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Interdependence and Sovereignty in the Ukrainian-Russian Relationship

PAUL D'ANIERI

Three years after Ukraine declared its independence, its future status remains uncertain. While complete reabsorption into Russia seems unlikely, a renewed subordination does not. Indeed, reintegration of Ukraine into Russia is advocated by many Russian leaders and even some Ukrainians. The centrifugal forces unleashed in 1991 have weakened, and gravity seems to be bringing Russia's former satellites closer and closer to the 'center'.

Ukraine is caught between two forces: the desire for political independence and the desire for economic prosperity. Many believe that the only hope for Ukraine to reform its economy and prosper lies in closer ties with Russia. Such ties, it is feared, would come at the cost of Ukraine's political independence. This dilemma between closer economic ties and the desire for independence is the fundamental question in the international politics of the former Soviet Union, and nowhere is it more important than between Russia and Ukraine. The future of Russian-Ukrainian relations will depend largely on how Ukraine attempts to resolve this dilemma. That is the fundamental question addressed in this article: how is Ukraine pursuing an economically beneficial relationship with a state from whom it perceives a significant security threat?

The relationship between trade and power is one of the oldest issues in both the study and practice of international politics, but both horns of this dilemma are particularly sharp for Ukraine. Economically, Ukraine is in a tailspin, with GDP undergoing massive decline, and social unrest increasing as a result. It is difficult to quantify how much of this tailspin is due to the breakup of the Soviet Union (or how much improvement would result from greater integration with Russia) but there is no doubt that the collapsed Soviet Union left behind not only a devastated Ukrainian economy, but one largely dependent on Russia.

The power side of the dilemma is perhaps even more acute.¹ While most studies of economic interdependence, especially those concerned with the advanced western economies, treat the major threat to 'security' as the threat to domestic economic security (i.e. prosperity), the threat to Ukraine is much greater. For Ukraine in its dealings with Russia, the basic

independence of the state is endangered on several fronts. First, Ukraine's territorial integrity is threatened by secessionist movements in Eastern and Southern Ukraine, which are directly linked to the question of economic relations with Russia. Second, pressure to join the CIS threatens reduced sovereignty, which, given the history of Ukrainian-Russian relations, is frightening to many in Ukraine.² Finally, bilateral cooperation, if it follows the form of deals worked out between Russia and other successor states, threatens Ukraine's right to administer its own economy.

FOUR QUESTIONS

In reconciling the contradictory pulls of prosperity and autonomy, Ukraine must answer four questions that are common to debates about interdependence, both in theory and in practice.

First, Ukraine must decide whether it will attempt to resist Russian power, that is to 'balance', or to come to an accommodation, to 'bandwagon'.³ Many theorists of international politics argue that the economic leadership of a hegemon is beneficial to hegemon and small state alike because it enables the resolution of collective action problems, such as tariff wars, which otherwise decrease economic efficiency for all.⁴ Such hegemony, however, jeopardizes Ukrainian independence. Ukraine must decide whether the traditional rule of opposing superior power or the newer view of the benevolence of economic hegemony is more applicable to its situation.

Second, Ukraine must answer a fundamental question in debates about trade and interdependence: to what extent does the pursuit of economic efficiency through interdependence endanger political autonomy? It must then decide what degree of dependence it is willing to endure for a given increase in economic efficiency. Even the leading theorist of free trade, Adam Smith, cautioned that 'defense is of much more importance than opulence',⁵ but some have argued that interdependence in fact increases security, while others have argued that a weaker state should avoid interaction with stronger states altogether.

Third, Ukraine faces a somewhat paradoxical threat between sovereignty and autonomy, where autonomy is the ability to do what one wants, and sovereignty is simply the ability to make one's own decisions (even if one can't get what one wants).⁶ Because it focuses so much on its sovereignty, Ukraine has been unwilling to delegate authority to any CIS body. While such a policy preserves legal sovereignty, it may also mean that Ukraine must face Russia alone, rather than with ten other states to help counter Russia's power. Moreover, to the extent that isolation from Russia's economy injures Ukraine's economy, Ukraine's susceptibility to Russian

pressure may actually increase. As the issue of oil demonstrates most clearly, this unwillingness to cede sovereignty paradoxically leaves Ukraine even more subject to Russian pressure, because without rules and institutions, power is the ultimate arbiter of disputes.

Fourth, Ukraine must resolve for itself a debate about international institutions: Do international institutions serve to constrain the most powerful states by 'tying them down', as many liberal theorists (and supporters of the EU) have argued, or are international institutions the instruments through which powerful states control the weak, as realist and Marxist theories argue? Will the CIS constrain Russian power by tying it down with institutional procedures and dilute it by giving it only one vote out of twelve, or will it empower Russia by taking sovereignty from other states and giving it to an institution which Russia will dominate simply by virtue of its size?

This article examines three issues in Ukrainian-Russian relations to see how the Ukrainian leadership has dealt with these dilemmas in the first two and a half years of independence. Policy toward the CIS is significant both as a broad barometer of Ukrainian views toward cooperation and as an indicator of Ukrainian hesitation to surrender any decision-making authority for the sake of increased efficiency. This issue of surrendering decision-making authority is examined more closely by examining policy toward trade and monetary cooperation, where the most significant issue has been the collapse of the ruble zone and its effects on interrepublic trade. The most immediately pressing issue for Ukraine, and one where Russian pressure has been greatest, is that of energy imports from Russia, on which Ukraine is greatly dependent. Ukraine's energy problems demonstrate most clearly what is to be lost domestically by a lack of cooperation, as well as the role played by power in the relationship.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

The Commonwealth of Independent States is perhaps most emblematic of the different views of Russia and Ukraine concerning their relationship. Ukraine viewed the CIS from the beginning as a means of dismantling the Soviet Union in an orderly fashion, and as time has passed has become the least involved of the Commonwealth's twelve members. Russia, in contrast, has seen the CIS as a means of continuing the beneficial ties of the Soviet Union even as the republics became independent, and its pressure on other states to make the CIS a viable and active institution has increased over time.

