Ukraine and Russia

The Post-Soviet Transition

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For Alison and Dan

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Ukraine and Russia


Ukraine
National Capital
City
International Boundary
Province Boundary
Except where noted, oblasts have the same name as their capitals.
0 Miles 100
BELARUS
RUSSIA
POLAND
(Oblast name: Volyn)
Lutsk
Rovno
Chernihiv
Sumy
Kyiv
Zhytomyr
Lviv
Kharkiv
Ternopil
Khmelnytskyi
Poltava
SLOVAKIA
Vinnytsya
Cherkasy
Luhansk
Uzhhorod
(Oblast name: Zakarpattya)
Ivano-Frankivsk
Dnipropetrovsk
HUNGARY
Chernivtsi
Kirovohrad
Donetsk
Zaporizhzhya
ROMANIA
MOLDOVA
Mykolaiv
RUSSIA
Odesa
Kherson
Sea of Azov
Black Sea
(Autonomous Republic of Crimea)
Simferopol
North Sea
RUSSIA
UKRAINE
Black Sea
Mediterranean Sea

Introduction

In a somewhat controversial review essay entitled "The Nowhere Nation," Jack Matlock, who served as the U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union as it was in the process of unraveling, made what can easily be taken as a rather commonplace and perhaps even banal observation—namely, that the "question of relations between Ukraine and Ukrainians and Russia and Russians" falls into the category of "fundamental."[1] The ambassador, of course, is not alone in this judgment. Proceeding from different points of departure and with diverse perspectives, various scholars, journalists, policy strategists, and government leaders directly or indirectly have arrived at about the same conclusion—a process that has been facilitated immeasurably by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the appearance of Ukraine and Russia as independent states.

Clearly, relations between Ukraine and Russia are fundamental in the first instance to the two parties that are directly involved, and, moreover, in ways that are not always readily apparent, including to the principals themselves. But for the longest time the conventional approach to Ukrainian-Russian relations—if indeed the subject was thought to require some special consideration by mainstream historians or political scientists—was primarily to address the Ukrainian side of the equation and in a manner that, oddly enough, had little or nothing to say about how the Russian side was affected by the relationship. At the risk of incurring the wrath of some of my friends and colleagues, the story went more or less along the following lines: There are these Ukrainians, who are actually quite numerous—about fifty million. In the past, many of them were Cossacks who fought against Poles, Tatars, and Russians for control of vast stretches of no man's land. When Ukraine became part of Russia in the mid–seventeenth century, it came to be known as Little Russia and its inhabitants were Little Russians. The word *Ukraine* means "borderland." The Ukrainians never really succeeded in establishing their own state, except for a brief period during the Russian Revolution. During 1917–21, power in Ukraine changed hands several times; it was ruled in-

termittently by Ukrainian nationalists, monarchist White Guards, German occupiers, and finally Bolsheviks. In the midst of this chaos, there were many pogroms. Kyiv, which is the capital of Ukraine, is the Mother of Russian Cities. It is where Russian statehood, culture, and religion have their beginnings. Many Ukrainians prefer to speak Russian; intermarriage is common. Ukrainian nationalists, most of whom come from the western regions of the country, bridle under Russian rule, although it has brought many benefits to ordinary Ukrainians—above all, Soviet modernization and considerable opportunities for personal advancement. Indeed, several top Soviet leaders (Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Gorbachev) and prominent literary figures (Gogol, Akhmatova, Yevtushenko, Solzhenitsyn) are from Ukraine or are of Ukrainian stock. But now let us return to the process of the gathering of the Russian lands by czars and commissars and the further expansion of the Russian state.

Obviously, this is a caricature, and it should by no means obscure the fact that the work of various scholars and analysts has addressed both Ukrainian and Russian themes in broader contexts of Eastern European history and politics—particularly the phenomenon perhaps best described as the making and unmaking of nations and states—and, in the process, has mapped out new and more fruitful approaches to understanding the Ukrainian-Russian connection.[2] The point of the caricature outlined here, moreover, is neither to bemoan the state of Russian and Soviet studies in the not so distant past nor to dredge up the issue of myths and their role in history[3] but to call attention to the fact that much may be learned about Ukraine *and* Russia by examining their relationship as a two-way street that has been and continues to be traversed by *both* sides.

There is a modus operandi to this book, and one of its dimensions is to view Ukraine not simply as an object of that relationship but to treat Ukraine and Russia interdependently as its subjects. By all accounts, the "Russian question" is not about to go away, particularly that aspect of it that involves building a new nation and a new state, which, as it turns out, cannot be fully understood without its Ukrainian component. Ukraine, needless to say, also has these items near the top of its agenda, and they, too, make little sense outside the Russian context. In this connection, I would hazard the guess that the prominently displayed article on the first page of the 1 April 2000 edition of the Moscow daily *Nezavisimaya gazeta* entitled "Ukraine Is Joining the Russian-Belarusian Union" is trying to tell us something, April Fool's Day notwithstanding.

The first three chapters of this book represent an attempt to address the issues of historical legacy, national identity, and the state in the Ukrainian-Russian relationship and how they played themselves out, as it were, against the background of a disintegrating colossus called the Soviet Union. The first chapter, in particular, although by no means theoretical in any sense that so-

cial scientists would recognize, seeks to provide a framework or at least some guidelines for understanding the specificity of the Ukrainian-Russian connection, if not its uniqueness. The succeeding two chapters take what might be termed the "before, during, and after" approach. Why were Ukrainian-Russian relations so cordial shortly before the Soviet state began to show signs that it was losing its viability? How did Ukraine and Russia contribute to its weakening and ultimate collapse? Why did Kyiv and Moscow begin to part ways when it became clear that the USSR was on its way out? And what explains the acrimony that characterized the relationship when it came time, so to speak, to begin life after the Soviet Union? The pace of events during this period, particularly in 1990–91, were breakneck, and in the course of the ensuing decade some of the important things that happened then (or did not happen) have become somewhat hazy. Very knowledgeable experts on contemporary Russia have written that in June 1990 Boris Yeltsin's Russia declared its independence. Had that actually been the case, one wonders what the course of events might have been. However, for reasons that can be gleaned from these initial chapters, Russia was in fact the only Soviet republic that never declared its independence. Indeed, in early 1996 Russia's lawmakers "restored" the USSR on their territory and declared the December 1991 agreements in Belovezh that dissolved the USSR to be null and void. Other and no less knowledgeable specialists write that Yeltsin was calling for the abolition of the Soviet Union in 1991. Had that been the case, things also would probably have turned out differently. In fact, the Russian president was quite busy that year discussing with Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev on what terms the Soviet Union might be salvaged. It was only when Yeltsin arrived in Minsk for the meeting that would bring an end to the Soviet Union, which was after Ukraine's astonishing popular vote in support of independence, that he made it clear that the Soviet Union was basically a lost cause. These issues are also discussed in the early chapters, and they are very much a part of the Ukrainian-Russian story. In short, I hope that I have also made a contribution here, however modest, to an analysis of why and how the Soviet Union fell apart.

The Ukrainian-Russian connection, of course, did not go away with the Soviet Union; it just became more complicated and made itself felt in more ways, like the problem of denuclearization. In an often quoted article published in early 1994 that focused on American strategy with regard to Russia, Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote that "without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be an empire, but with Ukraine suborned and then subordinated, Russia automatically becomes an empire" and that "Russia can be either an empire or a democracy, but it cannot be both."[4] Somewhat earlier, Roman Szporluk made an observation that was in a similar vein. Discussing the implications of an armed conflict between Ukraine and Russia, which was the subject of some speculation in 1992, he remarked, "You cannot build a *Rechtsstaat* if you have

to militarily occupy millions of Ukrainians."[5] My purpose in calling readers' attention to these observations is to underline the extent to which the Ukrainian-Russian relationship impacts on a fairly wide array of issues, problems, and areas. Brzezinski, after all, was assessing U.S.-Russian relations and global security, and Szporluk was contemplating the fate of democracy in Russia, but Ukrainian-Russian considerations figured prominently in both instances.[6]

The latter part of this book is devoted to examining how the Ukrainian-Russian conundrum has influenced foreign and security policy and domestic politics. The focus here is, above all, on Ukraine, but the links to Russia are never far removed. Chapter 4 poses the key foreign and domestic issues confronting the leadership in Kyiv and offers a perspective on the post-Soviet transition in Ukraine in comparison to the other Soviet successor states. These issues are then considered in detail in the chapters that follow.

The book closes with an analysis of the Crimean problem, in both its external and internal dimensions. To one degree or another, Crimea has conjured up many of the problems that are discussed throughout the book. It was and to some extent still remains a bone of contention between Kyiv and Moscow. The presence of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol brings security issues to the forefront. Crimea is Ukraine's most serious regional problem and, moreover, the site of persistent ethnic tensions with potentially serious consequences. Ironically, conventional wisdom has it that the peninsula was transferred to Ukraine from Russia in 1954 as a gesture of eternal friendship during the celebrations marking the "reunion" of the two countries and peoples three hundred year earlier.

Having placed the word *reunion* in quotation marks, I believe it seems appropriate at this juncture to offer readers, especially those with a peripheral familiarity with Ukraine's past, a brief historical outline to provide a modicum of background to the issues that will be discussed.[7] The saying goes that one cannot choose one's neighbors. So it is with Ukrainians and Russians. Both trace their political and cultural history to the medieval state that emerged in the ninth century around the city of Kyiv and came to be known as Kyivan Rus. Both share the Orthodox Christian faith, although Eastern Rite Catholicism is dominant in Western Ukraine. And both trace their languages to a common East Slavic predecessor.

Kyivan Rus was a formidable political, economic, and cultural center at least through the mid–eleventh century, with ties to Byzantium and Central Europe. In some sense, modern-day Ukrainian-Russian problems have their origins precisely in Kyivan Rus to the extent that many latter-day Ukrainians and Russians both claim it as the starting point of their own statehood and national identity. The decline of the Kyivan state, which is commonly attributed to the internecine struggle for power in the aftermath of its partition by Yaroslav the Wise (1036–54) among his sons and frequent incursions by

nomadic invaders, resulted in the emergence and consolidation of several new regional centers on its territory, among them Vladimir-Suzdal in the north, which was the forerunner of the Muscovite state, and Galicia-Volhynia in the west. In 1169, Kyiv was sacked by a prince from Vladimir-Suzdal; in 1240, it was destroyed by the Mongols, but its symbolic importance as the Mother of Rus Cities remained intact.

The demise of Kyiv and other Rus principalities was accompanied by the rise and growing importance in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries of the neighboring Lithuanian, Polish, and Muscovite states. Toward the end of the fourteenth century, Galicia came under Polish control while Volhynia and most of the remaining ethnically Ukrainian territories of the old Kyivan Rus fell to the princes of Lithuania, who entered into a dynastic union with the kings of Poland. Muscovy finally freed itself of the Mongol yoke at the end of the fifteenth century and its leaders, beginning with Ivan III (1440–1505), began to title themselves czar and "sovereigns of all Rus," claiming that all of the former territories of Kyivan Rus should be under their domain. Armed with the doctrine of Moscow the Third Rome (after Byzantium), the czars subsequently embarked on the mission of "gathering the Russian lands," something in the nature of America's Manifest Destiny. A formidable obstacle to this enterprise was the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which was created in 1569 and transformed the earlier dynastic union into a constitutional one with a common elected king and parliament, but separate laws and administrations for its Polish and Lithuanian components. As part of this arrangement, Lithuania's Ukrainian territories were transferred to Polish administration, which meant that now virtually all ethnically Ukrainian lands were within one political entity. Social tensions stemming from the landlord–tenant–peasant system of serfdom, the unresolved political-military problem of the status of the Cossacks on the state's borders, and the Orthodox-Catholic conflict all coalesced in 1648 in a revolt against Poland that was led by Bohdan Khmelnytsky, the elected *hetman* (leader) of the Cossacks, and gave rise to the Cossack state known as the Hetmanate.

In need of support, Khmelnytsky entered into a relationship with the Muscovite state in 1654, the exact nature of which has been in debate ever since. Interpretations have ranged from a full incorporation of the Hetmanate into Muscovy to a temporary military alliance between the two. Not surprisingly, Russian historiography was inclined to some variation of the former while the Ukrainian side saw things differently. Soviet historians were not burdened by problems of interpretation. The "Theses" approved by the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1954 dictated that the agreement concluded in the mid–seventeenth century in the town of Pereyaslav, not far from Kyiv, constituted a reunion of two fraternal peoples that, together with the Belarusians, trace their origins to a common Rus nationality that created the Kyivan state.

The question of who is right or wrong is almost irrelevant, except for professional historians. What is relevant is that (1) the polarized interpretations of what transpired in Pereyaslav later formed the basis for equally polarized conceptions of the nature of the Ukrainian-Russian relationship; and (2) a small part of ethnically Ukrainian territory, roughly corresponding to the present-day regions of Poltava and Chernihiv in central Ukraine and including the city of Kyiv, came under increasingly centralized Russian rule. The Polish-Russian war that was precipitated by the Pereyaslav agreement ended with the Treaty of Andrusovo (1667), which split the Hetmanate along the Dnieper River. It was agreed that Kyiv would be temporarily under Russian administration, but the Eternal Peace (1686) concluded between the two states left the future Ukrainian capital permanently under Moscow's rule. The Hetmanate initially enjoyed certain rights and privileges within Muscovy, but by the early 1780s these had been taken away. It became fully integrated into the Russian Empire and was commonly known as Little Russia—a mutation from the term *Little Rus*, which had been current already several centuries earlier.[8]

The next phase in the Ukrainian-Russian saga was defined by the partitions of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century, which brought most of the ethnically Ukrainian territories west of the Dnieper River (Right Bank Ukraine) under imperial Russian rule (along with Belarus). At the same time, Russia consolidated its control over the sparsely populated regions east of the old Hetmanate (the Kharkiv region and the Donbas) and took what is now southern Ukraine, including Crimea, from the Ottoman Empire. The bulk of what is now Ukraine, therefore, became part of Russia beginning in the latter half of the seventeenth and into the eighteenth centuries. It is important to note, however, that most of what is commonly referred to as Western Ukraine remained outside Russian and Soviet rule until 1939–45. The partitions of Poland relegated Galicia, which constitutes the present-day regions of Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Ternopil, to the Habsburg domains. After World War I, it became part of the new Polish state. Bukovyna, the northern part of which is now the Chernivtsi region of Ukraine that borders on Romania and Moldova, was also ruled from Vienna until 1918 and was then annexed by Romania. The westernmost Zakarpattya region (Transcarpathia) was part of Hungary since the eleventh to thirteenth centuries and was transferred to Czechoslovakia in 1919. After 1945, all of these territories were incorporated into Soviet Ukraine, leaving only relatively small pockets of Ukrainians outside its borders.

Even this cursory overview reveals the degree to which contemporary Ukraine is a country of regions that evolved under different political, cultural, and even linguistic conditions. Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, particularly the Donbas, are arguably the most "Russian" part of the country, certainly in terms of language; but Russians from Moscow, St. Petersburg, or Omsk

would probably find the residents of Donetsk and Luhansk a bit odd, not really "Russian." Southern Ukraine is largely Russian speaking, but Odesa, its regional capital, is much too cosmopolitan to be genuinely "Russian"; it is precisely the place where the mayor, a Jew, can easily be a Ukrainian "nationalist." Western Ukraine, with its historical ties to places such as Vienna, Warsaw, and Prague, for the most part has little use for anything Russian. Central Ukraine is rather more difficult to define precisely because it straddles east and west and incorporates parts of both. But Kyiv, which is both Russian and Ukrainian speaking, is politically Ukrainian.

In some sense, the main purpose of this book may well be to assess the degree to which both Ukraine and Russia have succeeded in sorting out their past and starting afresh.

NOTES

1. Jack F. Matlock Jr., "The Nowhere Nation," *New York Review of Books*, 24 February 2000, 42.

2. Readers are directed, for example, to the recently published collection of Roman Szporluk's selected articles, *Russia, Ukraine, and the Breakup of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 2000). See also Peter J. Potichnyj, Marc Raeff, Jaroslaw Pelenski, and Gleb N. Žekulin, eds., *Ukraine and Russia in Their Historical Encounter* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1992).

3. Myth making and its role in Ukrainian-Russian relations figure prominently in Anatole Lieven's *Ukraine and Russia: A Fraternal Rivalry* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999).

4. Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Premature Partnership," *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 2 (March–April 1994): 82 and 70, respectively.

5. "One Year after the Collapse of the USSR: A Panel of Specialists," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 8, no. 4 (October–December 1992): 326. Chechens do not number in the millions, but the point remains nonetheless valid today.

6. The Ukrainian-Russian relationship as central to European security has, in particular, drawn the attention of analysts. See, for example, Ole Diehl, *Kiew und Moskau: Die ukrainisch-russischen Beziehungen als zentrales Problem deutscher und europäischer Sicherheit* (Bonn: Europa Union, 1994); Tor Bukkvoll, *Ukraine and European Security* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1997); and Sherman W. Garnett, *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the Emerging Security Environment of Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1997).

7. Readers interested in learning more about the history of Ukraine can consult Roman Szporluk, *Ukraine: A Brief History* (Detroit: Ukrainian Festival Committee in Detroit, 1979); Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988); and Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

8. See Zenon E. Kohut, "The Development of Little Russian Identity and Ukrainian Nationbuilding," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 10, nos. 3–4 (December 1986): 559–76, and Volodymyr Kravchenko, " 'Rosiya,' 'Malorosiya,' 'Ukraina' v rosiis'kii istoriohrafii druhoi polovyny XVIII-20-kh rokiv XIX st.," *Zbirnyk Kharkivs'koho istoryko-filolohichnoho tovarystva*, nova seriya (Kharkiv: Oko, 1995), 3–15.

1

A Framework for Discussion, or *k postanovke problemy*

> The awakening of Ukraine, and especially the separatist character of Ukrainophilism, astounded the Russian intelligentsia, which, in the final analysis, did not really understand it. Because, above all, we loved Ukraine, its land, its people, its songs, we felt that all of this was ours, our own. But also because of our criminal disinterest in Ukraine's past.
>
> —Georgii Fedotov, "Rossiya i svoboda," 1945

> Millions of Russians are convinced that without Ukraine not only can there be no great Russia, but that there cannot be any kind of Russia at all.
>
> —Len Karpinskii, *Moskovskie novosti*, 22 December 1991

> We feel awkward without Ukraine.
>
> —Gennadii Seleznev, chairman of the State Duma, Interfax-Ukraine, 28 September 1998

Ukrainian-Russian relations since the collapse of the Soviet Union have largely been strained, conflictive, unstable, and, indeed, abnormal. Most discussions of the problem tend to focus on specific issues about which Kyiv and Moscow disagree. Among these, the most prominent and long-standing have been the fate of the Black Sea Fleet and its main base, Sevastopol; the related but larger question of Crimea—specifically, who should be considered its rightful owner; and the role and functions of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). A host of other problems and irritants remain and have exacerbated relations between the two states, including how to dispose of the debts and assets of the former Soviet Union; Ukraine's huge energy debt; delimiting and demarcating the borders of the two countries; the eastward enlargement of NATO; and, more recently, the status of the Russian minority and Russian speakers in Ukraine.[1] All of these disputes and disagreements

may be said to be "normal" in the sense that they can be defined and, in the course of negotiations, resolved. A case in point is the problem of the disposition of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet—probably the most difficult and certainly the most emotionally laden issue—which, although not definitively settled, has been effectively removed as a stumbling block in relations between Ukraine and Russia by the agreements concluded in Kyiv on 28 May 1997.[2] The latter paved the way for the signing of the basic bilateral treaty between Ukraine and Russia several days later, which is testimony to the fact that, despite a difficult agenda of unfinished business, compromises can be reached and seemingly intractable differences can be resolved.

Other problems between Ukraine and Russia, however, are not so easily defined and therefore rather more difficult to unravel. To say that they are basic or fundamental would be correct but not very enlightening. Certainly, they are the kinds of problems that do not easily lend themselves to the negotiating table. Even some of the principals involved in sorting out the issues between Kyiv and Moscow seem not to be able to explain in a fully satisfactory manner what it is that stands in the way of a "normal" relationship between the two countries. Thus, in early 1997 a leading Moscow newspaper published interviews with Ukrainian president Leonid Kuchma and his top security aide Volodymyr Horbulin, both of whom offered some views on the subject. The overall thrust of the interviews was that relations with Russia were bad and were not getting any better; the leitmotif was that Russia was not taking Ukraine seriously, that its attitude was patronizing and condescending.[3] There is nothing particularly revealing or astonishing in these observations. It has been clear for some time now that Moscow is having problems of one sort or another with virtually all of the members of the CIS, including Belarus, with which it has signed several agreements that are intended to establish an as yet undefined "union" of the two states. The CIS, in spite of grand integration schemes and strategic courses formulated in Moscow, not only is not integrating; it is silently fading away. The well-known political commentator Aleksei Pushkov, characterizing the CIS as a "community of non-communicators," shares the prevailing view that Moscow's policies in this area have failed.[4]

Both Kuchma and Horbulin seemed intent on going beyond "normal," issue-specific problems in the Ukrainian-Russian relationship and attempted to define what might be termed the "abnormal" dimension. Horbulin, for example, said that he was not prepared to offer a rational explanation for the difficulties between Kyiv and Moscow but suggested that a close reading of Freud could provide some insights or that perhaps Dostoyevsky might have the answer. Clearly, he was suggesting that psychological factors may be at work here. But then he added something more concrete: "I often recall what former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger told me: 'I never met a single Russian who thought that Ukraine could be independent.' "[5] Kuchma ex-

panded on this theme, saying that "in Russia they pretend that Ukraine as a sovereign, independent state does not exist." "As I see it," he continued, "in Russia the stereotype of viewing Ukraine as its constituent part or, at any rate, as the sphere of its prevailing influence has not yet been eliminated." The Ukrainian president returned to this issue a year later, after Yeltsin's state visit and the signing of the Ukrainian-Russian treaty. In an interview in *Izvestia*, although emphasizing that Ukrainian-Russian relations had vastly improved and that "problems of a political character" were now virtually absent, he nonetheless expressed concern about the future. Specifically, Kuchma called attention to what he termed the "divorce syndrome" in the Ukrainian-Russian relationship, briefly characterizing it as a "complicated political-psychological problem that casts an ominous shadow on the entire complex of Ukrainian-Russian relations."[6]

The perception that something is at work that makes it inordinately difficult for Kyiv and Moscow to get on with the process of normalizing their relations is not an exclusively one-sided affair. Dmitrii Ryurikov, Yeltsin's former foreign policy adviser, confided to a journalist that there is "something [in the Ukrainian-Russian relationship] that remains immutable—namely, a psychological layer that we are unable to surmount." He then proceeded, unwittingly, to personify the problem by expressing his irritation at the Ukrainian leadership's refusal to conduct its affairs with Russia on the basis of a "special relationship" and a "special history." Kyiv, he insisted, should make a "fraternal grand Slavic gesture" and refrain from constant appeals to its own laws and international norms in conducting negotiations with Moscow. In the Ukrainian-Russian case, he said, international law had to be applied "creatively."[7] In Kyiv, of course, the term *special relationship*, when it is voiced by an official from Moscow, inevitably conjures up the image of the "younger brother" who should behave in accordance with his prescribed subservient role. The pattern is well established in Ukrainian humor. When Russians and Ukrainians sit down to divide something up, so the story goes, the Russian side always proposes that the loot be parceled out in a fraternal manner; the Ukrainians, however, prefer that it be done on an equitable basis.

Some observers explain this dynamic and, indeed, the entire Ukrainian-Russian conundrum in terms of the "Pereyaslav complex," which takes its name from the 1654 agreement between the two sides. Professor Semen Appatov of Odesa University describes this phenomenon as ingrained "stereotyped thinking" of Ukrainian and Russian leaders as well as sizable segments of both societies. Briefly stated, the Ukrainians, based on their historical experience with the Russians, are suspicious of their motives and see Russia as the main threat to Ukraine's independence. The Russians, in turn, continue to view Ukraine as part of a single whole that has temporarily lost its way but inevitably will return to where it belongs.[8] The "Pereyaslav complex" as a shorthand guide to understanding Ukrainian-Russian relations is fine as it

stands, although we need to delve somewhat deeper. It is quite true that many Ukrainians do not trust Moscow, but just as many or perhaps more Poles, Hungarians, Czechs, Chinese, and others feel more or less the same way. It is equally true that many Russians refuse to accept Ukraine as a legitimate entity, but the Ukrainian-Russian connection did not begin in Pereyaslav.

Aleksandr Bovin, a former diplomat and political commentator who conducted the *Izvestia* interview with Kuchma, apparently found the concept of a "divorce syndrome" useful and returned to it in an article entitled "Problems in Relations with Ukraine Remain."[9] Noting "the emotional background against which practically all of us [Russians] view relations with Ukraine," Bovin confessed that intellectually he understands that Ukraine is independent and that Crimea and Sevastopol are now in a foreign country but that emotionally he is unable to deal with these realities.[10] "Maybe I'm wrong," he asserted, "but I have the feeling that a considerable part of the Russian elite simply cannot part with this syndrome." If this is indeed the case, then the outlook for Ukrainian-Russian relations is not very encouraging. The problem, as Bovin points out, is that surmounting the divorce syndrome is a key prerequisite for the solution of all outstanding disagreements between Kyiv and Moscow. The choices that he poses leave no room for ambiguity or ambivalence.

> Either, or. Either we feel that the separation of Ukraine is an historical misunderstanding, a regrettable, temporary accident, that there is a realistic possibility of changing the course of events or, at a minimum, imposing our will on Kyiv—and then we can and should conduct a brutal, forceful course with respect to Ukraine. Or, after all, we come to the conclusion that, in the foreseeable future, there is no going back, that Ukraine is a truly independent and truly sovereign state that has the "right" to its own policies that correspond to its own interests—and then it follows that we learn how to live with that kind of Ukraine.[11]

Dmitrii Furman, one of a handful of Russian academics specializing in Ukrainian issues, also sees the intangible as a core problem in the Ukrainian-Russian relationship: "Grasping the realities, shaking off the nationalist mythology—that is the way to deliverance from the painful Russian and Ukrainian psychological complexes and the psychological tension in Russian-Ukrainian relations."[12]

"Historical misunderstanding," "temporary accident," "divorce syndrome," "psychological complexes," "special relationship"—let us explore a bit further to see whether we can decipher what all of this might mean.

THE HISTORICAL LEGACY

Why should the Ukrainian-Russian divorce be any different, more complicated, or more painful than the other divorces that took place at the end of

1991? Writing several weeks after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Len Karpinskii, then chief editor of *Moskovskie novosti*, listed several reasons that the Belovezh accords that created the CIS should be viewed as a positive development. Among them was what he termed the "Ukrainian factor"—specifically, that the CIS was "the only way to block and prevent the complete severance of Russia from Ukraine, which would have been a genuine tragedy for Russian national consciousness."[13] The tragedy would have been for those millions of Russians who Karpinskii thought could not imagine the existence of any kind of Russia without Ukraine. This perception emphasizes the degree to which Ukraine is not only and not simply a problem *for* Russia but more importantly also a problem *of* Russia. The defining characteristic of the Ukrainian-Russian divorce syndrome is that when Ukraine declared its independence, it initiated divorce proceedings not only against the USSR but also against what many Russians perceived to be "Russia." Without straying too far afield into the rather complex business of what constitutes Russian national identity, suffice it to say that in the Russian public mind, such notions as the Soviet Union and Russia often were and remain interchangeable.[14] In this context, let us recall that the RSFSR did not declare its independence from the Soviet Union, which was not entirely fortuitous.

Nonetheless, this still does not satisfactorily explain why, for example, the Azerbaijani or the Estonian divorces were not perceived as personal Russian tragedies. Why, as one observer has noted, did the collapse of the Soviet Union evoke in the Russians the syndrome of the jilted spouse specifically with regard to the Ukrainians but not the other non-Russian members of the "Soviet family of nations"?[15] The answer is, to a large extent, historical. As Szporluk has pointed out, in imperial Russia Ukrainians (and Belarusians) were viewed as integral component parts of a greater Russian nation, a characteristic that set them apart from all of the other non-Russians of the former Soviet Union. While few Russians would deny that Azerbaijanis are Azerbaijanis or Estonians are Estonians, many Russians question the very existence of Ukrainians and Belarusians.[16] Historically, mainstream Russian political thought viewed Ukraine as the Little Russian province of Russia and Ukrainians as the Little Russian branch of the larger all-Russian (*obshcherusskaya*) nation. Writing in 1912, Petr Struve, one of the leading representatives of modern Russian liberal democracy, articulated the prevailing view of the Ukrainian-Russian relationship as follows:

> I am deeply convinced that, alongside all-Russian culture and the all-Russian language, Little Russian or Ukrainian culture is a local or regional culture. This position of the "Little Russian" culture and the "Little Russian" language has been determined by the entire course of the historical development of Russia and can be changed only by the total demolition not only of the historically developed structure of Russian statehood, but of Russian society as well.[17]

The Ukrainian question in Russia, however, was not a simple problem of ethnography and language. Struve explained:

> If the "Ukrainian" idea of the [Ukrainian] intelligentsia takes root in the masses and ignites them with its "Ukrainianism," it threatens a gigantic and unprecedented schism of the Russian nation, which, such is my deepest conviction, will result in veritable disaster for the state and for the people. All of our problems with the "periphery" will become mere trifles compared to the prospect of the "bifurcation" and—should the "Belorussians" follow the "Little Russians"—the "trifurcation" of Russian culture.[18]

To counter this development, Struve called on progressive public opinion in Russia to "initiate an ideological struggle against 'Ukrainianism' as a tendency that [aims] to weaken and, in part, even to abolish the great attainment of our history—all-Russian culture."[19] Another prominent Russian political thinker, the philosopher Georgii Fedotov, also understood the "Ukrainian idea" as essentially destructive of the Russian state, society, and culture: "It is a question not only of the political structure of Russia and its boundaries, but of its spiritual life."[20] Writing in 1929, he sensed that time may be running out.

> The problem [of Ukraine] is too complex for it to be treated in detail here. But the very existence of Russia depends on its successful resolution. Our task can be formulated as follows: not only to keep Ukraine in the body of Russia, but also to implant Ukrainian culture into Russian culture. We are witnessing a very rapid and for us an extremely dangerous process: the conception of a new Ukrainian national consciousness, essentially a new nation. . . . It is impossible to kill it, but one can work so that its consciousness establishes itself as a special form of Russian [*russkoe*] consciousness.[21]

Neither Struve nor Fedotov could realistically contemplate the notion of an independent Ukrainian state. But a Ukrainian identity separate from an all-Russian identity was sufficient to qualify as a mortal danger to both the Russian nation and the state. What this suggests is that Russians had an identity problem long before the Soviet Union fell apart and that Ukraine was very much a part of that problem.

Clearly, the tasks that Struve and Fedotov urged their countrymen to undertake to neutralize the perceived threat to Russia emanating from the "Ukrainian idea" were not completed—either by the imperial Russian regime or by its Soviet successor. The Bolsheviks, according to one view, made a fatal mistake from the very start by administratively organizing the Soviet state—which, with some adjustments, did not look very different from the pre-1917 Russian Empire—along ethnic lines and in a hierarchical order determined by what might be termed "national maturity," at the top of which

were the Union republics. As the politician-entrepreneur Arkadii Volskii pointed out some time ago, the founding fathers of the Soviet Union "were obviously romantics when they divided up the territory of Russia into national apartments instead of [administrative] states and provinces."[22] Stated differently, Lenin should have paid more attention to his resident expert on the national question, Joseph Stalin, who had very little use for all of these pseudoindependent "Soviet republics." This may well have precluded the "parade of sovereignties" that began in 1990 and soon thereafter resulted in the demise of the Soviet Union.

The "national apartments" remained, but the romanticism faded. The experiments of the 1920s along the lines of "national in form and socialist in content" did not last very long. The Soviet leadership, aided by learned academicians, developed the concept of the "Soviet people" as a "new historical community," which was widely understood, particularly by the non-Russians, as an attempt to create a new nation on the territory of the USSR that spoke primarily Russian. As survey research in eastern and southern Ukraine shows, the effort was not entirely without success. What the final product would have looked like had it not been for Gorbachev's perestroika and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union is difficult to say—which brings us to the present moment insofar as the problem of Russian national identity and the role that Ukraine and Ukrainians play in defining that identity. On the one hand, the Soviet Union—the "second Russian state," as Igor Chubais calls it[23]—was rather abruptly terminated, thereby interrupting once again the process of Russian nation building. To correct this problem, Yeltsin set up a government commission in 1997, a search committee of sorts, that was charged with finding a winning formula for the "Russian idea." Thus far, the experts have come up largely empty-handed.[24] On the other hand, it is becoming clear that the only formula that seems to be making any headway places primary emphasis on the old ingredients—namely, Ukraine and Belarus as the "missing links" required to make "Russia" complete.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

When Gennadii Seleznev, the head of the State Duma, the lower house of Russia's parliament, addressed Ukrainian lawmakers in September 1998 during an official visit to Kyiv, he proposed that Ukraine join Russia and Belarus in a "union of three," which, he predicted, would be hailed as "the main event of the outgoing 20th century." Seleznev claimed not to understand why his Ukrainian colleagues showed little enthusiasm for the proposal and assured them that if a referendum were held in Russia, nearly 70 per cent would vote for a union with Ukraine.[25] Yeltsin, too, was baffled by Ukraine's reluctance to integrate with its two East Slavic neighbors, claiming that his Ukrai-

nian counterpart would like to join Russia and Belarus in a new state formation "but that something is hindering him."[26]

Although Russia's first president was famous for his sometimes strange statements and erratic behavior, this belies either a strong dose of wishful thinking or serious flaws in his perception of Ukrainian realities—or both. Although Moscow would prefer that it were not so, Kuchma is not Alyaksandr Lukashenka, the president of Belarus, and the Ukrainian political class is not prepared to yield its newly won status and privileges in exchange for the equivalent of Russian provincial posts. On the contrary, Ukrainian political elites seem to be quite content now that they are no longer required to ask Moscow's permission for everything ranging from building a toilet at the railway station in Chop to attending an ecological conference in Budapest.[27] The population as a whole, particularly in the eastern and southern regions, does not share the enthusiasm of its leaders on this score. But, as we shall see, this does not automatically translate into an unambiguous desire to unite with Russia.

One of the important factors at work here is that the potential for political and social instability is perceived to be greater in Russia than in Ukraine.[28] Stated differently, mothers in Ukraine are not wildly enthusiastic about sending their sons to Chechnya or Tajikistan. More important perhaps is the long-term perspective—namely, that the younger generation has its own views, priorities, and values, which often do not coincide with those of its elders. The problem was summed up nicely by a participant in a Moscow roundtable at the end of 1998 devoted to the previous year's foreign policy gains and losses and prospects for the future:

> It is said sometimes: the elite will go and be replaced by their children and it is they who will come back [to the fold]. I think, quite the contrary. If the former comrades-in-arms of the Politburo—and, in effect, all of them are comrades-in-arms of one Politburo, including Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin—are unable to come to terms while still speaking Russian, then their Harvard-educated, English-speaking children certainly will not.[29]

Even in Belarus, survey research indicates that young people have diverse views about the desirability of integration.[30] Particularly interesting is the finding that unlike the older generation, which maintains a largely Soviet identity, more than two-thirds of Belarusian youth identify themselves with Belarus.[31] Once again, time is running out.

Neither Yeltsin, nor Seleznev, nor any other Russian leader have offered anything approximating a logical or coherent argument as to why Ukraine's integration or unification with Russia and Belarus would be a good thing for all concerned or, at the very least, for Russia. Admittedly, given the fact that all manner of integration schemes within the CIS have thus far proved to be

unworkable,[32] it may well be that such arguments simply do not exist. What Seleznev has suggested, however, is that the "awkwardness" that Russians apparently feel without Ukraine at their side would be relieved if the latter joined Russia in some sort of union. Yeltsin said something along similar lines in an address to his countrymen at the end of 1997: "It is impossible to tear from our hearts that Ukrainians are our own people. That is our destiny—our common destiny."[33] To round out the picture, we should take note of one of the relatively infrequent occasions when former prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin expressed his views on the subject: "Ukraine is not only a neighbor state to us. It is part of our soul, and we want to be together with it all the time, without infringing upon its sovereignty."[34] It would seem, therefore, that the hoped for Ukrainian-Russian union is intended to correct some sort of *Russian* disorder or problem. What the Ukrainian side stands to gain from the proposed joint enterprise is not entirely clear. Be that as it may, it is interesting to note that the majority of Russians agree with their leaders. A nationwide poll conducted in Russia in the fall of 1997 recorded that 56 percent of respondents felt that Russians and Ukrainians are "one people."[35] Presumably, it was this source of potential support that Boris Fedorov—a former deputy prime minister and minister of finance who has been in and out of several Russian governments and who is widely respected in the West as a staunch democrat and principled market reformer—had in mind when he suggested that if he were chosen to head the government, he would seek to amend the constitution to enshrine legally Russia's "aspiration to reunite with Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan."[36]

The fact that Yeltsin, Chernomyrdin, or even Seleznev have not articulated their understanding of the Ukrainian-Russian connection beyond sound bites is perhaps understandable given the political etiquette and tact that is expected of prominent officeholders.[37] Less understandable is the apparent inability of contemporary Russian political figures who are not burdened by the constraints of high office to go beyond the standard formulations developed by the classics on "Ukrainian separatism" when conveying their views on the subject.[38]

Gennadii Zyuganov, for example, who is not only head of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation with presidential ambitions but also a doctor of philosophical sciences who is inclined to polemicize with the likes of Arnold Toynbee and Samuel Huntington, explains that the "single Russian civilization" has been divided into three parts:

> In essence, this is a problem of our viability. How it will be solved will determine whether or not our Fatherland will be what it has always been—a unique, distinctive, and self-sufficient civilization. That is precisely why the second strategic task—after the internal consolidation of all healthy political forces—is the task of a new reunification of Ukraine and Belorussia with Russia.[39]

The similarity to Struve's argument almost a century earlier is more than apparent. Zyuganov admits that reunification with Ukraine is considerably more problematic than reunification with Belarus. The problems are twofold. First, the West in general and the United States in particular are determined to "completely tear Ukraine away from Russia and make it into a buffer between Europe and 'unpredictable' Moscow." The main culprit here is Henry Kissinger, whose Russophobic ideas are seen as having taken hold in Washington. Second, the Ukrainian political establishment is split into two camps—"Independists" ["*Samostiiniki*"] and "Little Russians"—and, unfortunately, it is the former, who are mainly from Western Ukraine, that are currently setting the political agenda in Kyiv. In spite of these difficulties, Zyuganov is convinced that in due time everything will revert to its natural state, above all, because of "the sympathies of the basic mass of the Ukrainian people, who understand very well that together with the Great Russians and Belorussians they belong to the single Orthodox all-Russian culture."[40] Above and beyond any other questions that may be posed here—for example, the rather odd assertion that Western Ukrainians control the levers of power in Kyiv—one wonders what any of this has to do with "communism."

Aleksandr Lebed, who unlike Zyuganov has not written a doctoral thesis and does not like to waste words but who was once considered the favorite to replace Yeltsin, is of the opinion that what has happened in the aftermath of the breakup of the Soviet Union is the "completely artificial division of two parts [Russian and Ukrainian] of one people," which will soon be reunited in a confederation.

> Whereas something can still be said about the Baltic states, Russians, Ukrainians, and Belorussians are people from one root, with essentially one language—we understand each other without an interpreter. We are the heirs to one faith, one military glory. They took one people and tore it up in an artificial fashion.[41]

Another former general and the former vice president of Russia, Aleksandr Rutskoi, who, proceeding from the decisions of the October 1993 Congress of Russian People's Deputies, insists that he is the legitimate president of Russia, is convinced that all of Russia's problems will be solved through unification with Ukraine and Belarus:

> If we want peace, prosperity, and happiness for today's living and for future generations, if we want to save the Fatherland from being divided up and from the dividers, if we want to survive on the holy land of our forefathers as a great and free people—the Russian State [*Derzhava*] must be restored within its natural boundaries: historical, geopolitical, ethnic. The basis for this process must be the reunification of the three fraternal peoples—Great Russians, Little Russians, and Belorussians—within the framework of a single Russian state.[42]

The list of Russian politicians, prominent and not so prominent, who insist that Ukraine and Ukrainians are not legitimate entities and that they need to return to their "natural state"—that is, unity with Russia and the Russians—is not unimpressive. Georgii Tikhonov explained that the State Duma's Committee on the CIS and Ties with Compatriots, which he headed until recently, had one main task: "To gather the Great Mother Rus and, to that end, prepare the necessary legal groundwork."[43] It follows logically, therefore, that he and his colleagues recommended that the Ukrainian-Russian bilateral treaty that was concluded in May 1997 not be ratified because it "totally does not reflect the specificity of Russian-Ukrainian ties and establishes a false ideology, the essence of which is that Russians and Ukrainians are considered to be two historical subjects primordially separate from each other."[44] Viktor Aksyuchits, the head of the Russian Christian Democratic Movement and, curiously, an adviser to former deputy prime minister Boris Nemtsov, argues that Ukrainians and Belarusians are actually Russians to such a degree that they should not be considered Slavs in the same sense as Poles or Serbs because this distracts from the fact that they are actually Russians. "History," he writes, "does not know either the Ukrainian or Belorussian nations or the 'sovereign' states of Ukraine and Belorussia."[45] Mikhail Yurev, a former deputy speaker of the State Duma and a member of Grigorii Yavlinskii's reformist Yabloko movement, feels that because Ukraine and Belarus are fictional entities, the question should not be posed in terms of their integration or consolidation with Russia but rather "in terms of returning these lands to the Russian Federation on conditions analogous to those of, say, Tataria."[46]

Most of these postulates may be found in a report entitled "The CIS: The Beginning or the End of History?" written by Konstantin Zatulin and Andranik Migranyan, which was published in abridged form in *Nezavisimaya gazeta* in the spring of 1997. The report maps out a strategy for a "single zone of Russian state building" that would encompass either all or significant portions of Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, without which its authors foresee the disintegration of Russia. Insofar as Ukraine is concerned, Zatulin and Migranyan proceed from the following basic assumptions: (1) Ukrainians as a single, developed nation do not exist and have never existed; (2) Ukraine is a "non-historical formation"; (3) "Ukrainianism" is a Western Ukrainian phenomenon; (4) Ukrainian protostatehood rests on a foundation of anti-Russian policies sponsored and financed by the West; (5) the existence of Ukraine constitutes a "permanent challenge" to Russia; and (6) the remedy for Russian-Ukrainian relations is "brutal therapy," which may require facilitating the collapse of the Ukrainian state.[47] It should be pointed out that the authors of this scenario do not represent the lunatic fringe of the Russian political spectrum. Zatulin is a former head of the State Duma's Committee on CIS Affairs and Ties with Compatriots. He was in the leadership of the centrist

Party of Russian Unity and Accord (PRES), which also included former deputy prime ministers Sergei Shakhrai and Aleksandr Shokhin, and is currently an adviser to Moscow mayor Yurii Luzhkov. Migranyan is a well-known political scientist and commentator who served on Yeltsin's Presidential Council.

To sum up, there is a current in contemporary Russian political thought whose representatives can be found on the right, left, and center of the political spectrum and whose perception of Ukraine and Ukrainian-Russian relations essentially mirrors the officially ideology of the pre-1917 Russian regime. This perception holds that Ukraine is historically an organic and integral part of Russia—not only in the territorial sense but culturally, linguistically, and spiritually as well. From this it follows that an independent Ukraine is unnatural, an unfortunate result of circumstance, some sort of terrible mistake or misunderstanding, perhaps even an anti-Russian plot concocted by hostile outside forces, and that in due time this abnormal state of affairs will be corrected and everything will return to "normal." Furthermore, the raison d'être of this approach has little if anything to do with concrete political, economic, or geostrategic considerations but with something considerably less tangible—namely, the conviction that the Russian nation and Russian statehood are themselves unnatural or incomplete without Ukraine (and Belarus).[48] The reunification of the two Germanys after the Cold War offers the adherents of this view what is considered to be a perfectly reasonable analogy for the remedy of this specifically Russian problem. Evgenii Kozhokin, director of the Russian Institute of Strategic Studies, explains:

> Proceeding from the position of the imperial syndrome of the Russians, variants are sought so as to restrict or curb it. For example, they advance the following premise: an independent Ukraine is a precondition for the democratic development of Russia. The premise is false by its very nature. The unification of Russia and Ukraine can be accomplished only by democratic means. And this unification is one of the foreign policy goals of Russia just as the unification of the FRG and the GDR [West and East Germany] was for many years a foreign policy goal of democratic Germany.[49]

What is particularly striking about this argument is the assumption that the basis for the analogy—that is, that the Ukrainians and Russians are a single nation divided by two states just as the single German nation was divided between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic—is taken for granted to the extent that it requires absolutely no commentary or explanation.

Certainly one of the more serious problems with this scheme, as Zyuganov, Aksyuchits, and others are fully aware, is that Western Ukraine does not fit

the paradigm. The well-known philosopher Aleksandr Tsipko, who was one of the foremost proponents of the restoration of "historical Russia," understood from very early on that Western Ukraine "has absolutely nothing to do with this [Russian and Soviet] history."[50] According to Tsipko, territories like Western Ukraine that were forcibly annexed to the Soviet Union on the eve of World War II are "morally and psychologically alienated from everything Russian and Soviet."[51] For some Russians, the "solution" to this problem has been to declare the Western Ukrainians "a separate East Slavic people."[52] From this perspective, Western Ukraine is not really "Ukrainian" and, therefore, it cannot really be "Russian."

THE "INFORMATION GAP"

The burden of the historical legacy on the Ukrainian-Russian relationship is compounded by the fact that, with few exceptions, there has been little effort, either in the mass media or in academic publications, to reexamine and reconsider the historical record and, more broadly, to approach the subject from a fresh perspective. As one Moscow participant in a roundtable noted:

> One huge inequality [between Russia and Ukraine] has, at any rate, been retained, which is a consequence of the long-standing political inequality. The Ukrainians know Russia, but the Russians [*russkie*] and the Russians [*rossiyane*] in general do not know Ukraine or know it superficially; they know it, under the best of circumstances, on the basis of textbooks of a history that was falsified.[53]

There are no functioning academic centers or institutes for Ukrainian studies in Russia, a country that is estimated to count among its citizens between four and ten million ethnic Ukrainians.[54] Ukrainian history in Russia's leading university is not treated as a separate subject but incorporated into "the general course on the history of the fatherland."[55] Book-length publications on Ukrainian history, politics, or Russian-Ukrainian relations are a rarity. This contrasts sharply with the situation in Poland, a country whose historical connection to Ukraine is in many ways similar to that of Russia's, where in the early 1990s at least ten Polish universities offered Ukrainian programs.[56] Survey histories of Ukraine were published in Poland in the 1970s, and publishing houses in Warsaw, Kraków, Lublin, and elsewhere steadily churn out a stream of titles on a variety of Ukrainian and Ukrainian-Polish themes. As one commentator has observed, a major factor that explains the glaring contrast between contemporary Ukrainian-Polish and Ukrainian-Russian relations is that Russia never had "its [Jerzy] Giedroyc nor its *Kultura*, which would be capable of interpreting the Ukrainian problem as, above all, internal-psychological rather than external-political."[57] Indeed,

not only was there no Russian equivalent of *Kultura*. Instead, as Anatolii Strelyanyi points out, the "songs of the Western Slavs"—that is, the ideas coming from Paris, Berlin, and other centers of the post-1917 Russian emigration, which became widely popular in Russia during the perestroika era, continued to propagate the established ideology of the czarist regime.[58]

A study that focused on the image of Ukraine and Ukrainians in the Russian press after the collapse of the Soviet Union found that, in spite of the overwhelming popular vote for Ukrainian independence in December 1991, the prevailing trend in the ensuing years was to portray the emergence of an independent Ukraine in almost conspiratorial terms—that is, as the work of "nationalist" or "sovereign communist" elites who succeeded in thwarting the "correct" instincts of the broad masses. The result, according to the author, is a deformed perception in the Russian popular mind that political elites in Ukraine are essentially the only obstacle that prevented the simple folk from having realized their heartfelt desire to join Russia. The study concludes that, for the most part, "Russian public opinion and the mass media evade serious discussion of the problems that are posed for Russian identity in connection with the formation of an independent Ukraine. A significant spectrum of public opinion continues to view the separation of Ukraine as something artificial and temporary."[59]

At the end of 1997, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, which is probably the only Moscow newspaper that regularly informs its readers about developments in the former Soviet republics, began publishing a monthly supplement called *Sodruzhestvo NG*, which is entirely devoted to analytical articles on developments in the former Soviet republics. Given the fact that *Nezavisimaya gazeta* is widely recognized as a serious newspaper, it came as something of a surprise that editorial control and overall direction of the supplement was entrusted to the Institute of the CIS Countries, whose director is Zatulin. The Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has declared Zatulin, a self-proclaimed "admirer of empire," persona non grata in Crimea because of his previous activities there. He is probably best known in Ukraine for his statement that he saw little reason to recognize "the historically nonexistent borders of an historically nonexistent state [Ukraine]."[60]

The results were predictable. In October 1998, *Nezavisimaya gazeta* severed its ties to the institute after the supplement published a scandalous article by Migranyan comparing Kazakh president Nursultan Nazarbaev to certain former African leaders said to have periodically engaged in cannibalism. The politically incorrect comparison was made in the context of Kazakhstan's purported discrimination of its large Russian minority.[61] Against this background, it is perhaps not entirely surprising that in 1997 a scholarly journal of a prestigious institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences could publish a lengthy two-part article essentially restating one of the central theses of standard works on "Ukrainian separatism" of early twentieth-century vintage—

namely, that Ukrainian nationalism was largely the invention of a small group of intellectuals led by the historian Mykhailo Hrushevsky, who was manipulated by "Polish chauvinists" determined "to set the Little Russians against the Russians and thereby split the Russian Empire from within."[62]

Moving from the mass media and scholarship to the realm of social mores and established patterns of behavior, we find what one commentator describes as the "chronic unseriousness of the Russian view of Ukraine."[63] Already in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, he writes, "there takes shape the notion of Ukraine as a ludicrous place and of Little Russian as burlesque, a parody of Russian." After two hundred or so years of viewing Ukrainians as sort of amusing country folk who are good at dancing and singing and who relish *horilka* with pork fat, "when talking to a Ukrainian you somehow exaggeratedly try to demonstrate that things Ukrainian (language, culture, statehood) do not strike you as amusing." More importantly, these stereotypes easily moved into the political arena. In 1991–92, Ukraine's first president, Leonid Kravchuk, was a favorite target of the Russian press in a way that would have been unimaginable if directed at leaders of the other non-Russian republics such as Zviad Gamsakhurdia of Georgia or Vytautas Landsbergis of Lithuania. The composite image of the Ukrainian president was that of a "flimflam man," a "clever swindler" who is, by his very nature as a Ukrainian, a hapless operator who is simple enough to get caught up in his own ridiculous schemes—in this case, independence.

The issue here, of course, is not Kravchuk as such, but the outlandish idea that anyone could seriously entertain the notion of being president of a place called Ukraine, which, after all, is not a real place but rather a term that denotes the outskirts of someplace else. In some sense, the essence of the problem was perfectly expressed by Auntie Motya, a character in one of Mykola Kulish's plays set against the background of the debate about the ukrainianization campaign in the 1920s: "Are you going to be serious, or do you insist on speaking Ukrainian?" Auntie Motya's take on the Ukrainian language is not far removed from the views of Dmitrii Rogozin, the leader of a political movement called the Congress of Russian Communities and now the head of the State Duma's Committee on International Affairs, who sees himself as representing the future of Russia. For Rogozin, Ukraine and Ukrainian history are quite simply nonsense.

> So-called Ukrainian statehood is now strong only because of a few nationalists from the western provinces [*gubernii*]. . . . To establish a state philosophy is not the same thing as to sit down three learned Jews and force them to write a textbook for illiterates on the history of the Ukrainian liberation movement analogous to *The Short Course of the VKP(b)*.[64]

It is not entirely clear what Jews have to do with anything in this particular context. Is Rogozin suggesting that ethnic Ukrainian historians are incapable

of writing textbooks? Or perhaps that all historians in Ukraine are Jews? Whatever the case may be, the element of total disdain is unmistakable. Is this a unique Ukrainian-Russian phenomenon? Probably not. One can sit in a cafe in Munich and overhear a conversation punctuated by the phrase *polnische Wirtschaft*—namely, something that is stupid, does not work, and has no place in any "real" country, but at the same time is rather comical by its very nature.

Already in 1915, Vladimir Vernadsky, the first president of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, who described himself as a man of "Russian culture and customs," sensed that the combination of government persecution of the Ukrainian language, ingrained stereotypes, and, perhaps most importantly, disinterest on the part of Russian society in what was happening in Ukraine was extremely dangerous—above all, for Russia.[65] He urged that practical measures be taken, including special publications about the Ukrainian movement by Russian scholars and public figures and the introduction of Ukrainian studies in Russian universities and appropriate courses in the system of secondary education, all of which was intended to preclude what Vernadsky saw had already taken hold among Poles in the Russian Empire—namely, complete rejection of Russia.

NOTES

1. *Izvestia* (Moscow evening ed.), 15 January 1993, listed ten "difficult barriers" separating Russia and Ukraine on the eve of a presidential summit in Moscow.

2. For the texts of the three agreements and the protocol signed by the then prime ministers Pavlo Lazarenko and Viktor Chernomyrdin, see A. V. Zagorskii, ed., *Rossiisko-ukrainskie otnosheniya 1990–1997 gg. Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow: Ministerstvo inostranykh del Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Moskovskii gosudarstvennyi institut mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii [universitet] MID Rossiiskoi Federatsii, 1998), 158–70. For an analysis, see James Sherr, "Russia–Ukraine *Rapprochement*? The Black Sea Fleet Accords," *Survival* 39, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 33–50. The agreements were ratified in March and June 1999 by the Ukrainian and Russian parliaments, respectively.

3. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 20 February 1997 and 5 February 1997, respectively.

4. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 28 February 1998.

5. Kissinger had already made this observation six years earlier in his "The New Russian Question," *Newsweek* (international ed.), 10 February 1992, 35.

6. See Aleksandr Bovin's interview with Kuchma in *Izvestia*, 24 February 1998.

7. See Oleg Medvedev's interview with Ryurikov in *Kievskie vedomosti*, 28 April 1995.

8. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 24 May 1994. See also John Morrison, "Pereyaslav and After: The Russian-Ukrainian Relationship," *International Affairs* 69, no. 4 (1993): 677–703.

9. *Izvestia*, 5 March 1998.

10. Similarly, the well-known writer Lev Kopelev remarked shortly before his

death that he "simply cannot fathom that Kyiv is 'abroad.' " See Oleksandr Pavlov's interview with Kopelev in *Den'*, 25 June 1997.

11. *Izvestia*, 5 March 1998.

12. Dmitrii Furman, "Russkie i ukraintsy: trudnye otnosheniya brat'ev," in *Ukraina i Rossiya: Obshchestva i gosudarstva*, ed. Dmitrii Furman (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Prava cheloveka," 1997), 16.

13. *Moskovskie novosti*, 22 December 1991.

14. See Tat'yana Solovei, "Russkoe i sovetskoe v sovremennom samosoznanii russkikh (k postanovke problemy)," in *Identichnost' i konflikt v postsovetskikh gosudarstvakh*, ed. Marta Brill Olkott [Martha Brill Olcott], Valerii Tishkov, and Aleksei Malashenko (Moscow: Moskovskii Tsentr Karnegi, 1997), 346–68.

15. Aleksei Tolpygo, "Oskolki i nasledniki: Ukraino-rossiiskie otnosheniya: konflikt sverkhzadach," *Druzhba narodov* 2 (1995): 150–51.

16. Roman Szporluk, "Belarus', Ukraine and the Russian Question," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 9, no. 4 (October–December 1993): 366. See also his "The Ukraine and Russia," in *The Last Empire: Nationality and the Soviet Future*, ed. Robert Conquest (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1986), 151–82.

17. Petr Struve, "Obshcherusskaya kul'tura i ukrainskii partikulyarizm: Otvet ukraintsu," *Russkaya mysl'* 33, no. 1 (January 1912): 66.

18. Struve, "Obshcherusskaya kul'tura i ukrainskii partikulyarizm," 85.

19. Struve, "Obshcherusskaya kul'tura i ukrainskii partikulyarizm," 86. See Richard Pipes, "Peter Struve and Ukrainian Nationalism," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3/4, pt. 2 (1979–80): 675–83.

20. Georgii Fedotov, "O Mazepe," in *Polnoe sobranie statei v shesti tomakh*, vol. 4: *Zashchita Rossii: Stat'i 1936–1940 iz "Novoi Rossii"* (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1988), 207.

21. Georgii Fedotov, "Budet' li sushchestvovat' Rossiya?" in *Polnoe sobranie statei v shesti tomakh*, vol. 1: *Litso Rossii: Stat'i 1918–1930*, 2d ed. (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1988), 290.

22. *Pravda*, 9 September 1992.

23. Igor' Chubais, "Rossiiskii ideinyi krizis v dvukh aktakh: Ot imperskoi politiki—k filosofii obustroistva," *NG-Stsenarii* 11 (October 1997). On Chubais and others who are searching for a new Russian identity, see Michael Urban, "Remythologising the Russian State," *Europe–Asia Studies* 50, no. 6 (September 1998): 969–92. A very valuable guide to this process is provided by Vera Tolz in her two articles "Conflicting 'Homeland Myths' and Nation-State Building in Postcommunist Russia," *Slavic Review* 57, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 267–94, and "Forging the Nation: National Identity and Nation Building in Post-Communist Russia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 50, no. 6 (September 1998): 993–1022.

24. *New York Times*, 31 March 1998, and Jörg R. Mettke, " 'Was soll aus uns werden?' " *Der Spiegel*, 11 January 1999, 136–40. See also Boris Orlov, "Russland auf der Suche nach einer neuen Identität," *Osteuropa* 49, no. 5 (May 1999): 470–85.

25. Interfax, 28 September 1998.

26. *Financial Times*, 27 March 1996.

27. On the attitude of elites in Ukraine toward independence, see E. I. Golovakha, "Rossiya i Ukraina: Obshchee i osobennoe v massovom i elitarnom tsennostnom soznanii," in *Kuda idet Rossiya? Obshchee i osobennoe v sovremennom razvitii: Mezhdunarod-*

nyi simpozium 17–19 yanvarya 1997 g., ed. T. I. Zaslavskaya (Moscow: Moskovskaya vysshaya shkola sotsial'nykh i ekonomicheskikh nauk, Mezhdistsiplinarnii akademicheskii tsentr sotsial'nykh nauk [Intertsentr], 1997), 288, and Aleksei Chernysh, "Ukraina i problema separatizma," *Svobodnaya mysl'* 5 (1997): 61–62.

28. *Kommersant-Daily*, 12 August 1995, and Steven A. Grant, *Ukrainian Elites View Their Country and the World: Results of a Focus Group Study*, R-8–96 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Information Agency, Office of Research and Media Reaction, [December] 1996), 29.

29. "Russian Foreign Policy: Amidst the Economic Crisis," *International Affairs* (Moscow) 45, no. 1 (1999): 70.

30. Zh. T. Toshchenko, "Kak zhit' vmeste, zhivya vroz' (Problemy postsovetskogo prostranstva)," *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya* 3 (1996): 11. In fact, as Andrei Piontkovsky points out, Lukashenka's enthusiasm for unification with Russia should not be mistaken for his readiness to abandon Belarusian independence. See his "Who Lost Belarus?" *Jamestown Foundation Prism*, 29 January 1999.

