia's territorial claims on Ukraine (especially the Crimea), the related issue of the dissolution of the Black Sea Fleet, and the political impact of the Russian-speaking minority of more than 11 million living in Ukraine.

Western media have -- quite understandably -- paid most attention to the tug-of-war between Russia and Ukraine over nuclear weapons and Russia's territorial claims on the Crimea. It is, however, important to understand that this imbroglio is multifaceted. Both Russia and Ukraine have to redefine their national interests and at the same time build domestic consensus for their policies. Contrary ideas on the role of the CIS reflect the dissimilar views on regional cooperation held by Ukraine and Russia. Both countries have a vital stake in maintaining a considerable level of cooperation, given Ukraine's high degree of economic dependence on Russia, and Moscow's concern with the Russophone minority living in Ukraine. For both countries, however, these disputes detract political energy from a task which is much more vital to their national interests: reforming their stagnating economies.

## **New security patterns in the former Soviet Union**

The dissolution of the Soviet empire has been a painful and complicated process. Many Russians have found it difficult to come to terms with the fact that Russia's internal empire has now been dissolved. This particularly applies to Ukraine (from the word *okraina* -- borderland). Economically, Ukraine's independence has had a tremendous impact on Moscow's trade relations with Central and Western Europe. After Russia, Ukraine was the largest republic in the Soviet Union in terms of population and territory, as well as in overall economic importance. It produced about 25 per cent of Soviet GNP and 21 per cent of its agricultural output. Strategically, the 'loss of Ukraine' implies the loss of an army of hundreds of thousands of troops as well as the best tanks and other military equipment, which were for obvious reasons stationed mainly in the western regions of the Soviet Union. But apart from these economic and strategic factors, Russia and Ukraine are also closely linked culturally and ethnically. For example, Russia's historical roots go back to Kievan Rus', the princely empire that ruled Eastern Europe from the tenth to the thirteenth century. In general, Russians in Moscow or Saint Petersburg feel that they have much more in common with Ukrainians than with their countrymen in Yakutsk or Vladivostok. This feeling of kinship is deepened by the fact that some 22 per cent of Ukraine's population are ethnically Russian.

The legacy of empire is now placing a heavy burden on relations between Russia and Ukraine. Misunderstandings, tensions and conflicts have erupted between both states, and different national interests and perceptions have for long produced a virtual breakdown in communication precisely at a period when so many matters have to be resolved. The issue of disputed borders and territories is an example. Ukraine has signed several comprehensive friendship and cooperation treaties with its neighbours in which it has formally renounced all territorial claims, recognized the inviolability of common borders, and promised to respect the rights of minorities (for instance with Poland in June 1992). But in spite of Ukrainian insistence Moscow still refuses to sign such a treaty. This is particularly worrying since nationalist Russian politicians consider Ukraine little more than a region which will, in the foreseeable future, again be incorporated into a 'Greater Russia'. Senior Russian officials have also allegedly cautioned Central European countries against developing closer political and military links with Ukraine, and have warned them 'not to bother building large embassies in Kiev because within eighteen months they will be downgraded to consular sections.'<sup>(5)</sup> On 8 July 1993, Russia's parliament (the Supreme Soviet), passed a resolution which declared the strategic Crimean port of Sevastopol to be Russian (see below). President Boris Yeltsin and Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev strongly renounced the imperial proclamation of this non-democratic body (which President Yeltsin dissolved on 20 September 1993). However, the passing of this resolution has intensified Ukraine's fears that Russia could revert to its expansionist tradition of previous centuries. Even President Yeltsin's top political adviser, Sergei Stankevich, argued in July 1993 that all republics of the FSU (with the exception of the Baltic republics), would be able to rejoin in the future, and that Russia would thereby conduct a policy of gradual 'economic and cultural' expansion.'<sup>(6)</sup>



## Moscow's policy towards the 'near abroad'

Still grappling with the loss of empire, Moscow has only recently begun to formulate a distinct and consistent policy towards the 'near abroad', the term which in Russian parlance is commonly used to indicate the countries of the FSU. There have been two main reasons for that delay. First, to have a single foreign policy covering countries as diverse as Latvia and Uzbekistan seemed useless. Why formulate one strategy for a motley collection of countries in which Russia has such differing foreign policy interests? But second, and more important, President Yeltsin and his collaborators have realized that to adopt a single approach towards the 'near abroad' would demand a more outspoken, even assertive, policy in which the use of coercion and force could not be ruled out. Such an outspoken policy would have negative consequences for Moscow's relations with the West. Since Yeltsin's strategy for reform presupposes significant western economic and financial assistance (as well as political support), the delay in dealing with the FSU becomes understandable.

This unfortunate policy vacuum was filled in the latter half of 1993, when several policy statements (for example, Russia's military doctrine, announced in early November 1993), provided a clearer picture of Moscow's foreign policy objectives. But even now, President Yeltsin's ambiguous policy statements have not reassured the countries of the FSU that Russia respects their sovereignty fully and has no imperialist aspirations. Russian nationalists and ex-communists are consistently accusing Yeltsin of making the country unduly dependent on the West (and on the United States in particular), and of failing to protect its interests in the 'near abroad.' These nationalist-conservative factions and political parties call for a more assertive and direct involvement of Moscow in the former Soviet republics. Their arguments for such an assertive policy are threefold.

First, Russia's vital economic interests in the FSU are manifest. They range from the availability of (ice-free) ports in the Baltic and the Black Sea and access to raw materials, to transportation and communications. Second, Russia has major political interests in the FSU. The diaspora of 25 million ethnic Russians and Russian-speakers constitutes the main reason why Moscow will remain involved in the political workings of its neighbours, protecting 'exiled' Russians from discrimination (see below). Armed conflicts and ethnic violence on its borders might well spill over into Russia itself, which would then have to deal with a massive influx of refugees. This could ultimately result in the disintegration of the Russian Federation. Third, Moscow has a clear-cut security interest in preventing its neighbours from allying with other Great Powers or joining potentially hostile security arrangements.

These arguments are predominantly aired by nationalist-conservative factions. It is clear that, after Russia's elections of mid-December 1993, in which neo-communists, old-style socialists and ultra-nationalists won almost half of the vote in the state Duma (the lower house of the parliament), these arguments have gained considerable strength. In a somewhat diluted form these arguments have now also emerged within Yeltsin's circle of Westward-looking policy-makers. Yeltsin's more assertive stance *vis-à-vis* the 'near abroad' may be an effort to placate hard-line nationalists as well as the military. It is beyond doubt that this shift in policy was already in the making, since Moscow had since early 1993 adopted a tougher policy towards its immediate neighbours. One early indication that such a policy could well be adopted was the

influential Council for Foreign and Defence Policy's report on foreign policy issues, which was presented to President Yeltsin in late 1992. This report called for an 'enlightened post-imperial integrationist course' in relations with the FSU, based upon a strong CIS with Russia at the helm. It argued that Russia should acquire an internationally recognized and accepted role as 'leader [in terms] of stability and military security on the entire territory of the former USSR', since it had special security interests in the region. It further warned against the danger of Russia becoming isolated from its traditional allies: East European countries might form a bloc with the 'near abroad' and establish a Baltic-to-Black Sea 'cordon sanitaire' separating Russia from the West.<sup>(7)</sup>

Ukraine's unwillingness to transform the Commonwealth into an effective economic and political institution (see below), and its determination to join the European Union (EU) and NATO, have only increased Russia's fears that the 'near abroad' will become a strategic 'front line', isolating Russia. Although Ukraine is officially committed to a policy of neutrality, it has used its non-bloc status mainly to distance itself from Russia, and has at the same time tried to develop closer political (and security) relationships with the countries of Central and Western Europe. Senior officials in Moscow have warned Central European countries not to form a political and/or military coalition with Ukraine, claiming that both Ukraine and Belarus fall within a Russian sphere of influence.<sup>(8)</sup>

Domestic political pressure and an increasing threat of violent conflicts in the FSU have made Moscow realize that a more assertive policy towards the 'near abroad' is required. In late March 1993, President Yeltsin proposed that Russia should be designated as principal peacekeeper within the FSU area, with the authorization of the United Nations. He called for 'distinguished international organizations, including the United Nations, to grant Russia special powers as a guarantor of peace and stability in the former regions of the USSR.'<sup>(9)</sup> One year earlier, during the March 1992 CIS summit in Kiev, ten of the eleven CIS member states (with the exception of Turkmenistan), had already agreed on setting up collective peacekeeping forces in the CIS. This agreement stressed that these peacekeeping forces could not be used for participation in the conflict itself, and that they could only be formed 'on a voluntary basis by the states that are party to this agreement.'<sup>(10)</sup> Russia later signed a CIS treaty of collective defence with Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, at a summit in Tashkent on 15 May 1992. Article four of the Tashkent Treaty echoes Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty and Article V of the modified Brussels Treaty, stipulating that if 'one of the participating states is subjected to aggression by any state or group of states, this will be perceived as aggression against all participating states in the treaty.' As is the case with most CIS agreements, the Tashkent Treaty has not (yet) been ratified or implemented and therefore remains an empty shell.

Although Boris Yeltsin regularly maintains that Russia does not claim a leading role in such a security structure, these initiatives have aroused the suspicion among some of its neighbours that Moscow is planning for military intervention in the 'near abroad' whenever it deems necessary. Ukraine in particular is apprehensive that any such new security structure would be dominated by Russia, and that Moscow would use a stronger CIS to extend its economic, political and military power to other

republics of the FSU. For similar reasons, the creation of joint standing peacekeeping forces has not materialized.

### The role of the CIS

By early 1992, all countries of the FSU (except for Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and the Baltic states), had joined the CIS. Despite the centrifugal forces which had led to the break-up of the Soviet Union, it was realized that there was a pressing need to stick together. The Soviet Union's centralized economic structure made close cooperation among the successor states essential, particularly since many key industries were located in only one or two republics. Most Soviet successor states were dependent on Russia for their energy supplies, and this dependence has been increased by these countries' low energy efficiency. Difficult decisions had to be made regarding the partition of joint property, economic infrastructures, the armed forces and its equipment, as well as the sorting out of the delicate question of citizenship. Although much remains to be done, there is a broad consensus that the Commonwealth has been essential to managing the disengagement of the Soviet successor states. Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk has called the CIS structure a 'civilized divorce', which may possibly have averted a Yugoslav-like civil war.

However, from the beginning the CIS has also been a bone of contention, since its member states have cherished widely differing views on the purpose and structure of the newly created Commonwealth. Russia and Kazakhstan have been the leading proponents of a strong CIS which provides a framework for economic and financial integration, and the development of a joint foreign and defence policy. In varying degrees they have been supported by Belarus, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Armenia, which recognize that their economic recovery requires collaboration, but which do not necessarily aspire to going beyond that; Central Asian republics are divided. Kazakhstan's close ties with Moscow may be best explained by the fact that 38 per cent of its population are ethnically Russian. Armenia, fearing Azerbaijan, favours a strong CIS, whereas Azerbaijan until recently chose a policy of isolation but decided to join in late September 1993. Following Georgia's request for CIS membership one month later, all Soviet successor states except the Baltic countries and Ukraine again have close official ties with Russia.

Ukraine has also acknowledged that strong economic links with Russia must be maintained, but it has rejected attempts to institutionalize ties within a CIS framework in which Russia is destined to be the dominant player. Kiev has argued that the Commonwealth of Independent States, is just that: a loose structure of fully independent countries. As early as December 1991, Kravchuk was arguing that if Russia tried to dominate, 'the Commonwealth will fall apart because Ukraine will never agree to be subordinated.'<sup>(11)</sup> Kiev has been particularly opposed to Russia's aim of endowing the Commonwealth with its own *finalité politique*. An institutionalized CIS would, according to Ukraine, encroach upon its newly acquired sovereignty. In September 1992, President Kravchuk clearly stated that his country rejected 'all attempts to turn back the wheel of history and revive the old imperial centre by camouflaging [these attempts] with deceptive slogans about a single economic or some such space, the need for more coordination of activities, and the like.'<sup>(12)</sup>

In mid-May 1993, all CIS leaders (with the exception of that of Turkmenistan), signed a declaration of intent to deepen economic integration. Although the declaration mentioned a commitment to establish an 'economic union', only Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan seemed at that time ready to go beyond a free trade zone and be prepared to establish a fully-fledged monetary union (including a single currency and monetary policy). In August 1993, Russia offered CIS member states a choice of three options for further economic relations and cooperation. First, a ten-year treaty providing for the gradual construction of an economic union; second, a fast-track agreement for 'intensive economic integration,' culminating in a common trading zone without customs barriers and with a common currency; and thirdly, the creation of a rouble zone operating along the same lines as the French zone franc in some African countries.<sup>(13)</sup> Either of these options would make Russia the dominant power within the CIS.

It is likely that Ukraine will also be obliged to enter into closer economic and monetary relations with Russia, especially in the light of its abysmal economic and financial situation. In 1992, Ukraine withdrew from the previous 'rouble zone', and introduced its own national currency (the *karbovanets*). In the summer of 1993, the *karbovanets* plunged dramatically because of a lack of financial discipline. Moscow has occasionally applied economic pressure on Ukraine to ameliorate Kiev's stance on CIS matters (for example by reducing gas supplies as a riposte to Kiev's failure to pay for earlier deliveries). It is clear that further economic integration within the CIS framework would be beneficial to Ukraine, since it would open up the possibility of joint ownership of Ukrainian industrial installations, which now lack Russian raw materials. But Kiev's reluctance to go ahead with these schemes is mainly political in nature, and has little to do with sound economic logic. For that reason Kiev only became an associate member of the Russian-led economic union (on 24 September 1993). What effect closer economic and monetary cooperation within the CIS will have on the foreign and security policies of its members remains to be seen. In the meantime, neighbouring countries like Poland are apprehensive of the increasing economic dependence of Belarus on Russia, fearing that Minsk's close political and defence relations with Moscow might undermine its full independence.

