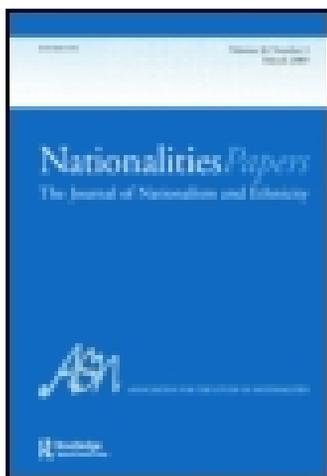


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## POST-COMMUNIST NATIONALISM AS A POWER RESOURCE: A RUSSIA–UKRAINE COMPARISON

*Mikhail A. Molchanov\**

The end of communism brought hopes for a wholesale liberal-democratic transformation to the republics of the former Soviet Union. However, bitter disenchantment soon followed, as resurrected nationalism undermined the republics' stability and threatened democracy. Mass nationalist movements in these countries were not observed until the regime's initial liberalization. In most cases, the high phase of nationalist mobilization was reached only after the post-communist state elites endorsed nationalism as an official policy of the state. In each instance, nationalist strategies of the state were defined in a complex interplay of domestic and international factors. Ethnicity became politicized as a resource for political action when other resources proved inadequate or insufficient. In addition, exogenous factors often played a leading role in this development.

This paper makes use of resource theories of nationalist mobilization to offer a comparative explanation of two distinct brands of nationalism that developed in Russia and Ukraine after the fall of communism. I start with an overview of the factors that make post-communist nationalism different from its nineteenth-century predecessor. I then proceed to offer a typology of nationalist strategies employed by the post-communist states. A more detailed account of two of the most popular strategies follows, using Russia and Ukraine as illustrations.

### **From Communism to Nationalism**

By nationalism I mean politics and ideology justified by an explicitly stated goal to promote a certain nation's interests. A nation can be defined as a political, ethnic, territorial, cultural, or religious group united by a common economy, mass culture, common legal rights and duties, and a belief system that emphasizes either shared history and genealogy or other common myths distinguishing this group from others.<sup>1</sup> National feeling is a feeling of being part of a culturally distinct community that extends beyond one's personal circle of significant others, cuts across the barriers of class and status, and legitimately commands the loyalty of its members. As a national community is not empirically given to any of its members, it becomes, in essence, an imagined community, whose contours are constructed and reconstructed in the process of national mobilization.

The national mobilization process is administered by a mobilizing agent, the national elite. Parochial interests of the elite become articulated as *national* interests when they are couched in universal terms of the fight being waged on behalf of all the compatriots. As Miroslav Hroch, Benedict Anderson and others have shown, this elite usually consists of educated classes from the indigenous nationality and local administrators who, for a variety of reasons, have grown dissatisfied with their present social standing. Contemporary nationalism is a product of modernization and mass education, but also of conscious manipulation of the masses by the elites.

As state socialist societies grew urbanized, industrialized, and more highly educated, inside competition for better-paying jobs and privileges intensified. This competition fostered the search for political and organizational resources that could be used to manage growing social tensions. Parochial nationalism became increasingly attractive, particularly in multiethnic societies where a nationalist appellation promised to stave off the ambitions of minorities and recent immigrants. A ready-made resource for nationalist mobilization was found within existing federal arrangements that discriminated between those administrative units that carried the name of an officially recognized ethnic group (“titular nationality”) and those that were defined in purely administrative and territorial terms, but not ethno-national ones. As some of the units were marked as ethno-national and others were not, the first group could use its official, albeit curtailed status to demand important political and economic concessions from the central governing bodies. The second group had no such option and was comparatively disadvantaged.

Political tensions between the two groups could be contained as long as resources seemed to be free flowing. This was particularly true in the former Soviet Union. However, the command economy and stringent isolation from world markets slowed tempos of growth and thwarted rising expectations of the populace. Administrative and territorial competition intensified. As more and more resources had to be found locally, the political significance of local administrative centers grew. Regional elites clamored for greater autonomy in their respective domains. Moscow was hard pressed by the ethno-republics’ aspirations to transform their political capital into more tangible assets. Where ethnicity had heretofore been politically dormant, it now came in handy. Where elements of grassroots nationalism had previously existed, they received a major boost as economic growth slowed down and job prospects in the peripheries declined.

As the poor economic performance of the allegedly superior social system became evident, mass dissatisfaction grew. “The hypercentralized nature of these regimes guaranteed that this dissatisfaction would be focused on the political authorities at ‘the center.’”<sup>2</sup> Nationalism became synonymous with decentralization and democratization, since the latter could be easily expressed in the language of local (national, popular) rights.<sup>3</sup> Moscow’s ultimate failure to provide reliable finance and credit, enforce business contracts, or engineer viable monetary and fiscal policies moved the republics to demand more say in those spheres of activity that had heretofore been

closed to them. Having found themselves largely on their own as early as 1989, the leaders of the republics had little choice but to claim the full measure of responsibility for economic (and hence political) affairs in their respective “protectorates” or relinquish authority to someone else. Administrative boundaries became natural frontiers that sheltered local bosses from the ruinous impact of central policies. The claim to a local power base became inevitably linked to an official “nationalizing” policy of the state.

As for the mass discontent, it could take a social-democratic or even a liberal-democratic form. But it had little institutional support within the existing system while official nationalism (“socialist in essence”) was permitted. Post-totalitarian states allowed some space for public exchange of ideas, and accorded official nationalities a certain degree of attention. Since an open debate on the effectiveness of the economic system or fairness of political representation was hardly possible until the advent of Solidarity in Poland and *perestroika* in the former Soviet Union, both political and economic grievances were often couched in a populist jargon of national interests and nationality policies. Populism, shared by both communism and nationalism, facilitated the transition from the former to the latter. The transition itself was caused as much by international as by domestic factors.

Post-communist nationalism was not just “striving for some form of continuity” that “looked back to emblems from the past.”<sup>4</sup> These “emblems from the past” were used as symbols of a return to the path of “normal” political and economic development that could ostensibly bring these nations “back to Europe.” National symbols conveyed the feeling of hope for a better future, thus looking forward rather than backward. “Mismodernized” and bitterly disillusioned nations were less concerned with continuity, and much more interested in finding their “proper” place in this new interconnected world of increasingly transparent borders, shifting alliances, and dramatically changing fortunes that no single state could brave on its own.

### **Post-communist nationalism: theories and typologies**

Nationalist mobilizations in the former Soviet Union took on different forms and shapes: civic and ethnic, inclusivist and exclusionary, separatist and irredentist. Newly found openness to the outside world was reflected in a painful search for a “European” identity, in one case, and a no less painful effort to distance itself from the West, in another. In turn, structural factors, including the concrete geopolitical position of a country and the assets and liabilities it possessed upon its entrance into the world political economy, influenced considerations of identity. A focus on geopolitics and international political economy may be indispensable if we want to see nationalism after communism as something more than a simple revival of ancient animosities.

Post-communist nationalism is sometimes likened to the postcolonial mobilizations of the twentieth century. However, the “decolonization” argument should take

into account the fact that some of the “colonies” had actually been better off than their supposedly exploitative metropole. Thus, the less developed republics of the former Soviet Union were traditionally ahead of Russia in terms of capital investment, industrial growth, state subsidies, and the like.<sup>5</sup> By the late 1980s, Russia was a net donor even to those union republics that, according to many indices, were already *more* developed than the RSFSR itself.<sup>6</sup> The end of communism saw Russia continuing to give handouts to the CIS countries. The former relative neglect of Ukraine was compensated for by implicit energy subsidies totaling an estimated U.S.\$12.6 billion by the end of the 1990s.<sup>7</sup> Russian imperialism has been peculiar in that the metropole failed to generate economic gains by exploiting the periphery.

On the other hand, it is not quite clear why the republics’ newly found dependence on the IMF and the World Bank and the necessity to follow their programs of structural adjustment, which pay little heed to the delicate issues of national sovereignty, may not be regarded as neocolonial in nature. However, post-communist reformers tend to ignore this idea. While the former communist metropolises are seen as “imperialists,” new centers of global financial and political power, surprisingly, are not. Those who do not buy into this overtly optimistic reading of contemporary global capitalism constitute an exception that is usually attributed to their retrograde political agenda or leftist indoctrination.