The relationship between the republics of the Soviet Union was an issue even before the coup attempt of August 1991 that catalyzed the collapse of

the Union; indeed the coup attempt was prompted by the prospect of a new union treaty greatly weakening the center. While most republics, including Ukraine, used the occasion of the coup attempt to declare their independence, many continued through the fall of 1991 to envision some type of political union between the new states, and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev continued his efforts to arrive at a new Union Treaty.

Only three weeks after the coup attempt, RSFSR Defense Committee Deputy Chairman Vladimir Lopatin advocated a new defense organization similar to NATO, and Soviet Defense Minister Evgenii Shaposhnikov said that republic leaders agreed that military forces should remain unified. Moreover, plans for an economic union, modeled on the European Community's original 1957 Treaty of Rome, were advanced.⁷

Already, however, Ukrainian leaders had other ideas, and Defense Minister Konstantin Morozov announced that Ukraine desired its own army, stating: 'We reject the idea of a unified military command. Our approach will be step-by-step towards an independent Ukrainian army'.⁸ And while ten other republics agreed on the draft Economic Union Treaty, the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada (parliament) immediately denounced it. Dmytro Pavlychko, chair of the Rada's Committee on Foreign Relations stated that Ukrainian independence must have 'top priority over all other issues'.⁹ This fundamental difference in Russian and Ukrainian views has characterized disputes over the CIS since even before its inception.

The treaty creating the Commonwealth of Independent States in December 1991 had two significant features.¹⁰ First, it dissolved in international legal terms the Soviet Union, accomplishing a goal sought by Boris Yeltsin as much as by Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk. Yeltsin was able to use this provision to force Gorbachev from office a few weeks later. Second, it stated the intention to coordinate policy on the whole range of government activities, from ecology to foreign policy.¹¹ The significance of these provisions was not their breadth, but the 'intentional' nature of them. Nothing concrete was agreed upon, and as the first phase of the CIS, the creation, was completed, the stage for the second phase was set: the states had destroyed the Soviet Union but reached no real agreement on what to do next.

The relationship between the CIS, its predecessor the USSR, and its largest state, Russia, was unclear, particularly in the military realm. When the CIS was created, the Soviet Defense Ministry was preserved and simply renamed the CIS military command, contributing to the perception that the CIS was somehow the continuation of the Soviet Union. Because this military command was now subject only to the CIS Council of Heads of State, which rarely agreed on anything, the actual situation in 1992 was that nobody was sure who controlled the military. Moreover, because Russia

waited some time to create its own Defense Ministry, it was not clear to what extent the CIS was truly independent of Moscow. Thus, the CIS military command was suspected both for being an attempt to re-establish the Soviet Union and for being an attempt by Russia to control others.¹²

The lack of agreement on the role of the CIS has continued to the present day, and has caused the institution itself to be moribund. Russia has been able to convince the more recalcitrant states (Georgia and Moldova) to join the organization, but there remains no significant institutionalization, due primarily to Ukraine's unwillingness to tolerate any centralized decision-making. Ukraine has remained opposed even to signing a CIS Charter which would lay out the basic foundations of the organization, on the grounds that such a charter would recreate central structures.¹³

This is not to say Ukraine has been unwilling to cooperate. Numerous agreements have been reached between Ukraine and the other former Soviet republics. However, Ukraine has been unwilling to integrate, or to create international institutions aimed at lowering the transaction costs of ad-hoc cooperation. Moreover, Ukraine's efforts have focused on bilateral rather than multilateral cooperation, again because less institutionalization is required for such cooperation.¹⁴ Overall, then, Ukraine's policy has continued to be driven by the sentiments its leaders expressed even before the formation of the CIS: no reduction of sovereignty whatever will be tolerated in the pursuit of mutually beneficial cooperation.

Within this broad continuity, both Russia's and Ukraine's positions on the CIS changed significantly in 1993.¹⁵ That spring, after almost 18 months of promoting the CIS, Russia downgraded the military importance of the organization. This was shown most clearly in a changed Russian policy towards CIS defense structures. From the beginning, Russia had advocated maintaining a strong joint military, even as other republics formed their own armies. In May 1993, however, Russia rejected two draft agreements proposed by the CIS joint command to increase integration and form some of the joint forces that Russia previously advocated. In particular, Russia opposed creating standing CIS forces during peacetime, a significant reversal from its original goal of an 'Eastern NATO'.

There appeared to be two reasons for the change. First, it seems that Russia may have simply given up on the hope of joint forces and decided to focus its efforts on strengthening its own military. Second, as pointed out by the Russian representative at the talks, Col. Gen. Boris Gromov, Russia would have to foot most of the bill for such joint forces, and was hesitant to do so at a time when money was short and the idea of joint forces was dead anyhow.¹⁶

Russia's change in policy on CIS armed forces was confirmed in June when Evgenii Shaposhnikov, Commander-in-Chief of the CIS armed

forces, was transferred by Yeltsin to the position of Secretary of the Russian Security Council, presumably because there was little to do at the CIS command.¹⁷ A few days later, the CIS Joint Military Command was suddenly abolished.¹⁸

Meanwhile, important changes were taking place in Ukraine's position toward Russia and the CIS. Until mid-1993, nationalists basically controlled policy on these issues, and steadfastly refused to deal with the CIS or to undertake significant cooperation with Russia. Moreover, opposition to the CIS Charter commanded the support of forces all across the Ukrainian political spectrum.¹⁹ As the Ukrainian economy crashed in 1993, however, many Ukrainians, particularly in the East, began to call for closer ties with Russia, the perception being that the economic collapse was due in large part to the severing of ties with Russia following independence. 'Whereas the main pressure on . . . Kravchuk had formerly come from nationalists demanding the withdrawal of Ukraine from the CIS, he now found himself under equally strong pressure from conservative deputies and the industrial lobby . . . who wanted Ukraine to reestablish economic links with the other CIS states and even to sign the CIS charter.'²⁰