During the many CIS summits, proposals were tabled for closer coordination of foreign affairs and cooperation among military industries and the joint defence of external borders. It has also been suggested that a CIS Council of Foreign Affairs be set up to coordinate the activities of its members in international organizations. In November 1992, the (former) Commander-in-Chief of the CIS Joint Armed Forces, Marshal Yevgeny Shaposhnikov, expressed his hope that the Commonwealth would indeed be transformed into a collective security pact, and that the armies of the CIS member states could be unified following the NATO model.<sup>(14)</sup> One month later, Shaposhnikov warned that the lack of such a pact could result in Western involvement in the FSU: 'NATO is giving serious thought to the establishment of peacekeeping forces for use, among other things, in the CIS.'<sup>(15)</sup> NATO's increased involvement in Serbia is seen as a precedent. What is more, Turkey -- a NATO member -- is already competing with Russia (and Iran) to fill the vacuum in Central Asia.

The abolition of the joint military command of the CIS on 15 June 1993 has meant a temporary setback for plans to develop a Commonwealth defence framework. Undoubtedly, Kiev's refusal to hand over administrative control of its nuclear arsenal

has contributed to this step (see below). Until now, the CIS has not lived up to Moscow's hopes, failing to develop into an effective framework for cooperation in the fields of trade, finance, and foreign and defence policy. However, for Russia the advantages of the CIS are still many and manifest. One of Moscow's main concerns is to assure the security of ethnic Russians living in the 'near abroad'. Time and again, Russia has insisted on the inclusion of the protection of minority rights in CIS documents. CIS members have already agreed that their frontiers should be 'transparent', meaning that citizens of the Commonwealth are to be given unhindered visa-free passage. For Russia this means that although millions of Russian-speakers now find themselves in a minority in a foreign country, they are at least free to return to Russia whenever circumstances make this necessary.

For other Soviet successor states there is no alternative to close economic cooperation with Russia, since Russia remains the most important trading partner for most FSU countries, as well as a vital source of energy and raw materials. Membership of the CIS may also be regarded as an asset, since it provides a rudimentary collective security structure which, in some cases, may have a stabilizing impact on regional disputes within the FSU. Closer political and security cooperation within the CIS, however, is still anathema to Kiev, and the economic logic of cooperation is unlikely to be compelling as long as several contentious issues remain unresolved. Among those issues, the uncertain control over the huge former Soviet nuclear arsenal is an important one.

### **Ukraine's nuclear ambivalence**

Russia has retained the USSR's status as a nuclear weapons state, but Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan still have nuclear weapons stationed on their territory, although it is generally assumed that at present they still lack the operational control to launch them. Given Belarus's docility towards Moscow and Kazakhstan's low profile on nuclear weapons, Ukraine's uncooperative attitude towards nuclear disarmament has received widest attention, and has already developed into a source of tension. In January 1994, Ukraine still had an estimated 1,656 nuclear warheads on its territory, carried by 120 SS-19 missiles (at two sites), 46 SS-24 missiles (silo bases, one site collocated with SS-19s), and 42 nuclear bombers (22 Tu-95s, each able to carry 16 AS-15 air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs), and 20 Tu-160s, each able to carry 12 AS-15 ALCMs).<sup>(16)</sup> Here it is argued that Ukraine has used the issue of nuclear weapons for three purposes: (1) to address its perceived insecurity; (2) for domestic reasons, particularly as part of a strategy of nation-building; and (3) as bargaining chips to obtain economic, political and security quid pro quo's from Russia and the West. Before elaborating on these points, a brief overview of the development of Ukraine's nuclear policy (up to August 1993) is in order. The background and consequences of the Massandra agreement between Ukraine and Russia of 3 September 1993, on nuclear weapons and the Black Sea Fleet, and the January 1994 agreement between Ukraine, Russia and the United States on Ukraine's nuclear disarmament, will be examined later in this chapter.

#### Shifting attitudes towards nuclear weapons

In 1991, popular support for dismantling nuclear weapons was considerable in Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan. The accident with the Chernobyl nuclear power

plant (in Ukraine) and the environmental damage of nuclear testing in Semipalatinsk (in Kazakhstan) had created wide mistrust of nuclear matters. It was therefore not surprising that Ukraine and Belarus officially declared their accession to the NPT as non-nuclear weapons states in the Alma Ata Agreement of 21 December 1991. Both countries also accepted that 'the process of destruction of nuclear weapons located on the territory of the Republics of Belarus and Ukraine shall take place with the participation of the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine under the joint control of the Commonwealth states'; Kazakhstan initially remained aloof. In the Minsk Agreement on Strategic Forces -- which was signed later that month -- it was agreed that 'the member-states of the Commonwealth recognize the need for joint command of strategic forces and for maintaining unified control of nuclear weapons, and other types of weapons of mass destruction of the armed forces of the former USSR.'<sup>(17)</sup>

Under these agreements, Ukraine would have to dismantle all its nuclear weapons by 1995, and transfer (an estimated) 3,000 tactical nuclear weapons to Russia by 1 July 1992. The removal of the latter category of weapons started without delay, but at the same time relations between Russia and Ukraine began to deteriorate rapidly, primarily due to disagreement on control over the Black Sea Fleet (see below). It nevertheless came as a surprise when, in mid-March 1992, President Kravchuk announced the suspension of the transfer of tactical nuclear weapons to Russia. Kiev declared that it was not fully assured that these weapons would be destroyed immediately, as had been agreed the previous December. Kravchuk proclaimed: 'We cannot guarantee that weapons transported to Russia will be destroyed or that they will not fall into undesirable hands . . . We want guarantees that they can't be used elsewhere. I don't want to make anybody else stronger.'<sup>(18)</sup> Kiev subsequently proposed building a new weapons dismantling facility in Ukraine itself. The removal of these tactical nuclear weapons only continued after a Russian-Ukrainian protocol regulating control over their destruction was signed, and by May 1992 all these weapons had been withdrawn from Ukrainian territory.

Article 5 of the START 1 treaty prohibits parties from stationing strategic nuclear weapons outside their national territory, which implies that nuclear weapons stationed in Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan cannot be dealt with as if they were *Russian* weapons. Not involving the three nuclear heirs in the START 1 process would implicitly sanction their property rights over the weapons on their territory.<sup>(19)</sup> Acknowledging these implications, the United States decided that the other Soviet successor states had to be included in its web of nuclear disarmament agreements. After weeks of negotiations, Washington worked out a settlement obliging Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan to 'assume the obligations of the former USSR under the [START 1] treaty.' On 23 May 1992, the foreign ministers of the United States, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan signed a legal supplement (protocol) to START 1 wherein the latter three countries promised to join the NPT 'in the shortest possible time.' This Lisbon protocol was a compromise which did little to resolve burning issues such as the ownership and operational control of the FSU's nuclear arsenal. It became clear that even the protocol itself could become a bone of contention when Kiev declared that it was now only bound to the seven-year period for disarmament (as stipulated by the START 1 treaty), and no longer by the deadline of 1995 (as specified by the Minsk agreement). In an accompanying letter, Ukraine additionally called for the elimination of nuclear weapons 'to be carried out under

reliable international control which should guarantee the non-use of nuclear charge components for repeated production of weapons and should prevent their export to other countries.<sup>(20)</sup> The United States, Belarus and Kazakhstan have now all ratified START 1, Ukraine had only partially ratified the treaty as at mid-November 1993, and Moscow had made its final approval contingent upon full ratification by Ukraine. Russia has also made it clear that until START 1 comes into force, it does not intend to ratify the START 2 treaty, which calls for even deeper cuts in the nuclear forces of the United States and Russia (see note 1).

By mid-1992, it had become evident that Ukraine's nuclear ambiguity had major consequences for the global disarmament process as well as for European security. In the summer of 1992, Ukraine's attitude towards nuclear weapons had shifted from an idealistic commitment to non-proliferation to a pragmatic attitude, calling for economic and political compensation from both Russia and the West. Ukraine's nuclear aspirations nevertheless remained nebulous. Among the advocates of a non-nuclear Ukraine are Foreign Minister Anatoly Zlenko and his Deputy Foreign Minister Boris Tarasyuk, but their opinion may well become the minority view. Zlenko has persistently argued that his country lacks both the financial resources and the expertise to maintain its nuclear arsenal. On 28 July 1993, he explained that 'Ukraine is for practical purposes an owner of nuclear weapons with a limited capability of using them in combat.' But he also added that although Ukraine was now a nuclear power, it would never authorize the use of nuclear weapons.<sup>(21)</sup> This was reiterated by President Kravchuk, who stated that having 'become the owner of nuclear weapons inherited from the former USSR by virtue of historical circumstances, Ukraine shall never sanction their use . . . and shall exclude the threat of the use of nuclear weapons from the arsenal of its foreign policy.' He also declared that Ukraine did not have the programmes for re-targeting its nuclear weapons and that, lacking the technical capability and facilities to service and test them, it was destined to become a non-nuclear state in the future.<sup>(22)</sup> At the same time the then Ukrainian Defence Minister Konstantin Morozov maintained that his country might join the NPT and support all its provisions, but as a state with the temporary status of a country with nuclear armaments on its territory that are being destroyed.<sup>(23)</sup> The Ukrainian parliament (the Verkhovna Rada) has time and again postponed ratification of START 1, arguing that it requires additional time to consider the pros and cons for Ukrainian security. Early-November 1993, the Rada finally decided to 'ratify' START 1, stating that Ukraine would partially implement the agreement and that START 1 would only apply to 42 per cent of the warheads left on its territory.

Kiev's initial attitude towards nuclear weapons may be explained by its original desire to mollify Western countries and to speed up their recognition of Ukrainian independence. It thereafter came to believe that its nuclear arsenal could increase its prestige, not only internationally, but also at home. Two main factors may explain Ukraine's policy. First, despite all these rational arguments for the rapid dismantling or transfer of the Ukrainian nuclear arsenal, Kiev holds on to nuclear weapons for their perceived symbolic value. Although these weapons are of little practical military value (see below), and have alienated the West, a broad coalition of nationalist and ex-communists dominating the Ukrainian parliament consider that possession of nuclear weapons is a demonstration of Ukrainian independence. An opinion poll conducted in early October 1993 found that 6 per cent of respondents favoured the unconditional proclamation of Ukraine's nuclear status; 27 per cent endorsed keeping

nuclear weapons until international security guarantees were granted; 33 per cent favoured a nuclear status combined with initiatives to seek the total elimination of all nuclear weaponry in the world; others were opposed to retaining these weapons, or did not care.<sup>(24)</sup> This indicates that Kiev's policy of nuclear ambivalence has been backed by the majority in Ukraine.

Second, account has to be taken of the fact that, until now, Ukraine has favoured nation-building over implementing a programme of cohesive economic and political reform. Ukrainian elites have drawn on several mythical elements from the country's past, such as the freedom-loving Cossacks and the glory and independence of Kievan Rus'. John Morrison has recently argued that Ukrainian policy towards Russia takes place in the long shadow cast by the Pereyaslav agreement of 1654 between the two countries. This agreement, according to Ukrainian historical memory, was the first step towards the military occupation of Ukraine by Russia. Even the current Ukrainian leadership has occasionally made reference to the lessons of Pereyaslav, namely that any Ukrainian leader who signs an agreement with Russia is risking potential surrender of independence on the pattern of 1654.<sup>(25)</sup>

Contemporary elements used for galvanizing the nation are various. Among the important ones is Ukraine's self-image as a European nation (in contrast to what it sees as Russia's 'Asian-ness'), which has contributed to Kiev's good record on human rights and national minority issues. This will certainly be an important factor which Western countries must take into account in their policy towards Ukraine. But the priority given to nation-building has also had negative consequences. Kiev has done little to establish effective democratic state structures, and none of the branches of Ukrainian political power seems to enjoy the trust and support of the Ukrainian population. Ukraine lacks an effective state administration that is strong and motivated enough to implement the rule of law and establish a functioning civil society. Kravchuk and other communist-turned-nationalist leaders have mainly used Ukraine's Soviet legacy and the spectre of Russian imperialism to gain political support for their policy of 'reform without tears', and to explain away the dismal state of the economy. In the meantime Ukraine lacks both the economic expertise and the economic institutions and procedures to run and reform the country properly. Privatization measures have only affected a small percentage of enterprises, and conservative local officials have established regional fiefdoms in the absence of central control. The Ministry of Finance and the National Bank hardly function; the country lacks an effective system of taxation, customs and excise duties; economic statistics are either non-existent or incomplete; and the currency is seriously discredited due to hyperinflation.<sup>(26)</sup> Since September 1993, Ukraine has been in a state of pre-collapse, with inflation hovering around 70 per cent a month, and production of most goods (including food), continuing to fall. These economic realities forced Kravchuk to become more susceptible to Russian economic coercion, which resulted in the Massandra agreement of early September 1993 in which Kiev accepted, in principle, Russia's proposal to sell half of the Black Sea Fleet to Moscow and transfer the remaining nuclear missiles in exchange for assured energy supplies (see below). It also contributed to President Kravchuk's decision to agree to Ukraine's nuclear disarmament in the trilateral agreement of January 1994, which will be discussed in more detail later in this paper.



## Ukraine's nuclear weapons: is operational control possible?

In early April 1992, the Ukrainian Defence Ministry issued a decree which assumed 'administrative control' (i.e. control of associated personnel, finance and logistics) over the nuclear weapons on its territory, but not 'operational control' (i.e. launching orders).<sup>(27)</sup> This decree also placed the strategic rocket forces stationed on Ukrainian territory under CIS operational command. This move increased tensions between Kiev and Moscow, since it was unclear who was then actually in control of the Ukrainian nuclear arsenal.