Resource theories of nationalist mobilization argue that ethnicity becomes politicized when it is used as a political resource. Before that, ethnicity is little more than a culture-specific environment of political action. As any environment does, it supplies the agency with material and instruments of action, delineates its structure of opportunities and constraints, but does not define its purpose. Ethnicity spawns nationalism when it becomes transformed into the resource of political action, that is, when policy makers assign it specific purpose and designation. The only natural thing about ethnic conflicts is the natural tendency of competing social and political actors to use any resource they can to beat the competition. Thus, “in multiethnic societies, politicians are tempted to privilege—or to promise to privilege—the members of one ethnic group over those of any other residents of the state.”<sup>8</sup> This may be the case even in stable democracies. In newly democratized countries, the temptation to use ethnicity as a power tool is much stronger.

Post-communist nationalism disguises struggles that are waged around tough issues of political power and the reallocation of property rights. Ethnicity provides a good medium for these disputes, since it can effectively mask their true nature and legitimize an indigenous elite’s grip on valuable resources. Ethno-politics offers a seemingly “natural” mode of interest articulation, which makes it indispensable in competition with more competent or better-equipped power pretenders. As a power game strategy, titular ethno-nationalism secures the unconditional victory of a dominant nationality over competitors from socially advanced ethnic minorities.

Whenever nationalism is used as a political resource, group markers of the dominant nationality become transformed into the most valued forms of social

capital. Political careers and often business opportunities get tied to the “right” nationality and foreclosed to the “aliens.” The latter, due to various “nationalizing” policies of the state, either are effectively excluded from the process of decision making or put in the second row of aspirants to offices with the government.<sup>9</sup> In the post-communist society, this situation creates a tension between the new forces of private initiative and the reality of more or less closed groups that draw their wealth and power from affiliation with the state.

A resource theory of nationalist mobilization cannot neglect internationally found resources. However heretical it may sound, post-communist nationalism feeds off a broader international environment. It is shaped by forces of geopolitics and international political economy. Though these two are related in the single reality of an interconnected and mutually dependent world, geopolitical considerations traditionally take precedence because of their direct bearing on national sovereignty and security. Russia’s geopolitical position is that of a regional hegemon with far-reaching aspirations. A second group, including Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova, is composed of previously stateless nations with a history of control by regional hegemons (Russia, Lithuania, and Romania, respectively). The third group of post-communist states can be characterized as strategically located borderlands with a proven history of independent or semi-independent existence (East Central Europe, the Baltic states). Western perceptions of Russia, often pictured as a potentially revisionist state, understandably differ from the perceptions of Ukraine and, even more, countries with an established record of democratic development before communism. Post-communist nationalism is in no small part influenced by these perceptions.

Recently, an image of “Weimar Russia” has been accorded a certain popularity and prestige in Western academic circles.<sup>10</sup> Since this image draws upon potent historical analogies, Russian nationalism is unanimously disapproved of and discouraged, often without further clarifications with regard to a particular brand of nationalism (moderate, radical, ethnic, civic) which would be expected if smaller European countries were addressed. Accordingly, *all* patriotic manifestations in Russia and by the Russians are viewed as potentially threatening to international peace and security. This perception cannot go unnoticed in the country. When depressed by an outside force, nationalism tends to get negative feedback that actually stimulates its growth. Arising “as a reaction to perceived threats to the nation’s existence or perceived opportunities for national aggrandizement,”<sup>11</sup> this brand of nationalism takes on mostly *defensive* and retrograde forms.

The group of previously independent nations enjoys the advantage of being a borderland between the West and its geopolitical “other.” Since they form a natural security belt, the West perceives these countries as allies and has granted them full support in their state and nation building efforts. These nations are predominantly pro-Western and are eager to accept full membership in all European structures. Their national identity is importantly “conditioned from outside, namely through

defining who is *not* a national,"<sup>12</sup> and, shall we add, who may *not* be considered a nation's ally. Strategically advantageous geopolitical position breeds various strategies of *selective* nationalism, *i.e.*, nationalism that principally targets certain local minorities and external anti-Western forces, while keeping an inclusive, liberal-democratic profile in communications with the West.

The group of previously stateless nations embraces newly independent states that have only recently appeared on the map. Though some of them can claim historical predecessors, these were either short-lived or institutionally incomplete and lacked the necessary political infrastructure or an unambiguous ethnic profile. In Central Asia, for example, historical antecedents are best characterized as "ethnically heterogeneous dynastic states," none of which, according to Edward Allworth, was "known at that time by the name of a component ethnic group."<sup>13</sup> Communism allowed these nations to mature, but also subjected them to foreign rule, nurturing dependence on external regulators. Independence took them by surprise. New states were born out of the collapse of communist federations that had enveloped them. Official nationalism became a necessity, both to justify separation and to make the best of it. Where native nationalism was weak or underdeveloped, it had to be constructed anew through emulation and/or importation of what seemed to be relevant codes and practices. Searching for an appropriate role model, former stateless nations tend to identify themselves either with former regional hegemony (*cf.* Belarus) or those neighbors that have secured recognition as forefront outposts of the West (*cf.* Ukraine's attitude toward Poland). In both instances, the strategy of *emulated* nationalism is called upon to diminish the insecurity that their prolonged stateless history has bequeathed.

This feeling of insecurity is reinforced by the economic vulnerability of the recently democratized states. The world market is harsh on newcomers, as the recent history of even the more successful East Central European countries ascertains. Double-digit inflation in Poland and the crisis of unrecoverable loans in the Czech Republic has underscored the gap between these aspiring "tigers" of Europe and their affluent neighbors to the west. The unreformed economies of the former Soviet Union have fared significantly worse, and many local critics blame the misfortune on the elimination of barriers that had formerly separated them from the West.

Economic vulnerability breeds nationalist reactions ranging from pure mercantilism, to xenophobia, to a host of conspiracy theories, all of which locate the source of domestic problems beyond the national borders. These reactions grow stronger if the early experience of opening puts an extra strain on the economy without bringing immediate positive changes. The more communist legacies slow down the transition and prevent full-fledged participation in the world market, the more potent nationalist feeling may eventually arise among those affected by an unsuccessful restructuring of the country's economy. This is the case of Russia in particular, where defensive nationalism has emerged as the only policy instrument that promises to uphold societal cohesion. In regionally split countries, such as Ukraine, defensive national-

ism acquires the form of ethno-regionalism, with the external enemy being sought in different places depending on the historical and geographic idiosyncrasies of a region. Thus, defensive reactions in western Ukraine and the national capital are usually aimed at Russia, while genetically similar reactions in the pro-communist Donbas and the pro-Russian Crimea naturally target the West, including the nationalist west of the country.<sup>14</sup>

### Russian Nationalism: A Defense Strategy

However counter-intuitive it may sound, Russian nationalism is, historically speaking, a relatively new phenomenon. Russia has never experienced anything close to the nationalist upheavals that shook nineteenth-century Europe. Russia's own Enlightenment (M. Lomonosov, N. Novikov, A. Radishchev) and Romantic period (V. Zhukovsky, M. Lermontov, Slavophiles) remained elite phenomena and did not lead to a mass movement of national consolidation. There was no Russian counterpart to Fichte's "Addresses to the German Nation." For all practical purposes, "Russia has been a state-nation rather than a nation-state ... identity has been centered on the state, which became an empire long before the population consolidated as a nation."<sup>15</sup> The state and the state-affiliated elite were viewed as the primary agents of development, leaving the society at large to passively follow the lead. The underdevelopment of civil society precluded the formation of a modern Russian nation before the Revolution of 1917 and continues to obstruct it now.<sup>16</sup>

Attempts to apply the Hrochian scheme of national mobilization<sup>17</sup> to Russia fell short of detecting anything like the crowning stage of mass national movement until very recently. The stage of intellectuals may be found in the tradition of the Russian Enlightenment and Romanticism, united, despite their differences, by the elite nature of both.<sup>18</sup> The stage of "patriotic agitation," erroneously attributed to the Slavophiles,<sup>19</sup> would probably better characterize the Russian populists of the late nineteenth century. Still, their concern was mostly social and economic (land reform) and only marginally nationalist. The residual imperialism of the Russian *narodniki*, much lamented by representatives of the national-liberation movements of the Russian periphery (especially Ukrainians), hampered the development of a properly *national* program for the Russians themselves. The "dominant" nation remained dissolved in the overarching imperial whole, on the one hand, and in semi-primordial local communes, on the other: "Localism, rather than nationalism, was in evidence throughout pre-revolutionary Russia."<sup>20</sup>