Ukraine became more willing to interact with the CIS, but the bottom line remained that no abridgement of Ukrainian sovereignty would be permitted. Thus, when the Economic Union of the CIS was negotiated in September 1993, Ukraine insisted on creating a special 'associate membership' for itself. According to details worked out at the Moscow CIS summit in April 1994, Ukraine will take part only in the organs it finds useful, and will be bound only by agreements it signs, not by decisions made by CIS organs that are binding on full members. 'The decisions of the Economic Union in which Ukraine does not take part will have for Ukraine the character of recommendation.'²¹

Despite the pressure for closer relations with Russia among eastern Ukrainians, and despite the prominent role this goal played in the campaign rhetoric of the new president, Leonid Kuchma, Ukraine has maintained its unwillingness to compromise on the sovereignty issue.²² Kuchma has adopted a much less friendly line toward the CIS than he showed during the campaign, stating his opposition to the creation of centralized organs, and refusing in September 1994 to play a full role in the new CIS Interstate Economic Committee, or to participate in a new payments union. Ukraine still objected to any institutions that would 'limit our sovereignty'.²³

Ukrainian leaders underestimated the tradeoff between economic autonomy and prosperity and were shocked at the cost of severing economic ties with Russia. Despite a reconsideration of policy and a vigorous debate within Ukraine, however, the bottom line has remained: Ukraine will seek economic cooperation with Russia, but only to the extent that supra-national

institutions are not required. For this reason, Russia and Ukraine continue to be at odds over the proper role of the CIS.

Overall, Ukraine has taken an extreme position, at least in the current international context, in favor of preserving sovereignty at the expense of the economic efficiency which could be pursued through integration. The main reason is clear: after a long struggle for independence, Ukraine is very jealous of its sovereignty, and fears that any initial surrender of sovereignty could open the door to renewed dominance by Moscow.

TRADE AND MONETARY COOPERATION

Ukrainian policy towards trade and monetary cooperation has in large part mirrored its policy towards the CIS: it has rejected any efforts to establish central coordinating mechanisms for cooperation. Even after the damaging effects of disrupting ties with Russia became clear, Ukraine has remained extremely suspicious of institutionalized cooperation with Russia, preferring ad hoc measures which provide no diminution of sovereignty, but also less economic efficiency than integration might.

Prior to independence many economists both within and outside Ukraine asserted that under Soviet central planning wealth was systematically transferred from Ukraine to Russia.²⁴ The logical policy was to sever those ties which were deemed exploitative, a policy which had the added benefit of shoring up the meager nationalist credentials of Leonid Kravchuk and his supporters. This policy was supported moreover by fears that Russia would use any interdependence to reassert its political dominance and by the belief that Ukraine should isolate itself from impending turmoil in Russia. Despite some dissent from the pro-reform 'New Ukraine' group of politicians who maintained the necessity of continued trade ties with Russia, 'the story of Ukrainian economic strategy since 1991 is largely a chronicle of the struggle of the exponents of the [nationalist] school of thought against recalcitrant economic realities'.²⁵

The effort to establish an independent Ukrainian economy has created problems in coordinating economic policies with Russia. The high level of interdependence inherited from the Soviet era means that even as the former Soviet republics try to build separate economies, their policies have large impacts on their neighbors. Coordination was necessary to avoid chaos, but difficult to achieve in practice, not simply because countries such as Ukraine were suspicious of the whole idea of coordination, but because the states themselves had very different plans and priorities. When Ukraine attempted to insure adequate domestic food supplies by restricting food exports in the fall of 1991, the price of meat in Russia jumped to ten times the level being paid by Ukrainian consumers.²⁶

While Russia was advocating an economic union in late 1991, it was also planning to adopt an economic reform package, which Ukraine and other states were not ready to do. So when Russia decided to free many prices in early 1992, two problems were created for Ukraine. First, higher prices in Russia created a flight of goods from Ukraine to Russia, and corresponding shortages and price rises in Ukraine. Second, the higher prices in Ukraine created a shortage of currency.²⁷

Ukraine responded primarily by increasing export controls, which were later raised by Russia as well.²⁸ In March 1992, the Verkhovna Rada adopted a measure on 'Fundamentals of National Economic Policy'. The policy provided for little domestic reform and focused instead on establishing economic independence from Russia, including a plan for a separate currency and a rapid departure from the ruble zone, barriers on imports from Russia, and a refocus of exports towards western markets.²⁹ These trade restrictions between highly integrated economies were catastrophic for Ukraine's economy, especially in eastern Ukraine.

Two problems provided the immediate impetus for the introduction of a separate currency. First, Russia controlled the only presses capable of producing ruble notes, and was unwilling or unable to emit sufficient currency to preserve liquidity as the prices of goods rose. There simply was not enough currency to go around, and several republics, including Ukraine, felt compelled to issue 'coupons' – supplementary currencies – long before they were ready to actually create individual currencies (Ukraine began issuing coupons in January 1992). Second, as long as 15 republics were using one currency, there was a great incentive for each republic to issue credits to failing industries. Doing so was inflationary, but the inflation caused by one state's credit emissions would be spread among all 15 republics. There was a classic collective action problem regarding credit emission and inflation. Thus the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development advised in February 1993 that the former Soviet states not attempt to maintain the ruble zone.³⁰ But having 15 separate currencies created its own problems, especially since all were being ravaged by inflation.³¹ With no convertibility of currencies, inter-republic trade was limited either to barter or hard currency transactions, which created yet another jolt to the economies.

It appeared that a breakthrough on these problems was reached at the CIS summit at Tashkent in May 1992, where an agreement on common fiscal, monetary, and credit policies was reached. Opposition to a weighted voted scheme, which would have left Russia in a dominant position, was met with a Russian concession to agree to consensus decision-making. All twelve republics, however, continued with short-term credit and currency policies that, while perceived as necessary, imposed disruption and inflation

on their neighbors and prevented implementation of the agreement.³²

Another attempt at economic cooperation was made at the Moscow CIS summit in May 1993. Still, however, Ukraine hesitated, with Kravchuk opposing using the term 'Economic Union' to describe the goal of the process.³³ Russian Deputy Premier Alexandr Shokin stated that Russia was attempting to get other republics to understand that some surrender of sovereignty was necessary to counter economic disruption,³⁴ and it appears that Kravchuk agreed. The crucial difference is that the Russian government saw such a surrender of sovereignty as the necessary (and therefore acceptable) price for economic stabilization, while for Ukraine that price was still too high.

