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ZONA EXTINSĂ A MĂRII NEGRE ÎN ACTUALUL CONTEXT EUROPEAN DE SECURITATE

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP: A GEOPOLITICAL CLASH. THE CASE OF UKRAINE-I*

Mihail E. Ionescu, PhD

UKRAINE: ECONOMIC CRISIS AND A GEOPOLITICAL TROPHY

‘The Vilnius Moment’ (the Eastern Partnership Summit of November 28th - 29th 2013) has signaled a turning point for Ukraine. A few days prior to the Summit (on November 21st, 2013), Kiev has announced that it suspends preparations for signing the association agreement, presenting instead its association with the customs union between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia, in order to alleviate Ukraine’s dire economic situation. While at the Vilnius Summit, President Viktor Yanukovych has stoically resisted pressures from European representatives to respect prior commitments regarding the signing of the Association Agreement with the European Union. Needless to say that following lengthy negotiations, the signing of the agreement was all but sure¹.

The public reaction was swift and the events that unfolded shook up Ukraine and lead to a widespread geopolitical confrontation in Europe. Essentially, we have witnessed the most serious international crisis since the end of the Cold War. Next I will briefly explore the chronology of events that lead to this outcome.

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DOMESTIC CRISIS

At the end of October 2013, the Ukrainian government was in the midst of negotiating a new loan with the International Monetary Fund. The IMF’s lending conditions at the time gave an indication as to how serious the country’s economic difficulties were. According to a report regarding the negotiation process, Ukraine implemented a series of measures: raising natural gas tariffs by 60% for households with a consumption that exceeds 3.5 thousand m³ of natural gas per year and developing a program to stabilize public finances (the program might have included a delay in profit tax rate cut, a revision of tax privileges for business and social benefits for population, etc.). This would have allowed the public sector deficit to be reduced to around 4% of GDP in 2014. The national currency would have been allowed to fluctuate up to UAH 8.5 per USD. With the IMF program in place, Ukraine’s external liquidity and fiscal challenges would have been reduced, bringing the country onto a more sustainable path of growth². The same report mentioned that following four quarters of negative growth, real GDP may pick up in the third quarter of 2013 thanks to a significant grain crop and continuing gains in private consumption. Moreover, the agricultural sector’s strong performance has been supported by steady improvements in animal breeding and poultry.

Real wage growth in this sector remained robust (up by 9.3% over the first eight months

of the year), supporting personal consumption expenditures (retail sales rose by 10.2% over the period). In July 2013, world steel prices have begun recovering, helped by a modest recovery of the global economy and low steel stock. The positive impact of such developments was however outweighed by trade restrictions imposed by Russia, that had a notable impact on Ukraine's machine building, metallurgy, manufacturing of food products, chemicals as well as performance of wholesale trade and cargo transportation. Therefore, industrial production continued to decline, with output down by 5.4% in August 2013. Due to a relaxation of trade tensions with Russia since late August 2013, Ukraine was forecast to continue recovery in the fourth quarter of 2013, although at a slow pace. Real GDP was projected to increase by 0.3% in 2013³. According to an optimistic scenario regarding Ukraine's relations with Russia, it was estimated that the short-term losses generated by the imposition of trade restrictions by Russia would be softened by the EU's compensatory measures. As a result, real GDP growth was forecast to accelerate to 2% in 2014.

The situation regarding Ukraine's external debt was extremely bleak. The country had to repay about \$1.6 billion to the IMF in the fourth quarter of 2013 and an additional \$3.5 billion in 2014, while total repayments of public and publicly guaranteed debt have been estimated at around \$7 billion in 2014. Such high external debt repayments put pressure on both the fiscal balance and local currency. The negotiations for a new loan with the IMF had been stalled because the Ukrainian authorities were reluctant to implement an increase in natural gas prices that would have triggered a public outcry. On October 7th 2013, Ukraine's economic situation was unanimously perceived as serious – „[...] an adjustment is inevitable. The only question is whether Ukraine will reform now or will adjustment be delayed” read one report of the World Bank. World Bank's economist in Kyiv Anastasia Golovach stated that Ukraine's budget deficit may exceed 6.5% of gross domestic product in 2013, while the current account gap may total 8%: “It is impossible to support twin deficits, while the central bank's reserves are declining. [...]

Also, such tendencies have a negative impact on investors' mood, making it more difficult for the government to borrow on international markets.” Golovach stated that if the Ukrainian government delayed the changes until after the presidential elections in 2015, the economic situation may be seriously affected: “Ukraine needs to start reform this year or next year at the latest, preferable reaching a deal with the IMF. [...] Then its economic growth may accelerate to 1.5 percent next year and 3 percent in 2015.”⁴

An analysis done a year after the November 2013 episode is extremely relevant for what actually happened within the Ukraine-EU-Russia triangle at the time. Two extracts from this analysis suggest that Ukraine's decision to avoid signing the EU Association Agreement was the result of geopolitical pressure, while the economic situation was less relevant in taking the decision that officially stated:

1. “/.../Moscow, Military Airport, Nov. 9, 2013: It doesn't happen often that Vladimir Putin attends a meeting at a site other than the Kremlin or his residence on the outskirts of Moscow. But on that Saturday evening in October, he unexpectedly agreed to a confidential tête-à-tête at the military airport not far from the Russian capital. His interlocutor? Viktor Yanukovich. It was the second conversation between the two presidents within the space of just a few weeks, with the first having taken place on Oct. 27 in the Black Sea resort of Sochi. Putin had nothing but disdain for Yanukovich, loathing the Ukrainian leader's constant wavering. In the past, he had often left Yanukovich waiting for hours like a supplicant and the Kremlin was convinced of Yanukovich's unreliability. Though the man from eastern Ukraine was much less pro-European than his successor, he had continued to stubbornly resist requests from Moscow. Ever since Putin came to realize that Yanukovich was in fact considering signing the EU association agreement, he had been regularly sending Sergey Glazyev to Ukraine to lay out the possible Russian response. Glazyev, Putin's advisor on economic integration in the post-Soviet regions, had been born in Ukraine. But he dutifully issued Russian threats to eliminate benefits and spoke at length of the potentially negative consequences.

ces for Ukraine. "The association agreement is suicide for Ukraine," he said. In October, Glazyev visited Yanukovych three times, on one occasion bringing along a Russian translation of the thousand-page draft association agreement because the EU had only sent an English version of it to Kiev. During Putin's meetings with Yanukovych in Sochi and Moscow, Putin promised subsidies and economic benefits worth around \$12 billion annually, including discounted prices for oil and natural gas. Conversely, he also threatened to launch a trade war that would drive an already fragile Ukrainian economy to ruin. Experts in Brussels also believe that he may have told Yanukovych what Moscow knew about his dealings with the EU. In Russian, such information is known as "Kompromat," a word that comes out of KGB jargon and refers to compromising details known about a leading figure. Following these meetings, Yanukovych's mood changed markedly. He became quieter and ceased holding the endless monologues for which he had become notorious. "Viktor, what's wrong," his Brussels partners would ask. But he evaded such questions, instead speaking in insinuations and innuendos. He proved unwilling to say much about the Russians. /.../

2. ".../Vilnius, Kempinski Hotel Nov. 28, 2013, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. They were all waiting for Yanukovych. It was the last chance they had to meet with the Ukrainian president to try and convince him to sign the agreement despite all that had happened. Though it was essentially a hopeless attempt, Barroso and European Council President Van Rompuy had resolved to try the impossible. Van Rompuy had brought two copies of the association agreement with him to Vilnius, ready to be signed. After a few minutes, Yanukovych showed up with his interpreter, the Ukrainian ambassador to the EU and a handful of aides. That was unusual; in the past, Yanukovych had always conducted the most important talks on his own. The greeting was brief and the roles were reversed. This time around it was the EU that wanted something: Yanukovych's signature. Barroso was visibly nervous. Ukraine's economy, he said, would profit considerably in the long term from closer ties with the EU. "Poland and Ukraine had roughly the same

gross domestic product when the Berlin Wall fell. Now, Poland's is roughly three times as large," he said. And then came the "bold chess move" that had previously been hinted at. Barroso said that Brussels would be willing to abandon its demand that Tymoshenko be released. Yanukovych was dumbfounded. Didn't Brussels understand that other issues had long since become more important? The talks became heated and Van Rompuy, not exactly known for his quick temper, lost his cool. "You are acting short-sightedly," he growled at Yanukovych. "Ukraine has been negotiating for seven years because it thought that it was advantageous. Why should that no longer be the case?" Outside, the reception for the heads of state and government had long since gotten underway and EU negotiators understood that Yanukovych could no longer be budged. After two hours, Barroso said: "We have to go." He and Van Rompuy briefly shook Yanukovych's hand and shut the door behind them. When the German delegation, under Merkel's leadership, met with Yanukovych the next morning for one final meeting, everything had already been decided. They exchanged their well-known positions one last time, but the meeting was nothing more than a farce. In one of the most important questions facing European foreign policy, Germany had failed."⁵

THE EURO-MAIDAN IN KYIEV AND THE REACTION OF RUSSIA⁶

The evolution of the protests in Kyiev after the end of November 2013- sometimes gathering up more than one million people- reach a point of boiling at the end of January 2014. Each day after the Vilnius Summit (28-29 November 2013) summit, where Yanukovych resisted any demand made by European leaders to keep the course towards EU, the Independence Square of the Ukrainian capital became the real heart of the country. The protesters, whose number sometimes reached a six-digit figure, occupied the square, pointing to the pro-European orientation of the majority of the nation and demanding the resignation of the government and president of the state, and the

holding of new elections. The clash between protesters and security forces gradually escalated to violent fights, the occupation of public buildings by the protesters, dead and injured people. The Euro-Maidan – as the square became known ‘urbi et orbi’ – acquired a military organisation with diverse orientations in the camp of the political opposition. What prevailed however was the European option of the protest, the categorical rejection of the Russian azimuth, which the state leadership had adopted by renouncing to sign the association accord with the EU. The Euro-Maidan became the symbol of the independence and EU option courageously assumed by the Ukrainian nation, of the construction of a free, democratic society without oligarchs that dominate the public life affected by endemic corruption. Undoubtedly, the political views of this huge rally were diverse and contradictory, but what prevailed was the outright rejection of a new eastern obedience and, along with affirming the independence, the firm option for the EU. Much will be written, from now on, about this huge display of political energy in Kiyev, its real or instrumented motives, the bad or interested influences from the country or abroad, the mobilizing influence of the Euro-Maidan in waking up the national conscience – similar rallies took place gradually in many regions of the country. Near the end of January, the situation of Ukraine considerably worsened, reaching a moment when many spoke about the possibility of a civil war that would tear the country between a pro-European west and a pro-Russian east. The international community made an appeal to calm and dialogue, while the USA and EU demanded the government to stop the violent repression and warned foreign forces to cease their interference with the political evolutions of Ukraine. Especially after the government passed in Parliament a package of laws that condemned the protesters and restricted many civil freedoms, announcing the advent of an authoritarian regime, the reaction of protesters was more dynamic and expanded in the country, where government buildings were occupied by the revolted population. Confronted with this situation, President Yanukovich was forced to step back, imposed the resignation of the government and appealed to

the opposition to participate in the governance. The Euro-Maidan rejected these requests and demanded the resignation of the president and new elections.

At ‘Wehrkunde’ (the annual security conference of Munich-Germany), on February 1-2, 2014, one of the most interesting moments of the event – honored by the presence of major personalities of international relations over the last half-century, such as Henri Kissinger, Helmut Schmidt, Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, Egon Bahr – was the confrontation between the representatives of the two camps currently in conflict in Ukraine. Moderated by the EU commissioner for Enlargement, St. Fuhle, the panel that gave the occasion of this confrontation was named “Global Power and Regional Stability: A Focus on Central and Eastern Europe” and included prestigious participants. From Zbigniew Brzezinski, former National Security advisor of US president Jimmy Carter, – who honestly confessed in the first place that he is not neutral with regard to the problems of today’s Ukraine – to the president of Romania, Traian Băsescu, who represented the difference between the former communist states outside the USSR and those on its territory in the process of regaining their own identity; from the representative of the Russian Duma, Leonid Slutski, according to whom the paradigm imposed by Brzezinski in the Western thinking in the perspective of the relation between Russia and Ukraine – the former is a global empire together with the latter, or a big regional power without it – must be overcome in order to consolidate the international security, to Irakli Garubashvili, the premier of Georgia, whose speech was praised by the Russian emissary. But, indisputably, all eyes were set on the clash between the two, the minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kiev government, practically outgoing since January 28, Leonid Kozhara, and Vitali Klychko, the president of the opposition party Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reforms, over the current evolutions of Ukraine, equally geopolitical and social-political. As announced by the hosts, this panel was held at the last moment, actually answering an exigency of this prestigious conference, which is to put on debate the ongoing events with the biggest impact on the international security and with

an unpredictable evolution. Or, besides the situation in the East China Sea or Mideast, or in other hot areas of the planet, Ukraine recommends itself as such.

Acting Foreign Minister Kozhara presented Ukraine as a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional society – over 8 million Russians – so the Euro-Maidan does not represent the will of the whole nation. At the same time, Nazi tendencies were manifest during the Kiyev rally, and there is a grave peril of terrorists taking over the protest. The opinion of the Foreign minister of the outgoing government also included arguments in favor of the relation between the cabinet and Russia, because of economic reasons, getting rid of the crisis being one of the benefits. By contrast, he went on, signing the accord with the EU was not accompanied by the necessary support for saving the country. He rejected the assertions of the political opposition that the government used violent means, as groups of protesters infringed the law, occupied public buildings and attacked the security forces.

The answer of Klychko was calm and reasonable. He mentioned the road which the Ukrainian nation wants to take – the way of reform and of fighting the corruption that exhausts the society and hampers its democratic progress. The orientation of the acting government toward Russia was not present in his address. He only explained that releasing the detained protesters and holding new elections represents the only solution to the present crisis. During his dispute with his opponent, he presented to the audience an album proving the violence of officials against protesters.⁶ His speech was the most applauded address to the prestigious event of Munich. In a statement delivered outside this confrontation, the Ukrainian opposition demanded the West to adopt sanctions against the acting leadership in Kiev.

The opinions of experts converge toward the idea that what is going on in Ukraine is, in fact, a geopolitical clash between Russia and the European Union. The conflict is not new and its episodes succeeded, as regards the ex-Soviet space, since 2003 (the start of the orange revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine), the present Euro-Maidan probably being the

latest of them. As a necessary mention, in the perimeter of this geopolitical confrontation between East and West we must also include the Russo-Georgian war of August 2008, which pointed to the 'red line' traced by Kremlin for the expansion of western organizations in the former Soviet imperial space.