As John Dunlop noted, "if the Tsarist empire cannot, except for its closing years, be termed a Russian empire, much less can the Soviet empire be so considered."<sup>21</sup> The label "federal colonialism," recently suggested by Graham Smith, can only obfuscate the nature of Soviet nationality policies, especially when further explicated as something premised on the "blurring of boundaries between metropole and colonies."<sup>22</sup> Once a metropole blends with its colonies, both disappear. The "internal

colonialism” thesis is even less applicable to the Soviet Union than it is to the U.K., which served as the focus of the original criticism.<sup>23</sup> Soviet communism did not promote the interests of the Russians over other peoples of the Soviet Union, nor did it exploit the latter to benefit the former. It did bear a “Russian face” because of the sheer numbers of ethnic Russians within the system and the appropriation of the Russian language for the purposes of culture and ideology. However, the whole design of the quasi-federal Soviet system, which aimed to contain non-Russian nationalism within administratively defined boundaries of its respective titular nationality, worked to empower the indigenous republican-level elites, nurturing nationalist feelings and creating nationalist leaders even where they had not existed before. As a result of the Soviet nationality policy,

many nationalities became demographically more consolidated within their “homelands,” acquired effective and articulate national political and intellectual elites, and developed a shared national consciousness. These more conscious and consolidated nationalities were “rooted” to specific territories, with abundant privileges for the titular nations and their local Communist elites.<sup>24</sup>

Instead of fostering the desired integration and even merger of nations, Soviet federalism institutionalized ethnicity and indeed “promoted a peculiar process of nation-building” in the periphery.<sup>25</sup> However, this was not the case in Russia proper. There the party deliberately blocked the process of Russian national self-identification. “Expressions of Russian consciousness have long been discouraged and Soviet traditions have been mixed with Russian.”<sup>26</sup> Institutionally, Soviet Russia was denied its own Academy of Sciences, KGB or Ministry of Internal Affairs, national television, and the whole set of ministries and central departments that were an expected element of any other Union republic. Politically, the Russian Federation did not have even a national capital of its own. Nor was a Russian section of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union allowed to exist. The Russians were underrepresented in the organs of Soviet power, and their party representation was also proportionately lower than that of the Georgians or the Jews. Russians were also discriminated against in their level of access to intellectual professions and occupations. Judged by their representation in the ranks of scientific intelligentsia, Russians fared worse than Jews, Georgians, Armenians, or Estonians.<sup>27</sup>

It is little wonder, then, that by the late 1980s Russian nationalism, previously confined to circles of the creative intelligentsia, made a “big leap forward,” spreading its influence over much broader sectors of intellectuals, political elite, and the Soviet “middle class” in general.<sup>28</sup> With *glasnost*, the linkage between the poor shape of the Russian national economy and its manifold international obligations both inside and outside the country became widely known. The lower living standards of the Russian people were increasingly attributed to the “imperial burden” abroad and the subsidies to other subjects of the Soviet Union at home. By the end of 1991, civic nationalism in Russia helped to secure a peaceful dissolution of the former superpower.

From 1990 to 1992, Russia seemed ready to accept the global leadership of its former Cold War rival and to work with the West on such major issues as regional and global security, economic reform, and politics of development. The so-called Atlanticist orientation in Russian foreign policy, championed by Andrei Kozyrev, was premised on the idea of junior partnership with the United States. While the country was too poor for expensive international engagements, Russian liberals believed it could still have a fair say in matters of international politics. They fought the seduction of isolationism by allying the country with the most powerful nation in the world and expected some sort of privileged treatment in return. The liberal position in the Russian foreign policy debate, as summarized by Neumann, was that of Russia's apprenticeship with Europe:

This insistence that Russia is just like Europe, only a little slower and a little less subtle, was initially the assessment made by the Russian state under Yeltsin's leadership. The state took over the liberal position, and tended to see Russia as an apprentice returning to European-based "civilisation."<sup>29</sup>

However, the apprentice proved wayward and failed to graduate. It was not long before the liberal internationalist dream vanished in the thin air of *realpolitik* concerns and competing national interests. Russia's willful acceptance of a junior partner's role in relations with the West led it to support policies in opposition to its national interest. A former superpower, Russia has been promptly ousted by the U.S. from the world markets of arms, nuclear materials, and space technology. In the first and most difficult years of transition, sanctions against former allies such as Libya, Iraq, and Serbia have cost the country an estimated U.S.\$15–16 billion.<sup>30</sup> Neglect of former clients in the Third World left between U.S.\$100 and U.S.\$170 billion sunk in unrecoverable loans. This debt, if paid in full, could have prevented the August 1998 default and even made Russia a net creditor.<sup>31</sup> Year after year, *per capita* Western investments into the Russian economy lagged far behind comparable investments into the countries of East Central Europe or the Baltic states. Trade liberalization without prior modernization of industry also dealt a heavy blow to domestic producers and made the country into a Third-World-type commodity exporter.

In addition to the economic problems, political losses began to be felt. If Russians thought the Cold War had ended because they wanted it to end, the Western public saw its demise as the defeat of one side and the victory of the other. This difference of opinion has driven home the idea that equal partnership was never on the cards. The loss of superpower status and the acute economic crisis of the post-communist transition were tied together in a single formula that described the IMF-approved policies of shock therapy as the deliberate "ruin of the national economic complex and reorientation of the flow of resources abroad."<sup>32</sup> Nationalist thinkers attributed the Soviet collapse to a Western conspiracy, arguing that it was Russia all along, and not Soviet communism in particular, that the West perceived as its perennial

geopolitical rival and strove to liquidate by all means necessary.<sup>33</sup> The eastward expansion of NATO despite Russia's protests, coupled with the fact that Russia was not invited to take any part in the alliance, was read as a clear case of strategic encirclement. "Look how eagerly NATO is trying to move closer to our borders, cutting our country off from its natural allies, partners, and markets," wrote Gennadii Ziuganov.<sup>34</sup> "This development is synchronized with the destruction of our defense industry, armed forces, national self-awareness, and spirituality." Closer to home, the "nationalizing" policies of the newly independent states in the "near abroad" made the plight of Russians there a subject of public concern. A domestic debate over proper federal arrangements brought fear of disintegration, with the *de facto* secession of Chechnya seeming to prove Moscow's irreversible impotence.

All of this has contributed to the rise of nationalism in Russia, which became a factor in mass politics after the "therapeutic" shocks of 1992–1993. The parliamentary elections of 1993–1995 saw nationalists securing growing numbers of seats in the state Duma. The combined legislative representation of the "national-patriotic" bloc, comprising parties as different as the Liberal-Democratic (LDPR), Communist (CPRF), or Agrarian (APR), gradually grew from 42% of the seats after the December 1993 elections to 54% in 1995.<sup>35</sup> A fierce attack that communists and nationalists launched against domestic liberal internationalists led to Kozyrev's resignation in 1995. Atlanticists suffered severe losses in the elections and appeared on the edge of being ejected from the Russian political debate. Some of them, most notably Kozyrev himself, became defenders of the Russian cause and made demands of other ex-Soviet countries. A Yabloko liberal, Aleksei Arbatov, stopped seeking NATO membership for Russia and grew more concerned with the proper development of Russia's armed forces and new markets for Russian arms exporters. Political analyst and TV commentator Irina Kobrinskaia, though criticizing the "great-power ideology" of Russian foreign policy, insisted on the priority of the national interests and lamented "the absence of a general long-term conception of national security, or a clear assessment of the [international] threats."<sup>36</sup> Defensive nationalism occupied Russian public opinion, and liberal theorists were hard pressed to follow the stream. A new orientation in foreign policy, called "Eurasianist" for its insistence on Russia's unique "Eurasian" destiny, resurrected great-power ambitions, even though the country was conspicuously lacking in great-power resources.

Borrowed from the eponymous current of thought that first showed itself in the Russian *émigré* literature of the 1920s, early Eurasianism had sought to anchor Russia in the East, underscoring differences in Russian and Western values, ways of development, and historical and geopolitical profiles.<sup>37</sup> Post-*perestroika* Eurasianists proclaim the spiritual and typological closeness of the two "traditional" civilizations, the Russian and the East Asian, both of which value collectivity and equity over individual achievement and private property.<sup>38</sup> Geopolitical doctrine counted Russia among the great continental powers set to control the core of the Eurasian "landmass" and naturally opposed to hegemonic moves of the "oceanic" (both

Atlantic and Pacific) powers. "Eurasian" nationalism sought to distance Russia from the West, even at the price of certain change in the balance between traditional Russia's Slavophile interests in the "near abroad" and its more recent orientation to loyal partners among the Muslim countries of Russia's southern underbelly.