As the Ukrainian economy crashed in the middle of 1993, domestic opposition to Kravchuk's policy of isolation increased. Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma signed an agreement on economic union with Russia and Belarus in July 1993, but was attacked for doing so, and while the CIS economic union progressed, Ukraine's part in it diminished. Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada Ivan Plyushch found the agreement 'absolutely unacceptable', viewing it as 'an attempt to restore not only a single economic space, but also a single state administration'.³⁵ Again the crucial issue was sovereignty: Ukraine refused to be bound by any measure to which it did not explicitly agree. Any coordination proceeded with Ukraine retaining an effective veto power, or simply not participating in programs with which it had problems. The Economic Union represented progress in the acceptance of interdependence, but also emphasized the barriers to significant cooperation or integration.

From summer 1993 to the present time, the issue of reestablishing ties between the Russian and Ukrainian economies has topped the political agenda in Ukraine, with those who favored increased ties, led by Kuchma, having increasing success against the nationalist/isolationist position. Kravchuk also seemed more amenable to the notion of economic union, stating that he might sign the agreement and then let the Verkhovna Rada decide whether to ratify it. Kravchuk seemed to be motivated by a newly-found realism, stating ominously that 'those who have quarreled with Russia have lost'.³⁶

The shortage of energy supplies through the winter of 1993-94 and the steady decline of the economy during that period increased pressure for something to be done, and Ukrainians increasingly viewed the breakup of the Soviet Union as at least in part responsible for their troubles. The relationship with Russia was the primary issue in the Ukrainian presidential election in June and July 1994. Kuchma, with his support based in the East, ran advocating an economic union with Russia, while Kravchuk moved further to the western/nationalist position which viewed economic union as

a sellout of Ukrainian sovereignty. Kuchma's victory reflects not only a crucial shift in political power away from nationalists and the west and towards eastern Ukraine, but a fundamental reassessment of Ukraine's policy of isolating itself from the Russian economy.

However, the shift should not be overestimated. Shortly after his election, Kuchma stated clearly that he would not involve Ukraine in any new central structure. While such comments are perhaps aimed at placating Ukrainian nationalists, those forces will continue to need placating. Moreover, even Kuchma and others advocating closer ties with Russia have remained fearful of, and opposed to, re-establishing central authority. The shift toward Russia that was expected to follow Kuchma's election has not materialized. Instead, Ukraine has finally begun the economic reform process, which will strengthen the economy independently.

It is important to separate two broad issues involved in trade and currency cooperation between Ukraine and Russia. The first issue is a practical one: the level of interdependence between the two economies. Interdependence was very high under the Soviet system, and the Ukrainian government reduced this interdependence intentionally following Ukraine's declaration of independence. This policy has now come into question, as the price of economic independence – that is, increased autarky – has proven high. It is therefore likely that Ukraine will tolerate and even seek a much higher level of interdependence with Russia in the coming months and years, as it tries to restore some of the economic efficiency that accompanied interdependence.

On the second issue of economic sovereignty, however, the nationalist position seems to be holding. Even many of the eastern ex-communists who support closer ties with Russia are wary of establishing any organs to govern those ties; many 'national communists' are equally ardent in their support for re-establishing ties with Russia and their opposition to creating an 'economic union' with central decision-making. On this second issue, Ukrainian opinion is still relatively unified, and, consistent with Ukrainian policy towards the CIS, is still jealous of Ukrainian sovereignty and suspicious of Russian intentions. Ukraine has remained highly protective of its sovereignty, even as the economic costs of that policy have become obvious, and even as it has become more realistic about accepting interdependence with Russia. This suggests that sovereignty is Ukraine's first priority in considering international cooperation and that the focus on sovereignty is a fundamental rather than a transitory phenomenon.

ENERGY POLITICS IN UKRAINIAN-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

Petroleum has played a major role in international politics since it became

the fuel of modern industry a century ago, and no issue is more immediately pressing for Ukraine than access to the energy sources on which the economy relies. The problem has been acute since independence, and shows no signs of improving. Ukraine's economy is highly vulnerable to energy shortages, because much of the economy is energy intensive, and because most of Ukraine's energy is imported.³⁷ Energy therefore highlights the perceived dangers of a large degree of economic dependence on Russia, and energy dependence has in fact been used by Russia to attempt to persuade Ukraine to give way on a whole range of issues. In energy, therefore, Ukrainian fears about dependence on Russia have already been realized.

By early 1993, energy dependence became a political issue, as Russia linked the continuation of fuel deliveries to Ukraine to Ukrainian concessions on the ongoing issue of repaying the debts of the old Soviet Union.³⁸ Shortly thereafter, the problem of non-payment became more acute, and Russia's state-run gas firm, GAZPROM, threatened a complete cutoff if debts were not paid. It is difficult to know whether Russia was coordinating policy between GAZPROM's cutoff threats and the government's offers to sell energy cheaply in return for political concessions, but clearly this was the perception in Ukraine, where Prime Minister Kuchma accused Russia of inducing 'a full paralysis' in the Ukrainian economy.³⁹

The linkage between energy dependence and political pressure came to the fore at the Massandra summit in early September 1993. A week before the summit, GAZPROM cut its supply of gas to Ukraine by 25 per cent, citing Ukrainian non-payment as the reason. The primary purpose of the summit was to resolve the long-simmering dispute over the Black Sea Fleet, but the Russian negotiators caught the Ukrainian delegation off guard by proposing a cancellation of Ukrainian debt in return for full control of the Black Sea Fleet and the surrender of Ukraine's nuclear warheads. The Ukrainian leadership apparently agreed to the deal, but denied this when word of the sale of the Black Sea Fleet caused an uproar in the Verkhovna Rada and the country.⁴⁰

