

ICPS newsletter[®]

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Ukraine's Choices

Ukraine has little choice but to integrate regionally, and that means, first and foremost, integrating with the regional leader, Russia. For now, the country's leadership has chosen integration rather than total opposition, but this is not the only choice facing the country. The next conscious step that Ukraine must make is to choose between passive and active integration. Indeed, Ukraine has all the elements necessary to take up an active, constructive, pragmatic integrational position. This is the conclusion presented in the latest issue of Inside Ukraine, ICPS's analytical monthly

On 6 July 2010, the International Centre for Policy Studies held a roundtable during which the latest issue of ICPS's analytical publication, *Inside Ukraine*, was presented. The theme of this issue, "Ukraine's Choices," continues the discussion of Russia's "Ukraine Agenda," which began in the previous issue.

Ukraine's drive towards Euroatlantic integration in opposition to Russia has collapsed. Confrontation on both the domestic and foreign political fronts put the Euroatlantic community in an untenable position vis-à-vis Ukraine.

In the contemporary world, integration is an irreversible process that Ukraine cannot avoid. In the post-soviet arena, three integration models are available: passive integration (Belarus), confrontation and the partial breakup of the state (Georgia), and pro-active integration (Kazakhstan). This offers two possible scenarios for Ukraine's further development.

Status quo: Passive integration

Russia has been actively and consistently carrying out its own agenda. The most fundamental points are:

- The enshrinement of Ukraine's non-block status and rejection of membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization;
- Gazprom's control over Ukraine's gas sector, especially the gas transport system (GST);
- the revival of sector-based industrial conglomerates according to soviet principles by merging specific branches of Ukraine's and Russia's economies;

- Russian being granted the status of the second official language in Ukraine;
- the establishment of a single Orthodox Church in Ukraine under the Moscow Patriarchate.

To have these conditions met, of course, Russia is prepared to pay. The most controversial example of this is the conclusion of the Kharkiv Agreement: the Russian fleet in exchange for gas. A less publicized example was an agreement on the atomic energy sector, where Ukraine gets outdated and overpriced technology together with loans to build reactors. The high level of corruption in the Ukrainian government has only made it easier to reach such agreements and have them carried out.

For this scenario to come to pass, two conditions must be met: no actual reforms that might bring in European standards and a switch to "managed" democracy. The first condition suits Ukraine's leadership just fine at this time and they are steadily working on meeting the second one.

Confirmation of the fact that Ukraine is currently moving towards this scenario—or is allowing itself to be led down that path—can be found in any number of events even just in June 2010:

- The passing of the Law "On the basis for internal and external policy in Ukraine," in which Ukraine's non-block status is enshrined and the removal of provisions in the Law "On the basis for national security in Ukraine" regarding the prospects of membership in NATO;

ICPS prepares analytical briefs for the European Parliament

The European Parliament has posted papers on its site that were written by the previous Director of ICPS, Olha Shumylo, who is now a member of the Centre's Supervisory Board. Two analytical briefs entitled "Analysis of National Indicative Programs for 2011-2013 for Moldova" and "Analysis of National Indicative Programs 2011-2013 for Ukraine" were prepared under the "Briefs for the European Parliament: Expert support for foreign policy issues" project, funded by the European Parliament. The main contribution to these papers came from the ICPS expert team, especially Foreign Aid Program Analyst Kateryna Zaremba. The General Directorate for Foreign Policy in the European Parliament gave the two documents very high marks.

- The adoption in principle of the Bill "On the procedure for organizing and running peaceful gatherings," which does not meet international standards and has been severely criticized by civil society organizations;
- A resolution of the Crimean Rada on granting the Russian language official regional status.

The policies of the current government are aimed at maintaining order and stability. This is impossible to properly achieve without extensive reform of the public administration system, the government machine, primarily in terms of bringing it in line with democratic governance and a market economy.

The Government will be unable to maintain stability for any length of time using repressive methods as this will only worsen the economic situation and cut into State Budget revenues. Crushing the Ukrainian language and gradually reducing the country's sovereignty will inevitably lead to political resistance and social unrest.