31. See Nancy Popson's summary of a presentation on "Generations in Belarus" at the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies by Larissa Titarenko of Belarus State University on 25 January 1999 in the Institute's *Meeting Report* 16, no. 11 (1999).

32. At the aforementioned foreign policy roundtable, Sergei Karaganov, deputy director of the Institute of Europe of the Russian Academy of Sciences and head of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, stated forthrightly, "I think, last year made us say goodbye to yet another illusion. I mean the illusion that it is possible to integrate the former Soviet space and to create an integrated entity on the basis of the CIS." See "Russian Foreign Policy," 69.

33. For the text, see Zagorskii, *Rossiisko-ukrainskie otnosheniya 1990–1997*, 48–50.

34. ITAR-TASS, 4 July 1996.

35. Interfax, 27 October 1997. In June 1993, a poll conducted among Russia's urban population yielded a 63 percent affirmative response to the same question. See *Novoe vremya* 37 (September 1993): 6.

36. *Izvestia*, 25 October 1994.

37. At the end of 1992, Yeltsin said that he was preparing a "very serious document" that would express his vision of the future of the Russian state and would proceed from the basic thesis that Russia is a unique country. See V. Starkov's interview with Yeltsin in *Argumenty i fakty* 42 (October 1992). As far as can be determined, this work has not yet appeared.

38. For a representative sample of this genre, see the collection of works compiled by M. B. Smolin, *Ukrainskii separatizm v Rossii: Ideologiya natsional'nogo raskola: Sbornik* (Moscow: Redaktsiya zhurnala "Moskva," 1998).

39. Gennadii Zyuganov, *Geografiya pobedy: Osnovy rossiiskoi geopolitiki* (Moscow: n. p., 1997), 248–49.

40. Zyuganov, *Geografiya pobedy*, 250–52.

41. See Natal'ya Kuznetsova's interview with Lebed in *Kievskie vedomosti*, 28 August 1995.

42. *Kievskie vedomosti*, 9 September 1995, quoting from Rutskoi's book *Obretenie very* (1995).

43. See Boris Krotkov's interview with Tikhonov in *Delovoi mir*, 6 February 1997.

44. *Kievskie vedomosti*, 21 July 1998.

45. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 27 February 1997.

46. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 30 March 1996.

47. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 26 March 1997.

48. The *New York Times*, 28 March 1999, reported that the Russian Ministry of Defense newspaper *Krasnaya zvezda* argued that the NATO campaign in Kosovo showed that no one was interested in a "great Russia," a situation that could be changed by unification with Ukraine and Belarus and the restoration of the Soviet Union.

49. *Obshchaya gazeta*, 28 December 1995–3 January 1996. In 1994, Migranyan argued that German reunification was a suitable model for the entire post-Soviet space. See his "Sny ob SNG," *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 14 September 1994.

50. See my interview with Tsipko in *Ukraine: From Chernobyl' to Sovereignty*, ed. Roman Solchanyk (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), 133. In the aftermath of the first invasion of Chechnya, Tsipko, completely disillusioned, made an about-face with regard to his views on the Ukrainian-Russian relationship: "If Ukraine and Belorussia want to preserve a chance for democratic development, for normal national development, and, in the final analysis—for survival, they should stay as far away from today's Moscow as possible." See *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 9 December 1994.

51. *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, 9 July 1991.

52. Anatolii Glivakovskii, *Samostiinaya Ukraina: Istoki predatel'stva: Politologicheskie ocherki* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo NRPR "Khors," 1992), 22.

53. *NG-Ststenarii* 7 (June 1997).

54. In an interview in *Den'*, 2 March 1999, Yurii Dubinin, Russia's ambassador in Kyiv at the time, speaking in the context of meeting the needs of the Ukrainian minority in Russia, mentioned that a Ukrainian institute had been opened as an autonomous part of the Moscow Pedagogical Institute and that there was "active work on establishing a Ukrainian university." Representatives of the Institute for the Study of the Diaspora in Kyiv published a polite rejoinder in *Den'*, 11 March 1999, essentially saying that Dubinin's assertions were wishful thinking.

55. Ludmila Kuz'micheva, lecturer at Moscow State University, in *Kievskie vedomosti*, 28 May 1997.

56. Roman Szporluk, "Reflections on Ukraine after 1994: The Dilemmas of Nationhood," *Harriman Review* 7, nos. 7–9 (March–May 1994): 6.

57. Mykola Ryabchuk, "Podolannya mynuloho," *Den'*, 24 April 1997. On the role of the Paris-based *Kultura* and its chief editor in the Ukrainian-Polish *rapprochement*, see Roman Szporluk, "*Kultura*: Bridging Ukrainian-Polish Relations," *ACE* 9, no. 8 (August 1997): 12, 15.

58. Anatolii Strelyanyi, "Pesni zapadnykh slavyan. Mysli o russkom natsional'nom soznanii," *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 8 August 1990.

59. A. I. Miller, "Obraz Ukrainy i ukraintsev v rossiiskoi presse posle raspada SSSR," *Politicheskie issledovaniya* 2 (1996): 135.

60. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 24 March 1995.

61. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 30 October 1998.

62. S. M. Samuilov, "O nekotorykh amerikanskikh stereotipakh v otnoshenii Ukrainy," *SShA—Ekonomika, politika, ideologiya* 3 (1997): 89. See the rejoinder by A.

Garan' [O. Haran'], "O 'rasizme' Grushevskogo i ukrainskom natsionalizme kak 'pol'skoi intrige,' " *SShA—Ekonomika, politika, ideologiya* 1 (1998): 125–27.

63. Artemii Levchenko, "Russko-ukrainskie khlopoty," *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 13 November 1992.

64. Aleksandr Mishkin's interview with Rogozin in *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 14 August 1999.

65. V. I. Vernads'kyi, "Ukrains'ke pytannya i rosiis'ka hromads'kist'," *Vitchyzna* 6 (1988): 172–77. The essay was first published in the Ukrainian Komsomol newspaper *Moloda hvardiya*, 12 March 1988, and subsequently in *Druzhba narodov* 3 (1990): 247–54.

2

Ukraine, Russia, and the Center

> Maybe Russia should secede from the [Soviet] Union.
>
> —Valentin Rasputin, 6 June 1989

> Some of the deputies, frantically pushing for the complete sovereignty of Russia at the [Russian] Congress [of People's Deputies] are not taking into consideration what kind of response their separatist passions and moods will strike in the hearts of the Ukrainians or the Belorussians.
>
> —Aleksandr Tsipko, *Izvestia* (Moscow evening ed.), 26 May 1990

> The specificity of the RSFSR, unlike the other fourteen Union states, is that in Russia it is impossible to even theoretically pose the question "of seceding from the USSR." There is nowhere to go!
>
> —Ruslan Khasbulatov, *Izvestia* (Moscow evening ed.), 24 September 1990

At some point in 1988 and certainly by 1989, a new lexicon in the Soviet political language emerged, quite simply and almost indeterminably. In the context of Gorbachev's "new thinking" and perestroika, politicians, academics, and journalists began talking about the "center" and the "republics," and in short order the political process in the Soviet Union began to revolve precisely around these concepts. Obviously, there had always been a center in Moscow and there were republics of various kinds, but both categories functioned as a single whole, which was neatly encapsulated in the political slogan "the indestructible Union."

It was entirely within this established framework that Gorbachev, during his trip to Ukraine in February 1989, proposed the formula "a strong center and strong republics" as the guiding principle for finding the optimal balance between the rights of the Soviet federation and those of the republics. A "big step" in this direction, according to the Soviet leader, was the decision to elaborate ideas of "self-management" and "self-financing" for the republics.[1]

As in other areas, Gorbachev was once again trailing behind the rapid development of processes that he himself had set in motion. The Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was even more behind the times. When it convened a month later to assess the results of Gorbachev's visit, the top party leadership revealed its understanding of the relationship between the center and the republics in a resolution that, among other things, instructed every CPSU member "to work toward the strengthening of the Soviet socialist federation according to Leninist internationalist principles."[2]

The republics, of course, already had something rather different in mind. They wanted more rights and more power, which is perhaps another way of saying that they wanted to have a political identity that was distinct and separate from that of the center. Many of them also wanted to have a national identity that went beyond what was permitted by "Soviet internationalism." Apart from the three Baltic states, Russia was one of the most enthusiastic. Its intellectual elites had been arguing for some time that Russia's status within the Soviet Union was the most unenviable, that it was precisely the RSFSR that was most discriminated against within the Soviet Union. The RSFSR, in contrast to the other Union republics, did not have its own Communist Party, Komsomol, KGB, trade unions, or academy of sciences, but it was the Russians who were being blamed for all of the ills of the Soviet Union.[3]

It was against this background that the well-known writer Valentin Rasputin shocked many of the deputies at the First Congress of USSR People's Deputies by half-seriously suggesting that maybe Russia would be better off without the Soviet Union.[4] One year later, on 12 June 1990, the Congress of Russian People's Deputies unwittingly took a decisive step in that direction by voting overwhelmingly (907 for, 13 against, and 9 abstentions) to declare the state sovereignty of the RSFSR. Ukraine followed suit on 16 July, and the "parade of sovereignties" was set in motion.

At the time, not much thought was given to the possible implications of the legitimization and politicization of the concepts of the center and the republics and the growing confrontation between the two, specifically with regard to the future of the Soviet state, relations between its constituent parts, and, least of all, Russian state and national identity. For many, particularly in the West, the problem was usually conceptualized in terms of the personal animosity and rivalry between Gorbachev and Yeltsin, which, of course, was very real.[5] In this context, the center and the republics were largely perceived as the corresponding arsenals for the Soviet Union's two leading political figures who were at odds with each other, thereby obscuring the rather more fundamental processes that were already under way and moving at an exceptionally rapid pace.

One of the few people who understood very quickly, even before Russia declared its state sovereignty, the full scope of the possible consequences of

Russia's enthusiasm for seeking an identity that was distinct from that of the Soviet Union was Aleksandr Tsipko. In an article entitled "Russians Withdrawing from Russia?" published in *Izvestia* at the end of May 1990, he warned that the Russian-led attack on the center threatened the dismemberment not only of the Soviet Union but of Russia itself as he understood it—namely, "historical Russia." Tsipko, who gained instant notoriety at the end of 1988 when he "debunked" Marxism in a series of articles in *Nauka i zhizn'*, did not specify the borders of his Russia, but it is clear that they went beyond the borders of the RSFSR, which he described as a "restructured Russia." The history of the real or "historical Russia," according to Tsipko, found its continuity in the history of the USSR. It was, therefore, perfectly logical, particularly for a trained philosopher, that what he aptly characterized as "Russia's flight from Russia" was qualified as "unnatural, it is insanity." But there was another aspect to all of this as well. Tsipko admonished the Russian deputies for forgetting that they were also Slavs, that "they are bound by one common fate with the Ukrainians and Belorussians, that they carry the basic responsibility for the Slavs of Kyivan Rus." In other words, by asserting their sovereignty Russians were distancing themselves from those without whom there could be no genuinely Russian identity. Finally, turning to more practical matters, Tsipko warned that the Ukrainians and Belarusians might well follow the Russian example. Noting that the Ukrainians could do quite nicely by themselves, in any case no worse than the Russians, he asked, "But what will remain of the USSR if the Ukrainians and Belorussians and then the Kazakhs, Uzbeks, and others begin thinking and acting like many people's deputies of Russia?"[6]

Tsipko was posing, succinctly and forcefully, a question that had been posed many times before in Russian history—namely, "What is Russia?" This time, however, the question was not a mere philosophical exercise à la Dostoyevsky or Tyutchev. The answer would have concrete implications for the Soviet Union; for Russia as a state; for Russians as a nation; and, as events would show, for Ukrainian-Russian relations. Tsipko understood in the spring of 1990 what other Russian thinkers and politicians would fully realize and sort out only somewhat later: it was all about the state.

In June 1990, Ruslan Khasbulatov, first deputy chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet, was part of that overwhelming majority that wanted sovereignty, arguing that Russia was being "dissolved" within the Soviet Union to its detriment.[7] By September, however, he was saying that Russia "had nowhere to go" and that "from the standpoint of the Union republics Russia is also the center and vice versa." But, at the time, Khasbulatov's attention was focused on a much more immediate problem: the idea of sovereignty was gaining in popularity in the various administrative subdivisions of the RSFSR, and the center was manipulating these sentiments to destabilize Russia proper. In the spring of 1991, Yurii Burtin, one of the leaders of the Dem-

ocratic Russia movement, formulated Russia's central dilemma in a phrase: "Here we cannot separate Russia from the center. We look back in history and the center is somehow ourselves."[8] By October of that year, when the term "former USSR" was already in circulation, Sergei Stankevich, an adviser to Yeltsin and then deputy mayor of Moscow, articulated the problem in the dimension that is of primary concern for our purposes—namely, that it was one thing to enjoy the fruits of sovereignty within the framework of a common state that included Ukraine and the other republics and quite another to deal with sovereignty when the Soviet Union was, for all intents and purposes, a dead letter:

> Russia turned out to be in a strange situation. It appears that at the moment of moving from the opposition—when it was necessary to oppose the center in order not to allow the implementation of laws that conflicted with Russia's interests—to full power (let's say even theoretical), Russia's leaders were taken by surprise. And Russia, in fact, turned out to be without its own statehood.[9]

It should be obvious that "being in opposition" is largely synonymous with being a part of the Soviet Union and that "having power" conveys the notion of being on one's own. In the fall of 1991, it was already quite clear that these two states of Russian being were crucial for Ukrainian-Russian relations. A Soviet Russia, as it were, that was in opposition to the center had exceedingly good relations with Soviet Ukraine; an "un-Soviet" Russia proved to be quite a different matter. Tsipko, writing at the same time as Stankevich, had the satisfaction of making the following observation: "All it took was for the Ukrainians, and later the Belorussians and Kazakhs, to begin seriously talking about their complete state independence for the jaws of our Russian proponents of sovereignty [*suverenshchiki*] to somehow drop."[10]

This dichotomy, insofar as it relates to Ukrainian-Russian relations, will be explored in the discussion that follows. It will also be useful in this context to look at the kinds of notions of Russia that were in the marketplace of perestroika ideas, the evolving relationship between Ukraine and Russia, and their contrasting views of the center's attempts to breathe new life into a disintegrating Soviet Union.

VARIETIES OF RUSSIA

In the summer of 1989, Szporluk published a widely acclaimed article entitled "Dilemmas of Russian Nationalism." The main purpose of the article, which was really quite simple and which many people found very useful, was to distinguish between two types of Russians insofar as state and national identity were concerned. The first type was labeled "empire-savers" and the second

"nation-builders." The defining characteristic of the former was that they "regard the present Soviet Union in its current boundaries as the proper and legitimate national 'space' of the Russian nation." For the latter, the point of departure was the focus on some kind of national Russia that would be essentially different from the Soviet empire. Anyone who reads the article carefully, however, will soon realize that the author encountered some problems in establishing unambiguous markers between the two categories beyond the initial differentiation. Szporluk acknowledged that the nation builders had different views as to the geographic extent of their perception of Russia and then delineated several kinds of nation builders. The problem was that some of the nation builders betrayed imperial inclinations. Conversely, he noted that "the empire-savers prefer to call themselves Soviet rather than Russian, even when they really mean Russian."[11]

Gorbachev was the most prominent and visible empire saver who often spoke about things Soviet but meant things Russian. In June 1985, during his first visit to Ukraine, he twice referred to the Soviet Union as "Russia" during an impromptu walkabout in the streets of Kyiv. Trying to correct himself, the Soviet leader explained: "Russia—the Soviet Union, I mean—that is what we call it now, and what it is in fact."[12] Representatives of the Soviet military high command had similar problems. When General Mikhail Moiseev, first deputy minister of defense and chief of the General Staff, addressed the Ukrainian parliament at the end of November 1990 in an attempt to persuade the lawmakers that they should not take state sovereignty too seriously when it came to military matters, the following exchange took place:

> **Moiseev M. O.** Today, I am not looking out for my name, for my position, I am looking out for the Russian State [*Gosudarstvo Rossiiskoe*], which needs to be defended (applause) without outer space [also by ground troops]. I mean the Russian State—this is all of the Union republics, I do not mean Russia alone.
> **Chairman.** Esteemed comrades! Comrades, I ask you to please calm down. Mikhail Alekseevich, a minute. I ask you please to calm down, let's hear the answers and questions.
> **Moiseev M. O.** I did not mean that the Russian Federation, or, as you understand, for me the words "Mother Russia"—this is all of the Union republics.
> Noise in the hall. (Applause)
> **Moiseev M. O.** If you see things differently, you can have your own opinion.[13]

Clearly, not too much should be made of these kinds of awkward moments, although they are indicative of a certain frame of mind. But even in his prepared speeches and addresses, Gorbachev let it be understood that the Soviet Union and Russia are one and the same thing. His defense of the center focused on the argument that the center is the guarantor of the Soviet Union's existence, which had to be preserved for essentially two related but distinct reasons. First, the Soviet Union is a "great state" (*velikoe gosudarstvo*), a state

that commands respect, particularly in the international arena. This was the geopolitical aspect. Second, and more interesting from our standpoint, the Soviet Union is something quite special that should not be tinkered with. In February 1991, addressing television viewers in connection with the forthcoming referendum on maintaining a renewed Soviet federation, Gorbachev referred to the Soviet Union as a "unique civilization" and the "natural result of an historical process."[14] Even after the abortive August putsch, Gorbachev was still talking about "this vast state that was formed [over a period of] a thousand years."[15] In June 1990, he addressed the founding congress of the Communist Party of the RSFSR:

> The profound truth of the matter is that Russia can be and is unique and great only by being surrounded and permeated by the life-giving forces of [other] cultures and languages, by being tied to them and by enriching them and, conversely, by being enriched by them. Tear apart this accretively rooted system and you will no longer have Russia at all—or certainly not that Russia that has been mandated to us and that we should solicitously hand down to our descendants.[16]

If one was not aware of the fact that this was a specifically *Russian* venue, one could easily imagine that Gorbachev was actually talking about the Soviet Union.

There were, of course, other empire savers who had little time and even less patience with convoluted discussions about the Soviet Union's "uniqueness" and similar abstract notions. What was important was the state as it was and nothing else. Colonel Viktor Alksnis, the chief spokesman for the Soyuz group of USSR people's deputies, was quite clear on this point: "Sure, you can destroy the ideology and the Party, but the state—that has to be eternal!"[17] Aleksandr Prokhanov, the chief editor of *Den'* and its successor *Zavtra* and one of the leaders of the red–brown coalition that began to assume organizational form in the spring of 1992 as the National Salvation Front, was even more direct:

> It is important that the state be preserved. Moreover, now it is really irrelevant what forces lead to the establishment of this state. Let it even be fascism, because if a great Russian [*russkoe*] state can be built only by paying the price of fascism, I would go for it. Fascism can be dealt with in due time—as long as the state is built![18]

The priorities of the empire savers were quite clear.

The nation builders, as has already been suggested, were a rather more complex and diverse lot. One category within this broad grouping that played an important role in 1989 and 1990 in Russian politics as well as in Ukrainian-Russian relations is perhaps best described as consisting of adherents of "Yeltsin's Russia," a term that was widely used at the time, particularly in

the West, where it was understood to mean a new kind of Russia that was noncommunist and non-Soviet. These were reformers, liberals, and democrats who wanted a "normal" Russia, the development of which was being hampered and thwarted by Gorbachev's center. During the electoral campaign for the Russian parliament in the spring of 1990, Yeltsin had this to say about the center: "Today, the center for Russia is a brutal exploiter, and a stingy benefactor, and an opportunist who does not think about the future. We have to put an end to the injustice of these relations."[19] In his address to the inaugural Congress of Russian People's Deputies in May 1990, the Russian leader characterized the "longstanding imperial policies of the center" as the source of all of the problems in the republics and, above all, in Russia.[20] The main political organization of these particular nation builders was the Democratic Russia movement, which took shape in early 1990 as an electoral bloc and then secured Yeltsin's election as head of the Russian Supreme Soviet at the end of May. The democratic opposition in Ukraine had no difficulty finding a common language with the representatives of "Yeltsin's Russia."

UKRAINIAN-RUSSIAN HONEYMOON

Yeltsin's victory in Russia ushered in what might be called a new era in Ukrainian-Russian relations. It found concrete expression in a document entitled "Declaration of Principles of Inter-State Relations between Ukraine and the RSFSR Based on the Declarations of State Sovereignty," which was signed at the end of August 1990 in Moscow by representatives of the democratic opposition in the Ukrainian parliament grouped in the People's Council (Narodna Rada) and their counterparts from the Democratic Russia bloc in the Russian parliament. Noting that the growth of democratic movements in the two republics offered the Ukrainian and Russian peoples "a real chance to open a new page in the history of their relations," the declaration affirmed the following principles: (1) unconditional recognition of Ukraine and Russia as subjects of international law; (2) "sovereign equality" of the two sides; (3) noninterference in each other's internal affairs and renunciation of force or economic and other forms of coercion incompatible with international law; (4) inviolability of existing state borders between the two republics and the renunciation of any and all territorial claims; (5) promotion and safeguarding of the political, economic, ethnic, and cultural rights of the representatives of nations of the RSFSR living in Ukraine and vice versa; (6) mutually beneficial cooperation in a broad range of areas on the basis of interstate treaties; and (7) regulation of all disputes in the spirit of harmony. In its concluding section, the declaration refers to the "current transitional period "as characterized, on the one hand, by the emergence and existence of "independent

Ukraine, the RSFSR, and others" as political realities and, on the other, by the existence of obsolete political, economic, administrative-state, military, and other Union structures. The main problem was to dismantle the latter in a painless manner, consolidate statehood, and move on to a "commonwealth of independent states." To that end, the declaration recommended the immediate start of negotiations on economic, political, military, and security matters and called for the establishment of diplomatic and consular relations, including permanent diplomatic representations in Kyiv and Moscow. Lastly, it appealed to lawmakers from both republics to support the declaration and to the respective parliaments to base interstate agreements between Ukraine and Russia on its principles.[21]

According to Yurii Shcherbak, the well-known writer, early leader of the Ukrainian Greens, and subsequently Ukraine's ambassador to Israel and the United States, the initiative to formalize an agreement between the two republics came from Kyiv, and he and Volodymyr Kryzhanivskyi, who later became Ukraine's first ambassador to Russia, went to Moscow to feel out their Russian colleagues. The general outline of the declaration was received positively in Moscow, but there was some disagreement within the People's Council in Kyiv. In the final analysis, however, the two sides approved the final text after day-long negotiations. Vladimir Grinev, deputy chairman of the Ukrainian parliament, and Khasbulatov, then first deputy chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet, also took part in the talks, which imparted an official veneer to the undertaking, although neither was acting in an official capacity.[22]

At about the same time, Ukraine and Russia began contacts on an official basis. In mid-August 1990, a group of Ukrainian government experts went to Moscow to discuss economic relations. The following month, the Ukrainian and Russian prime ministers met to iron out the details of an economic agreement and cooperation in the cultural field, which was signed in mid-October.[23] The first consultations between parliamentary delegations were held on 5 October in Kyiv, where agreement was reached to establish a permanent interparliamentary committee and exchange plenipotentiaries in the near future. The two sides also discussed a draft agreement on principles of interstate relations. There were, however, serious disagreements on a number of issues, including the new Union treaty proposed by Gorbachev and the question of the Soviet Union's assets. The Russian side was said to be prepared to sign the new treaty, whereas in Ukraine Gorbachev's plans for a renewed federation were a major point of contention between the democratic opposition and the Communists.[24] In early November, the Ukrainian and Russian foreign ministers, Anatolii Zlenko and Andrei Kozyrev, attending a session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, agreed to formalize direct contacts between the two foreign ministries.[25]

The high point of the Ukrainian-Russian honeymoon was reached on

18–19 November 1990, when Yeltsin came to Kyiv to sign a bilateral treaty between the two republics. The Russian leader had sent an invitation to the Ukrainians in mid-July, requesting that a delegation come to Moscow to work on the treaty, and the final negotiations were held in October and early November.[26] Yeltsin's presence in the Ukrainian capital, his address to the Ukrainian parliament, and, of course, the treaty itself were viewed as events of major historical significance. Yeltsin himself did much to create precisely such an atmosphere. The choice of the Ukrainian capital as the venue for the official ceremonies was deliberate. Speaking at a press conference after the treaty was signed, the Russian leader pointed out that previous agreements between Ukraine and Russia had been arranged in Moscow on unequal terms and emphasized that "we very much wanted to sign this one in Kyiv."[27] The gesture was intended to underline that a fundamental change in Ukrainian-Russian relations was being inaugurated. Yeltsin also began his address to the Ukrainian lawmakers with references to the past, saying that it was only now that it was possible to review objectively the historical record and that relations between Ukraine and Russia had been "considerably more complicated, equivocal than they were thought to be earlier." He also talked about the lost opportunity of the early 1920s, when relations between Ukraine and Russia were said to be developing on the basis of the sovereign status of the two republics; the impact of the totalitarian state; and the mass famine in Ukraine. In the context of stressing that relations between Ukraine and Russia could only be based on the principle of equality, Yeltsin outlined his vision of the new Russia:

> I categorically reject the accusation that Russia is now claiming some special role. As [Nikolai] Ryzhkov said at the [Supreme Soviet] session, that allegedly we want to shift the center from the center to somewhere in Russia. I categorically reject this accusation. Russia does not aspire to become the center of some sort of new empire. It does not want to have an advantage over other republics. Russia understands better than others the perniciousness of that role, inasmuch as it was Russia that performed precisely that role for a long time. What did it gain from this? Did Russians become free as a result? Wealthy? Fortunate? You yourselves know the truth, history has taught us: a people that rules over others cannot be fortunate.[28]

The treaty, which was signed on 19 November, incorporated many of the postulates contained in the August declaration. The two sides recognized each other as "sovereign states," and Article 6 affirmed the territorial integrity of the Ukrainian and Russian republics "within their presently existing borders within the framework of the USSR," a formulation that was later to be interpreted in diametrically opposed ways by Kyiv and Moscow.[29] The question of borders came up briefly several days later when Russian lawmakers debated ratification of the document, specifically with regard to Crimea,

but the objections of some of the deputies were pushed aside, and the treaty was ratified by both sides in record time.

The significance of the treaty, certainly from Ukraine's standpoint, comes into bold relief if one recalls that only two months earlier Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, whose authority among his compatriots then was immeasurably greater than it is now, proposed a very different model of Ukrainian-Russian relations. In an essay entitled *How Are We to Reconstruct Russia?* that was published in two of Moscow's leading newspapers,[30] the Nobel laureate called for the creation of a new state in place of the Soviet Union that was to be called the Russian Union and that would consist of the RSFSR, Ukraine, Belarus, and the ethnically Russian parts of northern Kazakhstan. Solzhenitsyn left no doubt that he considered Ukrainians to be Russians, but he was prepared to let them decide for themselves. "Obviously, if the Ukrainian people *really wanted* to separate—no one has the right to hold them by force," he wrote. If it came to that, he suggested that referendums be held throughout the country so that every locality and region could choose for itself where it wanted to be—a proposal that he would make again the following year on the eve of the Ukrainian referendum on independence.

When asked about Solzhenitsyn's ideas at the press conference in Kyiv, Yeltsin was brief, saying that from the standpoint of the writer's "moral ideology," he was in full agreement. As for the means of achieving the desired results, by which Yeltsin presumably had in mind the proposed Russian Union, the response was that there were "quite a few difficulties."[31] The Russian leader's desire not to be seen as challenging the authority of Russia's greatest living writer is understandable. More important, however, was the fact that by signing the treaty Yeltsin's Russia was rejecting both Gorbachev's and Solzhenitsyn's visions of Russia's future.

In the months that followed, Ukraine and Russia continued their cooperation. It was in the interest of both republics to work together in their efforts to wrest as many prerogatives from the center as possible to consolidate their declared sovereignty, which the center refused to juridically recognize. Correspondingly, it was Ukraine and Russia that offered the strongest opposition to Gorbachev's notion of a renewed Soviet federation. But it was also in the course of that struggle with the center that it became increasingly clear that Kyiv and Moscow had different views about the nature of that center and ultimately about whether there should even be a center.

THE UNION TREATY

The argument that a new Union treaty was a precondition for a genuine reform of the Soviet federation had been advanced in Estonia already in mid-1988. Even in Ukraine, whose leadership was judged to be more conservative

than most, Communist Party First Secretary Volodymyr Ivashko referred to the need for a new Union treaty in early 1990.[32] Somewhat later, Gorbachev conceded that this was indeed the case, and at a meeting of the USSR Council of the Federation in mid-June, a working group of representatives from the Union republics was set up to begin drafting a new treaty. The immediate cause for the change in policy was the belated realization that the newly elected parliaments in the Baltic states would very likely now press even more forcefully for complete independence.

The political situation in Ukraine at the time was very much in flux. The elections to the Ukrainian parliament in the spring of 1990—which were based on a relatively democratic electoral law that did not guarantee fixed seats for representatives of "public organizations" such as the Communist Party, the Komsomol, and the trade unions—gave slightly more than one-fourth of the seats in the 450-member assembly to representatives of the opposition organized in the Democratic Bloc. By the fall, their numbers grew to about one-third of the deputies. Several weeks after the new parliament convened, the opposition organized itself into a parliamentary group called the People's Council. In Western Ukraine, the elections to the local councils witnessed a complete victory for the opposition. Vyacheslav Chornovil, the longtime dissident and political prisoner, was elected head of the Lviv regional council and catapulted to national prominence. Various political groups and parties had already either committed themselves to full independence or were moving in that direction. The Ukrainian Republican Party, often referred to at the time as the party of dissidents because many of its key figures had spent long terms in Soviet labor camps, traced its origins to the Ukrainian Helsinki Union. At its constituent congress at the end of April 1990, it declared unambiguously that its goal was the establishment of an independent Ukraine. The more moderate Democratic Party of Ukraine, which began to take organizational form in May, also opted for state independence. The Popular Movement of Ukraine for Perestroika, or Rukh, which emerged at the end of 1988 as a Ukrainian variant of the popular fronts in the Baltic states and elsewhere, was the most prominent opposition organization. By March 1990, a faction had coalesced in Rukh that wanted to transform the organization into a political party and advocated independent statehood, and in October of that year Rukh's Second Congress dropped the term *perestroika* from its name and proclaimed complete independence as its primary goal.[33] The political situation in Ukraine, therefore, was quite different from that in Russia, and this would make itself felt in how Kyiv and Moscow responded to the center.

Moreover, in early July the opposition in Ukraine was the beneficiary of an unexpected development that would have long-term consequences. After little more than a month as head of the Ukrainian parliament, Communist Party leader Ivashko "defected" to Moscow. On 9 July, he sent in his resigna-

tion from the Soviet capital, where he was attending the Twenty-eighth Congress of the CPSU, after having ignored an official request from parliament to return to Kyiv to participate in the important debate on Ukraine's sovereignty declaration. Several days later he was named Gorbachev's deputy in the CPSU leadership. The consequences were twofold. First, the perception was formed, both within parliament and among the public at large, that for Ukrainian Communists the interests of Moscow took precedence over the interests of Ukraine. Second, Kravchuk was chosen to replace Ivashko as the speaker of parliament and, in effect, as Ukraine's leader.

Kravchuk's initial response to plans for a new Union treaty was positive, although with some reservations. At his first press conference after being elected head of the parliament, he expressed support for the idea and criticized those who were against it, noting that as yet no one had even seen the draft: "Today, to live without the treaty, to live outside of the Soviet Union means to lose a great deal for oneself and for one's prospects, if not to say more—to lose everything."[34] At the same time, Kravchuk emphasized that at the moment it was not important what form the treaty would eventually take—federation, confederation, or some other "political formation." What was important was that the initiative had to come from the republics, not from the center. In an interview at the end of July, he explained:

> My position here is clear. The Union treaty, our approaches to it must be formulated here, in our parliament. No one should even be able to insinuate that someone forced this treaty on us. We must decide here which questions we delegate to the Union government.[35]

The situation in Ukraine, however, was becoming increasingly more politicized, strident, and tense. The conflict between the democratic opposition and the Communist majority in parliament, popularly known as the Group of 239,[36] was played out on a daily basis during the summer for the national television and radio audience, and its impact was being felt in the streets. The political mood of the opposition as parliament prepared to convene for its Second Session on 1 October can be gleaned from the demands formulated toward the end of September by the Association of Democratic Councils of People's Deputies and Democratic Blocs in the Councils, which was headed by one of the early leaders of Rukh, Sergei Konev: (1) the resignations of Kravchuk and Prime Minister Vitalii Masol and his government, (2) rejection of the Union treaty "in any form" and primary emphasis on establishing interstate relations, (3) immediate implementation of the parliamentary resolution on performance of military service within Ukraine, (4) raising the declaration on state sovereignty to the status of a constitutional act, (5) priority adoption of a law on local self-government, and (6) disbandment of the CPSU and the nationalization of its property. If these demands were not met,

the association proposed to push for the dissolution of parliament and new elections.[37] The question of the Union treaty was rapidly moving to center stage, and it was singled out by Kravchuk together with the economy as heading the agenda for the forthcoming session of parliament.[38] The opposition People's Council addressed the nation specifically on this issue:

> The conservative part of the parliament is preparing plans to save the empire in the form of the new Union treaty. The new Union treaty is—new pollution of the Dnieper, new requisitions of bread and meat, new misery and slavery, new Chornobyls, new military service of Ukraine's citizens beyond its borders, new bondage for Ukraine and for all republics of the USSR. . . . The People's Council calls on the citizens of sovereign Ukraine to come to the republic's parliament on 1 October and say their "No!" to the Union treaty.[39]

Ukraine's Communist Party leadership had a different view. The newly elected first secretary, Stanislav Hurenko, told a plenum of its Central Committee at the end of September that the party was against wholesale rejection of the treaty as well as "simplified approaches" to its formulation. Nonetheless, without "such a treaty the sovereign republics will not be able to effectively solve the problems of their defense and security. Moreover, without this kind of a treaty there would be a real threat to the state [territorial] integrity of Ukraine."[40]

The political rally on 30 September 1990 and the one-day workers' strike the following day, which had already been well planned by mid-September, turned out to be the largest public demonstrations ever witnessed in the Ukrainian capital. It was against this background that on the eve of the protests the presidium of the parliament, addressing some of the issues that were being raised by the opposition, issued an appeal to the public for harmony and unity. For the first time, an official stand was taken on the new Union treaty, the signing of which was judged to be premature before the stabilization of the political and economic situation in Ukraine, the building of a law-based sovereign state, and the adoption of a new constitution.[41]

In the meantime, work on the Union treaty in Moscow had hardly begun. In mid-September, Kravchuk was interviewed on Ukrainian television, where he reported on a joint meeting of the Presidential Council and the Council of the Federation that heard a report on the status of "consultations" on the treaty. According to the Ukrainian leader, the discussion was vague and focused primarily on organizational matters. There was no concrete document that could be examined. It was decided that the republics should form their delegations for the talks and that some kind of organ should be established in the center to coordinate the drafting of the treaty and that would include representatives from the republics. Kravchuk said that there were thirteen different drafts but that they were all very general. He foresaw a process

whereby all of the republics would formulate their concepts of the treaty; these would then be examined by the as yet nonexistent coordinating body; agreement would be reached on a draft; then the republics would ratify the document. Clearly, such a scenario would have required months if not years, a time frame that, as it turned out, the center did not have.[42]

Asked directly what he thought of a new Union treaty, Kravchuk responded, "The most important principle in putting together both the treaty and the Union is that this will not be a unitary state, but a Union of free, independent, sovereign socialist states—republics." Specifically, the Union should have only those prerogatives that would be delegated to it by the republics; the republics would join the Union as independent sovereign states; and the process of forming the Union had to proceed from the bottom up, not vice versa. "It is crucial," said Kravchuk, "to underline the position of the priority of the republics with regard to the Union. Priority. All rights—in the economic and in the political spheres."[43] Obviously, Gorbachev was not ready for this kind of a change in his job description.

In Ukraine, no one was prepared for what happened next. On 2 October 1990, after two days of mass public demonstrations, students from throughout the country set up tents in Kyiv's central square under the city's main Lenin monument and began an indeterminate political hunger strike.[44] One of their demands was rejection of any Union treaty, which, it should be noted, no one had yet seen. The result, after two weeks of tense confrontation and negotiations with student leaders, was the fall of the Masol government, another of the students' demands, and the decision by the parliament on 15 October to confirm the stand that had been taken by its presidium—namely, that Ukraine would not agree to a Union treaty before stabilizing the political and economic situation in the country and adopting a new constitution.[45] One Moscow newspaper commented that the students managed to achieve in two weeks what the parliamentary opposition had been trying to do for almost half a year.

From that point onward, Kravchuk and the parliament, for all intents and purposes, stalled on the treaty, insisting that any arrangement with the center must be fully in line with Ukraine's declaration of sovereignty. During Yeltsin's visit to Kyiv in November, he and Kravchuk agreed that the sovereignty of their republics had to be juridically recognized by the USSR Supreme Soviet. This was placed on the agenda of the Fourth Congress of USSR People's Deputies in December 1990 by a deputy from Ukraine in the name of the Inter-Regional Group of Deputies and rejected by the largely conservative lawmakers. Among those who cast their votes against sovereignty were such leading lights of the Russian liberal establishment as Nikolai Shmelev, Tatyana Zaslavskaya, and Sergei Zalygin, chief editor of *Novyi mir*; two of Russia's most prominent democrats, Anatolii Sobchak, the popular mayor of Lenin-

grad, and Stankevich, chose to abstain, as did the reputed architect of perestroika, Gorbachev's close confidante Aleksandr Yakovlev.[46]

Soon after the students began their hunger strike, but before the Ukrainian parliament voted to delay consideration of the treaty, Hurenko, addressing the October 1990 plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, urged his colleagues in Moscow not to delay publication of the draft and to mount a broad campaign in favor of its adoption. It would be a mistake, he argued, to assume that the Ukrainians would "automatically" throw their support behind the speedy conclusion of the treaty.[47] It was not until the end of November 1990, however, that the first draft was made public.[48] Kravchuk's reaction was less than enthusiastic. Speaking at the December 1990 plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, he said that the draft could serve as a basis for discussion, but that it needed revisions. The main problem was the issue of delineation of powers between the center and the republics. It was the republics, he insisted, that should decide what they would allow the center. In some respects, Kravchuk noted, the original 1922 treaty that created the USSR was more democratic than the variant that was now being offered. Most important, according to the Ukrainian leader, the people needed to have a clear answer as to what the party wanted—a renewed federation or a Union of sovereign states.

> If one takes into consideration the realities, analyzes the situation, then one has to pose a new task, and that is: to build a new Union of sovereign states. Otherwise, [we] could come up against some very serious difficulties with regard to the signing of the Union treaty.[49]

As 1990 came to a close, the prevailing mood among the Ukrainian leadership was that, although the draft treaty was unacceptable in its proposed form, Kyiv should not extricate itself from discussions with the center so as not to be confronted with a fait accompli. Russia's position at this juncture was very close to that of Ukraine's. Yeltsin, addressing the Fourth Congress of USSR People's Deputies in December, announced that "the so-called revolution from above is over." "Russia," he said, "will not agree to the restoration of the Kremlin's dictate." Khasbulatov was more conciliatory, emphasizing that no one in the Russian leadership had ever come out against the idea of a new Union treaty. The treaty was necessary, but the question was what form it would take. The existing draft, said Khasbulatov, was not satisfactory because it reserved for the center the right to decide how power would be apportioned between itself and the republics.[50]

But already at the end of 1990 one important difference existed between Ukraine and Russia on the Union treaty question. Ukraine was bound by the October resolution of its parliament to delay concluding the treaty until it had a new constitution, whereas the Extraordinary Second Congress of

RSFSR People's Deputies had adopted a resolution on 11 December committing Russia to be "a full-fledged subject of a renewed USSR on the basis of a Union treaty."[51]

The Soviet Congress—that is, the collective center—took little notice of the objections that were being raised by Kyiv and Moscow. Not only did it refuse to recognize the sovereignty declarations of the republics. It also voted to retain the name "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" for the country, in spite of the fact that the draft Union treaty substituted the word *Sovereign* for *Socialist* in the text. The majority of the deputies turned out to be even more "centrist" than Gorbachev. Indeed, one deputy proposed that the Soviet Union be renamed "Russia." The Congress also passed a resolution on preserving a "renewed federation," and, on Gorbachev's initiative, it decided to hold a referendum on this issue, a move that the Soviet leader thought would strengthen his position against republics like Ukraine and Russia by giving him a popular mandate.

PARTING OF THE WAYS

A revised draft of the treaty was made public on the eve of the referendum, which was scheduled for 17 March 1991.[52] Yeltsin rejected it almost immediately.[53] Kravchuk, in a television interview on 12 March, repeated his previous stand that he was in favor of a Union treaty, but that "this is not the draft treaty that we need and that would reflect the interests of the people of the republic."[54] His position was strengthened by the results of the referendum in Ukraine. The Ukrainian parliament had been hopelessly split on how to react to Gorbachev's initiative: the opposition claimed that the referendum was "unconstitutional," while the conservative majority supported it. Kravchuk stepped in with a compromise proposal that would have long-term consequences: to retain the center's question on preservation of the Soviet Union and add another "Ukrainian question" to the ballot. The latter asked voters to respond to the following: "Do you agree that Ukraine should be part of a Union of Soviet sovereign states on the basis of the Declaration of the state sovereignty of Ukraine?" The results of the voting showed that 70.2 percent responded affirmatively to what came to be known as the all-Union question, and 80.2 percent gave their approval to the "Ukrainian question." Although the vote was subjected to conflicting interpretations by opposing political forces, Kravchuk subsequently cited the tally of the "Ukrainian question" as proof that Ukraine had solidly rejected the center's plans for a renewed federation. Directly after the referendum, he effectively dismissed the revised draft of the Union treaty, saying that he personally had "many objections to practically every article" in the document.[55]

Kravchuk was on an official visit to Germany when Gorbachev and repre-

sentatives of the nine republics (including Ukraine) that participated in the referendum held a meeting in Novo Ogarevo at the end of April 1991. This meeting was widely interpreted as constituting a breakthrough in the standoff between the center and the republics and, indeed, between Gorbachev and Yeltsin. The so-called 9+1 agreement, which took the form of a joint statement, called for the speedy conclusion of a new Union treaty, recognized the republics as sovereign states, and conceded that there had to be a cardinal increase in the role of the Union republics.[56] Yeltsin, who only shortly before had been calling for Gorbachev's resignation, described the outcome as a "tremendous victory" that demonstrated the Soviet leader's commitment to democratic reform. Gorbachev, according to Yeltsin, was now "our ally," and the two would work together to prevent the Soviet Union from falling apart.[57] Kravchuk, upon returning to Kyiv, claimed to have little knowledge of what had been discussed in Novo Ogarevo. When asked by journalists whether Ukrainian prime minister Vitold Fokin, who was Ukraine's representative at the talks, had the authority to sign off on the agreement, Kravchuk responded that it did not matter because the joint statement "has no juridical force." The positive aspect, he added, was that the center had finally agreed to recognize the need for a union of sovereign states in which the republics would play the key role.[58]

Perhaps the clearest indication of Ukraine's hesitation to avoid being drawn into some kind of formal agreement was the decision taken by an overwhelming majority of the parliament at the end of June 1991 to, in effect, postpone discussion of the Union treaty with the center until at least after mid-September. In a three-point resolution, the lawmakers instructed the appropriate parliamentary committees to examine the draft with a view toward its compatibility with Ukraine's sovereignty declaration and its law on economic independence; the government and the Academy of Sciences were told to look at the economic and legal consequences of joining a new Union; and a working group of the parliament's presidium was charged with bringing together all of these views and commentaries, including those of individual parliamentarians.[59] This was a major blow for Gorbachev, who wanted the treaty signed in July in time for the G7 meeting in London, where he hoped to present a semblance of unity. At about the same time, on 5 July, the Russian parliament, under pressure from Yeltsin, joined seven other republics in approving the existing draft of the treaty in principle. The Russian lawmakers wanted certain changes, including Russian jurisdiction over enterprises in the RSFSR, and they reserved the right to review the final text.[60] In mid-July 1991, Yeltsin's position was that Russia's interests were, of course, his primary concern. "But these interests have to be pursued in such a way so that under no circumstances will the Union be ruined. That is my credo," he said. "There is a single Russia, but there is also a single Union." Russia would continue working with the other republics to transform the Union funda-

mentally. "I am convinced," said the Russian president, "that this will be done with dignity."[61] After a marathon session with Gorbachev on 29–30 July, Yeltsin was reported as having said that "from the Russian side, there is no obstacle to concluding the Union treaty tomorrow, if you like."[62]

After the failed coup and Ukraine's declaration of independence on 24 August, Kravchuk's position was that Ukraine could not be bothered with discussions about a Union treaty. At a press conference on 27 August, he told journalists that work on the treaty was out of the question and that Ukraine would define its position only after the results were in from the 1 December referendum on independence. In any case, he insisted, the new arrangement would have to be some kind of a confederation. On the same day, Gorbachev met with Yeltsin and the leaders of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, all of whom were reported to have once again confirmed their commitment to the Novo Ogarevo process and the speedy conclusion of a Union treaty, but with "necessary changes dictated by the new situation in the country."[63] Kravchuk, on the other hand, addressing the opening session of the Extraordinary Congress of USSR People's Deputies on 2 September, repeated that everything was on hold until after the Ukrainian referendum.[64] Ukraine signed a seven-point declaration together with nine other republics and Gorbachev that was announced at the Congress and called for, among other provisions, an economic community and the preparation and signing of a treaty forming a union of sovereign states in which each of them could independently determine the form of its participation. However, these kinds of statements of intent were becoming increasingly meaningless.[65]

Kyiv at first boycotted and then only initialed the economic cooperation agreement worked out by Grigorii Yavlinskii, making its final adherence subject to parliamentary ratification. Furthermore, Ukraine boycotted the opening session of the revamped USSR Supreme Soviet on 21 October, although later it was decided to send a delegation with observer status, but limiting its participation to one of the chambers, the Council of the Republics. Gorbachev told the Soviet parliament that members of the State Council had decided to send an appeal to the Ukrainian parliament to immediately join in the preparation of a Union treaty. The draft of the treaty had been sent to the Ukrainian leadership, he said, and everyone was hoping to get a positive response. At the same time, in what was an unmistakable reference to Kyiv, Gorbachev warned unnamed republics against nationalizing the armed forces on their territories, saying that he would simply annul such actions as illegal and in contravention of the Soviet constitution.[66] The appeal, which was signed by Gorbachev and leaders of eight republics, including Yeltsin, insisted that the Union was a vital necessity:

> Ukraine is one of the largest republics in the Union. Its role in the development of our country, in everything that our peoples can rightly be proud of is

> irreplaceable. . . . Let us state frankly: we cannot imagine the Union without Ukraine. We are convinced that the multinational people of Ukraine also cannot conceive of the future without Union-type relations with all of the peoples of our country, with whom they are linked by a history of many centuries.[67]

The Ukrainian parliament responded on 25 October with a resolution stating that it considered participation in any interrepublican structures that could lead to Ukraine's inclusion into another state as "purposeless."[68]

By November 1991, Kravchuk was saying that talk about a Union treaty was basically a waste of time. The Ukrainian leader made it clear that he would never sign a treaty that had even the slightest hint of any kind of central organ. He said that he had been trying to convince Gorbachev that discussions about reviving the treaty negotiations were no longer serious. "The Novo Ogarevo process," he asserted, "no longer exists and there is no need to return to it."[69] When Gorbachev summoned the State Council to Novo Ogarevo on 14 November to resume work on the Union treaty, Ukraine was conspicuously absent. Almost as an aside, Kravchuk remarked on the following day that the treaty "has no future."[70] Ukraine also did not attend the 25 November session, at which Gorbachev hoped that the treaty would be initialed by those present. Shortly before, while on a campaign trip in Western Ukraine, Kravchuk announced that the Union treaty was a nonissue: "I have and will continue to wage the battle for Ukrainian independence, and I will not back off from this position."[71] In an interview that was published in *Izvestia* on 26 November, Kravchuk derisively dismissed Gorbachev's plans as a "fraud" in which he had no intention of taking part. The referendum on Ukraine's independence put an end not only to talk of a Union treaty but to the Soviet Union as such. On 6 December, the Ukrainian parliament annulled its resolution of June 1991, which had postponed consideration of the treaty, as if to wipe the slate totally clean.[72]

Russia's position on the Union treaty in the fall of 1991 was quite different. Several days after the failed coup, Yeltsin reaffirmed his faith in a renewed federation and even expressed support for a "Union center," a notion that was anathema to Kyiv.[73] In his address to the Congress of USSR People's Deputies on 3 September, the day after Kravchuk spoke to the same body, the Russian president argued for "a slight departure from the Novo Ogarevo agreements," proposing that the new Union allow for various forms of association, but "in some kind of a single system."[74] This was completely in line with what Gorbachev was now prepared to accept. At the end of October, meeting with representatives of the Union of Russian cities, Yeltsin maintained that Russia should not be the one to initiate the disintegration of the USSR.[75] At the same time, on 2 November, the Fifth Congress of Russian People's Deputies adopted an emotional appeal to citizens of Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine replete with references to family and fraternal ties pleading that

every effort should be made to avert what was described as a "national catastrophe" for all three if there would be a "severance of their blood relationship and unity":

> How many Ukrainians, Belorussians live in Russia, considering it to be their Fatherland! How many Belorussians and Russians cannot imagine their lives without Ukraine! And how many Russians and Ukrainians have tied their fates to Belarus! . . . We appeal to everyone who is ready to take at least a step, one effort so as to prevent a national catastrophe for the peoples of Belarus, Russia, Ukraine: take this step! . . . The uniting of our peoples and republics is capable of completing the task of state unification for the good of today's and future generations![76]

On the very eve of the Ukrainian referendum, after meeting with Gorbachev, Yeltsin told journalists that he had always supported the Union. The problem was Ukraine. And, like Gorbachev, he maintained that a Union without Ukraine was inconceivable.[77] Gorbachev, in turn, confirmed Yeltsin's readiness to adhere to the Union treaty if the proposals that had been made by the Russian parliament were appended to the text.[78] Indeed, after another session with the Soviet president two days before leaving for his scheduled visit to Minsk, Yeltsin again asserted that a Union treaty without Ukraine was not possible, but argued, not altogether logically, that it should be signed anyway "because at the moment there is no alternative."[79] Responding to journalists' questions, he explained:

> It was not an easy conservation [with Gorbachev]. Not easy. The point is, as I have stated on more than one occasion, both at the State Council and in the media, that if Ukraine really will not be in the Union then I cannot imagine such a Union. Therefore, there must be some guarantee from Ukraine of whether Ukraine wants to sign the treaty. If Ukraine accedes to the Union and concludes the treaty, Russia will then do the same, and I think that its Supreme Soviet will support that.[80]

Asked whether he would seek other options if the Union could not be maintained, the Russian president emphasized that "we must first talk about a Union treaty." It was only on 7 December, in his speech to the Belarusian parliament before meeting with Kravchuk and Belarus's parliamentary chairman Stanislau Shushkevich, that Yeltsin gave a clear indication that he held out little hope for Gorbachev's plans:

> The attempt to reconstitute the Union of Soviet Socialist republics in the Leninist interpretation has passed into history. The idea of half-federation and half-confederation has failed. If there remains even a tiny element of unitarianism, there is the risk that the system that has already brought us to a dead end will be reanimated.[81]

Russia always wanted a Union, he stressed, but without Ukraine "there will be many difficult problems, we will find ourselves on opposite sides of the barricades." The following day, Yeltsin, Kravchuk, and Shushkevich announced that the USSR had ceased to exist.

In his memoirs, Kozyrev argues that the Russian leadership cannot be accused of having wanted to liquidate the Soviet Union. The old Soviet Union was impossible to preserve, he writes, but Russia wanted to maintain the "historical community of peoples" that had been formed in the Russian Empire and the USSR. According to Kozyrev, the "rebirth of Russian statehood at that time was thought of in the framework of a renewed Union of Sovereign States," and "as we sincerely felt at the time, the renewal of the Union could have been fully accommodated within the framework of the Novo Ogarevo process."[82]

Gorbachev, as can be expected, found it difficult to believe that Yeltsin was guided by such lofty motives. Recalling his almost daily conversations with the Russian leader during the week before the Minsk accords were signed in December, he emphasizes that Yeltsin continually justified his unwillingness to demonstratively and decisively bring Russia on board by citing the fact that Ukraine was out of the picture. Gorbachev says that he realized then that Yeltsin was stalling, and he suspected that plans were under way to form a Slavic union as an alternative to his own plans. He drew the following conclusion:

> I was thinking then that the separatist position of Ukraine's leadership is a "gift" to Yeltsin: in Russia they will not support a president who is against the Union. The dissatisfaction of Russians with the center in no way means rejection of the Union. The separate position of Ukraine's leadership is a life preserver for those in the Russian Federation who are against maintaining the Union.[83]

Gorbachev's observation, irrespective of whether or not it corresponds to what Yeltsin was actually thinking or planning at the time, is particularly interesting from our standpoint because it brings into focus once again the state as the major problem for Russia's nation builders. Yeltsin, according to the Soviet leader, was trying to avoid the cursed dilemma by sacrificing the Soviet Union for a union of Slavic states.

NOTES

1. *Pravda*, 24 February 1989. A variation on this formula—"without a strong Union there are no strong republics, without strong republics there is no strong Union"—became the centerpiece of the Communist Party's approach to the reform of the Soviet federal system as outlined in its platform on nationalities policy, which

was adopted at the long awaited Central Committee plenum on nationalities issues convened on 19–20 September 1989. For the text, see *Pravda*, 20 September 1989.

2. For the text, see "Ob itogakh poezdki General'nogo sekretarya TsK KPSS M. S. Gorbacheva v Ukrainskuyu SSR: Postanovlenie Politbyuro TsK KPSS 31 marta 1989 g.," *Izvestia TsK KPSS* 4 (1989): 7–10.

3. See John B. Dunlop, "Russia: In Search of an Identity?" in *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*, ed. Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 29.

4. *Pervyi S"ezd narodnykh deputatov SSSR 25 maya–9 iyunya 1989 g. Stenograficheskii otchet*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Izdanie Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR, 1989), 458.

5. See the thorough analysis by Marc Zlotnik, "Yeltsin and Gorbachev: The Politics of Confrontation," in *The Collapse of the Soviet Union*, ed. Mark Kramer (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, forthcoming).

6. *Izvestia* (Moscow evening ed.), 26 May 1990.

7. Anatoly M. Khazanov, *After the USSR: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Politics in the Commonwealth of Independent States* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 38.

8. Knight-Ridder Newspapers, 8 March 1991.

9. *Novoe vremya* 42 (20 October 1991): 6.

10. *Izvestia* (Moscow evening ed.), 1 October 1991.

11. Roman Szporluk, "Dilemmas of Russian Nationalism," *Problems of Communism* 38, no. 4 (July–August 1989): 15–35.

12. Quoted in Bohdan Nahaylo, *The Ukrainian Resurgence* (London: Hurst, 1999), 53.

13. "Druha sesiya Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrains'koi RSR dvanadtsyatoho sklykannya," *Byuleten'* 42 (1990): 74–75.

14. *Pravda*, 7 February 1991.

15. M. S. Gorbachev, *Avgustovskii putch: Prichiny i sledstviya* (Moscow: Novosti, 1991), 34.

16. *Pravda*, 20 June 1990.

17. *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, 8 February 1991.

18. "S tochki zreniya chetvertoi vlasti: Interv'yu s rukovoditelyami rossiiskikh sredstv massovoi informatsii," *Strana i mir* (Munich) 9, no. 2 (March–April 1992): 26. The *New York Times*, 2 May 1996, described Prokhanov as the image maker for Zyuganov.

19. *Demokraticheskaya Rossiya* 1 (July 1990).

20. *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 25 May 1990.

21. For the text, see *Literaturna Ukraina*, 6 September 1990.

22. See Volodymyr Ruban's interview with Shcherbak in *Visti z Ukrainy* 38 (September 1990).

23. *Uryadovyi kur'yer* 1 (October 1990).

24. *Radyans'ka Ukraina*, 7 October 1990.

25. *Radyans'ka Ukraina*, 8 November 1990.

26. *Prapor komunizmu*, 11 July 1990, and TASS, 5 November 1990.

27. *Vechirnii Kyiv*, 21 November 1990.

28. For the text of Yeltsin's address, see *Vechirnii Kyiv*, 29 November 1990.

29. For the text of the treaty, see Zagorskii, Rossiisko-Ukrainskie otnosheniya 1990–1997, 108–12.

30. *Komsomol'skaya pravda* and *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 18 September 1990.

31. *Komsomol'skoe znamya*, 21 November 1990. See also John B. Dunlop, "Russian Reactions to Solzhenitsyn's Brochure," *Report on the USSR*, 14 December 1990, 3–8.

32. See his address to the February plenum of the Ukrainian Party Central Committee in *Radyans'ka Ukraina*, 24 February 1990.

33. The development of Ukrainian political parties and their programs is discussed in Taras Kuzio and Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine: Perestroika to Independence* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1994), 99*ff*. For a thorough analysis, see Nahaylo, *The Ukrainian Resurgence*, 156*ff*.

34. *Radyans'ka Ukraina*, 26 July 1990.

35. See Oksana Hutsul's interview with Kravchuk in *Molod' Ukrainy*, 25 July 1990.

36. That was the number of deputies that cast their votes for Kravchuk as speaker of the parliament on 23 July 1990.

37. *Visti z Ukrainy* 41 (October 1990).

38. *Pravda Ukrainy*, 14 September 1990.

39. For the text, see *Literaturna Ukraina*, 13 September 1990.

40. For the text, see *Radyans'ka Ukraina*, 30 September 1990.

41. For the text, see *Radyans'ka Ukraina*, 28 September 1990.

42. Subsequently, both Kravchuk and Hurenko, on various occasions referred to the need for a referendum in Ukraine on an agreed text of the treaty.

43. *Radyans'ka Ukraina*, 11 September 1990.

44. For a colorful day-to-day account of the students' strike, see Solomea Pavlychko, *Letters from Kiev*, trans. Myrna Kostash (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1992).

45. R*adyans'ka Ukraina*, 16 October 1990. The decision was formalized in a resolution adopted on 17 October. For the text, see *Vidomosti Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrains'koi Radyans'koi Sotsialistychnoi Respubliky* 45 (6 November 1990): 836–37.

46. For the results of the voting, see *Chetvertyi S"ezd narodnykh deputatov SSSR 17–27 dekabrya 1990 g. Stenograficheskii otchet*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Izdanie Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR, 1991), 387–407.

47. *Pravda*, 10 October 1990.

48. For the text, see *Pravda*, 24 November 1990.

49. *Pravda*, 13 December 1990.

50. *Chetverty S"ezd*, vol. 1, 294–98 and 506–10, respectively.

51. TASS, 11 December 1990.

52. For the text, see *Pravda*, 9 March 1991.

53. See Ann Sheehy, "Revised Draft of the Union Treaty," *Report on the* USSR, 22 March 1991, 4.

54. *Holos Ukrainy*, 16 March 1991.

55. *Holos Ukrainy*, 3 April 1991.

56. For the text, see *Pravda*, 24 April 1991.

57. *New York Times*, 12 May 1991.

58. *Komsomol'skoe znamya*, 6 May 1991.

59. For the text, see *Vidomosti Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrains'koi Radyans'koi Sotsialistychnoi Respubliky* 32 (6 August 1991): 884.