The truth of this affirmation is demonstrated by the circumstances in which the present protest started in Kiyev. After the surprise announcement made by president Yanukovich about not signing the accord of association with the EU and changing the geopolitical azimuth of the country, with formal mentions to the arrangement reached with Russia regarding the financial aid (USD 15 bln.) and a special price for the import of Russian gas, along with the resistance to the pressures made by European leaders in Vilnius, the opposition prepared a protest rally. The huge mobilization of forces (close to one million participants at some moments) determined the strong response of authorities, which actually catalyzed the people's revolt. The Euro-Maidan immediately got organized, the population supported the political opposition, the rally became permanent and prepared itself of a quasi-military manner to withstand the aggression of officials, and constantly radicalized itself. The main protest – regardless of the diverse political orientations and tendencies manifest in the first place – was against the abandoning of the pro-European Union orientation and the ever stronger change of geopolitical azimuth toward Russia by the political leadership of the country, actually replacing it.

The geopolitical clash acquired a new dimension when the government rapidly passed through the Parliament – where the majority is held by the Party of Regions – a package of laws (16 January 2014) that prohibited unauthorized public rallies, punished their participants, treated like foreign structures the NGOs which receive financing from abroad. The protest got instantly radicalized, the tendency revealed by this move of the government being the attempt to instate an authoritarian regime similar to those of Belarus and Russia, somehow deepening the already assumed eastern azimuth. The pro-Europe tendency in the whole body of the revolt gained even more consistency, be-

neficially associating itself with the demands to reform the country in the sense of European values (the eradication of corruption, the abandoning of the oligarchic model of market economy etc.). The violence took a dangerous turn and it became increasingly evident that Ukraine is on the brink of civil war. The contagion in the other regions of the country of the movement and exigencies of the Euro-Maidan, as well as the pressures from abroad – from the West, but also from the East (Russia) – determined the government to backtrack and start the dialogue. The proposals made to the political opposition to participate in the government, even take its leadership, were however rejected by protesters. Eventually, the government installed by Yanukovich with the Party of Regions, which instrumented the geopolitical orientation toward Russia decided by the president resigned on January 28, but continues to be in charge of the internal and foreign policies of the state.

Toward the end of January, one can already consider that the protests of Kiev acquired the dimensions of a large-scale international crisis. The violence of the repression made many international organizations and political leaders take position and some states already implemented punitive measures (cancelling the visas for some officials involved in the repression, for instance). The US, first of all, pleaded for initiating sanctions against the Ukrainian leadership, the European Union did not reject the idea, but was more cautious over their effectiveness in view of identifying a peaceful solution to the conflict.

The main actors of this international crisis are undoubtedly Russia, the European Union and the US. It can be considered the dramatic episode of the crisis that started in 2008, when NATO intended to offer the 'roadmap' of the accession to the North-Atlantic Alliance, while Russia answered through the Georgia war. On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that this internal confrontation of Ukraine reached a point when a solution must be identified very rapidly. It is clear that the political opposition will accept nothing else than a positive answer of the officials to their demands: early presidential elections, the return to the Constitution of 2004, the signing of the accord of association with the EU and an amnesty law acceptable for protesters.

The political connotation of this internal conflict is crucial for the East-West relations, for the transatlantic relation, for Europe and for Russia. Will Ukraine belong to the East (the Eurasian Union) or the West (the European Union)? Will Europe hesitate to support the Euro-Maidan, thus placing itself in a relation of subordination toward Russia? Will the US be firm enough to impose the observance of the essential principle in international relations, the right of each country to decide its fate without interferences from abroad? Will Russia – and its president, Vladimir Putin – pass their own existential test of Ukraine being associated to the Eurasian Union?

Of course, it is difficult to assess what Russia will do after the outbreak of Euro-Maidan in Kiev, and the fast development of the protest movement against the Eastern option which President Yanukovich has proposed already switching sides in the last moment. If the opinions of the experts close to Kremlin is an indication, than what some of them wrote in February, prior to the bloody repression of Euro-Maidan, is relevant. For example, on February 17, 2014, what Serghei Karaganov has written on the Valdai website is to be taken into account as a preliminary Russian position concerning the Ukrainian crisis:

"Ukraine is a separate issue. It is undoubtedly part of the Russian historical and geopolitical space. But it is already obvious that attempts to integrate Ukraine will cost dearly due to the dysfunctional elite, which will endlessly waver and beg for handouts from all the sides. Things may even come to a division of Ukraine. A more rational choice would be an agreement with Berlin and Brussels (now only barely discernible) to make Ukraine a state that would not be torn apart by neighbors but jointly supported. For now, the tough response to attempts to involve Ukraine into a meaningless association with the EU, which looked like a challenge to Moscow, leaves room for maneuver."⁷ But only two weeks later, Karaganov exposed the larger goals targeted by Russia in Ukraine, showing that there is a 'red line' of Kremlin in tackling with the Ukrainian crisis. In the meantime, the repression of Euro-Maidan and the flight of the president of Ukrai-

ne changed the balance of political forces in that country, a new government committed itself to fulfillment of the European integration. Now, Karaganov wrote: "The outline of a compromise is clear. A federal structure for Ukrainian institutions – and a switch to a parliamentary system in place of a presidential one – would enable the people of each region to make their own choices over language and cultural allegiance. Ownership and control of the gas transportation system should be shared between Ukraine and its neighbours. The country should be allowed to participate both in Russia's customs union and the EU association deal. The crisis has exposed the failure of our post-Cold War policies, but it can be put to constructive use. We should belatedly begin work towards the common goal of an Alliance of Europe stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok, in which people and trade would flow freely. We should merge the soft power of Europe with hard power and resources of Russia, as prominent Europeans and Mr. Putin have often proposed."⁸

So it was a new decision in Kremlin, namely that no association of Ukraine with European Union, except the case of the concomitant association with the Russian customs union and, more significantly, an "Alliance of Europe stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok". That is equivalent with rewriting the global order, because USA would have been rejected from the former defined "Euro-Atlantic space" of security, implicitly asking for the dismemberment of NATO.

These are questions that the big chancelleries of the world, actively involved in the events of Ukraine do not hesitate to ask, while devising adequate policies that suit their own interests and future designs. The West – here we consider, as a whole, the attitude of both the EU and USA, in a general framework – already has a clear line of conduct. As informal sources and the media of big impact reveal, the right solution, with certain nuances, of course, would be for President Yanukovich to condemn and punish the violence and illegalities committed by police and other structure of force against protesters, avoiding any future use of violence against them, as some have advised abroad. Then, he should appoint a te-

chnocrat in charge with the task of forming a non-political government with the mission of managing the economy in crisis and negotiating a loan with the IMF, WB, EBRD and, mainly, with preparing the presidential elections of next year, guaranteeing a free and correct ballot. The nuances of such a solution taken under consideration by the West in general refer to variants like the resignation of the president and early elections and enforcing sanctions against Ukraine for as long as such a solution is delayed. This would satisfy the Ukrainian nation's right to free option without foreign interference, either from East or West. It is a solution that takes into account the very tough confrontation existing today, the split of the Ukrainian nation instrumented by interested forces (between the massive Ukrainian West and the East dominated by ethnic Russians, between Orthodox believers and the others etc.). Alternatives to another course, which would negate the natural right to free option of Ukraine, are the civil war – with its international reverberations of extreme complexity – that would mean, first of all, a major defeat for the West, which it cannot afford.

CIVIL WAR IN UKRAINE ? For several months, before the episode that sparked the mass protests known as Euro-Maidan, experts in the political evolutions of Eastern Europe, also in Ukraine, predicted a tough clash between the two camps, with the possibility of a civil war. Several arguments seemed to support the hypothesis. First, it was obvious that these experts were sharing the acute feeling that Russia, on full international geopolitical offensive – will use the first favorable moment to act in Ukraine and realign this country under its sphere of influence. Especially after the success achieved by Russia in the Syrian dossier in September 2013 – when the performance of President V. Putin enjoyed a large recognition and was followed by his proposal addressed to the USA for a common action aimed at solving the big problems of the present – and after Armenia dropped the EU, opting for the Eurasian Union, this feeling became more acute.

And the Ukrainian experts felt this amplitude of an imminent Russian action. The author talked, in October 2013, with an eminent Ukrainian expert, who knows very well the si-

tuation of this country and who did not hesitate to describe the atmosphere in his country as close to civil war. His demonstration pointed to the certitude of the inevitability of an action staged by Russia, whose geopolitical offensive was seen as being of a large perspective targeting the entire former communist Eastern Europe, along with the acute feeling that the pro-western forces will not yield to such interference by Moscow that would liquidate the independence of Ukraine. As a matter of fact, such a geopolitical orientation of Moscow had been detected by American officials since 2012, when Hillary Clinton did not hesitate to publicly warn with this regard. In a press statement delivered in Dublin, in December 2012, just before a meeting with her Russian counterpart S. Lavrov, H. Clinton affirmed that: "There is a move to re-Sovietise the region. It's not going to be called that. It's going to be called a customs union, it will be called Eurasian Union and all of that. But let's make no mistake about it. We know what the goal is and we are trying to figure out effective ways to slow down or prevent it." Replying to that assertion immediately, one of the Russian officials said: "Attempts of certain Western politicians to distort the genuine essence of Eurasian integration look odd. Even more, it is impermissible to openly declare one's interference and hindrance of these positive processes. This impudent behavior reminds me of a lame duck limp", obviously implying that Russia would not ask anybody's permission to reach its own target.

But other elements, too, pleaded for taking into consideration such a scenario: the Russian military exercise held in 2013 under the name 'Zapad-2013', with a worrying scale, the pressures put by Moscow on other states committed to the Eastern Partnership of the EU, different accords on the construction of nuclear power plants in Hungary and Finland; the passing of certain laws in Bulgaria etc. As international media mentioned frequently at the time, Ukraine was only the first target of a Russian offensive towards Europe. Republic of Moldova was close to the conclusion of the EU association agreement, Hungary concluded a deal with Russia for its nuclear plant, becoming more dependent on Moscow, Belarus is already part of the Russian sphere, Cyprus, Bulgaria,

Serbia are targeted also by the Russian companies and oligarchs searching best investments, but closely connected to Kremlin foreign policy goals. It was also highlighted in the media that the West disengagement towards the fate of Ukraine is a bonus for the Russian plans and an incentive for more aggressive moves.¹⁰ Concerning Eastern Partnership's countries, such as Georgia or Moldova, the crisis in Ukraine highlighted the difficulties which they have to confront in their strive for European integration. Eastern partnership report published in August 2014 listed these hardships on the road to their development along the European Union standards and observed that: "Under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, Russia has aggressively sought to prevent countries that it perceives to be in its economic, political and cultural orbit from seeking closer ties with Western Europe. The recent crisis in Ukraine is only the latest manifestation of these aggressive policies."¹¹

So far, Russia only gave signs of discontentment with the so-called interference of western powers in Ukraine's home affairs, admonishing the Kiev authorities for its weakness to the so-called illegalities committed by protesters, hence an advice to repression and implicit a threat with suspending the economic support it had pledged. There were also more or less veiled threats about Russia possibly intervening and even causing a splitting of Ukraine if the West amplifies its destabilizing action. With regard to this last matter, Moscow officials, even of very high rank (V. Putin, S. Lavrov) criticized the presence of western politicians in the middle of the Euro-Maidan protesters, saying that the international climate would only worsen if Kremlin did the same way in Greece or elsewhere in the EU. A clear expression of the Kremlin 'hawks' with regard to Ukraine was provided, on February 6, by Sergey Glazyev, aide to the president Vladimir Putin in charge with the relations with the countries of proximity. First, he said that the 'interference' of western states in Ukraine is an infringement of the treaty signed by Russia with the USA in 1994, through which both states guaranteed the security and sovereignty of Ukraine after it renounced its nuclear potential inherited after the collapse of the USSR. Answering the ques-

tions of the newspaper 'Kommersant' he said: "Under the document, Russia and the USA are guarantors of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and ... are obliged to intervene when conflict situations of this nature arise/.../And what the Americans are getting up to now, unilaterally and crudely interfering in Ukraine's internal affairs, is a clear breach of that treaty. The agreement is for collective guarantees and collective action." This perspective suggested by Glazyev can be understood in at least two essential ways: Russia is legally entitled to intervene in Ukraine once the security and sovereignty of the country are in danger; second, that Russia and USA are legally entitled to consult over the future of Ukraine, also on the anti-government, anti-Russian and pro-Europe protests going on since November 2013 in Kiev.

At a second reading, Glazyev's statement raises an interesting hypothesis about the USA's recent activism in Kiev and, in the context, relative to the insulting remark made against the EU by the assistant to the US secretary of state, Victoria Nuland, in a private phone conversation with the US ambassador in Kiev, on February 6. The discussion, allegedly tapped by the Russian intelligence and transformed into a youtube viral, this remark determined the strong protest of Germany and other EU states. Glazyev also mentioned that the USA spends some USD 20 million daily to fuel the Kiev protest and even the premises of the US embassy is used to train protesters in guerrilla warfare tactics, that the weakness of the Yanukovich government which delays a strong intervention pushes the country to anarchy and separation. According to Glazyev, Ukraine is experiencing a real coup d'état and the government (which resigned meanwhile) should take the necessary measures to prevent the chaos. "The authorities are not fulfilling their duty to defend the state, negotiating with putschists as if they are law-abiding citizens/.../As for starting to use force, in a situation where the authorities face an attempted *coup d'état*, they simply have no other course of action./.../Otherwise, the country will be plunged into chaos." With the same occasion, Russian official expressed his opinion concerning the way in which Moscow sees the solution in

Ukraine: "Russia/.../ was concerned that the country should not split apart. But he suggested that a form of federalism be introduced to give regions substantial powers – including over their budgets and even international relations. Citing the example of Greenland, which enjoys substantial autonomy from Denmark and unlike the Danish state is not part of the European Union, he said western and eastern Ukraine could have different economic relations with the EU and Russia./.../Today, economic, cultural and human ties between the regions of eastern and western Ukraine are less than the links between southeastern Ukraine and Russia and between the western regions and the EU," Glazyev said, suggesting eastern regions might want to join a customs union that Putin favors."¹²

The option of Kremlin hawks is clear: immediate and tough repression of the Kiev revolt by authorities, in order to terminate the intervention of the West which, in fact, protects a coup against the democratically elected leadership. And this must be done even at the price of a deterioration of Russia's relations with the USA and EU. Reading the statements of the Russian officials as that one mentioned above, some astute annalists in the West observed that the Ukrainian crisis is the beginning of an large Russian geopolitical advance towards Central Europe. Walter Russell Mead wrote on his blog on February 11, 2014 that: "If Vladimir Putin gets his way, we may one day look back on the current crisis in Ukraine as a prelude to a much larger struggle between Russia and the West over the fates of the former Soviet republics. As U.S. and EU diplomats continue to quarrel about niceties around the Maidan, Russia is surreptitiously extending economic and political links to lands ever farther west. Last week, Hungary's parliament approved a plan for the construction of two new reactors at the country's only nuclear plant in Paks, which will be financed almost exclusively by a Russian loan of up to \$14 billion."¹³