In the first half of 1992, the targeting tapes (the software for the guidance system) for the 400 to 700 AS-15 ALCMs in Ukraine were removed, and the SS-19s and SS-24s were also reportedly incapacitated. Russia still maintains command and control over these weapons, which incorporate such safety devices as permissive action locks (PALs -- which block the launch of a missile until activated by several codes), and environmental sensing devices (whereby a missile must follow a specific sequence before the warhead can detonate). Ukraine's Tu-160 and Tu-95 bombers cannot deliver these air-launched cruise missiles, since they lack new targeting data. Ukraine therefore no longer possesses any usable air-delivered, theatre-range nuclear missiles, although some argue that even without functioning control mechanisms they could be used as 'free-fall' bombs. Its current nuclear force has rather limited strategic capabilities: the SS-19 and SS-24 have both been designed for a maximum range of 10,000 kilometres, and it would be very difficult to adapt the minimum range capabilities of these missiles in such a way that they are capable of reaching strategic targets in European Russia. Russia's most populated cities are located west of the Urals, which are only 2,000 to 2,800 kilometres from Kiev. The minimum range of the SS-24 is estimated to be 5,000 kilometres, whereas the SS-19 may, with great difficulty, be adjusted for a somewhat shorter range.<sup>(28)</sup>

One specialist has asserted that in order to develop a credible independent nuclear deterrent force, Kiev has to do six things: (1) gain physical and operational control of the nuclear weapons and their warheads; (2) develop and maintain a command and control system; (3) obtain the geodetic data needed for re-targeting the missiles; (4) protect the missiles from a pre-emptive strike; (5) develop a maintenance system; and (6) develop training, testing, design and production facilities for eventual modernization.<sup>(29)</sup> Since Ukraine's nuclear weapons arsenal has been designed to function within the integrated Soviet industrial-technological infrastructure (for instance maintenance, command and control, reconnaissance satellites and testing sites), it is unlikely that these weapons could function as a credible and independent nuclear force. Even if Kiev were to gain physical control of its nuclear weapons without military conflict with Russia, the difficulty of accomplishing the other tasks is daunting (as well as very costly). It has, for example, been reported that Ukraine's missiles may not have been serviced for about three years now (whereas they require servicing every eighteen months). Russia has also stopped renewing the tritium in the warheads, which makes using the missiles difficult, although not necessarily impossible.<sup>(30)</sup>

Ukraine's nuclear arsenal therefore has a doubtful deterrent capability, consisting as it does of weapons which it does not control and which are more suitable for striking targets in the United States. These facts suggest that there is little credibility in the

notion that Ukraine could use the weapons it has inherited as a deterrent, since Kiev's nuclear weapons may well fail to deter Russia. But Kiev may assume that its nuclear force does not have to be large, modern and well-maintained to be militarily and politically useful. As one American specialist has argued: 'The Ukrainians are hedging their bets on the nuclear question because they want some time in which they can keep their eyes on the Russians.'<sup>(31)</sup> But at the same time nuclear deterrence is also a very blunt instrument of military statecraft. As Steven E. Miller has maintained: 'deterrence will not work well when dealing with ambiguous borders or disputed territories -- a point that may be highly relevant to Russian-Ukrainian relations.'<sup>(32)</sup>

What would happen if Ukraine were to seek operational control of these missiles? Russia has clearly stated that it 'cannot accept' such an eventuality, but it has not hinted at how it would react. Any Ukrainian tampering with nuclear missiles, for instance by installing new launching codes, will be immediately detected by Russia. Russian leaders may respond in several ways, for example by temporarily deactivating the missiles, or by putting economic pressure on Kiev by turning off energy supplies. One drastic option would be a military pre-emptive strike against Ukrainian missile sites. Although certainly not the most likely policy choice, neither would it be unprecedented, given the American attack on Iraq's nuclear facilities during the 1991 Gulf War, and the Israeli strike against Iraq's nuclear facility in the early 1980s. Since Ukraine's 176 ICBMs are located in only two sites<sup>(33)</sup> and Moscow has extensive knowledge of the structure of these silos, such a pre-emptive strike would probably be very effective.

Western countries consider an overtly nuclear Ukraine to be a worst-case scenario. Both the United States and West European countries have time and again proclaimed that opposing nuclear proliferation is a policy priority. They have appreciated that the emergence of a nuclear Ukraine could well lead to a military conflict between Kiev and Moscow with unforeseen but potentially harrowing consequences. This could then lead to a chain reaction of nuclear proliferation which would have repercussions in the Middle East as well as in Asia. Details of Western policy will be examined in the second part of this paper.

#### Nuclear leverage and economic coercion

The nationalist lobby in Ukraine has advocated the retention of Ukraine's nuclear weapons for reasons of strategic influence and political prestige, as well as leverage *vis-à-vis* both Russia and the West. Kiev has tried to use its nuclear bargaining chips for three purposes, with -- until now -- varying degrees of success.

First, Ukraine and Russia are engaged in a protracted process of dividing Soviet assets (as well as Soviet debts) between them. Although nuclear weapons may be seen as both an asset and a liability, President Kravchuk has claimed that Ukraine's nuclear arsenal is Ukrainian property and is worth some US \$6 billion. The fissionable material (highly enriched uranium -- HEU) used in nuclear warheads can in principle also be used as fuel for nuclear reactors, and Ukraine now wants back some of the HEU that will be recovered from the tactical missiles that were transferred to Russia in the first half of 1992. The question how much a warhead is worth became significant when, on 31 August 1992, the United States and Russia signed an agreement calling upon America to purchase some 500 metric tons of HEU recovered

from the FSU's nuclear warheads for US \$5-10 billion. Washington has urged Russia to share the proceeds from the sale with Belarus and Ukraine, but Moscow has been reluctant to do so.<sup>(34)</sup> Ukraine felt disadvantaged, since it would not benefit under this scheme, whereas it appeared as if Russia would earn billions of dollars from the sale of material from Ukrainian warheads. What is more, Ukraine is dependent upon imported Russian nuclear fuel to run its five nuclear power plants (which generate up to a third of the country's electric power). Kiev has therefore been determined not to transfer its strategic warheads without compensation, arguing that it has made a significant contribution to the Soviet nuclear arsenal and is therefore entitled to financial recompense.

Ukrainian officials have now differentiated between ownership and possession. The head of the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry's disarmament and arms control department, Konstantin Hryshchenko, has argued that 'ownership makes it possible to make an economic profit out of disarmament, which is something Ukraine simply does not have the right to refuse. But possession presupposes operational control over an installation which (. . .) Ukraine has granted to the joint command of the CIS strategic armed forces.'<sup>(35)</sup> The problem is becoming more complicated, because Ukraine will have difficulty in obtaining international support for the construction of domestic nuclear fuel reprocessing plants, since it has not become a signatory to the NPT. Ukraine and Belarus are members of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), but they have not concluded full-scope safeguards agreements (which include all nuclear-related activities) with the IAEA .

Nuclear leverage has also been used to obtain financial and economic advantages from the West. Kiev's policy of nuclear ambiguity has, however, created significant diplomatic ill-will in the West and has contributed to Ukraine's isolation in the international community. Western reactions to Kiev's foot-dragging on denuclearization were very critical. Ukraine's hesitance was seen as an irritant in the US-Russian disarmament process and has led to serious doubts whether Ukraine's non-nuclear intent was sincere. For a considerable time Ukraine's strategy therefore seemed to backfire, since Western countries did not want to reward a possible proliferant for its nuclear brinkmanship. Only since mid-1993 have western countries begun to use economic and financial carrots to alter Kiev's course on the nuclear issue. In June 1993, the American Secretary of Defence Les Aspin and President Clinton's special envoy for the FSU, Strobe Talbott, visited Kiev with a set of proposals to persuade Ukraine to adhere to the Lisbon protocol's obligations. Washington's sensitivity towards Ukraine's security problems were a sign that the United States was shifting from a Moscow-centred approach towards one which empathized more with Ukraine's security predicament. We will deal with US policy in part two.

The second reason Kiev has tried to use its nuclear bargaining chips has been to gain political advantages, linking its nuclear policy to Russia's attitude towards the 'near abroad', Ukraine in particular. This has not been done in an outspoken manner, but Ukrainian politicians and government officials have frequently declared that Ukraine would be neglecting its national security requirements if it dismantled its nuclear arsenal hastily and without a satisfactory settlement of the other disputes with Russia. During negotiations with Russia, Kiev has only made tacit use of the diplomatic advantages of its nuclear ambiguity. The Ukrainian leadership may well have

assumed that Moscow would be more susceptible to its demands, but up to now nuclear leverage has not proven effective and Moscow has been careful to avoid giving the impression of being swayed by Kiev's nuclear power politics. For example, during the Massandra summit between Kravchuk and Yeltsin in early September 1993, Russia's economic coercion proved more powerful than Kiev's nuclear leverage (see below).

Third, Kiev hopes to persuade the West to guarantee Ukraine's territorial integrity in the event of a Russian attack. Since April 1992, Ukrainian leaders have called for Western security guarantees. This was again stated in Ukraine's foreign policy guidelines, published in late July 1993: 'the reduction and destruction of nuclear weapons located on its territory is linked by Ukraine to the extension to it by the nuclear states and the world community of safe national security guarantees.'<sup>(36)</sup> The only nuclear guarantees offered to Kiev have come from Russia, the country *against* which Ukraine would like to have a guarantee. In January 1993, President Yeltsin offered a Russian guarantee 'that the integrity of Ukraine will be preserved and protected and that its frontiers will be defended against a nuclear attack'; Kiev has not accepted that offer. Western countries and their security organizations have refused to provide Ukraine with such a guarantee, for a variety of reasons which will be discussed in more detail in the second part of this study. The Moscow agreement of January 1994 (see below), made significant progress towards Ukraine's nuclear disarmament, especially since the accord included provision for resolving the HEU issue, Ukraine's debts to Moscow, and an American political commitment to guarantee Ukraine's territorial integrity. However, until the Ukrainian parliament has ratified the agreement, and until all missiles have been removed from Ukrainian soil, Kiev's nuclear arsenal will remain a significant 'nuisance' factor. This will make it more difficult for Ukraine to forge closer links with Western organizations like the European Union and NATO, and build a stable relationship with Russia.

### **A multifaceted imbroglio**

When Ukraine eventually joins the NPT as a non-nuclear weapons state and fully ratifies START 1, including the all-important Lisbon protocol, one of the main problems of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict will have been removed. It would, however, be overly optimistic to assume that this dispute would then be completely resolved, since Kiev might well try to drag out the disarmament process as long as it possibly can in an effort to keep its nuclear option open as an insurance against possible future Russian imperialist policies. There are numerous technical considerations which Ukraine may use as pretexts for protracting this process, and in the meantime Kiev would still have (at least in theory) the possibility of revising its course concerning nuclear weapons. Although the nuclear issue is a crucial and complex element of the Ukrainian-Russian security equation, several other issues also await a solution before both countries can develop good-neighbourly relations. Here, two issues are examined: (1) the Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet, and (2) the Russian minority in Ukraine.

#### **Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet**

Since early-1992, the questions of territorial control over the Crimean peninsula and the disposition of the Black Sea Fleet have been high on the agenda in both Kiev and

Moscow. Like the nuclear problem, these issues are of special importance since Ukrainian leaders consider them test cases for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and for Russia's future role in the `near abroad.'<sup>(37)</sup> In both countries the military is directly involved in this controversy: Ukraine has substantial military units stationed in the region, and the Russian military have a large stake in Sevastopol (the fleet's main naval base).

The issue of control over the Crimea has deep historical roots. Russians are especially proud of the Tsarist conquest of the Crimea from the Ottoman Empire in 1783, and feel that it duly belongs to Russia, despite the fact that Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev gave the Crimea to Ukraine in 1954 (in recognition of the friendship between these two peoples and to mark the tricentenary of the Pereyaslav agreement). The vast majority of the Crimean population are Russian, as are the majority of the personnel of the Black Sea Fleet. Russian nationalists claim that both the Crimea and the Fleet should become (or remain) Russian and they reject the idea of dividing up the fleet itself. Russian military sources argue that a divided fleet would be unable to carry out its task of defending the southern flank of Russia (and Ukraine) against a perceived threat from Turkey and NATO. At the same time, however, Kiev's claim on the Fleet may be partly explained as an effort to deny Russia the naval power to pose a threat to Ukraine from the south.

President Yeltsin has acknowledged Ukraine's territorial control over the Crimea, but has repeatedly declared that the Black Sea Fleet `was, is and will be Russian.'<sup>(38)</sup> Ukraine has rejected Russian demands to subordinate the fleet to the Commander-in-Chief of the CIS Joint Armed Forces, claiming most parts of the fleet for itself. Since most of the officers of the CIS are either Russian or have strong ties with Russia (by whom the majority are paid), a `CIS Black Sea Fleet' would in practice be under Russian command. Many meetings were held in an effort to resolve this issue, but mutual mistrust and a lack of willingness to take political risks blocked any political solution. Several agreements were signed (for instance at Dagomys in June 1992, and Yalta in August 1992), but differences in interpretation again resulted in deadlock. The June 1993 Moscow meeting produced a plan for a division of the fleet into two equal parts, but this agreement (which has also not been ratified), failed to tackle such delicate and contentious issues as finances, the status of Sevastopol and the legal status of the fleet's personnel.