Post-Soviet Eurasianists choose China, rather than America, as the preferred role model. Notwithstanding their fear of Islamic fundamentalism, they would also prefer to ally with Muslim rather than Catholic or Protestant countries. The gist and main justification of the current "Russian [*rossiiskii*] Euro-Asian project," viewed sympathetically by an analyst closely affiliated with the government, is its passionate rejection of the "primitive Westernism" that informed political and social orientations in the first post-*perestroika* years.<sup>39</sup> Most Russian politicians now agree that the time of the "romantic relations with the West" is over, and that no one will take care of Russian national interests save Russians themselves.<sup>40</sup> But does it necessarily mean that Russia's natural allies should be found in the East? How can an eastern orientation help Russia solve her burning domestic problems? What might be a "Eurasian" alternative to the inclusive all-European security structures? Are Taliban-like movements Russia's natural allies? Eurasianism has offered no answers to these questions. Its only tangible result at the moment is Sino-Russian rapprochement, boosted by a shared feeling of estrangement from the West, the growing volume of Russian arms' sales to the People's Republic of China (PRC), and Russia's clear desire to benefit from trade with the Asian giant.

The school that dominates the Russian foreign policy debate at the moment, the so-called national pragmatist approach, attempts to achieve a balance between East and West, seeing the country's position in the world system of states as unique. Though accepting post-Cold-War realities and the *de facto* leadership of the West, national pragmatists assert that "Russia's interests are not, nor can they be, identical to those of the United States."<sup>41</sup> This group is willing to diversify Russia's external relationships, but subordinates them to such principles as the priority of national interests, mutual benefit, and equal partnership. It shies away from the superpower rhetoric advocated by radical nationalists, yet makes it clear that Russia should not yield to Western pressure in such areas as security, military and defense policies, traditional partnerships, or sensitive export decisions. This national pragmatist strategy is moderately nationalist and can become more or less openly defensive, depending on external stimuli.

Pragmatic nationalists do not approve of unconditional cooperation with the West. They are considerably less enthusiastic than liberal internationalists on the issue of pan-European solidarity. They are even less supportive of the idea of a transatlantic unity of interests. If they have to choose between Europe and the United States, they will choose Europe, only to stave off the establishment of a "unipolar world" with the U.S. at the top. They are anxious to preserve Russia's traditional spheres of influence, first and foremost in the "near abroad" countries of the former Soviet Union. Though they reject more radical visions of reintegration at all costs, they

nevertheless see all of the former Soviet space as an exclusive sphere of Russia's "live interests." "Any external forces," in Primakov's words, should be consequently denied "a possibility to 'drive wedges' between Russia and the other CIS countries."<sup>42</sup> In this view, Russia's "resurrection" from its present humble status requires exerting maximum effort to encourage centripetal tendencies inside the CIS. Special attention should be paid to the "creation of the East Slavic coalition, possibly a confederation, as its would-be members are doomed to remain 'Europe's pariahs' anyhow."<sup>43</sup>

The big strides that nationalism has made in Russian foreign policy should be assessed against the fact that the country suffered a profound geopolitical defeat following the break-up of the Soviet Union. While keeping its seat on the U.N. Security Council and the title to all the nuclear arms amassed by the Soviets, Russia kowtowed to the West in turning its back on former allies and long-term clients. Though granted formal acceptance to the G-7 group of countries (occasionally called "G-8" since then), it lost almost all instruments of control over the adjacent former Soviet republics, and was not even able to secure its fair share of the market of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Russia conspicuously failed to pacify a separatist movement in the tiny Chechen Republic, and its "peacekeeping" missions in the "near abroad" drew severe criticism from almost all parties concerned. A dissident group inside the CIS, the Ukraine-led GUUAM (the acronym for Georgia-Ukraine-Uzbekistan-Azerbaijan-Moldova), has invalidated Russia's claims to regional leadership. Insisting on the transparent "inner" border with its ex-Soviet neighbors, Russia has exposed itself to all the dangers of the porous and unguarded "outer" borders of the former Soviet Union, thus opening the gates for smugglers, illegal immigrants, drug traffickers and the like. With a population of little more than a half and GDP about one-quarter of the former Soviet Union's, Russia's situation looks bleak in comparison to almost any other established nuclear power.

It is hard for Russians to accept political and economic humiliation of this magnitude. Hence, public debate on the issue tends to degenerate into a search for scapegoats, foster conspiracy theories, and employ more or less xenophobic nationalist appellations. Mass Russian nationalism has intensified as a defensive reaction to the shocks of post-communist transformation. People are told that their problems result from geopolitical offensives of the West. Economic collapse is linked to the break-up of the Soviet Union, so reconstitution of some better form of a Union becomes the nation's road to salvation. The 1999 Duma elections, though seen in the West as pointing to the relative decline of the communists and outspoken nationalists, in fact, delivered a sound victory to the official "patriots," Vladimir Putin's Unity in particular. Of all the contestants, only the left-centrist Yabloko party ventured a moderate critique of the Chechen affair, for which it was punished with a more than twofold decline in Duma representation.<sup>44</sup> As the talk of national interest grows into a mantra justifying things as disparate as exceptionalism in federal policy (*cf.* privileged treatment of Tatarstan to the military involvement in Chechnya),

TABLE 1  
What Politics Should the Russian Authorities Adopt toward Chechnya?

|                                                                                             |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Seek rapprochement and cooperate with Chechnya's leadership (Maskhadov)                     | 28 |
| Isolate Chechnya from the neighboring regions of Russia; strengthen security on the borders | 37 |
| Bomb the bases of the Chechen field commanders                                              | 9  |
| Conduct a massive military operation against the Chechen rebels                             | 8  |
| Do not attempt any drastic measures, but try to "conserve" the situation                    | 5  |
| Don't know, undecided                                                                       | 14 |

*Source:* A national public opinion poll conducted by the All-Russia Center for the Study of Public Opinion (VTsIOM) on 23–28 July 1999. *N* = 1600.

increased defense expenditure, or subsidies to "patriotic" culture makers, nationalism becomes an unavoidable feature of any political contest.

Post-communist nationalism is articulated differently by the elite and mass levels of society. Distinguishing between the two groups is important as a measure of control against sweeping, and therefore inaccurate, generalizations. Though public opinion can be manipulated, manipulation has its limits. Sociological polls show that the bellicosity of Russia's "national-patriotic" media is not matched by an equally intense reaction on the part of the populace (Table 1). No more than one-third of those polled support the idea of a peaceful restoration of the USSR.<sup>45</sup> Even the Russia–Belarus Union is looked at with restraint (Table 2), since an understanding of its potential cost to Russia and an increasingly critical view of Lukashenka's practices makes the proposal less appealing than nationalists would like.<sup>46</sup> The communist/nationalist media and its imperialist rhetoric notwithstanding, mass nationalism is chiefly guided by a conservative longing for the good old times and the fear of further deprivation. It has no use for expansionist dreams of a forceful restoration of the former empire.

The situation may change, however, if the sense of strategic encirclement and insecurity, bred by NATO's expansion and exacerbated by the alliance's war on Yugoslavia, receives a new boost from a conclusive Russian failure in the Caucasus. The crisis over Kosovo confirmed Moscow's worst fears of the West and made

TABLE 2  
What Kind of Relations with Belarus Are in Russia's National Interests? (%)

|                                                                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Preservation of the current state of affairs                                                        | 24 |
| Full merger into a single state                                                                     | 43 |
| Return to the situation that existed before the union agreement was signed; independent development | 15 |
| Don't know, undecided                                                                               | 18 |

*Source:* VTsIOM national poll, 18–22 June 1999. *N* = 1600.

anti-Americanism fashionable, nearly precipitating a complete severance of Russia–NATO relations. The Ministry of Defense finally got a sympathetic ear from the government and increased budget allocations. Large-scale military exercises, symbolically dubbed West-99, resurrected the old Soviet tradition of expensive military posturing *vis-à-vis* countries of the Western alliance. Whatever the official position of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs might be, the military has found a voice of its own, as the second war on Chechnya has all too clearly demonstrated. As for the general public, the number of Russians who express a dislike for the West more than doubled in the wake of the NATO war on Serbia, from 23% to 49% by March 1999.<sup>47</sup> By April 1999, 57% of Russians squarely blamed the conflict on the “aggressive policy of the U.S. and NATO,”<sup>48</sup> while the Duma delayed ratification of the START-II treaty and even voiced a proposal to retarget Russian missiles at NATO countries. The revised military policy has been motivated by the perception of the U.S. as a security threat and reinforced by declared readiness for a nuclear first strike if needed.<sup>49</sup> Western criticism of the Chechen adventure was countered by Yeltsin’s notorious reminder of Russia’s nuclear capabilities.<sup>50</sup>