Is there also another 'school of thinking' in Moscow? Of course, there is a second one, but it recognizes that there is a great difficulty in implementing it. So according to this second school, if inclusion of Ukraine within the Eurasian Union will be followed by implementa-

tion of European-style reforms “the protests in Kiyev’s Independence Square and the unexpected rapprochement between Russia and Ukraine could have long-term positive consequences for both countries./.../Russia and Ukraine are united in that their future prosperity lies in developing European-type democratic societies.” But, unfortunately , Russia is aspiring to become an world power pole which is in contradiction with the USA and EU interests . The conclusion of the analysis is that ”Russian leaders are convinced that international relations within the Commonwealth of Independent States (as the loose-knit organization of former Soviet states is known) is a zero-sum game territory. That means every defeat suffered by a partner from outside the region translates into a victory for Russia. Such outsiders would include the U.S. and China, as well as the EU.Any attempt to understand the economic consequences of the current events around Ukraine without taking into account this worldview of the regional elites is bound to fail.”¹⁴ In spite of the merits of developing along the European style reform of both Russia and Ukraine, the imperial dream of the the Russian elite to be a world pole is opposing to such a course . What is very important and common for these Russian schools of thought is that “to Russia the Ukrainian issue is the red line. And when it seemed possible that Ukraine, with active participation from Europe and the U.S., could turn into something built on different principles/.../there was no longer any room for agreement. Russia no longer cares about the possible damage to its relations with the West, which may now be curtailed.” And that is “natural” as F. Lukianov observed because „Ukraine has always been regarded as an important bridgehead upon which the balance of power in Europe and the physical security of Russia depend.”¹⁵

IT WAS FEBRUARY 21st. What happened on that day at Kiyev and in Ukraine gives the measure of how history speeds up these days. With a rapidity which can be explained only by the profound global revolution produced by the internet and the pertaining globalization, in just days, practically from Tuesday until Friday (February 18-21), an entire political system collapsed, government authorities

evaporated and other authorities took their place at the helm of the state. This is a European state with 46 million inhabitants and a huge economic potential. The constitution of 2004 was reinstated, which gives powers to the national legislative, to the detriment of the president, and the parliament already took the first measures. It elected an interim president, as the previous one, Viktor Yanucovyich ran to Kharkov where-it was said at the time - he raises armed militias, denouncing the new regime which it accuses of having staged a coup. The new government will take over the administration of the state , while there is also talk about a new parliament, given the dissolution of the former ruling Party of Regions, whose lawmakers emigrate to other parties. Yulia Tymoshenko, the opponent of Yanukovyich, was released from prison and delivered an address to the Euro-Maidan protesters, which was met with some reservation. In fact, a new political dynamic began in Ukraine.

First in Kiev. Protesters have not been evacuated from the EuroMaidan and assumed the mission of monitoring how their demands are fulfilled. The agreement signed on 21st of February by the opposition with President Yanukovyich, mediated by the Foreign Affairs ministers of Germany, France and Poland and a Russian official, which provided a peaceful solution to the crisis by forming a grand coalition government and holding presidential elections this year (probably in December) was invalidated (it did not bear the signature of the Russian mediator) when the president ran to Kharkov shortly after that.

Then, another dynamic was installed in various regions of Ukraine. In the East, a meeting was already held on 22nd of February – proving that it had been prepared in due time, as it was attended by approximately 4,500 delegates, which hints to a synchronization with the bloody repression in Kiev – regrouping the authorities from the pro-Russian and pro-Yanukovich regions of Ukraine, which denounced the measures taken by the authorities newly installed in the capital. In Crimea, which was attached by former Communist ruler of the Soviet Union, N.S. Khrushchev, to Ukraine in 1954, there are certain tendencies of secession and reuniting with Russia. The idea is

also evident in other parts of the traditionally pro-Russian East of the country. In the West of the country, authorities were replaced in some towns, where police and other structures of force joined the new revolutionary political current.

As a whole, in the Ukrainian politics the dynamic is about coagulating some obvious pressures toward the objective of fragmenting/dividing the state between the East and West, with some form of leadership under the Russo-European condominium of a confederation. In Kiev, the central government goes to great length in order to secure its authority toward these secessionist tendencies, in order to preserve the unity and independence of the state. Where is this internal political dynamic heading to? This is one of the capital questions that await an answer. At the level of international relations, the big powers initiated a rapid dynamic of jointly acting in order to avoid the start of a devastating war on the old continent, which is not at all impossible, according to some scenarios. The big powers interested in the issue are, obviously, Russia, EU and USA, the last two being mirrored, as it is normal at a time of serious crisis, also in the position of NATO.

For several day after the Euro-Maidan massacre, Russia does not hint to its intentions for the immediate future. After February 21st, talks were held between the leaders of the USA and Russia, also of Russia and Germany, in which sympathy was expressed for the release of Yulia Timoshenko from prison – the candidate defeated in the 2010 elections by Yanukovich, who represents a symbol of state unity and also of the legitimacy of the new authorities in Kiev – but there was also concern over a possible military intervention from abroad (mainly, if not exclusively, Russian). It has been considered that the existence of a united and independent Ukrainian state is vital for the security and stability of the continent and that this crisis must be managed with priority to the will and major interests of the Ukrainian nation. A sign of the deteriorating situation has been the behavior of the Russian troops in Crimea, which especially after February 28, began to size control of Ukrainian military installations on the peninsula. Meeting on

March 3, 2014, EU foreign ministers said the Union will “consider ... targeted measures,” such as visa bans and asset freezes on selected Russian officials, unless Moscow retreat its troops from Crimea peninsula where they began to act as occupying forces.¹⁶ On March 4, 2014, at Poland’s request, has met The North Atlantic Council for consultations within the framework of Article 4 of the Washington Treaty, which states that “the parties will consult whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence, or security of any of the parties is threatened.” The statement issued after mentioned that it is necessary „to pursue and intensify our rigorous and on-going assessment of the implications of this crisis for Alliance security, in close coordination and consultation. We continue to support all constructive efforts for a peaceful solution to the current crisis in accordance with international law. We welcome the ongoing efforts undertaken by the United Nations, the European Union, the OSCE and the Council of Europe.”¹⁷ On the evening of March 5, 2014, general secretary of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, issued a statement which underscored the gravity of the evolution of the events in Ukraine for the stability and security of the Euro-Atlantic space. He mentioned that “Russia continues to violate Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and its own international commitments” and, consequently, NATO decided to take immediate measures. “We have suspended the planning for our first NATO-Russia joint mission. The maritime escort for the U.S. ship Cape Ray, which will neutralise Syria’s chemical weapons. Let me stress, this will not affect the destruction of chemical weapons, but Russia will not be involved in the escort of the US vessel. We have also decided that no staff-level civilian or military meetings with Russia will take place for now. We have put the entire range of NATO-Russia cooperation under review. These steps send a clear message: Russia’s actions have consequences”- said Rasmussen.¹⁸

The USA affirmed that the peaceful solution and the preservation of Ukraine’s integrity are undisputable matters and that it will militate in this direction, alongside its allies, Rus-

sia and the Ukrainian authorities. The EU and international institutions feverishly make calculations referring to an economic support for a Ukraine that is on the verge of a dangerous financial and economic collapse. What will be the result of this new dynamic that appeared in the relations between the major actors interested in the future of Ukraine? Will Russia avoid a military intervention, at the demand of Crimea, for instance, or under the pretext of protecting the Russian minority? Is Russia truly interested to maintain the unity of Ukraine and its 'game' of fragmentation/federalization is only a pressure skillfully put so that to obtain more from Kiev? Are we witnessing a technology much more sophisticated than the previous procedures of dividing the spheres of influence between the big powers?

A particular mention is worth being made about the positions of the direct neighbors of Ukraine. Poland was extremely active during this hectic week, with its Foreign Affairs minister Radek Sikorski having a significant role in reaching a solution in February 20-21 discussing with both camps to stop the violence in Kiev. The prominent role of Poland at regional scale cannot be denied, while the gain of image at EU scale is significant. Romania, the second large neighbors of Ukraine in the West, made appeals from the highest level to the ending of violence by both sides, and PM V. Ponta paid a visit to Chisinau that constituted a clear sign of support granted to the republic of Moldova in these troubled times, when the states of the Eastern Partnership undergo a major crisis. During a meeting of the main decision makers in Bucharest, the participants announced the preparations made also for receiving the possible refugees from Ukraine in case of unwanted evolutions. Hungary and Slovakia joined the position of the European Union.

As reality show, these Ukraine neighbors, although members of NATO are afraid of the Russian behavior. Are they entitled to be so afraid given the fact that they are under the NATO 'article five' guarantee? It was observed almost instantly that, if on the paper they have that guarantee, it is not substantiated with military muscle. In accordance with the commitments of NATO with Russia Founding Act in 1997, prior to the first wave of enlargement

of the Western Alliance towards Eastern Europe, there are few, if any, military assets of the Alliance deployed on the territory of the new members (former Communist countries). As a matter of fact, we are witnessing two strategic reality connected with NATO forces in Europe. From 3 million NATO troops, half being in Europe 1,5 millions NATO troops in Europe, around 300 000 (10 per cent) are deployed in Central and Eastern Europe (they are practically national troops of the new member states).

Furthermore, from a total of 28 NATO installations (bases, headquarters, etc.) only 5 are located in Central and Eastern Europe; finally of 66,271 US forces in Europe, 66,081 are deployed in Western Europe and 136 in the East of the continent on the territory of the new member states, while from 200 non-strategic nuclear weapons, none could be found in Eastern locations. It was then correctly assessed that: "CEE countries remain vulnerable to Russian tactics, which emphasize fast, limited-goal military strikes to create facts on the ground that will prove difficult for a politically disunited Alliance to reverse. The Russian military incursions in Georgia and Ukraine demonstrated that the early phase of a regional conflict is especially crucial for determining its eventual outcome. Given the reaction time required for forces to be deployed from Western Europe or North America, such tactics neutralize to some extent the advantage of the Article 5 guarantee. The vulnerability created by this delay highlights the need for pre-site defensive forces."¹⁹ Here was the reason for the repeated requests of the new members of NATO addressed to the Alliance to establish very soon NATO bases on their territory or to multiply the exercises of NATO troops in Eastern Europe as a tool of deterring the Russian aggression or, in the worst case, to be there for the first phase of an eventual face-off. It is not to much to say that the same reality could have been the best argument for those in the region among the decision-makers who considered that an understanding with Russia is to be preferred to an perceived empty guarantee.

It is hard to foresee the future, even on a very short term, especially in case of a very fluid political dynamic, with so many actors involved. There is a multitude of questions in

all the comments made about the situation in Ukraine and its evolutions are monitored with great concern. It is evident that solving this serious crisis in Europe, which makes possible even a war that would involve great powers, requires all sides to manifest calm and prudence in their actions. The biggest danger is that a wrong decision or an insufficiently considered action made by one of the political actors of the drama unfolding in Ukraine determines a foreign intervention and the start of a domino process with tragic consequences at continental and even global scale.

The start of the Russian military operations in Crimea, on a larger scale against Ukraine, already evident since February 28, was promptly labeled as aggression not just by the target state, but also by the majority of the international community. The international press of the period is full of articles and studies that try to look into the immediate future. Will a state of war begin between the two Slavic states, following the obvious Russian aggression? What will be the attitude of USA, EU and NATO in probably the most serious crisis that sparked in Europe after the end of the Cold War, if not since the end of the last world war? What will be Russia's next moves in the already started action? What are the implications of the Russian action on the relations between Moscow and the West? Why did Putin risk losing, with this action, the prestige gained with the Winter Olympics of Sochi? Will this lead to a new Cold War, similar to the previous one, between West and East? How can be explained the support of the Russian speaking population from eastern Ukraine for such an armed aggression against the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine? Will the Ukrainian state turn into a federation, confederation or some other form of dismemberment? Has Crimea already become a 'frozen conflict'? etc.

Each of these questions have found at the time not one, but many answers in the international press, obviously because the ongoing events were perceived having a clear global implication. Especially at regional scale, their impact was evident, so the western neighbors of Ukraine feel – in turn – threatened by the Russian aggressive action. Will Russian forces

venture further west? Will Russian leaders use the lack of a strong reaction from the West to the invasion in Ukraine – especially during the first days – as a signal for such an advance into the former Soviet space, even in the exterior empire? In a column run by the 'Washington Post' on March 3, Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote: "If Ukraine is crushed while the West is simply watching, the new freedom and security in bordering Romania, Poland and the three Baltic republics would also be threatened."²⁰ The possibility of such a scenario being more than just speculation is demonstrated not only by the statements made by some leaders of these states – such as Poland – but also by recent history. As a matter of fact, even the Eastern Partnership founded in 2009 appeared as effect of another Russian strong-hand action in 2008, against Georgia. And this scenario becomes even more plausible, because it is accepted as possible result of the present crisis a dismemberment of Ukraine, the political map of the region will take a new configuration whose novelty will imply a long period of transition to normality, with direct impact on the region, also in military terms. Eastern Europe could become overnight the Balkans of the early 20th century, famous for being the "powder keg" of the continent.

What international press approached only in a collateral manner, and without producing a torrent of analyses, is why Russia risked such a military action given the experience of the military failure in Afghanistan, from the '80s of the last century?

As it is known in detail, due to the documentation that was made public, the invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR, in December 1979, pushed Moscow into an unprecedented isolation abroad, which took a heavy moral and material toll. And the massive losses registered by the Soviet forces in the combat against Afghan insurgents sparked an internal crisis that was also accelerated by the leadership transition at Kremlin, determining the 'perestroika' and 'glasnost' that eventually failed into the collapse of USSR, in 1991. Certainly, not only the Russian invasion of Afghanistan set the whole process in motion, as the reasons for the collapse of the USSR were multiple, but it is undisputable that the war waged in that

country precipitated the entire phenomenon of social and state dissolution.

It is known now that the decision to invade, made in 1979, did not meet the consensus of the Soviet decision-making structure – the Politburo of the Communist Party – which soon had to admit the fact that the action was a mistake that must be repaired. Matters pertaining to the prestige of a big power, above all – what will the allies/satellites say?; and the adversaries in the bipolar competition? – delayed the Soviet's leadership's decision of announcing a withdrawal from Afghanistan until it was obviously too late, while the internal crisis which this action has accelerated could not be stopped anymore.