Matters came to a head in early July 1993, when the Russian Parliament declared that Sevastopol was Russian territory, arguing that it had not been included in Khrushchev's gift.<sup>(39)</sup> Ukraine immediately brought this claim to the attention of the UN Security Council, which (on 21 July 1993) ruled the declaration `null and void', and confirmed Ukraine's territorial integrity under the UN charter.<sup>(40)</sup> President Yeltsin also immediately distanced himself from the claim, arguing that parliament did not reflect Russian public opinion and had no power over Russia's foreign policy. Although President Kravchuk declared that Ukraine did `not identify the Russian Parliament with Russia and the democratic movement in Russia', (former) Defence Minister Morozov stressed that the declaration could hardly be ignored, and that Kiev had `drawn conclusions' for itself, and would be obliged at all times to be prepared to defend itself against Russia.<sup>(41)</sup>

Less than two months later, on 3 September, Kravchuk and Yeltsin signed an accord during a short summit in Massandra, close to Yalta in the Crimea. For a moment it seemed that not only had a solution been found to the contentious issue of the Black Sea Fleet, but that Ukraine was ready to surrender its status as a nuclear power when Kravchuk agreed, in principle, to the transfer of all nuclear warheads for dismantling in exchange for assured supplies of unenriched uranium for its power stations, as well as the discharge of a substantial amount of its debts to Russia. Ukraine would reportedly surrender most of its fifty per cent claim to the 300-ship fleet to Russia, and a joint commission would work out how Russia would write off Ukraine's estimated US \$2.5 billion debt to Russia (mainly for Russian oil and gas deliveries).<sup>(42)</sup>

It was clear that the Massandra agreement had been dictated by Russia, which had used economic coercion to impose its wishes on a Ukraine which was suffering from a rapidly worsening economic situation. President Kravchuk acknowledged that Ukraine had to 'consider its realistic opportunities', and that Kiev's negotiating position would have been stronger 'if we were a little richer today'.<sup>(43)</sup> When President Yeltsin was asked afterwards what guarantees there were that this accord would be fulfilled (unlike previous agreements on these issues), the Russian president remarked that this accord was different since it was directly linked with Ukraine's debts and economic dependence on Russia.<sup>(44)</sup> Not very surprisingly, the Massandra agreement was hailed in Moscow as a major victory, and President Yeltsin firmly declared that these issues were now once and for all settled. In Ukraine, on the other hand, Kravchuk was severely criticized by nationalist factions. *Rukh*, one of Ukraine's main opposition parties, accused Kravchuk of high treason and betrayal of the Ukrainian people.<sup>(45)</sup> Even today, the status of the Massandra agreement still remains unclear, and like many other documents signed between CIS members may well remain unratified and therefore not be implemented. Kravchuk later dismissed Yeltsin's claim that a final agreement was reached, arguing instead that Russia had tabled a proposal which was now being studied by a joint commission. 'To study. No decision was taken [at Massandra]', Kravchuk emphasized in a press conference on 6 September 1993.<sup>(46)</sup>

This is just one episode in a very delicate and protracted territorial dispute between two nuclear powers. Although this dispute has until now been contained, there are no signs that the issue will be settled in the near future. The Russian Parliament's claim on Sevastopol has done little to allay Ukrainian concerns that Moscow will continue to use economic coercion (or even military force), to back its territorial claims. After Russia's parliamentary elections of December 1993, in which Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's ultra-nationalist Liberal Democratic Party of Russia won a substantial number of seats in the state Duma, it is very unlikely that Moscow will be prepared to adopt a more compromising policy towards Ukraine. President Yeltsin earlier declared that the territorial dispute could 'only be resolved in the context of political dialogue, taking into account the opinions and interests of the different groups of the population, with the treaties and agreements with the Ukrainian side and the principles of the CSCE and the UN being strictly observed'.<sup>(47)</sup> Contingency planners in Kiev will nevertheless have to allow for the possibility of a Russia which is far less congenial to Ukrainian independence, since Yeltsin's government may well be succeeded by a more conservative and nationalistic one.

## Minority problems

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, some 25 million Russians (or Russian speakers) found themselves living in 'foreign countries'. The uncertain fate of these Russians abroad has been an emotionally charged issue in Russia's political debate. Ideas on Russia's proper role in safeguarding the rights of these minorities have been closely linked with different perspectives on other political issues, like the economic, political and perhaps even military role of the CIS, and Russia's peacekeeping role in the FSU. Those who favour a strong CIS and active Russian involvement in peacekeeping also claim to be very concerned about the rights of their countrymen in the 'near abroad' and call for active Russian involvement to guarantee their safety. In the latter half of 1993, Moscow's involvement in the security of the Russian-speaking population of the FSU became more outspoken. In November 1993, for example, Foreign Minister Kozyrev called for the establishment of a special agency to deal with the problems which face Russians living in the 'near abroad'.<sup>(48)</sup>

It was, however, quite some time before Moscow's policy on these matters crystallized. In the Russian Foreign Ministry's 'concept' foreign policy paper of 1993, the issue of minorities ranked among the 'most important foreign-policy tasks, requiring the coordinated and constant efforts of all state structures'.<sup>(49)</sup> Russia's Draft Military Doctrine of May 1992 included references to 'special missions' of Russian armed forces to protect the rights of Russian citizens and people in the FSU who identify themselves -- ethnically or culturally -- with Russia. In his 1993 New Year's message on Russian television, President Yeltsin argued that Russians 'have much in common with the states of the CIS, the Baltic republics, and Georgia, and we shall inevitably be cooperating closely. However, we shall remember the fact that millions, tens of millions of our compatriots reside in these states. It is the right and duty of Russia and Russia's leadership to protect these interests. Who knows, maybe at some time, our peoples will wish to establish even closer bonds. But never again will there be violence or subordination between our countries. The imperial period in Russia's history has ended.'<sup>(50)</sup>

How Russia responds to breaches of human rights of Russians abroad has now become a major test case for Moscow's policy towards its neighbours. Although some Western states have more than once intervened in other countries (allegedly) to protect their citizens, Yeltsin's New Year statement seems to have set the tone for current Russian foreign policy, and it has legitimized interference in the 'near abroad' whenever the rights of ethnic Russians are (or seem to be) in jeopardy. Until now, Moscow has acted with relative restraint and has only made sparse use of economic and military pressure *vis-à-vis* its neighbours in cases where Russian minorities were involved. But it is clear that the issue of minority matters may easily be exploited and used as a pretext for Russian meddling in the internal affairs of Soviet successor states. It is certainly likely that the Russian minority issue will remain a powerful tactical tool in Russia's policy *vis-à-vis* the 'near abroad.' The Council for Foreign and Defence Policy's 1992 Report even went as far as to maintain that Russia's ethnic diaspora could provide Moscow with 'political, economic, and social trump cards of significant potential power.' One example of this has been the call by the powerful lobby of Ukrainian conservative deputies and industrialists in the southern and eastern part of that country for Kiev to strengthen economic ties with Russia. This was followed by an agreement between Ukraine and Russia to establish a 'Don Basin'

regional free trade zone (signed in late June 1993). Although this free trade zone would only include the border *oblasts* of both countries, it has been seen as a Ukrainian attempt to mollify both the Russians living in these border regions (who make up a majority in the Donbas), as well as Russia itself.<sup>(51)</sup> From July 1993, pro-Russian political parties in the Donbas region and the Crimea lobbied to add a question to the referendum scheduled for September 1993 (which was cancelled and replaced by parliamentary elections in March 1994), concerning their secession from Ukraine (and adhesion to Russia).<sup>(52)</sup> The 11.2 million Russians living in Ukraine (making up some 22 per cent of the total population) are therefore potentially political allies for Moscow, and they guarantee close Russian involvement in Ukraine's internal politics.

In many cases, the problem of minorities is only one of the many contentious issues which trouble relations between Russia and its neighbours. Until now, this issue has not come to a head in Russia's relations with Ukraine. Troubles are, however, bound to arise in the Crimea, where ethnic Russians make up some 68 per cent of the population. In April 1993, Crimea became an 'autonomous part of Ukraine', with its own constitution and the right to set up the office of a Crimean President. The Crimean parliament had already declared the peninsula's independence from Ukraine, in May 1992, but this was of course rejected by Kiev. Presidential elections, held in the Crimea in January 1994, were won by Yuri Meshkov, who is now calling for closer economic and political alignment with Russia and may seek a referendum on independence from Ukraine. This will increase pressure on Kiev and Moscow to resolve contentious problems such as control over the Black Sea Fleet and the future of the Crimea itself.

It is difficult to foresee how Moscow will react to such calls for support from Russians living in the former Soviet Republics. Russian reactions to the question of minorities in other Soviet successor states provide a useful indicator for Kiev of the development of Moscow's policy *vis-à-vis* the 'near abroad.' The Russian-Estonian dispute over Tallinn's handling of the Russian-speaking population has indicated that Moscow is prepared to threaten with economic sanctions and even -- if only implicitly -- with the use of armed force. In mid-June 1993, the Estonian parliament adopted a law requiring Russophones to pass a language test before having the right to vote. This would have a significant impact upon the political rights of Russian speakers, who, in early 1992, accounted for 37 per cent of the population. It would also mean that Estonia's second city -- Narva -- of which more than 95 per cent of the population are Russian, would be (temporarily) disfranchised. Moscow reacted angrily, and in a statement President Yeltsin declared that 'to all intents and purposes we are speaking about the practice of ethnic cleansing and the introduction of an Estonian version of apartheid.' He warned the Estonian leadership against ignoring 'certain geopolitical and demographic realities', and that Moscow 'has the means to remind it of it.'<sup>(53)</sup> The statement further said that 'all the responsibility for possible violation of civil peace in Estonia will rest with the Estonian leadership', and that 'Russia will not be able to remain in a position of indifferent onlooker' if Russians in Estonia decide to 'protect themselves.'<sup>(54)</sup> Foreign Minister Kozyrev later tried to reduce tensions by declaring that the problem of the Russian minority in Estonia should be solved through dialogue, calling upon Europe 'to give us a hand in achieving this goal.' Kozyrev further argued that 'Narva should become a touchstone of the ability of Europe to effectively prevent and extinguish conflicts.'<sup>(55)</sup>



Indeed, one could argue that these issues are a test of the potential of Western countries and international institutions to identify and resolve conflicts in the FSU before they escalate. The Council of Europe and the CSCE have both played a useful part in diminishing tensions in the Russian-Estonian dispute by playing the role of neutral mediators and by offering a set of rules for 'democratic behaviour.' This has indicated that timely involvement of international organizations in these kinds of disputes is an essential aspect of conflict prevention. The second part of this study will examine western responses and the implications for Western policy.

## PART TWO

# WESTERN POLICY TOWARDS UKRAINE AND RUSSIA

It is clear that any sharpening of the Russian-Ukrainian dispute would seriously destabilize the Eurasian region: it would be likely to block further reform in Russia, and would have a negative impact on stability, economic reform and the process of democratisation in Central Europe. Yet the West must also be prepared for a different kind of security threat, most notably the possibility that Ukraine's independence may be threatened from the *inside* due to a virtual breakdown of its economy and its inadequate state structure. Its powerless political system and the priority it puts on nation-building over serious economic restructuring are gradually turning Ukraine into a typical 'weak state.' As a weak state, Ukraine could easily become a source of regional instability, particularly because a lack of internal legitimacy may lead to blaming external scapegoats for internal failures, and hence to discord and conflict.<sup>(56)</sup>

Inevitably, this has major implications for Western policy towards the region. Part two of this study gives a brief survey of Western policy towards Russia and Ukraine. It also examines the implications for future Western policy and tries to provide some tentative answers as to how the West could contribute to stability and peaceful change in this part of the world.

### The West's 'Ukrainian problem'

The demise of the Soviet Union's internal empire has -- to paraphrase Albert Einstein -- changed everything except the way we think. Indeed, it has taken more than a year for Western analysts to grasp the fact that the Soviet Union has spawned several independent non-Russian states. This has had important implications for Western policy, since policy-makers have for long considered political developments in Russia as crucial, whereas Ukrainian politics have been seen as something happening on the fringes, and hence of lesser importance. This paper argues that the West needs to accept that Ukraine, one of Europe's largest countries, is a sovereign state which deserves to be treated as such. The West must therefore first solve its own 'Ukrainian problem', i.e. acknowledge Ukraine's independent status and formulate a comprehensive policy which takes into account the changed security environment in the western part of the FSU.

Ukraine and Russia: partnership or security risks for the West?

For Kiev it has come as little surprise that many Russians do not consider Ukraine a legitimate entity, and certainly do not regard it as a viable sovereign state in the medium term. However, what is more worrying to Ukrainian policy-makers is that it is not only Russia which has to get used to these new realities. Until early 1993, Western countries paid a disproportionate amount of attention (as well as the lion's share of economic assistance) to Russia, tending to ignore countries such as Ukraine. When Mikhail Gorbachev was still in power, Western states preferred the Soviet

Union to remain united, and therefore tended to discourage Kiev's quest for independence. This initial Western attitude has resulted in disappointment among Ukrainian advocates of independence, who still complain that Western countries have not yet come to terms with Ukraine's independence. The former Ukrainian Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma, for example, has protested that 'on the map of world leaders, Ukraine does not even exist. They are indifferent whether Ukraine is independent or not.'<sup>(57)</sup>

Western governments have indeed adopted a Moscow-centred approach, and have -- with a few exceptions -- considered Soviet successor states in terms of those states' relations with Russia. There are three main reasons for the West's dominant focus on Russia. First, in its earlier stages, Western policy towards the FSU was a cautious one, characterized predominantly by inertia (i.e. mainly determined by now antiquated concepts such as 'the Soviet Union'), and not very receptive to innovative thinking. Most Western countries had been careful not to antagonize Russia by encouraging the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Second, as mentioned earlier, the emergence of new, sovereign Soviet successor states, like Ukraine, has proven an obstacle to far-reaching American-Russian nuclear disarmament plans. For a long time, the United States and Western Europe have viewed Ukraine chiefly as a proliferation problem and as an impediment to nuclear disarmament. This approach has failed to grasp the fact that Kiev's attitude to nuclear weapons has been shaped largely by domestic and regional factors. Third, Western policy-makers initially lacked the knowledge and expertise to comprehend the domestic workings of these new states. Soviet specialists in Western ministries were not necessarily experts on the Baltics, Ukraine or Central Asia. Policy towards these countries has therefore at times been somewhat offhand.