These reactions are defensive in nature and, therefore, can be controlled. If Russia is not pressed hard into a corner, defensive nationalism is bound to subside, as it will lose its *raison d’être*. On the other hand, continuing treatment of Russia as a third-rate country may backfire.<sup>51</sup> A number of populist politicians and parties, lacking more tangible power resources, will be tempted to call upon nationalism. Official Moscow will have to follow the trend. If overtaken by nationalist anti-Western sentiment, Russia’s precarious democracy may not survive for long. A nationalist president may move to apply the Chechen “lessons” in a way that will jeopardize the security and sovereignty of neighboring countries. The West’s sneering at Russia’s objections to a redefinition of NATO’s mandate will then fully reveal itself as a “counterproductive policy of accelerating the very neoimperial tendencies that it is intended to prevent.”<sup>52</sup>

### Selective Nationalism in Ukraine

Nationalist resurgence in Ukraine started almost by default, not so much provoked as unwittingly preprogrammed by the clumsy actions of reformers in Moscow. Their peculiar lack of sensitivity to the issue of nationalities was characteristically demonstrated by Gorbachev in his June 1985 slip of the tongue, when, to the astonishment of a street crowd in the Ukrainian capital, he used “Russia” as a synonym for the Soviet Union as a whole. Most Soviet rulers were at least cautious enough to take the national issue seriously and paid token homage to the heroic traditions of the people, even while brutally suppressing anything that smacked of anti-systemic, “bourgeois” nationalism.<sup>53</sup> The last General Secretary uniquely rose through the ranks without having served anywhere beyond the borders of the Russian Federation. His personal background was therefore particularly ill-suited for the job of running

a multinational country, let alone attempting to reform it. These tasks required skills that Gorbachev had had no opportunity to acquire. The new course, accordingly, included a bid to dismantle the established instruments of Soviet nationality policy. As summarized by Paul Goble,

- First, he called for zero-based budgeting, a direct challenge to the republics' role in the economy.
- Second, he treated the periphery in an undifferentiated way, not giving pride of place to the republics over the oblasts of the RSFSR.
- Third, he appeared to call for an end to affirmative action, arguing that the selection of cadres in both Moscow and the republics should be conducted the same way—on merit and without favoritism.<sup>54</sup>

As if all of this was not enough to trigger a nationalist counter-attack, the Moscow reformers launched a vicious offensive against local middle-management cadres, collectively labeling them a “mechanism of inertia.” The campaign of “acceleration” located the seed of the country’s economic ills in intermediary elites who were directly responsible for the functioning of territorial and sectoral formations of the Soviet system. Thus, Moscow was the first to breach the unwritten national contract that gave the center ultimate power together with ultimate responsibility for its workings. The national cadres felt themselves betrayed by their leader.

The effects of this policy for Russia and Ukraine were structurally similar. Sovereignist elites had to be developed to withstand the pressure of increasingly irrelevant Union authority and to take on the tasks of management and coordination that were being divested by the Kremlin one after another. The gap between the center and the periphery grew exponentially. Gorbachev ended wars and commanded withdrawal of troops; the republics had to resettle the returnees. The Politburo fought alcohol consumption; the republics lost budget revenues from wine and vodka sales. Monetary reform confiscated people’s savings; local bosses had to prevent chaos and secure an adequate food supply. Moscow refused to enforce inter-enterprise contracts; the republics attempted to shortcut economic circuits, rerouting them through the domain they could control. Authority over the economy became contested in the “war of laws” that Moscow increasingly lost to the periphery. The frustration of republican elites gave rise to national communism and an honest desire to break free from an ineffective, yet obtrusive center, a nuisance for the conservatives and reformers alike.

Ukrainians started reassessing their relationship with Moscow in the wake of the worst nuclear disaster humanity has experienced to date—the Chernobyl catastrophe of 26 April 1986.<sup>55</sup> With radioactive fallout about 200 times stronger than that of Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined,<sup>56</sup> Chernobyl and its aftermath vividly demonstrated the organizational incapacity of the Soviet system and its blunt disregard for the laboring people it purported to represent. The 1986 May Day celebrations in contaminated Kiev underscored the profound dishonesty of Soviet officialdom. The

ecological movement was born soon thereafter, and a national opposition showed itself, under the name of *Rukh* (“Movement” in Ukrainian) in late 1988.

And yet, well into the mid-1990s, Ukraine was still sitting on the fence regarding its future mode of coexistence with Russia. While nationalist dissenters, such as the writer Ivan Dziuba, the journalist Viacheslav Chornovil, or the lawyer Levko Luk’ianenko, were no longer prosecuted and could generate a not negligible following, first among students and intellectuals and then among the broader segments of society, the appeal of their message remained limited. The Ukraine’s Writers’ Union, spearheaded by *Rukh*, initially focused its attacks on issues of a cultural and broadly social character, presenting itself as a catch-all national-democratic movement “in support of *perestroika*.” Its main accomplishment in 1989 was the Law on Languages in the Ukrainian SSR, which designated Ukrainian as the state language in the republic, while keeping Russian as “the language of international communication of the peoples of the USSR.”<sup>57</sup>

However, after the Declaration of the State Sovereignty of the RSFSR, Ukrainians had little choice but to follow suit. Little more than a month later, on 16 July 1990, Ukraine’s Verkhovna Rada reciprocated with a unanimously passed sovereignty Declaration of its own. By 1991, the economic adventurism of Gorbachev’s policies had estranged masses of the population, while Moscow’s oscillations between reform and reaction profoundly confused and alienated Ukraine’s *nomenklatura*. Dissatisfied national communists under the leadership of Leonid Kravchuk saw *Rukh* as a vehicle to promote the ideas that they could not express in the open and eventually took over the nationalist agenda.<sup>58</sup> Meanwhile, some of *Rukh*’s original followers moved on to launch nationalist parties of a rather radical persuasion.

As Moscow lay paralyzed by the abortive coup of August 1991, the Ukrainian Parliament passed the Act of the State Independence of Ukraine. The erstwhile middle managers of the Soviet republic finally secured themselves from any attacks from the center, jumpstarting policies of distancing themselves from Russia in education, culture, media, national security, and the economy. By the end of the year, the December 1991 referendum rallied all nationalities living in Ukraine in a common desire to steer away from what seemed to be an increasingly unpredictable power struggle in Moscow. The economic collapse of the Soviet center looked irreversible, while Ukraine’s traditionally strong positions in agriculture, food, and light industry were erroneously interpreted as indications of a high level of self-sufficiency. The state media, ordered to propagate independence, proscribed the alternative as equivalent to national treason. About 76% of the eligible adult population voted to support state independence. Empowered by the popular mandate, Leonid Kravchuk refused to entertain the idea of a renewed Union, thus making formal dissolution of the USSR inevitable. Five years later, Ukraine’s nation-building process was crowned by the adoption of the new Constitution (28 June 1996) which transformed acknowledged emblems of the Ukrainian nationalist movement into state symbols.

The turn to Ukrainian nationalism as a state-building platform has been variously interpreted as an example of political opportunism on the part of the old communist elite, a matter of expediency, or a genuine political rebirth, prompted by the clear manifestation of popular will in the December 1991 referendum. Most interpretations, notwithstanding their differences, view the change of political course as a manifestation of creative political will on the part of the Ukrainian leadership.<sup>59</sup> Closer analysis of the events shows that Kravchuk was literally forced into the “new course” by the collapse of the Moscow center. Once forced, however, he adapted quickly. The national independence of Ukraine was used to protect state-socialist rent seeking amidst the sea of chaos emanating from Moscow.

As resource theories of nationalist mobilization would predict, post-communist nationalism in Ukraine has been used as a power resource. It was played out on several domestic and international arenas, in most cases tying domestic and international factors together. First and foremost, it was a middle-management response to the collapse of the central authority. The accelerating break-up of the Soviet Union had to be stopped at some better-prepared line of defense. What Gorbachev mockingly called the “parade of sovereignties” was, in essence, nothing else than a reconsolidation of the local oligarchy’s grip on power, capital, and resources that they had originally been authorized to manage on behalf of the center.