But Kremlin planners of 2014 apparently forgot the lesson learned in Afghanistan, when they invaded Ukraine. The Russian nation however has not forgotten the history lessons. A poll conducted Monday, March 3, on 1,600 subjects from all over Russia gave the following results to the question: "Should Russia react to the overthrow of the legally elected authorities in Ukraine?": 73 % "No"; 15 % "Yes". The negative score was even higher among students (77 %).²¹

The military intervention in Ukraine was already met by the clear opposition of the legitimate leadership of the Ukrainian state, which qualified it as aggression. The attempt by Moscow to avoid this reality by invoking the legitimacy of ousted president Yanukovich, who allegedly made a request of support and defence against the extremist forces in the country – is not justified by the logic of events – and the prospect of a new Afghanistan is evident. Even if Russia has the upper hand in terms of military forces' ratio between the two states, in this case too, same as in Afghanistan, this is not how the whole evolution of a possible military confrontation should be treated. The Ukrainian army, if it will fight back, will be rapidly defeated, but combat will continue – as it was frequently proved after the Cold War, to think only about the recent past – under various forms of insurgency, which already proved to be formidable in the confrontation with classic armies. Iraq post-2003 and Afghanistan post-2001 are examples that must

be carefully analysed by political planners in Kremlin, when they will make decisions these days. There is no chance for a military success in such a combat.

But will the Ukrainian nation get involved in such a military effort as an insurgence? History demonstrated that the answer can only be positive. We do not refer to the examples of 1918-1922 or 1944-1953, conducted in conditions of international isolation and limited foreign support of those times. But we consider the recently showed will of the whole Ukrainian nation of being independent and sovereign, the fact that it has a legitimate leadership and it appears very likely that – although traumatized by the bloodshed on Euro-Maidan – it will not hesitate to commit itself to immediate armed resistance. The support promised by the international community to Ukraine, to its independence and territorial integrity could become in the future another indicator of strengthening the decision to firmly resist if Russia does not make the correct decisions.

In such a reading of the recent events of Kiev and Crimea, Russia has no other option than conforming itself to international legality and taking the adequate measures in order to avoid another Afghanistan in Ukraine.

But how the Russian aggression against Ukraine has been developed ?

It is obvious that the Russian military aggression began with special forces being covered as 'self-defense forces' or masked as 'unknown,' so-called "little green men" or "the polite men" but visibly with a precise mission. Gradually, but not very soon it was understood that Russia has applied a new type warfare, later on called as "hybrid war". One should not rule out even a military confrontation that could crown what was called 'the biggest crisis since the end of the Cold War' as it could end with a new frozen conflict. The situation in Ukraine was open at the beginning of March 2014 to any evolution and – obviously – even to an unforgiving mistake of crisis management, which could once again throw, 100 years after the first generalized European war, the old continent into a new big conflict.

But is it still too early for us to draw some lessons from the evolution of the Ukrainian

crisis so far? Are we hampered by the fact that we do not know the end – hopefully a peaceful one that will preserve the territorial integrity of the Ukrainian state – in making some attempts to notice few of the trends which these days of confrontation between Russia and the West outlined as probable constant lines of evolution in the future? In our opinion, the answers to these questions are negative. No, it is not too early. And this is why:

From the diplomatic evolutions so far – the reference is to the days before February 21, when a European troika (the Foreign Affairs ministers of France, Germany and Poland) succeeded to mediate an accord between the Euro-Maidan and authorities, rapidly shattered, but invoked today by Russia – and what happened after the installing in crescendo of the crisis management diplomacy as soon as Kremlin made the decision to intervene in Crimea (February 28), one can understand some significant elements. First, the 'troika' of the EU Foreign Affairs ministers that took upon itself the mission to mediate the Ukrainian internal conflict reveals the forming of a new axis of continental power with a role of managing the difficult situations in eastern Europe. Set aside the fact that Poland thus enters the 'first echelon' as one of the great European powers, let's notice that the older German-French binomial suddenly finds the vigor it had lost when it failed to adequately manage the crisis of sovereign debts in 2010 – 2011 or in Libya. Second, we notice the almost immediate failure of the accord reached by the 'troika' in Kiev and, along with the installing of the new Ukrainian power, the strong discontentment of Moscow. It does not delay in acting through a masked military intervention, defying the international legality: the act of Helsinki, in 1975, reconfirmed later, which forbids the violation of the recognized borders of a member state, as well as the UN Charter.

Third: the gradual loss of importance by the initial 'troika' and the advent of a power binomial, very robust and coagulated after an initial hesitation: Germany and the USA (backed by the United Kingdom). The talks of the Kremlin leader are generally conducted with the leaders of these grand powers, Obama

and Merkel negotiate the opportuneness and amplitude of sanctions against Russia.

Fourth, the European Union, which has a feverish programme of sending its high officials to Kiev and holding meeting in Brussels, gradually align behind the German position of probing all the possibilities of finding a peaceful solution. Fifth, it is evident that if Germany insists on finding a peaceful solution and sparing Moscow, the USA, together with this direction of action, insists on sanctions against Russia that will seriously shake Putin's plans, suspected of not stopping just at Ukraine and also assumes the dispatching of military forces – a fleet is sent to the Mediterranean, a destroyer is sent to the Black Sea for common exercises with the Romanian and Bulgarian fleets, fighter planes patrol in the Baltic air space and are dislodged in Poland.

Last, but not least, NATO adopts a martial speech affirming the imperative of observing international laws. It dispatches to Eastern Europe, up to its own borders, in consensus with the US actions, AWACS planes to Poland and Romania conducting the normal mission in such cases: the discouraging of the aggressor and strongly supporting a robust diplomacy meant to bring it to reason.

This general picture shows several directions of action that seem to reclaim the title of 'lessons learned' from the present crisis. First, that the military aggression is no longer a taboo subject in Europe, that having at hand the military force one can advance designs of big power – camouflaged or not – without being met by a common, instantaneous and decision opposition of the West. The increasingly frequent references to the '30s of last century and the ways of action of Hitler – for instance, the pretext of protecting the own ethnicity in conquering the Sudetenland in 1938 – and the installing of a new trend of 'appeasement' in Europe are doubtlessly justified. Which way one will act with this regard on the old continent and perhaps in the whole system, it is still unclear, but the fact that the principles of the Act of Helsinki, like the stipulations of Versailles toward Hitler are disrespected, this cannot be denied anymore.

Second, Russia enjoys a differentiated treatment from the West. On one hand, Germany

shows to be more conciliatory, more open to understanding the motivations of Moscow, as it only tries to refrain its appetite and repeatedly remind it that it infringes the legality, without weakening through adequate measures the capability of action. The fact that the German business has big interests in the relation with Russia, that the German economy needs the Russian oil and gas are realities that motivate strongly, but not completely the attitude of Berlin. On the other hand, one can notice, with all the hesitations and criticism brought to the Obama administration, that it seems to move from the position of no longer occupying advanced strategic/geopolitical positions (corresponding to the 'grand strategy' of off-shore balancing), which was general during the last years, and becomes more offensive and more decided in demanding the observance of the systemic order. Even China, suspected at the beginning of the crisis of tacitly supporting Russia, seems to have realized lately the danger posed by and Eurasian heartland dominated in Europe by Germany and in Asia by a Eurasian Union controlled by Moscow. The German magazine "Der Spiegel" admitted that "the Kremlin leader has succeeded in one respect: he has divided the West. This process began months before his foray into Crimea, when he granted temporary asylum to US whistleblower Edward Snowden."²² The reference mainly points to the Germany-USA relation, but the mentioned division has a larger geopolitical connotation: does Germany need Russia in a future global competition?

And there is yet another 'lesson' of the latest days of crisis. The small and middle-sized powers – fearing the 'great games' committed by the big powers – show a normal movement of coagulation and constantly consult with each other, either in group meetings – like the Visegrad Group – or in larger-scale regional ones – Visegrad and the 'group of Nordic states' – especially since the idea appeared – Kissinger, for instance – of a 'neo-Finlandisation of Central and Eastern Europe.' The voice of these powers is strong and is heard in the international organizations and leaders already take shape, like Poland and Sweden, through initiatives and constant diplomatic effort. The hope was in rapidly solving the crisis and avoiding its degeneration into a destructive war.

Notes:

¹ An example of such a situation, with little semblance in recent diplomatic history, in which a state radically and swiftly changes its geopolitical options, has occurred in the context of the CSEEA grant regarding the Eastern Partnership. Planned two months in advance, the round table that took place at the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration Bucharest (NUPSPA), on November 24th 2013, had the Vilnius Summit as a main topic of discussion. The round table's agenda included a speech by Ukraine's Ambassador in Romania. Because Ukraine's refusal to sign the EU Association Agreement was made public the day before his speech, the Ambassador did not take part in the event. See <http://eapr.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/tentative-agenda.pdf>

² Olga Pogarska, Edilberto L. Segura, "Ukraine-Macroeconomic Situation-October 2013", Sigma Bleyzer private equity investment management firm & The Bleyzer Foundation, Analytical Report, October 2013, available at <http://www.usubc.org/site/sigmableyzer-macroeconomic-reports/ukraine-macroeconomic-situation-october-2013>.

³ Ibidem

⁴ Daryna Krasnolutska, Kateryna Choursina, "Ukraine Economic Imbalances Are Unsustainable, World Bank Says", Bloomberg, 7 October 2013, available at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-10-07/ukraine-economic-imbalances-are-unsustainable-world-bank-says.html>

⁵ Summit of Failure. How the EU Lost Russia over Ukraine, November 24, 2014, in <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/war-in-ukraine-a-result-of-misunderstandings-between-europe-and-russia-a-1004706-2.htm>

⁶ The text is including also parts of articles, largely extended, but without footnotes, published during the development of the Ukrainian crisis since February 2014 in the daily newspaper "Nine o'clock" (in English language) under the pen name M. Hareshan.

⁷ Klychko reaffirms opposition demands (Munich Security Conference), 02.02.2014 12:49 – in www.securityconference.de/en/news/article/klychko-reaffirms-opposition-demands/; Ukraine's Yanukovych Returns to Work, Street Protests Go On, in "Moscow Times", issue 5302, 03 February 2014 – <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/ukraines-yanukovych-returns-to-work-street-protests-go-on/493815.html#ixzz2sIPtSFUh>; Vladimir Frolov, Yanukovych's Classic Case of State Capture, 02 February 2014 | Issue 5301 – <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/yanukovych-s-classic-case-of-state-capture/493724.html>

⁸ Sergei Karaganov, Turning East?, 17.02. 2014 http://russiancouncil.ru/en/inner/?id_4=3219#top

⁹ Idem, Russia needs to defend its interests with an iron fist, 6 March, 2014, http://russiancouncil.ru/en/inner/?id_4=3259#top

⁹ Interfax Central Asia General Newswire, Article from: Central Asia General Newswire | December 10, 2012- <http://business.highbeam.com/436260/article-1G1-311705437/interfax-central-asia-general-newswire>

¹⁰ Edward Lucas and A. Wess Mitchell, Central European Security After Crimea: The Case for Strengthening NATO's Eastern Defenses, March, 25, 2014, passim, <http://www.cepa.org/sites/default/files/The%20Case%20>

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ABSTRACT

The popular surge in the Maidan, at the end of 2013, ended up in the forced departure of Ukraine's president Yanukovich. The start of the Russian military operations in Crimea, on a larger scale against Ukraine, already evident since February 28, was promptly labeled as aggression not just by the target state, but also by the majority of the international community. The international press of the period is full of articles and studies that try to look into the immediate future. Will a state of war begin between the two Slavic states, following the obvious Russian aggression? What will be the attitude of USA, EU and NATO in probably the most serious crisis that sparked in Europe after the end of the Cold War, if not since the end of the last world war? What will be Russia's next moves in the already started action? What are the implications of the Russian action on the relations between Moscow and the West? Why did Putin risk losing, with this action, the prestige gained with the Winter Olympics of Sochi? Will this lead to a new Cold War, similar to the previous one, between West and East? How can be explained the support of the Russian speaking population from eastern Ukraine for such an armed aggression against the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine? Will the Ukrainian state turn into a federation, confederation or some other form of dismemberment? Has Crimea already become a 'frozen conflict'?

Keywords: Ukraine, European Union, neighborhood, crisis, war, Russia, aggression

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IDENTITATE ȘI SECURITATE ÎN EUROPA DE EST

Eastern European Identity – Current Perspectives. A Romanian View

George-Vadim Tiugea

SEARCHING FOR A DEFINITION

There are many people today who would ask themselves what Eastern Europe still means today. If we are trying to give a geographical definition of the place where this entity would reside, then we will have a lot of trouble identifying the limits of the region. Especially the western ones, as anyone would consider Russia as being a part of Eastern Europe, if only for its part lying west of Ural Mountains, as some illustrious politicians of the 20th century such as Charles de Gaulle and Mikhail S. Gorbachev considered, in order to define the limits of a dim European continent. But for its western limits we must use history to reach to some reasonable result. In fact, if we use the definition given to the region during the Cold War by some political scientists, such as Zbigniew Brzezinski¹, we must include countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia (today Czech Republic and Slovakia), Hungary, Yugoslavia (today Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia), Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, but also the former Soviet republics of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova. Some also include East Germany (former German Democratic Republic) and the Caucasus countries (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan), in a much extended definition. In this definition, Winston Churchill's Iron Curtain would be the western limit of Eastern Europe².

However, after 1989, the perceptions of some countries in the region started to chan-

ge, as they began to consider themselves something else than Eastern European, and rather like something between the West and the East: Central Europe. This applied to countries which were not Soviet republics, but also increasingly to Baltic States after their independence in 1991. The tendency was supported by the ideological drive to the West after the fall of communist regimes, which was accompanied by a massive adoption of Western modern cultural model, often in the form of the American (or global, as some would like to call it today) mass culture model. Thus, Eastern Europe was restrained to the former Soviet space, even if some of the countries in the region themselves tried to create an exclusive core club of Central Europe (the Visegrad Group) and still include the Balkans into Eastern Europe (or into the newly carved region of South East Europe). This definition often found support in the existence of the traditional border between Western Christianity (Catholic and Protestant) and Orthodoxy, a limit promoted by authors with a civilizational approach, such as Samuel P. Huntington³.

A compromise definition was that adopted by the French interwar school; lead by geographers such as Emmanuel de Martonne, they tended to define the region as "Central and Eastern Europe", a designation which became more convenient later to the European Union in order not to exclude any country from a future enlargement.

No matter of the definition, when approaching the subject of Eastern Europe one must

agree that this is a broad area, which is definitely not belonging to the Western civilization, even if it shares some common features with it, be it only the predominant Christian roots, but which is nonetheless European and not Asian, American or Middle Eastern. If we add here the inheritance of the Soviet style communist rule we can understand more easily what we are talking about. And even during transition from communism to capitalism, after 1989, there are still common features which stand out as similar in the region and help us recognize its broad contours.

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL INHERITANCE

But for assessing these common features and differences we must go back to the historical background which helps us understand the basis of the Eastern European culture and its area. Even if some consider it obsolete, we must come back to the Byzantine Empire and Eastern Orthodoxy to find these common roots.

The Eastern part of the Roman Empire was never completely dominated by Rome in what regards its culture and civilization, which had remained basically Greek in nature, resting upon the inheritance of Hellenistic civilization and its greatest imperial experience, the Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great, which in itself expressed a temptation for conquering the Orient, often resembling the expansion of the Tsarist Empire to Siberia and the Far East. Therefore, what became known as the Byzantine Empire had never been completely subjected to Western civilization embodied by Rome, but only formally and under strict military occupation.