These are the main reasons why, during 1992 and much of 1993, the West -- like Russia -- failed to formulate a clear-cut policy towards the newly independent states. Difficult questions related to the FSU's future economic, political and security structure have therefore not been addressed. For example, should the West encourage the construction of a more closely-knit Commonwealth which would most likely be dominated by Russia? If not, how should it respond to the aspirations of Ukraine (and perhaps even Russia) to join Western institutions like the EU, NATO and WEU? Should the West endorse an active Russian role in peacekeeping (and perhaps even peacemaking) in the FSU, and what role should the UN and the CSCE (or Western countries themselves) play in order to quell future conflicts in the FSU? These are difficult questions, straightforward answers to which are in short supply. They are, however, questions which need to be addressed, since a passive and complacent Western attitude is likely to leave the West faced with faits accomplis which do not necessarily conform with its security interests.

The crucial question for Western policy-makers will, however, certainly not be answered in the foreseeable future: will Ukraine and Russia become partners for the West or will they develop in such a way that they become risk factors for European security? In order to answer this question we have to await the evolution of the internal political situation in these countries: will they develop into democracies with market economies, or will they return to authoritarian and/or nationalist rule, engulfed in ethnic and secessionist turmoil? Although the West has now realized that its role in the eventual outcome of these developments is limited, Western policy should be

aimed at creating the conditions for peaceful economic and political reform in this part of the world.

## The United States

American policy towards the FSU has been called 'hesitant in tone, trivial in content, humiliating in impact.'<sup>(58)</sup> Not all criticism has been that harsh, but few have praised Washington's initial approach towards the FSU for its confidence, constructiveness and vision. US policy started off on the wrong foot when, during his visit to Kiev on 1 August 1991, just three weeks before Ukraine's declaration of independence, President Bush called upon Ukraine to change its course of 'suicidal nationalism'. This political gaffe indicated that Washington still preferred a unitary USSR, with Gorbachev at the helm, to Soviet disintegration. When, however, Gorbachev abdicated and Ukrainian independence was affirmed in the December 1991 referendum, the United States had to accept that the situation had changed dramatically.

Washington recognized the independence of all the former Soviet republics on 25 December 1991, and opened formal diplomatic relations almost one month later. At the time, Secretary of State James Baker said that future relations with the Soviet successor states would depend on their commitment to responsible security policies, democratic political practice and free market economies. President Kravchuk visited Washington for the first time in May 1992, and subsequent negotiations resulted in an agreement which granted Ukraine most-favoured nation status. Kiev, together with Moscow, became the location of an International Science and Technology Centre,<sup>(59)</sup> but Ukraine still attracted little attention from American policy-makers.

All this changed significantly when, in mid-March 1992, President Kravchuk suspended the transfer of tactical nuclear weapons to Russia, and Ukraine's nuclear position became uncomfortably ambivalent. The United States firmly condemned Ukraine's foot-dragging on nuclear disarmament and the then Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger remarked that 'if the delay goes on much longer, it inevitably will have an impact on the bilateral relationship between the United States and Ukraine.'<sup>(60)</sup> The US Congress had earlier appropriated US \$400 million for Fiscal Year (FY) 1992 to assist the FSU 'destroy nuclear weapons, chemical weapons and other weapons'; for FY 1993 another US \$400 million was earmarked for help in the safe storage of fissile material and the dismantling of missiles and launchers. All four nuclear weapons states of the FSU have become eligible for these so-called 'Nunn-Lugar' funds (named after the initiative of Senators Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar).<sup>(61)</sup> Up until late 1993, little of this American money had been spent, primarily because the CIS countries lacked the political mechanisms and institutions to accept the assistance. US \$175 million of the Nunn-Lugar money had been earmarked for Ukraine, but until late 1993, Kiev was not allowed to participate in talks on how these funds could be spent in its country, since its parliament had not fully ratified START 1 and the Lisbon protocol.<sup>(62)</sup>

For almost a year, American policy *vis-à-vis* Ukraine was dominated by the nuclear issue. Like most other Western countries, Washington's attitude towards Kiev failed to appreciate the security dilemmas which this young country was facing. This resulted in a period of acrimony which has done little to increase American influence

in Ukraine, and has only further aggravated Kiev's sense of insecurity. With the arrival of the Clinton administration in office in January 1993, Washington's Moscow-centred approach changed towards greater recognition of the interests of the other Soviet successor states. The United States now seems to acknowledge that Western insensitivity towards Ukraine's security predicaments had been counter-productive. A flurry of diplomatic activity intended to assuage Ukraine's political elite began in the spring of 1993. This resulted in a number of joint statements and agreements concerning further cooperation and joint projects in the fields of economics and science, and even on military matters. In early June, Secretary of Defence Les Aspin met President Kravchuk and Defence Minister Morozov in Kiev and proposed the removal of warheads from missiles based in Ukraine and their storage in internationally monitored facilities. This was a new initiative, which had been strongly opposed by Russian Defence Minister Grachev when he met Secretary Aspin prior to his visit to Kiev.<sup>(63)</sup> Apart from the practical value of Aspin's offer, this proposal especially had symbolical importance since it indicated that the United States was considering a more flexible approach towards Ukraine.

During a follow-up visit by Morozov to Washington on 26 July 1993, a memorandum of understanding was signed which promised to set up a Bilateral Working Group on Defense Issues (composed of senior defence officials), enabling both countries to 'search for a solution to issues relating to Ukraine's security'. On that occasion, Aspin declared that the United States 'strongly supports an independent Ukraine that is secure in its borders and at peace with its neighbours. We now have a forum to address some of the security issues facing Ukraine.' He also argued that this agreement would help build a new security partnership with Ukraine.<sup>(64)</sup> During a testimony to a US Senate Committee, Strobe Talbott later declared that Ukraine 'is a country to which we are also giving priority. Ukraine has a vital contribution to make to the peace and prosperity of Europe. It is a nation with which we feel a deep bond and with which we want to develop a broad and mutually beneficial relationship.'<sup>(65)</sup> By now it had become clear that Ukraine had finally won itself a place on the mental map of Washington's policy-makers.

At the same time the Russian-Ukrainian dispute again flared up over the status of the Crimea and Sevastopol (see above). With Yugoslavia now fragmented and war-torn, Washington began to worry that the FSU might befall a similar fate. One of the major problems was that the FSU still lacked a solid security framework which provided peace and stability. This was especially worrying since there was an alarming potential for ethnic, religious and nationalistic volatility within the FSU. Washington had reacted negatively to President Yeltsin's call for Russia to be granted 'special powers' to keep order within the FSU, earlier that year. In response, in August 1993 the US State Department circulated a 'non-paper' (which was referred to in the media as 'Directive 13') on American policy towards the FSU. It called for greater US involvement in that part of the world, and also rejected a greater Russian role in peacekeeping in the FSU, insisting that all peacekeeping efforts should comply fully with the CSCE rules set out in the Helsinki summit of 9-10 July 1992 (i.e. only act with the consent of involved parties, and respect neutrality).<sup>(66)</sup> Since Russia's peacekeeping doctrine was apparently not based on these norms, it would not be possible for Russian involvement to be sanctioned by the United Nations. The Directive further stated that the United States should be prepared to support UN peacekeeping operations in the FSU, even if these opposed Russia's interests.<sup>(67)</sup>

At first, Russian policy-makers said informally that they would not accept any outside involvement in the FSU. After the leakage of 'Directive 13', the US State Department organized a special press conference in Moscow, explaining that Washington was not contemplating interference in the FSU, and that America recognized Russia's responsibility to maintain stability in the region.<sup>(68)</sup> In early September, Washington again made it clear that it wanted to be involved in international efforts to foster peace and stability in the FSU, but had no plans to act unilaterally. Strobe Talbott declared that the United States understood Russia's concerns for stability on its borders and the well-being of ethnic Russians in neighbouring states. But he also clarified that it was crucial that 'Russia neither assert nor exercise any special role or prerogative that would be inconsistent with the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of any other state.' At the same time Talbott claimed no formal American role in peacekeeping in the FSU, but insisted that Washington would continue to lead international efforts to solve conflicts and find peaceful solutions, using bodies like the UN, CSCE and NACC.<sup>(69)</sup> He also stated that Washington would closely follow Russia's conduct towards its neighbours, and that the United States considered this to be an 'extremely important standard in judging the course of reform to watch how Russia conducts its foreign policy. We expect Russia to respect the sovereignty, the territorial integrity, and indeed the security, of all its neighbours.'<sup>(70)</sup>

In late September, Foreign Minister Kozyrev clarified Moscow's position on peacekeeping in the FSU in a speech to the UN General Assembly. He made it clear that Moscow would resist outside involvement -- other than financial -- in the affairs of the FSU, and argued that no group of nations 'can replace [Russian] peacekeeping efforts' along the borders of the old Soviet Union. Although Kozyrev stated that Russia had made peacekeeping and the protection of human rights foreign policy priorities, American officials have been reluctant to concede special Russian rights within the FSU, even under UN or CSCE auspices.<sup>(71)</sup>

It is clear that the matter of Western involvement within the FSU remains unresolved and some further aspects are discussed below. What is important, however, is to appreciate the more active and assertive approach of the United States towards the FSU. After an offer to mediate in the dispute on nuclear weapons between Kiev and Moscow, the United States successfully brokered an accord on Ukraine's nuclear disarmament. The agreement, signed in Moscow by Presidents Yeltsin, Clinton and Kravchuk on 14 January 1994, required Ukraine to return its nuclear warheads to Russia for dismantling, where the HEU (estimated to be around 15 metric tons), will be diluted to nuclear fuel which will eventually be returned to Ukraine for use in its nuclear power plants. Independent inspectors will oversee the process of blending the HEU and the fuel fabrication in Russia. In compensation, Russia further agreed to cancel a significant part of Ukraine's debt. The United States also provided Ukraine with assurances that its present borders would not be changed without Kiev's approval. The exact formulation of Washington's guarantee to Kiev has not been made public.

It is very unlikely that this agreement would have been reached without Washington's direct involvement. Although it is still unclear whether the agreement will be ratified by Kiev's parliament, it has nevertheless taken a major step in the direction of Ukrainian nuclear disarmament. It must, however, also be stressed that this agreement

will be a Pyrrhic victory for non-proliferation if the United States, and the West in general, do not remain interested in supporting Ukraine's economic and political stability. As Poland's First Deputy Defence Minister, Jerzy Milewski, argued: `All the United States is interested in are those damn missiles. To change the situation in Ukraine, the West will have to make it clear that it considers the sovereignty of Ukraine inviolable.'<sup>(72)</sup>

## Western Europe

It is beyond doubt that Ukraine's stability is of great interest to European security. From a geopolitical perspective, the emergence of a new country between Central Europe and Russia with a population of 52 million and a territory 10 per cent larger than France, has major implications for Europe's security. Although calling Ukraine a `buffer' might smack of *realpolitik*, it is clear that the fact that Central European countries like Slovakia, Hungary and Romania no longer have a common border with Russia (and Poland only has a common border with the Kaliningrad enclave), has important strategic consequences. For example, the security position of Central European countries has been enhanced, which may make strengthening their ties with Western institutions less problematic. This will probably result in their full membership of the European Union and the WEU, and consequently also of NATO (see below), around the turn of the century.

Although supporting Ukrainian independence has been of major importance, most West European countries have -- like the United States -- needed considerable time to come to grips with the dissolution of the USSR. Initially, West European countries also conducted a Moscow-centred policy and displayed little sensitivity to Kiev's security requirements. In general, West European countries joined Washington's initial policy of putting pressure on Ukraine to meet its international obligations and transfer its nuclear weapons forthwith. Finding the right balance between pressing for Ukraine's nuclear disarmament and supporting its independence has at times proved difficult.

Ukrainian politicians have paid considerable attention to improving their relations with Western Europe. Given the country's economic weight, it comes as little surprise that Germany has figured in the forefront of Kiev's `Westpolitik'. Germany's voice may be particularly influential in Kiev, since it may persuade the Ukrainian elite to model their country on Germany: a Great Power, both economically and geographically, which does not possess nuclear weapons.<sup>(73)</sup> Kiev has courted Bonn by putting forward a proposal to encourage ethnic Germans now living in Kazakhstan but hoping to return to Germany, to settle in Ukraine. Since Germany is not keen to receive these immigrants (for both economic and social reasons), Kiev expects to gain some goodwill *vis-à-vis* Germany. This might in the future result in Bonn's economic support and closer ties with West European institutions. Ukraine already receives approximately half of its foreign aid from Germany. Because of previous economic ties between Ukraine and the former German Democratic Republic, German trade relations with Kiev are relatively elaborate in comparison with that from other Western countries.

Although Germany has put pressure on Kiev to comply with its international obligations, it has also consistently tried to convince other Western countries that the

chances of Kiev ratifying START 1 would be enhanced if Ukraine did not feel isolated, and if ties with the West were strengthened. This policy of 'building bridges' concurs with Germany's general Ostpolitik, and its preference for economic and political carrots rather than sticks. Underlying this policy is the assumption that an isolated Ukraine is unlikely to give up its nuclear weapons, and that only when Kiev feels sufficiently secure and sovereign will it relinquish the nuclear option. Persistent Western pressure on Ukraine on the nuclear issue has indeed already become a source of resentment in Kiev, and this has had the undesirable consequence that the West is now looked upon, in some political circles, as being biased towards Russia. This has limited Western influence in the region, since it is important that the West be regarded as an honest broker by both parties.

It is clear that, for obvious historical and geopolitical reasons, Ukraine is of vital importance to Germany. Although German policy-makers are aware that Ukraine's fate is highly dependent upon what happens in Russia, Bonn has claimed that it conducts an even-handed policy towards both countries. During his visit to Kiev on 11 June 1993, chancellor Helmut Kohl proclaimed that Germany would not give preference to Russia over Ukraine. This was again confirmed by Defence Minister Volker R  he during his visit to Ukraine two months later. On that occasion, Germany and Ukraine signed a memorandum of understanding covering the exchange of military personnel and regular meetings between representatives of defence ministries. Germany had already initiated a similar programme with Russia. During his visit, R  he stressed the importance of Ukraine ratifying START 1 and joining the NPT, and emphasized that his ministry would not get involved in concrete joint projects with Ukraine (which would also include Germany's technological and financial aid with denuclearization) until Kiev had complied with these obligations.<sup>(74)</sup>

Great Britain's policy towards Russia and Ukraine has differed little from Germany's. Like all Western countries, Britain has emphasized the necessity of Ukraine's denuclearization and the need for stability within the FSU. As a nuclear weapons state, Britain has been especially sensitive to Ukraine's nuclear foot-dragging.<sup>(75)</sup> As in the United States, a modest shift in policy took place in early 1993, and London has now formulated a more comprehensive approach towards Kiev which includes economic and technical assistance. Like most other Central and East European countries, Ukraine benefits from Britain's Know-How Fund, which provides technical and legal assistance for restructuring former communist societies. However, it is clear to London that limited financial resources combined with Ukraine's very limited capacity to absorb foreign assistance, cuts down Britain's economic 'carrots'. All in all, Britain has realized that it possesses few potent instruments of statecraft to propel Kiev towards a non-nuclear position.