60. TASS, 5 July 1991.
61. Quoted in *Holos Ukrainy*, 14 July 1991.
62. *Los Angeles Times*, 31 July 1991.
63. TASS, 27 August 1991.
64. For the text, see *Radyans'ka Ukraina*, 5 September 1991.
65. For the text, see *Izvestia* (Moscow evening ed.), 2 September 1991.
66. For the text of Gorbachev's speech, see TASS, 21 October 1991. See also *Izvestia* (Moscow evening ed.), 21 October 1991.
67. For the text, see *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 23 October 1991.
68. For the text, see *Vidomosti Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy* 51 (17 December 1991): 1491.
69. *Holos Ukrainy*, 12 November 1991.
70. Central Soviet Television, 15 November 1991.
71. *Demokratychna Ukraina*, 26 November 1991.
72. For the text, see *Vidomosti Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy* 9 (3 March 1992): 229.
73. Radio Rossii, 29 August 1991.
74. *Rossiya*, 6–10 September 1991.
75. TASS, 31 October 1991.
76. For the text, see *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 20 November 1991.
77. Central Soviet Television, 30 November 1991.
78. See the interview with Gorbachev conducted by Iosif Seredich and Anatolii Maisenya in *Narodnaya hazeta* (Minsk), 30 November 1991.
79. TASS, 5 December 1991.
80. Central Soviet Television, 5 December 1991.
81. *Sovetskaya Belorussiya*, 10 December 1991.
82. Andrei Kozyrev, *Preobrazhenie* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 1995), 154–55.
83. Mikhail Gorbachev, *Dekabr'-91: Moya pozitsiya* (Moscow: Novosti, 1992), 57.

3

After the Fall

> There is a point of view according to which the three days in August marked the beginning of Russia's restoration. But equally well-founded is the view that Russia's history in a certain sense came to an end precisely in August 1991. The end of the line—the significance of which is only now beginning to enter the consciousness of the Russian-speaking elite—was the declaration of an "independent Ukraine" by the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR.
>
> —Gleb Pavlovskii, *Moskovskie novosti*, 3 November 1991

> Today the choice between the USSR and the CIS does not exist. In essence, the CIS is the only possible form of a renewed Union.
>
> —Russian minister of foreign affairs, Andrei Kozyrev, 18 April 1992

> Time passes, and the road from Moscow to Kyiv is becoming ever longer. Who will estimate the losses from the lost opportunities?
>
> —*Izvestia*, 29 May 1993

From the vantage point of 2000, one can take issue with the notion that the attempted coup in August 1991 and Ukraine's declaration of independence—or, for that matter, even the collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of the CIS—did in fact definitively mark the end of one kind of Russia and the beginning of another. It is true, of course, that if one looks at a map one will find fifteen independent states where the USSR used to be. It is also true, however, that Russia, Ukraine, and the other former Soviet republics are still in varying stages of transition, and from this standpoint alone it would be difficult to talk in terms of conclusive or "historical" breaks with the past.

The basis for this less than optimistic perception need not even be the fact that for several years now Russia and Belarus have been trying to put together some kind of not entirely comprehensible union of states and that their leaders seem convinced that the enterprise would be more complete with Ukraine as a member. It is enough to consider instead the following statement from a

press briefing by former Russian deputy prime minister Valerii Serov, who was responsible for relations with CIS countries:

> It is time for us to relinquish our previous terminology, when by force of inertia we referred to our partners in the CIS as the Near Abroad. They are no different from those that are "far off," and for a long time now they have been completely independent subjects of international law, recognized by the entire world. It is in vain that some people think that all of this is temporary in nature and that soon enough, because someone wants it that way, everything will return to its rightful place. It has to be recognized that a civilized divorce has taken place, and the main thing now is to build our relations on the basis of the realities that have taken shape.[1]

Serov, of course, would probably agree that a historical break had occurred. Had he been holding his press briefing sometime in 1992 or even 1995, then what he had to say could be understood as quite normal. Russia, like the other former Soviet republics, was still adjusting and, unlike the others, had the added problem of parting with empire. But Serov was urging his listeners to come to terms with reality in early 1998, which is reason enough to wonder what exactly is the distance between the old Russia and the new Russia.

The final judgment on this admittedly speculative question will be made by future historians. What we can say with a sufficient degree of certainty at this juncture is that the events of August–December 1991 ushered in a very different stage of development for both Russia and Ukraine and for their interrelationship as well. Neither Russia nor Ukraine, each for its own specific reasons, was particularly well prepared for the transition, and this goes a long way toward explaining the difficulties that followed. For Russia, a major problem was certainly the nature of its radically altered statehood. Vice President Rutskoi probably expressed the feelings of many of his fellow citizens when he said in January 1992 that he did not want to live in a "banana republic." He also said:

> We must not allow anyone to demolish with one blow the bridge of memory between yesterday and today, to say that today everything is beginning from zero and that the history of Russia means nothing. We need to be fully aware that the destruction of Russian statehood can be the prologue to a much more horrible destruction.[2]

Rutskoi did not elaborate what kind of terrible calamities might lie ahead. But it was clear to him that the CIS was not the answer for Russia or, indeed, for the other newly independent states. Something was missing, and it soon became clear that that something was "historical Russia." Developing the banana republic analogy further in another article entitled "In Defense of Rus-

sia," which was a variation on the title of an essay by Fedotov published in 1936, the Russian vice president explained:

> That which is happening to us, to Russia is nothing other than the tragic history of a great country. . . . In the final analysis, it is necessary to understand in a politically sober and reasonable manner, including by the parliament, where the border lies between devotion to the principle of the self-determination of the state and the total collapse of the Russian state. . . . The historical consciousness of Russians [*rossiyan*] will not permit anyone to mechanically bring the borders of Russia in line with the borders of the Russian Federation and, in the process, to repudiate that which constituted the glorious pages of Russian history.[3]

And this brings us back to Szporluk's categories of empire savers and nation builders. Again, with the benefit of hindsight one can argue that what made such a differentiation possible in 1989 was the fact that the Soviet Union—that is, a "Russian" state—was still very much a reality. When the USSR was on the map, it was not particularly vexing for the nation builders, who, let us remember, came in assorted varieties, to contemplate a new kind of Russia. But when the Soviet Union began to crumble in the fall of 1991, many nation builders began to look increasingly more like empire savers. Was it entirely fortuitous that the leading political organization of the nation builders, the Democratic Russia movement, split at its Second Congress in November 1991 when three important constituent political parties—the Russian Christian Democratic Movement, the Democratic Party of Russia, and the Kadets—left the movement because of conflicting views on the "unity and indivisibility of Russia"—that is, the Soviet Union?[4] Aksyuchits, the leader of the Christian Democrats, explained, "We are patriots, we oppose the destruction of the [territorial] integrity of the USSR and Russia. That is precisely what was behind our break with the Democratic Russians."[5] In October 1991, even the late Galina Starovoitova, certainly one of the staunchest liberal democrats in Yeltsin's camp, was talking about Russia's "geographic losses." "After Russia left the Union," she observed, "we are finally realizing that we have neither a full-fledged Russian statehood nor a Russian civil society."[6]

In the months that followed, the vexing problem of the Russian state was played out primarily in the conflicts between Russia and Ukraine. The creation of the CIS, which has been described as Russia's "imperial afterthought,"[7] although it served as a mechanism for a civilized divorce, provided still another theater for confrontation between Kyiv and Moscow.

THE AUGUST CRISIS

The initial decrees issued by Yeltsin directly after the failed August coup attempt and the appointment of RSFSR officials to fill posts in the Soviet gov-

ernment and administration was met with suspicion in Kyiv and other Soviet capitals, particularly Alma-Ata. Riding on the heels of its victory over the putschists (and Gorbachev), Yeltsin's team gave the impression that the Soviet Union was now "under new management," as it were. Kravchuk called attention to the "euphoria" in Moscow and the "exaggeration of the merits of some one individual or one people," citing suggestions coming from the Russian leadership that all Soviet state structures should be based on their RSFSR counterparts. Referring to the committee that had been formed under the chairmanship of Russian prime minister Ivan Silaev, which was charged with managing the economy and naming new Soviet government ministers, Kravchuk remarked that "I have my doubts whether this committee, which is composed of representatives of one republic, can defend the interests of other republics."[8] The late Anatolii Sobchak, the mayor of Leningrad and one of the most visible and popular democrats in Yeltsin's camp, acknowledged that some of the statements that were being made by the Russian leadership and its deputies at the Extraordinary USSR Supreme Soviet's opening session were indeed "emotional," but at the same time he called into question the motives of the various republics that had proclaimed their independence, suggesting that this was a ploy, that "under the cover of this talk about national independence they are trying to preserve these [communist] structures, but with a new face."[9] Rutskoi had made the same accusation to a group of Ukrainian deputies in Moscow the day after Ukraine proclaimed its independence: "All of this was done in order to save the CPSU on the territory of Ukraine."[10] The perception that would soon gain a solid foothold in the Western media—namely, that Russia was now under the leadership of "Western-styled and reformist democrats," whereas Ukraine had been hijacked by "communists turned nationalists"—was already coming into focus.

The first serious clash between Kyiv and Moscow erupted on 26 August, two days after Ukraine declared independence, and was prompted by Yeltsin's press secretary Pavel Voshchanov, who issued a statement declaring that Russia reserved the right to revise borders with those republics, apart from the Baltic states, who withdrew from "Union-type relations."[11] At a press conference the same day, Voshchanov explained that the statement referred primarily to Crimea, the Donbas, and northern Kazakhstan, regions heavily populated by Russians and Russian speakers:

> If these republics enter the Union with Russia it is not a problem. But if they go, we must take care of the population that lives there and not forget that these lands were settled by Russians. Russia will hardly agree to give away these territories just like that.[12]

The Ukrainian response was predictable. Serhii Ryabchenko addressed his colleagues in the Soviet parliament the next day and appeared to be mimick-

ing Sobchak, warning of the "dangers of recreating imperial structures, but under different names." He also demanded that the Russian leadership retract its statement on borders of the previous day.[13] Rukh issued a similar warning:

> Once more, an attempt at Ukrainian rebirth, just as it did 72 years ago, calls forth high-handed rejection from certain newly democratized leaders of Russia—victors over the Red putschists. Once more, illusions of messianism, once more the "Big Brother" syndrome, imperial aspirations regarding one's neighbors.[14]

The presidium of the Ukrainian parliament was more diplomatic, authorizing its press center to issue a statement saying that (1) the Ukrainian declaration of independence affirmed the indivisibility and inviolability of Ukraine's territory; (2) the Ukrainian leadership is not calling into question its borders with the RSFSR, it respects Russia's territorial integrity, and has no territorial claims on Russia or any other bordering states; (3) the presidium is prepared to discuss any border questions on the basis of the 1990 bilateral treaty with Russia; (4) Article 6 of that treaty recognizes the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the RSFSR as defined by the currently existing borders within the USSR; (5) the existence or nonexistence of Union relations cannot serve as the basis for calling into question existing borders between Russia and Ukraine; and (6) there is, therefore, no legal basis to treat the 26 August statement as having any bearing on relations between Ukraine and Russia.[15] At the same time, Kravchuk told a press conference that territorial claims are very dangerous, that he had already discussed the issue with Yeltsin, and that an explanation from the Russian president would be forthcoming.[16]

There is no record of any subsequent clarification from Yeltsin. Instead, the Russian president reiterated his position on borders during meetings with Gorbachev and Kazakhstan's leader Nursultan Nazarbaev on 27 August and again the following evening in an interview with a French radio station. Sobchak was quick to label Voshchanov's statement a mistake,[17] but his remarks in the Soviet parliament about Ukraine's Communist leadership masquerading as defenders of the national cause aggravated the situation. Another prominent Russian democrat from Yeltsin's entourage, Moscow mayor Gavriil Popov, appeared on central television on 27 August and added fuel to the fire. He described the independence declarations in the republics as "parades of secession" that were "illegal"; expressed his full support for the statement on borders; urged that Russia's treaties with those republics seceding from the USSR be renegotiated with a view toward safeguarding the Russian minorities there; and argued that the status of Crimea and the Odesa Oblast, among others, be decided by local referendums.[18] Contrary to what the

prominent publicist Gleb Pavlovskii wrote in the fall of that year, it appears that the significance of Ukraine's independence declaration had already entered the consciousness of Russian democrats within several days of its adoption.

In the midst of these developments, the session of the USSR Supreme Soviet on 28 August was interrupted by the announcement that an "emergency situation" had developed and that a delegation from Russia headed by Rutskoi was already on its way to Kyiv. As Yeltsin subsequently explained, the purpose of the mission was "to tell the Ukrainian people: if you stay in the Union, we will not make territorial claims."[19] The deputies were asked to approve the formation of a delegation from the Soviet Union as well, which was headed by Sobchak. Both delegations arrived in the Ukrainian capital later that day without prior notice; like everyone else, the Ukrainian leadership learned that the visitors from Moscow were on their way from the nationally televised broadcast of the Supreme Soviet session. This otherwise minor detail contributed to the widespread impression that, as in the past, Moscow was dispatching its emissaries to one of its provinces to dictate policy and set guidelines for implementation.

Upon their arrival, Rutskoi and Sobchak were greeted by huge and decidedly hostile crowds at the parliament building. According to a Ukrainian account, the initial attitude of the Russian leaders was such that it necessitated a reminder that they were now guests in a foreign country.[20] After night-long negotiations, with the USSR Supreme Soviet delegation acting in an observer capacity, the talks resulted in an eight-point communiqué pledging joint efforts to avert the "uncontrolled disintegration of the Union state" and recognizing the need for interim interstate structures for a transitional period with the participation of interested states that were "subjects of the former USSR." It proposed that these states immediately begin preparations to conclude an economic treaty, reform the armed forces, create a collective security system, and refrain from unilateral decisions regarding strategic military matters. The communiqué also reaffirmed the articles of the Ukrainian-Russian treaty concerning the territorial integrity of both states and the rights of their citizens.[21]

The term "former USSR" appears to have been enshrined in an official context for the first time as a result of the Ukrainian-Russian talks. Upon returning to Moscow, Sobchak reported to the USSR Supreme Soviet that one of the lessons that he had taken away from Kyiv was that "Ukraine, like other republics, has finally taken the path toward genuine independence, genuine freedom, the formation of its own statehood, and that no one can force it to diverge from this path." While in Kyiv, members of the Russian delegation had tried to play down Voshchanov's statement on borders. Stankevich argued that it was not the last word on the subject, that the Russian parliament also had a say in such matters. Even Rutskoi was quoted as saying

that Russia supported and recognized Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity.[22]

NEARING THE END

The "crisis situation" appeared to have receded almost as quickly as it had emerged. In fact, however, Ukraine and Russia were drifting increasingly farther apart, which was reflected in their different approaches to the new Union treaty in the fall. The signals coming from Moscow were becoming a source of concern for the Ukrainian leadership.

On 1 October, RSFSR state secretary Gennadii Burbulis, who at that time was probably Yeltsin's closest political aide, detonated what amounted to a political bomb in Ukraine as well as in other republics when he told Russian lawmakers that "Russia is the sole republic that could and should be the successor to the [Soviet] Union and all of its structures."[23] The reaction in Moscow varied depending upon how one viewed the future of Russian statehood. Burbulis' statement implied that the Soviet Union was finished or at least on its last legs and that the RSFSR was taking over. Leading officials such as Stankevich and Khasbulatov essentially agreed.[24] In Kyiv, of course, this was seen as a another step in the direction of the "under new management" approach to the Soviet state. Ukraine, with its substantial Russian minority and even larger number of Russian speakers, was growing uneasy over the increasing official concern in Moscow about the rights of its countrymen in the republics and, at times, somewhat threatening pledges of unspecified forms of support.

Against this background, in October Solzhenitsyn issued his appeal in connection with the upcoming referendum on independence in Ukraine in which he argued that the aggregate vote could not be considered binding. Ukraine's "false Leninist borders," he insisted, meant that each region should decide for itself whether it wanted to remain part of the country.[25] In Kyiv, this was understood as a call for partition. Soon thereafter, as the Ukrainian-Russian debate over the fate of Ukraine's nuclear arsenal was growing more heated, *Moskovskie novosti* printed the sensational news that Russian government officials had discussed the possibility of a nuclear conflict between Moscow and Kyiv. Another Moscow newspaper printed a somewhat different version—namely, that Russian leaders had considered a preventive nuclear strike against Ukraine.[26] The stories were denied by the Russian defense minister and downplayed by Kravchuk, but Yeltsin was quoted by the Ukrainian first deputy prime minister Kostyantyn Masyk as having told him that he had indeed discussed such a possibility with his generals but that "it was not technically possible."[27] Clearly, such an explanation was less than reassuring for Kyiv.

Ukraine and Russia continued their cooperation on an official level. On 6 November, Kravchuk and Yeltsin signed a communiqué in Moscow that pledged to bolster relations in all areas and to create the corresponding mechanisms for implementing such a policy, which was described as having "unconditional priority" for both sides. It was agreed to proceed quickly on a formal agreement in the military-political sphere.[28] Kyiv had decided to establish a permanent plenipotentiary mission in Moscow at the end of August 1991, and at the end of November Leonid Smolyakov was named Moscow's representative in Kyiv. The interparliamentary committee on cooperation, which had been agreed on in the 1990 bilateral treaty, held its first session in Moscow in mid-November.[29]

Nonetheless, the tension in the air was unmistakable. In early November, the presidium of the Ukrainian parliament issued a statement saying that after Ukraine's declaration of independence, the media in the "former USSR" had embarked on a campaign to discredit the Ukrainian political leadership, sow inter-nationality discord in the country, frighten the population with scenarios about economic and political chaos accompanying independence, and disseminate rumors about nuclear war between Ukraine and Russia, all of which was ascribed to a "relapse of imperial thinking."[30] Yeltsin's warning at the end of the month that if Ukraine refused to join a political union it would have to pay for its imports from Russia in hard currency and at world prices did not help matters.[31] This was understood in Kyiv as a form of economic blackmail, particularly since the two republics had signed an economic agreement only several weeks earlier.

In the meantime, Yeltsin and his advisers announced new plans to take over additional Soviet government functions, which prompted Kravchuk to openly accuse the Russian leader of wanting to transfer central power to Russia. "Boris Yeltsin believes that Russia should remain the center around which the newly independent states will revolve," he told a group of foreign journalists at the end of November. Moscow will undoubtedly be a "center," he said, "and we will deal with it like a state deals with any center—say Paris."[32] The atmosphere was not improved when *Izvestia*, quoting from *U.S. News & World Report*, informed Ukrainian readers on 27 November that Yeltsin had pleaded privately with the Bush administration to do whatever it could to prevent Ukraine's secession from the USSR.[33]

The results of the Ukraine's December referendum, which were certainly surprising, came as a shock to many in Russia. Vitalii Churkin, the chief spokesman for the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, described the effect in terms of a "political Chornobyl."[34] Gorbachev had compelling reasons for self-delusion about Ukraine. And although he was clearly not the best judge of what was happening there, what he had to say on the eve of the Ukrainian referendum illustrates some fundamental problems about how many Russians had grown accustomed to viewing their "younger brothers":

> I know that land very well—I think I more than know it—I have a feel for the Ukraine. I have a personal link with the Ukraine. My roots are in the region of Chernigov in the Ukraine. My other roots are in Voronezh, in Russia. . . . Some politicians are trying to prepare public opinion for a view that if the Ukraine votes for independence, that means that it votes for secession, but that is not so. . . . If we take a serious view of things, I am sure that we cannot even contemplate that the Ukraine would leave the union, because that would be big trouble for the union, but even bigger trouble, a catastrophe for Ukraine.[35]

The Soviet president repeated his message that an independence vote in Ukraine did not mean secession in a telephone conversation with President Bush on 30 November.[36] But other Russian leaders were also in what might be termed various states of denial. A few days after the referendum, Sobchak told a leading Paris newspaper of the dangers posed by an independent Ukraine, including the "forced ukrainianization" of the Russian minority. He likened the situation to the conflict between Serbs and Croats in Yugoslavia, with the exception that a nuclear conflict between Ukraine and Russia could not be excluded. If Ukraine refused to join a new confederation with Russia and the economic community, it could expect territorial claims from Moscow.[37] Like Gorbachev, Sobchak insisted that the referendum vote in Ukraine was not tantamount to secession; the referendum was about the declaration of independence, he explained, not about whether Ukraine remained in the Soviet Union. The severing of ties was characterized as "absurd" and "the road to nowhere." Besides, he said, Moscow had in the past given Ukraine a number of purely Russian regions, including all of southern Ukraine, and this may now have to be reconsidered.[38]

The creation of the CIS a week after the Ukrainian referendum should have rendered this kind of rhetoric irrelevant. What happened instead is that the conflict between Kyiv and Moscow simply shifted from one plane to another. Gorbachev and the old center were now out of the picture, and ostensibly there was no longer any reason for dire warnings should Ukraine decide not to join "some kind of confederation." In a sense, the CIS was "some kind of confederation," at least from Moscow's standpoint. The conflict continued on what may be termed a more direct and, in some cases, official bilateral basis. Initially, the main issues were Crimea, the Black Sea Fleet, and the fate of the Soviet military, and in due time the CIS itself was added to the list. Thus, it was not entirely surprising that in early January 1992 Sobchak was saying that the CIS was already a failure and warning the world community that Kyiv's plans for a separate army posed a "serious threat for all of humanity" and that a prominent member of the Russian government was accusing Kravchuk, the president of a country that had gained international recognition, of what amounted to "separatism" in the context of discussing regional problems in Russia proper.[39] Reading the Moscow press in early 1992, one

could easily come to the conclusion that Russia's leaders were rather confused as to whether they were defending the interests of Russia or "Russia."

THE CIS COMPROMISE

On 8 December 1991, at a government retreat in Belovezh outside of Brest in Belarus, the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, and the host republic agreed to bury the USSR, which was declared as having ceased to exist "as a subject of international law and as a geopolitical reality." Initially at least, all three, albeit to varying degrees, probably saw the CIS as in some sense a replacement for the Soviet Union. What exactly transpired during those lengthy talks is still largely a matter of conjecture. Yeltsin's memoirs are disappointingly uninformative about how the Belovezh meeting was arranged and say little about the substance of the talks.[40] Kozyrev, who was a member of the Russian delegation, is considerably more enlightening, although he flatly states that for the moment he is not comfortable with revealing "delicate details and secrets." The former foreign minister says that the Russian delegation came to the meeting with proposals along the lines of forming a community or union of democratic states and that during the talks Yeltsin and Burbulis tactfully but consistently kept emphasizing that the three Slavic states should stick together regardless of how the situation in the Soviet Union developed further. The Ukrainians and the Belarusians, he notes, did not reveal their intentions for a long time. The Ukrainians were concerned that Yeltsin had come to pressure them into remaining within the Soviet Union, which, they warned, would result in the talks breaking down. Neither Kravchuk nor Fokin would back off from the referendum results. Kozyrev credits the Russian president with shifting "the general discussion about fraternal traditions to a concrete idea—a union of fraternal republics-countries," which the three leaders agreed on. The details were left to the other members of the delegations to work out overnight. According to Kozyrev, it was the Russian side that drafted the Belovezh agreements. The Belarusians contributed to the process, and the Ukrainians joined in later. The Russians, he concedes, emphasized "union and integration," but for the Ukrainians "the emphasis patently fell on the opposite side." On the morning of 8 December, the three leaders met, agreed on changes and revisions, and decided to call their new creation the Commonwealth of Independent States.[41]

To create the CIS was one thing, but the question obviously arose as to what should be done about the USSR. Shushkevich states unambiguously that it was Burbulis who first posed the question and then proceeded to argue that the Soviet Union no longer existed de facto and should be liquidated de jure.[42] Kozyrev recalls that it was Sergei Shakhrai, at that time a state councilor, who came up with a "legal" basis for dissolving the Soviet Union. His

logic was quite simple. The initial agreement to create the USSR was made by Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and the Transcaucasian Federation. The latter no longer existed, which left the three Slavic republics free to annul their original agreement. Shakhrai confirms that it was he who drafted the document that "recorded the death of the country," adding that this is his "personal tragedy." He also says that the Russian delegation did not come to Belovezh with anything on paper. The Belarusians were ready to discuss variants of a new Union, but the Ukrainians "came 'to say their last good-byes to everyone.' " "They were in a state of euphoria. It was extremely difficult to work. I would characterize Ukraine's role not as decisive, but as fatal."[43]

In the spring of 1994, Shakhrai publicly announced that he regretted his role in Belovezh, saying that although the decisions that were taken there were unavoidable, he was saddened by the fact that such a great state has fallen part. As "moral and political compensation" for his part in that process, Shakhrai unveiled his plans for a "confederation of Eurasian states" within the CIS, which, among other things, foresaw unified armed forces with a unified military command.[44] Burbulis confirms that it was Shakhrai who provided the "escape clause," as it were, for liquidating the Soviet Union. He says that the Russian delegation came to Belovezh with "open questions." The first was whether it would be possible to maintain economic and political ties to Ukraine after Kravchuk had flatly rejected the new Union treaty. The second was whether it was possible to return to the idea of an agreement among the three Slavic states and Kazakhstan, which had begun discussions along these lines already in April 1991.[45] In this context, he reveals that Nazarbaev knew of the Belovezh meeting beforehand and agreed to take part. On his way to Minsk, according to Burbulis, the Kazakh leader stopped off in Moscow to see Gorbachev and after that he backed off.[46] Nazarbaev sees things differently. He claims to have been invited to attend the talks only when he arrived in Moscow:

> They said that they are waiting for my signature. I answered: "I am sorry, I did not take part in the preparation of this document and, therefore, I will not sign it. I need to look into everything. And then, there are also the Central Asian republics, the leaders of which will ask me specifically: "What have you concocted there?"[47]

Burbulis also provides the interesting detail that the first person to be told of the Belovezh decisions was USSR minister of defense Evgenii Shaposhnikov, who gave his consent to the undertaking. Bush was notified next, and then Gorbachev was informed.

Shushkevich has also said that everyone expected Nazarbaev to be present at the Belovezh talks but that he got "stuck" in Moscow on his way. According to the former Belarusian leader, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan

had agreed already in February 1991 to sign a quadripartite agreement as a counterweight to Gorbachev.[48] In what was very likely one of his first press interviews after the Belovezh talks, Shushkevich said that each of the three sides had their own plans and ideas but that the final agreement was essentially an entirely new product that was worked out after difficult and intensive work.[49] In another interview in early 1992, he confided that it was he who brought Yeltsin and Kravchuk to Belovezh, explaining that he was sick and tired of the Moscow press depicting Belarus as a country of "timid idiots."[50] After another tense and fruitless meeting with Gorbachev at the end of October, Shushkevich and Yeltsin agreed that the Russian leader would go to Belarus to review the situation. Then Shushkevich asked Belarusian prime minister Vyacheslau Kebich to get in touch with his Ukrainian counterpart to determine whether Kravchuk would be willing to attend the talks. After receiving a positive response from Kyiv, Yeltsin was asked whether he had anything against Kravchuk's participation in the meeting. His response, according to Shushkevich, was that it was a fine idea.

Kravchuk has been the most forthcoming about what transpired on 7–8 December, although his account differs in some respects from that of Shushkevich. The former Ukrainian leader claims, for example, that it was he who proposed the meeting in Belovezh.[51] More important, his version of the Belovezh talks portrays Yeltsin's initial role in a very different light. Kravchuk says flatly that Yeltsin came to Belarus with proposals from Gorbachev that amounted to a last ditch effort to save the Soviet Union:

> And when we met in Belovezh, B. N. Yeltsin honestly posed three questions to me in the name of M. S. Gorbachev. Will Ukraine sign the existing text of the [Union] treaty? I said no. I repeat, this question was not coming from him, but in the name of M. S. Gorbachev, with whom he had a meeting beforehand that lasted many hours. I said no. The second question: Will Ukraine sign the text of the treaty if it introduces some kind of changes in the text? I said no. And the third question: Will Ukraine sign the treaty if it proposes its own version of the Union treaty? I said: If Ukraine proposes its version, then it will not be a confederative state, it will be something else—a commonwealth of states. Therefore, this cannot be accepted even as a basis [for talks].[52]

With that matter out of the way, the three leaders began looking at other options. The result was the CIS.

After returning to Kyiv, Kravchuk said that the Russian and Belarusian sides had hoped to forge a closer union but that "our referendum and our independence" forced them to soften their stand: "These were decisive. It became clear that Ukraine would not change its position, and thus Yeltsin and Shushkevich understood that to live with Ukraine they would need to find an alternative—this alternative was the Commonwealth."[53] The Belovezh meeting produced three documents: a statement announcing the formation of the

CIS, which said that the organization was open to new members; an agreement creating the CIS; and a statement by the three governments on the coordination of economic policy. The Soviet Union was finished, and on 25 December 1991 Gorbachev resigned his presidency of the USSR.

WHITHER THE CIS?

It was not long before anyone who read the newspapers or watched the evening news easily came to the conclusion that the CIS was not a happy compromise. The disagreements among the now independent states, particularly Ukraine and Russia, did not go away with the passing of the Soviet Union. The CIS summits of the heads of state now became an arena where many of these problems came into full public view. At the March 1992 summit in Kyiv, for example, Russia refused to discuss the question of the former Soviet Union's assets, which was of particular interest to Ukraine. Ukraine, on the other hand, did not sign any of the documents dealing with the CIS joint armed forces and its command, which was of particular interest to Russia. At the concluding press conference, Kravchuk told journalists that the CIS had thus far not adopted a single more or less serious document that had been implemented, and if this situation did not change, the CIS, which he characterized as a "dream," was doomed. Yeltsin reminded his colleagues that it was they who abandoned the Soviet Union, not Russia.[54] The atmosphere at the summit could have been presaged by a small detail noticed by a Ukrainian journalist: the only limousine that was not bearing the state flag of Ukraine in the motorcade carrying the heads of state to the summit talks was the one occupied by Yeltsin.[55] At the next summit, which was held in May in Tashkent, Kravchuk declined to attend, giving priority to a visit by the Finnish president. Russian television, apparently annoyed by the snub, commented that "Ukraine's policies led to the definitive collapse of the Soviet Union. Now it appears to be the same for the Commonwealth."[56]

In short order, another problem was added to the list of disputes between Kyiv and Moscow: the CIS itself, specifically its functions in the post-Soviet space and what role Russia intended to play in the newly formed organization. In essence, the issue revolved once again around the question of Russian statehood. Already several weeks after the CIS was formed, it was possible to discern at least two scenarios for the new organization's further development. The first was the so-called Ukrainian scenario, the gist of which was reflected in the statement by Ivan Plyushch, the head of the Ukrainian parliament, while on a visit to the European Parliament and the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. Asked by journalists why the former Soviet republics were drifting farther apart when the rest of the world was integrating, Plyushch explained that the CIS was something in the nature of a mechanism for con-

ducting an orderly "divorce process." The problems inherited from the Soviet Union had to be resolved first, he maintained. And if Ukraine, Russia, and other newly independent states become members of European institutions, why should there be coordinating structures in the CIS or, for that matter, the CIS as such? Why, asked Plyushch, have a "double divorce?"[57] At about the same time, Kravchuk described the CIS as "a committee to liquidate the old [Soviet] structures."[58] The Ukrainian leadership gave every indication that it viewed the CIS as an interim organization that was made necessary by the circumstances. Dmytro Pavlychko, the head of the parliamentary committee on foreign affairs, asserted several days after the Belovezh agreements, "We are not signing it to last for centuries. This a bridge for us over the chaos."[59] It would have been surprising if—after successfully resisting Gorbachev's efforts to save the Soviet Union and then gaining their independence—the Ukrainians had acted much differently.

Moreover, Kravchuk and the Ukrainian leadership were confronted with severe criticism from the opposition, which argued that Ukraine's membership in the CIS placed its independence at risk. The Third Congress of Rukh, which opened in late February 1992 with the participation of Kravchuk, witnessed a stream of anti-Moscow rhetoric and criticism of government policy. The Congress adopted a resolution saying that, although Ukraine's adherence to the CIS had been necessitated by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the further course of events had shown that this did not remove threats to its sovereignty. Rukh declared that it would work toward "the secession of Ukraine from the CIS, which does not fully guarantee the interests of Ukraine."[60]

The ratification process of the Belovezh agreements in the Ukrainian parliament clearly showed that Kyiv was wary of committing itself to the new organization. On 10 December 1991, the lawmakers passed a resolution ratifying the agreement creating the CIS but appended twelve "reservations." Among them was the reaffirmation of the inviolability of borders and the right to national armed forces; the proposed joint foreign policy activity was deemphasized by replacing the word *coordination* with *consultation*. Two days later, the deputies added further reservations to the text, including the purely symbolic rendering of the word *commonwealth* in the lowercase.[61]

Little more than a week later, on the eve of the Alma-Ata summit on 12 December at which an additional eight members joined the CIS, the Ukrainian parliament went a step further and issued a thirteen-point declaration outlining its understanding of the CIS agreement as providing for a loose association of states. The move was prompted, according to the declaration, because "official circles" in the signatory states were subjecting individual articles in the agreement "as well as its overall intent to differing interpretations"—specifically, referring to it "as a basis for creating a new union state."[62] Kravchuk and other Ukrainian leaders emphasized from the very

start that the CIS was not some kind of a new state and that there were no junior or senior members. Ukraine's firm policy was to steer clear of all initiatives to establish CIS coordinating structures and supranational bodies such as the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly and the CIS Charter. As a matter of principle, Kyiv ignored efforts aimed at integration in the political, military, and security spheres and, accordingly, did not sign the collective security treaty in Tashkent in May 1992.

The second scenario for the CIS was the Russian one. At a minimum, it envisioned an integrated structure in which Russia would play the leading role. To a large extent, this was also what the West was hoping for, if for no other reason than to ensure central control of the former Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal. At a maximum, the Russian scenario saw the CIS as a protostate of sorts and the foundation for some kind of new union of the former Soviet republics. For its part, Russia also could not have been expected to act differently. And like Kravchuk, Yeltsin also had his opposition. Already in mid-January 1992, the Russian Christian Democrats and the Kadets, who had left the Democratic Russia movement, announced their intention to form a right-of-center "patriotic opposition."

The forum for this initiative was the Congress of Civic and Patriotic Forces of Russia, which convened in early February and was addressed by Rutskoi, who called for the "restoration of the true face of Russia."[63] The gathering attracted various national-communist and overtly chauvinist and neofascist groups, including Pamyat, and ultimately broke up in confusion amid disagreements over who should be considered as representing genuine Russian patriotism.[64] It nonetheless managed to establish a coalition of political groups called the Russian People's Assembly, which adopted several documents calling for, among other things, "the rebirth by political means of a single and great Russian state within its historical borders" and the "recognition of the RSFSR as the legal successor to the Russian Empire and the USSR with all of the resulting political and juridical consequences."[65] The assembly's program also had a position on the CIS:

> We do not consider the CIS to be a viable creation, which means that long-term Russian policy cannot be oriented toward its preservation. However, the Commonwealth can be utilized as an instrument for the realization of Russian national-state interests. Through negotiations with other members of the Commonwealth, economic and political pressure, agreements, and with the support of public movements and state officials with a Russian orientation, the arbitrary Leninist-Stalinist borders must be revised in accordance with historical realities. At the same time, we welcome all forms of reunification with all adjacent territories, and we will not insist on the revision of borders should one or another of the former republics of the USSR bordering on the Russian Federation sign a federative union treaty with Russia.[66]

In mid-March 1992, several hundred delegates convened as the self-styled "Sixth Congress of USSR People's Deputies," confirmed the existence of the USSR, and declared the CIS null and void. These developments marked the beginning of a process of consolidation of the red–brown opposition that reached its high point with the formation of the National Salvation Front in October 1992 and which led ultimately to the violent confrontation between Yeltsin and the parliament the following year. The pressure from the "patriotic opposition" could not be ignored. Already by April 1992, at the Sixth Congress of Russian People's Deputies, Yeltsin was backpedaling, explaining that it was not Russia's fault that the Soviet Union had fallen apart. Kozyrev assured the deputies that Russia's priority was to "reestablish a renewed Union in one form or another" and that the CIS was the vehicle through which this would be accomplished.[67]

The initiatives of political groups such as the National Salvation Front to "restore Russia" were not emerging from a vacuum. In the fall of 1992, the prominent Russian sociologist Igor Klyamkin reported that opinion surveys showed that about 60 percent of Russians consistently condemned the dismantling of the Soviet Union; in Ukraine, the corresponding figure was between 33 and 46 percent in March–June 1992. Perhaps more interesting was the finding that Russians, regardless of social background, viewed the problem of their statehood primarily in terms of a joint enterprise involving the former Soviet republics, which was reflected in the greater importance that they assigned to consolidation of the CIS rather than strengthening their national statehood.[68] This was reflected in the mood among Russian lawmakers. The Sixth Congress of Russian People's Deputies adopted a resolution expressing its dissatisfaction with the level of political, economic, and military integration within the CIS; asking the parliament and the government to continue working with the other CIS states to "strengthen and develop the coordinating institutions of the CIS"; and welcoming the formation of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly. In a separate statement to all former Soviet citizens, the Congress declared its intention to strengthen the "friendship of peoples" and announced that it was prepared to "improve the Commonwealth of Independent States so that it would become a new form for the unification of genuinely equal states for the well-being and happiness of our peoples."[69]

How the Russian parliament imagined Moscow's role in the CIS became evident from a confidential document prepared by Evgenii Ambartsumov, head of the parliamentary committee on foreign affairs, which summarized closed hearings on Russia's foreign policy and was leaked to the press in August 1992. The document called for rejection of Kozyrev's Western orientation and proposed what was described as "Russia's Monroe Doctrine" for the CIS:

> As the internationally recognized legal successor to the USSR, the Russian Federation must proceed in its foreign policy from the doctrine that proclaims the entire geopolitical space of the former [Soviet] Union the sphere of its vital interests (along the lines of the USA's "Monroe Doctrine" in Latin America) and secure from the world community the understanding and recognition of its special interests in this space.[70]

By the end of 1992, the Congress of Russian People's Deputies was appealing to the parliaments of the newly independent states to consider the idea of forming a confederation or "another form of drawing together of the independent states of Europe and Asia, the former republics of the USSR, whose peoples are expressing their desire for unification."[71]

Moscow's perception of how it intended to conduct its relations with Kyiv at this early stage was consistent with the unfolding view of its role in the CIS. Particularly interesting in this regard is a memorandum on Ukraine prepared by Sergei Karaganov, deputy director of the Institute of Europe of the Russian Academy of Sciences and head of the influential Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, that found its way to the pages of one of Kyiv's most widely read newspapers in June 1992. The memorandum posited four scenarios. The first, which was judged to be unacceptable, was a military solution. The second focused on close and friendly relations at the expense of concessions and a maximum degree of compromise on Russia's part. The third would transform Ukraine into a "semi-independent state" by exerting economic and political pressure that would go beyond forcing concessions and actually impose Moscow's will on Kyiv. The final option was thought to be most acceptable:

> Keep the Ukrainian problem within a definite framework, not allow it to get out of control, and maintain the basic elements of cooperation and friendly relations between the two peoples through a combination of policies of reconciliation, pressure, and wide ranging use of international instruments, waiting until Kyiv outgrows its most acute period of striving for self-assertiveness.[72]

The desired results were to be attained by, among other things, the "greatest possible degree of isolation of Ukraine in the political and diplomatic area, restricting its political influence and its possibilities for receiving aid," and by "placing its most shameless figures under fire from international criticism by creating the image of an authoritarian-nationalist and neo-communist regime." No less disturbing, from Kyiv's standpoint, was the version of the draft Ukrainian-Russian treaty drawn up by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which foresaw a joint military doctrine and Russian military bases in Ukraine.[73]

It is difficult to say where Yeltsin and his closest advisers stood on these issues. Nonetheless, already in early 1992 the liberal Russian media was in-

clined to think that the leadership in Moscow was intent on bringing the post-Soviet space under new management. In its first issue for the new year, *Literaturnaya gazeta* wrote that it would be a mistake to assume that Gorbachev's resignation signaled the end of the center. Rather, what was happening was the "transfer of the idea of central power into other heads."[74] *Novoe vremya* had a similar take on the situation:

> By adhering to the Minsk agreement, the point of departure for the Yeltsin team was that the disappearance of the center would almost automatically and without conflict make Russia the legal successor to the USSR, the leader of the CIS, and the generally recognized source of consensus. In other words, the calculation was that the other republics would accept Russia as the good "older brother."[75]

THE ROAD TO "NORMALIZATION"

After the first full year of independence, both Kyiv and Moscow came to realize that translating their optimal scenarios into reality was not as simple as had been imagined. For Ukraine, the impact of harsh economic realities brought on by its almost complete dependence on Russian deliveries of oil and gas and the ineffectiveness of what passed for market reforms meant that a hard-line attitude in relations with Russia and intransigence on CIS-related issues had to give way to a more pragmatic and balanced approach.

This point was reflected in the appointment of Kuchma as prime minister in the fall of 1992. The new head of government was an experienced director of one of Ukraine's largest industrial enterprises, Pivdenmash in Dnipropetrovsk, which was the largest producer of missiles in the Soviet Union. Kuchma's professional life had little to do with Kyiv and everything to do with Moscow. The result was a partial reorientation of Ukraine's CIS policies, specifically with regard to economic matters. Accordingly, in April 1993 Kyiv initialed the agreement establishing the CIS Coordination Consultative Committee, with the proviso that the new institution would not go beyond its mandate in the economic area. At the CIS summit the following month, Kravchuk signed a joint declaration calling for greater economic integration and a common economic market for goods and services, while at the same time objecting in principle to the idea of an Economic Union. At the September 1993 CIS summit, which witnessed agreement on the creation of the Economic Union, Ukraine took a half-step by opting for the undefined status of an "associate member."

Kuchma's victory over Kravchuk in the 1994 presidential election was widely viewed as a turning point in Ukrainian-Russian relations. Moscow's policy of exerting economic pressure on Ukraine—which found its fullest expression in Yeltsin's statement at the G7 meeting in Tokyo that "they know

that all I have to do is cut off the gas and they'll come to Moscow on their knees"—seemed to be yielding the desired results.[76] The new Ukrainian president had based his electoral campaign around the need to restore ties with Russia, which he promised would lead to a turnaround in the economic situation, and he also advocated official status for the Russian language in Ukraine. All of this fell on fertile ground in the eastern and southern regions of the country, which were more visibly affected by the economic turmoil and accounted for a larger proportion of the vote than the central and western regions. In the fall of 1994, in addition to launching what was then perceived to be a program of "radical" economic reform, Kuchma also signed the agreement forming the CIS Inter-State Economic Committee, which was envisaged as a body charged with coordinating, executive, and control functions for the Economic Union (of which Ukraine was not a full member) and was the first supranational body within the CIS.

But the assumption that Ukraine's new leader would be more receptive to Moscow's initiatives and to political, military, and security integration within the CIS proved to be short-lived. Kuchma was quick to point out that Ukraine had not signed any documents that violated its constitution or laws, singling out Kyiv's continued rejection of collective security arrangements within the CIS and stating forcefully that he did not seek the presidency of Ukraine "in order to become a vassal of Russia."[77] At the end of 1996, in a national radio address on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the founding of the CIS, he went so far as to say that, although Ukraine was a cofounder of the CIS, it took part in its activities as an "associate member." Every state was free to determine the degree of its involvement in the organization, and Ukraine's position was that it regarded the CIS as "an inter-state mechanism for consultations and negotiations," primarily on economic matters and mainly on a bilateral basis.[78]

In Russia, Ambartsumov's notion of a "Russian Monroe Doctrine" eventually began to assume concrete forms. In early 1993, Yeltsin told a forum of the centrist opposition grouped in the Civic Union that the time had come for the international community, and specifically the United Nations, to grant Russia "special powers as a guarantor of peace and stability" on the territory of the former Soviet Union. "Russia is consistently and unequivocally for integration within the framework of the CIS," he asserted. "We are ready now for confederative relations of an open type with those states that agree."[79] By the end of that year and in early 1994, it was clear that Russia's policies with regard to the CIS were based on the proposition that Moscow is the dominant player in the post-Soviet space and that the entire territory of the former Soviet Union constitutes a zone of Russia's "historically determined interests" wherein it performs a "special role." This was the substance of Kozyrev's remarks at a January 1994 meeting of Russian diplomats from the CIS countries.[80] At the same time, Yeltsin told Russian lawmakers that

the CIS had reached a crucial point in its development that was marked by closer integration and that, in the process, "Russia's mission was to be first among equals."[81]

The hardening of Moscow's official policy may well have been prompted by the results of the Russian parliamentary election in December 1993, which brought Vladimir Zhirinovsky into the limelight. It was reflected in concrete plans for development of a long-term CIS integration program and in the establishment of a cabinet post for a deputy prime minister responsible entirely for CIS affairs. Such documents as the report of the Foreign Intelligence Service, headed at the time by Evgenii Primakov, entitled "Russia-CIS: Does the West's Position Need Modification?" (September 1994); the memorandum on "The Basic Directions of the Integrationist Development of the Commonwealth of Independent States" and the accompanying long-term program proposed by Russia and adopted at the CIS summit in Moscow (October 1994); and the presidential decree on "Russia's Strategic Course with the States-Participants in the Commonwealth of Independent States" (September 1995) were all geared toward promoting and strengthening integration. The "Strategic Course" spelled out that Russia's "main vital interests in the economic, defense, and security areas and in the defense of the rights of Russians" were all to be found on the territory of the CIS, thereby dictating Moscow's priority relations with these states, asserting flatly that the objective was the "creation of an economically and politically integrated union of states."[82] In practical terms, by early 1996 the original customs union with Belarus was expanded to include Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, Moscow and Minsk formalized the first of several agreements designed to create a "union state." Not to be outdone by the man in the Kremlin, the State Duma declared that the Soviet Union was still in existence on the territory of Russia.

Russia's "Monroe Doctrine" reached its apogee in April 1995, when Kozyrev told a session of the Council on Foreign Relations of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that he did not exclude the use of military force to protect Russians in the CIS countries and the Baltic states, a statement that raised eyebrows even in Moscow.[83] Clearly, the pro-Western and liberal Russian foreign minister was under siege from those "patriotic forces" that continued to view the collapse of the Soviet state as a "Russian tragedy," and he would soon be required to leave his post. Of course, there were (and still are) people like Aleksei Arbatov, whose perception of Russia's interests were quite unconventional at the time. In an article entitled "Realistic Integration: With Whom and What Kind? Imperial Infantilism and the National Interests of Russia," Arbatov calmly and methodically looked at where and what Russia stood to gain from integration. He noted, for example, that Moscow could easily exert pressure on Ukraine to unite but that an alliance of this kind would be conflictive by its very nature and create more problems for

Russia than advantages. Ukrainian-Russian integration was not only possible, he argued, but also necessary for both sides. But the more Moscow pressed for a political-military union, which he argued was irrelevant, the more difficult it would be to achieve genuine social, economic, and political integration. Arbatov concluded his article with the following observation: "Empire and a great state are not one and the same thing. . . . For Russia to lapse into imperial infantilism would be a mistake of strategic proportions and maybe the road to national catastrophe as well."[84]

In mid-1994, when Arbatov's article was published, his views were in the minority. Apparently, they still are. At the end of 1999, the Public Opinion Center in Moscow reported that 85 percent of Russians felt that Russia must reinstate itself as a "great empire"; 7 percent disagreed.[85] In some sense, the data yielded by a recent survey of Moscow teenagers are more unsettling. Over 50 percent said that they would prefer Russia to have the same borders as either the pre-1917 Russian Empire (28.7 percent) or the Soviet Union (24.5 percent); only 12.9 percent felt that Russia's current borders were appropriate.[86] It would seem, therefore, that the problem of differentiating the old from the new Russia, at least from the standpoint of how Russians imagine their state, will be with us for a generation or more.

NOTES

1. *Izvestia*, 22 January 1998.
2. *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, 17 January 1992.
3. *Pravda*, 30 January 1992.
4. *Izvestia* (Moscow evening ed.), 11 November 1991.
5. *Glasnost'*, 16–22 July 1992.
6. *Moskovskie novosti*, 20 October 1991.
7. *The Economist*, 23 October 1999.
8. *Sil's'ki visti*, 4 September 1991. RSFSR officials immediately took over, among others, the Soviet central bank and the foreign trade bank as well as several finance and trade ministries. On 3 September Yeltsin told CNN that in view of Russia's size and importance and its role in crushing the attempted coup, the key posts of prime minister, minister of defense, KGB chairman, and minister of interior in the Soviet government should be reserved for Russia.
9. Radio Moscow, 26 August 1991.
10. Quoted by Rostyslav Bratun' in *Kul'tura i zhyttya*, 31 August 1991.
11. For the text, see *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 27 August 1991.
12. Quoted by Reuters, 27 August 1991.
13. TASS, 27 August 1991.
14. For the text, see *Ukrainian Weekly*, 8 September 1991.
15. *Sil's'ki visti*, 27 August 1991.
16. TASS, 27 August 1991.
17. *Molod' Ukrainy*, 28 August 1991.

18. Central Soviet Television, 27 August 1991.
19. TASS, 29 August 1991.
20. *Robitnycha hazeta*, 3 September 1991.
21. For the text, see *Molod' Ukrainy*, 30 August 1991.
22. *Robitnycha hazeta*, 3 September 1991.
23. *Izvestia* (Moscow evening ed.), 2 October 1991.
24. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 12 October 1991, and *Moskovskie novosti*, 3 November 1991.
25. For the text, see *Trud*, 8 October 1991.
26. *Moskovskie novosti*, 20 October 1991, and *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 24 October 1991.
27. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 24 October 1991; *Izvestia* (Moscow evening ed.), 24 October 1991.
28. For the text, see Zagorskii, *Rossiisko-ukrainskie otnosheniya 1990–1997*, 117–19.
29. TASS, 12 November 1991.
30. For the text, see *Holos Ukrainy*, 7 November 1991.
31. Radio Kyiv, 28 November 1991, and *Boston Globe*, 1 December 1991.
32. Quoted in *Los Angeles Times*, 27 November 1991.
33. *Izvestia* (Moscow evening ed.), 27 November 1991. *U. S. News & World Report* carried the item in its issue for 2 December 1991, 17.
34. Quoted in *Ukrainian Weekly*, 8 December 1991.
35. *U. S. News & World Report*, 2 December 1991, 65.
36. *Los Angeles Times*, 1 December 1991.
37. *Le Figaro*, 4 December 1991. See also *The Times*, 5 December 1991.
38. Radio Mayak, 4 December 1991.
39. AFP and Reuters, 9 January 1992, and V. Holovachev's interview with Mikhail Poltoranin in *Trud*, 14 January 1992, respectively.
40. Boris Yeltsin, *Zapiski prezidenta* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Ogonek," 1994), 150–55.
41. Kozyrev, 168–73.
42. See Slawomir Popowski's interview with Shushkevich in *Rzeczpospolita*, 30 May 1998.
43. Sergei Shapoval's interview with Shakhrai in *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 10 December 1996.
44. *Moskovskie novosti*, 3–10 April 1994. See also his "Vremya raspada proshlo: Vozroditsya li Sovetskii Soyuz?" *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 19 March 1996.
45. In fact, discussions about a quadripartite treaty had already begun in December 1990, and later Uzbekistan was brought into the talks. For details, see Roman Solchanyk, "The Draft Union Treaty and the 'Big Five,' " *Report on the USSR*, 3 May 1991, 16–18.
46. Aleksandr Trushin's interview with Burbulis in *Obshchaya gazeta*, 19–25 December 1996.
47. N. Zhelnorova's interview with Nazarbaev in *Argumenty i fakty* 2 (January 1993).
48. Evgenii Gorelik's and Aleksandr Kryzhanovskii's interview with Shushkevich in *Sovetskaya Belorussiya*, 29 December 1992.

49. E. Gorelik's and A. Kryzhanovskii's interview with Shushkevich in *Sovetskaya Belorussiya*, 10 December 1991.

50. N. Zhelnorova's interview with Shushkevich in *Argumenty i fakty* 1 (January 1992).

51. Leonid Kravchuk, *Ostanni dni imperii . . . Pershi roky nadii* (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo "Dovira," 1994), 19.

52. Urmas Ott's interview with Kravchuk on Central Soviet Television, 11 February 1992. See also the interview conducted by Kira Vladina in *Sobesednik* 15 (April 1992).

53. Quoted in *Washington Post*, 10 December 1991.

54. *Demokratychna Ukraina*, 24 March 1992, and *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 24 March 1992.

55. *Molod' Ukrainy*, 25 March 1992.

56. Quoted by Reuters, 14 May 1992.

57. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 12 February 1992.

58. AFP, 20 February 1992.

59. *Washington Post*, 13 December 1991.

60. For the text, see *Narodna hazeta* 8 (March 1992). See also *III Vseukrains'ki Zbory Narodnoho Rukhu Ukrainy 28 lyutoho–1 bereznya 1992 roku: Stenohrafichnyi zvit* (Kyiv: Narodnyi rukh Ukrainy, 1995), 338–43.

61. For the text of the reservations, see *Holos Ukrainy*, 14 December 1991.

62. For the text, see *Holos Ukrainy*, 21 December 1991.

63. For the text of Rutskoi's address and other materials from the Congress, see *Obozrevatel'* 2–3 (February 1992).

64. *Novoe vremya* 7 (February 1992): 6–7.

65. *Obozrevatel'* 2–3 (February 1992): 11.

66. *Obozrevatel'* 2–3 (February 1992): 16.

67. For the texts of Yeltsin's and Kozyrev's addresses, see *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 23 and 21 April 1992, respectively.

68. *Novoe vremya* 38 (September 1992): 14–16.

69. For the texts, see *Vedomosti S"ezda narodnykh deputatov Rossiiskoi Federatsii i Verkhovnogo Soveta Rossiiskoi Federatsii* 18 (7 May 1992): 1329–31.

70. Quoted in *Izvestia* (Moscow evening ed.), 7 August 1992.

71. For the text, see *Sed'moi S"ezd narodnykh deputatov Rossiiskoi Federatsii: Doklady, soobshcheniya, dokumenty* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Respublika," 1993), 296.

72. For the text, see *Vechirnii Kyiv*, 18 June 1992.

73. For the text, see *Vechirnii Kyiv*, 21 September 1992.

74. *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 1 January 1992.

75. Igor' Bunin and Mark Urnov, "Tri dorogi vedut iz Moskvy: Odna iz nikh mozhet okazat'sya 'prusskoi,' " *Novoe vremya* 6 (February 1992): 23.

76. Quoted in *The Independent* (London), 10 July 1993.

77. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 28 October 1994.

78. The text of Kuchma's address was broadcast by Ukrainian Radio, 14 December 1996.

79. The text of Yeltsin's speech was broadcast by Russian Television, 28 February 1993.

80. For the text of Kozyrev's remarks, see *Diplomaticheskii vestnik* 3–4 (1994): 28–30.

81. *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 12 January 1994.

82. For the text, see *Diplomaticheskii vestnik* 10 (1995): 3–6.

83. For the text, see *Diplomaticheskii vestnik* 5 (1995): 56. See also *Izvestia*, 20 April 1995, and *Los Angeles Times*, 21 April 1995.

84. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 24 June 1994.

85. *New York Times*, 21 November 1999.

86. Anna Fen'ko, "Deti khotyat obratno—v imperiyu," *Kommersant vlast'* 13 (4 April 2000): 8.

4

Problems of Transition, Dilemmas of Security

> Of course, some states of the former Soviet Union command particular attention because of their potential to influence the future of the region. Ukraine is critical. With its size and its position, juxtaposed between Russia and Central Europe, it is a linchpin of European security.
>
> —Secretary of State Warren Christopher, 29 March 1995

> I am fully aware of the failures of the past five years as well as our progress. And I know the patience of our voters is not unlimited. Therefore I realize I must complete our march to reform. My new mandate is not a reason for euphoria.
>
> —President Leonid Kuchma, *Washington Post*, 8 December 1999

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of Ukraine in the context of security and stability not only in the so-called post-Soviet space, but in Central and Eastern Europe and, indeed, in Europe as a whole. The country's size, its population of nearly fifty million, and, perhaps above all, its strategic geopolitical position between East and West, largely explain former NATO secretary-general Javier Solana's estimation that Ukraine "has an absolutely unique role to play in the stability of Europe."[1] As the contours of the post–Cold War security structure begin to take shape with the eastward enlargement of NATO, this pivotal position between a Europe that is in the process of being redefined and reconfigured and a Russia whose identity and future continue to remain uncertain is likely to assume greater significance.

The outstanding question, of course, is how Ukraine will respond over time to the challenges posed by the changing security environment and the disparate and oftentimes conflicting expectations emanating from the East and West. The question can be formulated somewhat differently and rather more directly: How will Ukraine define its place and role in the new Europe and, for lack of a better term, the new Eurasia? A large part of the answer

will depend on the outcome of its own post-Soviet transition—which, in turn, is conditioned by two sets of broadly defined issues and problems, one international and the other domestic.

In the international arena, the key components are, on the one hand, the nature of the relationship between Ukraine and the West and, on the other, the "normalization" of Ukrainian-Russian relations. Relations and relationships imply something in the nature of a two-way street. Thus, the relationship between Ukraine and the West includes not only the degree to which the United States and its European allies remain committed to policies designed to engage Ukraine and, indeed, promote its integration into Euro-Atlantic political, security, and economic structures but also the extent to which Ukraine is ready and capable of actually integrating with these institutions. Stated differently, the foreign and security policy establishments in Washington, Brussels, and Kyiv may well be thinking along more or less the same lines, but whether the constellation of political forces in Ukraine and the Ukrainian citizenry as a whole are in tune with these policies is quite another matter. This problem, moreover, like many others confronting Ukraine, serves to emphasize that the international and domestic spheres are not easily dissociated.

The same two-way dynamics and a similar interdependency between international and domestic factors are at work in the Ukrainian-Russian relationship, although one could argue that the problems and the process here are considerably more complex, difficult, and volatile—if for no other reason than that Ukraine and Russia bring to the table several centuries of historical baggage. Certainly, both Kyiv and Moscow would like to "normalize" their relationship, but what constitutes "normalization" is often understood rather differently in the two capitals. And in Ukraine itself all manner of questions relating to Russia will elicit different and even diametrically opposed responses depending on whether they are asked in Kyiv, Lviv, Donetsk, or Sevastopol.

Other complications persist as well, and they illustrate very clearly the discomfort that can be associated with finding oneself between East and West. Thus, the West's commitment to promoting Ukraine's integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions—for example, NATO—is conditioned to some degree by the fact that Washington and Brussels are perfectly aware that Moscow is not happy with Kyiv's Western orientation. In short, there are no illusions about how the already less than amicable relations between NATO and Russia would be affected if Brussels were to be overly zealous in its embrace of Kyiv. Ukraine also cannot afford the luxury of discounting or minimizing Russia's concerns about its intention of "returning" to Europe. For example, given that the Ukrainian-Russian friendship treaty concluded in 1997 finally and unequivocally sanctified the state border between the two countries, Kyiv had an overriding interest in having the document signed, sealed, and deliv-

ered, as it were. However, one of the key arguments in the State Duma against approving the treaty was that by juridically recognizing the inviolability of Ukraine's borders, Moscow would, in effect, clear the way for Ukraine to join NATO eventually. Russian foreign minister Igor Ivanov, on the other hand, argued the contrary, insisting that failure to ratify the treaty would strengthen the hand of those forces in Ukraine pushing for NATO membership.[2] Either way, the Russian side linked the outcome of a truly critical phase in the development of bilateral Ukrainian-Russian relations to its larger foreign policy and security agenda. Both of these examples testify to the validity of Ukrainian Foreign Minister Borys Tarasyuk's observation that "Ukrainian-Russian relations are a global factor, their deterioration threatens stability in the broadest sense of the term, and we [Ukrainian and Russian diplomats] jointly bear responsibility for this before the world."[3]

The East–West/Eurasia–Europe paradigm should not obscure the fact that Kyiv is also actively engaged in what might be termed its own "near abroads"—particularly its immediate neighbors to the west from the former "Socialist Commonwealth" and, symbolically speaking, to the east from the former "Soviet family of nations." Ukraine's relations with Poland and Romania and Belarus, Moldova, or Azerbaijan are obviously important in their own right. Poland, for example, has had an impact on the fortunes (and misfortunes) of Ukraine in ways that, from a historical perspective, are certainly no less significant than the legacy of Russia's connection to Ukraine.