Later, this separation of the empire was also reflected in the type of Christianity adopted, with a lot of oriental religions' influence, but reflecting the ecumenical fragmentation characterising the ancient Greek city-states. Even if the Christianized Roman Empire under Theodosius pretended to represent a united cultural entity, it was only so in what regards the basic Christian values, which constitute even today the common features between Orthodo-

xy and Catholicism. In fact the schism between the western and eastern churches took place in 395 AD, when the empire had split into two, even if officially we are taught that the Great Schism only took place in 1054. And it was not really a schism but a formal recognition of the differences subsisting between the two cultural areas of the empire: Latin and Greek.

As a consequence, the first main cultural inheritance of Eastern Europe is the Byzantine spirit, with its Greek background and Orthodox Christianity. It is the time when Constantinople (former Byzantium) began to be called the "Second Rome". Of course, this cultural format also had political motivations of domination and conquest, later expressed under emperor Justinian, the famous author of the homonymic civil code and ruler of the largest Byzantine territory, extending also over the Italic Peninsula and Northern Africa⁴.

Later, to that Byzantine layer one must add the Slavic background, which came to offer more content to the difference between east and west. Even if some may say that the Slavic layer did not coincide with the Byzantine inheritance, as the Western Slavs (Poles, Czechs and Slovaks) and some of the Southern Slavs (Croats, Slovenes) adopted Catholicism and Latin alphabet, there is still a common ground which rests upon the Slavonic culture. Based on the new version of Greek alphabet developed by St. Cyril and Methodius and on the Julian calendar, this mostly religious cultural guise covered a broad region, sometimes including non-Slavic peoples, such as the Romanians, but there was only one standard, as in the west there was only one Rome.

One can argue that the Byzantines and the Slavs did not get along very well, as they fought and slaughtered each other during long and frequent wars, conquering and re-conquering territories from each other. But this had more to do with politics than with culture and we can recall similar confrontations between fellow western crusaders, as for example the Hundred Years War between England and France.

Sometimes the factor which unifies a culture is the outside danger and menace to the core values. This was the case of the Eastern European peoples when the invasions from the

east, of Tartars and Turks, forced them to fight and unite to defeat their enemies. It is the main legendary foundation of some literary works such as "Knyaz Igor's Army" (a literary tale dating back from the Kievan Russia)⁵ and the historical tale of many of today's nations, including the much reminded battle of Kosovopolje (1389), when Serbians, Bulgarians, Bosnians, Hungarians and Romanians stood against the Ottomans for a last time before being defeated. It is the same factor which is historically considered to have united the Eastern Slavs making up the Tsarist Empire against any common enemies, be them Tartars, Turks, Persians, Swedes, French or Germans.

The fact that Russia became the centre of such a cultural and political entity embodying most of Eastern European culture is due to some historical events that favoured this trend, among which the most important was the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans, thus creating the need for a "Third Rome", safe from any immediate threat. The geographical factors also helped that tendency, as Moscow was too much north for the reach of any Turkish invasion and could find no immediate obstacle against its expansion to the west and south, when it began to do that, under Tsar Peter the Great⁶. Actually, expansion towards the Black Sea could easily be motivated by the quest to free the Christian lands under Islamic rule, in another form of crusade, later motivated by the Slavic brotherhood links, especially with the Serbs. One must not also forget the substantial help offered to the Greek movement of emancipation called *Filiki Eteria*, which started from Russia in 1821 to give birth to the Greek modern independent state.

On the other hand, expansion towards the Baltic Sea, apart from its geopolitical considerations, can also be perceived as a movement of reuniting all the Slavic territories in Europe, even if the division of Poland together with Austria and Prussia can hardly be called so, and the occupation of Finland, Estonia, Livonia, Lithuania and Bessarabia were only politically motivated. One can say that the Tsarist Empire and its geopolitical successor, the Soviet Union, managed to unite (in a way or another) most of the Eastern European culture, under the claim of an external threat, be it the

bourgeois revolution, Catholicism, capitalism or America⁷.

However, no order based on repression and forced submission can be fully internalized and adopted by any people. This is what happened with peoples from what is now called Central Europe. While Russia was perceived as a potential ally against former oppressors, the attitudes towards it were favourable. Once it began to become the new oppressor, it was perceived as a new enemy. This is the rationale behind the Polish movement of liberation, finding a haven in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which was yet another milder form of imperialism. It is the same rationale behind the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the Czechoslovakian Spring of 1968 and other episodes, when Central Europe tried to emancipate itself from Moscow. One can also say that that Orthodox people never rebelled against Russian rule, but if we take Romania's example (which I will further detail) or Belgrade's under Tito, we reach to a different conclusion.

There is a limit of culture and history, which cannot be surpassed by the unifying impulse, and especially here in Eastern Europe, where ecumenical fragmentation is so common. After all, there is no common Eastern European authority of Orthodoxy, even if the Moscow Patriarch would like to consider himself as such. There is only the political authority conferred by Soviet domination over the former republics of the Union, but even in Serbia, where the faith is similar, there is a separate Patriarchate. We are not including here the Romanian, Greek and Bulgarian churches, which have adopted the new Gregorian calendar at the beginning of the 20th century (under the political influence of ruling Western dynasties), or the Patriarchate of Constantinople which was always influenced by Greece.

But, after all, it was also the communist period which has left its traces over all Eastern Europe, the main visible sign being the broad neighbourhoods of tall concrete flats in cities across the region, even starting from East Germany, but also the memories of the long lines in stores, where everything was rationalized (or even lacked most of the time) and where people used coupons instead of money, fearing of being heard by the secret police when gos-

siping about the regime, using candles during the night (where it was not forbidden) as electricity stopped in order to fulfil the five year plan and sleeping without heat during cold winters. Unfortunately, these are not traces which can be remembered with joy.

After 1989, when Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary were accepted into NATO, many people said that the cultural barrier between East and West, Orthodoxy and Catholicism, will become another sort of Iron Curtain. But when Romania and Bulgaria became NATO members in 2004, this assumption was shattered, proving that in politics there is no moral consideration as in religion, or, sometimes, in culture, but only cold calculation based on the perception of threat and, some say, a balance of power⁸.

However, perception of threat can occur on any side of the barricade. As Barry R. Posen said, there is a *security dilemma* which is developing, whenever an important actor becomes too powerful and capable of arbitrarily disposing of power⁹. This was the case during the Crimean War (1853-1856), against Russia, but also during Napoleonic Wars in Europe at the beginning of the 19th century, against France, and during the Second World War, against Germany. The countries of what nowadays is commonly called Central Europe perceived a threat from Russia during the 90s, not so much from its military potential, which was on the fall, but mostly from its problems in dealing with transition, which they experienced themselves and which they considered could be dealt easier under the umbrella of the West (NATO and EU equally concerned, one for security and the other for economy, a fact which is sometimes not well understood even by some Western European governments). Russia was perceived more as a temporarily retreated Soviet Union (or Tsarist Empire), than as a new state, with a new democratic system.

And vice versa, when Russia perceived a threat in the NATO enlargement, it began to rebuild its former Soviet military and security infrastructure, to develop its own type of "guided democracy", to become wary of foreign investments and promote more its own participations abroad (which is in fact not a new strategy in its history). Also, new partnerships

are in view, with Central Asian countries (a colonial type of inheritance) and China (former junior ally, now turning more and more into a senior one). It is a natural tendency, especially from a country which pretends to be a specific civilization, as Braudel would say¹⁰.

THE ROMANIAN CASE – AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE EVOLUTION TOWARDS RUSSOPHOBIA

Every national culture which developed during the 19th century was based on the assessment of some myths, which symbolised national unity and coherence of the local community. They practically differentiated between the people basing their assumptions on the presence of different languages, religious and cultural traditions and opposing them to each other.

Romanian historiography has always stressed, as many other nations' historiographies, that the Romanian people is a unique and exceptional case in the history of humanity. Everything in the history of the people living in the so-called "Carpathian-Danube-Pontus" area, seemed to be a piece of a specific destiny, especially after the development of national history at the end of 18th century in one of the provinces inhabited by people speaking this isolated Latin origin language, the Principality of Transylvania, and not accidentally since it was under Austrian rule, which favoured such romantic undertakings as digging for the glorious past¹¹.

One of the most commonly used description of the Romanian people used by this historiography was that it was "an island of Latinity in an ocean of Slavism". Indeed, geographically, the space inhabited by Romanians was bordered by Eastern Slavs to the north and Southern Slavs to the south, with a notable exception of Hungarians to the west. That led to the also common saying that "the Black Sea is our only true ally". Some would like this to be true even today, even if it is only a foolish rhetorical assumption. But indeed, the historical circumstances seem to confirm a part of this diagnosis, taking into account the situation of

these lands at the “crossroads of all evils” (as an ancient famous Moldavian chronicle writer said), identified under the forms of multiple invasions, conquests and plunders that the people had to cope with since the Roman rule was over in 271 AD.

In fact Roman occupation was the nation's very core of justification, based on the linguistic arguments and, later, on archaeological and written evidence. This was supposed to differentiate a nation which had lived separately in three historical provinces (Transylvania, Moldavia and Walachia) for five centuries, due to the geopolitical context which always favoured domination from abroad (geographically from three sides, too) and which still used, at least in two of them east and south of the Carpathians, the Slavonic script and traditional Christian-Orthodox religious education. It is true, though, that Transylvania, under Germanic Catholic domination was the exceptionally favoured cradle of the nation, where Latin roots were rediscovered and the national idea took contours. This led to an original inclination towards the West (where Rome was), which later developed in yet another forms.

However, religious faith created an also natural bond to Eastern European peoples. Apart from the Greeks and Serbs, which were natural “Christian brothers”, especially after the Turkish advance in the Balkans, there was also an attempt of tackling deeper eastern lands; in 1463, Prince Stephen the Great of Moldavia (presently sanctified by the Romanian Orthodox Church) married princess Evdokia of Kiev, royalty of Russian origins. This was supposed to create a powerful alliance with the great Knyaz of Kiev against Turks and Tartars. Unfortunately it failed, as Evdokia died only four years later and the changeful Prince Stephen turned to other projects more to the south¹².

In 1711, another attempt was made by Dimitrie Cantemir, the erudite scholar Prince of Moldavia, who concluded a secret alliance treaty with Peter the Great, the Russian tsar. As Russia began to become an important actor in the region, Cantemir tried to get some help against Turkish domination¹³. His good personal relations with Tsar Peter helped him a lot, but also his skills, as after being defeated by the Turks he became personal councillor of

the tsar until his death in 1723, which found him at his mansion near Harkov.

An important moment was 1829, when the Adrianople (today, Edirne in Turkey) Treaty between Russia and the Ottoman Empire was signed. It marked the change in the balance of power from the principalities of Moldavia and Walachia, as Russia obtained a significant political influence and, more importantly, the right to maintain troops north of the Danube. This manifested at local level by the adoption of the first constitutional documents in the principalities, the Organic Statutes, in 1831, under the close guidance of General Pavel Kiselyov (one of the great boulevards in Bucharest still bears his name under the French version of “Kiseleff”).

This relation was also tense, as Romanian politicians, schooled in the spirit of the French Revolution in Paris, began to adopt a more flexible attitude, further developed by the traditional saying that “Romania has always switched sides at some point” (in 1916, abandoning the Triple Alliance for the Entente, in 1938 abandoning Czechoslovakia for Germany, in 1944 abandoning Germany for the Allies and so forth). This started in 1856, after the Crimean War, when, benefiting from sympathy of Napoleon III, Moldavia recuperated southern Bessarabia and Russian access to the Danube was lost. It will be retaken in 1878, after Romania's independence war, in exchange for the former Turkish province of Dobrudja. Although allies in 1877, Romania and Russia became enemies after that and Romania evolved towards the alliance with the Central Powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary)¹⁴.

However, in spite of the Bessarabia dispute, Romania and Russia were allies again in 1916, though Romanian historians generally consider it was more an interested cold alliance and criticize the poor performance of demoralized pre-revolutionary Russian troops¹⁵. And, taking profit of the October Revolution (and literally interpreting Lenin's “right of nations to self determination”), Romania regained all of Bessarabia in 1918. Enmity with Russia continued until 1944 on the same coordinates, marked by the 1939 Ribbentrop-Molotov Treaty and its additional secret protocol, giving Bessarabia to USSR again (which contributed to the

Romanian historical complex of being dealt as negligible quantity by great powers, a sort of victim syndrome explaining all shortcomings in history, sometimes not without reason) and by its spiral response in the 1941 declaration of war and invasion of USSR by Romanian troops allied of the German Reich.

After gradual imposition of communist rule by Soviet troops in the years following 1944, military occupation (which ended in 1958), accompanied by initial deportations in Siberia, detention camps for political elites and rule of terror by secret service observation (and even forced learning of Russian language at all levels in schools), led to a growing Russophobia in Romania. But it was not only at the lower level but also at highest level of the Romanian Communist Party, which tended to act in the same flexible Byzantine manner as usual and tried a different approach after 1964.

In fact, the Ceausescu regime was more of a neo-Stalinist replica to the relative liberalization of communist regimes during the '60s. Thus, it concealed its harshness into a sort of independence and exaltation of nationalism, which was mistakenly interpreted by the West as a favourable attitude. In fact it had more to do with the North Korean and Maoist communist types. But, for geopolitical reasons, Romania became one of the pawns in the American-Chinese relation for balancing the USSR influence. Thus can be explained Ceausescu's hostile stance towards USSR during the repression of the Prague Spring in 1968 (one of the very few in the communist camp) and his Russophobia until his death (also during Gorbachev's mandate)¹⁶.

The US growing influence over communist Romania was not so much obvious at the level of the economy, where international financial aid was granted for some time, but especially on the educational and cultural levels. In schools, Russian began to lose ground to English (and not to French, the usual foreign language taught in Romania until 1945), and American movies began to be present in cinemas and on TV (of course, under the strict control of censorship, but still there). This was a sort of Cultural Revolution which, ironically enough, culturally turned Romania again towards the West.

That was the moment when nationalism suddenly came back to the stage and the history schoolbooks were rewritten according to the official truth, making Romania the centre of our universe and everybody else a possible enemy. Among those truths was the myth of Romania's lack of aggressive war record¹⁷ (only defence of the land was counted) and the need for ethnic purity, which eventually led to the selling of Jewish and German minorities to Israel and West Germany for the economic benefit of the elite.