Secondly, post-*perestroika* Ukrainian leadership used nationalism to stop much feared economic reforms and democratic transitions from encroaching on the republic’s turf, the local elite’s power base. Ukrainian liberal democrats at the time saw Kravchuk’s actions as bearing out his and his cronies’ desire “to isolate Ukraine from Yeltsin’s democratic Russia, rather than to protect it from the old Soviet Union.”<sup>60</sup> As more than one analyst noted, Ukraine’s *nomenklatura* bosses were “frightened by the decisive measures of decommunization implemented by the Russian leadership” and strove to “disengage themselves from ‘democratic bacchanalia’ that all of them, full of panic, saw on TV.”<sup>61</sup> The blueprint for the isolationist defense had been encoded in no other document than the USSR Constitution itself, which carried the right of national self-determination (up to secession) as a token reminder of the revolutionary origins of the state. Given the regime’s softening and the importance accorded to national self-determination by the international community, a heretofore shallow right became an important political resource that promised both internal and international gains. A formal separation walled off the economy, preserving traditional spoils of office for the post-communist political elite.<sup>62</sup> In a movement common to all of the post-communist countries, former apparatchiks and their trusted middlemen became endowed with property, owing to their close affiliation with the state, through the unprecedented procedure of a neofeudal distribution of assets. Political power was literally translated into money, as a chain of scandals involving top national politicians has all too clearly demonstrated.<sup>63</sup> State independence made it possible to conceal domestic mismanagement with the help of international financial assistance, for which Ukraine, as an independent state, now qualified.

Additionally, the state elite obtained an opportunity to play the country's important geopolitical position for cash and other benefits that both Russia and the West could not fail to deliver.<sup>64</sup>

The third element feeding into post-communist nationalism in Ukraine originated in the West. A large number of nationally conscious Ukrainians live in the U.S., Canada, and the countries of Western Europe due to unfortunate encounters that they or their ancestors had had with Soviet power. Those who fled the western Ukraine after its occupation by the Red Army in 1939 and those who fought Stalinism in 1941–1949 hardly distinguished between the Soviet regime and its Russophone administrators. The same attitude was paramount among representatives of the dissident nationalist movement of 1960–1985, which also brought significant numbers of anti-Soviet and anti-Russian refugees to the West. It is no coincidence that many in the diaspora are still connected with radical nationalist, anti-Russian parties, some of which were transplanted back to Ukraine following the state's proclamation of independence.

Finally, Ukrainian nationalism had a grassroots base that, for example, Belarussian nationalism did not. The western Ukraine, or more precisely the historical lands of Galicia and western Volyn', provided such a base. This region had the shortest history of incorporation into the Soviet Union and the Russian Empire, and had been the location of fierce resistance to Soviet communism by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. Apart from the fact that it was the least Russified, the region also remained the least modernized within Ukraine. The late advent of modernization allowed it to preserve certain elements of traditionalist nineteenth-century-type nationalism and parochialism, and helps to explain the local intensity of ethno-nationalist feelings, often fueled by perceptions of relative deprivation. Perhaps not accidentally, the population of western Ukraine scored lowest in the country on a cumulative index of liberal values,<sup>65</sup> thus representing a throwback to the past rather than a promising way out of the present predicament.

Selective nationalism in Ukraine shows itself in a desire to move closer to the affluent West, while keeping such a "strategic partner" as Russia at arm's length. Throughout its history, Ukrainian political elites have changed sides between Lithuania and Poland, Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Germany, looking for a powerful regulator who would be able to solve the most pressing problems of domestic governance. In the most recent period, the U.S. and other NATO countries replaced Moscow as the focus of Ukraine's international attention. In Szporluk's observation, "new kinds of international relations are especially important in forming and re-forming post-Soviet national identities and states."<sup>66</sup> Ukraine was the first among the Soviet successor states to apply to NATO's Partnership for Peace Program. Ukraine insisted on Western guarantees of security before ratifying the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Ukraine was adamant in seeking recognition and support from the United States, and eventually became the third largest recipient of U.S. international aid. Despite all the rhetoric of Eastern Slavic "brotherhood," which

Kiev regularly employs to win political and economic concessions from Moscow and to secure the backing of the essentially pro-Russian electorate in eastern regions of the country, Ukraine's security interests and foreign policy remain fundamentally pro-Western.<sup>67</sup>

The westward move reached its peak with the signing of the Charter on Distinctive Partnership between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Ukraine on 9 July 1997. It is not by chance that the long-delayed Russian-Ukrainian Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation was finally accomplished on 30 May in the same year, as Ukrainians used the impending NATO-Ukraine summit in Madrid as a bargaining chip in their negotiations with Russia. To alleviate Russian fears, Leonid Kuchma paid a state visit to the Russian Federation in February 1998, ushering in the Treaty and the Program of Long-Term Economic Cooperation for the period 1998-2007. Once economic cooperation with the country's largest trade partner had been secured, Kiev moved on to adopt, in November 1998, the State Program on Cooperation between Ukraine and NATO for the period until 2001. In the same year, Ukraine announced its official Strategy of Integration into the European Union. In April 1999, at the height of the crisis in Kosovo and parallel to Moscow's severing most of its ties to the Atlantic alliance, the Ukrainian President joined the NATO 50th anniversary celebrations in Washington, pledging to "further extend our cooperation with either EAPC as a whole or with NATO in particular."<sup>68</sup>

And yet, while the Ukrainian presidential administration and Ministry of Foreign Affairs attempt to steer the country closer to the Western alliance, the public response remains lukewarm. The 1997 poll showed 16% of respondents believed NATO to be an "aggressive military bloc," 19% doubted NATO's support of Ukraine against foreign aggression, and 21% resolutely opposed Ukraine's membership in the Western alliance. Forty percent of the polled saw the pro-Western policies of the government as undermining good relationships with Russia, 26% feared Ukraine's being pushed into a buffer zone between a Russian-led Tashkent alliance of the CIS countries and NATO, while 22.8% named Russia as Ukraine's main military and political ally. Every fourth Ukrainian agreed with Russia's categorical objections to eastward NATO expansion.<sup>69</sup> The 1998 national survey demonstrated the stable character of these orientations (see Table 3).

In contradistinction to the officially sponsored selective nationalism of the government, popular nationalism in Ukraine remains muted. Nationalists could not garner mass support in the 1991-1998 elections.<sup>70</sup> Most public opinion polls revealed a sound preference for some form of reunion with the Russian Federation, a position that ran contrary to that advocated by the authorities. As Table 4 shows, as late as 1994-1995 more than half of the Ukrainian people continued to believe that it was in the country's best interests to prioritize relationships with Russia and other CIS countries. In 1997, a combined 45% of those polled supported a political and military alliance with Russia, compared to 15% favoring one oriented to the West, and 25% in favor of continued neutrality. In 1998, 57% of a representative nationwide sample

TABLE 3  
Attitudes toward Pro-NATO Course of the Government in Ukraine (%)

|                                                                             | 1997    |        |                 | 1998    |        |                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------|-----------------|---------|--------|-----------------|
|                                                                             | Yes (%) | No (%) | Hard to say (%) | Yes (%) | No (%) | Hard to say (%) |
| Closer collaboration with NATO ...                                          |         |        |                 |         |        |                 |
| is in Ukraine's national interests                                          | 36      | 17     | 47              | 35.4    | 27.3   | 37.3            |
| runs contrary to Ukraine's interests, its non-allied status, etc.           | 22      | 26     | 52              | 32.7    | 26.6   | 40.7            |
| makes Ukraine a buffer country between NATO and the Tashkent alliance       | 26      | 9      | 65              | 35.4    | 15     | 49.6            |
| ... undermines stability of relations with Russia                           | 40      | 10     | 50              | 51.1    | 15.2   | 33.7            |
| ... is, by necessity, driven by the goal of further integration with Europe | 28      | 10     | 62              | 31.9    | 18.4   | 49.7            |
| ... serves the goal of Ukraine's prospective membership in NATO             | 40      | 3      | 58              | 51.2    | 5.8    | 43              |

Sources: *Politychnyi portret Ukrainy*, No. 18, 1997; the 1998 data file of the Democratic Initiatives research center.

believed that Ukraine should join with Russia and Belarus in a new inter-state union.<sup>71</sup> This stood in stark contrast with the elite's view of Russia as Ukraine's "biggest threat" (48% against 27% that saw it as the "main ally").<sup>72</sup>

The direction that the Ukrainian elite gave to domestic and foreign politics in 1991–1999 was determined by the perceived weight of its main counter-agent, be it the Moscow center, opposition at home, new Russia, or the West. In the majority of