This has, of course, not affected London's preparedness to establish normal diplomatic relations with Ukraine. Several high-ranking Ukrainian officials have visited Whitehall, including President Kravchuk in the summer of 1992. More recently, Secretary of State for Defence Malcolm Rifkind paid a visit to Kiev, as well as the port of Odessa. During his week-long visit in mid-September 1993, Mr Rifkind again stressed the nuclear issue, declaring that Ukraine should strictly observe the international agreements on nuclear disarmament. During this visit, a memorandum of understanding was signed which envisages consultation among experts on the



management of armed forces in a democratic society and bilateral contacts and cooperation between defence ministries.<sup>(76)</sup>

France, too, not wanting to rock the FSU boat even further by enthusiastically supporting Kiev's newly found independence, has conducted a cautious policy towards Ukraine. Former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, for example, argued in February 1993 that 'l'indépendance de l'Ukraine n'est pas plus fondée que le serait en France celle de la région Rhône-Alpes.'<sup>(77)</sup> In general, however, Paris has not been unsympathetic towards Ukraine. Itself a nuclear power, France may well have had some empathy with Kiev's wish to cling to its nuclear arsenal, at least for the time being. On the occasion of President Kravchuk's official visit to Paris in June 1992, France signed a cooperation agreement with Ukraine which covered a wide range of economic, political and security issues. Contacts have also been established between the French government and the French nuclear establishment to assist Ukraine in improving security in its nuclear power plants. The reactors of the RMBK-type (like the one at Chernobyl), are considered especially dangerous.

### **The role of international organizations**

Ukraine's official policy of neutrality has not inhibited its outspoken aspiration one day to join Western organizations like the European Union and NATO. Although some factions of Kiev's political elite are more enthusiastic about 'joining Europe' than others, it is clearly realized that close ties with Western and Central Europe are necessary in order to balance Ukraine's strong links with its neighbour to the east. Even though Ukraine's reform programme is among the feeblest in the region, it is determined to follow the path of the Central European states and become integrated in Western economic and security structures.

#### The EC/Union, NATO and WEU

Kiev has made a habit of emphasizing its identity as a European state. Foreign Minister Zlenko has stated that 'Ukraine is a European nation. More than that, Ukraine is a great European nation which can enrich the all-European process. Everything European is characteristic of us.'<sup>(78)</sup> During a visit to Brussels in September 1993, Zlenko confirmed 'L'Ukraine est en Europe. Nous faisons déjà partie de différentes institutions européennes et nous voudrions nous joindre à toutes les autres. D'ailleurs, le centre géographique de l'Europe se situe en territoire ukrainien. Vous pouvez le vérifier . . .'<sup>(79)</sup> By stressing its European credentials, Kiev may want to avoid being placed in the same category as Cyprus or Turkey and excluded for tacit cultural, religious and/or geopolitical reasons. But although few will question Ukraine's European-ness, Kiev's limited progress in economic reform, together with its proximity to Russia, makes the matter of possible Ukrainian membership of the EU, WEU and NATO a sensitive one. What is more, although Ukraine's human rights record is respectable, it has not yet been accepted as a member state by the Council of Europe, and one could therefore say that it has not even entered the antechamber of the EU.

Kiev values close ties with the EU for obvious economic and political reasons. Following the Central and East European countries, Ukraine has been engaged in negotiating a comprehensive agreement with Brussels which would cover both

economic and political cooperation. The first round of negotiations between the European Commission and Ukraine on a 'Cooperation and Partnership agreement' was held in late March 1993. Kiev has put pressure on Brussels to arrive at a substantial agreement as soon as possible. Before the first negotiating round, the Ukrainian government sent a letter to commissioner Hans van den Broek, calling on the EC to treat Ukraine and Russia on equal terms. It also insisted upon the inclusion of a so-called 'future events clause' in the agreement, which would envisage the setting up of a free-trade area with the EC founded on the four freedoms of movement (goods, capital, people and services). In subsequent negotiation rounds, Ukraine has time and again asked for the inclusion of a reference to a future 'association' with the EC, as well as a preferential regime in several sectors and the reinforcement of financial cooperation.<sup>(80)</sup> During the July 1993 negotiations, Ukraine's deputy Foreign Minister argued that his country hoped to include both the prospect for a free-trade area, and a reference to association with the EC in this agreement so as to stress Ukraine's vocation to join European institutions.<sup>(81)</sup>

Although Brussels has not applied overt economic coercion, EC officials have nevertheless tried to exert pressure on Kiev to ratify START 1 and accede to the NPT; this has been consistent EC policy. As early as 2 December 1991, the Twelve explicitly asked Ukraine to respect CSCE rules and to observe the commitments which the Soviet Union had already made in the fields of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. The President-in-Office of the EC Council, Niels Helveg, declared in June 1993 that it would be difficult to conclude an agreement with a nuclear Ukraine.<sup>(82)</sup> The final declaration of the Copenhagen European Council of June 1993 explicitly refers to Ukraine's international commitments, and argues that compliance 'is essential for Ukraine's full integration into the international community and would promote the development of its relations with the Community and its Member States.'<sup>(83)</sup> During Foreign Minister Zlenko's visit to Brussels on 18 September 1993, Willy Claes (who was President-in-Office of the EC Council at that time), again stated that the EC would strengthen relations with Ukraine once the latter had complied with its obligations.<sup>(84)</sup> In response, Zlenko made it clear that Kiev would not accept an arrangement involving an EC agreement in exchange for Ukraine's ratification of START 1 and its accession to the NPT.

Kiev also wishes to establish closer links with Western defence organizations such as NATO and WEU. Ukrainian officials have in general been more positive towards NATO, which they consider the only effective military organization in Europe. Parts of Kiev's political elite consider Ukrainian membership of NATO as 'a strategic counterweight to Russia in Europe.'<sup>(85)</sup> Like all other countries of the FSU, Ukraine is a member of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), which was set up in November 1991. NACC provides a platform for discussion between NATO and its former enemies in the East. Regular consultation takes place on political and security-related issues, and meetings at ambassadorial level are convened on a regular basis. An Economic Committee has been set up within NACC to focus on defence budgets; the committee also deals with questions of defence industrial conversion. The future role of NACC is still unclear. German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel argued in October 1993 that NACC 'could be used to orchestrate joint action in peacekeeping and crisis management,'<sup>(86)</sup> but further cooperation between NATO and Kiev will undoubtedly depend upon political developments in Russia and Ukraine.

Kiev has courted NATO in an attempt to attain formal nuclear security guarantees, and has frequently used its own nuclear arsenal as a lever to attract attention. Some Western analysts agree with Ukraine's plea. Edward Mortimer, for example, has stated that 'probably little short of an offer of full NATO membership would sway Ukraine now. That suggestion would be instantly rejected in all western capitals as destabilising and provocative. But it is time we decided which is more destabilising and, long term, more dangerous: to extend the western collective security system eastward, or to wait for proliferation to spread eastern insecurity westwards.'<sup>(87)</sup> But NATO has refused to extend its scope towards the FSU, fearful of antagonizing Moscow, and Russia's military in particular.

Until now, the debate about NATO enlargement has focused mainly on the countries of Central and Eastern Europe; Ukraine is generally not considered a likely candidate. NATO's Secretary-General, Manfred Wörner, has stated that enlargement 'would increase the stability of the whole of Europe and be in the interest of all nations, including Russia and Ukraine.'<sup>(88)</sup> Foreign Minister Zlenko argued, during his 'low key' visit to NATO headquarters in mid-September 1993, that Kiev was positive towards NATO enlargement, and although Ukraine was itself not then ready to join NATO, Zlenko maintained, he expressed the hope that the enlargement would not stop at Ukraine's Western border.<sup>(89)</sup> Some Ukrainian analysts also point to the fact that enlargement of both the EU and NATO to include only a few Central and East European countries would again divide Europe into an affluent and secure western part, and a poor, insecure eastern area which would again become dominated by Moscow. Russian commentators have also criticized NATO enlargement as directed against Russia, and have compared it with a new cordon sanitaire separating the West from Russia.<sup>(90)</sup> German Defence Minister Rühle has been an ardent advocate of enlarging NATO and the EU eastward. Although no clear-cut German policy has yet crystallized, Rühle has maintained that 'pre-emptive crisis management for us Germans means that we move the Western stability zone as far as possible to the East. It is not in Germany's interest to remain a state on the eastern fringes of the Western prosperity zone. We Germans are the first to feel the consequences of instability in the East.'<sup>(91)</sup> How far east exactly these Western institutions are expected to project stability, has not been clarified, but German politicians have indicated that Russia must be included in this 'European process,' and that stability can only be achieved with, but not against, Russia. NATO's current programme of a so-called 'Partnership for Peace', which was decided at the 10-11 January 1994 summit, has generally been seen as a compromise to assuage the fears of Central and East European countries yet without antagonizing Russia. The Partnership for Peace will be offered to all NACC members, and is intended to expand and intensify political and military cooperation in Europe by joint planning, joint military exercises and giving participating countries the ability to operate with NATO forces in peacekeeping and other operations.

Relations between WEU and Ukraine are practically non-existent. This does not mean that Kiev is not interested in WEU, which, under the Maastricht treaty, is to develop into the defence arm of the European Union. In a speech to the WEU Assembly on 2 December 1993, Foreign Minister Zlenko argued: 'Ukraine's participation in the WEU Assembly, with observer status as the initial step, would create the possibility of starting a real process of cooperation. We are deeply convinced that wide perspectives exist for such cooperation between WEU and Ukraine.'<sup>(92)</sup>

During its summit at Petersberg, near Bonn, in June 1992, WEU set up the so-called Forum of Consultation, which includes Bulgaria, the Czech republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and the three Baltic countries. Like NACC, the Forum of Consultation has been established to strengthen existing relations by restructuring dialogue, consultation and cooperation between WEU and the East. The Forum of Consultation members are considerably less diverse than those of NACC, and the Forum may therefore be a useful vehicle to enable these countries to acquaint themselves with the future security and defence policy of the European Union, and find new opportunities to cooperate with WEU. The fact that Ukraine has not been included in the Forum of Consultation may indicate to Kiev that its chances for full EU membership are limited, and that Western Europe is reluctant to extend the geographical limits of either NATO or WEU too close to Russia. Although WEU still has little to offer Ukraine in terms of closer political and military cooperation, it could well be an appropriate body to participate in some form in future peacekeeping operations within the FSU. The lack of operational capabilities and political commitment will, however, make WEU involvement in the FSU rather unlikely in the years ahead.

#### The CSCE and the United Nations

The CSCE and the UN now embrace all former communist countries (except Serbia-Montenegro), including all the Soviet successor states. Both organizations are increasingly looked upon as frameworks in which inter-state and minority problems can be addressed and resolved. Former Russian Ambassador to the United States Vladimir Lukin has called upon these institutions to 'serve as a facilitator of good relations between Russia and its neighbours and as a guardian of law, justice, and human rights in those relations.'<sup>(93)</sup> Ukrainian leaders have also regularly stated that they would seriously consider the possibility of mediation in Russo-Ukrainian relations.<sup>(94)</sup>

The CSCE is already involved in several disputes in the FSU, for example in negotiating a cease-fire agreement in Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>(95)</sup> It has also sent missions to Georgia, Moldova and Tajikistan to help mediate a settlement among different ethnic groups, and to Estonia to help Estonians and Russians establish normal community relationships among themselves. The intention of these CSCE missions is (in the words of US Ambassador to the CSCE John C. Kornblum), to 'represent a new sort of diplomacy which seeks to attack the root causes of conflict rather than focusing only on the symptoms of disagreement.'<sup>(96)</sup> What has been lacking are the operational capabilities as well as the political commitments of its major member states to become actively involved in peacekeeping operations. This might have changed since 1992, when the CSCE declared itself a 'regional organization' within the meaning of chapter VIII of the charter of the United Nations, which will enable it to coordinate peacekeeping operations with the UN. The 1992 Helsinki summit declaration indicated that the 'CSCE may benefit from resources and possible experience and expertise of existing organizations such as the EC, NATO and the WEU, and could therefore request them to make their resources available in order to support it in carrying out peacekeeping activities. Other institutions and mechanisms, including the peacekeeping mechanism of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), may also be asked by the CSCE to support peacekeeping in the CSCE region.'

Both NATO and WEU are now indeed prepared to make forces available to the CSCE, although agreement must be reached on procedures and costs.

The CSCE has played a limited role in relations between Ukraine and Russia, in particular its mechanism for solving minority questions might become of use, for instance through the CSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities, who has been appointed to provide early warning, and, when appropriate, early action. The recently established CSCE Forum for Security Cooperation, which will be involved in animating arms reductions and limitations, confidence and security-building measures and the development of security structures, may also play a valuable role in coordinating Russian-Ukrainian negotiations on the Black Sea Fleet as well as monitoring Kiev's nuclear disarmament. Until now, however, both countries have made limited use of the CSCE's good services. This might, however, well change. For example, the CSCE is now to consider developing a set of rules for Russian-led peacekeeping operation within the CIS (see below).