Option 1: How to dismember a state

Fortunately, Ukraine so far does not have any hot spots or frozen conflicts within its borders that might constitute a direct threat to its territorial integrity. Still, the risk that this country might split up has been brought up in more than one study by world-renowned analysts, including Samuel Huntington, the author of the concept of the clash of civilizations. He based his arguments on the fact that Ukrainians belong to two different civilizations: the Orthodox in the East and the European in the Uniate (Greek Catholic) West.

Enough centrifugal trends, both in the West and in the East, have emerged in the years of the country's independence for Huntington to declare that Ukraine was quite likely to break apart. In another scenario described in detail by the editor-in-chief of *Limes*, an Italian journal of geopolitics, Donbas and Crimea go to Russia, several western oblasts separate and, in one form or another, join the European Union, while a rump Ukraine remains as an ostensibly independent state that is under Russian influence. The inevitable result of such a scenario would be the disappearance of Ukraine as a geopolitical player on the world map.

The high-speed efforts of the new Administration to ensure rapprochement with Russia coupled with its restriction of democratic freedoms could well rouse equally strong resistance in regions that are generally anti-Russian. Political games with principles that are touchy for both sides, such as language or history, could push the pendulum of mutual antagonism to such a degree that the least pretext will be decisive and launch an irreversible disintegration.

Option 2: How to take the lead in integration

Ukraine is not afraid of getting closer to Russia and integrating with it. Mutual integration is actually the basis for international relations in the modern, globalized world.

Blind submission or knee-jerk resistance is not the best modality for

communicating with a country that is Ukraine's strategic partner. What is more appropriate is an active, constructive and pragmatic approach. In other words, Ukraine fully supports the process of integration with Russia and proposes its views of how this integration should actually take place.

Firstly, all integrational processes in any given sphere take place on the basis of a unifying political principle and not horse-trading over commercial assets. The EU's approach to this is a good example, as today it constitutes the best worked-out model for supporting the interests of every participant in the integrational process. This not only gives the European vector—declared by the President to be key—some real meaning but brings both Ukraine and Russia closer to EU requirements by providing the conditions for them to participate in broader integrational projects. At the same time, the countries can participate in joint Ukrainian-Russian projects as a guarantee that mutual commitments are carried through. If the gas transport system is going to be modernized, then that will only be with the inclusion of European partners.

Secondly, Kyiv becomes the center of all integrational processes and the base for carrying out joint projects. After all, this is where all the newly build integrational institutions are located. The territorial principle for placing Kyiv at the center of integration is critical. Why should Moscow agree? Because it has no reason not to agree if this is Kyiv's unwavering position, based on historical realities and European principles of integration.

Thirdly, the principle of mirrored commitments is applied. Ukraine has a fundamental position regarding the Ukrainian language as the only state language while agreeing, as Moscow requests, to ensure the necessary conditions and support for the Russian language and culture to evolve. For its part, the Russian Federation fosters an active policy regarding media, educational and cultural development in areas where there is a concentration of ethnic Ukrainians—Moscow, Siberia, the Far East, Krasnodar Krai, Surgut, Tiumen,

and Vladivostok—by funding Ukrainian-language schools and media through the State Budget.

For the European Union, this kind of development would not only not lead to a rejection of Ukraine's Eurointegration ambitions but, on the contrary, to a persistent, steady transition to European standards. A country that is a regional leader and is actively working with one of the global centers of power is a much more desirable and interesting partner for both the EU and NATO, than a country that cannot cope with relations with its closest neighbor.

This scenario can be ensured in Ukraine because all the necessary conditions are in place:

- A consolidated, strong and effective government;
- The ambitious goals set by the President and his party;
- Openly declared readiness among the country's leaders to undertake reforms;
- Intellectual capacity to develop a new post-conflict ideology of statehood;
- A high level of trust in the current government among voters;
- Support from Western partners, who are not interested in seeing Ukraine go down the drain as an independent player.

Playing out this last scenario is the only option Ukraine has to reach the goal set by its President: to become one of the Top 20 developed countries in the world over the next decade. ■

The entire issue can be downloaded at: http://www.icps.com.ua/files/articles/58/11/Inside_Ukraine_UKR_9.pdf

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