The significant point in this summit was that the Russian government explicitly linked the issues of energy supply and debt to issues which were basically unrelated, and which cut to the heart of Ukraine's national security. This represented a more assertive Russian policy, and highlighted to Ukrainian diplomats (who accused Russia of 'economic diktat') the vulnerability to economic pressure not only of Ukraine's economy, but of the whole range of Ukraine's political and security interests. The point was further underscored in November 1993 when *Izvestiya* cited unnamed officials in the Russian Foreign Ministry as saying Russia might bring economic pressure to bear on Ukraine to surrender its nuclear weapons.⁴¹

The Massandra agreements were never implemented; indeed, it was never resolved what had actually been agreed upon. However, they had an important impact on Ukrainian policy toward energy dependence in the coming months. Prior to Massandra, Ukraine used two methods to attain the energy necessary for its economy. The first method was begging suppliers not to cut Ukraine off. This was moderately successful for a time, but Yeltsin's Massandra ultimatum made it clear that the costs in political terms could be high. Second, Ukraine had explored alternative suppliers, particularly in the Middle East. This plan ran into two obstacles. First, Middle East suppliers wanted payment on normal terms: in hard currency and in cash. To the extent that they were willing to accept barter deals, a second problem was the infrastructure necessary to transport Middle Eastern oil and gas to Ukraine. While ambitious plans for a pipeline from Iran to Azerbaijan to serve Ukraine were announced in early 1992,⁴² little real progress was made, nor could such sources be counted on in the short term in any event.⁴³ The search for alternate supplies has continued. A barter deal of oil equipment for oil was reached with Iraq in July 1994, but consummation awaits lifting of sanctions against Iraq.⁴⁴

Massandra helped create the political will in Ukraine to adopt more drastic measures. By October 1993 the energy crisis had forced the closure of half of Kiev's industrial enterprises,⁴⁵ and in the winter of 1993–94, most public buildings were not heated, most street lights were turned out, and Ukrainian television began operating on a reduced schedule in order to conserve energy. Residential gas supplies were maintained, but many industries were idled through the winter.⁴⁶ Ukraine's refusal to give in to Russia's demand had a very high domestic price.

In early 1994 Russia shifted the emphasis of its efforts to make use of Ukraine's energy dependence, seeking ownership of Ukrainian gas and oil facilities rather than political concessions. This policy, discussed first in October 1993,⁴⁷ became the subject of talks in March–April of 1994. There appear to be four reasons for the shift in Russian aims. First, the policy of linking oil supplies to the Black Sea Fleet didn't work. Ukraine refused to give in, and Russia was unwilling to carry out the threat. Second, the trilateral nuclear agreement of January 1994 removed the need to use energy supplies to cajole Ukraine on that issue. Third, and perhaps most important, Ukraine's pipelines and storage facilities provided the one element of Ukrainian leverage in the energy relationship: If Russia cut off supplies to Ukraine, Ukraine could stop transporting Russian natural gas to the rest of Europe, eliminating a major source of hard currency revenue. Finally, Russia was undertaking a broad program in the spring of 1994 to increase its control in the oil and gas industry of the former Soviet Union, in which Ukrainian facilities played only one part.⁴⁸ Ukrainian pipelines and storage

facilities were important both as sources of revenue and as levers of control.

By February 1994 Ukraine's debt to Russia for natural gas reached a trillion rubles, and GAZPROM began reducing the supply of gas to Ukraine.⁴⁹ By the beginning of March, the supply of gas to Ukraine from Russia was down to one-fifth the normal level, and a meeting was set for 10 March to resolve the crisis.⁵⁰ By this time Ukrainian debt to Russia was \$1 billion for gas, and \$3.2 billion for energy overall.⁵¹ The two sides agreed that in return for the resumption of gas supplies from Russia, Ukraine would pay the debt accrued already in 1994 in rubles or hard currency, and pay half of the debt from 1993 in cash and the other half by transferring ownership in Ukrainian gas facilities. The details of the deal were to be finalized on 10 April, and GAZPROM stated its intention to cut supplies on that date if payment was not made.⁵² Even after the 10 April meeting, however, the deal was not finalized, primarily because the Ukrainian side refused to make concrete commitments on which facilities it would transfer to Russia.⁵³ Another round of threats and negotiations took place in August 1994, but the situation remained unresolved, because Ukraine had still not privatized the facilities in which GAZPROM was to be given shares.

The bargaining over energy debt over the last year has helped clarify the nature of interdependence between the two states in this area, and made it clear that while Russia can apply a great deal of pressure on Ukraine, the pressure is not without cost to Russia. It has also become clear that Ukraine has a few cards that it can play in response.

The threat to cut energy supplies, like many threats, is most useful when it doesn't actually have to be carried out. Because Russian gas shipments to Western Europe, a significant source of hard currency revenue, are carried through Ukraine in the same pipelines that supply Ukraine, Russia cannot actually cut the supply to Ukraine without cutting off its western customers as well⁵⁴ (hence the Russian effort to gain control over these pipelines). Also, a decline in demand for Russian gas has made maintenance of markets in the former Soviet republics essential.⁵⁵ Problems in the Russian energy industry make a cutoff problematic for technical reasons. While Russia was trying to step up the threat of a cutoff of gas in early 1994, the Russian state company in charge of selling oil in the Former Soviet Union, Transneft, found itself forced to actually increase oil shipments to Ukraine and Belarus, because of the insolvency of many domestic customers and the inability to transport the oil elsewhere.⁵⁶ Moreover, Russia found that once it actually called in the debt, it could not use it as a lever anymore – if Russia was not going to give Ukraine energy on advantageous terms, there was no point in Ukraine making the concessions that Russia desired.⁵⁷

Ukraine was also able to make counterthreats other than cutting off gas shipments to Western Europe. President Kravchuk stated that Ukraine's

fulfillment of its pledge to transfer its nuclear weapons to Russia would be endangered by Russian economic pressure on Ukraine: 'Fulfillment of all agreements, including agreements on nuclear commitments, is possible only if the economy works. If tomorrow factories come to a halt in Ukraine, and this is a reality if there is no gas, what carrying out of commitments can be spoken of?'⁵⁸

Energy is the economic sector that demonstrates most clearly the problem of Ukrainian economic dependence on Russia, and Ukraine's response to Russian pressure in this sector provides important insight into how Ukraine is facing the dilemmas elaborated at the beginning of this paper. Above all, it shows how determined Ukraine is to maintain its sovereignty, even when domestic prosperity suffers significantly. From September 1993 to April 1994 Ukraine repeatedly decided to cut its consumption of energy, forcing the closure of many industries in an already reeling economy, rather than transfer ownership of Ukrainian assets, whether they be ships of the Black Sea Fleet, nuclear warheads, or gas transport facilities.