But there is an added dimension here as well. All of Ukraine's immediate neighbors in Central and Eastern Europe either are impatiently waiting in NATO's anteroom (Romania and Slovakia) or have already become members of the Western alliance (Poland and Hungary). Kyiv's relations with these countries, therefore, are also part and parcel of its strategy to "return" to Europe. Similarly, Ukraine has concrete political, security, and economic rationales for developing effective and mutually beneficial bilateral ties with most of the former Soviet republics. But in view of Moscow's declared intention to play a preeminent role in the post-Soviet space—which, among other things, translates into various initiatives for the reintegration of the newly independent states with the former imperial metropolis and a self-delegated "veto power" over the direction of NATO's future enlargement—Kyiv's role in such regional groupings as GUUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova) and, more broadly, its policies with regard to the CIS bear directly on its relations with Moscow. Hence, while domestic determinants may play a relatively lesser role in how Kyiv interacts with Warsaw, Bucharest, Tbilisi, or Baku, its "near abroads" are integral elements in the formulation and implementation of broader foreign policy and security strategies.

Clearly, any discussion of Ukraine's post-Soviet transition must also consider internal factors and developments in the country independently of

whether or to what degree they impact on relations with the outside world. Indeed, both Western analysts and Ukrainian experts have argued convincingly that the most serious and immediate challenges that confront Ukraine—and therefore impinge directly on regional and European-wide security issues—are internal rather than external. The economy clearly ranks highest on the list of Kyiv's domestic concerns. In some sense, Ukraine has been in a state of more or less permanent economic crisis since it gained its independence in 1991. The collapse of the economy has been felt most directly and forcefully by ordinary citizens, resulting in widespread socioeconomic dislocation within virtually all strata of the population and serious strains on the social fabric. Needless to say, the country's political life has not been left unaffected by the economic chaos of the past decade. Democratization, in contrast to economic reform, has made significant progress. Presidents in Ukraine do not assume power in the aftermath of coups d'état, they do not declare themselves to be wise and paternal "leaders" of the people, and they do not extend their term in office by staging dubious referendums, as has been the case in some other former Soviet republics. The political opposition, whether on the left or on the right, does not suggest that hanging the president would solve all of the country's problems, which was one of the recipes suggested by Russia's self-styled "uncompromising opposition" in 1992–93.

Of course, this is not to say that Ukraine is free of political problems. On the contrary, the domestic political landscape leaves a great deal to be desired. Most political parties are weak and, from the standpoint of the electorate, uninspiring; this does not prevent them from multiplying with every passing year. A "de-Sovietized" constitution was not adopted until mid-1996, about five years after independence, and then only with great difficulty. Disagreements between the executive and legislative branches of government are usually considered to be a sign of a healthy democracy, but in Ukraine this state of affairs is more or less permanent. The parliament itself has never had a genuine political majority of any kind, with the obvious result that its achievements, particularly in the crucial area of economic reform, have been less than modest. The country is divided into regions with overlapping ethnic, linguistic, and, to a large extent, political cleavages, all of which makes its presence felt throughout the body politic. Ukraine also has its own variant of clan politics and its best-known derivative, "phony-crony capitalism," although their pernicious and demoralizing consequences are not on the same scale as in Russia.

On the positive side of this internal balance sheet, Ukraine's policies with regard to its ethnic minorities—especially its large Russian population—have served to preclude the doom-and-gloom scenarios that substituted for thoughtful analysis in some Western capitals (and in Moscow) and among certain academics and commentators during the first years of Ukraine's inde-

pendence. In fact, Kyiv's minorities and regional policies have contributed significantly to the country's political and social stability.

Brief mention has already been made of the fact that the international and domestic spheres are oftentimes interrelated. This point deserves to be developed further if only to illustrate the complexities of the post-Soviet transition. Thus, the progress of economic reform in Ukraine—more accurately, the lack thereof—is arguably the most formidable objective barrier to Kyiv's declared long-term goal of joining the European Union (EU) and, more broadly, "returning" to Europe. Widespread corruption at virtually all levels of government is another unpleasant reality. Ukraine depends heavily on U.S. political and financial support and can ill afford to compromise its relations with Washington because of an international scandal along the lines of the revelations from the Bank of New York affair. Admittedly, no one in Washington is holding congressional hearings on the workings of Ukraine's "phony-crony capitalism," and Kyiv's newspapers are not speculating about how the Ukrainian president and his family may be planning their escape to a foreign country. For now, the United States has found enough progress on economic reforms to continue its aid program, which prompted one Ukrainian journalist to quip that the Americans must know something that Ukrainian citizens are not aware of.[4]

Ukraine's economic predicament is a major factor in relations with Russia. The most obvious example is dependency on Russian energy to power and maintain Ukrainian factories and homes; overall, Ukraine imports 90 percent of its oil and 80 percent of its gas, and Russia provides 70 percent of the former and 80 percent of the latter. And although the division of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet and the status of Sevastopol are complex issues that go well beyond economic considerations alone, the fact remains that Kyiv offset a large part of its huge debt to Moscow by leasing much of Sevastopol's naval infrastructure and thereby formalizing a Russian military presence on its territory.

Finally, Ukraine is home to about 11 million ethnic Russians who constitute approximately 22 percent of the population and are heavily concentrated in the eastern and southern parts of the country and in Crimea. This cannot but impact on Ukrainian-Russian relations, especially since "protection" of the Russian and Russian-speaking diaspora has been raised to the level of official policy in Moscow.

The somewhat uninspiring picture that has been sketched out so far needs to be supplemented by one very important caveat—namely, that compared to that of most of the newly independent successor states of the Soviet Union, Ukraine's post-Soviet transition has been a relative success story.[5] Even a cursory glance at the old Soviet neighborhood almost a decade after the fall of the USSR underscores Ukraine's role as a force for regional stability, its own problems notwithstanding.

The three Transcaucasian states of Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan have all suffered serious and intermittently violent domestic political crises. The current presidents of Georgia and Azerbaijan, Eduard Shevardnadze and Haidar Aliev, respectively, both came to power in the aftermath of armed uprisings against their predecessors. Shevardnadze has managed to stay in office since the spring of 1992, but he remains the favorite target of assassination by shadowy paramilitary groups. Aliev has survived at least two coup attempts since becoming president in the fall of 1993, was reelected in 1998 in a vote that was boycotted by the leading opposition groups and is generally considered to have been orchestrated by the incumbent, and is said to be considering a third term even though the present constitution precludes that possibility. Armenia, once thought of as an oasis of civility and democracy, held presidential elections in the fall of 1996 that were accompanied by opposition protests of vote rigging, mob violence, and armed troops and tanks in the streets of the capital. In the fall of 1999, gunmen entered the parliament and murdered the prime minister, speaker, and other government officials. All three states are embroiled in ethnically fueled military conflicts that have dragged on since the late Soviet period. Georgia's territorial integrity is threatened by the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia; Armenia and Azerbaijan remain locked in a territorial dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh. Russia has been an active player in the region, particularly in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, manipulating one side or the other in the pursuit of its own economic and strategic interests. Russian military bases in Armenia and Georgia, the latter in dispute by the host country, make Moscow the main arbiter in the conflict-prone Transcaucasus.

With the exception of Tajikistan, which has served as the battleground for the armed forces of rival regional, clan, ethnic, and religious groups since 1992, the remaining four Central Asian states—Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan—have thus far largely succeeded in managing their transition to independent statehood without civil war and ethnic conflict. But the price for maintaining stability in Central Asia appears to be a very clear drift toward the institutionalization of authoritarian, one-man rule throughout the region, particularly in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and, increasingly, Kazakhstan. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have been characterized as virtual police states. Turkmen president Saparmurat Niyazov has the official title of "Leader of All Turkmen," and apparently he is not opposed to suggestions that the constitution be amended so that he can remain president for life. Uzbek president Islam Karimov has been in office since the collapse of the Soviet Union, managed to cancel regularly scheduled presidential elections in 1996, and was reelected in early 2000 with 92 percent of the vote, which included the ballot cast by his opponent. In early 1999, Kazakh president Nazarbaev was returned to another seven years in office by a suspicious margin of over 80 percent after having ordered early elections, which

prompted even officials in Washington to admit that the process of democratization in the country had suffered a setback. Reports indicate that he is already preparing for the next presidential election in 2006. Observers speculate that Kyrgyz president Askar Akaev, whose reputation is that of a genteel intellectual interested primarily in physics, is planning a similar course of action. Kyrgystan has been touted as the region's most democratic country, but it is increasingly beginning to resemble its Central Asian neighbors.

Central Asia was one of the first places to experience outbreaks of ethnic violence unleashed by perestroika and grounded in the disaffection of national minorities that found themselves on the "wrong" side of artificially created borders—a problem that has not gone away with the passing of the Soviet Union. Kazakhstan is confronted with a particularly difficult situation by its Russian minority, which accounts for 37 percent of the total population (ethnic Kazakhs number 42 percent) and is heavily concentrated in the northern border area with Russia, which some Russians view as historically Russian territory. At the end of 1999, authorities arrested a group that included Russian citizens for plotting an armed revolt in the region. There are substantial Uzbek minorities in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan, and some observers wonder whether these diaspora could be exploited to further Karimov's dream of a "common Turkestan home" led, of course, by Uzbekistan. In the meantime, both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are fending off military incursions by Uzbek Islamic rebels based in Tajikistan. With little or no experience of modern statehood and after having independence unwillingly thrust on them, most of the newly independent states of Central Asia, their confidence bolstered by the prospect of petrodollars, are growing more assertive in their relations with Russia and are seeking to define their geopolitical identities in a region increasingly subject to competing influences from the outside, including neighboring states such as Iran and China, in a modern-day replay of the "Great Game" of the nineteenth century.[6]

The prospects for Belarus and Moldova, two of Ukraine's immediate neighbors, are anything but clear. In Belarus, power is concentrated in the hands of an erratic leader with demonstratively anti-Western convictions and scant regard for the principles and practices of democracy. Lukashenka, who was elected president in 1994, had already achieved a certain degree of notoriety by casting the sole dissenting vote in the Belarus parliament against the Belovezh agreements that formally sealed the fate of the USSR in December 1991. The Belarusian leader is on record praising the leadership qualities of Hitler and threatening to deploy nuclear weapons on Belarusian territory in response to NATO enlargement.[7] In November 1996, Lukashenka staged a presidential coup that allowed him to greatly expand his powers, disband the legally elected parliament, and pack the new legislative body with his own cronies. Several leading opposition figures have been forced into exile; others have mysteriously disappeared. Confronted like all of the former Soviet re-

publics with the formidable task of economic and political reform, Lukashenka has opted instead for one-man rule, a clampdown on the political opposition, and a vaguely defined "union" with Russia that no one, including its participants, seems to understand fully. This, in turn, has led to public demonstrations in the streets of Minsk that are routinely dispersed by the riot police. For all intents and purposes, Belarus is assuming the characteristics of a pariah state, a country, as one commentator observed, that is geographically in Europe but that does not want to be part of Europe.

Moldova is effectively split into two parts. The problem of the self-proclaimed Transdniester Republic, which remains unrecognized by the world community, has plagued the country's leaders since before independence. Russia, in spite of its role as a mediator in the dispute, more or less openly supports the region's separatist aspirations. Irrespective of the 1994 agreement on the phased withdrawal of the former Fourteenth Russian Army from Transdniester, Moscow seems determined to maintain a military presence in the country. In the fall of 1996, the State Duma adopted a resolution reaffirming that the Transdniester constituted a "zone of special strategic interests of the Russian Federation" and proposed that Russian forces be permanently stationed in the region.[8] The ongoing and drawn-out negotiations between the central authorities and the breakaway region have produced few tangible results.

Then there is the recurring Russian question "What is to be done and who is to blame?" After the abortive coup in Moscow in August 1991, which set in motion the accelerated collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia experienced an armed revolt by opposition lawmakers, which was precipitated by Yeltsin's unconstitutional dissolution of parliament. The uprising was led by, among others, the country's vice president and was put down in early October 1993 by the military, which bombed the parliament building into submission. This was followed by new parliamentary elections in December of that year, which produced the "Zhirinovsky phenomenon" and, among other things, provided newspaper readers throughout the world with comic relief about plans to reclaim Alaska, Finland, and various other places. The new Russian constitution, which was approved at the same time, concentrates the bulk of political power in the hands of the president. In December 1994, under circumstances that remain unclear, Russian forces invaded Chechnya, nominally a part of Russia, resulting in a military and political fiasco that cost the lives of an estimated eighty thousand Russian citizens. For all intents and purposes, Chechnya functioned as a semi-independent state, and the authorities in Moscow made do with the fiction that it was a part of the Russian Federation. The parliamentary elections in December 1995 resulted in a victory by the Communist Party led by Zyuganov, whose "internationalism" translates into promises to restore the Soviet Union. The new State Duma wasted little time in unveiling its vision of the Russian future (and that of its neighbors) by

adopting resolutions in March 1996 denouncing and retracting Russia's participation in the dismantling of the Soviet Union and the creation of the CIS. In effect, Russia's lawmakers "restored" the Soviet Union within the Russian Federation. Although Yeltsin was able to defeat his Communist challenger in the 1996 presidential elections, his uncertain state of health kept the Moscow rumor mills spinning as to who was actually running the country and what was in store for Russia after his departure from the political scene. The whys and wherefores of the August 1998 financial crisis in Russia that gave new meaning to the term "virtual economy" are best left to the economists to sort out. But even for a nonspecialist, it seems fairly clear that many of the assumptions behind such worn clichés as "Yeltsin's team of young and dynamic economic reformers" were somewhat naive and that the often repeated proposition that Russia's neighbors had much to learn about market reforms from Moscow was seriously misplaced.

In August 1999, Yeltsin, whose physical and mental condition had been a favorite and recurring subject of speculation, announced that he was in fighting form and was "ready for battle, particularly with Westerners," which led *Izvestia* to comment that developments in the country resembled the "theater of the absurd."[9] Shortly thereafter, Russia was again at war in Chechnya, and Western scholars and columnists were busy speculating about "Who lost Russia?" At the end of 1999, Yeltsin unexpectedly resigned and, in the process, paved the way for Vladimir Putin as his successor through the office of the acting presidency. This interesting maneuver has inspired a cottage industry known as Putinology, which Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has aptly described as "psychobabble." At the end of the day, the West is still trying to sort out what is happening in Russia.

Viewed against this background, Ukraine's post-Soviet experience has led most analysts and observers to conclude that the country finds itself on the plus side of the balance sheet. Comparing Ukraine and Russia, one has to agree with the appraisal of a Moscow specialist who concludes that the "younger brother" has reached a higher level of political maturity than the "older brother."[10] Kravchuk, Ukraine's first president, has often been criticized for pursuing a "nationalist" agenda geared toward strengthening independent statehood at the expense of economic reform, which is said to have nearly brought the country to the brink of economic meltdown in 1993–94.[11] In and of itself this may well be a fairly accurate assessment. No one will dispute that Ukraine's economy was in an awful shambles. But no one should underestimate the problems that confronted all of the post-Soviet leaders after 1991 and the difficult choices that had to be made.

Under Kravchuk's leadership, Ukraine made choices that not only led to economic stagnation and near collapse but also resulted in complete abandonment of the world's third largest arsenal of nuclear weapons, ongoing dialogue with Russia, and interethnic accord. In the spring and summer of 1994,

voters in Ukraine went to the polls and chose a new parliament and president; the transfer of power occurred peacefully and democratically. Despite fears of a widening regional split between the "pro-Russian" eastern and the "pro-Ukrainian" western parts of the country, which were accentuated by the voting patterns in 1994, there was never an imminent danger of fragmentation along overlapping regional, ethnic, and linguistic lines. Even in Crimea, which remains Ukraine's most serious regional problem, the enthusiasm for separatism appears to have lost its fervor. Indeed, one can reasonably argue that Leonid Kuchma's victory in the presidential elections, which was made possible by the overwhelming support of "pro-Russian" voters in the east and south, has served to legitimize Ukrainian independence and statehood in precisely those parts of the country that are least committed to these ideals.

In short, the country did not disintegrate amid Ukrainian-Russian ethnic turmoil and Russia was not required to come to the rescue, as the U.S. intelligence community apparently feared at the end of 1993.[12] Although its results have been negligible, an economic reform program was finally adopted in the fall of 1994. The long standoff between the president and parliament was resolved with the agreement of all political forces on a new constitution in June 1996. The Black Sea Fleet problem was finally disentangled, and a friendship treaty with Russia was signed in May 1997 and subsequently ratified by both sides. New parliamentary elections were held in the spring of 1998, and constitutionally mandated presidential elections took place in the fall of 1999. Kuchma was reelected to another five-year term, defeating his Communist opponent by a comfortable margin of nearly 20 percent in what was widely perceived as a popular mandate against a "return to the future."

Kuchma is quite right in asserting that there is no basis for euphoria. Key foreign and domestic issues still need to be resolved, which are very much a part of what one astute observer has characterized as the "incomplete settlement" with Russia.[13]

NOTES

1. Quoted by James Sherr, *Ukraine's New Time of Troubles* (Surrey, England: Conflict Studies Research Centre, G67, October 1998), 2.

2. See the interview with Georgii Tikhonov, chairman of the state Duma Committee on CIS Affairs and Ties with Compatriots, in *Parlamentskaya gazeta*, 24 December 1998, and *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 26 December 1998, for Ivanov's remarks.

3. "Vystup Ministra zakordonnykh sprav Ukrainy B. Tarasyuka v Dyplomatychnii akademii MZS RF (Moskva, 18 lystopada 1998 r.)," *Polityka i chas* 11–12 (1998): 5.

4. *Den'*, 20 February 1999.

5. This argument is forcefully developed by Alexander J. Motyl, "Making Sense of Ukraine," *Harriman Review* 10, no. 3 (Winter 1997): 1–7.

6. For a very thorough analysis of the situation in the Transcaucasus and Central

Asia, see the 8 July 1998 testimony of Martha Brill Olcott before the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on International Economic Policy, Export and Trade Promotion (courtesy of Central Asia Monitor—On-Line Supplement).

7. In February 1999, Lukashenka said that the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Belarus was a "great mistake" and that the nuclear arsenal could now be returned in view of NATO expansion and the shrinking membership of the CIS collective security arrangement. See Interfax, 25 February 1999.

8. For the text, see *Sobranie zakonodatel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii* 48 (25 November 1996): 10552.

9. *Izvestia* (Moscow ed.), 26 August 1999.

10. Dmitrii Furman, "Ukraina i my: Natsional'noe samosoznanie i politicheskoe razvitie," *Svobodnaya mysl'* 1 (1995): 70.

11. See "The Birth and Possible Death of a Country" and "How to Wreck an Economy," *The Economist*, 7 May 1994, 3–7 (special Survey section), and Dorinda Elliott and Karen Breslau, "A Dangerous Basket Case," *Newsweek*, 18 July 1994, 29.

12. *Washington Post*, 25 January 1994. For a full exposition of the view that Ukraine was on the verge of imploding, see Eugene B. Rumer, "Eurasia Letter: Will Ukraine Return to Russia?" *Foreign Policy* 96 (Fall 1994): 129–44. One reputable academic journal in Moscow found Rumer's scenario of an unstable and destabilizing Ukraine necessitating its incorporation into a "greater Russia" so "realistic" that it highlighted his article in a separate review under the title "Ukraine and Russia: The Inevitable Rendezvous?" See S. Chugrov, "Ukraina i Rossiya: Neminuemoe svidanie?" *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya* 3 (1995): 155–56.

13. Sherman W. Garnett, "An Incomplete Settlement in Eastern and Central Europe," in *Russia and the West: The 21st Century Security Environment*, ed. Alexei G. Arbatov, Karl Kaiser, and Robert Legvold (Armonk, N.Y.: Sharpe, 1999), 129–54.

5

Foreign and Security Policy: Looking West, Watching East

> Our strategic choice is known and mapped out. Ukraine has to "return" to the family of civilized peoples of Europe, become its full-fledged member. That is our goal, that is our fate.
>
> —Volodymr Horbulin, secretary of the National Security Council, *Demokratychna Ukraina*, 3 February 1996

> The strategic goal of our country is integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures.
>
> —President Leonid Kuchma, 4 June 1996

> The more Ukraine is in Europe, the more Europe is safe.
>
> —President Aleksander Kwasniewski, 7 June 1996

Ukrainian officials and international affairs experts routinely describe Kyiv's foreign policy as being "multivectored," which, if taken to its logical extreme, suggests that its interests are global in nature. Some critics have pointed out that trying to be everywhere, as it were, more often than not results in being nowhere. Similarly, Kyiv has a penchant for defining relations with other countries as "strategic." Thus, in addition to the United States and Russia, Poland, Germany, China, and Bulgaria have also been described as "strategic partners."[1] Yet, as the government's premier think tank on security issues concedes, "Ukraine does not yet have real and reliable strategic allies."[2] In view of the fact that Ukraine is in some sense a "new state," perhaps its diplomats can be forgiven for "overcompensating."

The fact of the matter is, however, that under current conditions and in the foreseeable future Ukraine only has two real options—East or West. The leadership is perfectly aware of this stark choice, which is implicit in the frequently repeated warnings that becoming a buffer or gray zone between East and West has to be avoided at all cost and that new dividing lines should not

be drawn in Europe. In short, the Eurocurtain must not replace the old Iron Curtain. And in spite of fuzzy statements to the effect that national interests are best served by pursuing "active neutrality" and that Ukraine's foreign policy should be neither pro-Western nor pro-Russian but rather pro-Ukrainian, it is quite clear that Kyiv's foreign and security policy orientation is directed primarily toward the West. The question is, of course, whether the "European choice" can be sustained over time and ultimately realized.

Several key factors are at play here. Will the West continue to view Ukraine as an important component of European security? Stated differently, will Ukraine be a contributor to European security and not simply a consumer? What can be expected from Moscow if and when push comes to shove, specifically with regard to further NATO enlargement? Finally, will political and economic conditions in Ukraine serve to promote or to preclude the "European choice"?

UKRAINE AND THE WEST

In mid-1995, Kuchma told an interviewer that "Ukraine's return to Europe is a completely natural process."[3] That may well be. But the process has by no means been an easy one. The "strategic choice," as Ukraine's foreign policy architects describe it, has been made, but whether it can be fully realized remains open to question.[4] The problems are many and complex, beginning with the simple fact that after more than seventy years of the Soviet experience, most Ukrainians had a rather distorted image of what the "West" represented. Even more Westerners, specifically those charged with formulating foreign policy, had equally curious notions of what Ukraine was all about. President George Bush's "Chicken Kiev" speech to the Ukrainian parliament on 1 August 1991, in effect warning the Ukrainians not to create problems for Gorbachev with their "suicidal nationalism based upon ethnic hatred" is a case in point.[5]

But there were some very concrete problems as well, the most important of which was that Ukraine could not even contemplate "returning" to Europe without ridding itself of the huge nuclear arsenal, the third largest in the world, that it inherited from the Soviet Union. This was the point of departure, specifically for Washington. But it was not until early 1993, when the Clinton administration undertook a review of its policy with regard to Ukraine, that the framework was developed that would lead to the denuclearization of Ukraine and thereby set the stage for Ukraine's "European choice." The formula, which had eluded and confounded Western policymakers for some time, turned out to be amazingly simple: transcend the fixation on Ukraine as primarily an arms control problem and broaden relations as if it were a "real" country. The new approach was unveiled by then Ambas-

sador-at-Large Strobe Talbott during his visit to Kyiv in May 1993, where discussions focused not only on nuclear issues but also on economic assistance, expanded defense and security ties, and a renewed political relationship between the United States and Ukraine. Instead of coordinated pressure from Washington and Moscow, a three-way negotiating process was set in motion that produced the Trilateral Statement of January 1994 and resulted in the removal of all nuclear weapons from Ukraine's territory in June 1996.[6]

For Ukraine, one of the key issues in the denuclearization process was to obtain legally binding security guarantees from the United States and Russia. At the Ukrainian-Russian summit in Moscow in January 1993, Yeltsin announced that Russia was prepared to offer Ukraine security guarantees that would come into force after Ukraine ratified START-1 and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Specifically, the Russian president affirmed that "Russia guarantees the preservation of the [territorial] integrity of Ukraine and the defense of its borders from nuclear attack."[7]

The pledge was greeted with a sigh of relief in the West. Within several weeks, however, it became clear that this optimism was unfounded. In early February, a top-level Ukrainian diplomat was quoted as saying that what Russia was providing on paper fell short of "even the minimal demands of Ukraine."[8] The problem, as it turned out, was the fourth point in the text of the guarantees, which stipulated that Russia would respect Ukraine's borders "within the framework of the CIS."[9] This controversial formulation, which Kyiv understood as cementing Ukraine to membership in the CIS as a condition for its security, was not acceptable. Russian negotiators explained that the text had been drafted together with the appropriate parliamentary committees and that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not in a position to make a better offer.

Ukraine ratified START-1 in November 1993 but appended a long list of conditions and reservations. These were removed after agreement had been reached on the Trilateral Statement, which extended formal security assurances (not guarantees) by the United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia once START-1 came into force and after Ukraine acceded to the NPT as a non–nuclear weapon state. In November 1994, the Ukrainian parliament conditionally acceded to the NPT; one of the conditions was security guarantees from the nuclear states. In the final analysis, however, what Ukraine received in the form of a separate document at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) summit in Budapest in December 1994 was a memorandum on security assurances (again, not guarantees) that essentially promised to respect Ukraine's borders in accordance with the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, refrain from economic coercion, and seek United Nations Security Council action in the event of nuclear aggression or the threat of nuclear aggression.[10] Interestingly,

Ukraine publicized the document as representing *guarantees* of its security, which clearly it was not.[11] This detail simply serves to illustrate the degree to which the security issue was paramount for the Ukrainian leadership as it prepared to divest itself of its nuclear weapons.

The trilateral agreement closed one chapter and opened another in U.S.-Ukrainian relations and cleared the way for Ukraine to orient itself toward the West. Ties with Europe were initiated already in 1994 and 1995. In June 1994, Ukraine became the first CIS state to sign a partnership agreement with the EU. Even at that early stage, some Ukrainian officials were making very important distinctions between *strategic* and *tactical* decisions. Deputy Foreign Minister Oleksandr Makarenko, commenting on the agreement with the EU, explained:

> The very fact that the agreement was signed in the form that it was and that we were able to do that answers the question: Where, in the final analysis, should Ukraine be moving—to the East, back to the past, or to the West, toward the future? I personally feel that there are questions of strategy and questions of tactics, which should never be confused.[12]

At the end of 1995, Ukraine was admitted to the Council of Europe. The "European choice" was made explicit in several of Kuchma's speeches and addresses in the spring and summer of the following year. By early 1996, the Ukrainian president appeared to have forgotten what he had said less than two years earlier in his presidential inauguration address—namely, that "Ukraine is historically a part of the Eurasian economic and cultural space. Today, the vitally important national interests of Ukraine are focused precisely on this territory of the former Soviet Union."[13] Speaking at a forum in Helsinki in February, Kuchma impressed on his audience that "[t]he cradle of Ukrainian culture is European Christian civilization. That is why our home is, above all, Europe."[14] In April, he addressed the session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, where he reaffirmed his country's strategic goal of full membership in the EU. The following June, Kuchma told the Assembly of the Western European Union (WEU) that Ukraine's strategic objective was integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures. If there were any doubts about Kyiv's foreign policy orientation, specifically with regard to the Europe–CIS dichotomy, they were dispelled at a meeting of Ukraine's top-level foreign affairs officials in July, where Kuchma emphasized the distinction between "integration" and "cooperation":

> I would also like to note that our foreign policy terminology should reflect the principled political line of the state. Along with the strategic choice of adhering to the processes of European integration, Ukraine's firm and consistent line is the line of maximum broadening and deepening of bilateral and multilateral

forms of cooperation both within and outside the framework of the CIS while safeguarding the principles of mutual benefit and respect for each other's interests and abiding by the generally recognized norms of international law.[15]

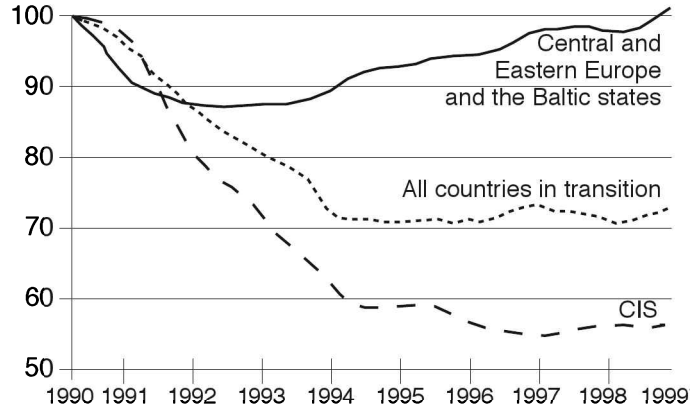
The leadership's "European choice" has remained firmly on course. Representatives of the government rarely miss an opportunity to declare that Kyiv is determined to gain associate status within the EU and ultimately to become a full-fledged member. In the fall of 1997, a European and Transatlantic Integration Administration was created within the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that includes a European Union Department. Shortly thereafter, a top-ranking diplomat was named to the newly created post of representative to the European Communities (European Union). The National Agency of Ukraine for Reconstruction and Development became the National Agency of Ukraine for Development and European Integration. In June 1998, Kuchma issued a decree approving "Ukraine's Strategy of Integration into the European Union."[16]

The clearest affirmation of Kyiv's foreign policy orientation was the appointment of Tarasyuk as foreign minister in April 1998. A central figure in Ukraine's foreign policy establishment since independence and perhaps the key player in the denuclearization negotiations with the United States, Tarasyuk served as Ukraine's ambassador to the Benelux countries in Brussels from the fall of 1995 and in October 1997 was also named Kyiv's first head of mission to NATO. He is widely reputed to be the leading proponent of an active pro-Western orientation in Kyiv.

Decrees, strategies, and structural changes in the government bureaucracy are plainly not enough to "return" to Europe. The state of the Ukrainian economy, to take only the most obvious indicator, is such as to preclude any serious discussion of EU membership in the foreseeable future. Shortly after independence, then minister of foreign affairs Anatolii Zlenko confidently proclaimed that Ukraine expected to join the EU within five years.[17] But it took the EU member countries nearly four years to ratify the partnership and cooperation agreement with Ukraine, and Kyiv's determined pleas to begin discussions about associate status have been politely but routinely rebuffed. Less tangible factors are at work as well. In mid-1999, the *Financial Times* published an extremely interesting article graphically showing that as a whole the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic states, after having initially suffered substantial economic declines, began to recover in 1992–93 and are now at or above their 1990 levels. Thus, Poland's real GDP in 1998 was 17 percent higher than when its transition began. The CIS countries, on the other hand, experienced a dramatic economic decline that only began to taper off in 1996 (see figure 5.1).

Nine out of the twelve CIS countries have lost more than 40 percent of their pretransition output, with Ukraine and Georgia being the worst per-

Figure 5.1 Index of Real GDP (1990 = 100)



Note: * = Provisional
Source: Financial Times, 30 June 1999.

formers. The most intriguing explanation offered by some economists for such discrepancies is something described as a "supportive political culture" and geographic location; the economic indicators show that it helps to be closer to Berlin.[18] One suspects that political culture has something to do with the fact that between 1994 and 1998, only about 13 to 16 percent of respondents surveyed in Ukraine favored establishing ties primarily with the West; in 1998, more than 52 percent preferred some combination of an Eastern orientation (developing ties primarily with the CIS, Russia, or an East Slavic bloc of Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus). Similarly, public opinion in Ukraine is divided on what kind of economy is preferable. Slightly more are in favor of central planning (30 percent in 1999) than a market economy (27 percent in 1999), with almost as many (25 percent) preferring "both in conjunction." The latter category, moreover, has nearly doubled over the past several years.[19] A nationwide poll released in early 2000 showed that more respondents distrusted than fully trusted the EU (35 percent and 29 percent, respectively); an even larger proportion (36 percent) were undecided.[20] Thus, Tarasyuk's assertion that the "European idea has become Ukraine's national idea and a consolidating factor for its society" is rather surprising.[21] Ukrainian diplomats, their optimism notwithstanding, are well aware of intangibles such as a "supportive political culture." To "return" to Europe, according to Kyiv's representative to the EU, a political decision is not enough. What is needed is a genuine legal, economic, cultural, and, least tangibly, a "civilizational revolution."[22]

THE NATO FACTOR

A key aspect of the "European choice" centers on NATO, its eastward enlargement, and the degree and extent of Ukrainian-NATO cooperation. On the one hand, Ukraine has been an early and eager participant in NATO-related initiatives. It was the first of the CIS countries to sign on to the Partnership for Peace program in February 1994; it has also been the most active and enthusiastic. From very early on, Kyiv emphasized that it wanted a "special partnership" with NATO that went beyond established programs such as Partnership for Peace.

This is where the complications began to emerge. First, the alliance had to decide for itself how far it was prepared to go to accommodate Ukraine's desire for such a relationship. One of the major problems was and remains that, above any other considerations that come into play, Brussels must take Moscow's concerns (and objections) into account in developing its relations with Kyiv. Russia places a great deal of value on the proposition that its self-perceived status as a great power demands a certain amount of exclusive attention from the West in general and from institutions such as NATO in particular.[23] A special arrangement of any kind between Brussels and Kyiv flies in the face of that proposition. On a more practical level, a Ukrainian-NATO link, "special" or otherwise, renders unrealistic Moscow's avowed aim to play the role of chief security manager in the post-Soviet space. It also sends a signal to other CIS member states, including participants in the Tashkent collective security arrangement, that security disengagement from Russia is feasible. No one should have been surprised that at the beginning of 1999 Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Georgia did not renew their membership in the Tashkent treaty organization. Thus, while not in a position to block the development of closer ties with NATO, the Russian leadership has made it clear on numerous occasions that there is a "red line" beyond which NATO cannot go—the Baltic states and the CIS countries.

For the time being, the problem has been resolved by establishing "special relationships," as it were, with both Ukraine and Russia. In July 1997, NATO and Ukraine signed a Charter on a Distinctive Partnership, which reaffirms NATO's support for Ukrainian sovereignty and independence and its territorial integrity, spells out areas of consultation and cooperation between the two sides, and defines how these will be implemented.[24] Somewhat earlier, in May, NATO and Russia signed the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security, which was relatively more "special."

The other side of this coin is that the Ukrainian leadership is confronted with a very similar problem in terms of its relations with Russia. Kyiv cannot afford to pursue its Western orientation without taking Russian sensitivities into account. From Moscow's standpoint, Ukraine's drift toward Europe un-

dermines its own perception of a "special relationship" with Ukraine. Simply stated, for Russia, the issue is all about Kyiv's unambiguous rejection of Russia and the prospect of "losing" Ukraine—this time for good. Brief mention has already been made of how the NATO factor found its way into the debate in the State Duma over ratification of the bilateral treaty with Ukraine. At the end of 1998, an *Izvestia* journalist, reporting on the Ukrainian government's program that was submitted to parliament, wrote with undisguised horror that for the first time a Ukrainian document of such importance virtually ignored Russia while calling for the need to develop a state concept of relations with NATO for the 1998–2000 period.[25]

Irrespective of Moscow's concerns, key foreign policy advisers in Kuchma's administration such as Horbulin, who was secretary of the National Security and Defense Council from 1994 to 1998, have been consistent advocates of an active and expanding Ukrainian role in NATO. Within several months of signing the charter, the first session of a special interagency committee on cooperation with NATO was convened at which Horbulin severely criticized government ministries and institutions for the lack of concrete and practical results in their work with NATO. Horbulin was particularly harsh in his appraisal of the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff in connection with the Partnership for Peace program. The time had come, he asserted, to move from words to deeds.[26] Soon thereafter, in mid-October 1997, the NATO–Ukraine Commission, which is provided for by the charter as a mechanism for consultations between Kyiv and the alliance, held its inaugural meeting in Brussels. The following year, Kuchma unveiled a wide-ranging state program for cooperation with NATO to 2001, which outlines Ukraine's joint activities in the political, military, military-technical, economic, scientific, and ecological areas and directly involves more than twenty ministries and state agencies.[27] In the meantime, Kuchma and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attempt to assuage Moscow's fears with catchy but not entirely reassuring arguments along the lines that their policies are pro-Ukrainian rather than anti-Russian and that, in any case, Russia has a higher level of cooperation with NATO than does Ukraine.

A final consideration, and certainly one of the most important, is the degree to which the stated objectives of the Ukrainian leadership with regard to NATO are shared by the general public. The results of one of the early polls, reported in January 1994, revealed a surprisingly high proportion of the general population (51.4 percent) in favor of policies oriented toward Ukraine's membership in NATO; 20.8 percent were opposed, and 27.8 percent offered an alternative response or had no clear view on the subject.[28] Two years later a somewhat different picture emerged. A plurality of 38 percent favored NATO membership, 23 percent were opposed, and 39 percent had no opinion.[29] It was suggested that the fairly large proportion of respondents who were uncertain about their views indicated that Ukrainians had a

Table 5.1 Should Ukraine Join NATO?

Response	*Percentage*
Yes, and as soon as possible	19
Yes, but later on	18
Not at all	21
It is difficult to say	42

Source: Yevhen Holovakha and Il'ko Kucheriv, "NATO i hromads'ka dumka v Ukraini," *Politychnyi portret Ukrainy* 18 (1997): 110.

deficit of information about NATO. If this is indeed the case, then it lends credence to the story about a Crimean lawmaker who, when asked what he thought was a better option for Ukraine—NATO or the North Atlantic Alliance—paused briefly and then responded, "Well, after all, everyone knows that NATO is an aggressive bloc. But the North Atlantic Alliance. I don't know. I need to take a look at the documents."[30] A nationwide poll conducted in January 1997 confirmed that nearly half of the respondents could not decide whether Ukraine should or should not join NATO (see table 5.1).

The survey also showed that in spite of Cold War stereotypes, only 16 percent felt that NATO was an aggressive military bloc. Almost half viewed NATO either as a defensive alliance or a peacekeeping organization, while 39 percent found it difficult to form an opinion. There were definite regional disparities in attitudes toward NATO. The largest proportion of respondents who felt that NATO was an aggressive military bloc were in the Donbas (27 percent) and Crimea (25 percent). Ethnic Ukrainians were more favorably disposed toward NATO than Russians. Younger and better-educated respondents were more likely to have positive attitudes. More than a third of respondents felt that Ukraine's participation in the Partnership for Peace program strengthened its security, but 52 percent did not know. For 40 percent of respondents, it was clear that broadening ties with NATO would undermine stable relations with Russia; 10 percent disagreed; 50 percent could not answer. Almost half of respondents stated that they were indifferent to the decisions taken by their immediate neighbors in Central and Eastern Europe to join NATO, but 50 percent were certain that the stationing of nuclear weapons in these countries would have negative consequences for Ukraine. A later study, conducted in the fall of 1997, did not alter the overall picture substantially. The proponents of NATO membership remained more or less the same, while those who were opposed increased at the expense of the undecided (see table 5.2).

It may be worth noting that the Ukrainian results do not differ all that radically from findings in the Czech Republic, which joined the Alliance in the spring of 1999. At various times in 1997, Czech support for NATO mem-

Table 5.2 Ukraine Should Join NATO (in percentages)

	Agree	*Disagree*	*Do Not Know/No Answer*
Western	47	17	36
West Central	39	22	39
East Central	31	36	33
Southern	28	42	30
Eastern	23	42	35
Total	34	31	35

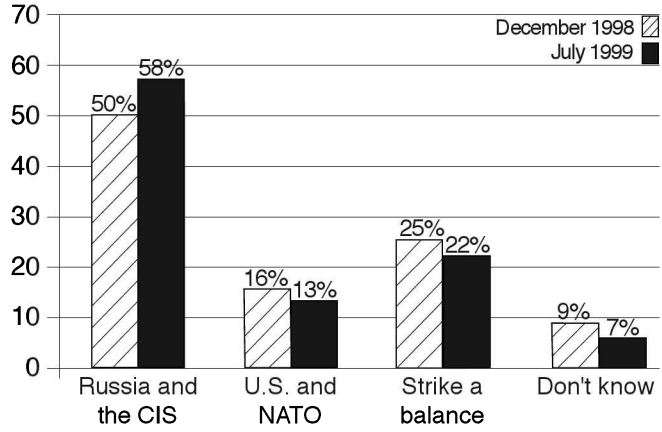
Source: U.S. Information Agency, Office of Research and Media Reaction, "Russians and Ukrainians Regret Demise of USSR, Lose Confidence in NATO," *Opinion Analysis*, M-28-98 (24 February 1998): 6.

bership ranged from 37.4 to 42.8 percent. A survey released in December of that year showed that 26.7 percent did not want their country in NATO, and 30.5 percent were undecided.[31]

Public opinion took a sharply downward turn after NATO's military operation in Kosovo in 1999, with 61 percent saying that their attitude toward the alliance worsened and 27 percent saying that it was unchanged. Asked directly whether Ukraine should join NATO, only 10 percent answered affirmatively.[32] This negative perception was reflected in the Ukrainian parliament, which adopted statements and resolutions in March and April criticizing the NATO bombing campaign, calling for a review of the "entire complex" of Ukrainian-NATO relations, and even suggesting that lawmakers should examine the possibility of revoking Ukraine's status and obligations as a non–nuclear weapon state.[33] On the larger question of where Ukraine's security interests are best served, a July 1999 nationwide poll registered responses that were essentially in line with the overall East–West foreign policy preferences noted throughout 1994–98—namely, only 13 percent favored closer security relations primarily with the United States and NATO, which was slightly down from December 1998, and 58 percent opted for Russia and the CIS, an increase of 8 percent over the previous six months (see figure 5.2). One year after the Kosovo campaign, 45 percent of respondents in a nationwide poll said that they did not trust NATO; 29 percent said that they fully trusted the Western alliance; and 34 percent were undecided.[34] Clearly, there is a wide gap between official policy and the person in the street.

Against this background, Horbulin's admission "We recognize that we are not yet ready to become a NATO member both in terms of meeting the necessary criteria and in terms of public opinion in Ukraine" is very much on the mark.[35] It also reveals that Horbulin, like Tarasyuk, by no means precludes Ukraine's membership in NATO. The problem, however, is much more complex and difficult. There is the question of not only when Ukraine will be ready for Europe but when, if ever, Europe will be ready for Ukraine.

Figure 5.2 Percentage Who Favor Closer Security Relations Primarily with Russia and the CIS or the United States and NATO



Source: Adapted from *Opinion Analysis*, M-172-99:2.

Sherman Garnett has pointed out on various occasions that the Western European countries have thus far been largely indifferent to Ukraine's "European choice" and that it is by no means clear how far the U.S. commitment to Kyiv extends. The danger, as he sees it, is that the Western European view of Ukraine may well turn out to be similar in some respects to its perception of Turkey.[36] The latter, of course, has been a member of NATO since 1952, but it was only at the end of 1999 that the EU decided that Turkey could even be considered for membership in that organization. One suspects that a large part of the problem here is "civilizational."

UKRAINE AND ITS "NEAR WEST"

It would be tempting to explain the foundation for the relationship between Ukraine and its neighbors in Central and Eastern Europe in one simple formula—namely, that the latter view the former as a buffer against Russia and that the former sees the latter as a way station to Europe. The formula is certainly not without substantial merit, although it represents an oversimplified version of reality. It neglects to take into account that the histories of Ukraine and some of its western neighbors, particularly Poland, have been intertwined for centuries. Kyiv, it should be recalled, was under Lithuanian rule from the second half of the fourteenth century and a part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth until 1667. Indeed, before 1648 virtually all Ukrainians lived within the commonwealth, and after 1667 Warsaw ruled more Ukrainian territory and more Ukrainians than did Moscow.[37] Most of

what is commonly known as Western Ukraine was part of Poland in the interwar period and the remainder in Czechoslovakia and Romania. In more recent times, the satellite states of Eastern Europe held an attraction for many Ukrainians (and not only in Western Ukraine) as "a world apart."[38] Moreover, Ukraine's western neighbors understand that geography alone is not a guarantee of security and that buffer states come in several varieties. Present-day Belarus is one variant—and obviously not the most desirable. When the June 1996 Ukrainian-Polish declaration affirmed that "[t]he existence of an independent Ukraine promotes the consolidation of Poland's independence just as the existence of an independent Poland promotes Ukraine's independence,"[39] the Polish and Ukrainian presidents were simply paraphrasing Jozef Pilsudski: "Without an independent Ukraine there cannot be an independent Poland." Against this background, it is perhaps not entirely fortuitous that Poland was the first country to recognize Ukraine's independence.[40]

This is not the place for a detailed discussion of Ukraine's relations with its "Near West."[41] For our purposes, it is important to focus on Central and Eastern Europe in the context of Ukraine's search for security and its "return" to Europe. Ukraine's initial efforts in this regard were far from successful. In early 1993, after meeting with Hungarian leaders in Budapest, Kravchuk revived an idea that had been advanced a year earlier by Polish president Lech Walesa—namely, to establish a "zone of stability and security" in Central and Eastern Europe that was to fill the perceived security vacuum in the region created by the collapse of the Soviet Union. The proposed security zone would not be closed, he insisted, and would include Russia. Hungarian prime minister Jozsef Antall explained that the idea was not to form a new bloc along the lines of the former Warsaw Pact and that Kravchuk's proposal envisaged regional security within the framework of overall European security. Such regional or subregional security, he argued, could only contribute to the process of European integration.[42] Tarasyuk, at that time a deputy foreign minister, also stressed that the intention was not to form a military alliance or to cut Russia off from Europe. "On the contrary," he maintained, "it would be to serve as a bridge between Russia and the West."[43] But at the Prague meeting of the CSCE in April, Russia was not among the countries listed by Ukraine as a participant in the proposed security arrangement, although the Ukrainian representative specified that other countries could be added to the list.

Kravchuk took his initiative a step further at a meeting with Antall in Uzhhorod at the end of April. In a joint communiqué issued after the talks, Hungary noted that it was ready to cooperate with Ukraine in "the promotion and further development" of the concept of "a zone of stability and security in the Central and Eastern European region." With such a concept in mind, experts from both sides were to begin consultations. For his part, Krav-

chuk joined Antall in excluding the possibility of a variation on the Warsaw Pact and stressed once again that his proposal foresaw "clear interconnections with NATO." At the same time, he noted that the Central and Eastern European countries did not intend to seal themselves off from other countries, including Russia. "All we want," he insisted, "is for our security to be guaranteed and our interests defended."[44]

Discussions were also held with the Slovaks and the Romanians, but the crucial player was Poland. The second Ukrainian-Polish summit in Kyiv in May 1993 was a disappointment for the Ukrainians in this respect. Processes were already underway in Brussels, Warsaw, and Budapest that would ultimately lead to full-fledged membership for Poland and Hungary in NATO, which rendered Kravchuk's plans superfluous. A similar fate befell Kuchma's proposal to create a nuclear-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe, which he began to voice with increasing frequency at various international forums in the spring of 1996, shortly before Ukraine gave up the last of its nuclear weapons. Once again, the main problem was that Kyiv's neighbors to the west were already moving on to bigger and better things. In this case, they were not prepared to support an initiative that would complicate their relations with NATO.

Overall, Ukraine's initial efforts to stake out its claim as a Central and Eastern European state—specifically, its attempts to draw closer to the Visegrad Group and the Weimar Triangle—were met with a cool reception. It was only in mid-1996 that it gained full-fledged membership in the Central European Initiative (CEI), a regional grouping with a primarily economic focus, and Ukraine still remains outside the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA).

Kyiv sees its relations with its western neighbors as based on two fundamental precepts. First, it affirms that like Poland or the Czech Republic it, too, is a member of the Central and Eastern European community of nations. Second, from a concrete practical standpoint, the region is viewed as a vehicle or conduit for eventually linking Ukraine to Western Europe. As Kuchma noted in Geneva in the spring of 1996, Kyiv's strategy is to approach common European institutions in "two ways—directly and through membership in Central European institutions."[45] At first glance, there would seem to be nothing particularly problematic here. Yet, one could argue that there is an implicit contradiction in these two postulates, which can be expressed in a rhetorical question: If Ukraine is already a part of Central and Eastern Europe, why is it experiencing considerably more difficulties than countries such as Poland, Hungary, or the Czech Republic in "returning" to Europe via what might be termed the direct route? Or, stated differently, why does Kyiv need intermediaries like Warsaw to promote its interests in Europe? Ukraine's leaders are not unaware of the problem. Kuchma formulated it quite accurately in his Geneva speech:

> Compared to other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the phenomenon of Ukraine consists in that, while open to integration with Europe, it must overcome two lines of division on the continent that were established after the Second World War. The first is the increasingly less clear western borders of the former Warsaw Pact. The second is the western border of the former USSR, which is still sometimes viewed as the boundary of the CIS and artificially separates Ukraine from its neighbors in Central and Eastern Europe.[46]

Indeed, the region is separated by two borders. But what is more important from the long-term perspective is that the very process of the gradual disappearance of one dividing line may well contribute to the strengthening of the other, behind which Ukraine now finds itself.

In one of his articles, Horbulin noted that the reality is that Western Europe is not in a hurry to open the door to its Eastern European neighbors and that the latter, including Ukraine, require "certain stages of adaptation" that would demonstrate their willingness and readiness for integration.[47] The fact is, however, that Ukraine will require more stages than the others. The Soviet Union was indeed a "world apart," and although the Eastern European "people's democracies" ostensibly shared the same worldview and political and economic system with the Soviet republics, Eastern Europe—and Poland in particular—was never really a part of the Soviet world.[48]

Polish president Aleksander Kwasniewski has noted that Ukraine "is just defining its place in Central Europe,"[49] and Poland is playing the key role in that process as well as in the larger effort to integrate with Europe as a whole. As has already been noted, Warsaw sees its endeavors in this regard, which have been crucial for Kyiv, as an investment in its own long-term security. Ukraine, for its part, has repeatedly emphasized that it welcomes Poland's membership in NATO, which it would like to see transformed from a purely defensive alliance into a broad security organization open to all European countries, including, by implication, itself.

The degree to which Ukrainian and Polish security interests coincide can be seen from their joint efforts in an area the importance of which is oftentimes unrecognized or underestimated—namely, engaging Belarus and offsetting its already considerable isolation from Europe. The first trilateral meeting of the countries' foreign ministers was held in Brest in July 1996 to discuss security issues and regional cooperation, specifically in the context of the Euroregion Bug project. Several months later, Ukraine, Poland, and Lithuania issued a joint statement underlining their concerns about developments in Belarus. Kyiv and Warsaw confirmed their determination to counter the isolation of their neighbor at the Ukrainian-Polish summit in Kyiv in May 1997, and the problem was discussed again shortly thereafter at the meeting of the presidents of Ukraine, Poland, and the Baltic states in Tallinn. Clearly, there is only so much that can be done by interested parties like Kyiv

and Warsaw to influence the direction of Minsk's domestic and foreign policies, a fact that was pointedly demonstrated by the rather awkward "disinvitation" of Lukashenka from the major summit of European leaders hosted by Kuchma in Yalta in September 1999.[50]

The development of Ukrainian-Polish bilateral relations and regional cooperation since 1990–92 can easily serve as a model of how burdensome and difficult legacies, both historical and "ideological," can be surmounted if a common ground of mutual interests can be found. Kyiv and Warsaw signed a basic bilateral treaty in May 1992 affirming, among other things, the inviolability of borders between the two countries and respect for the rights of national minorities well before the signing of a comparable treaty between Kyiv and Moscow. In January 1993, the two governments established a presidential consultative committee, and shortly thereafter a military agreement was signed. In the fall of 1995, the two sides decided to form a joint Ukrainian-Polish peacekeeping battalion. Mutually beneficial cooperation in the international arena required that Ukraine and Poland consolidate their bilateral relationship by also sorting out and coming to terms with some unpleasant aspects of their shared history. To that end, at the May 1997 summit Kuchma and Kwasniewski signed a joint declaration, "Toward Understanding and Unity," which has rightly been viewed as a major turning point in the reconciliation of the two nations.

Ukraine has worked purposefully to establish itself in Central and Eastern Europe by seeking and pursuing friendly and cooperative relations with all of the countries in the region. As with Poland, relations with Hungary have been exemplary. Hungary was the first country to establish diplomatic relations with Ukraine after the referendum on independence, and a basic bilateral treaty was signed already in early December 1991. A major factor in facilitating the development of Ukrainian-Hungarian ties was Budapest's positive attitude toward the treatment of its conationals in Ukraine, which contrasts sharply with the situation of the Magyar minorities in Romania and Slovakia. Relations with Romania were burdened for the longest time by what were, in effect, territorial claims emanating from certain political forces in Bucharest, differing views and interpretations of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact and several postwar treaties and agreements, and complaints about the treatment of Romanians in Ukraine. Romania, of course, needed to resolve its problems with Ukraine if it wanted to be considered for NATO membership, but the negotiating process was difficult and lengthy. The breakthrough came with the signing of a basic bilateral treaty in June 1997, which recognized the existing borders between the two countries. Plans are under way to form a joint battalion with Hungary and Romania that would be used primarily in emergency situations and rescue operations.

The three Baltic states fall into a special and somewhat unique category. They experienced the "Soviet way of life," but, like Western Ukraine, only

since World War II. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania did not join the CIS, and their identity as Eastern European states has never really been in question, even within the former Soviet Union. In at least one respect, the Baltic states are no different from Poland or the Czech Republic—all three are firm in their intention to join NATO and the EU at an early stage. This conditioned their relations with Kyiv, which has benefited greatly by supporting their efforts.[51]

For Ukraine, the big question is what happens next. How will relations with its neighbors in Central and Eastern Europe be affected after they become "fully European"—that is, after they are integrated politically and economically into NATO and the EU? The issues range from the very specific such as Ukraine's desire to maintain visa-free travel for its citizens, which is precluded by EU regulations, to larger questions along the lines of whether or not a "new Yalta" in the form of a Eurocurtain is in the making.

At this juncture, the outlook for Ukraine is less than optimistic. The Czech and Slovak governments have already announced their intention to impose a visa regime on Ukraine (as well as Russia and Belarus). Hungary has said that it would delay taking this step until it becomes a member of the EU. And Poland promises to seek a special arrangement with the EU whereby the introduction of visas would be delayed for as long as possible or somehow avoided altogether. Although the EU summit in Helsinki at the end of 1999 adopted a common strategy for Ukraine, the meeting was still a disappointment for Kyiv. It is not that Ukraine's leaders expected to be invited to accession talks. What they wanted but did not get is a clear political signal that Ukraine would not be locked out even after having met EU standards at some point down the line. On the eve of the summit, Kyiv's ambassador in Brussels expressed Ukraine's dilemma in terms of the Turkish analogy. The EU, he said, seemed to accept Ukraine as a security partner, "but when it comes to integration, we find we are pushed into the same category as Russia."[52]

UKRAINE AND ITS "NEAR EAST"

Outside Russia, of course, Ukraine has singled out several of the former Soviet republics as the focus of its attention. Belarus is an immediate neighbor, but the course of political developments in Minsk in recent years poses some difficult problems. Lukashenka has put his country's foreign policy on a primitively pro-Russian, integrationist, and anti-Western footing, while the domestic environment has become increasingly antidemocratic and authoritarian. Potentially one of the most serious problems for Ukraine would be the development of a full-fledged military-political union between Belarus and Russia. In April 2000, Lukashenka made the sensational announcement that Minsk and Moscow were planning to form a military grouping number-

ing about three hundred thousand—a formation that would equal the strength of the entire armed forces of Ukraine—that would be deployed on Belarusian territory as a counterweight to NATO. Although Belarusian-Russian agreements call for the development of a single military doctrine and a regional military coalition, Putin subsequently made it clear that there would be no single army with a joint command. Nonetheless, the overall thrust of Minsk's foreign and security policies explains in large part why Kyiv considers it important for its own interests to counter the isolation of Belarus from the West, which could easily have the effect of driving the country even further into the Russian fold. The basic bilateral treaty with Belarus was signed in July 1995, and in May 1997 the two concluded a state border treaty, the first of its kind among CIS member states. In practice, however, there is little that Kyiv can do to effectively influence the choices that are being made in Minsk. In virtually all respects, Belarus inherited a legacy that makes its post-Soviet transition a considerably more difficult and lengthy process than that of most other CIS states.

Ukraine's interests in Moldova are dictated, above all, by the impact on regional stability of the unresolved dispute over the breakaway Transdniester Republic, where, moreover, Russia's influence remains strong. In addition to the approximately five hundred peacekeepers, there are about 2,600 troops of the former Fourteenth Russian Army in the region (the so-called Operational Group of Russian Forces), and Moscow does not appear to be in a hurry to implement its 1994 agreement with Chisinau and Tiraspol on their phased withdrawal. Ideally, the Russian military would like to see its presence in Moldova legalized by securing basing rights in the country. Ukraine's unease over these developments was reflected in Kuchma's forthright statement in Chisinau in October 1998 that Russian forces belong in Russia.[53] Ukrainians are the largest national minority in Moldova overall as well as in the Transdniester region, a factor that has also been cited by Ukrainian diplomats as a source of concern for Kyiv. During the last several years, Kyiv has played a much more visible role in efforts to mediate the dispute between the two sides.[54] In January 1996, together with the presidents of Russia and Moldova, Kuchma signed a joint declaration that underscored the need for a quick resolution of the Transdniester conflict by defining a special status for the region within Moldova; Ukraine and Russia also assumed the role of guarantors of agreements between Chisinau and Tiraspol. Both sides have urged the Ukrainian leadership to send peacekeepers to the region, a proposal that is under consideration in Kyiv but that would require some form of agreement on Moscow's part. Ukraine was a signatory to the memorandum on the fundamentals of normalizing relations betwen Moldova and Transdniester in May 1997 and a party to further multilateral agreements in 1998 and 1999. Moldova is a member of the informal GUUAM grouping, which is rounded out by Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan. Joint Ukrainian-Moldovan

military exercises were held for the first time in June 1998, and plans are said to be under way for a joint peacekeeping battalion similar to the one formed with Poland.

Ukraine's relations with Moldova, however, have not been entirely free of problems. In the immediate post-Soviet period, when Moldova's Popular Front still set the tone of the country's political life, disputed border claims were a sensitive issue, and it was only in late 1994 that an agreement was signed renouncing mutual border claims. This made it possible to begin talks on delimiting and demarcating the state border, which resulted in the signing of a state border treaty in August 1999 and facilitated the ratification of the basic bilateral treaty that had been signed already in the fall of 1992.