But the communist regime violently collapsed in the only bloody revolution of Eastern Europe at the end of 1989. This too expressed a deeply rooted Oriental cruelty and even Mediterranean sort of vendetta, as the dictatorial couple was executed in great hurry, as if to conceal any traces of the past. It led to an exacerbated drive towards virtual "total freedom", when everything was allowed and everything old was thrown out. It is the moment when the popular saying developed that "everything American was good and everything Soviet was bad". Adopting the American way of life became the main purpose in the life of most Romanians (thus serving the easier integration of urban elites in a growingly globalized world), English predominates and even influences the new Romanian language development in recent years (it is also true, though, that the Latin alphabet was not a barrier, as in some other cases). American movies and types of shows also predominate in Romanian TV programmes, be they private or public, even at the expense of Romanian and Western European ones (this is gradually changing under the influence of EU regulations).

It is no surprise, then, that Romania had the highest rate of popular approval for NATO membership among countries in the region and that EU integration was supported, as a natural evolution towards the West. In the case of NATO accession, it was regarded as a clear means of insuring security from external threats, and especially from Russia (even nowadays, many people in Romania, taught by history school books about the "abusive conduct of the great neighbour from the east", fear a potential Russian invasion resembling the 1944 occupation). This is still used by populist

politicians to win votes on the basis of a radical pro-American position (even by building training bases for American troops in Romania¹⁸).

Nevertheless, the society remained conservative and traditional, especially in its rural parts (44% of the population) but not only. One must mention just that the most popular institution is the Orthodox Church, trusted by almost 64% of the population¹⁹. And, recently, during a contest organized by the public television for establishing who was the “Greatest Romanian of all times”, Prince Stephen the Great of Moldavia won the final by a great majority, a sign that historical myths are still there²⁰.

But, even if the US is thousands miles away and obviously has various interests in all regions of the world, Romania chose, as during most part of its history, the bandwagoning strategy, by becoming ally of the strongest military power of the moment. Should things change, this might also change, but not very likely in the near future in the absence of an alternative competitive and viable model (the Chinese model seems too far away and different altogether). Because, in the end, it all comes down to cold-blooded politics and not to moral values, which are but the clothes of carefully designed interested strategies

PRESENT PERSPECTIVES

Are there any perspectives for a unified Eastern Europe at the beginning of the 21st century? If we are looking at the map we can hardly see a bright picture. The Central European nations have chosen to separate from the East and “married” the West (under the form of the EU or NATO). Balkans are waiting for a similar fate, in search for a better economical situation and stability. The CIS countries are divided between following the same strategy and choosing an alternative path by joining Russia in an illusory new structure, the “Eurasian Union”.

Some are supporting a Eurasian development, justified by the huge surface covered by Russia, most of it east of Urals. It is the region where most of natural resources can be found and the so-called “heartland”. The

theory of Eurasianism, developed during the 1920s by Russian immigrants such as Nikolai Trubetzkoy, Pavel Savitzky and Lev Gumilev, claimed that Russia and the territories under its imperial rule constitute a separate civilization from European and Asian ones and should be integrated under the form of a new structure (state, union, community), opposing the competing existing structures in its neighbourhood²¹. The theory is presently promoted by Aleksandr Dugin and his Eurasia Party, which claim that the Eurasian Union is a coherent geopolitical structure, based on Orthodox faith, Slavic origin and culture and the continental contiguity. It would oppose the so-called “thalassocracy” (power of the sea) promoted the US and NATO, in a global struggle for world domination²². This structure would currently refer to the former Soviet Union space and is commonly used by the Putin administration in order to justify Russia’s strong comeback into the international arena.

For the countries making up the “GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development”, the perspective of Euro-Atlantic (or only European) integration seems more attractive, though. If we are speaking about Ukraine, it is traditionally split between its “Western destiny” and its historical and cultural ties with Russia. The presence of a significant Russian minority in its eastern and southern areas binds those regions to Russia²³. At the same time, the formation and development of the Ukrainian nation has been closely linked to the Russian background. Also, the very formation of the Russian medieval state was related to the existence of Kievan Russia.

If we are talking about the Cossacks, the forerunners of the Ukrainian nation, they have traditionally been split between the Zaporozhian Cossacks, based in the south of present-day Ukraine and closer to Russia and the Starodub Cossacks, based in the north of present-day Ukraine and closer to Poland. This division survived until the present-day, affecting the viability of the independent Ukrainian state.

One must also take into account the various territories composing Ukraine, which have belonged to different countries over the last century. Thus, the western portion, known under the term “Halych” or “Galicia”, with the capital

at Lviv (or Lwow) was usually part of Austria or Poland and was exposed to the influence of Western culture, Greek Catholicism and Polish language. A small part of the south-west, known under the name "Ruthenia", was part of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, with a significant Hungarian minority. Other small parts in the south used to belong to the Principality of Moldova, and later to Romania, under the names of "Bukovina" and "Budjak", being populated by significant Romanian population, Jewish, Russian and Bulgarian minorities. Finally, the Crimean Peninsula, usually ruled by the Tartars remaining after the Golden Horde, was now populated by a predominantly Russian population²⁴.

As a result, the consolidation of the Ukrainian nation has been difficult and the process resulted into what Huntington called "torn country". After the events at the beginning of 2014 and the sudden change of government in Kiev, Russia has reacted and occupied Crimea, which it considered its own territory, given by Khrushchev on 1954 as reward to Ukraine for its contribution to the Soviet victory in the Second World War. Supported by Moscow, a part of the Russian people from eastern regions of Donetsk and Lugansk (the "Donbass") also rebelled against Kiev.

However, the rest of Ukraine reacted with hostility towards Russia and elected a new president in May 2014, which is favourable to the West. This is due to the fact that Russian – speaking population represents the majority only in the regions of Crimea (77%), Donetsk (75%) and Lugansk (69%)²⁵. It is probable that Russia's action will only strengthen Ukraine's alliance with the West (EU and NATO) and make it embrace Western culture. East European identity would then be confined to the three regions controlled by Russia.

The Republic of Moldova has also been aspiring, during the last five years towards the Western community. Even if its Constitution provides that it is a neutral country, which is not going to join any military bloc (a provision since the pro-Russia Communist Party was still in power and obviously aiming at NATO), its relation with the EU is not conditioned by anything (apart from its energy dependence on Russia). Therefore, the current Moldovan

government aims at closing up relations with the EU and most of all with Romania, its kin country.

Nevertheless, Moldova is kept in a difficult position due to the Transnistrian problem, a carefully designed Stalinist strategy of post-crisis retreat, in order not to lose geopolitical control of a territory lying close to the Danube. The Transnistrian region was, in fact, added to Soviet Moldova's territory in order to balance its ethnic Romanian majority with Russian and Ukrainian minorities. Although these minorities are not confined to Transnistria, the region separated from the rest of Moldova after a short bloody confrontation with Chisinau authorities in 1992. Ever since, the separatist region's regime has organized successive referenda to declare its independence, but not even Russia acknowledged them yet, even if its support for the separatists is more than obvious²⁶.

Moldova's problem is that a significant share of its economy lies in the Transnistrian region (much like Ukraine's in Donbass). Also, Russian influence is still present in the rest of Moldova, by means of Russian businessmen, TV and radio channels and Russian language, which has the status of "language of interethnic communication" (especially in the big cities and the Gagauz autonomous region)²⁷. The most probable scenario is that, if Moldova continues to improve its relation with the EU and Romania, Russia would probably force a split of Transnistria, in order to preserve Eastern European identity in this region.

Georgia and Azerbaijan try to make up a transit route towards the Caspian oil avoiding Russia, but the project does not seem as attractive as in the beginning, at the end of the 90s. Lately, the European Union signalled that it abandoned the Nabucco project concerning a transit pipeline from this region. However, the EU preferred to support the TANAP (Trans-Adriatic Pipeline) project, a little more to the south than Nabucco, but also crossing Georgia, Azerbaijan and Turkey.

In what concerns Georgia, it has constantly sought a closer relation to NATO and the EU. Nevertheless, Russia has expressed its reluctance to this path, especially by its 2008 intervention which was aimed at securing its control over the separatist regions of Abkha-

zia and South Ossetia. The two regions have the role of hindering Georgia's western aspirations and menace any alternative energy transit routes that could compete with Russian oil and gas exports²⁸. In spite of the good relation developed since 2003 with the United States and the European Union, Georgia's situation is hardly promising. The perspectives offered by the EU, through its European Neighbourhood Policy are interesting but their development in the field depends on the future coherence of the Union.

The recent change of government in Tbilisi could signal a more favourable attitude to Russia, even if the new Georgian president has constantly asserted his commitment to preserve preferential relations with the West. It would be anyway very difficult, if not impossible to adopt a pro-Russian stance, while part of the national territory is occupied by troops belonging to the Russian Federation, a move equivalent to high treason for Georgians. The most likely scenario, therefore, is that Russia, after recognizing the two breakaway Georgian regions, would also annex them in order to make its presence there permanent and keep Georgia at a standstill. However, the rest of the country's western path is certain to be preserved and consolidated by Russia's stance.

In the case of Azerbaijan, the situation is a little different, though also difficult. Azerbaijan has benefited from its significant oil and gas resources in order to develop its energy independence and statehood. This independence has also allowed it to adopt a sort of absolutist government, of the kind found in Gulf emirates, regardless of western critiques. In spite of the latter, economic relations with the EU and US have consolidated.

The country's major problem, though, lies in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, which has been occupied by Armenian troops since 1994. While various peace initiatives have been attempted, with Western and Russian help, the situation has lingered ever since, which is regarded with much annoyance in Baku. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan has begun developing a sizeable army in order to retake the region by force, a move which is not encouraged by anyone²⁹.

In what concerns its relation to Russia, Azerbaijan is weary of Russian support given to Armenia, also in the matter of Nagorno-Karabakh. Russia is also a competitor in what concerns oil and gas exports to the West. At the same time, although it has a majority Shiite Muslim population, as its southern neighbour Iran, Baku's relations with Teheran are pretty tense, mainly due to its close relations with the US and Israel, but also due to the presence of a significant Azeri population in the north-western part of Iran. Therefore it has especially good relations only with Georgia and Turkey, its kin country from the region. The EU is pretty far from Azerbaijan and the relations are mainly economic, while Azeri democracy seems to be closer to the Russian model of authoritarian rule. Therefore, even if it is open to Western values, Azerbaijan's Eastern European identity is likely to be preserved (in a very Middle Eastern form) and will ultimately depend on Turkey's evolution in relation to the EU.

For the other countries in the region of Eastern Europe, their situation depends very much on Russia's stance. Armenia is trapped between the Nagorno-Karabakh issue and a hostile Turkish neighbour, so it economically depends on Russia and increasingly on Iran³⁰. This makes all Western attempts to integrate it into a different regional structure impossible. As it lately signalled, Armenia chose to integrate into the Eurasian Union and is clearly consolidating its Eastern European identity.

Belarus is today a mere Russian outpost, but with a stubborn and dictatorial warlord as president, leading his country towards a North Korean model. Although during recent years it has given some signs that it would like to emancipate from Russian influence, its reliance on the past Soviet model of society makes it the most faithful ally of Russia in this part of the world. Thus, it is no question that its Eastern European identity will be preserved.

CONCLUSION

In the end it all depends on Russia about how the rest of Eastern Europe will evolve. As we have seen, Eastern European identity has

evolved nowadays into from a mere geographic concept into a geopolitical orientation favouring a good relation with Russia (even if this could rather be called Eurasian identity). This alternative is based on the former Soviet Union potential which, nevertheless, cannot be viable anymore in the context of globalization. If we take into account a possible alliance with China it will not be sure who is at an advantage: Russia with declining demographics, raw materials and huge uninhabited territory, or China with a huge population and an exceptional economic development potential? Russia risks to become a junior partner, or, at best, a second hand nuclear power (as India and Pakistan), depending on another authentic great power.

It is also true however that most of Russian economy and population resides in its European part. This could favour, on the long run, a European integration approach. After all, during the last three centuries Russia has been one of the most significant European actors. It is nevertheless true that until the 20th century the world powers were all European. Culturally and historically, Russia is a part of Europe and this cannot be changed. And this is reflected by the influence over Eastern Europe, which no matter what would happen, is closely linked with the rest of Europe more than with other Asian partners.

There is indeed an organic interdependence between the different parts of Europe. This was particularly obvious during recent energy disputes between EU countries and Russia. Of course, any merchant wants to sell its product at a more advantageous price. But when the trade includes other advantages besides money, there must be a more balanced approach, looking more to the future than to the past. Especially when it is clear that Russia has the resources and the EU needs them and also has the money to pay for them. In this respect, it is obvious that all parties have still to learn to cooperate.

However, at the present time Russia seems to favour an approach which could create a new dividing line in Europe, between a Western part integrated in the European Union and NATO and an Eastern part integrated in the Eurasian Union and the Collective Security

Treaty Organization. This new "iron curtain" could go from the town of Narva in Estonia, east of the Baltic States, around the Kaliningrad region, west of Belarus' border with Poland and south of its border with Ukraine, around Transnistria, following Ukraine's border with Russia until Donbass, then west of Donbass till Mariupol, than north, west and south of Crimea in the Black Sea, south of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, east and south of Georgia. If it will give birth to a new "cold war" no side will win out of this, and the losses could be tremendous, living Europe behind other parts of the world. However, it is the task of politicians and their supporting citizens to decide weather a matter of defining a separate kind of identity, grounded or not in reality, should shape the future of this region.

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Notes:

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⁴ Marvin Perry, *Western Civilization. A Brief Survey. Volume I: To 1789*, Houghton-Mifflin, Boston, 1990, p. 134-136.

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⁹ Barry R. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict" in Michael E. Brown (ed.) *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*, Princeton University Press, Princeton/NJ: 1993, p. 142.

¹⁰ Fernand Braudel, *Grammaire des civilisations*, Flammarion, Paris, 1993, p. 569

¹¹ Iancu Maxim, *Etnogeneza românilor și a altor popoare europene privită prin prisma geografiei istorice*, Editura Moldova, Iași, 1995, p. 169-185

¹² Petre P. Panaitescu, *Istoria românilor*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1990, p. 119.

¹³ Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *Sfatul domnesc și Adunarea Sărilor în Principatele Române*, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 1995, p. 173-175.

¹⁴ Gheorghe Nicolae Cazan, Constantin Rădulescu-Zoner, *România și Tripla Alianță*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1979, p. 38.

¹⁵ Vlad Georgescu, *Istoria românilor de la origini până în zilele noastre*, ediția a IV-a, Humanitas, București, 1995, p. 187-188.

¹⁶ It is interesting that, even at the level of sports commentators, the anti-Soviet attitude was present to reflect an anti-imperialist stance when Romanian sportsmen and women came second after USSR representatives and the latter were blamed (sometimes with some reason) for influencing the refereeing – especially in gymnastics and handball, where Romania performed well.

¹⁷ Georgescu, *op. cit.*, p. 286-287.

¹⁸ The Romanian movie “California Dreamin’ – Unfinished” by late Cristian Nemescu, which took the prize *Un certain regard* at the Cannes festival 2007, is a very illustrative picture of the American image in Romanian modern mythology.