It would seem that such a policy could not be maintained in the face of growing domestic unrest over the economic collapse, but it has been. The seriousness of the hardship in Ukraine was emphasized by Kravchuk, who stated that without a solution, 'you will arrive in the evening at home and want to cook something to eat and there will be no gas'.⁵⁹ Yet Ukraine could not pay, and did not significantly compromise. The pressure in eastern Ukraine for greater ties with Russia has not extended to pressure for Ukrainian concessions to ensure the supply of energy. Indeed, it seems that the issue is making Ukrainians even more resistant to Russia, as Russia's tactics are perceived as heavy-handed, and serve only to convince many Ukrainians that they really do have something to fear from Russia.⁶⁰

Energy is one arena which may improve significantly if Ukraine's nascent economic reform takes hold. Government subsidies encourage waste, and the inability of many firms to pay their gas bills is at the root of the government's inability to pay Russia. Reform should shift the problem from the government to individual consumers and lead to a reduction in energy use, but this is unlikely to happen quickly.

CONCLUSIONS

Ukraine's policies towards the CIS, trade and monetary cooperation, and energy dependence yield important insight into how Ukraine is dealing with the acute dilemmas it faces as a state which is economically dependent upon a neighbor from whom it perceives a significant security threat. In its first three years of independence, Ukraine has come to see the constraints

inherent in its situation more clearly, and has begun to resolve the policy dilemmas created by those constraints.

On the broad debate between balancing and bandwagoning (submitting to hegemony), Ukraine has found neither policy suitable. Its unwillingness to bandwagon has been demonstrated by its refusal to submit to Russian pressure on any of the three issues discussed here. Its unwillingness (or inability) to balance is demonstrated by the lack of attempts to organize resistance to Russian pressure among the other former Soviet states, by Ukraine's inability to convince western states to take a stand in its favor, and by its willingness to surrender its nuclear weapons, which many Ukrainians view as the best guarantor against Russian aggression.⁶¹ Ukraine initially attempted to avoid this dilemma by isolating itself from Russia. As the economic consequences of isolation became clear, that policy has eroded, and Ukraine's current policy *vis-à-vis* Russia resembles neutrality, and is aimed at keeping a distance from Russia politically, while admitting Russia's economic importance.

In choosing between autonomy and prosperity, Ukraine has undergone a fundamental shift in policy. Originally, its domestic and foreign policies were based on the perceived need to create a degree of economic autonomy to reinforce the policy of political independence from Russia. Breaking the ties of interdependence, however, proved devastating to Ukraine's economy, and the policy has since been revised. Since autumn 1993 Ukraine has sought to re-establish many of the trade links that were severed after independence. While willing to sacrifice some autonomy for prosperity, Ukraine has steadfastly resisted surrendering sovereignty, no matter what the cost in domestic prosperity. Ukraine's willingness to simply close industries due to energy shortages, and its resistance to international coordination of trade, currency, and other policies, demonstrate how far Ukraine diverges from the prescriptions of liberal theory as followed in the West.

Ukraine's emphasis on sovereignty is further demonstrated by its refusal to join the CIS, which might increase Ukraine's autonomy *vis-à-vis* Russia (that is, Ukraine's ability to resist Russian pressure) by binding Russia with rules and diluting Russian power. Instead, Ukraine has steadfastly refused to work through the CIS, or even to create narrow trade-coordination bodies, citing the need to preserve sovereignty above all else. As a result, Ukraine deals with Russia only in bilateral terms, a policy which maximizes the power difference between the two countries and enables Russia to subject Ukraine to extreme pressure (as in energy politics).

Finally, Ukraine has adopted a view of international institutions counter to that prevalent in the West. Ukraine views the CIS not as a means to promote cooperation, or to bind Russia, but as a means by which Russia can

subjugate Ukraine. This contrasts with the notion that the EC would be useful not only to increase prosperity, but to control the potential hegemon in that region – Germany. Ukraine's policy resembles that espoused by 'Euro-skeptics', who have tended to see an expansion of European integration as a threat to sovereignty and as a means of expanded German influence.

The patterns established in the first three years will continue as long as the two states are interdependent and have different aspirations for the political arrangements of the region. Russia's Chechen fiasco will likely heighten Ukrainian fear as well as Russian caution about Russia's role in the 'near abroad', but it may also strengthen Russian nationalists and the longing to 'stand tall' internationally. Either way, the politics of interdependence and sovereignty will continue to be the crux of the Ukrainian-Russian relationship.

Ukraine has recently (finally) embarked on the path toward economic reform. If this reform is successful, Ukraine may be able to increase prosperity without sacrificing sovereignty to the CIS. Indeed, the role of a strong economy in maintaining independence seems to be one of the factors promoting reform in Ukraine, and Western aid and encouragement are having an important impact on Ukraine's ability to prosper independently of Russia. Without economic improvement, Ukraine will remain in a situation where prosperity, autonomy, and sovereignty are in tension with one another, and where at least one of these fundamental goals must be sacrificed.