United Nations peacekeeping operations have quickly become the instrument of choice of Western governments dealing with the upheavals resulting from the collapse of empires and rivalling nationalisms. Until now, UN peacekeeping operations have not been conducted within the FSU, but the UN Security Council did establish a mission (consisting of 88 observers) monitoring the ceasefire between Georgia and Abkhazian separatist groups (Resolution 858) on 24 August 1993. This was the first time that the UN had sent military missions into the FSU.<sup>(97)</sup> Earlier, the UN had been indirectly involved in a CIS peacekeeping operation in South Ossetia. Russia and Georgia had deployed so-called 'blue helmet' troops in mid-July 1992, to stop ethnic fighting in South Ossetia. These troops had been issued with UN-blue helmet bands and matching chevrons on their sleeves.<sup>(98)</sup> As mentioned earlier, Moscow has called upon both the UN and the CSCE to acknowledge that the CIS (and Russia) have a special responsibility in peacekeeping in the FSU, but Western countries have been reluctant to give Russia a free hand.

# CONCLUSIONS

## WESTERN POLICY OPTIONS

Geopolitical factors have played an important role in Western policy towards the FSU. Most attention and economic assistance has been paid to Moscow, based upon the logic that it is in the West's interest to stabilize and democratize a nuclear power like Russia, especially since a nationalist backlash or anarchy in this country would have serious consequences for other Soviet successor states as well as for the rest of Europe. Considering Russia's dominant position in Eurasia, successful economic and political reform there will also be quintessential for Ukraine. As Alexander Motyl has argued: 'A deteriorating Russia . . . will pose an even greater security risk than a stable Russia, and an economically prostrate Russia will in all likelihood abort economic reform in Ukraine. Either way, Ukrainian nationalists have no grounds for *Schadenfreude* because Ukraine will face some unpleasant alternatives. Indeed, it may even be in a no-win situation.'<sup>(99)</sup> Without continued and successful reform in Russia and Ukraine, nationalists in both countries may choose to adopt aggressive policies and Russian and Ukrainian armed forces may get involved in inter-ethnic dispute and border conflicts.

This paper has indicated that a democratic, stable and independent Ukraine is in the West's interests for two reasons. First, if Ukraine were Westward-looking and respected in the international community, this would minimize the prospect of a renewed Russian imperial drive to the west. It has been argued in this paper that if Kiev's ties with western countries and institutions are strengthened, the full ratification of START 1 (including the essential Lisbon protocol), and accession to the NPT will become more likely. Closer ties with the West would give Ukraine's policy-makers and parliament the confidence to take difficult decisions on such sensitive matters as the Black Sea Fleet and nuclear disarmament; Kiev may also realize that making concessions to Russia does not necessarily undermine Ukrainian sovereignty. Knowing that Western countries and institutions will support Ukraine -- both economically and politically -- will provide Kiev with more room for manoeuvre, which will make it easier to resolve some of the disputes between Ukraine and Russia. The Moscow agreement of January 1994 has already shown that Western involvement and a higher level of confidence in Ukraine are providing Kiev with the required leeway to take a more flexible stance towards nuclear disarmament and the dividing up of the Black Sea fleet. This will help stabilize Russia's relations with Ukraine, and Moscow's relations with the West will consequently also improve. As a result, Ukrainian and Russian leaders could focus their attention on essential economic and political reform.

Second, an independent, democratic and non-nuclear Ukraine can make an important contribution to the establishment of a viable European security architecture. In the continuing debate on the enlargement of Western institutions (like the EU, NATO and WEU), Moscow has time and again voiced its opposition to the eastward extension of Western collective defence organizations, considering Central and East European countries' full membership of NATO and WEU a significant threat to its security. For the moment, the West is not prepared to antagonize Russia, and has chosen

intermediate solutions (like the 'Partnership for Peace' in the case of NATO, and 'enhanced status' in case of WEU).<sup>(100)</sup> These are, however, only short-term solutions, and it is difficult to foresee how EU, NATO and WEU will be able to keep their Eastern neighbours at arm's length over the next few years. It is likely that, within a decade, Central and East European countries will join Western collective defence organizations via membership of the EU (which would give them the right to join WEU and which, in the view of many, should be linked to NATO membership). In the light of these future developments, one might argue that an independent and stable Ukraine will be a considerable geopolitical asset as a state which can act as an essential bridge between an enlarged Western and Central European economic, political and defence community, and a reformed Russia. Too little attention has been given to this beneficial geopolitical consequence of an independent Ukraine.

This overview of Western policies *vis-à-vis* Ukraine and Russia has shown that Western governments and institutions have until now adopted an approach which is both pragmatic and hesitant in character. This is not very surprising, given the fact that any influence which the West might have on the final outcome of disputes between these two countries is limited, and given the decisive importance of domestic factors in both Russian and Ukrainian politics. However, Washington's policy of active involvement in mediation between Ukraine and Russia has indicated the West does have a role to play. Since major Western interests are involved in political stability, non-proliferation and peaceful change within the FSU, a more coherent and consistent Western policy is required.

### **A menu for choice**

The West has three strategic policy options in dealing with Ukraine, Russia and disputes between the two countries: (1) a policy based upon collective security; (2) a low-key policy; and (3) a policy of active involvement. It will be important to note that these options are broad categories, which, although based upon different assumptions, are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For example, conducting an *ad hoc* policy of selective engagement would imply a pragmatic blend of options 2 and 3. The West here has a menu for choice and might choose different levels of involvement regarding economic, political and military relations in the CIS region. It almost goes without saying that close cooperation among Western countries and institutions would significantly enhance the political impact of all three strategies.

### **Ukraine, Russia and collective security**

Although previous attempts to establish a working and effective collective security arrangement (such as the nineteenth century Concert of Europe and the League of Nations, one century later) have proven fruitless, there is now a sense that Cold War practice must be replaced by a new cooperative framework. In such a collective approach to security all participating states would be committed to defending all others in the event of military conflict. It would require a common definition of aggression and a willingness to act whenever aggression occurred. It would encourage peaceful change and legitimate force only in self-defence. Madeleine Albright, the US permanent representative to the UN, stated in June 1993 that Washington would work towards the idea of collective security since it 'flows from a mutuality of interests -- commercial, financial, cultural, ecological, political and security-related -- that affect

our daily lives. In short, it is in our interests to shape a world that is more than an agglomeration of states, but is in fact a principled community.<sup>(101)</sup>

Following this approach, initially the CSCE and the United Nations would be the main vehicles for Western policy towards the FSU; NACC could eventually also become an important component in such a security system. In October 1993, German Foreign Minister Kinkel suggested that NATO might well offer an arrangement for security cooperation and consultation to non-member states in Central and Eastern Europe, including Russia and Ukraine. NATO could, according to Kinkel, coordinate its activities with the UN and the CSCE on issues like peacekeeping, conflict prevention and crisis management.<sup>(102)</sup> The WEU Council of Ministers has also declared that WEU is ready to support the implementation of conflict prevention and crisis management measures under UN or CSCE auspices; this would include peacekeeping activities.<sup>(103)</sup> Such an approach would certainly have far-reaching implications for Western involvement in peacekeeping, enforcement and conflict prevention in the FSU. It further assumes that superpower disagreements will not again paralyse the UN Security Council, which might henceforth call upon NATO, WEU or the CIS to establish multinational peacekeeping forces and thereby contribute to stability within Western, Central and Eastern Europe. For Ukraine, such a Western collective security policy would be beneficial, since the risk that a selective enlargement of Western institutions would split the continent, thereby isolating Ukraine, would be reduced. It should, however, be clear that this option hardly constitutes a realistic short-term policy; it might, however, be a viable mid-term or long-term objective.

#### A low-key policy

The West could also choose to adopt a low-key policy towards Ukraine and Russia. If conflicts broke out in the CIS, the West would not get involved and would not respond with economic and/or political sanctions. This option is based upon the assumption that the West has (1) few direct strategic interests in the CIS region; (2) even fewer instrument of statecraft to influence developments there; and (3) insufficient understanding of the details, historical background and psychological climate of most of these (potential) conflicts.

One could indeed argue that the West has very little interest in becoming involved in a Russian-Ukrainian conflict in which nuclear weapons are (indirectly) involved. Western countries and their security organizations have until now been reluctant to deepen relations with Ukraine and have unanimously and decisively declined Kiev's plea for specific security guarantees. Western countries have furthermore been careful not to take sides in the numerous disputes between Ukraine and Russia. If any of the disputes we have examined above escalated, the West would find that it had very little leverage. For example, penalizing Russia for possible aggressive behaviour *vis-à-vis* Ukraine would probably be merely counterproductive, strengthening the hand of the military and conservative-nationalist factions. By restricting economic assistance, the West would furthermore make the process of transition in Russia more difficult, and it would thereby shoot itself in the foot. As this paper has indicated, the West's leverage over Ukraine is perhaps even more modest, and it has shown that the West certainly has no remote control over these kinds of conflicts.



One of the consequences of such a low-key policy would be that the West acknowledged the FSU to be an area in which Moscow has a vital interest, and that it (at least implicitly) accepted Russia as the regional leader in this region. Although this does not imply that the West must condone Russia's heavy-handedness towards its neighbours, it does imply that the international community is likely to support Russian-led or CIS-led peacekeeping missions as long as they have been mandated by the UN Security Council and are closely monitored by the CSCE. First steps in this direction were taken at the CSCE meeting of foreign ministers on 1 December 1993, in Rome. Although no official decision was taken during that meeting, the CSCE Secretariat was asked to draw up a set of rules as a basis for the sanctioning of Russian/CIS peacekeeping operations.<sup>(104)</sup>

There are two main arguments in favour of the West's adoption of such a policy. First, it has to be acknowledged that neither the United States nor Western and Central European countries are currently prepared to send troops to regions of tension and conflict within the FSU, partly because they have little understanding of the nature and complexity of these disputes, but mainly because they lack the domestic support to expose their troops to danger in regions like Central Asia. It is very unlikely that many countries will be prepared to designate troops to keep or restore the peace in former Soviet republics. One must therefore expect that, since the West is not prepared to shoulder the operational burden of these peacekeeping activities, Russia will step in and take on the leading role. In view of this, the West should welcome the chance to monitor and influence Russian behaviour in the CIS region through the UN and the CSCE.

Second, ethnic and religious conflicts at Russia's borders might otherwise spill over and thereby endanger the cohesion of the Russian Federation itself. Such disintegration would hardly be in the West's interest, since it would be likely to play havoc with economic and political reforms in Russia, and might even result in a Russian nationalist backlash bringing anti-Western leaders to power. It goes without saying that such a development would only further complicate Ukrainian-Russian relations.

#### A policy of active involvement

The third option the West could contemplate would be a policy of active involvement, which would be in many respects the antithesis of the low-key policy outlined above. Such involvement would include substantial economic assistance to Ukraine as well as Russia (both for their economic reform programme and for denuclearization), a more active political commitment to become a party in their disputes (for instance as a neutral intermediary), as well as the development of closer ties with the EU, NATO and WEU.

Economic involvement would clearly be the least controversial component of such an approach. Although the West would have to commit at least some US \$20 billion per year (for a period of three years),<sup>(105)</sup> it would steer clear of the quagmire of ethnic and nationalist politics in the FSU. Political and military involvement are likely to be much more controversial, since they would require an active Western role in reducing tension among the two major CIS member states. Until now, the West has been reluctant to establish closer ties with Kiev, and has made better overall relations

hostage to Ukraine's cooperation in the field of nuclear disarmament. The past years have proven such a policy of conditionality to be fruitless, if not counterproductive. In displaying such reluctance, the West has clearly failed to empathize with Kiev's precarious economic and security situation. A policy of active involvement would try to go beyond conditionality, and would take the initiative to strengthen relations with Ukraine while at the same time calling upon Kiev to comply with its international commitments. This would be done in the hope that such a step would provide the Ukrainian government with sufficient assurance to ratify START 1 in full (i.e. including the Lisbon protocol), and join the NPT as a non-nuclear weapons state. American involvement in brokering the trilateral Moscow agreement of January 1994 is only a first step towards such a policy. It should be followed up by a similar active engagement of the West European countries, the European Union and NATO, to establish closer links with Kiev.

In following such a policy of active involvement, care would have to be taken not to undermine Russia's position in the FSU, and an attempt be made to make the West an active partner in regional disputes and in assisting the economic and political reform process. It would therefore be important to maintain close contacts with Russia, and to consult with the Kremlin before undertaking potentially controversial actions. Such a policy would also require Western support for UN-mandated and CSCE-monitored Russian/CIS peacekeeping operations. It is difficult to envisage how the West could strengthen ties with Ukraine while at the same time refusing Moscow the prerogative of initiating peacekeeping operations in the 'near abroad.' As John Lough has argued: 'if the West fails to materialize as the sort of partner Russia requires, or if the West is perceived not to be interested in rebuilding Russia -- a claim frequently expressed -- then Russia may be tempted to adopt a more forceful, less compromising line toward the "near abroad" in pursuit of differently perceived national interests.'<sup>(106)</sup>

### **A careful balancing act**

Both a low-key policy and a policy of active involvement have their drawbacks. It seems clear that Western involvement in the FSU is essential: without the West's economic and political support, reformers in Moscow and Kiev are unlikely to succeed in transforming society in their countries. It must, however, also be understood that a Western policy which accepted Russian/CIS-led peacekeeping operations *without* simultaneously strengthening relations with Ukraine would be dangerously lopsided. Such an approach would only enhance Moscow's position *vis-à-vis* Kiev, and would lead to the further isolation of Ukraine. It is therefore up to the West to formulate a more balanced policy towards Ukraine and Russia which seeks to address the security requirements of *both* countries.