Ukraine's priorities in the Transcaucasus, in addition to political and security issues, have a very definite economic dimension. Specifically, Kyiv has joined in the competition for delivering Caspian oil to international markets by proposing a transit route from Baku in Azerbaijan to Supsa in Georgia and on to a terminal near Odesa. Georgia and Azerbaijan are members of the GUUAM grouping, which is an indication of the degree of their cooperation with Ukraine. For Georgia and Azerbaijan, Ukraine's insistence on the principle of territorial integrity bolsters their positions with regard to the separatist regimes in Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh, respectively. Tbilisi has had an ongoing dispute with Moscow over the role and functions of Russian peacekeepers in Georgia and has asked Ukraine to undertake a peacekeeping role. Ukraine and Georgia have also discussed the formation of a joint peacekeeping battalion that would eventually include Azerbaijan. More recently, the indications are that all five GUUAM members are prepared to form a single battalion that, among other things, would provide security for planned pipelines.[55]

Among the Central Asia countries, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have pursued policies within the CIS context that largely coincide with those of Ukraine—the former because of its tough-minded defense of its independence and criticism of Moscow and the latter because of its unswerving principle of neutrality. Turkmenistan is also an important supplier of natural gas to Ukraine.

The very existence of GUUAM, wherein Ukraine is recognized as the unofficial leader, confirms the widely held view that Kyiv has emerged as a focal point for those CIS states that for one or another reason have found the prospect of a Moscow-dominated CIS unappealing. This as yet loosely structured association traces its origins to agreements among Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova that were reached at the Council of Europe summit in Strasbourg in October 1997. In April 1999, GUAM became GUUAM when Uzbekistan joined the grouping at the NATO anniversary summit of members and partners in Washington.[56] The venue turned out to be symbolic and did not pass unnoticed in Moscow. GUAM was originally conceived as an

informal association of states primarily linked by shared economic interests and considerations, particularly the development and transport of Caspian energy resources. Clearly, political factors were present as well. Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Moldova, even more so than Ukraine, all have serious and unresolved political, military, and security issues that bear directly on their relations with Russia. But when in early 1999 Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan made it clear that they would not renew their membership in the Tashkent collective security arrangement (Ukraine and Moldova were never members) and when all five announced in Washington that their security interests were best served by strengthening ties to NATO, any remaining illusions about the CIS as a viable mechanism, political or otherwise, were shattered.

Needless to say, Kyiv's political and diplomatic initiatives in the post-Soviet space are a source of concern for Moscow, where, in certain quarters, Ukraine is viewed as being the driving force behind the emergence of an "anti-Russian" axis that, if allowed to develop further, will result in the destruction of Russian statehood. The point of departure for adherents of this viewpoint is that "the problem of the CIS is the problem of the preservation and survival of the Russian state." Accordingly, "although the disintegration of Ukraine is a problematic alternative for Russia, it is nonetheless better to facilitate it than to suffer a permanent challenge from Ukraine."[57] Irrespective of the degree to which one is prepared to treat such forthright statements of Russian *Realpolitik* seriously, the fact remains that Ukraine's Western orientation and its geopolitical role in the post-Soviet space remains a matter of serious concern in Moscow.

NOTES

1. Stephen R. Burant, "Poland, Ukraine and the Idea of Strategic Partnership" (The Carl Beck Papers in Russian & East European Studies, no. 1308, March 1999), 1.

2. The National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, the National Institute for Strategic Studies, and the National Institute for Ukrainian-Russian Relations, *Ukraine 2000 and Beyond: Geopolitical Priorities and Scenarios of Development* (Kyiv: NISS, 1999), 7.

3. " 'Ich muss das Kreuz tragen': Der ukrainische Präsident Leonid Kutschma über Wirtschaftsreformen, Tschernobyl und Boris Jelzin," *Der Spiegel*, 3 July 1995, 126.

4. For comprehensive accounts of Ukraine's relations with the West and with NATO, see the various publications by Sherman W. Garnett and F. Stephen Larrabee, particularly Garnett's *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the Emerging Security Environment of Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1997), and Larrabee's contribution "Ukraine's Place in European and Regional Security," in *Ukraine in the World: Studies in the International Rela-*

tions and Security Structure of a Newly Independent State, ed. Lubomyr A. Hajda (Cambridge, Mass.: Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University, 1998), 249–70. Olga Alexandrova, "Ukraine and Western Europe," in the same work, 145–70, provides a detailed analysis of Ukraine's relations with key Western European states and institutions.

5. See "Remarks to the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of the Ukraine in Kiev, Soviet Union, 1 August 1991," http://csdl.cs.tamu.edu/bushlib/papers/1991/91070102.html.

6. For analyses of the U.S.-Ukrainian relationship in the context of denuclearization, see Sherman Garnett, "U.S.-Ukrainian Relations: Past, Present, and Future," in *Ukraine in the World*, ed. Hajda, 103–24, and Nadia Schadlow, "The Denuclearization of Ukraine: Consolidating Ukrainian Security," in the same work, 271–87. See also Anatoli Zlenko, "The Foreign Policy of Ukraine: Its Formation and Stages of Development," *Ukrainian Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (Fall 1997): 208*ff*., and Jadwiga Stachura, "Polityka amerykanska wobec Ukrainy," *Sprawy Miedzynarodowe* 47, no. 3 (July–September 1994): 101–14.

7. Quoted in *Uryadovyi kur'yer*, 19 January 1993. See also "Rossiisko-ukrainskie peregovory," *Diplomaticheskii vestnik* 3–4 (February 1993): 37.

8. AP, 10 February 1993, and the *Los Angeles Times*, 26 February 1993.

9. *Moloda Halychyna*, 18 March 1993.

10. For the text of the memorandum, see Sherman W. Garnett, "Ukraine's Decision to Join the NPT," *Arms Control Today* 25, no. 1 (January–February 1995): 11.

11. *Holos Ukrainy*, 9 December 1994 (and other Ukrainian sources) rendered the document as "Memorandum pro harantii bezpeky u zv'yazku z pryyednannyam Ukrainy do Dohovoru pro nerospovsyudzhennya yadernoi zbroi." Oddly, the Russian side also refers to guarantees. See Zagorskii, *Rossiisko-ukrainskie otnosheniya 1990–1997*, 210–11. The *SIPRI Yearbook 1995: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 638, cites the memorandum as UN General Assembly document A/49/765, 19 December 1994, "Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with Ukraine's Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons."

12. Quoted in Serhii Fomin, "Try shlyakhy: Odyn z nykh—nash," *Polityka i chas* 7 (1994): 27.

13. For the text, see *Holos Ukrainy*, 21 July 1994.

14. "Ukraina i maibutnye Yevropy: Vystup Prezydenta L. D. Kuchmy u tovarystvi im. Paasikivi (m. Hel'sinki, Finlandiya) 8 lyutoho 1996 roku," *Polityka i chas* 3 (1996): 4.

15. "Stan i perspektyvy ukrains'koi zovnishn'oi polityky: Vystup Prezydenta Ukrainy L. D. Kuchmy na zasidanni kerivnoho skladu MZS Ukrainy 15 lypnya 1996 roku," *Polityka i chas* 8 (1996): 5.

16. For the text of the "Strategy," see *Uryadovyi kur'yer*, 18 June 1998.

17. Svitlana Hrytsai, "Ukraina povertayet'sya v Yevropu?" *Nova polityka* 3 (1999): 19.

18. Martin Wolf, "Caught in the Transition Trap," *Financial Times*, 30 June 1999.

19. N. V. Panina and Ye. I. Holovakha, *Tendentsii rozvytku ukrains'koho suspil'stva (1994–1998 rr.): Sotsiolohichni pokaznyky (Tablytsi, ilyustratsii, komentar)* (Kyiv: Instytut sotsiolohii NAN Ukrainy, 1999), 68, and Gary A. Ferguson, *Public Opinion in Ukraine 1999* (Washington, D.C.: International Foundation for Election Systems, 1999), A-2.

20. *Den'*, 23 March 2000.
21. Interfax, 24 November 1999.
22. Borys Hudyma, "Dorohoyu do spil'noho domu: Stosunky mizh Ukrainoyu ta Yevropeis'kym Soyuzom u svitli nabuttya chynnosti Uhodoyu pro partnerstvo ta spivrobitnytstvo mizh Ukrainoyu ta YeS," *Polityka i chas* 5 (1998): 4.
23. See the two-part article by Sergei Rogov, director of the Institute of the USA and Canada of the Russian Academy of Sciences, in *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 25 and 26 March 1997.
24. For the text, see *NATO Review* 45, no. 4 (July–August 1997): 5–6 (Special Insert: Documentation).
25. Yanina Sokolovskaya, "Ukraina otvorachivaetsya ot Rossii," *Izvestia*, 23 October 1998.
26. *Uryadovyi kur'yer*, 4 October 1997.
27. For the text, see *Uryadovyi kur'yer*, 23 and 24 March 1999. See also Center for Peace, Conversion and Foreign Policy of Ukraine, "State Program of Ukraine's Cooperation with NATO," http://www.public.ua.net/~potekhin/ucpccrs.htm.
28. *Mist*, 31 January 1994.
29. U.S. Information Agency, Office of Research and Media Reaction, "Ukrainian Elites Worry over Threats to Independence," *Opinion Analysis*, M-132–96 (7 June 1996): 3.
30. Quoted by Vadim Dubnov, "Zona Krym," *Novoe vremya* 31 (10 August 1997): 20.
31. *New York Times*, 23 December 1997.
32. *Den'*, 9 June 1999, and U.S. Information Agency, Office of Research and Media Reaction, "Ukrainians Draw Closer to Russia after NATO Air Campaign," *Opinion Analysis*, M-172–99 (2 September 1999): 1.
33. For the texts, see *Holos Ukrainy*, 26 March and 27 April 1999.
34. *Den'*, 23 March 2000.
35. Volodymyr Horbulin, "Ukraine's Contribution to Security and Stability in Europe," *NATO Review* 46, no. 3 (Autumn 1998): 12.
36. Ian Brzezinski, Sherman Garnett, Oleksandr Pavliuk, Alexander Rahr, Roman Solchanyk, and Igor Torbakov, "Roundtable: The Future of Ukrainian-Russian Relations," *Harriman Review* 10, no. 3 (Winter 1997): 49–50.
37. Roman Szporluk, "Ukraine: From an Imperial Periphery to a Sovereign State," *Daedalus* (Summer 1997): 87.
38. This term is borrowed (and used in reverse form) from Gustaw Herling, *A World Apart*, trans. from the Polish by Joseph Marek (Melbourne: Heinemann, 1951). On the drawing power of things Polish among students and intellectuals in Soviet Ukraine, see the memoir-essay by Mykola Ryabchuk, "Pol'shcha, pol's'kyi, polyaky," *Suchasnist'* 11 (1998): 138–47.
39. For the text, see *Polityka i chas* 7 (1996): 79–81.
40. For an interesting discussion of the evolution of Ukrainian-Polish relations from conflict to reconciliation to "symbiotic relationship," see Ilya Prizel, "The Influence of Ethnicity on Foreign Policy: The Case of Ukraine," in *National Identity and Ethnicity in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Roman Szporluk (Armonk, N.Y.: Sharpe, 1994), 105–14. See also Antoni Z. Kaminski and Jerzy Kozakiewicz, *Polish-Ukrainian Relations 1992–1996: Report* (Warsaw: Center for International Relations at the Institute of Public Affairs, 1997).

41. See Stephen R. Burant, "Ukraine and East Central Europe," in *Ukraine in the World*, ed. Hajda, 45–77.

42. *Uryadovyi kur'yer*, 2 March 1993.

43. *Financial Times*, 22 April 1993.

44. For the text, see *Uryadovyi kur'yer*, 4 May 1993.

45. "Demokratychna Ukraina v suchasnomu yevropeis'komu konteksti: Vystup Prezydenta Ukrainy L. D. Kuchmy na zasidanni 'Mizhnarodnykh Konferentsii Zhenevy' 21 bereznya 1996 roku," *Polityka i chas* 4 (1996) 4.

46. "Demokratychna Ukraina v suchasnomu yevropeis'komu konteksti," 3.

47. Volodymyr Horbulin, "Nasha meta, nasha dolya," *Polityka i chas* 1 (1996): 4.

48. See Roman Shporlyuk [Szporluk], "Pol'shcha, Yevropa—i nova ukrains'ka heohrafiya," *Den'*, 26 January 1999.

49. Bohdan Osadczuk's interview with Kwasniewski, "Rozmowa z prezydentem Aleksandrem Kwasniewskim," *Kultura* (Paris) 1–2 (1997): 106.

50. The "Belarusian problem" in its regional and European contexts is discussed in *Belarus at the Crossroads*, ed. Sherman W. Garnett and Robert Legvold (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999).

51. There is no satisfactory account of Ukraine's relations with the Baltic states in the post-Soviet period. See, however, the short overview by Dzintra Bungs, *The Baltic States: Problems and Prospects of Membership in the European Union* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1998), 100–101.

52. Quoted in *International Herald Tribune*, 12 November 1999.

53. *Izvestia*, 24 October 1998.

54. See Sherman W. Garnett and Rachel Lebenson, "Ukraine Joins the Fray: Will Peace Come to Trans-Dniestria?" *Problems of Post-Communism* 45, no. 6 (November–December 1998): 22–32.

55. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 7 May 1998; Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 22 January 1999.

56. For good overviews of Ukraine's interests and role in GUUAM, see S. I. Pirozhkov and V. A. Parakhonskii, "Formirovanie modeli regional'nogo sotrudnichestva v sisteme GUUAM," in *Ukraina i problemy bezopastnosti transportnykh koridorov v Chernomorskom-Kaspiiskom regione: Materialy I Mezhdunarodnoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii (Sevastopol', 8–9 iyunya 1999 g.)* (Kiev: Natsional'nyi institut ukrainsko-rossiiskikh otnoshenii, Fond Fridrikha Eberta, 1999), 18–35, and Center for Peace, Conversion and Foreign Policy of Ukraine, "Shaping of Ukraine's Regional Cooperation within GUUAM," http://www.public.ua.net/~potekhin/ucpccrs.htm.

57. See the abridged report "SNG: Nachalo ili konets istorii?" authored by Konstantin Zatulin and Andranik Migranyan, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 26 March 1997. At a press conference in Moscow called to publicize the report, Migranyan, who served as an adviser to Yeltsin, was quoted as saying that "blabber about democracy and preservation of the state are two very different things." See *Kievskie vedomosti*, 29 March 1997.

6

State and Society

> Given that today there is no direct military threat to Ukraine and that the possibilities of political pressure from foreign countries, although they exist, are limited, the national security of our state is, in the main, subject to the influence of internal threats.
>
> —Volodymyr Horbulin, *Uryadovyi kur'yer*, 15 October 1996

> Independence is when wages are paid on time and there is democracy.
>
> —Yurii, civil servant and father of two, 24 August 1999

In the fall of 1990, an influential European financial institution ranked Ukraine at the top of the list of Soviet republics in terms of economic potential, outdistancing even the three Baltic states.[1] The suggestion was that the Ukrainians were the "most likely to succeed." Less than four years later, *The Economist* wrote, "The party of power [in Ukraine] has achieved something that many might have thought impossible: to invent an economic system that is more inefficient than the command economy of the old Soviet Union."[2]

It is unlikely that the Ukrainian leadership invented anything at all. A more balanced view suggests that, in addition to such subjective factors as neglect and incompetence, widespread corruption, and state theft, economic progress and political reform in Ukraine, as in most of the former Soviet republics, has been hampered by systemic problems that are a legacy of the former Soviet Union.[3] Indeed, if one is prepared to agree with Kuchma's contention that "psychology" and the "style of people's thinking" may well be the most difficult barriers to overcome in the process of effecting change,[4] then one wonders where the subjective ends and where the objective begins.

ECONOMY AND SOCIETY, STATE AND NATION

In the spring of 1995, Kuchma told a press conference in Kyiv, "If we do not unite as a nation, we do not have a future." On the face of it, this is not a

particularly insightful observation. But he went on to add that at that juncture the only thing that could unite the country was the economy. If the economy begins to work, he maintained, everything will change. Unpopular measures had to be taken; "otherwise another variant is possible: there will not be a country."[5]

Let us recall some of the context in which Kuchma ventured this pessimistic assessment. An economic reform program was finally announced in October 1994, but a year or two down the line, no one noticed that anything had actually changed. Clearly, it would have been unrealistic to expect an improvement of the economic situation in such a relatively short time, but people's expectations are quite another matter. Masol, the former head of the Soviet-era State Planning Committee, had just resigned as prime minister, to the great relief of those in the Ukrainian government who were genuinely interested in economic reforms. The battle over a new constitution, both within the parliament and between the executive and legislative branches, was proceeding apace, with no end in sight. Crimea, after several months of internal political turmoil, no longer had a constitution or a president. Relations with Russia were moving forward, albeit painfully. The basic bilateral treaty between Kyiv and Moscow had been initialed in February 1995, but problems of all sorts still remained, particularly how to divide up the Black Sea Fleet.

Kuchma did not elaborate as to why he concluded that the state of the economy was the sole key to successful nation and state building. But it is probably fair to assume that his point of departure was that, given the political disunity and the pronounced regional cleavages in the country, the winning formula was to improve the economic situation. After all, this formula—in the sense of people's expectations about positive economic change—proved successful in the December 1991 referendum on independence, when over 90 percent of the population decided that they would be better off without the Soviet Union.

The discussion that follows has no pretensions to economic analysis. The purpose is to make some rather elementary observations about Ukraine's economy and to gauge how popular opinion views the socioeconomic situation in the country and where it thinks that Ukraine's future lies. If Kuchma's emphasis on the economy as the deciding factor is essentially correct, it can be assumed that economic conditions play a preeminent role in what people think about independence, unification with Russia, and other alternatives for Ukraine's future as a nation and a state.

At the end of 1998, the average monthly wage in Ukraine, if it was paid, stood at $50. In 1999, according to the International Labour Organization, average monthly per capita income had dropped to $25 from $37 the previous year. In August–September 1998, the national currency was devalued 40 percent.[6] After seven years of independence, Ukraine's GDP is estimated to

Table 6.1 Annual GDP, in Comparable Prices (in percentage change over the previous year)

1992	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*
−16.8	−14.2	−23.9	−11.8	−10.1	−3.2	−1.7	−0.4

Sources: I. Fedorovskaya, "Ukraina: Vykhod iz krizisa zaderzhivaetsya," *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya* 9 (1998): 129; Reuters, 5 March 1999; and Interfax, 2 March 2000.

have plummeted by two thirds.[7] The annual decline in GDP between 1992 and 1999 can be seen from table 6.1.

Official figures do not tell the full story, if only because they cannot take the so-called shadow economy into account. But the overall picture is fairly clear. In 1996, the average decline in GDP for the CIS countries was 6 percent; Ukraine had the largest decline, except for Tajikistan. Ukraine also has one of the highest rates of decline in the volume of industrial and consumer goods production.[8] Summarizing a semiofficial report on the state of Ukraine's national security in 1994–96, Horbulin wrote that significant declines in the volume of production, the energy crisis, and what he described as unsystematic implementation of economic reforms had contributed to the growth of social tension and popular dissatisfaction and were feeding nostalgia for the times of the former Soviet Union. Particularly painful were the arrears in the payment of wages, pensions and other social benefits, and the overall decline of incomes. Against the background of economic crisis, Ukraine was experiencing the criminalization of society, a high degree of corruption at various levels of the state administration, and a decline in people's spiritual and moral values. The most dangerous threats to the country, he concluded, were internal in nature, first of all in the economic sphere.[9] Most interesting, for our purposes, is the observation that social and economic problems had people yearning for the "good old days."

What do the people think? Nationwide surveys conducted from 1994 to 1998 show that between 91 and 96 percent of respondents were dissatisfied to one extent or another with the situation in Ukraine.[10] In 1998, the most frequently cited reasons for dissatisfaction were poverty (45 percent), payment arrears (24 percent), and unemployment (23 percent). Between 46.8 and 50.7 percent of respondents felt that their material conditions had worsened significantly during the previous year. At the end of 1997, a poll conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology reported that 45 percent of respondents said that they did not have enough money to buy basic foodstuffs; 49 percent said that they had enough food but lacked money for clothing.[11] The most frequently cited problem facing the country was people's standard of living (83 percent), followed by crime (45 percent).[12] Attitudes toward the economic course that should be pursued showed that more

Table 6.2 Preferred Economic Course (in percentages)

	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*
Complete transition to the market	29.6	27.8	23.9	20.3	20.0
Certain changes are necessary	21.4	19.0	23.6	24.1	23.8
Return to preperestroika conditions	30.9	34.8	33.6	38.0	39.0
Other	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.7	3.6
Difficult to say	15.1	15.9	16.5	14.9	13.6

Source: Ukrainian Society 1994–1998 (Kyiv: Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 1998), 2.

people wanted a return to preperestroika conditions (39 percent), although those that favored a complete transition to the market and those that felt that certain changes were necessary were roughly the same (20 and 23.8 percent, respectively). Support for a market economy has eroded gradually since 1994 (see table 6.2).

According to a SOCIS–Gallup poll reported at the beginning of 1998, the overwhelming majority (79 percent) of people felt that they had a better life in the period before 1985—that is, before Gorbachev; only 4 percent said that they were better off now; and 9 percent thought that their situation had not changed.[13] At the end of 1999, as much as 83 percent said that they were better off before perestroika.[14]

The enthusiasm that voters demonstrated in the referendum on independence, which surprised even the most fervent optimists in Ukraine and came as a shock to Moscow, is a thing of the past. Although the data vary from survey to survey, the fact remains that substantial numbers of people in Ukraine have lost confidence in independent statehood and seek solutions in either unification with Russia and/or some form of integration with several or all of the CIS states. The economic factor figures prominently in people's attitudes. Thus, in a poll conducted in November 1995, support for independence was registered by only 43 percent of respondents. Opponents of independence totaled 34 percent, and those who were indifferent accounted for 19 percent. Of those who were opposed to independence, 45 percent said that their decision was motivated by the deteriorating economic situation since 1991.[15] During the last several years, support for independence has ranged between 56 and 61 percent, while those who were opposed was between 27 and 33 percent (see table 6.3).

In other polls, conducted in 1998 and 1999, respondents were asked whether they thought Ukraine should be independent in spite of the many difficulties standing in the way of statehood. On both occasions, 61 percent answered affirmatively. Negative responses accounted for 19 (1998) and 15 percent (1999), and those who could not answer represented 20 and 24 percent, respectively.[16]

Table 6.3 What Is Your Personal Attitude toward Ukraine's Independence? (in percentages)

	1997	*1999*
Firm support	26	31
More inclined to support	30	30
Firm opposition	19	11
More inclined to oppose	14	16
Difficult to say	11	13

Sources: Den', 19 August 1997 and 21 September 1999.

Although the overall picture does not change substantially when the question of unification with Russia is introduced, there are noticeable shifts in attitude depending on the kinds of options that are available for maintaining ties with Russia and/or the other CIS states. A total of about 60 percent favor independent statehood, but the vast majority of these, approximately 85 percent, at the same time wish to have very close relations with Russia (open borders without visa and customs controls). In this framework—that is, when unification with Russia is offered as an option—the proportion of those who may be qualified as opponents of independence by virtue of their support for unification with Russia in a single state increases somewhat to about one-third (see table 6.4).

It would seem, therefore, that the presence or absence of ties to Russia and/or other CIS states as an option needs to be taken into consideration when attempting to determine popular attitudes toward independence. Thus, a survey conducted in 1997 shows that when independence and close relations with other CIS states is not an option, the proportion of those who remain committed to independence decreases considerably (see table 6.5).

Table 6.4 What Kind of Relations Would You Like to See between Ukraine and Russia? (in percentages)

	1994	*1995*	*1997*	*1998*
As with other states (closed borders, visas, customs)	15	14	13	11
Ukraine and Russia should be independent, but friendly states (open borders, no visas, no customs)	49	49	53	50
Ukraine and Russia should unite in one state	34	31	30	36
Difficult to say	3	6	4	3

Sources: Kyivs'kyi mizhnarodnyi instytut sotsiolohii (KMIS) and Kafedra sotsiolohii, Natsional'nyi universytet, "Kyyevo-Mohylyans'ka Akademiya" (NaUKMA), *Hromads'ka dumka Ukrainy: osin' 95-ho* (unpublished text), 11 [data for 1994 and 1995]; *Den'*, 6 December 1997 and 23 December 1998.

Table 6.5 Which of the Following Foreign Policy Orientations Is Best for Ukraine? (May 1997) (in percentages)

Unification of CIS countries in a single state	46
CIS membership under current conditions	13
Withdrawal from the CIS, consistently independent policy, orientation toward non-CIS countries	26
Difficult to say	15

Source: *Den'*, 30 May 1997.

Other surveys indicate that most people are favorably inclined toward Russia and other CIS states. At the end of 1997, respondents were asked directly to agree or disagree with the proposition that Ukraine's participation in the CIS should be more active, but not at the cost of its state sovereignty. The response was 68 percent in favor, 12 percent opposed, and 20 percent uncertain.[17] Another survey, reported in the summer of 1998, asked for an opinion on the state of Ukrainian-Russian relations. Only 9 percent expressed satisfaction with the existing situation; 61 percent said that relations should be thoroughly strengthened.[18]

Similar patterns emerge when respondents are asked to choose between the somewhat odd variant of independence within a union of Soviet sovereign states and "normal" independence. In the spring of 1997, 52 percent favored the former, essentially the "Gorbachev option," while 23 percent were opposed. Full independence, on the other hand, was supported by only about one-fourth of those polled and half were opposed.[19] One Ukrainian scholar has argued that even in December 1991, when voters were asked to decide the fate of the declaration of independence, they in fact chose "relative sovereignty" as reflected in the sovereignty declaration of 1990 and not full independence.[20] Overall, survey research conducted in the period between 1994 and 1998 clearly indicates that the majority of the population still wants to maintain and strengthen ties in some form within the CIS, although the proportions have generally decreased from the highs registered in 1994–95 (see table 6.6).

At this juncture, a note of caution may be advisable with regard to the data gathered from survey research, particularly with regard to issues such as independence and ties with Russia. Time, circumstance, and the political culture of the cohort are bound to influence the outcome of any opinion poll. In Ukraine, the apparently contradictory responses that are sometimes elicited from the same cohort by the same poll takers at the same time has led some observers to suggest that the population suffers from "political schizophrenia." Thus, the same 1998 poll that registered 61 percent of respondents supporting independence also found that opinion was almost evenly split on the

Table 6.6 In What Direction Would You Like to See Ukraine Develop? (1994–1998) (in percentages)

	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*
Mainly broaden ties within the CIS	40.5	38.8	31.8	23.7	23.8
Mainly develop relations with Russia	17.5	14.8	14.4	4.5	5.0
First of all strengthen the East Slavic bloc (Ukraine, Russia, Belarus)	—	—	—	24.3	23.7
Create a Baltic–Black Sea Union	1.7	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.9
Mainly establish ties with Western countries	13.3	13.9	15.9	13.8	12.8
Mainly rely on our own resources to strengthen independence	13.3	14.4	18.5	16.1	17.7
Regions should choose their own course	4.2	4.4	4.5	4.1	5.0
Other	2.3	1.9	1.7	1.4	1.6
Difficult to say	9.5	10.8	12.2	11.3	9.3
No response	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.2

Source: Ukrainian Society 1994–1998, 4.

question of immediately holding a referendum on "renewing the union of fraternal Soviet peoples" (36 percent in favor, 37 percent opposed, and 27 percent uncertain)."[21] An even more glaring example was provided by a 1997 poll conducted in Crimea. It turns out that no more than 30 percent of Crimeans want the peninsula to secede from Ukraine (37.8 percent Russians and 20.5 percent Ukrainians); at the same time, 71.5 percent of Russians and 51.4 percent of Ukrainians would like to see Crimea as a part of Russia. One of the sociologists who conducted the poll provided an original explanation for the seemingly conflicting data: Crimeans are inclined to be not against things but rather for things. Therefore, they are for both maintaining ties with Ukraine and restoring lost ties with Russia.[22] Another factor is the degree to which the questions are "simple" or "complicated." Nationwide polls conducted in January and October 1996, for example, revealed a relatively high proportion of 58 percent who agreed with the straightforward proposition that Ukraine should unite with Russia (36 percent were opposed). The following year, 62 percent said that Ukraine, like Belarus, should try to form a union with Russia (25 percent were opposed).[23] In July 1999, 65 percent favored a union with Russia and Belarus, up from 61 percent the previous year.[24] Apparently, no other options were offered. One wonders what the response would be if the question were phrased in a somewhat more "complicated" manner—for example, along the lines of "Do you want Ukraine to

unite with Russia and send your son to Chechnya, Dagestan, Tajikistan, and so forth?"

These problems notwithstanding, public opinion, such as it is, does tell us something about what people are thinking. One conclusion that can be reached is that the Ukrainian public would like the best of both worlds: the perceived benefits of "union" with Russia and/or other CIS states as well as "independent" statehood. One could argue that in this respect the situation has not changed fundamentally since the 1991 referendum called by Gorbachev, when 70.2 percent of voters in Ukraine agreed that they wanted to maintain the USSR as a "renewed federation of equal sovereign republics" and, at the same time, 80.2 percent said that Ukraine's state sovereignty declaration should be the basis for its membership in a "Union of Soviet sovereign states." One can also conclude that the Ukrainian leadership, having made its "European choice," is moving in a direction that does not appear to have firm support among the population. This is one component of what some government security experts in Kyiv describe as a "state of latent conflict" between the powers that be and the general public.[25] How this situation will be resolved depends as much on the course of events in Russia as it does on developments in Ukraine.

POLITICAL FAULT LINES

If the transition to democracy is measured solely in terms of personal freedoms, Ukrainians may be said to have achieved a qualified success. From 1994 to 1998, a majority of the population (between 54 and 60 percent) felt that they could freely express their political views; between 14 and 18 percent disagreed.[26]

But other aspects of the political life of the country cast a shadow over the transition. There is a wholesale lack of confidence in virtually all government institutions and political parties. Political forces are fragmented not only along the traditional left–center–right spectrum, but also within each orientation, particularly among the so-called national democrats. The political center, which is the mainstay of any democratic society, exists but remains amorphous. Indeed, in Ukraine many of those calling themselves "centrists" or "independents" appear to be active in political life primarily for purposes of self-aggrandizement. Some political parties are simply clan-based organizations founded to further their adherents' interests.

Kuchma was elected president in the summer of 1994 largely as result of widespread popular discontent—particularly in Ukraine's predominantly Russian-speaking eastern and southern regions—with the catastrophic economic situation in the country and the strained relations with Russia that prevailed during the previous administration under Kravchuk. For many voters,

these two issues were clearly linked: economic problems were often perceived to be the direct result of the breakdown of previously existing economic ties and Kyiv's overly independent stance with regard to Moscow. As Kuchma put it shortly after being named prime minister in the fall of 1992: "Anti-Russian actions in politics have led to anti-Ukrainian economic consequences."[27] Accordingly, his electoral campaign focused primarily on the need for economic reform and improving relations with Russia.

Kuchma's first major initiative came in the fall of 1994, when he fashioned a "socially oriented" program of economic reform that was closely linked to the establishment of a strong executive. The implementation of that program was impeded from the very start by two major stumbling blocks. First, there was no real constitution. The existing fundamental law was a Soviet-era document that had been altered on a piecemeal basis by countless amendments since at least 1990. Ukraine's post-Soviet constitution, delineating the division of power between the executive and legislative branches, was not adopted until mid-1996.[28] During the first two years of the new administration, Kuchma and parliament were locked in a drawn-out struggle over the basic tenets of the constitution, and, in the process, a great deal of valuable time and energy that could have been devoted to implementing economic reform was wasted. Second, the parliamentary elections in 1994 seated a sizable contingent of left-wing deputies opposed to most of Kuchma's reform program. The coalition of Communists, Socialists, and members of the Peasant Party initially accounted for about 35 percent of the parliamentary mandates. These two factors were closely intertwined. A clear delineation of power between the president and parliament would have served to facilitate implementation of reform, particularly if, as Kuchma wanted, the powers of the presidency were expanded and broadened. The parliamentary bloc of leftist parties obviously had no interest in promoting such an agenda, certainly not along the lines that were being suggested by Kuchma. Indeed, the program of the Communist Party of Ukraine, which continues to have the single largest contingent of deputies in parliament, goes so far as to call for the abolition of the institution of the presidency altogether. Moreover, Kuchma's vision of a powerful executive faced opposition to one degree or another from a broad range of political forces in parliament, including some reformers, whose natural instinct was to defend their corporate interests. The result was gridlock and a struggle for power between the two branches of government, a debilitating but by no means atypical phenomenon in most of the post-Soviet states.

The confrontation was prompted by Kuchma's proposed draft law on state power and local government, which he submitted to parliament at the end of 1994. The first phase of this conflict lasted six months and was resolved only after lengthy negotiations and a presidential threat of a nonbinding national referendum on confidence in both the president and parliament, which the

lawmakers were eager to avoid. In May–June 1995, a compromise was reached, and parliament passed a modified version of the so-called power law and shortly thereafter agreed to a Constitutional Accord that cleared the way for the power law to be implemented as an interim "small constitution" until the adoption of the fundamental law in one year's time.[29]

Two points bear emphasizing with regard to the Constitutional Accord. First, it was agreed to by parliament not because the majority of lawmakers was won over by the president or was suddenly overcome by a sense of civic duty. Rather, it was in their interest to avoid a referendum, even a nonbinding vote, given the mood of the electorate. In December 1994, slightly more than 64 percent of respondents in a nationwide survey registered disapproval of the parliament's work; only somewhat less than 12 percent approved; about a fourth had no answer. Conversely, at that time Kuchma enjoyed a surprisingly high approval rating, with more than 58 percent of respondents agreeing that he was making progress in acting on his electoral campaign promises and should be allowed more time to implement changes.[30] Moreover, in the spring of 1995, when the Constitutional Accord was near completion, Kuchma had solid popular backing for his position on delineation of power within government. Voters favored a strong executive over a strong parliament by a margin of three to one.[31] Second, the Constitutional Accord was only a stopgap measure, and the struggle over the new constitution among opposing political forces continued for another full year.

The second phase of the constitutional marathon began immediately and focused on the actual text of the document that had been drafted by a working group of the Constitutional Commission. In the process, the draft was subjected to numerous revisions by specially formed working groups, but it continued to face opposition from the left-wing parties in parliament. It was only in early June 1996 that the lawmakers finally managed to approve a version of the draft in its first reading that had been agreed on by a provisional committee of deputies representing the various parliamentary factions and groups. Final approval came on the morning of 28 June after an all-night session and, once again, under a presidential threat of a popular referendum. With the exception of one unaffiliated deputy, all of the votes against were cast by the Communists and Socialists.

Kuchma's problems with the parliament have not been limited to disagreement over how power should be distributed between the two main branches of government. No less important is the fact that the president has not been able to find a stable and reliable majority of supporters among the lawmakers. Rather than examining in detail the programs and policies of each of the more than one hundred political parties officially registered in Ukraine in the spring of 2000, [32] it might be more instructive to look at the distribution of political forces in parliament from 1996 to 1998 as reflected in the strength of parliamentary factions and groups and briefly summarize the political and

economic orientations of the major parties represented in the left–center–right political spectrum. For our purposes, what is important is the relative strength of, broadly speaking, pro-reform and anti-reform sentiment among the lawmakers during the past several years.

As table 6.7 illustrates, in the spring of 1996 a coalition of opposition left-wing political parties accounted for approximately one-third of the parliamentary seats; a slightly greater proportion of deputies was distributed within an amorphous center that largely represented regional, economic, and *no-menklatura* interests; while committed democrats and reformers held less than a quarter of the mandates.[33]

Left Coalition

The Communist Party of Ukraine, officially registered at the end of 1993 after having been banned following the failed 1991 coup, was the most successful political party in both the 1994 and 1998 parliamentary elections.[34] It is Ukraine's largest, with an estimated membership of 120,000. Its leader, Petro Symonenko, was defeated by Kuchma in the second round of the No-

Table 6.7 Parliamentary Groups and Factions (April 1996)

	Percentage of Deputies	*Number of Deputies*
Left	33.9	
Communists		88
Socialists		28
Peasant Party of Ukraine		25
Total		141
Center	38.2	
Unity		28
Center		28
Independents		26
Inter-Regional Deputies Group		26
Social–Market Choice		26
Agrarians for Reform		25
Total		159
National Democrats	21.4	
Reforms		31
Rukh		29
Statehood		29
Total		89

Source: Prezydiya Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy, "Spysok deputats'kykh fraktsii i hrup u Verkhovnii Radi Ukrainy: Za stanom na 05 kvitnya 1996 roku" (unpublished text). The percentages are calculated on the basis of the total number of deputies at the time (416), some of whom were unaffiliated.

vember 1999 presidential election but managed to gain nearly 38 percent of the vote. The Communists have also been the most steadfast in their opposition to Kuchma and, indeed, to the existing political system in Ukraine. Symptomatically, the majority of Communist deputies in the parliament refused to take the oath of allegiance as required by the new constitution.

The Communist Party of Ukraine considers itself to be the ideological heir to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and its program is wholly restorationist. It seeks to put an end to what it describes as the "capitalization of society" through restoration of the power of the soviets, state regulation of economic and social processes, socialization of the means of production, and a revamped union of socialist states. Ukraine's Communists have been in the forefront of an ongoing campaign to establish close political, economic, and security ties with Russia and fully integrate within the CIS. Overall, the Communist parliamentary faction has been quite stable, although there is a dividing line between orthodox members and adherents of "national communism," which was clearly demonstrated in their split vote on the new constitution.

The Socialists are moderate in their opposition. They favor a political system based on soviets, with the executive branch constituted by parliament and subordinated and responsible to it, a state-regulated but mixed economy that gives priority to state and collective forms of ownership and excludes private ownership of land except for Soviet-style personal plots, social guarantees for the population, and independent statehood with close ties to Russia as well as integration within the CIS. The moderation of the Socialists has been due in large part to the political views and prominence of their leader, Oleksandr Moroz, who was speaker of the parliament from 1994 to 1998. Moroz has been characterized as evolving along the lines of classical social democracy and was one of the leading candidates for president in 1999. It was primarily because of opposition to his moderate political views that a hard-line group of dissidents emerged within the Socialist Party of Ukraine at the end of 1995 and went on to form the ultraleft Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine led by Nataliya Vitrenko, Ukraine's so-called Iron Lady, who was initially viewed as the strongest contender for the presidency after Kuchma.

The Peasant Party of Ukraine is primarily a special interest group that brings together chairmen of local rural soviets and collective and state farm heads; it has been described as a rural version of the Socialist Party and numbers over one hundred thousand members. After the 1994 elections, the Peasant Party served as the core for the Agrarians of Ukraine parliamentary group, which, however, proved unable to maintain organizational unity. In the fall of 1995, almost half the parliamentary representation split off to form its own Agrarians for Reform group, leaving the remainder to reorganize itself as the parliamentary faction of the Peasant Party. A year later, another

reshuffle resulted in the reestablishment of a single Agrarians of Ukraine group.

In the spring of 1997, the Peasant Party and the Socialists joined forces in parliament, and the following year the two parties ran as a bloc in the parliamentary elections; but before the year was over the joint parliamentary faction split along party lines. The head of the Peasant Party, Oleksandr Tkachenko, was catapulted to national prominence when he was chosen speaker of the parliament after the 1998 elections. Tkachenko has been a vocal proponent of Ukraine's entry into a "Slavic Union" together with Russia and Belarus, and he, too, had presidential ambitions. In early 2000, however, Tkachenko was removed from the leadership of the parliament by a majority of center–right deputies and replaced by Plyushch, who had led the parliament from 1992 to 1994.

The fact that the left-wing forces in parliament have remained differentiated has served to preclude a united opposition against the reform process. Still, the left together with conservatives from the center have been in a position to obstruct reforms, but not strong enough to dictate their own terms. There were clear differences among the three left-wing parties that formed the left coalition throughout most of the 1994–99 period, which was clearly reflected in the inability of the Socialists and the Peasant Party to sustain organizational unity. Economic and social issues form the basis for cooperation, but questions of state and personality differences work against a united front. The Communists clearly stand out in the degree of their opposition across the board, while the Socialists have demonstrated that they can be more flexible.

Amorphous Center

The political center in Ukraine is the most difficult to define. In fact, a genuine center along classic European lines still remains a work in progress. Moreover, many "centrists" find the label convenient because it allows them entrée into politics and access to privileges and much else without having to reveal to voters that, beyond personal gain, they have few if any firm convictions.

Overall, the six groups in table 6.7 may be characterized as political moderates, but their interests were so varied as to preclude a common political platform. The defining characteristic of the political center has been its largely amorphous nature and the absence of unifying or overarching political or economic convictions. Not surprisingly, the centrist groups have often been organized not along party lines but rather as regional or interest group lobbies. The Social–Market Choice group, which was formed in early 1996, represented an interesting combination of regional and party interests to the extent that it was under the patronage of the Liberal Party of Ukraine, which

is based primarily in the Donetsk region in eastern Ukraine and is supported by influential local business interests. One of the largest centrist groups was Unity, which was made up almost exclusively of deputies from Kuchma's old power base in Dnipropetrovsk and represented the interests of local power structures and their allies from among the so-called *nomenklatura* capitalists. The Center, which was disbanded in the fall of 1996, initially brought together incumbent and former central government officials. The Inter-Regional Deputies Group traced its origins to the 1994 electoral bloc cochaired by Kuchma (Inter-Regional Bloc of Reforms), and the Independents were the most diverse in composition and their political views.

In early 1996, the center accounted for a sizable proportion of parliamentary votes, but it was fractured and unstable in the pursuit of diffuse, narrow, and often competing interests. Many centrist deputies either supported or opposed reform legislation depending upon concrete issues and how these fitted into their personal agendas. Clearly, a true political center holds the key to the transformation of the parliament into an agent of reform. There is a trend in this direction, and its development depends on the further political structuralization of Ukrainian society. But this has proven to be a slow and difficult process.

National Democrats

The national democrats have formed the backbone of support for political and economic reform, but they are more often than not in political opposition to Kuchma. With their main constituencies in the western and central parts of the country and in Kyiv, they favor market oriented reform, represent principled anticommunism, and are firmly committed to independent statehood. Rukh traces its origins to the perestroika-era opposition movement of the same name, and it was led for the past several years by the late Vyacheslav Chornovil, a prominent former political prisoner and human rights activists.

The core of the Statehood group was formed by the Ukrainian Republican Party and the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, which are considered to be more "nationalist" than Rukh, although the problem of clashing personalities and egos probably explains as much about the differences among the three parties as any other factor or issue. Indeed, the conflicting ambitions of the leaders of the main national democratic parties has been a major stumbling block preventing the formation of a solid coalition backing the reform process and was probably the major factor in the poor showing of the national democrats in the 1998 parliamentary elections. Indeed, shortly before Chornovil's untimely death in the spring of 1999, Rukh split into two competing political parties, with the obvious consequences for its parliamentary faction. The Reforms group was the most variegated in its regional composition and

gave precedence to an agenda of political and economic reform over "nationalist" concerns.

An important development in the fall of 1996 was the formation of the Constitutional Center parliamentary group, which ranked second only to the Communists in numbers (see table 6.8). Drawing heavily on the Center and Statehood deputies and thereby resulting in their dissolution, the Constitutional Center was the product of a long awaited drawing together of reform-minded liberals and national democrats facilitated by the lengthy negotiations that ultimately led to the adoption of the constitution. Its leader was Mykhailo Syrota, who played a key role in guiding the draft constitution through the parliament as head of a specially formed parliamentary conciliatory commission.

The driving force behind the Constitutional Center was the People's Democratic Party formed in early 1996. The fact that Kuchma chose one of the party's leaders to head his administration quickly prompted commentators to characterize the party and its representatives in parliament as the emerging "party of power" that would serve as the foundation for Kuchma's reelection bid. Another key figure in the party is Valerii Pustovoitenko, the prime minister from mid-1997 through 1999. The Constitutional Center saw itself as the nucleus around which the "situational majority" that adopted the

Table 6.8 Parliamentary Groups and Factions (February 1997)

	Percentage of Deputies	*Number of Deputies*
Left	35.9	
Communists		86
Socialists		25
Agrarians of Ukraine		38
Total		149
Center	41.2	
Constitutional Center		56
Unity		37
Inter-Regional Deputies Group		28
Social–Market Choice		25
Independents		25
Total		171
National Democrats	13.5	
Reforms		29
Rukh		27
Total		56

Source: Prezydiya Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy, "Spysok deputats'kykh fraktsii i hrup u Verkhovnii Radi Ukrainy: Za stanom na 01 lyutoho 1997 roku" (unpublished text). The total number of deputies was 415, some of whom were unaffiliated.

constitution could eventually be transformed into a stable parliamentary majority to back Kuchma's reform program.

The realignments and shifts within parliament as it was nearing the end of its term (1994–98) witnessed the increasing strength of the center and, more important, the coalescence of a liberal democratic nucleus determined to promote the reform process, but it did not dramatically change the distribution of political forces in parliament (see table 6.8).

None of the parliamentary blocs had the votes to push through its agenda, but each was capable of blocking its opponents. A clear example was the failure of the left-wing parties to bring the question of Ukraine's membership in the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly to a vote. This issue was placed on the agenda once again after the 1998 elections, with the left coalition blocking passage of legislation and ratification of dozens of agreements and treaties unless the national democrats and their allies in the center agreed to put the question on the parliamentary agenda. The result was that Ukraine's lawmakers finally agreed in March 1999 to join the body. For the most part, the gridlock that has characterized the Ukrainian parliament since independence has not prevented agreement on such major national issues and initiatives as Kuchma's economic reform program of 1994, ratification of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Crimean separatism, and the Constitutional Accord and the constitution. An important factor was the relative degree of popular support for Kuchma, but that support has dropped dramatically since 1995.

The parliamentary elections in the spring of 1998 also did not substantially alter the balance of political power in parliament (see table 6.9). Although the Communists increased their numbers, their victory came at the expense of the Socialists and the Peasant Party, which ran as an electoral bloc and lost about half of their representation. Overall, the left coalition still accounted for just under 40 percent of the mandates, enough to continue its obstructionist role but short of the majority required to actually set the tone in the new parliament. The Progressive Socialists, however, although on the ideological left, reject both the Communists and Socialists as traitors to the cause.

The center, once again, is a curious amalgam. The Hromada Party emerged from obscurity in 1997 when it was taken over by Pavlo Lazarenko, who was sacked from the post of prime minister in the summer of that year, and his business associate Yuliya Tymoshenko, former head of the powerful United Energy Systems company. During the electoral campaign, Hromada essentially promised all things to all people, but it is an open secret that the party, which draws its strength from Lazarenko's base in Dnipropetrovsk, is primarily an anti-Kuchma creation of the former prime minister. Lazarenko's parliamentary immunity has now been lifted, and he faces prosecution for misappropriating state funds to the tune of more than $2 million. The Green Party, which enjoyed mass support during the perestroika period but showed

Table 6.9 Parliamentary Groups and Factions (September 1998)

	Percentage of Deputies	*Number of Deputies*
Left	38.0	
Communists		120
Socialists and Peasant Party		33
Progressive Socialists		14
Total		167
Center	46.8	
People's Democratic Party		86
Hromada		45
Independents		26
Social Democrats (United)		25
Greens		24
Total		206
National Democrats	10.7	
Rukh		47
Total		47

Source: Prezydiya Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy, "Spysok deputats'kykh fraktsii i hrup u Verkhovnii Radi Ukrainy: Za stanom na 01 veresnya 1998 roku" (unpublished text). The total number of deputies was 440, some of whom were unaffiliated.

few signs of life thereafter, scored a surprising success in 1998. According to some observers, it was simply bought by business and banking interests who needed a noncontroversial forum to serve as a vehicle for promoting their interests, which clearly have little in common with ecology. Rukh increased its representation in the parliament, but, like the Communists, at the expense of its natural allies in the national democratic camp.

In the short space of two years following the 1998 elections, a number of parliamentary groups and factions fell apart and new ones were formed. The Progressive Socialists were disbanded for lack of numbers. The same fate befell the Peasant Party, Hromada, and the Independents. In the meantime, several center–right groups emerged, including Rebirth of Regions, Fatherland, Labor Ukraine, Solidarity, and Reforms-Congress. Rukh's deputies split into two factions. There is little to be gained by tracing the rise and decline of these groups. Much more instructive are the results of a poll taken in the spring of 2000 that gauged voter preference. According to the results, the left—consisting of the Communists, Socialists, and the Progressive Socialists—could expect 31 percent of the vote, with the bulk of the left vote (22.5 percent) going to the Communists. The right, including the national democrats, could count on 17 percent. Supporters of the center accounted for another 16 percent. And 35 percent were undecided.[35]

The shifts and realignments since the 1998 elections show that the left has

clearly lost ground and that the center–right is a force to be reckoned with. In December 1999, Pustovoitenko failed to gain parliament's approval as prime minister. Instead, the leaders of ten center and right parliamentary groups proposed the candidacy of Viktor Yushchenko, the head of the National Bank, who easily won the backing of a solid majority of lawmakers. Yushchenko is considered to be Ukraine's leading proponent of economic reform. Perhaps the clearest expression of the trends underway in parliament was the announcement the following month by about 240 center and right deputies (226 constitute a majority) of the formation of a parliamentary majority. The group declared its support for statehood and social and economic reform, vowed to work constructively with the president and the government, and succeeded in unseating Tkachenko and his Communist first deputy from the leadership of parliament.

The 35 percent of undecided voters cited earlier may be taken as a good indication of the degree of antipathy in Ukraine toward virtually all state institutions (except the military) and the political process as a whole. A poll conducted at the end of 1995 and in early 1996 revealed that solid majorities lacked confidence in the parliament (70 percent), local government (69 percent), the national government (61 percent), and the judicial system (59 percent).[36] Except for 1998, complete distrust in the parliament has grown in every year since 1994. In 1998, the proportion of respondents who distrusted their elected representatives to one degree or another was 65 percent; only 7.3 percent trusted the lawmakers (see table 6.10).

Political parties fared slightly better, with almost 62 percent saying they distrusted them; but only 3.2 percent expressed any degree of trust. The government (cabinet of ministers) rated as poorly as the parliament and the political parties.[37] Kuchma, as mentioned earlier, initially enjoyed relatively high popularity ratings, particularly in a country that was dissatisfied with most everything that had to do with government and politics. In a poll conducted in December 1994, 44.4 percent approved of his job performance, and 28.2 percent disapproved. Moreover, in the short space of six months, the strength of his support shifted from the east to western and central Ukraine.[38] Another poll, taken at about the same time, showed that 52 percent had confidence in Kuchma; 38 percent did not. These figures remained substantially unchanged

Table 6.10 How Much Trust Do You Have in the Parliament? (in percentages)

	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*
Distrust	51.2	60.6	62.0	64.3	65.0
Trust	9.7	9.5	8.7	6.9	7.3
Difficult to say	35.2	29.2	29.3	28.3	26.8

Source: Ukrainian Society 1994–1998, 8.

Table 6.11 How Much Trust Do You Have in the President? (in percentages)

	1995	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*
Distrust	37.0	45.9	50.3	60.8
Trust	33.3	23.4	17.6	9.7
Difficult to say	29.0	30.7	31.9	28.7

Source: Ukrainian Society 1994–1998, 8.

in a survey conducted at the end of 1995 and in early 1996.[39] Since then, however, Kuchma's ratings began a downward slide, reaching their lowest levels in 1998 (see table 6.11).

Looking at another poll taken in November 1998,which revealed that 67 percent of respondents did not have confidence in the president (15 percent said that they did), one commentator ventured to question whether the legally elected representatives of state and government in Ukraine actually have "real legitimacy" in the eyes of the population.[40]

This is a rather interesting question. One answer, of course, is that, however much voters in Ukraine dislike their elected representatives, they have consistently gone to the polls to freely express their likes and dislikes, thereby legitimizing their choices.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 1999: A TURNING POINT?

In November 1999, Kuchma was reelected to a second five-year term, defeating Communist Party leader Symonenko by a margin of almost 20 percentage points in the second-round runoff. The incumbent president, whose popularity rating on the eve of the elections did not rise above 10 percent, essentially ran on a platform that stressed the achievements of his admittedly lackluster previous term and promised effective government, a "socially responsible" state, economic reform, and, once again, a "pro-Ukrainian" foreign policy.[41] There was no going back, he insisted, maintaining that a change of leadership at this juncture would be the ruin of the country. In an interview several days before the final round, Kuchma reaffirmed the "European choice," arguing that

> Ukraine's strategic choice is predetermined by its geopolitical situation and historical and cultural traditions. And they very clearly identify our state with Europe. The direction of our foreign policy is integration with European structures.[42]

In an unusually forthright manner, he rejected the idea of a union of Slavic states, dismissing it as "nothing other than a political trick."

In the first round, voters were presented with a list of thirteen candidates, several of whom pledged to take Ukraine "back to the future" through one or another combination of reinstating "socialism" or "communism," re-creating some form of the Soviet Union, and bringing Ukraine into a Slavic union with Russia and Belarus. Kuchma won the largest number of votes (36.5 percent), followed by Symonenko (22.2 percent), Moroz (11.2 percent), Vitrenko (11 percent), and former prime minister Yevhen Marchuk (8.1 percent), which set the scenario for the Kuchma–Symonenko runoff. The fact that the combined vote for the left was nearly 45 percent was seen in some quarters as an ominous sign.

On the eve of the runoff, Kuchma replaced Horbulin with Marchuk as secretary of the National Security and Defense Council, a move reminiscent of Yeltsin's appointment of Lebed as head of the Security Council during the 1996 Russian presidential race. And, like Yeltsin, Kuchma stressed the evils of communism and was returned to office by 56.3 percent of the vote. Ironically, Symonenko was in a role somewhat analogous to that which Kuchma had assumed when he successfully challenged Kravchuk in the 1994 elections. The Communist Party leader advocated "Soviet rule—the rule of the toilers," a "Union of sovereign states of fraternal peoples," the "dynamic development of relations with Russia and Belarus," and added an unequivocally anti-Western and anti-NATO plank to his platform as well.[43] He won 37.8 percent of the vote. International observers were not entirely happy with the violations of international norms during the campaign and the elections, particularly the pro-Kuchma bias of much of the media, but the results were judged to be legitimate and valid.[44]

The Economist may well have been on the mark when it described Kuchma's reelection as "Ukraine's dismal choice."[45] Indeed, the voters were dissatisfied with their options, and 3.5 percent availed themselves of the opportunity to reject both candidates. Nonetheless, two aspects of the election results may suffice to characterize the outcome in terms of a turning point for the country in consolidating the nation and the state. First, the electorate voted not for Kuchma but against Symonenko—this in spite of the ongoing economic difficulties and irrespective of the fact that the unambiguously pro-Western course of the previous five years lacks solid public support. Detailed analyses and survey research will very likely provide valuable insights of voting behavior. But the big picture is already fairly clear. Ukraine's voters rejected "communism," a reinvented Soviet Union, Slavic unity—and "Russia." For some, this was primarily a calculated *political* choice. These voters may be antimarket to one degree or another, preferring instead the economic and social security of what used to be the "Soviet way of life." They may not be enthralled by the idea of NATO, either. Nonetheless, this particular category of the electorate disregarded the Communist Party's promises about "popular rule" and "social justice" and, one suspects, focused on the Communist political

agenda. And for them, that agenda is linked to Moscow. Whether or to what degree Ukraine's Communists should be held responsible for the plans of their Russian colleagues for a "great Russia" is another matter.

Symonenko appears to have belatedly realized that the "Russian connection" was not the winning formula. In the midst of the elections, he made it clear that while he personally favored a union with Russia and Belarus, the people themselves would need to be consulted in a referendum. He also insisted that, whatever happened, Ukraine would nonetheless remain independent and democratic and, moreover, that he was a patriot. Not convincing for the politically motivated segment of the electorate.

A second and almost certainly a much larger category of voters also equated the Communists with Russia and rejected both. Their motivation was also political, but in a different sense. It is perhaps best described by Yuliya, who told a journalist, "You just have to look at what's happening in Russia. Thank goodness he [Kuchma] hasn't dragged us into that."[46] What she probably had in mind was the exploding apartment buildings in Moscow and elsewhere and the second invasion of Chechnya. But these were just the latest episodes in a not altogether appealing story that began to unfold in Russia beginning in 1991. The earlier installments include the botched August coup attempt, the shelling of the Russian White House, Zhirinovsky, the first Chechnya war, and so on. Today, virtually no one in Ukraine sees Russia as either an economic or a political model.[47] A Ukrainian sociologist put it differently and more bluntly:

> The strengthening of statist attitudes in Ukraine, it should be noted, is facilitated by the internal policies of Russia. With every subsequent war in Russia, the level of national self-identification of Ukrainians grew. That is what is happening today, with this war in Chechnya.[48]

Ukraine's Communists were the "beneficiaries" of these processes.

The second interesting aspect of the presidential vote is that the "great divide" between eastern and western Ukraine—specifically insofar as a link between voting behavior and ethnicity or linguistic preference is concerned—failed to materialize as in 1994. Clearly, the western regions voted in overwhelming numbers for Kuchma. But this was not surprising. Western Ukrainians have demonstrated before that they have little use for Communists and Russia. Much more significant is what the elections revealed in the heavily Russian and predominantly Russian-speaking east and south. The Donbas region was split. Donetsk Oblast gave Kuchma a slight majority, while neighboring Luhansk Oblast gave Symonenko an equally slight majority. No less important is the fact that in both oblasts the electorate essentially divided its vote between the two candidates. To a greater or lesser degree, the

same thing happened in all of the other regions where the Russian language prevails. Kuchma won majorities in the eastern Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, where he forged his career, and in the southern Odesa Oblast. Symonenko, however, gained his largest majorities in the central Vinnytsya, Poltava, and Chernihiv Oblasts, which are hardly the bastions of Russian speakers. Crimea fit the pattern of other Russian-speaking regions. The Crimeans, who have the well-founded reputation of being "anti-Ukrainian" and "pro-Russian," gave Symonenko slightly more than 51 percent of their votes and Kuchma about 44 percent—not entirely bad for someone who abolished the presidency in Crimea, nullified its constitution, subordinated the regional government to Kyiv, and, according to some quarters in Moscow, is implementing a policy of ethnocide against ethnic Russians and Russian speakers. And what was probably quite a surprise for many observers, Sevastopol, the "hero city of Russian glory," chose Kuchma over Symonenko by a margin of about 6 percentage points.

In mid-1999, *Izvestia* noted that a certain "regularity" can be observed in Ukraine's presidential elections.[49] In each case, the winning candidate moved from left to right. Kravchuk transformed himself from the ideological secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine to a "Ukrainian nationalist." Kuchma started out as the Communist Party secretary of the Soviet Union's largest missile factory, which he ran for almost a decade, was elected in 1994 with the support of the country's "Red Directors," and thereafter began holding discussions with the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and NATO. Perhaps one might suggest that Ukraine's presidents and its citizens are building a nation and a state.

NOTES

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3. For a full exposition of this view, see Alexander J. Motyl, *Dilemmas of Independence: Ukraine after Totalitarianism* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993).

4. "Nova arkhitektura bezpeky v Yevropi nemozhlyva bez Ukrainy: Vystup Prezydenta Ukrainy L. D. Kuchmy na Asamblei ZYeS 4 chervnya 1996 roku," *Polityka i chas* 7 (1996): 4.

5. Quoted in *Nezavisimost'*, 29 March 1995.

6. Guy Standing and László Zsoldos, "Worker Insecurities in Ukrainian Industry: The 1999 ULFS," SES Papers (Geneva: International Labour Office, April 2000), 1.

7. *Financial Times*, 27 November 1998.

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12. *Den'*, 22 December 1998.

13. *Den'*, 16 January 1998.

14. Department of State, Office of Research, "Ukrainians Discouraged by the High Cost of Economic, Political Transition," *Opinion Analysis*, M-203–99 (17 November 1999): 1.

15. *Demokratychna Ukraina*, 28 December 1995.

16. *Den'*, 16 July 1998 and 3 August 1999.

17. *Den'*, 2 December 1997.