¹⁹ HotNews.ro, „Sondaj: Încrederea în Biserică, Parlament și Guvern a scăzut semnificativ, a crescut încrederea față de SRI, SIE și DNA”, 12 august 2013, <http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-esential-15364796-sondaj-romanii-cea-mai-mare-incredere-primarie-armata-biserica-onu.htm>, accessed on 16 October 2014.

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²⁸ Boniface, Védrine, *op.cit.*, p. 32-33.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 44-45.

³⁰ Oleg Serebrian, *Geopolitica spațiului pontic*, Ediția a II-a revăzută și actualizată, Cartier, Chișinău, 2006, p. 116-127.

ABSTRACT

The paper is investigating the cultural sources of the identity characterizing the eastern part of the European continent. After defining the concerned geographical region, which is usually called Central and Eastern Europe, its historical evolution is analyzed in order to see where the break-up point between Central and Eastern Europe occurred, somewhere during the communist rule and the post-communist era. As an illustration of this, the Romanian political relation with Russia is chronologically presented. Then, the current perspectives for a certain Eastern European identity in the region are presented. The conclusion is that, at present Eastern European identity is very much related to Russia, under the influence of geopolitical disputes, although some cultural elements are still present in countries which oppose Russia's current Eurasian regional project.

Keywords: Europe, identity, perception, Russophobia, historiography, Romania

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Interaction between Collective Memory and Foreign Policy Making Process: A Social Constructivist Approach

Armen Hovhannisyan

INTRODUCTION

A huge interest towards the role of memory in IR is one of the central issues the post-modern period has brought to the forefront of the academic discussions. Memory is our subjective perception, interpretation of events that we have lived, felt or of those that we have been told only. It's an ongoing intellectual process – the more information we get the more our memory on certain issues and events is being transformed, reshaped; our perception and interpretation of different processes and events are being reconstructed and reviewed constantly. Phenomenon of memory and its impact on the social processes cannot be underestimated as it [memory] is given to us physiologically. Each individual is building his present actions and relations on the basis of memory and analysis of the past. In the case of bilateral/multilateral relations between the states, practically the same pattern can be observed. During the interaction process between the states/nations in the system of International Relations, there can take place periods and facts which influence negatively or positively on the further relations. Factor of collective/or national memory can be observed in the roots of cooperation and conflict between nations, states and ethno-political formations.

In this case how does the memory impact the foreign policy-making process and what is its place in the scheme of interaction between all the variables involved?

In order to answer to the foregoing questions I distinguish the main variables – collective memory, collective identity, political interest – and analyze their interaction with each other. In the first section of the paper I give a general definition of the collective memory, in the second one I talk on the interaction between collective memory and collective identity, in the third one – on the interaction between political interest and collective memory and in the fourth one – on the role of collective memory in the system of IR.

ON THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY

A classic of the memory theory, M. Halbwachs by his conceptual approach to memory as a social phenomenon, distinguishes *autobiographical memory*, *historical memory*, *history* and *collective memory*¹. Autobiographical memory is a memory system consisting of episodes recollected from an individual's life, based on a combination of episodic (personal experiences and specific objects, people and events experienced at particular time and place) and semantic (general knowledge and facts about the world) memory². In other words it's the memory of events that are the result of our lifetime experience. Historical memory is the memory transmitted by historical records. History is the memorable past we don't have "organic" connection with, the past that is not an important part of our life anymore. And the collective memory is the active past that forms our identity.

Collective memory *per se* is the symbiosis of all the other types of memories distinguished by Halbwachs [autobiographical memory, historical memory and history]. It is a comprehensive intellectual project that is in circular interaction with such phenomenon as collective identity. These two intellectual ongoing projects that organize groups under a certain system of values and memories are on the basis of each group (society/nation, political party, etc.), shaping and predicting its interests, perception of “reality” and further development.

Interest towards memory was very huge among the social thinkers of all times but, as J. K. Olick and Joyce Robbins state in their joint paper that it is only in the period between 19th and 20th centuries that explicit social approach to the memory became widely used in the academic field. Contemporary usage of the term collective memory is to a large extent connected with the names of two scholars of memory: Emile Durkheim, who made a comprehensive analysis of commemorative rules in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912)³ and his student Maurice Halbwachs, who published an outstanding study entitled *The Social Framework of Memory* in 1925⁴. But according to the same Olick and Robbins the grounded use of the term collective memory belongs to Hugo von Hofmannsthal in 1902. Who referred to “the dammed up force of our mysterious ancestors” and “piled up layers of accumulated collective memory”⁵. These two scholars [Durkheim and Halbwachs] have a huge contribution in actual memory studies, they are the most cited authors in this field and their statements stand on the basis of each study of the field. They share the opinion that studying memory is not a matter of reflecting on the properties of the subjective mind, rather memory is a matter of how minds interact in society and how their operations are structured by social arguments⁶. Accepting Durkheim’s sociological criticism of philosophy, Halbwachs stresses that, “it is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize and localize their memories”⁷. Jeffery K. Olick and Joyce Robbins talking on Halbwachs’ concept of collective memory stress that it is developed not only beyond philosophy but also against psychology, though the very idea

of a social memory appropriates psychological terminology⁸. Indeed, actual academic community is largely using psychological terminology while talking on the social memory. They rather often use also neurological terminology to assess the state of society from the social memory perspective. Arguing on Freudian and other psychological accounts, Halbwachs states that “there is no point in seeking where ... [memories] are preserved in my brain or in some nook of my mind to which I alone have access: for they are recollected by me externally, and the groups of which I am a part at any time give me the means to reconstruct them ...”⁹. Halbwachs, probably, was the first to raise the issue of the existence of collective memory in our modern understanding and to counter it to the individual memory. Besides, Halbwachs maintained history-memory interaction in the sense that history counters the tradition as a complex of elements of society’s and group’s collective memory.

Thus, collective memory is the subjective remembrance of an [experienced and unexperienced] event by a group of people (in this case by a nation/state). It is an ongoing intellectual project, being constantly re-negotiated within and by the group. Collective memory is not only a social phenomenon but also a political one, being a result of incessant interaction with such variables as political interest and collective identity.

INTERACTION BETWEEN COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

In the social sciences identity is considered as an individual’s or group’s conception and expression of his/their individuality or belonging to a group. It is a social representation that an individual or a group carries not only for him-/or itself but also for other individuals or groups. In other words identity is a system of values, ideals and practices built on the basis of our memories – narrative construction of the past, some kind of mechanism that determines our perception of “reality”, shapes our goals, interests and actions, distinguishes the “truth”

from the “false”, differentiates *us* from *others* (om *alter*) and unites us with those who share the same system (we categorize those who share the same system with us as *self*, hence *self* or *alter* can be understood as an individual or a group).

Identity itself as well as memory is a social phenomenon. We can demonstrate individualist and collectivist approaches while studying identity, but at the same time we cannot elucidate phenomenon of individual identity abstracting from the society. As the individual identity operates, develops and transforms within social practices. In social identity theory and identity theory the self is seen as reflexive: it can be taken as an object, can be categorized, classified or named in certain ways in opposition to other social categories/classifications. This process in the social identity theory is called *self-categorization*¹⁰ and respectively *identification*¹¹ in the identity theory. Identity formation is based on these two processes. Each society has its unique characteristics by which they define themselves from others, by opposition and reinforcement of these “self-images”. The following process of self-defining, of belonging to a certain community, society, nation or country leads to the complex concept of identity.

The narrative turn in the identity theory has brought the need to review the content and the meaning of the phenomenon of identity that is considered as a constant process of development in narrative form¹². Talking on identity as a social phenomenon Scottish philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre stresses that all the attempts directed to study identity (individual, as well as collective one) “independently of or in isolation from the notion narrative” are doomed to fail¹³. According to Stuart Hall, individual and group identities are names we are positioned by and position ourselves in the narratives of the past¹⁴. I would qualify narrative as a short story and subjective explanation of the past that differentiates us from those who explain it [the same past] in different way or unites with those who share it with us. In order to become a member of any human community one should put himself in its [community’s] past or to reject it. Each community is based on the common remembrance of the past, so

that a real community is considered as a “community of memory”¹⁵, one that does not forget its past, being involved in a constant process of retelling. Thus, collective memory, collective identity and grand narrative are different tips of social memory, are interdependent and ongoing intellectual processes/projects that stand on the basis of each community (nation/state).

To carry a particular social identity means to act as a whole one with the certain group, to be like others in the group and to represent the world from the group’s perspective¹⁶. First of all let’s see what national identity means and how it interacts with collective memory. National identity is a social representation that the national group carries not only for itself but also for other national groups. National identity formation process takes its beginning from the historical transition of the given national group to a nation which creates its national identity on the basis of the national grand narrative and collective memory. Along with collective memory, national identity is never a static phenomenon being engaged in a constant process of transformation, review and refreshment in consequence of internal developments (within the identity group/nation) and external impacts (by the national others). Though, as Muller mentions, “there might have been more “identitarian” and “unitary memory-nation” during the “golden age” of the nation building process”¹⁷, [national] identity construction is an ongoing process that never stops.

As I have mentioned upper, collective memory and national identity are interdependent phenomena. National identity as a social phenomenon is based on the collective/national memory – narrative constructions of the past, in turn the nation perceives and memorizes events in its ongoing life on the basis of the national system of values – national identity. At the same time they both are not “possession” or “property” but ongoing processes – social projects that can be refreshed, reshaped, reviewed and changed in time and space as a result of internal or external transpositions and impacts. Then, how can national identity be refreshed, reshaped, reviewed or changed? First of all, any transformation concerning the phenomenon of identity in general [including national iden-

tity] is directly dependent on the transformation of the collective memory. Renegotiation of the collective memory takes place constantly by “historical circumstances” and “regulatory standards” that bring about change of the national identity content. In other words, any new [alternative] information that enters the group also brings review of the meaning of the past: under the impact of current circumstances we filter our remembrance of the past events and relations through the new information; whereby some of them do not change at all, others are rejected or importance of some others change. This process causes transformation of the collective memory and reflectively the national identity. At the same time, each event in order to become a part of the national identity first of all should become a successful collective memory and part of national grand narrative.

National identity is a symbolic system that filters the perception the nation has towards the world not only for itself but also for the national others. The basis of the national identity are common origin, language, historical past and also religion (with some reservations), it means common culture of its members that reassure and legitimate existence of the nation as an independent and individual political entity and also stand on the basis of the phenomenon of nation-state formation process.

The central idea of the national identity concept is determination of national *self* and national *alter/other*. This inter-determination process is the very mechanism that supports preservation of homogenous and individual character of the national identity phenomenon and its denial to recognize and accept similarities with anything that are not related to it and any contextual differences.

Thus, if national identity is a direct legitimate basis of the nation-state’s existence and development, it means preservation of national identity is a paramount priority for the state. In turn, preservation of national identity is directly connected with the collective/national memory preservation. From this perspective, mnemonic practices and institutions at the national level, such as national calendar, architecture, museums, archives, monuments, historiography, national strategic documents, public television and radio [that are available

nationwide] art, etc. play a significant role in the collective memory and respectively national identity preservation. I would add also political and other symbolic elites (e.g. journalists, intellectuals, civil society groups, etc. that have an important contribution in the collective memory formation, renegotiations and preservation processes in the democratic societies) and their gestures to this category. This does not mean that any transformation of national identity is against the nation-state’s existence. Definitely no, as I have mentioned at the beginning of the subchapter, being a social phenomenon identity in general (including national one) is a process, it is “self-sameness over time”¹⁸. Hence, its transformation is a natural process as well that can be caused, for instance, by technological/scientific development, climate and other natural processes caused by direct human actions, change of national political elite, etc. that in turn bring about reinterpretation of collective perception of the present and the past in this context. At the same time, in case of natural transformation of national identity it does not undergo cardinal changes – its core content, that distinguishes national *self* and *alter* as a rule remains unchangeable. Transformation of the core content already is a direct threat for further existence of the state and also the nation as a socio-political entity. Thus the main factor that causes collective memory as well as national identity renegotiation or transformation is the information, more precisely its interpretation.

Because of the fact that collective memory and national identity are interdependent phenomenon we can stress that these two social phenomena have similar characteristics and are influenced directly or indirectly by the same factors. As in case of collective memory we cannot abstract from the factor of political interest while studying national identity. National identity is the basis of the nation-state, which means that preservation of national identity is a political interest. Thus, national identity is a political category as collective memory itself. These three categories: collective memory, collective identity and political interest are interdependent variables that form some kind of triangle and the outcome of their interaction results in the collective perception of the event.

INTERACTION BETWEEN POLITICAL INTEREST AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY

As I have already mentioned, collective memory is also a political category, it is impossible to abstract from the factor of political interest while studying collective memory, especially at the national/state, as well as at the international levels. Collective memory (at the national level) is an important factor that legitimates and ensures existence and further development of the nation-state, still remaining the central subject of the system of IR. This means that collective memory at the national level and its formation process are issues of state sovereignty and state interest.

In the open/democratic societies it is possible even for the individual experience (mostly trauma) to become a collective memory and in some cases even at the international level. Mass Media, NGOs, public interest groups, political parties, civil society groups, intellectuals, social networks, internet, individuals etc. give opportunity to share the information with society and spread information which does not even meet current political interests of the state, creating collective memory. The same logic functions in case of group experiences (mostly traumas experienced by a group of people). The only difference is that group experience has more chances to become available for broader audience, as it is almost impossible in democratic societies to ignore a group of people who are trying to voice their experience. Nevertheless, individual or group experiences, to a larger extent, can become a collective/national memory only in case of the direct involvement of the state. I don't underestimate the role of the up-mentioned agents and information platforms of the collective memory formation process, but at the same time practically they are only able to create a "short-term [collective] memory" that, as a rule, is forgotten after a generation, or an "alternative"/"parallel" collective memory that will be possessed by a group of people.

An experienced [by an individual or a group] event can become a successful collective memory in case when the event is talked abo-

ut, discussed, described, invoked and given a completely systematized academic assessment to. Another important circumstance is to make the systematized assessment of the experienced event available for the broader audience – the carriers of the memory and to make the memory alive through the generations. Definitely, the up-mentioned agents and platforms of information dissemination theoretically and practically are able to realize the given process, especially within democratic societies. But, as a rule, they do not have access to the broader audience, first of all because of the limits of resources in comparison to the state.

Basically, the state has the monopoly privilege to control the collective memory formation process and to make the memory alive through the generations, using the mnemonic practices: creation of the national calendar – holidays, commemoration days, textbooks for the schools, establishment of monuments, museums and other institutions of memory collectivization. The state/or nation needs real or imaginary examples, heroes and antiheroes, stories of victimhood or resistance in order to shape or reconfirm the national identity or the values/or symbols they carry or aspire to and to ensure the state's further existence and development. At the same time these are not the only interests the state or the political elite are guided by in its assessment of the experienced event. Another important factor that influences the state's approach to the past and its interpretation is the interest of reproduction of the political elite and to protect the interests of the political force it belongs to. Talking on this topic, Kammen emphasizes that disagreements over how to remember the past – both about what events occurred and what sort of stories to tell about them – are nearly a universal phenomenon: often, the stories that "win out", and are told for decade to come, are the ones that have the backing of people in power¹⁹.