TABLE 4  
Foreign Policy Orientations of the Ukrainian Population

|                                                         | 1994 (%) | 1995 (%) | 1996 (%) | 1997 (%) | 1998 (%) |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS); renewed union | 40.5     | 38.9     | 26       | 23       | 22.8     |
| Russia; Russian–Belarussian Union                       | 17.6     | 14.8     | 15       | 22       | 22.7     |
| The Baltic–Black Sea alliance                           | 1.7      | 0.8      | 2        | –        | –        |
| Pro-Western                                             | 13.4     | 13.9     | 7        | 15       | 15.3     |
| Self-reliance; non-allied                               | 13.3     | 14.4     | 8        | 25       | 28.7     |
| Don't know, undecided, other                            | 13.5     | 17.2     | 42       | 15       | 10.5     |

Sources: *Politychnyi portret Ukrainy*, Nos 15, 1996; 18, 1997. The 1998 data are courtesy of Dr. Irina Bekeshkina of the Institute of Sociology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.<sup>73</sup>

cases, the response given to the challenge was reactive, rather than proactive. Nationalism was used on an *ad hoc* basis, once to deter Russian separatists in the Crimea, another time to justify Ukraine's turn to the West for protection and military tutelage, and yet another time to explain Ukraine's unwillingness to take part in Russian-dominated structures of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Nationalist rhetoric lessened when real politics demanded a more accommodating approach. Thus, agreements on the Black Sea Fleet were finalized when the burden of the Ukrainian debt to Russia became intolerable. At about the same time, Ukraine confirmed its acceptance of the so-called "zero option" with regard to the external debts and assets of the former Soviet Union, leaving Russia alone to deal with the problem. In a similar vein, Ukraine's pro-Western stance fluctuated, depending on the intensity and direction of Western criticism variously caused by the slow pace of reform, the human rights situation, and the like. This flexibility is telling, and may prove to be the best strategy for a relatively disadvantaged and geopolitically "squeezed" country. Whether or not it will be as effective in managing Ukraine's affairs in a globalized, dynamic environment of the twenty-first century remains an open question.

## Conclusion

Post-communist nationalism is typologically different from its predecessors. It is not paving a road to modernity. It is not being called upon to consolidate a socially divided society, or to create a new, postcolonial identity for the empire's former subjects. For the most part, the newly democratized states have moved beyond these tasks. This nationalism was born in the fight for resources that had transformed amorphous movements for democratization and decentralization into a struggle for full national independence, as only full independence gave the right to choose developmental paths and international alliances freely. Pro-independence forces in the former Soviet Union often protected regionally based channels of redistribution that were endangered by central government policies, while reorientation from the impoverished East to the affluent West was the main problem for East Central Europe.

Post-communist nationalism has often invoked ethnicity and ethno-political allegiances, but its deeper roots lie elsewhere, and its goals are usually defined in a complex juxtaposition of politics, economy, and international relations. In each of these arenas, nationalism tends to be used as a resource by entrepreneurs of political and social movements. A combination of domestic and international factors determined whether post-communist states and societies adopted defensive, selective, or emulated strategies of nationalist mobilization. The concrete form that the relationship to the West takes can make post-communist nation builders adopt more or less parochial and authoritarian, or more or less inclusive and democratic strategies of mobilization. In the case of Russia, a sense of "strategic encirclement" has bred a

defensive and quasi-imperialist nationalism. In Ukraine, a strategy of selective nationalism has been used to secure the most benefits from the country's important geopolitical position between Russia and the West. In both cases, official nationalism promulgated by the elite has been met with a less than overwhelming response on the part of the general public. However, the continuing hardships of post-communist transition and growing feelings of deprivation may still be used to provoke such a response if more radically nationalist politicians seize power in either country.

## NOTES

- \* The author gratefully acknowledges the support of the United States Institute of Peace. The article is based on the text of a paper presented at the 4th Annual Convention of the Association for the Study of Nationalities (ASN), Columbia University, New York, 15–17 April 1999.
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  2. Lee Walker, "Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in the Post-Soviet Transition," in L. Drobizheva *et al.*, eds, *Ethnic Conflict in the Post-Soviet World: Case Studies and Analysis* (Armonk, NY: Sharpe, 1996), p. 8.
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  4. Karen Henderson and Neil Robinson, *Post-communist Politics: An Introduction* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1997), p. 165.
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  10. Stephen E. Hanson and Jeffrey S. Kopstein, "The Weimar/Russia Comparison," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1997, pp. 252–283; Stephen Shenfield, "The Weimar/Russia Comparison: Reflections on Hanson and Kopstein," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 4, 1998, pp. 355–368. Cf. "Is This Weimar Russia?" *U.S. News & World Report*, Vol. 125, No. 19, 1998, p. 48.
  11. Jeff Chinn and Robert Kaiser, *Russians as the New Minority: Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Soviet Successor States* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), p. 28.
  12. Anna Triandafyllidou, "National Identity and the 'Other,'" *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 4, 1998, pp. 593–594.
  13. Graham Smith *et al.*, *Nation-Building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands: The Politics of National Identities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 69.

14. However, note a distinct anti-American strand in the ideology of most radically nationalist and Western-based UNA/UNSO (Ukrainian National Assembly/Ukrainian People's Self Defence), which even arrived at its own model of East Slavic Empire, though ruled from Kiev, not Moscow. The UNSO paramilitaries fought on the Russian (Slavic) side in the Trans-Dniester conflict with Moldova, and against Russians and pro-Russian separatists in Georgia and Chechnya. More on Ukraine's ultra-nationalists can be found in Taras Kuzio, "Radical Nationalist Parties and Movements in Contemporary Ukraine Before and After Independence: The Right and Its Politics, 1989–1994," *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 1997, pp. 211–242. The group's peculiar anti-establishment revolutionism and the accompanying hodgepodge of philosophy are well articulated by its leader: Dmytro Korchyyn's'kyi, *Viina v Natovpi: Nash Dosvid Politychnoho Nasyl'stva* (Kiev: RAF, 1997).
15. Paul A. Goble, "Regions, Republics, and Russian Reform: Center–Periphery Relations in the Russian Federation," in John W. Blaney, ed., *The Successor States to the USSR* (Washington: Congressional Quarterly, 1995), p. 163.
16. A more sanguine assessment of the pre-revolutionary civil society in Russia can be found in Edith W. Clowes, Samuel D. Kassow and James L. West, eds, *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Nicolai N. Petro, *The Rebirth of Russian Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995); David Wartenweiler, *Civil Society and Academic Debate in Russia, 1905–1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
17. Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
18. Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).
19. Robert J. Kaiser, *The Geography of Nationalism in Russia and the USSR* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 381.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 382.
21. John Dunlop, "Russia: Confronting a Loss of Empire," in Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras, eds, *Nation and Politics in the Soviet Successor States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 45.
22. Graham Smith, *The Post-Soviet States. Mapping the Politics of Transition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 34, 47.
23. Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism. The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536–1966* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975). A student of European regional nationalism has recently observed that seeing the creation of the UK "merely as the establishment of Greater England, or as a colonial venture" betrays the argument premised on "a strong teleological element ... and a tendency to anachronism in projecting national identities back into the pre-national era" (Michael Keating, "Britain," in Don MacIver, ed., *The Politics of Multinational States* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p. 216).
24. Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 125.
25. Victor Zaslavsky, "Success and Collapse: Traditional Soviet Nationality Policy," in Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras, *Nation and Politics in the Soviet Successor States*, pp. 33–34, 40.
26. Gregory Guroff and Alexander Guroff, "The Paradox of Russian National Identity," in Roman Szporluk, ed., *National Identity and Ethnicity in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), p. 86.
27. Theodore H. Friedgut, "Nations of the USSR: from Mobilized Participation to Autonomous Diversity," in Alexander J. Motyl, ed., *The Post-Soviet Nations: Perspectives on the Demise of the USSR* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p. 219.