18. *Den'*, 27 August 1998.

19. *Den'*, 26 June 1997.

20. Aleksei Chernysh, "Ukraina i problema separatizma," *Svobodnaya mysl'* 5 (1997): 62.

21. *Den'*, 16 July 1998.

22. *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 9 February 1999.

23. U.S. Information Agency, Office of Research and Media Reaction, "Russians and Ukrainians Regret Demise of the USSR, Lose Confidence in NATO," *Opinion Analysis*, M-28–98 (24 February 1998): 2.

24. *Opinion Analysis*, M-172–99: 2.

25. *Natsional'na bezpeka Ukrainy*, 32.

26. *Ukrainian Society 1994–1998*, 4.

27. *Uryadovyi kur'yer*, 16 October 1992.

28. For an analysis of this painful process and its antecedents, see Kataryna Wolczuk, "The Politics of Constitution Making in Ukraine," in *Contemporary Ukraine: Dynamics of Post-Soviet Transformation*, ed. Taras Kuzio (Armonk, N.Y.: Sharpe, 1998), 118–38, and the contributions by Valerii Zaitsev, "Konflikty mizh hilkamy vlady v protsesi ikh stanovlennya (1991–1996)," and Serhii Tolstov, "Konstytutsiinyi protses v istorychnii perspektyvi," in *Stanovlennya vladnykh struktur v Ukraini (1991–1996)*, ed. O. Haran', V. Kulyk, and O. Maiboroda (Kyiv: Tsentr politychnoho analizu hazety "Den'," 1997), 17–29 and 66–88, respectively.

29. For the text, see the collection of documents and materials compiled by S. Holovatyi and L. Yuz'kov, *Konstytutsiya nezalezhnoi Ukrainy: Dokumenty, komentari, statti*, vol. 1 (Kyiv: Ukrains'ka Pravnycha Fundatsiya, 1995), 321–43.

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32. The literature on political parties in Ukraine is considerable. See, among others, O. V. Haran', comp., *Ukraina bahatopartiina: Prohramni dokumenty novykh partii* (Kyiv: MP "Pam'yatky Ukrainy," 1991); Peter J. Potichnyj, "The Multi-Party System in Ukraine," *Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien* 3 (1992); Andrew Wilson and Artur Bilous, "Political Parties in Ukraine," *Europe–Asia Studies* 45, no. 4 (1993): 693–703; Peter J. Potichnyj, "Formation of Political Parties in Ukraine," *Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien* 1 (1994); Vasyl' Yablons'kyi, *Suchasni politychni partii Ukrainy: Dovidnyk* (Kyiv: "Leksykon," 1996); Sarah Birch, "Party System Formation and Voting in the Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections of 1994," in *Contemporary Ukraine*, ed. Kuzio, 139–60; and Mykola Tomenko and Oleh Protsenko, comps., *Pravo vyboru: Politychni partii ta vyborchi bloky* (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo "Zapovit," 1998).

33. The names of the parliamentary groups and factions and their numbers are in a state of flux because of frequent realignments and the emergence of new groupings. Nonetheless, the basic division into left, center, and national democratic coalitions remains largely valid.

34. For a detailed analysis, see Andrew Wilson, "The Ukrainian Left: In Transition to Social Democracy or Still in Thrall to the USSR?" *Europe–Asia Studies* 49, no. 7 (November 1997): 1293–316.

35. *Den'*, 27 April 2000.

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38. *IFES National Survey of the Ukrainian Electorate*, 11.

39. *Opinion Analysis*, M-78–96: 1–2.

40. *Den'*, 16 December 1998.

41. Kuchma's electoral program was published in *Uryadovyi kur'yer*, 22 September 1999.

42. Yanina Sokolovskaya's interview with Kuchma in *Izvestia* (Moscow ed.), 10 November 1999.

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44. For a very thorough analysis of various aspects of the election, see Volodymyr Ruban, ed., *Naperedodni: Vybory '99* (Kyiv: Fond "Ukrains'kyi vymir," [2000]).

45. "Leonid Kuchma, Ukraine's Dismal Choice," *The Economist*, 20 November 1999, 64.

46. Reuters, 12 November 1999.

47. According to a nationwide poll conducted in June 1999, 2 percent of respondents chose Russia as an economic model and 1 percent as a political model. See Ferguson, *Public Opinion in Ukraine 1999*, A-18.

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49. *Izvestia* (Moscow ed.), 17 June 1999.

7

Regions and Nations

> We felt for a long time that national consciousness was dictated by language, but we have realized this is not so.
>
> —Mykhailo Horyn, chairman of the secretariat of Rukh, *Christian Science Monitor*, 2 October 1990

> I am not the president of some region, but of the entire country.
>
> —President Leonid Kuchma, *Der Spiegel*, 25 July 1994

> The people of Russia are seriously concerned about the situation with regard to observing the rights of that part of the population of Ukraine for whom Russian is their native language. The deputies of the State Duma are aware of more than just isolated facts of restrictions of these rights.
>
> —Statement of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, 25 December 1998

Writing in the *New York Times* in early 1999, Serge Schmemann raised some interesting and provocative questions about the validity of certain widely held convictions about nationalism, ethnic strife, and regionalism, particularly in the context of the trend toward globalism and transnationalism after the demise of the bipolar world. The newly emergent common wisdom that ancient ethnic ambitions and hatreds ostensibly released by the lifting of authoritarian and Cold War strictures potentially make for a more complex and dangerous world than the familiar bipolar East and West, he suggested, may need to be rethought. "Could it be," asked Schmemann, "that this supposedly new nationalism is neither so new, so surprising, nor so uniformly dangerous?"[1] The question is particularly valid for Ukraine, where, as the author pointed out, the ethnic violence that was widely anticipated—and it might be added, not only by President Bush, intelligence experts in Washington, and academics and journalists but also by Gorbachev and some of his opponents in Yeltsin's camp—failed to materialize.[2] For the most part, serious students of post-

Soviet Ukraine have now concluded that regions, ethnicity, and language in Ukraine matter, that these factors will continue to impact on Ukraine's domestic and foreign policies, but that Ukraine is not very likely to fall apart because of regional problems or interethnic strife and that Russian peacekeepers will not be required to rescue ethnic Russians and Russian speakers in Kyiv or, for that matter, in Lviv from enraged anti-Russian Ukrainian mobs.

REGIONS AND IDENTITIES

Ukraine may not be in danger of fragmentation, but its overlapping regional, ethnic, and linguistic fault lines constitute one of the most serious obstacles to state building and nation building and, by extension, to the country's stability and security. The possibility of "separatist tendencies in individual regions and among certain political forces" as well as "socio-political confrontation" among regions figure in the list of basic threats to national security enumerated in Ukraine's "National Security Concept" that was adopted in January 1997.[3] The regional divide, primarily between the eastern and western regions, is a legacy of the country's historical development, and, as a product of history, its effects on a wide range of domestic issues and foreign policy choices is likely to be felt for quite some time.

However, the notion that the east is solidly and uniformly the opposite of the west on key issues such as independence is flawed. In fact, the first flaw is the east–west paradigm itself, which, although convenient, grossly oversimplifies Ukraine's rather more complex regional structure and, as a consequence, the differences and variations as one moves from east to west. It would be more correct, for example, to divide the "east" into historically distinct eastern and southern geographic regions. Crimea is often discussed in the context of the "east," although its history, ethnic composition, and the circumstances under which it became part of Ukraine require that it be treated separately. There is a central region that is neither "east" nor "west," and the city of Kyiv has its own characteristics. The "west" is also not nearly as homogeneous as it is usually portrayed. Still, one can make some broad and unscientific observations about the contrasts between "east" and "west."

Ukraine's urban and industrial east has a high concentration of the country's 11.4 million ethnic Russians (22.1 percent of the total population) and is predominantly Russian speaking. Almost 70 percent of the Russian population lives in the five oblasts of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, and Zaporizhzhya and in Crimea. In the broadest of terms, the east displays a weak commitment to Ukrainian statehood and favors close ties to Russia and the CIS. On social and economic issues, the east is generally more supportive of the social and economic features of "communism" or "sovietism." The west is primarily Ukrainian and Ukrainian speaking, strongly committed

to independence, suspicious of Russia and wary of the CIS, and more favorably disposed to Western models of political and economic development.

The first indications of an emerging regional agenda in the east were already evident in the late perestroika period.[4] In addition to social and economic problems specific to areas such as the Donbas (the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts), which is the center of Ukraine's ailing coal industry, issues such as the status of the Russian language, local autonomy, and the related question of whether the country should be organized along federal or unitary lines increasingly became the focus of political discourse. What pushed the buttons in the east were the adoption of the law on languages in the fall of 1989, which made Ukrainian the sole state language in the Ukrainian SSR; the emergence and growing popularity of Rukh in 1989–90, which was perceived uniformly in the east as a "nationalist" organization dominated by Western Ukrainian "separatists"; the declaration on state sovereignty adopted in the summer of 1990; and, of course, the independence declaration the following year.

In the Donbas, there was some speculative discussion about reviving the short-lived Donetsk-Krivoi Rog Republic established by the Bolsheviks in early 1918. Another variation on this theme was the idea of a Donetsk-Dnieper or Dnieper autonomous region. In Odesa, a movement briefly got under way that advocated a "special state status" for southern Ukraine within the boundaries of the czarist-era administrative region of Novorossiya. In the latter half of 1990, small but vocal groups were formed such as the Donbas Intermovement, the Democratic Movement of Donbas, the Movement for the Rebirth of Donbas, and the Democratic Union of Novorossiya, which cast themselves in the role of defenders of regional interests. This manifested itself not only in support for local autonomy, so-called free economic zones, and a federal state structure but also through demands that Ukraine adhere to the new Union treaty and, after August 1991, by criticism of independence, "separatism," and "nationalist extremism" in Kyiv. The pro-center and "internationalist" orientation of these groups and movements gave rise to accusations from the national democratic opposition that they were being promoted and financed from Moscow through the Communist Party.

A regionalism of sorts also briefly surfaced in Western Ukraine in early 1991, when the Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Ternopil Oblast councils met in joint session as the Galician Assembly and resolved to coordinate their political and economic activities. This initiative, however, had no regional autonomist underpinnings. On the contrary, it passed a resolution on the unity of all Ukrainian territories and decided to hold a local referendum in March (together with the all-Union and Ukrainian referendums on a "renewed federation") that directly addressed the question of Ukraine's independence.

The elected organs of local government initially steered clear of overtly political demands on Kyiv. The Donetsk Oblast council, for example, ad-

dressed an appeal to the national parliament in October 1991 requesting that it consider introducing a provision into the new constitution that would allow for a federal structure patterned on the German model. It emphasized, however, that the proposal was aimed at guaranteeing maximum support for independence at the forthcoming referendum and with the aim of precluding the formation of "new autonomous republics."[5] The results of the December 1991 referendum in the east showed unexpectedly strong support for independence: in the Donbas oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk, more than 83 percent voted in favor; in Zaporizhzhya and Dnipropetrovsk, more than 90 percent; in Odesa, more than 85 percent; and even Crimea registered a majority of 54 percent. This is not to suggest, of course, that certain high-profile issues that distinguish the east—which some scholars collectively refer to as the "Russian factor"—were no longer on the agenda.[6] On the contrary, not long after independence these very issues, particularly the status of the Russian language, were once again on the table with renewed vigor.

In the fall of 1992, a number of groups and political parties in the Donetsk region appealed to the local council to hold a referendum on granting Russian the status of a second state language in the region. At the same time, the parliament in Kyiv was picketed by miners and metallurgical workers from the east, who added federalization and the language issue to their economic demands. The major strike movement in June 1993, which began with the walkout of Donbas miners and was sparked by sharp price increases, very quickly assumed a distinct political character that focused on two main demands—regional economic autonomy and a nationwide referendum on confidence in the president, parliament, and all local councils—and ultimately forced early parliamentary and presidential elections in the spring and summer of 1994.[7]

Not surprisingly, miners in Western Ukraine, while supporting the economic demands of their eastern compatriots, did not join the strike and were opposed to most of the political demands that were being put forward. The Donetsk Oblast council supported the striking workers and passed a resolution in favor of local autonomy that, among other things, provided for the implementation of its own language policy. Shortly thereafter, it voted to hold a local consultative referendum on whether state status for the Russian language should be incorporated into the draft constitution and appropriate changes made to the national law on languages.[8] The vote was not held because the initial decision to conduct a nationwide referendum on confidence in the president and parliament was subsequently circumvented by the agreement on early elections. But in the course of the preparations for the parliamentary elections in early 1994, the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblast councils decided to hold their own consultative referendums on the status of the Russian language, on both the national and regional levels; federalization; and Ukraine's adherence to the CIS Charter and participation in the CIS Inter-

Parliamentary Assembly and the CIS Economic Union. The vote was overwhelmingly in favor across the board in both regions.[9]

The results of the parliamentary election and especially the presidential vote in 1994 highlighted the differences between east and west. The Communist Party and the left-wing parties as a whole were given an overwhelming mandate by voters in the east but fared poorly in the west; conversely, the national democrats dominated in the west but were soundly rebuffed in the east. In the presidential election, which followed soon thereafter, almost three-fourths of the eastern vote went to the "pro-Russian" Kuchma, while more than 70 percent of the west voted for the "pro-Ukrainian" Kravchuk.

Given the language structure of the east and west (according to survey data conducted from 1991 to 1994, slightly more than 81 percent of easterners use Russian as their "language of convenience," and 77 percent of westerners prefer Ukrainian), the territorial polarization largely overlapped with the linguistic polarization.[10] Polls that were taken in 1994 confirmed the obvious: Russian speakers identified with the "Russian factor"—that is, in the broadest of terms, they supported official status for the Russian language and were favorably disposed toward Russia, the CIS, and integration—which set them apart from the Ukrainian speakers. At the same time, the data revealed that Russian speakers differed amongst themselves on certain aspects of the "Russian factor" depending on their ethnicity—the ethnic Ukrainian Russian speakers, while sharing the same positive attitude toward the Russian language as ethnic Russians (virtually all of whom are Russian speakers), were more favorably inclined toward a "pro-independence" orientation than the ethnic Russians.[11]

A similar pattern of gradation and differentiation was registered by a 1997 poll that categorized respondents as Ukrainians, Russians, and "Ukrainorusians" (*ukrainorusy*) based on their self-identification, with the latter claiming to be both Ukrainian and Russian to one degree or another. Interestingly, the study also concluded that the issues that distinguish these groups—what has been referred to as the "Russian factor"—are not so much "Russian" as they are "Soviet."[12]

These points raise the all-important question of what really is at issue in the east-west paradigm. Is it language, ethnicity, politics, economics, "region" as a specific factor unto itself, or some combination thereof? Whatever the case may be, it is fairly clear that regionalism and, in particular, ethnicity and language, although important, do not amount to the "great divide" that some had detected. It is even more clear that these factors have been grossly overrated insofar as their potential for constituting a threat to the state and society. Indeed, it has been argued that the "great divide" is not so much a motive force as a complicating factor in Ukraine's problems and that it is a myth insofar as ethnicity is concerned.[13]

Although not a revelation by any means, it is important to note that regional differences and attitudes toward the "Russian/Soviet factor" are much

Table 7.1 In What Direction Would You Like to See Ukraine Develop? (May 1994) (in percentages)

	East	*West*	*Total Ukraine*
Mainly broaden ties within the CIS	48.4	17.1	40.7
Mainly develop relations with Russia	19.0	11.5	17.5
Mainly rely on our own resources to strengthen independence	9.2	24.3	13.2
Mainly establish ties with Western countries	8.8	29.0	13.4

Source: Adapted from Yevhen Holovakha and Nataliya Panina, "Hromads'ka dumka v rehionakh Ukrainy: Rezul'taty zahal'nonatsional'noho opytuvannya," *Politychnyi portret Ukrainy* 11 (1995), 11.

more complex and nuanced than they have often been portrayed. A look at the regional results of a poll conducted in mid-1994, beginning with the question of the preferred direction of Ukraine's foreign policy orientation, is instructive in this regard (see table 7.1).[14]

It turns out that developing relations primarily with Russia was not especially popular in either the east or west. On the national level, support for this option has dropped significantly from a high of 17.5 percent in 1994 to lows of 4.5 and 5.0 percent in 1997 and 1998, respectively (see table 6.6). On the other hand, almost half of the respondents in the east wanted greater ties with the CIS, whereas in the west more than half opted for either an independent approach or ties with the West. Potentially the most troubling feature of Ukraine's regionalism is the tenuous nature of the east's commitment to independent statehood. The results from the same survey, but grouped into a different combination of eastern and southern regions,[15] recorded how respondents thought they had voted in the 1991 referendum on independence and how they would vote in mid-1994 (see table 7.2).

Table 7.2 Attitudes toward Independence: East and South (in percentages)

	1991	*1994*
Voted (would vote) for independence	41	24
Voted (would vote) against independence	17	47
Did not (would not) vote	29	12
Do not remember	12	—
Difficult to say	—	17

Source: Adapted from Iryna Bekeshkina, I'lko Kucheriv, and Viktor Nebozhenko, *Preskonferentsiya "Politychnyi portret Ukrainy" prysvyachena pidsumkamy opytuvannya hromads'koi dumky u travni-chervni 1994 roku* (Kyiv: Sotsiolohichna sluzhba tsentru "Demokratychni initsiatyvy," 1994), 2–3.

Table 7.3 Attitudes toward Independence: East and South Subregions (in percentages)

	Northeast	*East*	*Donbas*	*South*	*Crimea*	*Total*
Would vote for independence	34	36	16	27	6	24
Would vote against independence	30	36	63	36	55	47
Would not vote	17	9	7	14	21	12
Difficult to say	18	19	13	23	18	17

Source: Adapted from Viktor Nebozhenko and Iryna Bekeshkina, "Politychnyi portret Ukrainy (Skhid, pivden')," *Politychnyi portret Ukrainy* 9 (1994): 44.

The data showed that in the space of two and a half years, a very substantial decline occurred in the proportion of easterners and southerners supporting independent statehood, dropping from 41 to 24 percent. However, if the east and south are broken down into subregions, what one sees is a fair amount of diversity among the northeast (Kharkiv Oblast), east (Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhya Oblasts), Donbas (Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts), south (Mykolaiv, Odesa, and Kherson Oblasts), and Crimea (see table 7.3).

In the northeast and east, support for and against independence was about even, whereas the Donbas and Crimea registered clear majorities against. The results that this survey yielded with regard to something called "state self-identification" were particularly interesting (see table 7.4).

Respondents were asked to identify a category of the population to which they thought that they belonged. In spite of the dominant anti-independence attitude (47 percent), most respondents (34 percent) identified with Ukraine, followed by the former Soviet Union (27 percent). The smallest proportions identified with Russia (3 percent) and the CIS (7 percent). Local or regional identification (23 percent) was also significant. It would appear, therefore,

Table 7.4 State Self-Identification: East and South Subregions (in percentages)

	Northeast	*East*	*Donbas*	*South*	*Crimea*	*Total*
Ukraine	35	55	23	48	3	34
CIS	10	5	9	5	4	7
Former Soviet Union	21	17	34	23	37	27
Russia	2	1	2	0	14	3
Own region	26	17	25	16	40	23
Europe	1	2	1	2	1	1
Difficult to say	5	3	6	7	2	5

Source: Adapted from Viktor Nebozhenko and Iryna Bekeshkina, "Politychnyi portret Ukrainy (Skhid, pivden')," *Politychnyi portret Ukrainy* 9 (1994): 45.

Table 7.5 Levels of Self-Identification (January–February 1997) (in percentages)

	Local	*National*	*Post-Soviet*	*Transnational*
Kyiv	17	58	12	9
Central	48	40	1	2
North	47	42	3	4
Northeast	48	43	15	4
Northwest	51	28	10	6
East	43	45	4	6
South	71	19	0	8
Southeast	31	64	1	2
Southwest	41	44	3	5
West	39	47	9	5
Crimea	56	19	11	10
Ukraine	43	41	6	7

Source: Adapted from Oleksandr Stehnii and Mykola Churilov, *Rehionalizm v Ukraini yak ob'yekt sotsiolohichnoho doslidzhennya* (Kyiv: n. p., 1998), 45.

that the weak support for independent statehood in the east and south does not preclude a sense of Ukrainian identity and by no means signifies a preference for Russian identity—even in Crimea.

Another poll, conducted in early 1997, asked respondents to choose "levels" of identification. The choices were local, national, post-Soviet (which included identification with the population of the CIS), and transnational, "citizens of the world," as it were (see table 7.5). In all regions of Ukraine, the dominant identification was with the local and national levels.

The 1998 parliamentary elections did not produce any startling departures or new developments insofar as regionalism, ethnicity, language, and voting behavior are concerned. If anything, the several studies that have been done thus far seem to be in general agreement that the Russian/Soviet factor in the east has lost some of its acuteness in the face of the continued economic crisis.[16] One might even venture to suggest that the "common misery," as it were, may be having a leveling effect. The elections were held under a new electoral law that replaced the previous majoritarian system with a mixed system whereby half of the 450 deputies were elected from national party lists and half from single-mandate districts; it also established a 4 percent threshold for the party lists.

The new arrangement allows for some insight as to how voters responded to the programs and slogans of political parties and blocs competing for voters' sympathies. Interestingly, the two groups that chose to emphasize the Russian/Soviet factor in their electoral programs suffered unmitigated disasters. The SLOn (Social-Liberal Union), while supporting Ukraine's "Euro-

pean choice," argued that it could be implemented "only within the framework of a close strategic partnership with Russia" and advocated an economic union of the two countries. It categorically rejected what was described as attempts to legalize the "political division of a single people" into a titular nation and national minorities and supported official status for the Russian language. The SLOn received 0.9 percent of the national party list vote. The Union Party, which proposed that Ukraine join in an "inter-state union" with Russia and Belarus, singled out "nationalist ideology [that is] forced upon society" as one of the three main reasons for the country's critical situation, and advocated recognizing Russians in Ukraine as a "state-forming" nation and the Russian language as the second state language, garnered 0.7 percent of the vote. The Party of Regional Revival of Ukraine, whose name reflects its main focus but which also supported strategic partnerships with the "fraternal peoples of Russia and Belarus" and promised "legal priorities" for the Russian language, managed to get 0.9 percent.[17]

There is, as we have seen, solid support in Ukraine for integration within the CIS, but apparently few see themselves as belonging to a "CIS *narod*." Identification with the former Soviet Union is considerable, which is not surprising given the large numbers in Ukraine (and even more in Russia) who regret its passing.[18] It is also clear that the Soviet identity is much more pronounced in the east than it is in the west. Although the question of its staying power is doubtless multifaceted, it is fair to assume that a good deal of its attraction can be attributed to the fact that the Soviet period is associated with economic and social stability, particularly the "golden age" of the Brezhnev period. Most important, however, the survey results cited here are in line with what a number of specialized studies have concluded—namely, that Ukraine's regional diversity and the related issues of ethnicity, language, and identity are far more complex than the conventional east–west or Ukrainian-Russian paradigms.[19]

It bears repeating that the main problem that regionalism poses for Ukraine is not the danger of secession and fragmentation but the challenge of forging a modern, post-Soviet national identity that is grounded in a civic ethos. Nationwide, substantial disillusionment with independence persists. In the east, historical, ethnic, and linguistic factors combined with economic hardship have served to accentuate such attitudes. Much of the population there is ambivalent about its national identity. Certainly one of the most important factors that will influence the outcome of the nation-building project not only in these areas but in Ukraine as a whole is the steady recovery of the economy. Thus far, Kuchma has not made much of a difference in this regard. Still, he has proved himself to be a skillful promoter of the state and the nation. Although he started out as the favorite of the "pro-Russian" east, he now enjoys greater popularity in the "pro-Ukrainian" west. Clearly, this is not national consensus. One could argue that it is nothing more than a simple

trade-off. But one could also argue that Kuchma is the best example of another process that has largely been overlooked—namely, the integration of political and economic elites from those areas that are least committed to the "Ukrainian idea" into the national mainstream. He has "imported" large numbers of easterners to serve in important posts in Kyiv, particularly from his hometown Dnipropetrovsk.[20] Simply stated, the action is in the national capital, not in the regions, and these people now have a stake in Ukraine. Quite telling and symptomatic in this regard is a little-known brochure published in 1997 by Lazarenko, Kuchma's erstwhile colleague from Dnipropetrovsk and prime minister at the time, entitled *Into the Third Millennium with the National Idea*.[21]

NATIONAL MINORITIES AND THE RUSSIAN QUESTION

After the parliamentary elections in 1998, U.S. deputy secretary of state Strobe Talbott evaluated the ethnic scene in Ukraine as follows:

> While there is cause for concern about what lies ahead for Ukraine, there are reasons for optimism as well. . . . Even the latest elections contained encouraging signs that Ukrainians are dealing with their ethnic and cultural differences through peaceful, democratic means. The results indicate that members of the Russian- and Polish-speaking minorities tended to cast their ballots for candidates on the basis of their stand on issues, not on the basis of their ethnicity.[22]

The view that, with few exceptions, interethnic harmony has been the rule in Ukraine—which, moreover, sets it apart from most of the other former Soviet republics—is widely prevalent and shared by international monitoring organizations.[23] The U.S. State Department in its annual reports on human rights in Ukraine also gives a positive assessment of Ukraine's record in this area, saying that cases of ethnic discrimination are largely isolated and that with the exception of two regions, there is no evidence of serious ethnic tension in the country. In some parts of Western Ukraine, the reports state, small Russian, Jewish, and other minority groups credibly accuse some ultranationalist Ukrainians of fostering ethnic hatred and local authorities of failing to respond adequately; and in Crimea, Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar minorities complain of discrimination by the Russian majority.[24] Some "pro-Russian groups" in eastern Ukraine complain about the increased use of the Ukrainian language in schools and the media, claiming that their children are disadvantaged when taking university entrance examinations. The reports also note that anti-Semitism exists on an individual and societal basis but that it is virtually nonexistent on an official level and that Jews, Ukraine's second largest minority after the Russians, have expanded opportunities to pursue

their religious and cultural activities.[25] The overall situation was probably best described by Yaakov Bleich, the chief rabbi of Kyiv and Ukraine: "Ukraine has the best human rights record in the former Soviet Union," and its policy toward Jews and other minorities is "very, very positive."[26]

Ukraine is routinely described as a multinational country. At the same time, Ukrainians and Russians account for about 95 percent of the total population. The remaining 5 percent includes Jews, Belarusians, Moldovans, Crimean Tatars, Bulgarians, Poles, Hungarians, and Romanians, all of whom number one hundred thousand or more, and numerous smaller groups. Individually, none of these national minorities exceed 1 percent of the total population. There were slightly more than 486,000 Jews in Ukraine according to the 1989 census, making them the third largest national group after the Ukrainians and Russians. Their real number, according to some estimates, was closer to a million. But the combination of emigration and an aging population has reduced their numbers to between three hundred thousand and half a million.[27] With the exception of the Jews and Belarusians, the remainder of the larger groups live fairly compactly, mostly in the western and southern parts of the country and in Crimea.

Most observers credit the Ukrainian leadership, under both Kravchuk and Kuchma, for the absence of any serious interethnic conflict in Ukraine. The government has gone to great lengths to stress that the Ukrainian nation is defined as a territorial or political concept, not as an ethnic or linguistic category. With the exception of some ultranationalist groups, which have little if any impact on the political process in Ukraine, all political parties in the country adhere to this position. Significantly, the two parties that have been identified with the slogan "Ukraine for Ukrainians!" received 0.2 percent of the party list vote in the 1998 parliamentary elections.[28] Much of the groundwork for Kyiv's policies with regard to the national minorities was laid in the 1960s and 1970s by the dissident movement in Ukraine, which emphasized the struggle for national rights within the broader framework of human rights irrespective of ethnicity or language. This was also the position taken by Rukh when it emerged as the main umbrella group for the political opposition in the late 1980s. At its founding congress in September 1989, it adopted special declarations addressed to all non-Ukrainians in Ukraine, to ethnic Russians, to Russian-speaking Ukrainians, and a statement explicitly condemning anti-Semitism. Shortly thereafter, it formed the Nationalities Council of Rukh, a body composed of representatives from organizations and societies of the national minorities, which was the first of its kind in Ukraine.[29] At its founding congress, Rukh's program called for national-cultural autonomy for all national minorities, and subsequently it added national-territorial autonomy for those groups without statehood outside Ukraine.[30]

Equal rights for all national groups are guaranteed in several documents

and laws beginning with the July 1990 state sovereignty declaration and including the parliamentary Declaration of the Rights of Nationalities of Ukraine (November 1991) and the law On National Minorities of Ukraine (June 1992). The latter provides for native-language instruction or study of the native language either in state schools or through national cultural societies. It also states that in areas where a national minority constitutes a majority of the population the language of the given group may be used in the work of local state organs, public organizations, and other institutions. At the end of 1999, native-language instruction in general education schools was available for Romanians (108 schools), Hungarians (65), Moldovans (18), Crimean Tatars (7), Jews (5), and Poles (3). In another 2,466 schools, instruction was in two or more languages. There were also 76 Saturday schools run by 430 officially registered national cultural societies, where nearly seven thousand children learned their native language.[31] At the beginning of the 1998–99 school year, almost thirty-five thousand secondary school pupils were taught in Romanian, more than twenty-one thousand in Hungarian, over four thousand in Crimean Tatar, and over a thousand in Polish.[32]

Survey research provides an additional perspective on nationality issues. People in Ukraine display an unexpectedly high degree of anxiety about the possibility of interethnic conflict, which has been ascribed to actual outbreaks of violence in other parts of the former Soviet Union.[33] At the same time, in Ukraine itself few seem to have experienced any serious problems because of their ethnicity. Surveys conducted from 1994 to 1996 show that between 5 and 10 percent of respondents said that they had encountered situations in which individuals were discriminated against because of their nationality.[34] In 1998, 7 percent said that they themselves had been discriminated against because of their ethnicity; in Kyiv the corresponding figure was 5 percent and in Crimea 8 percent. In 1999, 4 percent said that they were discriminated against because of their national affiliation.[35] A 1995 survey found that 67 percent of respondents felt that discrimination against national minorities was entirely absent in Ukraine.[36]

Nonetheless, it has been argued that Ukraine may already be or is about to become a "nationalizing state"—that is, a state that imposes a dominant Ukrainian ethos on state and society—particularly with regard to the ethnic Russians and Russian speakers in Ukraine and especially with respect to its language policies. According to this view, even if Ukraine is not a "nationalizing state," it is nonetheless perceived as such by Russian speakers in its eastern and southern regions.[37] It is also argued that the country has managed to avoid conflict stemming from ethnic and language issues "not because [it] has adopted a so-called civic conception of the state, but because the government's language policy remains ambiguous."[38] Finally, although Ukraine may well not be a "nationalizing state," its precepts are said to inform the agenda

of "Ukrainian nationalists," and therefore an element of confrontation is "more or less guaranteed."[39]

One of the major problems with the "nationalizing state" scenario is that there is little evidence that the language question actually is an issue for most people in Ukraine. In early 1999, only 2 percent of respondents felt that the status of the Russian language was a matter of concern for them.[40] Moreover, attitudes toward the Russian language, irrespective of nationality, are quite positive. An overwhelming majority of both Russians and Ukrainians—84 percent, according to one survey—favor raising the status of the Russian language in Ukraine, including 48.6 percent who feel that it should have either state or official status.[41] In another poll, conducted by the Kyiv Center for Political Research and Conflict Studies, 82.2 percent supported raising the status of Russian, including 72.3 percent of the Ukrainian respondents.[42] No less important, as a group Russians appear to feel rather comfortable in Ukraine. They do not sense that they are being discriminated against; do not want to leave the country; and do not seem particularly interested in Moscow's protection.[43] At the very least, the call to arms sounded at the end of 1991 by Stanislav Govorukhin, the well-known Russian actor, filmmaker, and presidential candidate in 2000, who warned that Ukrainians would soon begin disemboweling pregnant Russian women in Ukraine, was somewhat overstated.[44]

This is not to say that there is no "Russian question" in Ukraine. In fact, at least two Russian questions exist. One has to do with how the political class in Moscow sees the situation; the other has to do with the realities in Ukraine. In Russia, the conventional wisdom is that Russians in Ukraine are being treated unfairly—specifically, that the Russian language and culture are under siege. Tikhonov, the former head of the State Duma Committee on CIS Affairs and Ties with Compatriots, has characterized Kyiv's policies as a "total pogrom of Russian culture."[45] Readers of the respected daily *Nezavisimaya gazeta* are treated to articles describing Ukraine's policies toward its Russian citizens in terms of "forced ukrainianization," "ethnocide," and "genocide," particularly in its monthly supplement devoted to the former Soviet republics.[46] On the eve of his visit to Kyiv in May 1997 to sign the Black Sea Fleet agreements, Chernomyrdin expressed his concern about "the line, which is increasingly manifesting itself in Ukraine towards restriction and actually ousting of the Russian language and culture from the state and intellectual life of the society."[47] According to a member of the Russian delegation that accompanied Yeltsin a few days later to the Ukrainian capital to sign the Ukrainian-Russian bilateral treaty, the Russian president intended to "voice his deep concern over the ousting of [the] Russian language from the life of the Ukrainian society." This was confirmed by Yeltsin's spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembskii, who told journalists in Kyiv that the problem of restrictions on the rights of Russian speakers in Ukraine to be educated and have access

to information in Russian would be a topic of the discussions at the summit.[48] The State Duma and the Federation Council delayed ratification of the treaty for more than a year because of objections to the treatment of Russian speakers in Ukraine.[49] In a statement addressed to the Ukrainian president, parliament, and government that was adopted by the State Duma when it eventually ratified the treaty in December 1998, the Russian lawmakers included restrictions on the rights of Russian speakers on the list of problems that needed to be resolved in a timely fashion.[50]

Chernomyrdin, Yeltsin, and the State Duma either were misinformed or found it politically expedient to cast themselves in the role of guardians of Russians and the Russian language in Ukraine. If the language of instruction in Ukraine's educational system can be taken as a barometer of the "comfort zone" for the Russian language, then Russian speakers should feel fairly comfortable. In the 1998–99 school year, 34 percent of all pupils in general education schools were taught in Russian, which is greater than both the declared proportion of Russians in Ukraine listed in the 1989 census (22.1 percent) and the proportion of the population that declared Russian as their native language (32.8 percent).[51] The proportion of preschool children taught in Russian was 25.3 percent, and the proportion of students receiving their higher education in Russian was either 28 or 34 percent depending on the level of accreditation.[52]

Clearly, the census data on language do not represent the last word on the subject. It is interesting to note, however, that the census results regarding Russian as the native language largely correspond to the data from opinion polls. From 1994 to 1998, the proportion of respondents who said that Russian was their native language ranged from 34.7 to 37.8 percent.[53] Another way of looking at language affiliation is to gauge its use in the family setting. The polls show that between 32.4 and 34.5 percent converse exclusively in Russian; another 26.8 to 34.5 percent use both Russian and Ukrainian depending on circumstances.[54]

Whichever indicator one chooses, it would seem that, with the exception of the preschoolers, the language of instruction in Ukraine's schools and universities is largely in line with people's preferences and existing realities. However, if one is guided by the category of "language of convenience" referred to earlier, which some consider to be a more reliable indicator of the language situation, then a rather different picture emerges. According to one source, Russian is the language of convenience for about 55 percent of the population.[55] Another source gives the lower figure of 43 percent.[56] It is not entirely clear why the language of convenience should be a more precise indicator of language preference than the native language or the language spoken at home, but the fact remains that it serves as the basis for much of the discussion about Ukraine as a "nationalizing state."

It may well be that Russian rights activists in Ukraine and those politicians

Table 7.6 Language of Instruction in General Education Schools (in percentages of schoolchildren)

	Russian	*Ukrainian*
1991–92	50.0	49.3
1992–93	47.8	51.4
1993–94	44.9	54.3
1994–95	43.0	57.0
1995–96	41.0	58.0
1996–97	39.0	60.0
1997–98	36.0	63.0
1998–99	34.0	65.0

Sources: Ministerstvo statystyky Ukrainy, *Narodne hospodarstvo Ukrainy u 1993 rotsi: Statystychnyi shchorichnyk* (Kyiv: "Tekhnika," 1994), 384; Ministerstvo statystyky Ukrainy, *Statystychnyi shchorichnyk Ukrainy za 1995 rik* (Kyiv: "Tekhnika," 1996), 446; Derzhavnyi komitet statystyky Ukrainy, *Statystychnyi shchorichnyk Ukrainy za 1996 rik* (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo "Ukrains'ka entsyklopediya" imeni M. P. Bazhana, 1997), 457; and Derzhavnyi komitet statystyky Ukrainy, *Statystychnyi shchorichnyk Ukrainy za 1998 rik* (Kyiv: "Tekhniha," 1999), 429.

in Moscow who are convinced that Russians and Russian speakers in Ukraine are the victims of genocidal policies are proceeding from the assumption that the language situation that prevailed before independence—that is, when Russian enjoyed a privileged position—is preferable to the situation that exists today. Clearly, the percentage of schoolchildren taught in Ukrainian has increased steadily in every year since 1991, with a corresponding decrease in the proportion of pupils taught in Russian (see table 7.6).

The same is true in the eastern part of the country, where the figures for Russian-language instruction remain high, although not uniformly throughout the region. There has been virtually no change in Crimea, and in the Donbas Russian-language enrollments have dropped by nearly 7 percent. A very substantial decrease of almost 28 percent was registered in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast (see table 7.7).

As with the general education schools, the prevalence of Russian or Ukrainian in the preschool and higher education establishments differs significantly from region to region. In Crimea, the proportion of university and higher school students taught in Russian in 1998–99 was 100 percent; in the Donbas it ranged from 77 to 89 percent.

In the areas of press, publishing, and radio and television, the Russian-language media have strengthened their position as compared to the preindependence period. Between 1990 and 1998, the proportion of the annual print run of journals in Ukrainian decreased from 90.4 to 17.5 percent; the corresponding figures for the single-issue print run of newspapers were 68 and 39.6 percent. Obviously, the Russian-language press accounts for virtually all of the balance. Between 1995 and 1997, the number of Russian-language

Table 7.7 Russian-Language Instruction in General Education Schools: East and Crimea (in percentages of schoolchildren)

	1991–92	*1992–93*	*1993–94*	*1994–95*	*1995–96*	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*
Crimea	99.9	99.9	99.7	99.7	99.5	99.4	99.7	98.1
Donetsk	96.7	96.1	95.1	95.0	94.0	93.0	91.0	90.0
Luhansk	93.3	92.7	91.6	91.0	90.8	90.0	89.0	87.0
Zaporizhzhya	77.3	75.1	72.5	70.0	69.0	67.0	64.0	62.0
Dnipropetrovsk	68.9	67.4	63.4	58.0	54.0	50.0	45.0	41.0
Kharkiv	72.0	69.4	66.9	65.0	63.0	61.0	57.0	53.0

Sources: Ministerstvo statystyky Ukrainy, *Narodne hospodarstvo Ukrainy u 1993 rotsi: Statystychnyi shchorichnyk* (Kyiv: "Tekhnika," 1994), 384; Ministerstvo statystyky Ukrainy, *Statystychnyi shchorichnyk Ukrainy za 1995 rik* (Kyiv: "Tekhnika," 1996), 446; Derzhavnyi komitet statystyky Ukrainy, *Statystychnyi shchorichnyk Ukrainy za 1996 rik* (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo "Ukrains'ka entsyklopediya" imeni M. P. Bazhana, 1997), 457; and Derzhavnyi komitet statystyky Ukrainy, *Statystychnyi shchorichnyk Ukrainy za 1998 rik* (Kyiv: "Tekhnika," 1999), 429.

journals increased from 101 to 118 and the number of newspapers from 721 to 796. The data for books and brochures appear at first glance to favor the Ukrainian language. In 1997, Ukrainian-language titles accounted for 49.8 percent of the total and Russian-language titles for 37.5 percent. It turns out, however, that nearly half of the Ukrainian titles were textbooks. According to Ivan Drach, the former head of Rukh and currently the chairman of the State Committee of Ukraine for Information Policy, Television, and Radio, the third largest commodity imported into Ukraine from Russia after gas and oil is books.[57] In 1998, Russian-language broadcasts accounted for 9 percent and 20.6 percent of *state* radio and television airtime, respectively. But almost two-thirds of *total* radio and television airtime was in Russian.[58]

Nonetheless, political groups and cultural organizations representing the Russian minority feel that the role and status of the Russian language and culture are not what they should be and are critical of the government's policies. The aforementioned SLOn coalition conducted its 1998 parliamentary electoral campaign on a platform that included criticism of the authorities' language policy as undemocratic and a violation of human rights and promised to make Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism official policy.[59] The recent conference on "The Dialogue of Ukrainian and Russian Cultures in Ukraine" issued recommendations that, among other things, referred to the "juridically unjustified forced and illegal acceleration of eliminating the Russian language and culture from the educational sphere, official information and state-political life, and the artificial demolition of the historical affinity of the Ukrainian and Russian linguistic and artistic cultures."[60] The First Congress of Russians of Ukraine, convened in May 1999, accused the government of "establishing a policy directed at a massive expulsion of the Russian ethno-cultural factor from all aspects of society."[61] The point of departure for Russian rights activists is that Ukraine is a bilingual country, that this should be codified by specific legislation, and that official policy amounts to "aggressive nationalism" that has as its objective derussification and ukrainianization.[62] Moreover, the argument has been made, in both Kyiv and in Moscow, that Russians in Ukraine are a "state-forming" nation, a concept that is not entirely clear.[63] Another variation on this theme is that Russians in Ukraine should be recognized as a "partner-nation," the implications of which have also not been spelled out. At the risk of suggesting the obvious, it appears that the criticism of Kyiv's policies, both from Moscow and from the Russian community in Ukraine, proceeds from a frame of reference for Ukrainian-Russian relations—in the broadest sense of the term—that cannot accommodate the notion of Russians in Ukraine as an "ordinary" national minority.

There is every indication that the question of the role and status of the Russian language will continue to stir emotions, both in Ukraine and in relations between Kyiv and Moscow. With a view to the presidential elections in

October 1999, Kuchma issued an order to the Ministry of Education in June recommending changes in the procedures for entrance examinations to institutions of higher learning that would allow the examinations to be taken in Russian.[64] After the elections, several steps were taken that set off protests in both Kyiv and in Moscow. In December 1999, Ukraine's Constitutional Court issued a ruling on the state status of the Ukrainian language as delineated in the constitution, specifically with regard to its use by national and local government bodies and in the educational system, which essentially reaffirmed existing legislation.[65] The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs reacted with a note to the Ukrainian embassy in Moscow at the end of January 2000 expressing the hope that Ukraine would implement its policies with regard to Russian speakers in the spirit of the Ukrainian-Russian friendship treaty. At the same time, it made public a statement criticizing Kyiv for violating constitutional norms.

More controversy followed when the Council on Questions of Language Policy attached to the office of the president approved a draft government decree "On Additional Measures to Broaden the Functioning of Ukrainian as the State Language," which proposes to screen state officials at all levels with regard to their knowledge and use of Ukrainian in the performance of their duties, complete the process of bringing language instruction in schools in line with the country's national composition, regulate the language status of private radio and television channels, facilitate Ukrainian-language books and publications, introduce tax levers on outside publications disseminated in the country, develop a program to derussify the sport and tourist industries, and other measures.[66] This prompted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow to issue another statement, saying that "certain forces in Ukraine seem determined to create a phenomenon unseen in Europe before—to make the native language of the overwhelming majority of the population [*sic*] an actual outcast, reduce its status to marginal and possibly even to squeeze it out."[67] Russia's human rights commissioner, in turn, urged international organizations to increase their monitoring of the situation in Ukraine, and Russian rights activists in Ukraine appealed to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe for assistance. The language question was also said to be on the agenda of Putin's first visit to Ukraine as president in April 2000.[68] In short, the Ukrainian-Russian problem—as a function of both domestic and interstate politics—is not likely to go away sometime soon.

In an interview in early 1993, then Russian ambassador in Kyiv Smolyakov confided that he knew of no instances of "forced ukrainianization" in Ukraine, including in Crimea."[69] There is no question that with independence the sphere of the Ukrainian language has been broadened in the educational system, which is theoretically regulated by central authorities, although it is the local administrations that either implement or ignore directives from Kyiv. It is less clear whether the role and status of the Ukrainian language

and culture have actually improved very much since Soviet times.[70] Anyone who has visited government offices in Kyiv, attended sessions of the national parliament, or simply walked the streets of Ukraine's major cities is not likely to be impressed by the impact of the "nationalizing state."

Moreover, there is one rather puzzling aspect of the language situation in Ukraine. In a 1994 survey, 43.5 percent of Ukrainians declared Russian as their "language of convenience"; by 1999, that figure rose to 50.9 percent.[71] The question that comes to mind is why are more Ukrainians finding the Russian language "convenient" if it is under threat, declining in prestige, losing its viability, and the like? The Russian language and culture in Ukraine no longer enjoy the support and privileges that were made available by an all-powerful central bureaucracy in Moscow, but whether they are now under attack from Kyiv remains a problematic question. What can be said with the utmost certainty is that assertions about pogroms and genocide are quite simply nonsense.

NOTES

1. *New York Times*, 21 February 1999.

2. In a 1994 report for the Atlantic Council of the United States, Robert Cullen wrote that "the stage has been set and the actors have been assembled [in Ukraine] for an ethnic conflict" comparable to those between Serbs and Bosnians, Georgians and Abkhaz, and Armenians and Azerbaijanis; suggested that "in some cases Russia is doing the West a favor by intervening and halting bloodshed in parts of its former empire"; and recommended to Washington that "the United States should make clear to Ukraine that it will not countenance violent repression of Russian separatists or denial of their political rights." See Robert Cullen, *Ukraine, Ukrainian Minorities and United States Policy*, Occasional Paper Series (Washington, D.C.: Atlantic Council of the United States, 1994), ix and xi-xii.

3. For the text, see *Holos Ukrainy*, 4 February 1997.

4. The Crimean question will be discussed separately in the next two chapters.

5. Roman Solchanyk, "The Politics of State Building: Centre–Periphery Relations in Post-Soviet Ukraine," *Europe–Asia Studies* 45, no. 1 (1994): 59–61.

6. See, for example, Dominique Arel and Valeri Khmelko, "The Russian Factor and Territorial Polarization in Ukraine," *Harriman Review* 9 (special issue entitled "Peoples, Nations, Identities: The Russian-Ukrainian Encounter), nos. 1–2 (Spring 1996): 81–91.

7. Bohdan Nahaylo, *The Ukrainian Resurgence* (London: Hurst, 1999), 453.

8. *Izvestia*, 16 June 1993; *Holos Ukrainy*, 3 August 1993.

9. Monika Jung, "The Donbas Factor in the Ukrainian Elections," *RFE/RL Research Report*, 25 March 1994: 52–53, and Dominique Arel and Andrew Wilson, "The Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections," *RFE/RL Research Report*, 1 July 1994, 15.

10. Arel and Khmelko, "The Russian Factor and Territorial Polarization in

Ukraine," 81. The category "language of convenience" is understood as the language that respondents feel more comfortable with during survey interviews.

11. Arel and Khmelko, "The Russian Factor and Territorial Polarization in Ukraine," 88.

12. M. I. Beletskii and A. K. Tolpygo, "Natsional'no-kul'turnye i ideologicheskie orientatsii naselenie Ukrainy: Po dannym sotsiologicheskikh oprosov," *Politicheskie issledovanie* 4 (1998): 74–89.

13. 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), 17–18; and James Sherr, *Ukraine's New Time of Troubles* (Surrey, England: Conflict Studies Research Centre, G67, October 1998), 6.

14. The east in this case encompasses the six oblasts of Donetsk, Luhansk, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhya, Kharkiv, and Sumy; the west covers the seven oblasts of Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Volyn, Rovno, Zakarpattya, and Chernivtsi.

15. The east encompasses the Donetsk, Luhansk, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhya, and Kharkiv Oblasts; the south covers the Odesa, Mykolaiv, and Kherson Oblasts and Crimea.

16. See Peter R. Craumer and James I. Clem, "Ukraine's Emerging Electoral Geography: A Regional Analysis of the 1998 Parliamentary Elections," *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics* 40, no. 1 (January–February 1999): 1–26; Melvin J. Hinich, Valeri Khmelko, and Peter C. Ordeshook, "Ukraine's 1998 Parliamentary Elections: A Spatial Analysis," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 15, no. 2 (April–June 1999): 149–85; and Andrew Wilson and Sarah Birch, "Voting Stability, Political Gridlock: Ukraine's 1998 Parliamentary Elections," *Europe–Asia Studies* 51, no. 6 (September 1999): 1039–68.

17. For the official results of the party list vote, see *Holos Ukrainy*, 8 April 1998. The programs of the political parties and blocs contesting the 1998 election are reproduced in Mykola Tomenko and Oleh Protsenko, comps., *Pravo vyboru: Politychni partii i vyborchi bloky* (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo "Zapovit," 1998).

18. In a May 1997 survey, 62 percent of respondents in Ukraine said that they regretted that the Soviet Union no longer existed (*Den'*, 26 June 1997). On 28 January 1999, Interfax reported that the corresponding figure in Russia was 85 percent. The data vary from survey to survey. See, for example, *Opinion Analysis*, M-28–98: 5.

19. See Paul S. Pirie, "National Identity and Politics in Southern and Eastern Ukraine," *Europe–Asia Studies* 48, no. 7 (November 1996): 1079–104; Lowell Barrington, "The Geographic Component of Mass Attitudes in Ukraine," *Post-Soviet Geography* 38, no. 10 (December 1997): 601–14; Arthur H. Miller, Thomas F. Klobucar, William M. Reisinger, and Vicki L. Hesli, "Social Identities in Russia, Ukraine, and Lithuania," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 14, no. 3 (July–September 1998): 248–86; and Stephen Shulman, "Competing versus Complementary Identities: Ukrainian-Russian Relations and the Loyalties of Russians in Ukraine," *Nationalities Papers* 26, no. 4 (December 1998): 615–32.

20. See *New York Times*, 18 October 1996; *Washington Post*, 27 October 1996; and *Wall Street Journal*, 28 January 1997.

21. Pavlo Lazarenko, *U tretye tysyacholittya z natsional'noyu ideyeyu* (Kyiv: Vydavnychyi budynok "Maksymum," 1997).

22. *Washington Post*, 18 April 1998.

23. *Human Rights and Democratization in the Newly Independent States of the Former Soviet Union* (Washington, D.C.: Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, [January] 1993), 60.

24. The Crimean Tatar question will be discussed in chapter 9.

25. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, *Ukraine Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997*, 10–11, http://www.state.gov//www/global/human_rights/1997_hrp_report/ukraine/html, and the same Web site for the 1998 and 1999 reports.

26. Quoted in *Washington Post*, 28 March 1995. See also Abraham Brumberg in *Washington Post*, 11 July 1999.

27. *The Economist*, 19 December 1998; *Ukrainian Weekly*, 18 April 1999.

28. On the marginalization of the ultranationalists in Ukraine, see Roman Solchanyk, "The Radical Right in Ukraine," in *The Radical Right in Central and Eastern Europe Since 1989*, ed. Sabrina Ramet (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 279–96.

29. See Oleksandr Burakovs'kyi, comp., *Rada Natsional'nostei Rukhu Ukrainy (1989–1993): Zbirnyk dokumentiv* (Edmonton: Vydavnytstvo Kanads'koho instytutu ukrains'kykh studii Al'berts'koho universytetu, 1995).

30. For overviews of national minorities issues in Ukraine, see Volodymyr Yevtukh, "Etnopolitychnyi renesans v Ukraini," in *Quo vadis, Ukraino? Materialy tret'oi (zymovoi) sesii Mizhnarodnoi shkoly ukrainistyky (Kyiv, sichen' 1992 r.)* (Odesa: "Mayak," 1992), 107–25; Susan Stewart, "Ukraine's Policy toward Its Ethnic Minorities," *RFE/RL Research Report*, 10 September 1993: 55–62; and Natalja Lakiza-Sachuk and Natalie Melnyczuk, "Ukraine after Empire: Ethnicities and Democracy," in *Ethnic Conflict in the Post-Soviet World: Case Studies and Analysis*, ed. Leokadia Drobizheva, Rose Gottemoeller, Catherine McArdle Kelleher, and Lee Walker (Armonk, N.Y.: Sharpe, 1996), 109–27.

31. See the interview with Mykola Rud'ko, head of the State Committee of Ukraine for Nationalities and Migration Affairs, in *Literaturna Ukraina*, 23 December 1999. According to Rabbi Bleich, in the spring of 1999 sixteen Jewish schools (twelve of which were partially supported by the government) had an enrollment of five thousand. See *Ukrainian Weekly*, 18 April 1999.

32. Derzhavnyi komitet statystyky Ukrainy, *Statystychnyi shchorichnyk Ukrainy* za *1998 rik* (Kyiv: "Tekhnika," 1999), 429.

33. Natalya Panina, "National Tolerance and Relations between Nationalities in Ukraine," *A Political Portrait of Ukraine* 7 (1995): 48.

34. Yevhen Holovakha, *Suspil'stvo, shcho transformuyet'sya: Dosvid sotsiolohichnoho monitorinhu v Ukraini* (Kyiv: Fond "Demokratychni Initsiatyvy," Instytut sotsiolohii NAN Ukrainy, 1997), 69.

35. Ferguson, *Public Opinion in Ukraine 1998*, II-68, and Ferguson, *Public Opinion in Ukraine 1999*, A-40.

36. Kirill Keidanskii, "Mezhetnicheskie otnosheniya v Ukraine: tolerantnost' protiv antagonizma," in *Etnichnost' na postsovetskim prostranstve: rol' v obshchestve i perspektivy: Materialy konferentsii (Kiev, noyabr' 1995 g.)* (Kiev: Izd-vo UANNP "Feniks," 1997), 34.

37. Dominique Arel, "Ukraine: The Temptation of the Nationalizing State," in

Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia, ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu (Armonk, N.Y.: Sharpe, 1995), 157–88

38. Dominique Arel, "Ukraine: The Muddle Way," *Current History* 97, no. 621 (October 1998): 342*ff.*

39. Andrew Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990s: A Minority Faith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 172. For a somewhat different perspective on the "nationalizing state," see Aleksei Miller, "Ukraina kak natsionalizuruyushcheesya gosudarstvo," *Pro et Contra* (Moscow) 2, no. 2 (Spring 1997): 85–98.

40. *Den'*, 20 March 1999.

41. Beletskii and Tolpygo, "Natsional'no-kul'turnye i ideologicheskie orientatsii naselenie Ukrainy," 83.

42. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 26 February 1998.

43. See Evgenii Golovakha, Natalia Panina, and Nikolai Churilov, "Russians in Ukraine," in *The New Russian Diaspora: Russians in the Former Soviet Republics*, ed. Vladimir Shlapentokh, Munir Sendich, and Emil Payin (Armonk, N.Y.: Sharpe, 1994), 59–71; Sergei Savoskul, "Russkie v nezavisimoi Ukraine: status, identichnost', perspektivy," in *Ukraina i Rossiya*, ed. Furman, 278–329, and S. S. Savoskul, "Migratsionnoe povedenie russkikh nezavisimoi Ukrainy," in *Russkie v novom zarubezh'e: migratsionnaya situatsiya, pereselenie i adaptatsiya v Rossii*, ed. S. S. Savoskul (Moscow: Institut etnologii i antropologii RAN, 1997), 110–53. For a more general discussion, see Paul Kostoe, *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 166–99.

44. Govorukhin made his appeal in a widely viewed television interview on 12 October 1991. See *Literaturna Ukraina*, 17 October 1991.

45. *Kievskie vedomosti*, 21 July 1998.

46. See, for example, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 26 February 1998; *Sodruzhestvo NG* 7 (July 1998); *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 26 January 1999; and *Sodruzhestvo NG* 4 (April 1999).

47. See his interview with Interfax-Ukraine, 27 May 1997.

48. RIA Novosti, 31 May 1997, and *Rossiiskie vesti*, 3 June 1997.

49. See the transcript of the hearings in the State Duma on the ratification of the treaty called by the parliamentary Committee on CIS Affairs and Ties with Compatriots in March 1998 in *Sodruzhestvo NG* 3 (March 1998), and the commentary by Bohdan Horyn', a member of the parliamentary delegation from Ukraine invited to attend the hearings, in *Chas-Time*, 2–8 April 1998.

50. For the text, see *Sobranie zakonodatel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii* 2 (11 January 1999): 316–17.

51. *Statystychnyi shchorichnyk Ukrainy za 1998 rik*, 429. In a statement issued on 12 February 2000, the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that currently 31.7 percent of pupils in state schools are taught in Russian. See http://www.mfa.gov.ua/info/s2000/0212.html.

52. *Statystychnyi shchorichnyk Ukrainy za 1998 rik*, 424, 434, and 436.

53. *Ukrainian Society 1994–1998*, 33.

54. *Ukrainian Society 1994–1998*, 34.

55. Arel and Khmelko, "The Russian Factor and Territorial Polarization in Ukraine," 86.

56. Beletskii and Tolpygo, "Natsional'no-kul'turnye i ideologicheskie orientatsii naselenie Ukrainy," 76.

57. Yanina Sokolovskaya's interview with Drach in *Izvestia* (Moscow ed.), 13 April 2000.

58. *Statystychnyi shchorichnyk Ukrainy za 1998 rik*, 456; *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 11 June 1999; *Den'*, 2 March 1999; Ministerstvo Ukrainy u spravakh natsional'nostei, mihratsii ta kul'tiv, *Informatsiinyi byuleten'* 1 (March 1995): 15; and Andrii Popok and Yurii Lahutov, "Ukraina-Rossiya: Etnopolitychnyi faktor mizhderzhavnykh vidnosyn," *Universum* 11–12 (1998): 18.

59. See, for example, Vladimir Grinev, *SLON o yazykovoi politike v Ukraine* (Kiev: Sotsial'no-Liberal'noe Ob"edinenie, 1997).

60. *Dialog ukrainskoi i russkoi kul'tur v Ukraine: Materialy III-i Mezhdunarodnoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii (12–13 noyabrya 1998 goda, g. Kiev)* (Kiev: Fond podderzhiki russkoi kul'ture v Ukraine [Russkii Fond], 1999), 244.

61. *Financial Times*, 25 May 1999.

62. See the articles by Vladimir Malinkovich, who serves as the coordinator for all Russian cultural groups in Ukraine on these issues, in *Region*, 4–11 and 18–25 March 2000.

63. See, for example, T. Poloskova, "Diaspory i vneshnyaya politika," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'* 11 (1999): 78.

64. *Postup*, 29 July 1999.

65. For the text, see www.rada.gov.ua/laws/pravo/all/maindocn.htm. An abridged version is published in *Postup*, 21 March 2000.

66. Kabinet Ministriv Ukrainy, Proekt, "Postanova Pro dodatkovi zakhody shchodo rozshyrennya funktsionuvannya ukrains'koi movy yak derzhavnoi" (photocopy of original).

67. Quoted by Interfax, 9 February 2000.

68. Interfax, 14 April 2000.

69. *Holos Ukrainy*, 27 January 1993.

70. See Mykola Ryabchuk, "A Future Ukraine: One Nation, Two Languages, Three Cultures?" *Ukrainian Weekly*, 6 June 1999.

71. *Sodruzhestvo NG* 11 (22 December 1999).