NOTES

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1. For an overview of security issues between Russia and Ukraine, see William H. Kincade and Natalie Melnychuk, 'Eurasia Letter: Unneighborly Neighbors', *Foreign Policy* (Spring 1994) pp.84–104.
2. See John Morrison, 'Pereiaslav and After: The Ukrainian-Russian Relationship', *Int. Affairs*, 69/4 (1993) pp.677–703.
3. For development of these concepts see Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1987). For their application to the situation in the former Soviet Union, see James M. Goldgeier, 'Balancing vs. Bandwagoning in the Former Soviet Union', paper delivered at the 1992 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Assoc. Here, I use the concepts slightly differently. Walt's work concerns the formation of military alliances, while the issue between Russia and Ukraine concerns economic cooperation.
4. See, e.g., Charles Kindleberger *The World in Depression 1929–1939*, rev. ed. (Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California 1986); Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, 2nd ed., (NY: HarperCollins, 1989); and Keohane, *After Hegemony* (Princeton UP, 1984).

5. Quoted in Edward Mead Earle, 'Adam Smith, Alexander Hamilton, Friederich List: The Economic Foundations of Military Power', in Peter Paret (ed.) *Makers of Modern Strategy*, (Princeton UP, 1986), p.218.
6. These definitions of 'autonomy' and 'sovereignty' are derived from Richard Cooper, *The Economics of Interdependence* (NY: McGraw-Hill, 1968), p.4. On the tradeoff between autonomy and sovereignty, see Cooper, pp.4-5.
7. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Daily Report* (Hereafter *RFE/RL*), 12, 15 Sept. 1991.
8. *RFE/RL*, 17 Sept. 1991.
9. *RFE/RL*, 18 Sept. 1991.
10. The text of the treaty is printed in *Washington Post*, 10 Dec. 1991, p.A32.
11. *RFE/RL*, 12 Dec. 1991.
12. See Stephen Foye, 'The CIS Armed Forces', *RFE/RL Research Report 2/1* (1 Jan. 1993), pp.41-5.
13. The issue of the CIS Charter is discussed in some detail in Roman Solchanyk, 'Ukraine and the CIS: A Troubled Relationship', *RFE/RL Research Report 2/7* (12 Feb. 1993), pp.23-7.
14. Ukraine's preference for bilateral cooperation was discussed by President Kravchuk in detail in late 1992 (see Solchanyk, 'Ukraine and the CIS' (note 13) p.25). It was Kravchuk's policy as early as Dec. 1991 (see Roman Solchanyk, 'Kravchuk Defines Ukraine-CIS Relations', *RFE/RL Research Report* [13 March 1992]: 7); and was elaborated more recently in an interview on Ukrainian Television, 2 April 1994. Its opposition to the creation of any coordinating bodies is discussed in Anne Sheehy, 'Seven States Sign Charter Strengthening CIS', *RFE/RL Research Report 2/9* (26 Feb. 1993), pp.10-11.
15. See John Lloyd, 'Russia Begins to Choose between Union and Empire', *Financial Times* (hereafter *FT*), 18 April 1994, p.2.
16. *RFE/RL*, 14 May 1993. It seems that Russia was confronting at this point 'the hegemon's dilemma'. See Arthur Stein, 'The Hegemon's Dilemma: Great Britain, The United States, and the International Economic Order', *Int. Organization* 38 (1984), pp.355-86. A potential or actual hegemon, Stein argues, must pay a disproportionate share of the costs of cooperation, and thus must choose between maintaining hegemony and securing individual long-term economic power.
17. *RFE/RL*, 14 June 1993.
18. *RFE/RL*, 16 June 1993.
19. Solchanyk, 'Ukraine and the CIS', (note 13) p.25.
20. Sheehy, 'Seven States Sign Charter', (note 14) p.11.
21. Mykhailo Majmeskal of the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry, quoted in Myroslav Levys'kyi, 'Prezidenty Radyat', A Chyny Hadyat', *Za Vil'nu Ukrajinu*, 13 April 1994, p.1.
22. On Kuchma's views prior to the election, see Maria Kara, 'Rozkol "Rosiykoyi" Ukrajinu', *Post-Postup*, 17-24 March 1994, pp.1-2, and 'Leonid Kuchma: 'Vlady v Ukrajinu s'ohodni nemaje. Pravljat' bal zovsim inshi syly'' *Vysokyj Zamok*, 12 April 1994, p.2.
23. *RFE/RL*, 13 Sept. 1994. See also Mykola Tkachenko, 'Read My Lips: No New Soviet Union', *Krieble Institute Monitor 2/18* (15 Oct. 1994).
24. Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 2nd ed. (Univ. of Toronto Press, 1994), p.569. For a more realistic assessment, see Stuart S. Brown and Misha V. Belkindas, 'Who's Feeding Whom? An Analysis of Soviet Interrepublic Trade', in Richard F. Kaufman and John P. Hardt (eds.), *The Former Soviet Union in Transition. The authors state unequivocally: 'The Russian Federation dominates as the principle net generator of resource outflows to all remaining 14 republics'* (p.176).
25. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, *Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (NY: CUP, 1994), p.177.
26. *RFE/RL*, 22 Oct. 1991.
27. *RFE/RL*, 27 Dec. 1991.
28. *RFE/RL*, 10 Jan. 1992.
29. Steven J. Woehrel, 'Political-Economic Assessments: Ukraine', in Kaufman and Hardt (note 24).
30. See John Lloyd and Steve LeVine, 'West Sees Danger in End of Rouble Zone', *FT*, 12 Nov. 1993, p.2; and 'The Cost of Monetary Chaos', *The Economist*, 20 Nov. 1993, pp.77-8. The