'We need Europe for a few decades, and then we must turn our back on it,' Peter the Great once told his collaborators.<sup>(107)</sup> This may remind Western governments that one of the worst outcomes of the end of the Cold War would be the renewed isolation of Russia from economic and political developments in the West -- Western Europe in particular. Western governments must therefore do their utmost to maintain a good relationship with Russia, and try to assure Moscow's compliance with UN and CSCE rules. Moscow's window to the West is still open, but this might well change if the West were unreceptive to Russia's security interests. It is clear that President Yeltsin's Western-oriented reformist policy has already come under pressure due to the success

of ultra-nationalist and neo-communist factions in the parliamentary elections of December 1993. The West should not, however, focus only on Moscow. At the same time, Western policy should be aimed at maintaining Ukraine's strategic position as a linchpin between East and West, and support its stability and sovereignty. Finding the right balance between recognizing Moscow's legitimate security interests in the FSU and supporting a sovereign Ukraine which is capable of economic and political reform, may not be easy. But other policy options are certainly not preferable and may result in Moscow turning its back on the West sooner or later.

1. On 31 July 1991, President George Bush and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev signed the START 1 treaty, which stipulated that both sides should have no more than 1,600 intercontinental delivery vehicles (which should carry no more than 6,000 accountable warheads). In START 2, signed by Presidents Bush and Yeltsin in June 1992, this latter figure was reduced to between 3,000 and 3,500 warheads each, to be reached by the year 2003.
2. See Peter van Ham, *Managing Non-Proliferation Regimes in the 1990s. Power, Politics and Policies* (London: Pinter Publishers for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1993), chapters 4 and 5.
3. *International Herald Tribune*, 2 July 1993.
4. François Heisbourg, 'The Future of the Atlantic Alliance: Whither NATO? Whether NATO?', in *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 2 (Spring 1992), p. 127.
5. *Financial Times*, 17 March 1993.
6. *RFE/RL News Brief*, 5-9 July 1993, p. 5.
7. See F.V. Shelov-Kovedayev, 'Strategy and Tactics of Russian Foreign Policy in the Near Abroad' (unpublished, undated paper). Quoted in John Lough, 'Defining Russia's Relations with Neighbouring States', in *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 2, no. 20 (14 May 1993), pp. 55-6. The concept of a Baltic-Black Sea Union was born on the eve of World War I, as an attempt by Central European countries to fend off Germany and Russia. See, for the fear of such a new 'cordon sanitaire': Larisa Sayenko, 'Will Minsk become capital of Baltic-Black Sea Union?', in *Moscow News*, no. 23, 4 June 1993. The Ukrainian Republican Party proposed the creation of such a Union in mid-August 1993, as an alternative to a CIS economic union which was signed in Moscow by Russia, Belarus and Ukraine at the same time. See *BBC SWB Former USSR*, 17 August 1993. Stanislau Shushkevich, the chairman of the Belarus Supreme Council, has also suggested that Minsk should try to form a belt of neutral states in Europe, and should approach countries like Poland, Romania, Moldova and Hungary to find out whether they are interested; until now, these countries have not expressed such an interest.
8. See Roy Allison, 'Security Issues in Ukraine's Relations with Eastern, Central and Western Europe.' Paper prepared for a conference on 'Ukraine and the New Europe', University of North London, 23-24 April 1993, p. 27.
9. *BBC SWB Former USSR*, 2 March 1993.
10. See, on this issue, James N. Greene, 'Russia's "Peacekeeping" Doctrine: The CIS, Russia, and the General Staff', unpublished paper, NATO - SHAPE, Brussels (February 1993).
11. *Financial Times*, 17 December 1991.
12. Quoted in Roman Solchanyk, 'Ukraine and the CIS: A Troubled Relationship', in *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 2, no. 7 (12 February 1993), p. 24.

13. *Financial Times*, 27 August 1993.
14. Ann Sheehy, 'The CIS: A Shaky Edifice', in *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1 January 1993), p. 38.
15. Quoted in Suzanne Crow, 'Russia Seeks Leadership in Regional Peacekeeping', in *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 2, no. 15 (9 April 1993), p. 31.
16. *The Military Balance 1993-1994* (London: Brassey's for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1993) pp. 90-1.
17. Quoted in William Walker, 'Nuclear weapons and the former Soviet republics', in *International Affairs*, vol. 68, no. 2 (1992), p. 264.
18. *International Herald Tribune*, 13 March 1992.
19. See on this issue Walker, 'Nuclear weapons in the former Soviet republics', pp. 268-9.
20. *Arms Control Today*, June 1992, pp. 34-37.
21. *BBC SWB Former USSR*, 29 July 1993.
22. *BBC SWB Former USSR*, 3 August 1993.
23. *International Herald Tribune*, 27 July 1993.
24. *BBC SWB Former USSR*, 21 October 1993.
25. John Morrison, 'Pereyaslav and after: the Russian-Ukrainian relationship', in *International Affairs*, vol. 69, no. 4 (October 1993).
26. See Alexander J. Motyl, *Dilemmas of Independence. Ukraine After Totalitarianism* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993), pp. 137-44.
27. *FBIS-SOV*, 22 May 1992.
28. Martin J. DeWing, 'The Ukrainian nuclear arsenal: problems of command, control, and maintenance', Monterey Institute of International Studies, Program for Nonproliferation Studies, Working Paper no. 3 (October 1993), p. 17.
29. William H. Kincade, 'Nuclear Weapons in Ukraine: Hollow Threat, Wasting Asset', in *Arms Control Today*, (July/August 1993), p. 14.
30. *The Economist*, 14 August 1993, and DeWing, 'The Ukrainian nuclear arsenal', p. 9.
31. Quoted in *Financial Times*, 17 August 1993.

32. Steven E. Miller, 'The Case Against a Ukrainian Nuclear Deterrent', in *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993), p. 71.
33. Ukrainian SS-19s are deployed in Khmel'nitskiy and Pervomaysk; SS-24s are deployed in Pervomaysk only.
34. David Hughes, 'U.S., Russia Bargain for Enriched Uranium', in *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, (11 January 1993), pp. 28-9.
35. *BBC SWB Former USSR*, 18 August 1993.
36. *BBC SWB Former USSR*, 3 August 1993.
37. See on this issue John W. R. Lepingwell, 'The Black Sea Fleet Agreement: Progress or Empty Promises?', in *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 2, no. 28 (9 July 1993).
38. *The Independent*, 10 January 1992.
39. *NRC Handelsblad*, 12 July 1993.
40. *BBC SWB Former USSR*, 22 July 1993.
41. *BBC SWB Former USSR*, 24 July 1993 and 5 August 1993.
42. *Financial Times*, 4-5 September 1993, *Le Monde*, 5-6 September 1993.
43. *BBC SWB Former USSR*, 6 September 1993.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. *BBC SWB Former USSR*, 8 September 1993.
47. *BBC SWB Former USSR*, 22 July 1993.
48. *BBC SWB Former USSR*, 20 November 1993.
49. 'Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation', approved at a special session of the Foreign Ministry's Council on Foreign Policy, 27 November 1992.
50. *BBC SWB Former USSR*, 3 January 1993.
51. *Eastern Europe newsltr*, 6 July 1993.
52. *Wall Street Journal*, 25 August 1993.
53. Yeltsin has often declared that states pursuing economic and political policies at odds with those of Russia would have to pay for Russian energy in hard currency and

at world prices. Over the past years, Moscow has regularly played the 'energy card', especially towards the Baltic states and Ukraine. Disruptions in Russian energy deliveries towards these countries have resulted in serious economic problems. The Russian government has clearly acknowledged that countries who violate the rights of Russian minorities will face tough economic sanctions.

54. Quoted in, respectively, *The Economist*, 10 July 1993, and *International Herald Tribune*, 27 July 1993.

55. *International Herald Tribune*, 14-15 August 1993.

56. See, on this issue, Lawrence Freedman, 'Weak states and the West', in *The Economist*, 11 September 1993.

57. Quoted in *The Economist*, 15 May 1993.

58. James Billington, 'A Critique of U.S. Policy Towards the Commonwealth', in *Working Group on U.S. Diplomacy Towards the Commonwealth of Independent States* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, June 1992), p. 30.

59. The U.S. provided US\$ 10 million; Japan and the EU countries also made substantial contributions.

60. *International Herald Tribune*, 17 December 1992.

61. The United States is now looking for international participation in this so-called Safe Secure Dismantlement (SSD) Programme.

62. See Dunbar Lockwood, 'Dribbling Aid to Russia', in *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, (July/August 1993), and 'SSD Initiatives with Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine', in *USIS Paris - International Affairs*, 6 April 1993, p. 67.

63. 'Aspin Continues US Efforts to Denuclearize Ukraine', in *Arms Control Today*, (July/August 1993), p. 23.

64. *BBC SWB Former USSR*, 30 July 1993. See also *USIS Paris - Defense*, 29 July 1993.

65. Strobe Talbott before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 7 September 1993. See *USIS Paris - International Affairs*, 16 September 1993, pp. 69-70.

66. CSCE Helsinki Document 1992, 'The challenges of change.' See *Helsinki Monitor*, vol. 3, no. 3 (1992), pp. 59-99.

67. See two articles on 'Directive 13' in *Wall Street Journal*, 19 August 1993.

68. *NRC Handelsblad*, 25 August 1993.

69. Strobe Talbott, ambassador-at-large and special advisor to the Secretary of State, before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 7 September 1993. See *USIS Paris - International Affairs*, 16 September 1993, pp. 71-2.

70. Interview with Strobe Talbott on WorldNet, 29 June 1993. Quoted in *USIS Paris - International Affairs*, 8 July 1993, p. 19.

71. *International Herald Tribune*, 30 September 1993.

72. *Wall Street Journal*, 11 January 1994.

73. Although Germany's case is, of course, markedly different on a very important point: Bonn is a full member of both NATO and WEU and has therefore firm (nuclear) security guarantees; Kiev has not.

74. *BBC SWB Former USSR*, 20 August 1993.

75. London's criticism regarding Kiev's nuclear ambiguity may carry a little less weight due to the fact that the United Kingdom itself possesses nuclear weapons. One of Ukraine's leading military and nationalist figures, Lieutenant-General Vlodymyr Tolubko, has argued in the British press that '[y]our former great political leader, Margaret Thatcher, said that nuclear weapons are a deterrent. Your current leaders say the same. Why should Ukraine think otherwise?', *The Independent*, 19 June 1993.

76. *BBC SWB Former USSR*, 1 October 1993.

77. 'Ukraine's independence is no more justified than that of the Rhône-Alpes region [of France] would be.' Quoted in *Libération*, 3 August 1993.

78. Quoted in Yaroslav Trofimov, 'Foreign Minister Promotes Ukraine's European Role', in *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 31 May 1992.

79. 'Ukraine is in Europe. We already form part of various European institutions and we would like to join all the others. Moreover, the geographical centre of Europe is in Ukrainian territory. You can verify this . . .' Quoted in *Le Soir*, 16 September 1993. Kiev has taken several initiatives in an effort to highlight its European vocation. For example, in July 1993, it was decided to establish a special organization (called 'Free Economy in Eastern Europe'), to promote the development of private enterprise and Ukraine's integration in the EC. See *BBC SWB Former USSR*, 23 July 1993.

80. *Agence Europe*, 20 May, 18 June, 10 July, and 12/13 July 1993.

81. *Agence Europe*, 7 July 1993.

82. *Agence Europe*, 18 June 1993.

83. European Council of Copenhagen, 21-22 June 1993. Conclusions of the Presidency, in *Europe Documents*, 24 June 1993, p. 7.

84. *Atlantic News*, 22 September 1993.



85. *FBIS - SOV*, 16 September 1992.
86. *International Herald Tribune*, 21 October 1993.
87. *Financial Times*, 28 July 1993.
88. *Atlantic News*, 15 September 1993.
89. *Atlantic News*, 22 September 1993.
90. Alexei Pushkov, 'Building a New NATO at Russia's Expense', in *Moscow News*, no. 39, 24 September 1993.
91. *International Herald Tribune*, 8 October 1993 (emphasis added).
92. Speech of Ukrainian Foreign Minister Anatoly Zlenko at the 39th session of the WEU Assembly in Paris on 2 December 1993.
93. Vladimir P. Lukin, 'Our Security Predicament', in *Foreign Affairs*, no. 88 (Fall 1992), p. 69.
94. See for example the statement by Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister Borys Tarasyuk, in *BBC SWB Former USSR*, 29 July 1993.
95. The CSCE's so-called Minsk peace process intends to resume the peace process in Nagorno-Karabakh. The Minsk Group consists of Belarus, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Turkey, and the United States.
96. See the text of Ambassador John C. Kornblum's lecture 'CSCE Remains Important to European Security' for Bavarian Radio on 16 February 1993. Reprinted in *USIS Paris - International Affairs*, 1 March 1993, p. 24.
97. *Le Monde*, 26 August 1993.
98. Adam Daniel Rotfeld, 'New Dimensions of Peace-Keeping: The Case of the CSCE and the Commonwealth of Independent States', (1992, mimeo), pp. 10-11.
99. Motyl, *Dilemmas of Independence*, p. 98.
100. During their joint visit to Warsaw on 12 November 1993, German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel and French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé declared their wish 'to see the WEU adopt an association status that should be open to the partners in the [Forum of] Consultation that have already signed an association agreement with the European Union . . . Association status would make broad cooperation in WEU activities possible.' The Declaration approved by the WEU Council of Ministers in Luxembourg on 22 November 1993, no longer referred to 'associate status', but only mentioned the possibility of an 'enhanced status', without indicating what this would entail in practical terms.

101. Madeleine Albright, 'Peacekeeping: A Critical UN Interest', 18 June 1993 (USIS - Embassy of the USA).

102. *International Herald Tribune*, 21 October 1993.

103. WEU Luxembourg Declaration approved by the WEU Council of Ministers on 22 November 1993.

104. *Financial Times*, 2 December 1993.

105. This was suggested by Graham Allison and Robert Blackwill, in 'America's Stake in the Soviet Future', in *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 70, no. 3 (Summer 1991).

106. See John Lough, 'The Place of the "Near Abroad" in Russian Foreign Policy', in *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 2, no. 11 (March 1993), p. 23.

107. Quoted in Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 113.