8

The Crimean Imbroglio I: Kyiv and Moscow

> Irrespective of the official statements of the Russian leadership recognizing the territorial integrity of Ukraine, hardly anyone in Russia considers Crimea to be Ukrainian territory.
>
> —*Izvestia* (Moscow evening ed.), 6 January 1992

> Relations between Russia and Ukraine will not be resolved until a question of principle—the status of the eternally Russian lands Crimea and Sevastopol—is resolved.
>
> —Yurii Luzhkov, 21 February 1998

The question of Crimea's status—essentially, whether it should rightfully be a part of Ukraine; the more specific and also more convoluted question of whether Sevastopol, which was the main base of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet, was juridically a part of Crimea when the peninsula was transferred to Ukraine in 1954—and the related but distinct problems, both practical and political, in determining the fate of the Black Sea Fleet form a complex of issues that arguably have been one of the most serious impediments to normalizing Ukrainian-Russian relations after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The international dimension of the Crimean imbroglio—that is, Crimea, Sevastopol, and the Black Sea Fleet as issues that impinge directly on relations between Kyiv and Moscow—is sufficiently complex to warrant separate treatment; it forms the substance of the discussion that follows. But there is an internal dimension to the Crimean imbroglio as well, and it is perhaps no less important insofar as Ukraine's stability and security are concerned. Precisely this circumstance—namely, that Crimea poses challenges that are simultaneously international and domestic in character and, moreover, the fact that in some instances the external and internal aspects either fully overlap or, at a minimum, share a common frame of reference—has made the "Crimean question" one of the most intractable and long-standing problems confronting Ukraine. In essence, the prevailing view in Russia is that Crimea

is historically Russian territory, that it has little or nothing to do with Ukraine, that it should not have been transferred to Ukraine, and that it should revert to Russia. Much of the Crimean political elite and the general public basically share these very same convictions.

Before focusing on the Kyiv–Moscow part of the problem, it would be useful to briefly look at some of the characteristic features, both external and internal, that define the Crimean question. First, Crimea, unlike other disputed regions of Ukraine (e.g., the Donbas and parts of southern Ukraine), was formerly a *constituent* part of the Soviet Russian republic. As long as there was a Soviet Union, no one—in Russia, Ukraine, or Crimea—attached any particular significance to the fact that the peninsula had been transferred from Russian to Ukrainian jurisdiction. Gerrymandering and territorial shifts from one republic to another were not uncommon practices in the Soviet Union, having begun already in the 1920s. Indeed, in 1956 an entire "sovereign" Union republic, the Karelo-Finnish SSR, disappeared from the map only to find itself incorporated into Russia with the diminished status of an autonomous republic (the Karelian ASSR). The fact of the matter is that the borders of the Soviet republics were for all intents and purposes a fiction. Thus, in spite of the fact that Crimea is not just some out of the way border district but, on the contrary, a choice piece of real estate that, among other things, symbolizes for many Russians the power and glory of the Russian state, the "transfer of title" in 1954 was neither unprecedented nor particularly problematic. Clearly, all of this changed when Ukraine declared its independence.

Second, the Black Sea Fleet continues to be based primarily in Crimea, with Sevastopol serving as the main naval base and headquarters. This imparts a military and geostrategic dimension to Moscow's concerns, ambitions, and policies with regard to the peninsula. Whether or not one shares the widely held view that the Black Sea Fleet is actually a rusting junk heap, that it has little if any military significance, and that its main value is as a museum exhibit is largely irrelevant.[1] What is relevant is the position taken by Moscow—namely, that a Russian Black Sea Fleet must be maintained and that it must be based primarily in Crimea, which translates into a Russian military presence on Ukrainian territory. Suffice it to say that the long-standing disagreements between Kyiv and Moscow over the division and basing of the Ukrainian and Russian components of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet formed the single most difficult and emotionally laden obstacle to the conclusion of the basic bilateral treaty on friendship and cooperation between Ukraine and Russia. The agreements reached on the Black Sea Fleet in May 1997, while not definitively resolving these issues, postponed them for a period of twenty years.

Another factor that sets Crimea apart is its ethnic composition: it is the

only major administrative subdivision of Ukraine where Russians are the majority. According to the 1989 census, Russians formed 67 percent of the population, while Ukrainians accounted for only 25.8 percent. An even larger majority considered Russian to be its native language, including 47.4 percent of the Ukrainians. Today, the proportion of Russians in Crimea has certainly decreased, largely because of the influx of Crimean Tatars returning from their places of exile. According to Crimean government sources, the Crimean Tatars numbered 240,000 in mid-1996, representing 9.1 percent of the population; by 1998, that number was estimated to be around 260,000, accounting for about 12 percent. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in January 2000 there were 255,473 Crimean Tatars officially registered in Crimea as permanent residents, but Crimean Tatar sources say that in mid-1999 there countrymen actually totaled nearly 275,000.[2] The ethnic configuration of the peninsula has routinely been cited in the Western media and even in some scholarly publications as the key determinant of the Crimean question, particularly insofar as relations between Kyiv and Simferopol are concerned. The implication is that most Crimeans are drawn to Russia because most Crimeans are Russian. Clearly, the relative proportion of Russians and Ukrainians in Crimea is an important factor, but it should not distort our understanding of the complex realities of the Crimean situation. Crimea is not, as some have suggested, a potential Ukrainian-Russian Bosnia, and the overriding issues there are not ethnic but political.

The Crimean Tatars, who are returning to the historic homeland from which they were forcibly deported en masse in 1944, are an important factor in Crimea irrespective of their numbers. If one can speak of a threat of ethnic conflict in present-day Ukraine, the focus would be on the Crimean Tatars, who feel that they are disenfranchised and routinely discriminated against by the local "Russian" authorities in their *own* land. On several occasions, tension has escalated into violent confrontation. Moreover, relations with the central authorities in Kyiv, who have grown accustomed to solid support from the Crimean Tatar leadership in the struggle against Crimean separatism, are far from ideal as the Crimean Tatars grow increasingly more impatient with Kyiv's inability or unwillingness to properly address their ethnopolitical and socioeconomic concerns. A case in point is the election law approved by the national parliament for the 1998 elections to the local Crimean legislature, which rescinded the guaranteed quota of fourteen seats for the Crimean Tatars that was provided for in earlier legislation. There is a religious dimension to the problem as well, which has made itself felt with the emergence of a fundamentalist oriented Islamic party on the Crimean Tatar political spectrum. The picture would not be complete without noting Turkey's interests and motivations in the region, which adds geopolitical and geostrategic ingredients to what is already a combustible mix.

EARLY WARNING SIGNS

Probably the first signal that Crimea could potentially be a serious problem for Ukrainian-Russian relations appeared even before Ukraine declared its independence in August 1991. The occasion was the debate in the Russian Supreme Soviet, described as "stormy" by a TASS correspondent, that preceded the ratification of the Ukrainian-Russian bilateral treaty of November 1990. Article 6 of the treaty committed both sides to recognize and respect the territorial integrity of the Ukrainian and Russian republics "within their presently existing borders within the framework of the USSR." Yeltsin, Kozyrev, and Vladimir Lukin, head of the parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and External Economic Ties, urged the lawmakers to ratify the treaty without delay. Others, however, insisted that the problem of Crimea's status should be resolved first. Still others proposed that ratification be postponed and that the issue be referred to the Congress of People's Deputies. This was the position taken by Sergei Baburin, who would soon become an outspoken opponent of Ukrainian independence. Baburin argued that ratification would be inconsistent with plans that were underway for the Union treaty. In the final analysis, however, the treaty was ratified by an overwhelming majority.[3]

Interestingly, the bilateral treaty—specifically, Article 6 concerning the inviolability of borders—reemerged as an issue in early 1992, at the height of Ukrainian-Russian tensions over the Black Sea Fleet and the fate of the Soviet military in Ukraine and at precisely the moment that the Russian parliament was preparing to challenge Kyiv over Crimea. In an interview in *Novoe vremya* in February, Ambartsumov, then deputy head of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and External Economic Ties, was asked to explain why his committee had recently recommended that the transfer of Crimea be declared unconstitutional given the fact that little more than a year earlier he and his colleagues had argued against making Crimea an issue during the parliamentary debate on ratification of the Ukrainian-Russian treaty. Ambartsumov replied that the move was justified by "newly uncovered documents and facts." The transfer of Crimea, he said, was initiated by Nikita Khrushchev in response to pressure from his associates in the Ukrainian Party leadership. More to the point, however, he argued that a search of the archives had failed to produce the joint representation of the Russian and Ukrainian republics requesting Crimea's transfer to Ukraine; that the decision by the presidium of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet on the transfer was taken without the required quorum; and, finally, that only the full Supreme Soviet, not its presidium, was empowered to make such weighty decisions.

Ambartsumov's attempt to call into question Crimea's status as part of Ukraine on the basis of alleged legal improprieties during the transfer process may be viewed with a certain dose of skepticism, given that the concept of "Soviet legality" was always a rather curious phenomenon. Nonetheless, it

was perfectly understandable in view of the prevailing atmosphere in Russia at the beginning of 1992. Relatively suddenly and quite unexpectedly the unimaginable had happened—the Soviet Union was no more and Ukraine was an independent state—and it would take much of Russia's political class considerably more than several weeks to come to terms with these unpleasant realities.

Ambartsumov also had another argument at his disposal. He maintained that in November 1990 there was a clear understanding between Kyiv and Moscow that the borders between Ukraine and Russia were inviolable only if "the republics [Ukraine and Russia] remained within the [Soviet] Union—that is, within the framework of some kind of political whole." If Ukraine gained its independence, however, "revisiting this question [inviolability of borders] would be fully legitimate."[4] This was not an entirely original interpretation. In December 1991, several days after the Ukrainian referendum on independence, Sobchak told an interviewer that during the Soviet period Ukraine had been given many Russian regions largely populated by Russians. "This does not mean," he added, "that today we should make territorial claims. But, as is precisely recorded in the treaty [of 1990] between Russia and Ukraine, we recognize all of this within the framework of the [Soviet] Union, within the framework of those relations that existed between us."[5]

In fact, the wording on borders in the 1990 treaty is not a model of clarity and precision. During the ratification debate in the Russian parliament, Kozyrev argued that Russia recognized Ukraine's borders only if Ukraine remained within the Soviet Union.

> Comrades, I want to call your attention to the formulation of this article [Article 6]: ". . . within their presently existing borders within the framework of the USSR." That is, what we are talking about is that today we are republics within the framework of the USSR. . . . It is a different matter if the question arises as to the border being outside the framework of the USSR. But, first of all, then one can expect that it will in any case be within the framework of a Union of sovereign states, that is, essentially within a renewed [Soviet] Union.[6]

Kozyrev may well have been convinced that this is what he and his Ukrainian counterparts had agreed to when they negotiated the treaty. In the spring of 1992, he would make a similar argument, explaining to Russian lawmakers that Russia recognized Ukraine's borders only if Ukraine remained within the CIS. In any case, this was the position of Sobchak, Ambartsumov, and other Russian officials.

What makes this interpretation difficult to accept at face value is the premise that in November 1990 diplomats in Moscow (or Kyiv for that matter) could seriously have entertained the kind of scenario described by Ambartsumov—namely, negotiations and formulations based on the notion that the

Soviet Union could cease to exist.[7] In the final analysis, however, we need go no further than Yeltsin's speech to the Russian Supreme Soviet on 20 November 1990 for a clarification of what the Russian side was thinking at the time. Reporting on the treaty and on his talks in Kyiv the previous day, Yeltsin explained:

> Relations between Russia and Ukraine should have their own logic. Today it is difficult to foresee the fate of the treaty [among] the sovereign states of the Union. But whatever the case may be, I consider it necessary to state that during the negotiations yesterday we did not make our relations with Ukraine subject to it [the Union treaty]. These are relations and a treaty between two independent [*samostoyatel'nykh*], sovereign states. A treaty on the state level.[8]

Clearly, the mood in Moscow in early 1992 was no longer what it had been in the fall of 1990, and Ambartsumov's position was fully consistent with the policy statement on borders issued by Yeltsin's press secretary Voshchanov soon after Ukraine declared its independence.

As was to be expected, Ukraine's interpretation of Article 6 did not allow for any conditionality on the question of borders. In what was intended to be a response to Voshchanov's statement on borders, the presidium of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet on 27 August authorized a statement of its own, saying, among other things, that in the 1990 treaty the signatories recognized the borders between Ukraine and Russia as those that existed on the date of the signing of the treaty; that if either side "ceased participating in the USSR" the borders should nonetheless be defined according to the status quo on that date; and, consequently, that "the existence or absence of union-type relations cannot serve as the basis for questioning the currently existing borders between Ukraine and Russia."[9]

Crimea was named by Voshchanov as one of the regions of Ukraine where Moscow reserved the right to revise borders. This was the first direct and, more important, official challenge issued by the Russian government with respect to Ukraine's territorial integrity. Influential leaders of the Russian democratic movement like Popov and Sobchak, among others, were quite forthright in their statements that Crimea's status as part of Ukraine should not be considered permanent. Kozyrev, although urging moderation and warning of the problems that could arise with Kyiv if the Russian parliament pressed ahead with plans to formally raise the Crimean question, characterized the transfer of the peninsula as "a political decision of the former Politburo," presumably suggesting that this was something out of the ordinary and not quite legitimate.[10] Russia's vice president was more imaginative. During a visit to Sevastopol in early April 1992, Rutskoi told an assembly of Black Sea Fleet officers that those who had signed away Crimea may have been "suffering from a hangover or sunstroke."[11]

Arguments to the effect that the peninsula's transfer to Ukraine was an act of voluntarism that violated constitutional norms would continue to serve as a basis for claims to Crimea and Sevastopol in the years that followed. Without venturing into the somewhat murky area of what was legal or illegal in the Soviet Union of 1954, it may be worthwhile to briefly review how and under what circumstances Crimea became part of Ukraine.

CRIMEA: 1954

Crimea was given the status of an autonomous republic within the RSFSR in October 1921. In June 1945, the presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet issued a decree stripping the republic of its autonomy and downgrading its status to that of an oblast. A year later, the RSFSR Supreme Soviet passed a law confirming the abolition of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR and the downgrading of Crimea, specifically linking these territorial-administrative changes to the "treason" of the Chechens and Crimean Tatars during the German occupation.[12]

The argument that it was Khrushchev who arranged the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine—either because he was under pressure from Ukrainian Party leaders or, as another version has it, because he needed the support of the Ukrainian Party to bolster his position in the struggle for power in the Kremlin—is certainly plausible. Nonetheless, this does not make it illegal or unconstitutional. There is also the widely held view that Crimea was a gift to Ukraine to commemorate the three hundredth anniversary of the "reunification" of Ukraine and Russia, which was celebrated on a grand scale throughout the Soviet Union in 1954.[13]

Whatever the case may be, the transfer itself seems to have been conducted within the framework of well-established Soviet legal formalities. On 5 February 1954, the presidium of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, acting on the recommendation of the RSFSR Council of Ministers and in consultation with officials from the Crimean Oblast and the city of Sevastopol, adopted a resolution on the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine, which was forwarded to the presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet. The resolution singled out "the common economy, territorial proximity, and close economic and cultural ties between the Crimean Oblast and the Ukrainian SSR" as well as "the consent of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian republic" as the basis for its decision.[14] Shortly thereafter, on 13 February, the presidium of the Ukrainian SSR Supreme Soviet responded with a resolution of its own, profusely thanking its Russian counterpart for such "a generous, gratifying act of the fraternal Russian people" and requesting the presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet to proceed with the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine.[15] In less than a week, on 19 February, the presidium of the USSR Supreme

Soviet issued the appropriate decree, citing the "joint representation" of the Russian and Ukrainian presidiums.[16]

The mystery surrounding the joint representation (*sovmestnoe predstavlenie*) that, according to Ambartsumov, could not be found in the archives is probably not a mystery at all but rather a question of how one understands the term "joint representation"—as a single document of both parties or as individual documents submitted to the presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet with a common purpose. Ambartsumov may have been on firmer ground when he argued that, according to the RSFSR constitution, the presidium of the Supreme Soviet did not have the authority to initiate the process of changing the republic's borders. What he failed to mention, however, is that between sessions of the Supreme Soviet its prerogatives reverted to the presidium. The right to sanction border changes between Union republics was within the competence of the full USSR Supreme Soviet, and on 26 April 1954 it did precisely that, passing a law that confirmed the earlier decree of its presidium.[17] Ambartsumov avoided this aspect of the issue as well. Moreover, Russia's transfer of Crimea was subsequently legitimized by amendments to the 1937 RSFSR constitution and again by the 1978 constitution, which dropped all references to the peninsula. In the final analysis, the issue appears to be moot. Even if Russian lawmakers were in violation of their constitution when they initiated the process of transferring Crimea to Ukraine, which was the principal argument of Ambartsumov and others, international law has long recognized that "a state cannot plead the violation of its own internal law in order to justify the non-fulfillment of international obligations."[18]

Ukrainian spokespeople disagree with their Russian counterparts not only on the legal and constitutional issues but also insofar as Khrushchev's motives are concerned. The prevailing view in Kyiv is that Crimea was transferred to Ukraine not for political reasons but because of the peninsula's deteriorating economic and demographic situation under Russian administration in the immediate postwar years.[19] The economic argument, it might be noted, is borne out by Aleksei Adzhubei, Khrushchev's son-in-law, who recalls that the newly elected Soviet leader initiated the bureaucratic process of transferring Crimea to Ukraine after witnessing at firsthand the decaying infrastructure and agricultural shortfalls during his stay there in October 1953.[20]

THE LUKIN INITIATIVE

The first attempt to raise the Crimean issue on an official state level was made by Lukin's parliamentary committee on international affairs, which distributed its resolution urging the nullification of the 1954 decisions to Russian lawmakers in mid-January 1992. At the time, Kyiv and Moscow were in the midst of a heated dispute over ownership of the Black Sea Fleet and the fate

of the former Soviet military, and it was decided to refer the resolution to other committees so as not to exacerbate the situation.[21] On 23 January, however, the Russian parliament decided on a course of action described by *Izvestia* as "a step toward the development of Russian-Ukrainian relations according to the Yugoslav variant."[22] By an overwhelming majority of votes, it instructed the Committee on Foreign Affairs and External Economic Ties and the Committee on Legislation together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to examine the constitutionality of the 1954 decisions and resolved to approach its Ukrainian counterpart with a recommendation to do the same.[23]

The resolution was introduced by a group of so-called patriotic-statist deputies from the Russia and Fatherland parliamentary groups headed by Baburin, who had recently returned from Sevastopol. Baburin and his colleagues also gained the approval of the lawmakers for an appeal to the Ukrainian parliament, urging the Ukrainian side to recognize the Black Sea Fleet as an integral part of the Strategic Forces of the CIS and to accelerate constructive negotiations on all matters related to the Black Sea Fleet.[24] For Baburin, Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet were issues that were not easily dissociated:

> I left for Crimea with a group of deputies right after the officers' meeting in Moscow. We saw for ourselves that, in essence, this was the third defense of Sevastopol. We were also convinced of the striving of the sailors and officers to maintain the fleet as a single entity. . . . After the radical statements by the leadership of Ukraine, the question also came up about restoring historical justice with regard to Crimea. It is no secret that it was "presented" to Ukraine in violation of all laws to commemorate the 300th anniversary of Ukraine's reunification with Russia. The Russian parliament should not take the position of absolute abdication and betrayal. We are proposing that all of these questions be resolved in the process of negotiations.[25]

The root problem, however, was Ukrainian independence. As Baburin explained shortly after the parliament's decisions: "We were obligated to declare: if Ukraine is disavowing its 300-year unity with Russia, there should be some kind of negative consequences."[26]

The linkage between Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet, albeit of a very different kind, and the circumstances and considerations that prompted Lukin to place the Crimean question before the Russian parliament, were reflected in his letter to parliamentary speaker Khasbulatov, excerpts from which appeared in *Komsomol'skaya pravda* as parliament was preparing to discuss the Crimean question.[27] Lukin recommended, among other things, that Crimea be used as the main bargaining chip in the Black Sea Fleet dispute. The scenario that he outlined had the Russian parliament declaring the transfer of Crimea as illegal and, which is not entirely comprehensible, a repressive act against Russia in the context of the recently adopted law on repressed peo-

ples. Lukin predicted that this would have the effect of stimulating the independence movement in Crimea "even without our direct influence." The expected result would be that "the Ukrainian leadership will be faced with a dilemma—either agree to the transfer of the fleet and its bases to Russia, or deal with the question of Crimea's status as part of Ukraine."

Lukin had other ideas as well. With regard to the former Soviet military, he proposed that two courses of action be studied in terms of how effective they might be. The first was a presidential decree, which had already been drafted, placing all of the former Soviet armed forces under Russia's jurisdiction. The alternative, which he preferred because it was less confrontational and easier to implement, was to bring the Black Sea Fleet and all of its bases under Russia's jurisdiction, with the aim of eventual negotiations with Kyiv as to the status of the bases and the possible transfer of part of the Black Sea Fleet to Ukraine. Given that Kyiv's reaction would be unfavorable in either case, Lukin proposed that Ukraine be confronted with the immediate cancellation of contracts for its military-industrial production and that the most important air force units be transferred from Ukrainian territory. This approach would also have political dividends in terms of Russian domestic politics. Concessions to the Ukrainians, he maintained, would play into the hands of the right-wing nationalist forces at home, while a hard-line position would evoke broad popular support for the Russian leadership and, moreover, provide additional time for maneuvering in the implementation of highly unpopular economic reforms.

Finally, and what is perhaps most interesting, Lukin, a democrat with the reputation of a "moderate nationalist," understood the "special relationship" between Russia and Ukraine in terms that were essentially the same as Baburin's.[28] The 11 January Ukrainian-Russian negotiations in Kyiv on military issues—which resulted in the first official recognition by Russia that a part of the Black Sea Fleet would be included in Ukraine's conventional armed forces—apparently left Lukin with the impression that Ukraine had been "lost." The only positive aspects of that meeting, he wrote, were that the Ukrainians had made their position clear and that they agreed to refrain from unilateral actions for a one-week period during which experts from both sides were to continue discussions. Beyond that, he observed:

> The main goal of the Ukrainian leadership is clearly coming into focus—to completely sever the special relationship with Russia, including in the military-political area. By proclaiming Ukraine formally a neutral state, they want to move toward the West without us, repeating the path taken by Eastern Europe.

Lukin, as events would later show, was absolutely on target.

In early February 1992, the original deadline set by the Russian parliament for its committees to report their findings was extended by several weeks. In

the meantime, Ukrainian lawmakers responded to their Russian colleagues with a statement saying that their actions violated several bilateral agreements on the inviolability of borders as well as the agreement creating the CIS and the Helsinki Final Act and, moreover, "threatened to destabilize the socio-political situation in Ukraine and Russia." At the same time, the statement expressed its understanding of the Russian parliament's "problems in forming a sovereign state" and declared its readiness to participate in mutually beneficial cooperation and constructive talks.[29] The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement that, in effect, supported the Russian parliament's decisions, emphasizing their "non-confrontational, constructive attitude" and characterizing them as an attempt to enter into a broad dialogue on Ukrainian-Russian relations.[30] Yeltsin, for his part, distanced himself from the parliament, saying that "extreme situations arising in the Supreme Soviet—for example, the demand for the almost immediate return of Crimea to Russia," served only to complicate matters.[31]

RUTSKOI'S MISSION TO CRIMEA

Whether by coincidence or by design, in early April 1992, at the same time that Kyiv and Simferopol were in the process of concluding a power-sharing agreement after difficult negotiations, Yeltsin sent Rutskoi to Crimea (and to the breakaway Transdniester Republic) at the head of a delegation that included presidential adviser Stankevich and General Boris Gromov, first deputy commander of CIS ground forces. In Sevastopol, the vice president openly declared that "common sense" dictated that Crimea must be part of Russia and that it must be a party to the Russian federative treaty. It was then that he made his colorful suggestion that hangover or sunstroke could have been at fault for the loss of Crimea. Asked by journalists whether he knew anything about the transfer of military equipment from Crimea to Russia, Rutskoi responded, "Why should we transfer anything from Russia to Russia?"[32] Stankevich offered the assessment that the 1954 decisions had no legal basis and that the Russian Supreme Soviet would "put an end to it." In his view, the problem would ultimately be decided by the Congress of Russian People's Deputies, which was due to open on 6 April. Stankevich also placed great hopes on the planned referendum in Crimea, which, he thought, would allow the peninsula to declare its independence and immediately thereafter join Russia.[33]

Sobchak joined the chorus as well, criticizing the leadership in Moscow for failing to move resolutely in defending Russian national interests, including Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet, and urging Yeltsin to repeal the 1954 decisions. "Crimea has never belonged to Ukraine," he argued, "and there are no legal and moral grounds" for Ukraine to lay claim to the peninsula.[34]

Rutskoi's remarks caused a storm of protest in the Ukrainian press and resulted in statements by the presidium of the Ukrainian parliament and by the parliament itself criticizing the Russian vice president by name for interfering in Ukraine's internal affairs and calling into question its territorial integrity.[35] One can only speculate why Rutskoi, who was officially responsible for agricultural matters, should have been delegated to make uninvited visits to Crimea and the Transdniester Republic, two areas where Russian-backed separatist movements were in full swing. It should be noted, however, that by this time his credentials as a patriot-statist were firmly established, and it is quite likely that the Yeltsin leadership, which was bracing itself for a frontal assault by the red–brown opposition at the Sixth Congress of Russian People's Deputies in April, hoped to soften criticism of the government's policies by demonstrating that it was no less patriotic than the deputies.

"WITHOUT JURIDICAL FORCE"

The patriots-statists made a concerted effort to place the Crimean and Black Sea Fleet issues on the agenda of the Sixth Congress, but the majority was successful in moving the debate to the Supreme Soviet. Finally, at a closed session on 21 May, the Russian parliament adopted a resolution declaring the 1954 decision of the presidium of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet regarding the transfer of Crimea as having been in violation of the Russian constitution and legislative procedures and therefore "without juridical force from the moment that it was taken." At the same time, it asserted that the Crimean question had to be "regulated" by interstate negotiations with the participation of Crimea "and on the basis of the will of its population." On the following day, the parliament also approved a statement to its counterpart in Kyiv, which was intended to explain its actions.

The document began with the observation that the Russian public was beginning to doubt "the sincerity of the intentions of some founders of the CIS" who, it asserted, "are seeking to break up this Commonwealth." Referring to unilateral efforts to artificially dismember the armed forces, the struggle for the Black Sea Fleet, and "unfriendly statements" at various international forums, the authors left no doubt whom they had in mind. The statement also noted that the rights of Russians and other nations historically linked to Russia were being encroached upon, that there was growing public pressure in Russia for "effective measures in defense of [Russia's] state interests," and that demands were being made for a "legal assessment" of the 1954 decisions. By formally raising the Crimean issue, the document argued, the Russian parliament had no intention whatsoever of making any territorial claims on Ukraine; rather, it wished to call attention to the sad state of affairs in the CIS, which required "the utmost strengthening and the development

of integrationist processes."[36] This rather odd explanation, which had already been offered by Khasbulatov several days before the resolution was passed,[37] only makes sense within the broader context of the "special relationship" between Ukraine and Russia.

The statement affirmed Russia's adherence to "the principle of the inviolability of borders existing within the framework of the CIS, including those between the Russian Federation and Ukraine," which is an almost exact rendering of the wording in Article 5 of the 8 December 1991 Agreement on the Founding of the Commonwealth of Independent States: "The High Contracting Parties recognize and respect each other's territorial integrity and the inviolability of existing borders within the framework of the Commonwealth." Once again, Moscow understood this to mean that borders were inviolable only if the corresponding states remained members of the CIS, which had already been emphasized by Kozyrev in his address to the Sixth Congress of Russian People's Deputies in April.[38] That formulation had been rejected by the Ukrainian parliament in the process of ratifying the CIS agreements several days after they were signed. Sergei Filatov, first deputy chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet, reaffirmed Russia's insistence on the conditionality of the border question in the process of explaining, quite candidly, why the Russian lawmakers thought it necessary to address their Ukrainian colleagues. The statement, said Filatov, was prompted by Ukraine's "overt attempts to break away from the CIS."[39] In short, the overarching issue was not the status of Crimea as such but rather Moscow's determination to keep Ukraine aligned with Russia.

Kyiv reacted to these moves in a predictable manner. Besides a protest note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ukrainian parliament adopted a resolution and a statement of its own that qualified Moscow's actions as an "act of political blackmail."[40] Kyiv steadfastly maintained that the status of Crimea is not negotiable and that decisions taken in Moscow are, in essence, irrelevant. Support for the Ukrainian position was expressed by Starovoitova, Yeltsin's adviser at the time, by the splintered Democratic Russia movement, and, in his own inimitable fashion, by Tsipko, who maintained that the Russian parliament's decisions on Crimea set a precedent that could pose a danger for the very existence of Russia as a state. True to his conviction that the "real" Russia had been perpetuated in the form of Soviet statehood, Tsipko argued that renunciation of the Soviet past was tantamount to the renunciation of Russia. Indeed, according to Tsipko, following the logic of Russia's lawmakers, one could return to the period of Kievan Rus and insist that the 1654 "reunification" of Ukraine and Russia was illegal because it had not been based on a referendum, which was precisely what Khasbulatov, Kozyrev, Filatov, and other leading members of Yeltsin's team were advocating for Crimea.[41]

Crimea was not on the agenda of the first Kravchuk–Yeltsin summit in Da-

gomys in June 1992, which was rightly seen as a victory for Kyiv to the extent that it affirmed Ukraine's position that Crimea could not be the subject of interstate talks. Nonetheless, it was clear that the Crimean question would not simply go away. At the end of May, a Ukrainian newspaper quoted Baburin as telling Kyiv's ambassador in Moscow: "If we do not take Crimea away from you, war between Russia and Ukraine will erupt."[42] Zhirinovsky paid a visit to Simferopol on 7 June, where he told an unsanctioned meeting that not only Crimea but all of Ukraine was Russian territory.[43] Shortly before the summit and again on several occasions thereafter, Rutskoi repeated his conviction that Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet were never to become Ukrainian. More disturbing, however, were Kozyrev's remarks in a French newspaper interview in early June about border changes and the possibility that Crimea could revert to Russia,[44] which indicated that the views of the red–brown opposition, particularly on questions regarding Russia's relations with the former Soviet republics, could not be easily dismissed by the Yeltsin government.

THE "THIRD DEFENSE OF SEVASTOPOL"

Russian and Soviet history assign a special status to Sevastopol in the hierarchy of "hero cities." The first defense of Sevastopol occurred during the Crimean War in the mid–nineteenth century and the second during World War II. The "third defense of Sevastopol," a phrase that appears to have been coined by Baburin,[45] refers to the attempt by Russian lawmakers to establish that, in accordance with Soviet legal norms, Sevastopol was not juridically a part of Crimea when the peninsula was transferred to Ukraine and therefore continued to remain under Russia's jurisdiction after 1954.

The argument was based entirely on a decree of the Presidium of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet issued on 29 October 1948 that granted Sevastopol the status of an "independent administrative-economic center with its own special budget" and assigned it to "the category of cities under republican subordination." The logic that followed was simple and straightforward: the decree had legally "extricated" Sevastopol from Crimea's jurisdiction; Sevastopol was not mentioned in the various documents that transferred the peninsula to Ukraine, which meant that the city was not included in the transfer; the decree had never been amended or nullified; therefore, Sevastopol was part of Russia even if Crimea was part of Ukraine.[46]

The key figures in this admittedly novel undertaking, which was set in motion in the early fall of 1992, were Aleksandr Kruglov, a deputy of the Crimean parliament and the Sevastopol city council, and Evgenii Pudovkin, a member of the Russian parliament's international affairs committee. Kruglov, who was also head of the Sevastopol branch of the Moscow-based Na-

tional Salvation Front, concentrated his activities primarily on mobilizing public opinion on the Sevastopol issue in Crimea, which included organizing public rallies and meetings that ended with the adoption of the appropriate resolutions and protests addressed to Moscow. Kruglov coordinated his activities with Pudovkin, who energetically lobbied his colleagues in Moscow to address the question formally.[47] Through their joint efforts, Pudovkin was able to argue the case for Russia's claim to Sevastopol at the Seventh Congress of Russian People's Deputies in December 1992, which resulted in an instruction to the parliament to examine the legal documentation regarding Sevastopol's status.[48] To that end, a special parliamentary investigative commission headed by Pudovkin was established, which began to lay the groundwork for the "third defense of Sevastopol."

The authorities in Kyiv responded in a fashion that was now becoming all too familiar and almost routine: a formal note of protest from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a declaration from the presidium of the Ukrainian parliament accusing the Russian deputies of advancing territorial claims and violating existing agreements. The Ukrainian side also felt it necessary to challenge the Russian interpretation of the 1948 decree with its own version of what that document meant, insisting that it had nothing to do with territorial-administrative changes and emphasizing the fact that Sevastopol was listed among the cities with republican status in the 1978 Ukrainian constitution but not in the Russian constitution.[49] In early 1993, the scenario of formal diplomatic protest followed by a statement from the presidium of the Ukrainian parliament was repeated, this time in connection with a questionnaire distributed by Pudovkin's commission to members of the Crimean parliament eliciting their views on possible changes in the status of both Sevastopol and Crimea, including a question that posited a confederation among Russia, Ukraine, and Crimea. Another incident involved a letter from a deputy speaker of the Russian parliament to the Crimean parliament offering Moscow's services as an "international guarantor" of a referendum on the peninsula's independence.

Finally, in a resolution adopted on 9 July 1993 by a unanimous vote (with one abstention), the Russian parliament "confirmed the Russian federal status of the city of Sevastopol" and instructed the government to formulate in the shortest possible time a state program to safeguard that status and conduct negotiations with Kyiv on Sevastopol as the main base of an undivided Black Sea Fleet. The Russian Central Bank was put on notice that it should begin thinking about how to provide for Sevastopol's budget, and the appropriate parliamentary committee was ordered to draft legislation amending the constitution to reflect Sevastopol's status as part of Russia.[50] Anticipating the reaction from Kyiv, Pudovkin emphasized that the ruling on Sevastopol did not constitute a claim to Ukrainian territory inasmuch as the city had never been part of Ukraine. Both the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Yelt-

sin were quick to distance themselves from the parliament's actions. The Russian president declared, "I am ashamed of this decision. The problems of the Black Sea Fleet and its city-base should be resolved gradually and calmly. Otherwise, what, in the final analysis, am I expected to do—go to war with Ukraine?"[51]

On this occasion, Kyiv responded in a decidedly more forceful manner, suggesting a greater concern about the overall direction in which relations with Moscow were moving. Pavlychko, head of the parliamentary committee on international relations, seemed to anticipate Yeltsin's remarks when he characterized the Russian parliament's resolution as "tantamount to a declaration of war."[52] Besides the formal diplomatic protests and parliamentary counterresolutions, the decision was taken to request an immediate session of the United Nations Security Council to deal with the situation, which resulted in the first public condemnation of Russia by the international community during the almost two-year confrontation between Kyiv and Moscow over Crimea. Although stopping short of a formal resolution, the Security Council decided on a statement from its president reaffirming its commitment to Ukraine's territorial integrity and characterizing the Russian parliament's action as incompatible with the terms of the 1990 Ukrainian-Russian treaty and the United Nations Charter and therefore "without effect."[53]

Efforts on the part of several Russian lawmakers to have the parliament reconsider its vote on Sevastopol proved unsuccessful. Indeed, in the early fall of 1993, as the conflict between Yeltsin and the Russian parliament was reaching its breaking point, Oleg Rumyantsev, secretary of Russia's Constitutional Committee and one of the leaders of the social democrats, conducted a fact-finding tour of Crimea, where he assured the residents of Sevastopol that their city was part of Russia and that this would be reflected in the new Russian constitution.[54]

ZATULIN AND LUZHKOV

The dissolution of the Russian parliament and the shelling of the parliamentary building in October 1993 was met with apprehension not only in Kyiv but also in Washington and other Western capitals. On the one hand, Ukraine's leaders had no reason to assume that the new parliamentary elections in Russia scheduled for December would necessarily result in a legislative body more amenable not only on the issues of Crimea and Sevastopol but on Ukrainian-Russian relations in general. Migranyan characterized the situation forthrightly and, as it turned out, fairly accurately:

> The Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation correctly asserted the existence of the Crimean problem. This question has not disappeared with the disappear-

ance of the Supreme Soviet. There is absolutely no divergence of views in Russian political circles regarding Crimea. Absolutely none.[55]

On the other hand, the forcible dissolution of the parliament was a serious blow for the red–brown opposition, both organizationally and morally, which probably contributed to the fact that in the early part of 1994 the polemics between Kyiv and Moscow over Crimea and Sevastopol receded into the background.

If the September–October events in Moscow were a setback for those political forces in Russia committed to the Crimean cause, developments in Crimea itself were much more promising. In January 1994, Yurii Meshkov, the leader of the most influential separatist movement in Crimea, scored an overwhelming victory in the autonomous republic's first (and only) presidential elections, and several months later his supporters grouped in the "Russia" bloc captured a majority in the local parliamentary elections.[56] The patriots-statists in Moscow had sufficient reason to be optimistic that under Meshkov's leadership Crimea would break loose from Kyiv without their active intervention. This wait-and-see attitude was reflected in the initial statements made by Zatulin, who was chosen to head the State Duma's newly created Committee on CIS Affairs and Ties with Compatriots, which were relatively moderate and restrained. Indeed, one of Zatulin's deputies, Vyacheslav Igrunov, expressed confidence that there would be no more statements of the kind issued by the Supreme Soviet in 1992–93.[57] At the same time, Zatulin did not conceal his convictions, maintaining that Russia had a "mission" in Crimea (and elsewhere outside of Russia) and that Crimea was an "open problem" for Russians not unlike the Kuril Islands for the Japanese.[58] In his address to the opening session of the new Crimean parliament, Zatulin struck an emotional note, telling the assembly that for him and his colleagues being in Crimea left them with the impression of "having returned to their lost country."[59]

In May 1994, during the tense situation sparked by the Crimean parliament's decision to, in effect, renew its claim to independence, the State Duma adopted an appeal to the Ukrainian parliament politely cautioning against any forceful response, praising Kyiv's handling of the situation, and expressing its readiness to promote "the search for constructive compromises."[60] In November, Kyiv's decision to nullify a long list of Crimean laws that were ruled to be in violation of Ukraine's constitution and legislation prompted a statement from the State Duma that was more forceful in tone. While recognizing "the reality of Crimea being situated in Ukraine," the statement urged the Ukrainian deputies and "all citizens of Ukraine" to be patient and respectful with regard to Crimea's hopes and problems and warned that without a compromise solution to the Kyiv–Simferopol conflict agreements on the future of the Black Sea Fleet and the signing of a Ukrai-

nian-Russian friendship treaty were "unattainable."[61] The move was initiated by Zatulin.

The authorities in Kyiv were in a position to ignore these veiled threats. The internal political situation in Crimea had deteriorated to the point of near anarchy because of the conflict between Meshkov and the local parliament. Moscow, on the other hand, was hardly in a position to be giving recommendations to Kyiv on how to deal with regional separatism after the invasion of Chechnya and the series of military fiascoes that followed. Capitalizing on the situation, Kuchma and the Ukrainian parliament moved decisively in the spring of 1995, stripping Crimea of its constitution and the presidency and temporarily subordinating the government to the cabinet of ministers in Kyiv. The initial reaction from the Russian government was very cautious. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and especially First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets, who was in the process of negotiating important economic agreements with Kyiv, emphasized that the Crimean problem was strictly a Ukrainian internal matter.

Zatulin, who by this time was well on his way to establishing himself as Russia's chief ideologue on the CIS and one of the most vocal advocates of the rights of Russians and Russian speakers in the near abroad, took a very different position.[62] On his initiative, the State Duma adopted a statement that voiced serious concern about the impact of Kyiv's actions on Ukrainian-Russian relations, referring specifically to the ongoing negotiations on the Black Sea Fleet and the restructuring of Ukraine's huge debt to Moscow, and warned about the threat to stability in the region. In a separate resolution, the deputies focused their attention on recent agreements reached between Moscow and Kyiv, which included the bilateral friendship treaty initialed by Soskovets and First Deputy Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk in early February, with a view toward their critical appraisal. At the same, the decision was taken to form a separate parliamentary committee on the Black Sea Fleet, which was headed by Zatulin.[63] It was in the midst of these developments that Zatulin made his pronouncement on "the historically nonexistent borders of an historically nonexistent state." Several weeks later, in his first response to the developments in Crimea, Yeltsin asserted that the friendship treaty with Ukraine would not be signed until Russia was certain that the rights of the Crimeans were being respected. "Russia has considerable interests in Crimea," he said. "That is why we are not indifferent to the fate of Crimea. The President and the government want the problems in relations between the authorities in Simferopol and Kiev to be settled through political dialogue, without pressure and with respect for the will of the Crimeans."[64] Several days later, Kozyrev made the sensational statement that the use of military force to protect Russian citizens and compatriots abroad could not be ruled out.

The remarks by Yeltsin and Kozyrev may have been knee-jerk reactions to

the difficulties that the Russian government was experiencing in its negotiations with Kyiv, particularly with regard to the Black Sea Fleet and the issue of dual citizenship for Russians in Ukraine, and its growing frustration with the fact that it could do little or nothing to dissuade the Ukrainian leadership from increasingly aligning itself with the West. It was against this background that Yeltsin held a closed-door meeting in mid-May with top-level officials, including a wide array of defense and security representatives, that was devoted to one overriding question: "What to do with Ukraine?"[65] While the government was mapping out a strategy, the parliament, whose term was coming to an end in December, busied itself with resolutions and appeals on Crimean issues that appeared to be of little interest even to most Crimeans. Zatulin failed to win a seat in the parliamentary elections but continued his Crimean activities in his new role as director of a Moscow institute on the CIS—to the point where the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared him persona non grata in the autonomous republic.

The new State Duma elected in December 1995, which was now dominated by Zyuganov's Communist Party and its allies on the left, continued the policies of the previous two Russian parliaments. The leadership of the committee on CIS affairs was entrusted to Tikhonov, whose views on Crimea and on Ukraine in general mirrored those of Zatulin. Already in early 1996, while leading a parliamentary delegation on a working visit to Crimea, Tikhonov echoed Zatulin's refrain to the effect that the deputies felt that they were on Russian territory.[66] The political convictions of the majority of Russian lawmakers are perhaps best exemplified by the fact that they brought to a successful conclusion a project that had been initiated by their immediate predecessors: the denunciation and retraction of Russia's role in the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the creation of the CIS, which, in effect, "restored" the USSR on the territory of the Russian Federation.

At the end of 1996, the State Duma turned its attention to Crimea and related questions. On 24 October, it adopted a lengthy appeal to the Ukrainian parliament requesting that it refrain from a "unilateral approach" to three issues: the "arbitrary" transfer of Crimea; the status of Sevastopol, which was described as not having been part of Crimea in 1954; and the division of the Black Sea Fleet. On the previous day, it had voted overwhelmingly to pass a law that mandated an end to the process of dividing the Black Sea Fleet.[67] Little more than a month later, the Council of the Federation, the upper house of the parliament, adopted a resolution and statement on Sevastopol that, among other things, expressed its concern that Kyiv, "despite objective realities," had no desire to discuss the Russian status of the city with Moscow.[68] The documents were sponsored and introduced by Luzhkov, who had now firmly established himself as the leading champion of Sevastopol and the Russian Black Sea Fleet. Already in December 1994, the Moscow mayor announced the "incorporation" of the city into the Russian capital as one of

its administrative subdivisions, which was part of a larger project establishing Moscow's patronage over Sevastopol.

Luzhkov's periodic visits to the city, frequently in connection with the opening of Moscow-subsidized housing complexes or schools for Black Sea Fleet personnel and their families, have usually been accompanied by statements of one kind or another about Sevastopol and/or Crimea that are understood by Kyiv as claims to Ukrainian territory. On 7 December 1996, in an interview on Russian television's widely viewed *Vremya* news program, Luzhkov caused an uproar by his assertion that Sevastopol "could be taken by force" and that "there were adequate forces in Russia to defend our sovereignty."[69] In some sense, Luzhkov's assertion, cited at the beginning of this chapter, that Russia and Ukraine will never come to terms unless the latter relinquishes Sevastopol and Crimea, is no less disturbing than his readiness to entertain the possibility of war over these "eternally Russian lands."

Clearly, all of this could be (and often is) dismissed as so much empty talk, political posturing, and the like. Some Western observers of the Russian political scene are fond of emphasizing that many of the most outrageous statements on Ukraine emanating from Moscow are made by those representatives of the Russian political class who have "no power." Stated differently, if it did not come from Yeltsin (or Putin), it is irrelevant. This is all very nice and well except for the fact that prominent politicians in Russia, including past and perhaps future candidates for the presidency such as Luzhkov and Lebed, are convinced that Crimea should be part of Russia. Not so long ago, in October 1996, while still head of Russia's Security Council, the ex-general confided:

> Apparently, it is time to raise the question of the existence of a territorial dispute between Russia and Ukraine, viewing Russia's rights to Sevastopol from the historical aspect, basing ourselves on a solid legal foundation, on the ethnographic factor, and also taking into consideration the will of the city's residents.[70]

Finally, it may be worthwhile to bear in mind that all of those Russian deputies who have "no power" were elected by the citizenry of Russia. Moreover, the people's representatives appear to reflect the views of the electorate rather accurately. In two separate nationwide polls conducted in December 1996, between 70 and 76 percent of respondents felt that Sevastopol should be part of Russia. In all categories—regardless of age, level of education, geographic location, or political preferences—between 64 and 76 percent shared this view. Only between 2 and 5 percent firmly believed that Sevastopol should belong to Ukraine.[71] Attitudes have not changed since then. In early 1999, the All-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion reported that 78 percent of Russians felt that Sevastopol should belong to Russia. At the

same time, 45 percent felt that the treaty with Ukraine should not have been ratified before, among other things, resolving the status of Sevastopol.[72]

In the final analysis, neither Crimea, nor Sevastopol, nor for that matter the Black Sea Fleet could stand in the way of concluding the basic treaty of friendship between Ukraine and Russia in May 1997. By that time, it was perfectly obvious that the longer Moscow hesitated the more determined Kyiv was to tie its fortunes to the West and, in particular, to NATO. But the final say was with the State Duma and the Federation Council. The former did not give its approval until December 1998. The opposition was led by Tikhonov, who argued, among other things, that ratification of the "anti-people treaty" would signify recognition of the "false idea" that Russians and Ukrainians are separate peoples; definitively assign "Russian [*rossiiskii*] Crimea" and the "Russian [*russkii*] hero city Sevastopol" to Ukraine; and recognize de jure the territorial integrity of Ukraine.[73] The committee voted against ratification, citing the need for an internationally recognized treaty that would define the status of Crimea, Sevastopol, and Russian citizens and compatriots in Ukraine. According to the document, ratification of the Ukrainian-Russian treaty should be made contingent on "Ukraine's voluntary recognition of Russia's jurisdiction over Crimea and Sevastopol."[74] At the same time, Luzhkov and his newly founded "Fatherland" movement mounted a campaign against the treaty along similar lines in the Federation Council, but it was ratified by the upper house in February 1999.

It remains to be seen whether politicians in Moscow and the Russian public will eventually come to terms with the fact that Crimea is no longer a part of Russia. In some sense, the peninsula's loss is compensated by the fact that a Russian long-term presence there is guaranteed by the Black Sea Fleet. In the meantime, none of the legislation passed by the Russian parliament that lays claim to Crimea and Sevastopol has been repealed.

NOTES

1. The characterization of the Black Sea Fleet as the world's largest naval museum is offered by Konstantin Pleshakov, "Krym: Kuda nas tolkayut glupye natsionalisty," *Novoe vremya* 31 (July 1993): 6.

2. S. M. Chervonnaya, "Vozvrashchenie i integratsiya krymskikh tatar v Krymu: 1990-e gody," in *Vynuzhdennye migranty: Integratsiya i vozvrashchenie*, ed. V. A. Tishkov (Moscow: Institut etnologii i antropologii Rossiiskoi Akademii nauk, 1997), 148; Interfax-Ukraine, 17 February 1998; Tamara Tarnawska's interview with Crimean Tatar leader Mustafa Cemiloglu [Dzhemilev] in *Ukrainian Weekly*, 25 October 1998; Refat Chubarov, deputy chairman of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis, in *Den'*, 11 June 1999; and *Uryadovyi kur'yer*, 10 February 2000. Jane I. Dawson, "Ethnicity, Ideology and Geopolitics in Crimea," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 30, no. 4 (December 1997): 429, cites a Ukrainian statistical handbook for 1993 that gives the following

breakdown of the national composition of Crimea: Russians, 57.3 percent; Ukrainians, 25.8 percent; and Crimean Tatars, 11.7 percent. Given that the last census in Ukraine was conducted in 1989, these figures are presumably estimates.

3. TASS, 22 and 23 November 1990. The "Crimean card" was also used by Gorbachev. On at least two occasions, during his visit to Lithuania in January 1990 and in his address to the Komsomol Congress in April of that year, the Soviet president referred to Crimea, among other areas in Ukraine heavily populated by Russians, as a focal point of potentially serious Ukrainian-Russian conflict in Ukraine. At that time, of course, the issue was not the status of Crimea as a problem in relations between the Ukrainian and Russian republics but the assertiveness with which some public organizations in Ukraine were pressing for the legitimization of the Ukrainian language in Ukraine and the perceived threat of the forcible ukrainianization of Russians and Russian speakers. For details, see Roman Solchanyk, "Ukraine and Russia: Before and after the Coup," *Report on the USSR*, 27 September 1991, 14–15.

4. Interview with Ambartsumov conducted by Marina Shakina, "Poluostrov razdora," *Novoe vremya* 6 (February 1992): 19.

5. Radio Mayak, 4 December 1991. In an interview in *Le Figaro* published the same day, Sobchak asserted, "If Ukraine joins a new union of the confederative type and the economic community, the question of borders will not be raised."

6. Quoted in *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 13 July 1993.

7. For a different approach to this issue, see Sherman W. Garnett, *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the Emerging Security Environment of Central and Eastern Europe*. (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1997), 58.

8. Radio Moscow-1, 20 November 1990; *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 21 November 1990. It should be pointed out that *Pravda*, 18 January 1992, reporting on the preparations in the Russian parliament to annul the 1954 decisions on the transfer of Crimea, asserted that when the ratification of the 1990 treaty between Ukraine and Russia was being decided, Yeltsin supposedly "let it slip out that if Ukraine declares that it is seceding from the USSR, then we will be able to demand the return of Crimea." The newspaper did not provide any further details.

9. Ukrinform-TASS, 27 August 1991; *Sil's'ki visti*, 29 August 1991.

10. TASS, 23 January 1992; Reuters, 24 January 1992. The top policymaking body of the Communist Party at the time was officially called the presidium, not the politburo.

11. *Pravda Ukrainy*, 7 April 1992.

12. *Izvestia*, 26 June 1946; "Trevogi i nadezhdy Kryma," *Chto delat'* (Kiev) 1 (November 1990): 13.

13. In an article in *Trud*, 26 May 1992, the historian O. Volobuev refers to Khrushchev's motives and the anniversary celebrations and reproduces excerpts from the protocols of a meeting of the presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU in late January 1954 that laid the groundwork for the transfer of Crimea by the presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

14. Quoted by V. Butkevych, B. Horyn', and A. Svidzyns'kyi, *Krym—ne til'ky zona vidpochynku* (L'viv: Poklyk sumlinnya, 1993), 45–46. Mikhail Tarasov, chairman of the presidium of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, cited the same economic and geographic reasons as well as the strengthening of the friendship between the Ukrainian and Rus-

sian peoples as the reasons for the transfer in his address to the session of the presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet on 19 February 1954. For the text, see *Izvestia*, 27 February 1954.

15. For the text, see *Sbornik zakonov Ukrainskoi SSR i ukazov Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta Ukrainskoi SSSR 1938–1979*, vol. 1 (Kiev: Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoi Literatury Ukrainy, 1980), 41.

16. For the text, see *Natsional'ni vidnosyny v Ukraini u XX st.: Zbirnyk dokumentiv i materialiv* (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1994), 326.

17. *Natsional'ni vidnosyny v Ukraini u XX st.*, 328.

18. See the article by Galina Shinkaretskaya, head of the Group for CIS International-Legal Problems of the Institute of State and Law of the Russian Academy of Sciences, "Ostrov Sevastopol'," *Novoe vremya* 1–2 (13 January 1997): 14.

19. See Vasyl' Boyechko, Oksana Hanzha, and Borys Zakharchuk, *Kordony Ukrainy: Istorychna retrospektyva ta suchasnyi stan* (Kyiv: Osnovy, 1994), 89–91.

20. Aleksei Adzhubei, "Kak Khrushchev Krym Ukraine otdal," *Novoe vremya* 6 (February 1992): 20–21, and *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, 22 May 1992.

21. *Pravda*, 18 January 1992.

22. *Izvestia* (Moscow evening ed.), 24 January 1992.

23. For the text, see *Vedomosti S"ezda narodnykh deputatov Rossiiskoi Federatsii i Verkhovnogo Soveta Rossiiskoi Federatsii* 6 (6 February 1992): 307.

24. *Vedomosti S"ezda narodnykh deputatov Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, 306–7.

25. Quoted in *Pravda*, 24 January 1992.

26. *Moskovskie novosti*, 9 February 1992.

27. *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, 22 January 1992.

28. In a letter to Solzhenitsyn in the spring of 1992, Lukin emphasized his conviction, which was widespread among patriots-statists such as Baburin and Rutskoi, that the Russian Federation was not the "real" Russia: "I said openly in parliament and I am ready to repeat it now: the Russian Federation within its Bolshevik borders is the same kind of deformed and artificial body as the USSR." For the text, see *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 1 April 1992.

29. For the text, see *Vidomosti Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy* 19 (12 May 1992), 554–55.

30. For the text, see *Diplomaticheskii vestnik* 4–5 (29 February–15 March 1992): 61.

31. ITAR-TASS, 25 February 1992.

32. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 7 April 1992.

33. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 7 April 1992.

34. Interfax, 9 April 1992.

35. For the texts, see *Vidomosti Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy* 28 (14 July 1992): 942–43, and 29 (21 July 1992): 979–80, respectively.

36. For the texts of the resolution and the statement, see *Vedomosti S"ezda narodnykh deputatov Rossiiskoi Federatsii* 22 (4 June 1992): 1525 and 1530–31, respectively.

37. At a press briefing on 18 May, Khasbulatov told journalists that the Russian parliament would very likely nullify the 1954 decisions on Crimea, but that, irrespective of the outcome, Russia would not make territorial claims on Ukraine. In the process of forming a truly democratic state, he said, Russia is simply "freeing itself of illegal acts committed by the previous leadership." See *Izvestia* (Moscow evening ed.), 19 May 1992.

38. See the text of his address in *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 21 April 1992.

39. Quoted in *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, 22 May 1992.

40. For the texts of the resolution and statement, see *Holos Ukrainy*, 4 and 5 June 1992, respectively.

41. *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 27 May 1992, and *Nedelya* 21 (May 1992).

42. *Holos Ukrainy*, 23 May 1992. *Izvestia* (Moscow evening ed.), 26 May 1992 quoted Baburin as saying, "Either Ukraine reunites with Russia again, or—war."

43. *Holos Ukrainy*, 9 June 1992.

44. *Le Monde*, 7–8 June 1992.

45. *Pravda*, 24 January 1992.

46. See, for example, Luzhkov's article in *Izvestia*, 1 November 1996, in which the Moscow mayor also offers the analogy of the Vatican's status in Italy.

47. For a detailed analysis, see Bohdan Horyn', "Kukhnya politychnoi provokatsii proty ukrains'koi derzhavy (movoyu faktiv)," *Rozbudova derzhavy* 5 (1993): 27–35, and 6: 18–24.

48. *Sed'moi S"ezd narodnykh deputatov Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, 377.

49. See, for example, the interview with Kravchuk in *Pravda Ukrainy*, 15 December 1992.

50. For the text, see *Vedomosti S"ezda narodnykh deputatov Rossiiskoi Federatsii* 29 (22 July 1993): 1794.

51. Quoted in *Nazavisimaya gazeta*, 13 July 1993.

52. *New York Times*, 10 July 1993.

53. For the text, see *Ukrainian Weekly*, 25 July 1993.

54. *Segodnya*, 16 September 1993.

55. *Respublika* (Kyiv), 4–10 November 1993.

56. On the presidential and parliamentary elections, see Andrew Wilson, "Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Ukraine: The Issue of Crimea," in *Crimea: Dynamics, Challenges and Prospects*, ed. Maria Drohobycky (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995), 108–31.

57. ITAR-TASS, 1 February 1994.

58. See the interview with Zatulin conducted by Grigorii Kroshin, "Krym ne styanut' u Ukrainy . . . ," *Stolitsa* 11 (1994 [March]): 7.

59. Quoted in *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 11 May 1994.

60. For the text, see *Gosudarstvennaya Duma: Postanovleniya i drugie dokumenty (mart–mai 1994 goda)* 4: 86–87.

61. For the text, see *Gosudarstvennaya Duma: Postanovleniya i drugie dokumenty (11–25 noyabrya 1994 goda)* 9: 31–32.

62. See his article "Nastupil moment istyny v otnosheniyakh Moskvy i Kieva," *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 24 March 1995.

63. For the texts, see *Gosudarstvennaya Duma: Postanovleniya i drugie dokumenty (10–24 marta 1995 goda)* 5: 30–32 and 19, respectively.

64. Reuters, 15 April 1995. See also *Washington Post*, 19 April 1995.

65. *Kievskie vedomosti*, 19 May 1995.

66. Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 14 February 1996.

67. For the texts, see *Sobranie zakonodatel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii* 45 (4 November 1996): 10050–52 and 10042, respectively. The law was vetoed by Yeltsin.

68. For the texts, see *Sobranie zakonodatel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii* 51 (16 December 1996): 11015–16.

69. *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 11 December 1996; *Narodna armiya*, 11 December 1996.

70. *Flag Rodiny* (Sevastopol'), 5 October 1996. See also *Los Angeles Times*, 14 October 1996.

71. *Izvestia*, 28 December 1996, and *NG-Stsenarii* 8 (July 1997).

72. Interfax, 26 February 1999, and *Trud-7*, 5 March 1999.

73. See his lengthy article in *Kievskie vedomosti*, 21 July 1998, and the interviews with him in *Parlamentskaya gazeta*, 24 November 1998 and 24 December 1998.

74. Excerpts from the document are published in *Kievskie vedomosti*, 22 May 1998.

9

The Crimean Imbroglio II: Kyiv and Simferopol

> Quite simply, the [Crimean] guys took the wrong road.
>
> —President Leonid Kuchma, *Ogonek*, April 1995

> I remain the legally, popularly elected president of Crimea, and I will perform my duties to the extent possible.
>
> —Yurii Meshkov, *Izvestia*, 14 April 1995

> If we do not begin a normal dialogue with the Crimean Tatars, the consequences will be grave.
>
> —Sergei Kunitsyn, chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, *Izvestia* (Moscow ed.), 15 June 1999

When one talks about the Ukrainian west and the Russian east in the context of Ukraine's regional differences, the terms *Ukrainian* and *Russian* are, as we have seen, short forms for rather complex issues. Crimea is the most "Russian" of Ukraine's regions, and, for reasons that have already been noted, it has posed the greatest problems for the architects of Ukraine's state- and nation-building projects. The facile popular perception is that the main reason for these problems is the ethnic factor—that is, that the conflict between Kyiv and Simferopol has its roots and is conditioned by the fact that Crimea has an ethnic Russian majority. Two observations are in order. First, there is no evidence of hostility between Ukrainians and Russians in Crimea based on ethnicity. On the contrary, studies show that in Simferopol, for example, ethnic harmony is the rule.[1] Second, ethnicity does matter, but it is only one and by no means the most important element in the Crimean imbroglio.