- latter contends that the dissolution of the ruble zone was to the advantage of Russia and the disadvantage of other republics, who could no longer export their inflation to Russia.
31. The Ukrainian karbovan' lost 46 per cent of its value against the dollar in one day, 30 March 1993, and inflation throughout 1993 approached 75 per cent per month. Inflation and the value of the currency against the dollar stabilized somewhat in the first half of 1994, as currency emissions were limited, but skyrocketed again in the fall, following an annual cycle in which government payments to farmers at harvest time led to inflation.
 32. James A. Duran, Jr., 'Russian Fiscal and Monetary Stabilization: A Tough Road Ahead', in Kaufman and Hardt (note 24), p.215.
 33. *RFE/RL*, 17 May 1993.
 34. *RFE/RL*, 19 May 1993.
 35. *RFE/RL*, 23 Aug. 1993.
 36. *RFE/RL*, 23 Sept. 1993.
 37. On the energy situation in Ukraine, see Leslie Dienes, 'Energy, Minerals, and Economic Policy', in I.S. Koropeckyj (ed.), *The Ukrainian Economy: Achievements, Problems, Challenges* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Ukrainian Res. Inst., 1992).
 38. The linkage was made by the Russian ambassador to Ukraine, Leonid Smolyakov, in a press conference 5 Feb. 1993 and repeated by Deputy PM Alexandr Shokin on 8 Feb. (*RFE/RL*, 9,10 Feb. 1993).
 39. *RFE/RL*, 22 Feb. 1993.
 40. *RFE/RL*, 6-10 Sept. 1993.
 41. *RFE/RL*, 24 Nov. 1993
 42. *RFE/RL*, 22 Feb. 1992.
 43. The Iran deal was never consummated due to Ukraine's inability to pay for the oil. In early 1994, Ukraine was attempting to negotiate oil deals with Nigeria, Croatia, Iran, India, and Vietnam but so far has been unable to find an alternative to Russia. See 'Anatolij Zlenko Znovu Vyklav Ne toi Tovar v Irans'kij Naftovij Lavtsi, Ale Ne Rozhubyvca na Indijs'komu Bazari' *Post-Postup*, 29 April-6 May 1994, p.2; and 'Ukrajina ta Nigerija ukladajut' uhadu pro postachennja nafty', and 'Khorvaty zaproponuvaly Ukraini investuvaty v naftoprovid', *Post-Postup*, 17-23 Feb. 1994, p.B1.
 44. *RFE/RL* 15 July 1994.
 45. *RFE/RL*, 7 Oct. 1993.
 46. On Ukraine's dire energy situation, see Jill Barshay, 'Ukraine Shivers as Energy Dwindles', *FT*, 23 Nov. 1993, p.2.
 47. *RFE/RL*, 12 Oct. 1993.
 48. For an analysis of Russia's policy of expanding its control of the gas and oil industries in former Soviet states, see Steve LeVine, 'The Great Game Revisited', *FT*, 7 March 1994, p.12. See also LeVine and Robert Corzine, 'Russians Muscle in on Oil Deals', *FT*, 21 Jan. 1994, p.2.
 49. *RFE/RL*, 7 Feb. 1994. See also, John Lloyd, 'Gazprom Threatens to Cut Exports' *FT*, 12-13 Feb. 1994, p.2.
 50. *RFE/RL*, 7, 9 March 1994. See also 'Russia-Ukraine Gas Row Talks', *FT*, 8 March 1994, p.2.
 51. John Lloyd and Jill Barshay, 'Ukraine Rejects Black Sea Fleet Deal in Gas Row', *FT*, 7 March 1994, p.20.
 52. Serhij Lavrenjuk, 'Jadernoji Zbroji Vzhe Nema. Mozhe ne buty i hazoprovodiv'. *Holos Ukrainy*, 12 March 1994; *RFE/RL* 11 March 1994; Jill Barclay, 'Ukraine Gas Supplies Resume', *FT*, 11 March 1994, p.2. Plans to transfer Ukrainian gas facilities to Russia are discussed in great detail in Hanna Lyuta, 'Vyrishennja Problemy Hazozabezpechennja Ukrainu Lezhit' u Politychnij Ploshchyni', *ibid.*, 17-24 March 1994, p.4; 'Postavky Rosijs'koho Hazu v Ukrainu Pokryvajut' Pryblizno 80 per cent Obsjahu Ochikovanoho Importu z Turkmenystanu', *Post-Postup*, 1-7 April 1994, p.B5.
 53. 'Spil'ni Interesy Ukrainjs'kykh i Rosijs'kykh Hazovykiv Pom'yakshuyut' Problemu Rosijs'kykh Hazopostavok', *Post-Postup* No.10, 8-14 April 1994, pp.B1, B5; 'U Spravi Vypłaty Ukrainoju Zaborhovanosti RAT 'GAZPROM' Stalysja Pevni Pozytyvni Zrushennja', *ibid.*, 22-8 April 1994, p.B3.
 54. 'Ukraine Steps Up 'Gas War', *FT*, 3 March 1994, p. 3; Dmytro Kyblyts'kyj, 'Rosijs'kyj

- Gazprom khoche deshcho pryvatyzuvaty v Ukrajinu. Todi my zmozhemo dejakyj chas varyty jicty*', *Post-Postup*, (17–24 1994) p.1.
55. Hanna Lyuta, 'Rosija Dala Haz Ukrajinu, Bo Ne Dala Inshym', *Post-Postup*, 3–9 Feb. 1994, p.B4; 'Out of Gas', *The Economist*, 12 March 1994, p.35.
56. *RFE/RL*, 16 Feb. 1994. See also John Lloyd and Leyla Boulton, 'Russians in Oil Export Revenue Trap', *FT*, 6 April 1994, p.2.
57. Lloyd and Barshay (note 51), p.20.
58. Quoted in *ibid*.
59. Quoted in Kyblyts'kyj, 'Rosij's'kyj Gazprom' (note 54), p.1
60. For an example of mainstream Ukrainian attitudes toward Russian pressure on energy, see Lavranjuk, 'Jadernoji zbroj' (note 52), p.2.
61. It is debatable whether possession of nuclear weapons would make Ukraine more or less secure. John Mearsheimer argues they would. See 'The Case for a Ukrainian Nuclear Deterrent', *Foreign Affairs* 72/3 (Summer 1993), pp.50–66. Kincade and Melnyczuk disagree, as does Steven E. Miller, 'The Case of the Ukrainian Nuclear Deterrent', *ibid.*, pp.67–80. Many Ukrainians believe that in some form or another, retention of nuclear weapons would act as a deterrent against Russia. See Viktor Nebozhenko, 'Pohlyad hromads'koji na holovni priorityety zovnishnoji polityky Ukrajinu', *Politychnyi Portret Ukrajinu* 5 (Dec. 1993), pp.10–13.