28. John Dunlop, *The New Russian Nationalism* (New York: Praeger, 1985); *idem*, "Russia: Confronting a Loss of Empire."
29. Iver B. Neumann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe; A Study in Identity and International Relations* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 200.
30. Alex Pravda, "The Politics of Foreign Policy," in Stephen White, Alex Pravda and Zvi Gitelman, eds, *Developments in Russian and Post-Soviet Politics*, 3rd edn (London: Macmillan, 1994), p. 223.
31. *Russia: A Country Study* (Washington: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1998), p. xlvi.
32. Gennadii Ziuganov, *Derzhava* (Moscow: Informpechat', 1994), p. 103.
33. Kseniia Mialo, "Mezhdu zapadom i vostokom." *Moskva*, No. 11, 1996, pp. 107–131; No. 12, 1996, pp. 83–118.
34. G. A. Ziuganov, *My Russia*, ed. Vadim Medish (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), p. 17.
35. The author's calculations, based on published results of the elections.
36. Irina Kobrinskaia, "The Domestic Factors of Foreign Policy in Post-Communist Russia," in Lilia Shevtsova, ed., *Rossiiia politicheskaiia* (Moscow: Carnegie Center, 1998), p. 317.
37. See more on commonalities between original and post-*perestroika* Eurasianism in Dmitry V. Shlapentokh, "Eurasianism: Past and Present," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 1997, pp. 129–151.
38. See S. G. Kara-Murza, *Intelligentsiia na pepelishche Rossii* (Moscow: Bylina, 1997); *idem*, *Opiat' voprosy vozhdiam* (Kiev: Oriiany, 1998).
39. Sergei Kortunov, "Imperskoe i natsional'noe v rossiiskom soznanii," *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn*, No. 5, 1998, p. 21.
40. See Gennadii Seleznev's address in *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'*, No. 4, 1997, pp. 3–13.
41. Ilya Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy: Nationalism and Leadership in Poland, Russia and Ukraine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 269.
42. Yevgenii M. Primakov, "Rossiia v mirovoi politike," *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'*, No. 5, 1998, p. 8.
43. Aleksei Podberezkin, "Russkii put': sdelai shag! (Nekotorye voprosy russkogo kommunizma)," *Obozrevatel'*, No. 3, 1998, p. 167.
44. Unity, 72 seats; Communist Party of Russia, 113 seats; moderately nationalistic Fatherland – All Russia, 66 seats; Yabloko, 21 seats; Zhirinovskiy Bloc, 17 seats. Essentially pro-governmental Union of Right-Wing Forces and Our Home Is Russia (both officially patriotic), 29 and 7 seats, respectively. RFE/RL online, "Final Results of Duma Elections Announced," 10 January 2000 (<http://www.rferl.org/elections/russia99results/index.html>).
45. V. G. Gel'bras, "National Identification in Russia and China," *Polis*, No.1, 1997, pp. 129–144.
46. V. Dubnov, "The Need to Understand New Realities," *New Times* (Moscow), July 1997, pp. 12–13.
47. M. Wines, "Hostility to U.S. Is Now Popular in Moscow," *New York Times*, 12 April 1999.
48. Results of a nationwide poll, as reported by VTsIOM (<http://www.wciom.ru/HOME R.HTM>).
49. *Jamestown Foundation Monitor*, 12 October 1999; *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 9 October 1999.
50. Erik Eckholm, "A Bristling Yeltsin Reminds Clinton of Russia's A-Arms," *New York Times*, 10 December 1999.
51. As former U.S. National Security Adviser General Brent Scowcroft opined, "we are behaving toward them in a way that accentuates their sense of humiliation that they have as a result of the end of the Cold War. And we seem to ignore them, unless we need them for some particular thing. I think it is a very bad way to go. And I think it is giving rise to a strong nationalistic sentiment that is both anti-US and anti-Western." Andre de Nesnera, "Russia–NATO," *Voice of America*, 2 December 1999.

52. Alexander J. Motyl, "Making Sense of Ukraine," *Harriman Review*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1997, p. 6.
53. Joseph Stalin, a recognized Bolshevik authority on the "national question," was particularly adept at the instrumental use of nationalism. An adamant centralizer, he nevertheless went along with Lenin's idea of federalization and indigenization of the cadres, the policy that continued until the early 1930s. Once indigenization bore its fruit, it was reversed to halt the possibility of secessionism. A similar U-turn occurred when the regime's attempt to stamp out Russian national feeling, labeled as "great-power chauvinism in the 1920–1930s," was folded back to draw upon the sources of popular patriotism during World War II. Cf. Robert Conquest, ed., *Soviet Nationalities Policy in Practice* (New York: Praeger, 1967); Gerhard Simon, *Nationalism and Policy toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991); Jeremy Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917–23* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999).
54. Paul A. Goble, "Gorbachev and the Soviet Nationality Problem," in Maurice Friedberg and Heyward Isham, eds, *Soviet Society under Gorbachev* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1987), pp. 95–96.
55. David R. Marples, *Ukraine under Perestroika: Ecology, Economics and the Workers' Revolt* (London: Macmillan, 1991); Jane I. Dawson, *Eco-nationalism: Anti-nuclear Activism and National Identity in Russia, Lithuania, and Ukraine* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996).
56. *Health Consequences of the Chernobyl Accident* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 1995).
57. Dominique Arel, "Language Politics in Independent Ukraine: Towards One or Two State Languages?" *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 23, No. 3, 1995, pp. 597–622.
58. More on that in Alexander J. Motyl, *Dilemmas of Independence: Ukraine after Totalitarianism* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993).
59. Cf. Taras Kuzio and Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine: Perestroika to Independence* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1994); Alexander J. Motyl, *Dilemmas of Independence*; Roman Szporluk, ed., *National Identity and Ethnicity in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, pp. 3–17; Andrew Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990s: A Minority Faith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
60. Personal interview with members of the Kharkiv branch of the Inter-Regional Deputies Group, October 1991. Cf. Yu. N. Pakhomov and Ye. I. Golovakha, *Politycheskaia kul'tura naseleniia Ukrainy* (Kiev: Politychna Dumka, 1993), p. 100.
61. Volodymyr Lytvyn, *Politychna arena Ukrainy; Dijovi osoby ta vykonavtsi* (Kiev: Abrys, 1994), p. 280; Serhii Bilokin', "Ostannii shans? Z istorychnoho dosvidu derzhavotvorennia," *Literaturna Ukraina*, 4 February 1993.
62. A textbook observes that "indeed, there was some relationship between nationalism and caution over economic reform because economic gradualism meant resisting pressure to reform from Russia" (Henderson and Robinson, *Post-communist Politics*, p. 201). A "mimicry of reform" might be a better choice of words than "economic gradualism," at least for the period before the arrival of the new Ukrainian currency in 1996.
63. See more on corruption in Russia and Ukraine in Rozalina V. Ryvkina, "Social Roots of the Criminalization of Russian Society," *Russian Social Science Review*, Vol. 39, No. 4, 1998, pp. 28–45; Valentyn Yakushyk, Charlotte Watson, James E. Mace and Kostyantyn Maleyev, "Corruption as Social Phenomenon," *Politychna dumka*, No. 4, 1994, pp. 126–132; John Thornhill and Charles Clover, "The Robbery of Nations," *Financial Times*, 21 August 1999; "Kuchma Can No Longer Back out of the War on Corruption," *Kyiv Post*, 24 June 1999.
64. It would be naive to represent these subsidies to Ukraine as wholly free from material interest on the part of the sponsor. In Russian–Ukrainian relations, the practice of selling subsidized

- oil at world market prices with subsequent sharing of profits between suppliers in Moscow and resellers in Kiev is well established. See Sherman W. Garnett, *Keystone in the Arch*, pp. 70–71.
65. William L. Miller, Stephen White and Paul Heywood, *Values and Political Change in Post communist Europe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan; New York: St Martin's Press, 1998), p. 155.
  66. Roman Szporluk, ed., *National Identity and Ethnicity in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, p. 7.
  67. More on that in Trevor Taylor, *European Security and the Former Soviet Union: Dangers, Opportunities and Gambles* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1994); Taras Kuzio, *Ukrainian Security Policy* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995); Tor Bukkvoll, *Ukraine and European Security* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1997); Sherman W. Garnett, *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the Emerging Security Environment of Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1997); Nadia Schadlow, "The Denuclearization of Ukraine: Consolidating Ukrainian Security," in Lubomyr A. Hajda, ed., *Ukraine in the World* (Cambridge,: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 271–287.
  68. Address by President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine at the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council Summit, Washington, 25 April 1999 (<http://www.ukremb.com/presrel0426KUCH.htm>).
  69. *Politychnyi portret Ukrainy*, No. 18, 1997.
  70. Electoral statistics for 1991–1994 can be found in Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990s*. The results of the 1998 parliamentary elections were reported by the RFE/RL Newslines, 1 April 1998. See the analysis in the *Ukrainian Weekly*, Vol. 66, No. 52, 1998.
  71. *Politychnyi portret Ukrainy*, No. 21, 1998. The sample of 1200 represented the adult population of Ukraine according to such indicators as sex, age, education, ethnicity, rural/urban division, and region.
  72. The 1997 poll involved 420 members of the Ukrainian political, economic, media, business and other elites. Cited in Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 118.
  73. The 1994–98 representative nation-wide polls were conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, the Democratic Initiatives research center, and the SOCIS-Gallup (Ukraine),  $N$  between 1200 and 1810,  $p < 0.05$ .