Relations between Kyiv and Simferopol may be said to have been strained more or less uninterruptedly at least from the time that Ukraine declared its state sovereignty in July 1990. There were, however, four critical junctures

at which issues of self-determination played a decisive role in defining Crimea as part of Ukraine. The first was the Crimean campaign for the restoration of its autonomous status, which began in the late 1980s and ended successfully and amicably in early 1991. The second was the Crimean declaration of independence in May 1992, which was blocked by Kyiv and never implemented. This was followed by the successes of the "Russia" bloc in the Crimean presidential and parliamentary elections in early 1994 and the attempt in May of that year to revisit the independence question. Finally, Kyiv's crackdown in the spring of 1995 resulted in the abolition of Crimea's presidency and the curtailment of the peninsula's prerogatives.[2]

THE QUEST FOR AUTONOMY

Demands for the restoration of Crimean autonomy surfaced in the summer and fall of 1989—at the time when Ukraine's law on languages was in preparation and the democratic opposition grouped in Rukh was beginning to emerge as a political force—and gained momentum after the declaration on state sovereignty. The organizing and moving force behind the campaign for autonomy was the Communist Party. One of the first to act was the Sevastopol City Party Committee. At its plenum in August 1989, it recommended holding a referendum on three questions: restoration of the Crimean ASSR, official bilingualism and whether the Ukrainian language should be taught in Crimea, and the resettlement of the Crimean Tatars. The autonomy issue came up again in January 1990 at a plenum of the Crimean Oblast Party Committee, where First Secretary Mykola Bahrov and the majority of speakers are reported to have concluded that autonomy would serve to moderate emerging problems in the area of inter-nationality relations. At the end of October, the election and report conference of the Crimean Party organization adopted a resolution that called for the restoration of the Crimean ASSR "as a subject of the USSR" and recommended holding a referendum.[3] The key role in organizing the campaign was played by Leonid Hrach, then the second secretary of the Crimean Party organization and currently the speaker of the local parliament.[4]

Appropriate measures were also being taken at the republic level. On the eve of the Crimean Party conference, the Secretariat of the Communist Party Central Committee in Kyiv instructed the leadership of the Supreme Soviet to place the question of Crimea's state status on the parliament's agenda. The Crimean Party leaders, in turn, were told to "take the initiative in adopting a declaration on the status of Crimea" and conduct "broad agitation" in the mass media in favor of changing Crimea's "administrative-political status."[5] The previous June, at the Twenty-eighth Party Congress, Ukrainian Party leader Ivashko raised the possibility of creating "national administrative-ter-

ritorial and even autonomous formations" in the context of improving the [Ukrainian] state system and protecting minority rights:

> Specifically, the question of Crimea's status is now being actively discussed. It is complicated. But, taking into consideration the geographic location, historical traditions, demographic and socioeconomic realities, the question of forming the Crimean ASSR as a multinational autonomy within the Ukrainian SSR could be looked into. Although, of course, the final say in the matter rests with the peoples of Crimea.[6]

It is probably fair to assume that the campaign to restore Crimea's autonomy was undertaken with the knowledge and approval of party organs in Moscow and, in fact, at their initiative. This was the very same tactic that Gorbachev's center tried to set in motion in the RSFSR—namely, raise the status of Russia's various administrative subdivisions by bringing them directly into the process of negotiating the new Union treaty and thereby circumventing and weakening the authority of "Yeltsin's Russia."

Representatives of the democratic opposition argued that the Crimean administration, which remained in the hands of the Communist Party after the local elections in the spring of 1990, was interested in autonomy for one overriding reason: to secure a degree of isolation from the national parliament, which, although still dominated by the Communist Party, could not entirely ignore the obstreperous opposition. By transforming Crimea into an "autonomous reservation," the traditional power structures could continue operating more or less undisturbed by developments in the Ukrainian capital. This argument is certainly not without merit. At the same time, it minimizes the extent of popular support in Crimea for some form of self-determination, which was fueled throughout 1990–91 by fears of "forcible ukrainianization," "Ukrainian separatism," and the very real possibility that Kyiv would refuse to agree to Gorbachev's new Union treaty.

In September 1990, the Crimean Oblast Soviet took the first concrete step toward autonomy, adopting a statement addressed to the USSR and RSFSR Supreme Soviets declaring that the 1945–46 decisions that had stripped the peninsula of its autonomous status were unconstitutional and should be nullified and expressing its conviction that Crimea's state status should be based on the will of the local population.[7] Two months later, an extraordinary session of the Crimean Oblast Soviet adopted a declaration that restated this position, adding that the Crimeans were entitled to the restoration of their statehood in the form of the Crimean ASSR "as a subject of the USSR and a party to the Union treaty." At the same time, the deputies resolved to hold a referendum on the question of statehood, although at the time there was neither a USSR nor a Ukrainian referendum law. The session was attended by Kravchuk, who stated that he personally had "no doubt whatsoever that Cri-

mea should be an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic." The issue could be resolved without a referendum, he asserted, but it was up to the deputies to decide.[8]

The vote was held as planned, with more than 81 percent of the electorate taking part. The majority of Crimean Tatars boycotted the action, arguing that if Crimea's autonomy was to be restored it should be national-territorial in form—that is, exclusively Crimean Tatar. Slightly more than 93 percent of voters answered in the affirmative to the question "Are you for the restoration of the Crimean ASSR as a subject of the USSR and a party to the Union treaty?" Simultaneously, the residents of Sevastopol voted by a margin of over 90 percent in favor of granting their city, as the main base of the Black Sea Fleet, "Union-republican" status.[9] Kyiv's official position was that the Crimeans were entitled to their autonomy, and this was reflected in the law "On the Renewal of the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic" passed by the national parliament in February 1991, which restored Crimea's status "within the borders of the Ukrainian SSR."[10] Crimea was now legally an autonomous republic within Ukraine.

THE QUEST FOR INDEPENDENCE

Ukraine's declaration of independence and the rapidly progressing disintegration of the Soviet state in the aftermath of the failed coup prompted the emergence of an organized and full-fledged separatist movement. Within little more than a week, on 4 September, the Crimean parliament declared Crimea's state sovereignty as a constituent part of Ukraine and the "supremacy, unity, and indivisibility of the Crimean ASSR."[11] The main force behind the separatist drive was the Republican Movement of Crimea (RDK) led by Meshkov, the future president of the peninsula, which was formed on the very day that Ukrainian independence was declared.[12] The RDK openly advocated the nullification of the 1954 decisions on Crimea and independent statehood, proposing that another referendum be held on the question "Are you for the independence of the Republic of Crimea in union with other states?" To that end, it succeeded in pressuring the Crimean parliament into adopting a referendum law in November. The deputies rejected, however, two other proposals that were placed on the agenda: an appeal to the nonexistent USSR Supreme Soviet and to Gorbachev on the annulment of the 1954 decisions and a measure that would have rendered ineffective on Crimean territory changes in the Ukrainian Criminal Code concerning criminal liability for advocating the violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity. The referendum campaign went into full swing at the beginning of 1992, and within two months almost 248, 000 signatures were gathered (180,000 were required by law).[13]

Kyiv's response to these developments focused on negotiating a power-sharing arrangement with the Crimean authorities while at the same time emphasizing the principle of Ukraine's territorial integrity. In early February 1992, a parliamentary delegation from Kyiv headed by Vladimir Grinev, a deputy speaker, was dispatched to Simferopol for talks with its Crimean counterpart. The result was a joint statement that, among other things, agreed on the need to delineate authority between Kyiv and Simferopol and establish a free economic zone on the peninsula, which was approved by the national parliament. At the end of March, another agreement was reached that a draft law worked out by the two sides would serve as the legal foundation for a power-sharing deal that would initially be examined by the Crimean parliament and then approved in Kyiv. The Crimean side agreed to the arrangement as well as to the draft law detailing respective spheres of power within a matter of days, indicating that it wished to avert the confrontational scenario that was being prepared by the RDK.

The referendum issue was placed on the agenda of the Crimean parliament for 5 May 1992. In the meantime, Kravchuk issued a strongly worded statement to the Crimeans condemning the referendum campaign, which he maintained was being organized by separatist forces intent on destabilizing the situation, sowing discord among the peoples of Crimea and between Crimea and Ukraine, and exacerbating relations between Kyiv and Moscow. While assuring the Crimeans that their interests would be better served within the framework of broad political and economic autonomy within Ukraine, the president made it clear that Ukraine would not permit any changes in its borders and that he would never participate in negotiations on the division of Ukrainian territory. The Ukrainian parliament, in turn, adopted on first reading a draft law "On the Delineation of Authority between Ukraine and the Republic of Crimea." The document, which had been agreed on by both sides, defined Crimea as an autonomous part of Ukraine that could independently decide all questions within its competence.[14] The draft was slated for final approval after review by parliamentary committees in Kyiv and Crimean lawmakers. In its final form, however, the law—which was approved by the Ukrainian parliament on 29 April and renamed "On the Status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea"—was extensively altered to the disadvantage of the Crimeans.[15] Even the name change was intended to demonstrate that Kyiv and Simferopol were not equal partners, which had been implicit in the earlier version.

When the Crimean parliament convened on 5 May, the prevailing mood in Simferopol was that Kyiv had reneged on an agreement that had been painstakingly negotiated over several months. The result was an unexpected vote declaring Crimean independence (118 of 167 deputies present) subject to a referendum, a corresponding resolution on the declaration, and an offer that Simferopol and Kyiv conclude a bilateral treaty. The referendum, which

was scheduled for the beginning of August, proposed two questions: "Are you for an independent Republic of Crimea in union with other states?" and "Do you approve of the act declaring the state independence of the Republic of Crimea?" Bahrov, the Crimean parliamentary speaker, attempted to somehow soften the anticipated reaction from Kyiv by arguing that the independence declaration was not tantamount to secession from Ukraine.[16]

The following day, the main topic on the agenda of the Crimean parliament was the adoption of a constitution; the unruly debate, as was to be expected, focused on the nature of relations with Ukraine. Once again, Bahrov sought to find some sort of middle ground. After two rounds of voting, he was able to get approval for the proposal to insert into the constitution a separate article stating that "The Republic of Crimea is part of the state of Ukraine and defines its relations with it on the basis of a treaty and agreements."[17] Understandably, some confusion ensued as to how the declaration of independence was to be reconciled with the constitution.

The response from Kyiv was immediate and unequivocal. The presidium of the parliament convened on 6 May and declared Crimea's actions unconstitutional. Various opposition parties in Kyiv called for the dissolution of the Crimean parliament, the imposition of direct presidential rule on the peninsula, and even the arrest of Bahrov and other Crimean leaders. The full parliament discussed the Crimean situation on 13 May and adopted a resolution that characterized the Crimean decisions as unconstitutional, blocked the resolutions on independence and the referendum, ordered the Crimean parliament to revoke the resolutions by 20 May, instructed a parliamentary commission to review all Crimean legislation with a view toward its constitutionality, and proposed that the president take immediate measures to restore law and order on the peninsula. At the same, it offered to continue the dialogue with the Crimean authorities on the basis of the Ukrainian constitution and the law on Crimean autonomy adopted at the end of April.[18]

Bahrov, as before, looked for a compromise solution, insisting that both sides had to be prepared to make concessions. The presidium of the Crimean parliament met on 18 May and proposed that the independence declaration and corresponding resolution be annulled and, in view of the expressed willingness to continue talks, that the referendum address the question of support for the constitution instead of independence.[19] The full Crimean parliament convened on 20 May but failed to reach a decision. On the following day, however, it agreed on four resolutions that (1) annulled the resolution on the declaration of independence (but not the declaration itself), reasoning that independence had already been attained by adoption of the constitution; (2) proposed that Kyiv suspend the law on Crimean autonomy and a draft law on a presidential representative in Crimea; (3) called for concrete recommendations reflecting Crimea's position on the delineation of power between Simferopol and Kyiv; and (4) suspended until 10 June its resolution on the

referendum, pending consultations with the referendum organizers and agreement on the delineation of power.[20]

The dialogue was resumed in June and ended with a joint statement confirming, among other things, that Crimea, as a constituent part of Ukraine, should have the necessary legal and political possibilities to maintain independent ties with other countries in the social, economic, and cultural spheres; at the same time, it was emphasized that the peninsula could not be the subject of international law. The decision was also taken to form a joint working group charged with finalizing a power-sharing agreement, which was agreed to by the Crimean lawmakers at the end of June.

Accordingly, on 30 June 1992 the Ukrainian parliament passed the law "On the Delineation of Power between the Organs of State Power of Ukraine and the Republic of Crimea," which, from the standpoint of the Crimeans, was an improvement over its predecessor. According to an accompanying resolution, however, the law would not go into force until after the Crimean constitution and legislation were brought into line with the corresponding national laws and the referendum was called off.[21] The Crimean parliament, in turn, after initially failing to agree on the referendum issue, decided in early July to place a moratorium on its referendum resolution, and in late September it enacted amendments to its constitution that were considered sufficient to meet Kyiv's requirements.

Thus, after a long and difficult process of confrontation and conciliation, the first major crisis in relations between Kyiv and Simferopol was defused, at least for the time being. Simferopol still had the referendum threat at its disposal, which could be used at any time. Moreover, there was an underlying problem that remained untouched by the agreements—namely, the RDK and its supporters were not about to go away, which is to say that the "Russian idea" in Crimea was still a force that had to be reckoned with.

MESHKOV: BACK TO THE FUTURE

One of the problems that Meshkov faced was that while the vast majority of Crimeans could agree that the "Russian idea" was a fine thing, there was no consensus as to what it actually meant, particularly with respect to Crimea's state status. The results of public opinion polls reported in the summer and fall of 1993 showed, for example, that only about 20 percent of Crimeans wanted the peninsula to return to Russia. In one survey, 41 percent supported independence, and 37 percent felt that Crimea should be part of Ukraine; in another, 57 percent favored "independence within Ukraine" and 23 percent "independence within the CIS."[22] This ambiguity was reflected in Meshkov's electoral campaign, during which he was consistent in emphasizing his support for "independence" but was careful to avoid defining what exactly it was

that he had in mind. Bahrov, his main opponent, also advocated "independence" but insisted that the status quo in relations with Kyiv should be maintained.

The 1994 Crimean presidential election was closely watched not only in Simferopol and Kyiv but in Moscow and Western capitals as well. The electioneering semantics notwithstanding, Meshkov and Bahrov represented two very different positions on the fundamental question of where Crimea's future lies—with Russia or with Ukraine—and the outcome of the vote was certain to set the stage for future relations between Kyiv and Simferopol as well as impact on the relationship between Ukraine and Russia. After an inconclusive first round of voting in mid-January that eliminated the other four contenders, Crimeans returned to the polls on 30 January and cast their ballots decisively for Meshkov as Crimea's first president. The leader of the Republican Party of Crimea (RPK-RDK) [23] won 73 percent of the votes, while Bahrov received only slightly more than 23 percent.

Already after the first round, in which Meshkov received more than twice as many votes as runner-up Bahrov, the Ukrainian parliament took a precautionary measure against anticipated moves to distance Crimea from Kyiv. On Kravchuk's initiative, it quickly amended the national constitution to authorize the president to nullify any normative acts either of the central organs of power or of the Crimean authorities that were considered to violate the Ukrainian constitution. Less than a month after the final election results, the parliament adopted a resolution on Crimea's status that was intended to spell out the limitations on the peninsula's autonomy. Specifically, the resolution stipulated that Crimea did not have state sovereignty and could not enter into political relations with foreign states; its constitution could not contravene the national constitution; Crimea was an integral part of Ukraine and Ukraine's borders could not be changed without the consent of its people; and there could be no Crimean citizenship, military formations, or monetary and financial systems. The Crimean authorities were given one month to bring their constitution and laws in line with those of Ukraine.[24]

The leadership in Kyiv had grossly underestimated Meshkov's popular appeal—and grossly overestimated Bahrov's ability to deliver. As noted earlier, Meshkov played down the separatism issue during the election campaign, but he was nonetheless sufficiently vague and seemingly contradictory in his public statements. "The essential part of my program is not separatism, not taking Crimea away from Ukraine," he explained, "but a higher standard of living for the Crimeans. We cannot achieve this without a union with Russia."[25] At the same time, Meshkov insisted that a referendum should be held in Crimea to decide its status, which was planned to coincide with parliamentary and local elections slated for late March 1994.

The proposed referendum; Meshkov's appointment of Evgenii Saburov, a Russian citizen, as deputy prime minister; and his call for Crimeans to boy-

cott elections to the national parliament put Simferopol on a collision course with Kyiv. The referendum, which was qualified as a nonbinding opinion poll, asked voters to respond to three topics: restoring the clause in the 6 May 1992 Crimean constitution that regulated relations between Crimea and Ukraine on the basis of a treaty and agreements, attaining the right to dual citizenship, and strengthening executive power by giving presidential decrees the force of laws in areas not covered by existing legislation. Kravchuk nevertheless issued a decree canceling the vote on the first two matters, which were deemed beyond Crimea's prerogatives.

The poll was held in spite of the ban, with overwhelming support for all three proposals. Much more important, however, were the results of the Crimean parliamentary elections, which gave Meshkov's supporters grouped in the "Russia" bloc nearly 60 percent of the seats. On 20 May 1994, less than two weeks after convening, the newly elected Crimean parliament voted to restore the 6 May constitution, which, it will be recalled, stated that Crimea was part of Ukraine but also specified that relations between the two would be based on a treaty and other agreements and provided for separate Crimean citizenship. The lawmakers also passed several resolutions broadening control over military and security organs on the peninsula. The decisions passed by an overwhelming majority (the Kurultai faction of the Crimean Tatars boycotted the vote), with Meshkov reportedly wavering at the last moment, and against the background of contradictory reports of Ukrainian troop movements near Sevastopol and Crimean claims of an attempt by Kyiv to stage a military coup d'état.[26]

In Kyiv, these moves were viewed as tantamount to a declaration of independence. On the same day, the Ukrainian parliament, maintaining that Crimea's actions represented a step toward secession, passed a resolution blocking the Crimean law and proposing that the Crimean parliament bring its constitution in line with the Ukrainian constitution and the law on delineation of power within ten days. If the Crimeans nullified their law, the resolution would immediately lose its force.[27] The Crimean deputies, confident of support from Moscow, declared Kyiv's actions invalid. Earlier, Yeltsin issued something in the nature of a warning to Kravchuk during a telephone consultation with the Ukrainian leader: "Crimea is a sovereign republic within Ukraine, and it has the right to make its decisions. The main thing is that neither Russia nor Ukraine should interfere in its affairs."[28] Within several days, however, passions were calmed, as both sides agreed to conduct talks. After the Crimean side ignored the deadline, the Ukrainian parliament moved to strengthen its hand by ordering the preparation of legislation that would allow it to annul Crimean laws outright if they were deemed to be in violation of the Ukrainian constitution and legislation.[29]

The events that unfolded in Crimea and in Russia in the latter half of 1994 played to Kyiv's advantage. Meshkov's "Russia" bloc was never a tightly knit

organization, and it soon became evident that competing political interests and conflicting egos were a more powerful force than the "Russian idea," ultimately resulting in a formal split among Meshkov's supporters.

More significantly, tension between the local parliament and Meshkov grew into a full-fledged conflict. In early September, the Crimean parliament, headed by Sergei Tsekov, rescinded Meshkov's power to appoint key local officials and stripped him of his role as head of state. Meshkov responded by suspending the parliament and all local soviets, transferring their functions to himself and to local heads of the administration, ordering the preparation of a new constitution subject to approval by referendum, and creating a "legislative assembly" to replace the parliament. The deputies were prevented from entering the parliamentary building by presidential security forces. Meshkov's decrees were then invalidated by the parliament. In the meantime, Saburov, the head of government, decided that he had had enough, submitted his resignation, and departed for Moscow. The local parliament dismissed the government. After efforts on the part of Kuchma and the Kyiv authorities to mediate a compromise solution proved fruitless, it went a step further and in early October deprived Meshkov of his remaining power. The constitution was amended, leaving the Crimean parliament with the authority to appoint the head of government and cabinet ministers.

The focus of the internal conflict was not only political but economic—specifically, competition for "privatization" rights to state assets in Crimea. This process, in turn, was accompanied by the growing influence of so-called "mafia structures" in the politics of the peninsula.[30] Indeed, it has been convincingly argued that one of the main reasons that the Crimean political elite was prepared to sacrifice the Russian idea and essentially caved in to pressure from Kyiv in the spring and summer of 1995 was its desire to regain control of the peninsula from the capital in order to reap the benefits of "privatization."[31]

Even without these additional problems, Crimea's economy was in a shambles. Already in early 1993, Prime Minister Kuchma reported that Sevastopol was financed from Kyiv to the tune of 85 percent of its budget; Crimea as a whole was the most heavily subsidized region apart from the city of Kyiv.[32] For the person in the street, the economic situation was a disaster; the only campaign promise that Meshkov and the "Russia" bloc were able to deliver was to adjust Crimean clocks to coincide with Moscow's. Popular disaffection with political leaders was reflected in opinion polls. In late September 1994, it was reported that only 23 percent of Crimeans supported Meshkov. At about the same time, another poll revealed that only 17 percent were in favor of retaining Crimea's autonomy, 32 percent felt that they could do without it, 30 percent were indifferent, and another 21 percent were unable to decide.[33]

CRIMEAN CLAMPDOWN

In September 1994, the Ukrainian parliament took steps to bring the situation in Crimea under control. Most important, it passed a law allowing for the dissolution of the Crimean parliament and the annulment of its laws. This was followed by a resolution that gave the Crimean parliament until 1 November to change its constitution and laws and laid the groundwork for unspecified consequences if Simferopol did not comply.[34] The deadline was not met, and in November another resolution was adopted that annulled about forty Crimean laws and other normative acts, beginning with its 1991 declaration of sovereignty.[35] Finally, in March 1995 the parliament abolished the Crimean constitution and its presidency, and Kuchma temporarily subordinated the Crimean government to the cabinet of ministers in Kyiv.[36]

The Crimean parliament responded by appealing to Kyiv as well as to Moscow, asking Yeltsin and the Russian parliament not to conclude the long-awaited friendship treaty with Ukraine without taking Crimea's interests into account. Tsekov went to Moscow to plead for help. In an address to the State Duma, he admitted that the Crimean leaders had made many mistakes but argued that the situation in Crimea, given its history, national composition, and international law, could not be viewed by Russia as a purely internal Ukrainian matter. The disrespect that Kyiv showed with regard to Crimea, he asserted, "is, first of all, disrespect for Russia."[37] Moscow, because of its war in Chechnya, was not in a position to offer Crimea anything but polite sympathy.

The Crimean parliament made an effort to assert itself at the end of April by approving a referendum scheduled for June asking Crimeans to vote on the May 1992 Crimean constitution, the Ukrainian legislation that abolished the constitution and the presidency, and a proposal for the economic and political unity of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. The Ukrainian authorities, however, made it clear that they were prepared to take resolute action, including the abolition of Crimean autonomy and the dissolution of the local parliament. Under pressure from Kyiv, the Crimean deputies canceled the planned referendum at the end of May. At the same time, they approved a draft constitution that was an amalgam of the May 1992 constitution and the Ukrainian law on delineation of authority, which ushered in a lengthy process of negotiations and revisions that was finalized only in December 1998 with the approval of the Crimean constitution by the Ukrainian parliament.

In July 1995, Tsekov was removed from his post as speaker of the Crimean parliament by his colleagues. Meshkov eventually left Crimea and moved to Moscow.[38] A very specific chapter not only in Crimea's quest for self-determination but also in Ukraine's development as a state was closed.

THE RUSSIAN IDEA IN CRIMEA

What is the "Russian idea" in Crimea? The answer is elusive. Given that Russians in Russia are having a difficult time grappling with this question, one can hardly expect Crimeans to have a clear answer. Whatever the Crimeans imagined the Russian idea to be, most observers seem to agree that it is fading. During the presidential elections in the summer of 1994, Crimean voters demonstrated very clearly and in overwhelming numbers what they were against—namely, the policies of Kravchuk, which were widely understood in terms of "Ukrainian nationalism." In the final round in July, a mere 8.9 percent voted for Kravchuk, the lowest return of any region in Ukraine (in Sevastopol, the figure was 6.5 percent). Kuchma, on the other hand, who fashioned his election campaign largely on promises of closer ties to Russia and a pledge to give the Russian language official status in Ukraine, received 89.7 percent of the Crimean vote (92 percent in Sevastopol). Crimeans clearly saw Kuchma as *their* president, but the hopes and expectations that they may have had quickly vanished.

Observers in Moscow are quick to point out that whatever autonomy Crimea had under Kravchuk was effectively ended under Kuchma. Certainly by the end of 1995, the lively meetings at the parliament building in Simferopol protesting against "Ukrainian nationalism," which were a routine occurrence in 1992–93, became a thing of the past.[39] As in most regions of Ukraine, the impact of the economic crisis and the general disenchantment with politics and politicians of all stripes has taken its toll. An added factor was that the moral and material aid that was promised and expected from Moscow never materialized. Moreover, in August 1998 the Russian "economic miracle"—which was widely perceived as a model of market reforms that should be emulated—turned out to be largely a scam and consequently lost much of its drawing power.

When Crimeans went to the polls in the spring of 1998 to choose a new parliament, the results showed how radically the political situation on the peninsula had changed. The big winners were the Communists and the big losers the ideological sympathizers of Meshkov and Tsekov. Only nine deputies (of ninety-eight) from the previous parliament were reelected, and only one of these is said to be an "activist of the Russian movement."[40] Communist leader Hrach, who was chosen to head the parliament, emphasized that the new leadership wanted "partnership and respectful" relations with Kyiv and was determined to avoid the mistakes made by the previous parliament.[41]

Crimea may well have "forgotten the ideas of Meshkov," as a headline in a Moscow newspaper asserted,[42] but this should not be construed to mean that the Russian idea has been forgotten altogether. Sergei Shuvainikov, the leader of the now defunct Russian [*Russkaya*] Party of Crimea who finished third in the Crimean presidential race in 1994, heads a movement that wants

to transform Crimea into a Russian national-territorial autonomy that would be called the Tavrida Republic. According to Shuvainikov, the Ukrainian-Russian friendship treaty "officially" recognizes Russians in Crimea as a de facto national minority and the borders between Ukraine and Russia as inviolable. The implication is that, under the circumstances, striving for independence and/or unification with Russia makes little sense. An added factor is the perceived threat from the Crimean Tatars in the event that they succeed in realizing their demand for national-territorial autonomy, which he sees as an "extremely serious danger."[43]

Shuvainikov's readiness to accept Russians, particularly in Crimea, as a national minority contrasts sharply not only with the perception of most Russians in Ukraine but also with the views of Crimea's supporters in Moscow. In October 1998, the State Duma adopted a statement protesting the fact that the new Crimean constitution grants state status exclusively to the Ukrainian language and arguing that the formula "national majority–national minority" is inapplicable to Ukraine and that Ukrainians and Russians in Ukraine are "two national majorities."[44] Tikhonov goes further, saying that Russians in Ukraine live on "eternally Russian [*russkikh*] lands" and constitute a "state-forming nation" in Ukraine.[45] Luzhkov, as we have seen, while prepared to grant Chechnya independence,[46] remains adamant that Sevastopol and Crimea are Russian territory.

Nonetheless, it is fairly clear that such enthusiasm for the Crimean cause is more evident in Moscow than in Crimea. As one observer in Moscow pointed out, although over forty organizations in Crimea have the word *Russian* in their names, they are small, uncoordinated, and weak; do not enjoy the support of the local population; and are unable to influence developments on the peninsula. For Ukraine,

> any kind of Crimean-Russian political-integrationist threat ceased to exist a long time ago. And if at some point in the future conditions were to come together whereby unification would again become possible, this will be the result of some kind of factors external to Crimea and by no means the result of efforts on the part of the Crimeans themselves.[47]

The Russian idea in Crimea may mean different things to different people, but it does have a fairly consensual foundation. Simply stated, Crimea's sympathies lie with Russia, not with Ukraine. This truism has been demonstrated in a variety of ways, including the seemingly innocuous attempts to place the peninsula's time zone in Moscow rather than in Kyiv. The December 1991 referendum on Ukraine's independence yielded the lowest level of support precisely in Crimea: 54.2 percent in favor and 42.2 percent opposed. Survey research conducted at the end of 1995 and in early 1996 shows that the Crimeans are much less likely to identify themselves as either citizens or residents of Ukraine than the general population (see table 9.1).

Table 9.1 Self-Identification: Crimea and Ukraine (in percentages)

			Crimea (Nationality)		
	Ukraine	*Crimea*	*Ukrainians*	*Russians*	*Crimean Tatars*
Citizen					
Use expression	60	26	35	20	32
Do not use	30	62	51	72	50
Resident					
Use expression	43	22	25	20	22
Do not use	45	68	61	73	62

Source: Adapted from U.S. Information Agency, Office of Research and Media Reaction, "Crimean Views Differ Sharply from Ukrainian Opinion on Key Issues," *Opinion Analysis*, M-53-96 (15 March 1996): 5.

When asked whether Crimea should be part of Ukraine, Russia, or an independent state, Crimeans opt for inclusion into Russia by a factor of ten as compared to the national sample. Interestingly, although the percentage of Crimean Ukrainians who want the peninsula to remain in Ukraine is more than double the percentage of Crimean Russians, the proportion of Ukrainians who would choose Russia is not that much greater than the proportion of Russians. The Crimean Tatars, as Dzhemilev once remarked, "are more Ukrainian than Ukrainians in the Crimea"[48] (see table 9.2).

Crimeans were also overwhelmingly in favor of confederation with the other former Soviet republics, and only slightly more than 10 percent supported Ukraine's independence. Again, the views of Crimean Ukrainians and Crimean Russians did not diverge radically on this issue, while the Crimean Tatars were much more favorably disposed to independent statehood (see table 9.3). These views have not changed significantly since mid-1994, when only 6 percent of Crimeans supported Ukraine's independence and 55 percent were opposed.[49]

The question of identity offers another insight into what underlies the

Table 9.2 Preferred Status of Crimea: Crimea and Ukraine (in percentages)

			Crimea (Nationality)		
	Ukraine	*Crimea*	*Ukrainians*	*Russians*	*Crimean Tatars*
Part of Ukraine	71	28	29	13	54
Part of Russia	4	40	41	59	8
Independent	13	19	15	17	27

Source: Adapted from U.S. Information Agency, Office of Research and Media Reaction, "Crimean Views Differ Sharply from Ukrainian Opinion on Key Issues," *Opinion Analysis*, M-53-96 (15 March 1996): 7.

Table 9.3 Preferred Status of Ukraine: Crimea and Ukraine (in percentages)

			Crimea (Nationality)		
	Ukraine	*Crimea*	*Ukrainians*	*Russians*	*Crimean Tatars*
Confederation	59	80	80	91	62
Independence	31	13	13	4	26

Source: Adapted from U.S. Information Agency, Office of Research and Media Reaction, "Crimean Views Differ Sharply from Ukrainian Opinion on Key Issues," *Opinion Analysis*, M-53-96 (15 March 1996): 7.

"Russian idea" in Crimea. How do the Crimeans define themselves? The 1994 survey, which focused on the heavily Russian and Russian-speaking eastern and southern regions of Ukraine, showed that the Crimeans had the highest proportion of respondents who identified themselves with the population of Russia (14 percent) and the lowest who saw themselves as part of Ukraine's population (3 percent). More than a third (37 percent) opted for affiliation with the former Soviet Union, presumably the "Soviet people," and 40 percent, the largest category, chose regional identity.[50] The data point to one very clear conclusion: the Crimeans stand out, even in comparison to their Russian and Russian-speaking compatriots in other parts of Ukraine, by the degree to which they reject both what might be termed "political Ukrainianism" and Ukrainian national identity. From that standpoint alone, the "Crimean problem" will remain on Ukraine's domestic agenda for the foreseeable future.

CRIMEAN TATARS

If the Russian idea in Crimea is fading, the "Crimean Tatar idea" may be said to be on the rise.[51] From a purely demographic standpoint, the future belongs to the Crimean Tatars. Two of every three births in Crimea are to Crimean Tatar families. The growth of the Crimean Tatar population on the peninsula will also be supplemented to some degree by continued immigration from among the estimated 150,000 to 250,000 Crimean Tatars who are still in Uzbekistan and other parts of Central Asia, to which the entire nation was deported in 1944.

Crimea's Russians and Ukrainians, on the other hand, are an aging population. More than a quarter of them are pensioners, for the most part former high-ranking military, KGB, and Communist Party officials who were rewarded for their services (including, of course, managing and implementing the deportation process) by retirement in the Soviet Union's version of Flor-

ida; about one-third of the population of Sevastopol consists of retired Soviet military personnel.[52]

Politically, the Russian idea in Crimea is represented by several dozen organizations that are in competition with each other, are largely considered to be irrelevant by the local Russian-speaking population, and have no power in the current Crimean parliament. The Crimean Tatars, on the other hand, have one political institution on the peninsula that, for all intents and purposes, has a near monopoly on the political life of the Crimean Tatar population—namely, the Mejlis, the representative executive body chosen by the Kurultai, or national assembly of the Crimean Tatar nation. The Mejlis is headed by Dzhemilev and his deputy, Refat Chubarov, both of whom are members of the national parliament in Kyiv. In May 1999, Crimea witnessed what is considered to be the largest ever public demonstration of Crimean Tatars—a crowd estimated between thirty-five thousand and fifty thousand—to mark the fifty-fifth anniversary of the 1944 deportation from their homeland and, no less important, to advance their political agenda and press their socioeconomic demands on the local and national authorities.

The large-scale repatriation of the Crimean Tatars from their places of exile dictated the priority tasks of the Mejlis leadership—namely, to ensure the organized and state-supported return of all Crimean Tatars who were deported and wish to return to their homeland and to establish normal social and economic conditions on the peninsula for the returnees. Neither of these objectives has been met, although some progress has been registered in both areas. The rate at which Crimean Tatars are returning has dropped considerably since the late 1980s and early 1990s. Whereas before 1993 the average annual number of returnees was thirty thousand, during the last several years that number has fallen to seven thousand to eight thousand.

Conditions for those who have returned remain abysmal. According to the State Committee for Nationalities and Migration, nearly 48 percent of Crimean Tatars currently do not have their own housing and about 33 percent of the able-bodied population is unemployed; the unemployment rate of the Crimean Tatars is double that of the Crimeans as a whole.[53] It is estimated that nearly half of the Crimean Tatar population does not have Ukrainian citizenship, which raises innumerable political, social, and economic barriers, including the inability to vote and take part in the privatization process.[54] A case in point is Kuchma's December 1999 decree on land reform, which lays the basis for the breakup of the collective farm system and provides for the parceling and sale of land. Crimean Tatars live primarily in rural areas, but without citizenship they are effectively precluded from the benefits of the land reform. A large part of the problem lies with the state of the Ukrainian economy and the paltry national budget, which do not allow the government in Kyiv to meet the needs of the Crimean Tatar population adequately. Neither Russia, although it considers itself to be the successor to the Soviet

Union, nor any other former Soviet republic has shown any interest in alleviating Kyiv's financial burden or otherwise fulfilling their responsibilities with regard to the Crimean Tatars and other deported nations.

In the absence of effective support, the Crimean Tatars, particularly in the early 1990s, began to seize unoccupied land and construct tent cities and shantytowns, which brought them into direct and often violent conflict with the local authorities. The latter were, in any case, predisposed to view the Crimean Tatars as an "alien" element, which accurately reflected and continues to reflect the views of the local population. Moreover, for many Crimeans, particularly the ubiquitous and decorated military veterans, the Crimean Tatars remain tainted with the Stalinist label of "traitors to the Fatherland."

By early 1993, however, it became clear to the local authorities that the Crimean Tatars were not about to go away and that the politics of stonewalling was a dead end. In March of that year, the Crimean parliament passed a resolution allotting plots of land to the Crimean Tatars and other deported nations. In some sense, this was a purely symbolic victory for the Crimean Tatars. The economic situation in Ukraine, particularly in 1993 and 1994, was such that it was inconceivable that any average Crimean Tatar family (or almost anyone else, for that matter) could finance the construction of a home. The March decree, however, may be said to have marked the beginning of a new phase in relations between the two sides. The local authorities abandoned what has been described as their previous policy of "apartheid," setting the stage for a protracted and difficult process of intermittent conflict and compromise.[55]

A case in point is the law on elections to the Crimean parliament that was adopted in September 1993, which, in spite of Crimean Tatar demands, did not make any provision for guaranteed representation for the Crimean Tatars or for any of the other deported nations. It was only after mass demonstrations and pressure from its own leadership that the Crimean deputies amended the law in October to include fourteen seats for the Crimean Tatars and one each for the Armenians, Bulgarians, Greeks, and Germans; no mandates were reserved for either the Krymchaks or the Karaim, both of which are indigenous Crimean nations. The law was valid only for the 1994 elections and, as we have seen, no national quotas were provided for in the elections to the local parliament in 1998.

From the very beginning, the Mejlis, which was chosen by the Second Kurultai in June 1991, proclaimed as its overarching political goal the self-determination of the Crimean Tatar nation through the restoration of its "sovereign national statehood," which translates into national-territorial autonomy in Crimea. This aim has been rejected by Kyiv. In August 1999, Kuchma argued that this would "tilt the balance" on the peninsula and result in "negative consequences."[56] In translation, this means that Kyiv is not prepared to exacerbate relations with Simferopol.

Crimean Tatar leaders, in turn, are fully aware that their maximalist demand is not likely to be met in the near future and have focused their efforts on attaining more practical objectives. One long-standing issue has been the official recognition of the Kurultai and Mejlis as the representative bodies of the Crimean Tatars. The Ukrainian leadership has refused to take this step. But in May 1999, on the eve of the huge demonstration in Simferopol, Kuchma met with Crimean Tatar leaders and issued a decree creating a Crimean Tatar advisory body attached to his office and chaired by Dzhemilev, which may be taken as progress of sorts. But disagreements over the composition of that body remain unresolved: the presidential administration insists on reserving the right to appoint its members, while Dzhemilev wants it be chosen by the Crimean Tatars.

At the same time, the leadership of the Ukrainian parliament agreed to hold hearings on another demand at the top of the Crimean Tatar agenda—legislation defining the status and rights of the Crimean Tatars. The Mejlis is determined to push through a law defining the status of the Crimean Tatars as an indigenous people of Ukraine, a concept that is enshrined (but not defined) in the 1996 constitution, which would include a guarantee of no less than 20 percent representation in the Crimean parliament and in other branches of the local government.[57] Until recently, the left coalition in the parliament was able to prevent placing this issue on the parliament's agenda.

Some movement on the local level has also occurred. Sergei Kunitsyn, the head of the Crimean government, responding to the Crimean Tatar threat of maintaining a permanent "protest presence" in Simferopol, announced a series of political, economic, and cultural measures designed to mollify the Mejlis, including the decision to establish an advisory council attached to the Crimean government similar to the body created by Kuchma.[58]

The Communist majority in the Crimean parliament sees all of this as a recipe for disaster, a view shared in certain quarters in Moscow. According to Zatulin, the Crimean Tatars are determined to secure exclusive rights on the peninsula, and "extremists from the Crimean Tatar movement are attempting to transform Crimea into a new Kosovo."[59]

During the May 1999 demonstrations in Simferopol, the Crimean Tatars unveiled a monument to General Petro Hryhorenko (Grigorenko), who had suffered persecution in Soviet psychiatric prisons for his defense of the Crimean Tatar cause. On the same day, the Soyuz Party and the Russian Community of Crimea began excavations for a planned monument to Empress Catherine II, who annexed Crimea to the Russian Empire. These two events, in a very real sense, provide the clearest insight into the current situation on the peninsula. Obviously, a great deal remains to be done in both Kyiv and Simferopol if the political and social tensions that attend the Crimean Tatar question are to be precluded from developing into a dangerous confrontation with the authorities.

NOTES

1. See Ian Bremmer, "The Politics of Ethnicity: Russians in the New Ukraine," *Europe–Asia Studies* 46, no. 2 (1994): 261–83, and V. A. Tishkov, *Ocherki teorii i politiki etnichnosti v Rossii* (Moscow: Institut etnologii i antropologii RAN, 1997), 304.

2. A very useful guide to the internal dispute between Kyiv and Simferopol is *The Crimea: Chronicle of Separatism (1992–1995)* (Kyiv: Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research, 1996).

3. Roman Solchanyk, "The Politics of State Building: Centre–Periphery Relations in Post-Soviet Ukraine," *Europe–Asia Studies* 45, no. 1 (1994): 51.

4. Mykola Porovs'kyi, one of the early Rukh activists, cites Hrach as saying that the decision to push for autonomy was first agreed upon at a conference of Crimean Communists as early as 1988. See his article "Kryms'ka problema: Zakonomirna real'nist' chy tsilespryamovana provokatsiya?" *Holos Ukrainy*, 1 June 1995.

5. Quoted by Vasyl' Chumak, "Kryms'ka karta," *Polityka i chas* 9 (1994): 44.

6. *Materialy XXVIII z'izdu Komunistychnoi partii Ukrainy: 19–23 chervnya 1990 roku (Pershyi etap)* (Kyiv: Politvydav Ukrainy, 1990), 31.

7. For the text, see *Chto delat'* (Kiev) 1 (November 1990): 13.

8. *Pravda Ukrainy*, 14 November 1990.

9. *Izvestia* (Moscow evening ed.), 21 January 1991.

10. For the text, see *Holos Ukrainy*, 15 February 1991.

11. *Pravda Ukrainy*, 7 September 1991.

12. *Holos Ukrainy*, 11 November 1993.

13. S. A. Usov, "K voprosu o statuse Respubliki Krym: Istoriya i sovremennye problemy," in *Mezhnatsional'nye otnosheniya v Rossii i SNG*, vol. 1, ed. Pol Gobl [Paul Goble] and Gennadii Bordyugov (Moscow: ITs "AIRO-XX," 1994), 84.

14. *Pravda Ukrainy*, 25 April 1992.

15. For the text, see *Holos Ukrainy*, 5 May 1992.

16. *Izvestia* (Moscow evening ed.), 6 May 1992; *Holos Ukrainy*, 8 May 1992.

17. "Konstitutsiya Respubliki Krym (Prinyata sed'moi sessiei Verkhovnogo Soveta Kryma 6 maya 1992 goda)," 2 (unpublished text).

18. For the text, see *Holos Ukrainy*, 15 May 1992.

19. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 19 May 1992.

20. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 22 May 1992; *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, 22 May 1992; and *Nezavisimost'*, 23 May 1992.

21. For the texts, see *Holos Ukrainy*, 3 October 1992.

22. *Visti z Ukrainy*, 27 May–2 June 1993, and *Moskovskie novosti*, 12 September 1993.

23. The setback suffered by the RDK in September 1992 after the Crimean constitution was amended brought to the surface a split in the organization. At a conference in October, the RDK transformed itself into the Republican Party of Crimea–Party of the Republican Movement of Crimea (RPK-RDK) headed by Meshkov. At the same time, the old RDK was retained as a mass movement from which the new party drew its membership; it, too, was led by Meshkov. A core of original RDK members headed by Vladimir Klychnikov refused to join the RPK-RDK and formed the Russian Language Movement of Crimea, conveniently retaining the acronym RDK.

24. For the text, see *Uryadovyi kur'yer*, 3 March 1994.
25. Quoted in *The Guardian*, 31 January 1994
26. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 21 May 1994.
27. For the text, see *Holos Ukrainy*, 24 May 1994.
28. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 21 May 1994.
29. For the text, see *Uryadovyi kur'yer*, 4 June 1994.
30. *Kommersant-Daily*, 19 July 1995, wrote that to understand what was going on in Crimea, one had to proceed from the sole premise that what was left of the Crimean economy was almost entirely criminalized and completely apportioned among criminal groups "cooperating closely and productively (for both sides) with the authorities." See also Ekaterina Tesemnikova, "Kriminal opredelyaet zhizn' Kryma," *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 3 April 1998.
31. Tor Bukkvoll, *Ukraine and European Security* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1997), 51–52.
32. *Uryadovyi kur'yer*, 9 February 1993, and Tor Bukkvoll, "A Fall from Grace for Crimean Separatists," *Transition* (Prague) 1, no. 21 (17 November 1995): 48.
33. RFE/RL Daily Report, 29 September 1994; and Volodymyr Yevtoukh, "The Dynamics of Interethnic Relations in Crimea," in *Crimea: Dynamics, Challenges and Prospects*, ed. Maria Drohobycky (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995), 82.
34. For the texts, see *Vidomosti Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy* 40 (4 October 1994): 1167 and 1173–74, respectively.
35. For the text and the list of nullified legislation, see *Vidomosti Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy* 47 (22 November 1994): 1248–1253.
36. For the texts of the resolution and the presidential decree, see *Holos Ukrainy*, 18 March 1995 and *Pravda Ukrainy*, 4 April 1995, respectively.
37. Tsekov's speech was published in *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 15 April 1995.
38. See the interview with Meshkov in *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 20 September 1997.
39. See *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 3 October 1995.
40. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 6 May 1998, and *Sodruzhestvo NG* 6 (June 1998).
41. Interfax-Ukraine, 18 May 1998.
42. *Sodruzhestvo NG* 11 (December 1998).
43. See the interview with Shuvainikov in *Holos Ukrainy*, 1 November 1997. The treaty refers to the rights of all national minorities in Ukraine and in Russia, the Ukrainian language in Russia and the Russian language in Ukraine, and the restoration of the rights of deported nations, but it makes no mention of the Russian minority in Ukraine or its status.
44. *Sobranie zakonodatel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii* 44 (2 November 1998): 9934.
45. *Parlamentskaya gazeta*, 24 November 1998.
46. Interfax, 21 June 1999.
47. Vyacheslav Lebedev, "Sootechestvenniki snova v pochete, "*Sodruzhestvo NG* 4 (April 1999).
48. Quoted by Gwendolyn Sasse, "The Crimean Issue," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 12, no. 1 (March 1996): 85.
49. Viktor Nebozhenko and Iryna Bekeshkina, "Politychnyi portret Ukrainy (Skhid, pivden')," *Politychnyi portret Ukrainy* 9 (1994): 44.
50. Nebozhenko and Bekeshkina, "Politychnyi portret Ukrainy (Skhid, pivden')," 45.

51. The best analytical and documentary source for the recent history of the Crimean Tatar national movement is the four-volume collection written and edited by M. N. Guboglo and S. M. Chervonnaya, *Krymskotatarskoe national'noe dvizhenie* (Moscow: Tsentr po izucheniyu mezhnatsional'nykh otnoshenii, Institut etnologii i antropologii RAN, 1992–97). See also Andrew Wilson, "Politics in and around Crimea: A Difficult Homecoming," in *The Tatars of Crimea: Return to the Homeland*, 2d. ed., revised and expanded, ed. Edward A. Allworth (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998), 281–321.

52. Grigorii Kroshin's interview with Galina Starovoitova in *Stolitsa* 23 (1994): 6; and Nataliya Belitser and Oleg Bodruk, "Krym kak region potentsial'nogo konflikta," in *Etnicheskie i regional'nye konflikty v Evrazii*, vol. 2: *Rossiya*, *Ukraina*, *Belorussiya*, ed. A. Zverev, B. Koppiters, and D. Trenin (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Ves' Mir," 1997), 85.

53. *Den'*, 18 March 1999, and *Izvestia* (Moscow ed.), 15 June 1999. See also Lilya R. Budzhurova, "The Current Sociopolitical Situation of the Crimean Tatars," *Harriman Review* 11, nos. 1–2 (1998): 21–27, and " 'The Punished People': Crimean Tatars and Prospects for Integration into the Ukrainian Society," *Research Update* (Kyiv) 5, no. 126 (17 May 1999).

54. *Uryadovyi kur'yer*, 19 May 1999.

55. M. N. Guboglo and S. M. Chervonnaya, "Krymskotatarskii vopros i sovremennaya etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya v Krymu," in *Meznatsional'nye otnoshenniya v Rossii i SNG* 1, ed. Pol Gobl [Paul Goble] and Gennadii Bordyugov (Moscow: ITs "AIRO-XX," 1994), 96; and Svetlana Červonnaja, "Die Bürgerrechtsbewegung der Krimtataren in den neunziger Jahren," *Osteuropa* 49, no. 2 (February 1999): 182.

56. Interfax, 30 August 1999.

57. *Den'*, 13 May 1999.

58. *Izvestia* (Moscow ed.), 15 June 1999.

59. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 26 May 1999.

Conclusion

> Russia in its new configuration is not recognized in its former capacity, and this is the source of all of the problems.
>
> —Boris Berezovsky, executive secretary of the CIS, *Izvestia*, 17 September 1998

> Ukraine should remain an independent country and God help Russia resolve its own problems.
>
> —President Leonid Kuchma, 11 November 1999

At the end of 1999, Yeltsin resigned and Russia inherited an acting president in the person of Putin, who then easily defeated Zyuganov in the March 2000 presidential elections. The change in Russia's top leadership, the first since the collapse of the Soviet Union, naturally gave rise to a great deal of speculation about what was in store for the country, particularly in view of Putin's earlier career in the KGB. Similar questions were being asked in Kyiv with respect to the outlook for Ukrainian-Russian relations, which, under Yeltsin, had in some sense become more or less predictable. Putin provided observers and analysts with food for thought in his programmatic article "Russia at the Turn of the Millennium," which was published on the eve of Yeltsin's resignation.[1] His vision for Russia had little to say about foreign policy, neither with regard to Moscow's immediate neighbors nor further afield, but it did devote considerable space to the "Russian idea," "patriotism," Russia's "greatness," "statism," and the need for a "strong state." "It was too early," he assured readers, "to bury Russia as a great power." This, added to Putin's biography and the conduct of the second war in Chechnya, contributed to the emerging consensus among observers in Kyiv that the "no necktie" meetings between the Ukrainian and Russian presidents during recent years were now a thing of the past. The two words that repeatedly cropped up in discussions about what could be expected from the new man in Moscow were *pragmatism* and *toughness*.

Putin's first foreign trip in his new role as president suggested that Ukraine

will remain at the top of Russia's agenda. The first stop was Minsk, followed by London, and then Kyiv with an excursion to Sevastopol. But the Ukrainian-Russian talks in mid-April did not produce any sensations or revelations; the accent was on the pragmatic, not the tough. The main topic of discussion was economic—specifically, Ukraine's huge gas debt, which totals either 1.4 or 2.1 billion U.S. dollars, depending on which side provides the figures, and the periodic pilfering of Russian gas, almost all of which transits through Ukrainian territory, by Ukrainian companies. Two other items were up for discussion: the ongoing political-military and economic disputes stemming from the presence of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol—specifically, Ukraine's insistence on closely monitoring Russia's military activities on its territory and the Russian navy's unpaid bills to Ukraine—and the status of the Russian language in Ukraine. Putin himself was low-key during his stay in Ukraine, leaving it to the experts to sort out the details and technicalities; no agreements were signed. The expectation in Kyiv is that the new Russian leader will deal with Ukrainian issues in late 2000, after having taken some initial steps to consolidate his power in Russia itself. For the moment, therefore, it is not altogether obvious how the post-Yeltsin leadership intends to formulate its Ukrainian policy.

The issues themselves, however, are not difficult to fathom. Besides the topics that were discussed in Kyiv in April, the list includes Ukraine's drift toward the West, particularly its ties to NATO; the lack of enthusiasm for the CIS and, more broadly, collective integration of the former Soviet republics under Moscow's aegis; the related question of GUUAM, which is widely perceived as a challenge and even as an alternative to Moscow's vision of the post-Soviet space; the problem of finally delimiting state borders between the two countries; and, among other matters, the long-standing disagreement over Soviet debts and assets. All of these issues have been on the table for some time. With a view toward forming some reasonable judgments about the outlook for Ukrainian-Russian relations, it would be both interesting and useful to determine what significance Russian elites assign to these outstanding issues. In short, what is it that bothers Moscow most about Ukraine?

Some insight into this question is provided by a poll of Russian government leaders, businessmen, and analysts conducted in February 2000 by the Ukrainian Center for Economic and Political Research together with the Russian Social-Political Center.[2] The first statistic that one is confronted with is that 88 percent of what the survey refers to as Russian experts characterized current Ukrainian-Russian relations as negative. Almost one-third said that the relationship was unstable; another 29 percent saw it in terms of "declarative cooperation"; 26 percent described it as "stagnation"; and 3 percent thought that Ukrainian-Russian relations were worsening. Only 12 percent noticed any progress in the Moscow–Kyiv dialogue.

No less important is the hierarchy of factors that are perceived as nega-

tively affecting the relationship. At the top of the list are the further development and broadening of Ukraine's ties to NATO and the problems associated with the Black Sea Fleet and Sevastopol, each of which were named by 84 percent of respondents. Given that the Russian fleet will be stationed in Sevastopol for a minimum of about twenty years, this irritant is not likely to go away.

Barring any radical departures in Brussels, Washington, and Kyiv, which are not likely, the NATO factor will also remain. If anything, Kyiv's involvement in the Western alliance is assuming new and, from Moscow's perspective, disturbing forms. At the beginning of 2000, NATO secretary-general Lord Robertson was in Kyiv on two separate occasions in a space of less than two months. His last visit, in March, was in connection with a session of the North Atlantic Council held in the Ukrainian capital—the first such meeting of the alliance's top policymaking body in a nonmember country and on the territory of the former Soviet Union as well. Shortly before, Kyiv hosted Supreme Allied Commander–Europe General Wesley Clark. In March, the Ukrainian parliament ratified the Status of Forces Agreement within the Partnership for Peace Program, which defines the legal status of NATO troops while engaged in exercises and other joint activities on Ukraine's territory and opens the way for the Yavoriv military training grounds in Western Ukraine, considered to be one of the best in Europe, to be utilized as a NATO training center. More important, Ukraine is intensifying its purely military cooperation with NATO, including taking steps toward attaining interoperability of its forces and command structure with those of the alliance—not only on the tactical but also on the operational and strategic levels.[3] Against this background, Kyiv's routine denials that it is contemplating requesting an application form from NATO any time soon is viewed with an understandably heavy dose of skepticism in Moscow.

To round out the picture, Russian decision makers are also unhappy with the controls established on the Ukrainian-Russian border (79 percent), the situation of Russian speakers in Ukraine (77 percent), Ukraine's gas debt (71 percent), its disinterest in the CIS (57 percent), its "inconsistent" foreign policy (55 percent), and its negative attitude toward the Belarusian-Russian union (50 percent). Surprisingly, the Russian experts were not particularly concerned about GUUAM (18 percent). In short, Russian elites see an obstreperous Ukraine that is moving toward Europe ("without us," as Lukin noted in 1992); seriously flirting with NATO; creating problems for Russia's energy sector, which accounts for 40 percent of the federal budget through gas and oil exports to Europe (mainly via pipelines located on Ukraine's territory); destroying the CIS; repressing its Russian speakers; and at the same time assuring Moscow that it is a "strategic partner."

It goes without saying that some of the differences between Kyiv and Moscow are more fundamental, complex, and therefore more difficult to resolve

than others. Ukraine's decision to "return" to Europe, although quite problematic both from the standpoint of domestic and outside constraints, remains firm and, moreover, is not something that lends itself to negotiations. Kuchma has let it be known that he is now a "free man." What he means, of course, is that after having been reelected he has more freedom to maneuver and less need to look over his shoulder in the pursuit of his objectives, including in the realm of foreign policy. The West may be disappointed with the slow pace of reforms in Ukraine and the rampant corruption, but Secretary of State Albright made a point of being in Kyiv before Putin's visit in April; President Clinton visited the Ukrainian capital in June 2000, admittedly after first having been in Moscow. In short, the United States remains interested.

As for Moscow, it is not at all clear what it can do about Kyiv's Western drift. Applying economic sanctions such as a cutback of fuel deliveries is a double-edged sword. Ukraine's likely response would be to increase transit fees. Moscow is perfectly aware of this quandary, and plans are under way for a transit route through Belarus in order to circumvent Ukraine. This, however, is a very costly and lengthy process. And Ukraine, in the meantime, is looking for ways to diversify its sources of energy and stake out its role in the pipeline politics of Caspian oil, which explains a good part of the rationale for GUUAM. Despite all of the bluster from Moscow, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic are now members of NATO; others are lining up. The new and potential NATO members have a stake in Ukraine staying on the track of European integration, specifically in the security area. In the final analysis, however, the time will come when Kyiv will have to move beyond its declarations of intent and its various state programs for integration into Euro-Atlantic structures and take the necessary steps that will convince Europe that Ukraine belongs in the West. It is at that juncture that the Ukrainian-Russian relationship will be faced with its next major test.

The other side of this coin is Kyiv's continued disinterest in the CIS and the model of Slavic solidarity offered by the Belarusian-Russian union. Kuchma's position remains unchanged—namely, that the CIS should serve as a venue for arriving at mutually beneficial economic arrangements and steer clear of political and security integration schemes. What Putin has in mind for the CIS still remains to be seen. His statement at the January 2000 CIS summit in Moscow to the effect that the twelve-member grouping should preserve "all the best things" of the Soviet Union has a nice ring to it but says very little. The fact is that even in Moscow serious politicians and analysts readily admit that the CIS is at best an amorphous institution and at worst pretty much a failure. Putin qualifies as a serious politician, and it is noteworthy that at the January summit most of his time was devoted to bilateral meetings with the individual heads of state rather than opting for the multilateral approach.

As for the Russian-Belarusian union, some in Moscow are apparently con-

vinced that sooner or later Ukraine (and others) will join what *Izvestia* has characterized as a "virtual state."[4] Seleznev, for example, asserted at a session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the union that the prospect of Ukraine and Armenia becoming members is being "actively discussed." Pavel Borodin—who was the "property manager" of the Kremlin under Yeltsin and is wanted in Switzerland for alleged money laundering and who now serves as the state secretary of the Belarusian-Russian union—thinks that Ukraine and Kazakhstan will join in three or four years' time.[5] Here again, level-headed people in Moscow realize full well that the Belarusian-Russian experiment may be of some use for satisfying popular nostalgia for "Slavic unity" and could even raise some eyebrows among military planners in Brussels but that for all intents and purposes it is very much a fiction. Russia under Putin is likely to go along with this charade, subsidizing the hapless Lukashenka regime as long as it serves its purposes as a counterweight of sorts to the West and NATO.

In the meantime, the accursed Russian questions remain: What is to be done, and who is to blame? It would seem that ten years after the disappearance of the Soviet Union, the question of who is to blame is rather moot. Should Ukrainians be blamed for wanting their own state and imagining themselves to be Europeans? Are Russians to be blamed for having to grapple with their identity problems? The survey of Russian experts mentioned earlier revealed that 31 percent felt that Ukrainians were Russians who happened to be living in a place called Ukraine; only 6 percent thought that their compatriots viewed Ukrainians as a "distinctive, historically formed nation." The problem here lies in the realm of the process known as the making and unmaking of nations. Are Russians to be blamed for aspiring to "great power" status at a time when their national budget is less than the Kmart Corporation takes in annually from American shoppers? Probably not.

And what is to be done? In the best-case scenario, as Kuchma and others have argued, Ukraine can serve as a bridge of sorts by bringing Russia and the West closer together in the process of its own "return" to Europe. In the worst-case scenario, which Kuchma has also suggested, Ukraine can bid Russia a final good-bye and good luck.

NOTES

1. For the text, see *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 30 December 1999.
2. See *Zerkalo nedeli*, 11–17 March 2000.
3. *Zerkalo nedeli*, 22–28 April 2000.
4. *Izvestia* (Moscow evening ed.), 27 January 2000.
5. *Zerkalo nedeli*, 15–21 April 2000, and *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 18 April 2000.

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