At the current stage of development, mostly in the open societies, people, practically, have access to any kind of information and to any kind of interpretation and explanation to an event that has happened. Each source of information spreads its interpretation/memory towards the past based on its interest, hence creating corresponding public opinion/memo-

ry. But still all the agents of collective memory-creating process, besides the state, do not have access to the broader audience - they are not able to create a nationwide and continuous collective memory. The state or the political force in power, practically, is the only agent that has monopoly access to the collective/national memory formation/or creation tools: the state controlled television, radio, press are available nationwide, insuring the delivery of the information to the broader audience and the mnemonic practices insure the continuity of the memory and its delivery to the next generations.

Thus, there is a question whether the alternate memory (individual, as well as group one) that contradicts the state interest can become a successful collective/national memory? In order to start talking on this question I should classify two kinds of memories that can contradict the state's interests. Firstly, memories, that contradict the interests of the political force in power/political elite which represents the state during the given period of time. Usually such kinds of memories are those of negative kind produced by the political force in power or the regime. For instance, such kinds of memories are those of the Central and Eastern European societies' produced by the socialist regime during the Cold War period or the violent suppression of post-electoral demonstrations by the state in Armenia after the questionable results of the presidential elections in 2008. Secondly, memories contradicting the interests of the state, as a subject of the system of IR, calling into question the territorial integrity, sovereignty of the state and the legitimacy of its further existence. In other words, those are the memories that contradict long-term interests of the state that, basically, do not transform with the change of the political elite. Usually such kinds of memories are connected with the state's policy against religious, ethnic, etc. minorities struggling for a certain political status, autonomy or independence; or with the state's "aggression" against other states/nations that brings geo-political and geoeconomical dividends to the state, as in case of Turkish collective/national memory concerning the Armenian Genocide, Turkish "occupation" of Northern Cyprus or the Russian col-

lective memory of the "military intervention" in Georgia in 2008.

The borderline between these two types of interest ("political elite's" and "stat/national" interests) which the political elites are guided by in the collective/national memory formation process is very subtle and often it is very difficult to distinguish these two categories and their influence on the collective memory formation process by the political elite. Eventually, both of them are intellectual products reflecting the result of various political negotiations and debates, but the main difference between political elite's and state/national interests is that the first is a result of political negotiations within a certain political community based on its identity, concept and ambition of political reproduction, while the state/national interest based on the national identity is usually a product of nationwide discussions involving different groups of society, such as political parties, Mass Media, NGOs, academia, civil society, etc., in other words the whole intellectual potential of the nation²⁰.

If in case of collective memories that political elite tries to create, guided by its own interests, we can observe formation of "parallel" or "alternative" collective memories in the society, in case of collective memories based on the state/national interest the society usually is in solidarity with the political elite's policy and silently accepts the interpretation of the past that the state offers. Hence, a "parallel" or "alternative" collective memory does have a possibility to become a successful collective/national memory after the change of the political elite, as the former collective memory created on basis of the former political elite's interests will be reviewed and reshaped by the new one, through the process called Transitional Justice. Regarding the collective memories created on the basis of the state/national interests, their modification is not directly dependent on the political elite's change – they can be reshaped if the state ceases to exist or in case of internal (i.e. revolutions), regional (i.e. war) or global transformations (i.e. war). Practically, modification process of such collective memories comes with the change of the political elite that is caused by the mentioned circumstances. To a larger extent, here I refer to totalitarian re-

gimes where the political elite are associated with the state (one-party states, monarchies), in such cases change of the elite brings destruction of the state and *vice versa*.

ROLE OF THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN THE SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Recently collective memory has become an important object in the foreign policy studies being represented as a primary variable, determining processes within the system of IR. The factor of collective memory is obvious in the integration or disintegration processes, conflicts and co-operations between the states and in the foreign policy making process in general. As I have mentioned above, collective memory is an ongoing social project that must be considered along with the phenomenon of political interest. They both are interdependent phenomena which means that the former can also be shaped, transformed and directed through the impact of the political interest, i.e. can appear as a manipulable resource. At the same time political interest can be determined by the collective memory. From this perspective the main questions are to what extent does the factor of collective memory impact the foreign policy-making process and what is the role the collective memory plays in the system of IR? The answers to the up-mentioned questions are directly dependent on the paradigm we chose to consider the given issue through, i.e. the theoretical basis the study is grounded on.

The collective memories impacting upon the foreign policy-making process of a state-agent as a rule are those experiences that are connected with the cultural "other" (negative experience(s) that causes animosity) and the cultural "self" (positive experience(s) that causes co-operation and integration). Let's take into consideration the rise of collective memory in the Central and Eastern European societies during the post-Communist period and the role it was playing in the foreign policy-making process in those societies.

In the realist/neo-realist and liberalist/neo-liberalist schools of the IR the factor of collective memory and invocation of the past [glorious and traumatic] is considered as a factor legitimating and substantiating "hard interests". From their perspective, invocation of traumatic pages of the past, based on the Second World War and Socialist periods and refreshing of the negative collective memory towards Russia, based on the same periods in the CEE societies, is only an auxiliary tool to legitimate and substantiate their foreign policy discourses and interests in conditions of the new geopolitical order – Euro- and Euro-Atlantic integration.

Neo-liberal scholar Joseph S. Nye in his paper *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* considers invocation of the past and collective memory creation process also as a form of "soft power". Because of the fact that the society has become more sensitive to propaganda, the credibility becomes a factor of great importance and a source of "soft power". From this perspective political struggle becomes one of creation and destruction of credibility, it means also creation and destruction of memory or "reality" perception, when politics is about whose "story will win". Governments and other organizations compete with each other in order to strengthen their own credibility and to weaken that of the opponents²¹. Thus, according to Nye invocation of the "glorious" past of the Soviet period and Grand Victory in the Second World War in Russia and also invocation of the memories connected with continuous struggle against socialist occupation in the Central and Eastern European societies (including Romania) during the post-communist period are results of "soft power" application.

In comparison to the mentioned mainstream schools of the IR theory the Social Constructivism endows collective memory with more important role not only serving as a "window dressing" for the "hard interests" but also being a factor determining those interests²². In the Social Constructivist school of IR theory the collective memory is closely related to *identity* as self-understandings and practices of human agents²³ that are not seen only as reflection of interests but also as a factor shaping and determining them. SC as well sees

invocation of the past, refreshing of the collective memory and collective memory creation process as political acts directed by political interest, only in SC political interest is not a self-help phenomenon – it can also be the result of self-understandings of human agents/society. As if each human agent or society perceives or memorizes certain events on the basis of its identity/system of values, it means that any demonstration of memories can also be determined by the identity. From the social constructivist perspective, rise of collective memory in the CEE societies and invocation of the negative past towards Russia in the post-Communist period is not only a result of the anarchic system's objective order but also an identity issue. It means invocation of the traumatic past in those societies was not only to justify and substantiate the foreign policy discourse (Euro- and Euro-Atlantic integration aspirations) of the new political elites in order to fulfill the created geopolitical vacuum in the region after the collapse of the socialist system, but also a result of a "social demand": CEE societies indeed are carriers of negative memory towards Russia, historical roots of such memory in some societies (for instance, in the Baltic States, Poland and Romania) are very deep and go far beyond the socialist period. In their collective memory the socialist period is embodied as a result of Russian occupation and imperialism, in their collective memory the socialist period is also an evil that was directed to destroy their collective/national identity – system of values. The proves of such memory are the result of the post-socialist surveys among the people who were living under the socialist system and, of course, numerous anti-Soviet riots during the socialist period in those societies that were not to show dissatisfaction with the socialist regimes but also not to be identified as a part of the "Russian world" and as carriers of its values. Collapse of the Socialist bloc brought new, legitimate political elites in those societies through democratic elections that made the negative collective memory towards Russia also available for the political elites, which in turn had found its reflection on the foreign policy making process.

The main difference between the mainstream schools of IR theory and SC is the one of methodological approach to the IR system

analysis. To a large extent neo-realists and neo-liberalists adopt systematic approach in order to explain foreign policy behavior of an individual state. It means, consider behavior of the state (as the main subject of the IR system) as a result of the "self-help" anarchic system that is an independent variable. Neo-realism itself "on the surface" has structural and reductionist commitments, with the *proviso* that they are defined as theories that explain the state's foreign policy behavior only in case of the national/state level of analysis²⁴, ignoring the role of the state-agents' identity within the system. Concerning the neo-liberals' (including the neo-Marxists') approach regarding the agent-structure problem, they take under consideration wider range of objects in order to explain the structure of the IR system, but in reality, like the neo-realists, they as well are not able in "to explain the structure's essential properties", objectifying social structures without recognizing that human actions instantiate, reproduce and transform those structures²⁵. They materialize the social structure of the system when it is considered as an object "analytically independent of the actions by which it is produced"²⁶. Realists and liberals *per se* "ignore" the social component and indirect actors in political processes (first of all human agents/citizens and the society itself) within the system of IR. Realists/neo-realists ignore them totally, while liberals/neo-liberalists take under consideration these agents but still to a large extent ignore their impact on the system, its construction and transformation, as Althusser states, recognizing "absolute ontological priority of the whole over the parts"²⁷.

Basically, the main idea of the SC is that the anarchic system of IR is not a natural structure but a social one that is dependent upon the agents' understandings of their activity. Talking on this issue in his other fundamental work "*The Agent-Structure Problem in the International Relations Theory*" (1987) Wendt stresses that social structures have a *discursive* feature and cannot be considered separately from the self-understandings and reasons that *per se* determine the agents' actions, as the social constructions gain their casual coherence only through the synthesis of "practical conscious-

ness and action”²⁸. From this perspective, rephrasing Wendt’s idea, we can state that the foreign policy making process towards Russia, and in general in the post-socialist states of the CEE region, cannot be analyzed separately from the existing negative collective memory in those societies towards Russia that in turn determines their foreign policy actions. Examples of practical consciousness in this case can be expression of the negative memory towards Russia by the human agents, especially by the mandatory ones, of the CEE societies through surveys or public gestures (including speeches of high representatives and strategic documents) respectively, representing this way a certain discourse that finds its reflection in the state’s actions within the system of IR.

Generalizing the analysis made above, how can we determine the role of the collective memory in the international relations and its impact on the foreign policy making process of state agents separately and within the system? Another well-known specialist of memory with constructivist approach Jan-Werner Müller’s suggestion seems rather comprehensive; he stresses that memory can be considered as a factor in IR in two ways: as part of political culture that is constituted of the identity and interests of states and “cultural/‘mnemonic’ context of decision-making”²⁹, in both cases being part of collective identity that determines the social agent’s interests and behavior within and out of the system. From this perspective, invocation of the negative memories towards Russia based on the Soviet crimes and their [crimes’] condemnation in the CEE societies (especially) during the post-communist period were *per se* actions of social demand directed to reaffirm and to protect the collective identity – system of values, of those societies that used to be under repression of the totalitarian socialist regimes. Being a result of social demand, negative collective memory became available for the new legitimate political elites even before the collapse of the Socialist system, having a great impact (in some CEE societies it still does) upon the foreign policy discourses. In other words, invocation of the negative collective memory towards Russia in the foreign policy discourses of the CEE societies can be considered as a “window dressing” for

the “hard interests” – Euro- and Euro-Atlantic integration – which (the interests) in turn are determined by the collective identity of those societies as “selves” with the Western world.

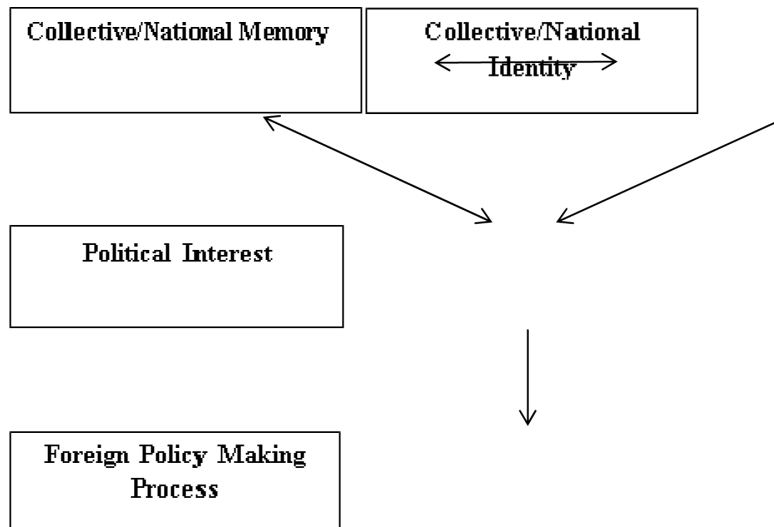
Thus, through the glance of the theoretical model developed in this paper the rise of negative collective memory towards Russia in the CEE societies and its impact upon their foreign policy-making in the post-Communist period was generated as a result of interaction between the main interdependent variables: *collective memory, collective identity and political interest*. The collapse of the socialist system brought to restoration of the sovereign states in the CEE, generating rise/restoration of the [national] memory and [national] identity, hence –redefinition of the [national] interest.

CONCLUSIONS

Generalizing the analysis made in the paper I arrive at the following conclusions, regarding the interaction between the main variables (collective memory, collective identity, political interest) and how does collective memory impact the foreign policy-making:

1. Collective memory and collective identity as well as collective memory and political interest are interdependent variables while political interest is dependent upon the collective identity, together forming some kind of triangle. According to this scheme, political interest [of a state] is determined by [its] collective identity, in turn collective memory and collective identity, as well as collective memory and political interest are in a constant process of mutual influence. This means that political interest, can impact the collective identity through interaction with collective memory – in order to become collective identity political interest should first become collective memory (Figure 1).
2. The pattern demonstrated in the Figure 1 also gives the answer to the question how does collective memory impact the foreign policy-making which is dependent upon political interest and represents the direct result of interaction between the three main variables.

Figure 1



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¹⁹ KAMMEN, Michael, *The Mystic Chords of Memory*, First Vintage Books, 1993, p. 13

²⁰ Such distinction can be observed only in the open, democratic societies, while in the authoritarian, non-democratic societies political elite's and state/national interests are products of the regime. This means that it is not possible to consider political elite's and state/national interests as two different categories, hence it is impossible to study their influence on the collective/national memory formation process separately.

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ABSTRACT

The Social Constructivist(SC) theory of the International Relations (IR) to a larger extent is related to the name of Alexander Wendt. In his 4 famous papers Wendt shows that such basic realistic phenomenon as power politics is social one that is not given from above and can be transformed through human agents' activity, putting the theoretical basis of what he considers as a missing link between neo-realists and neo-liberalists. SC interprets the anarchic structure of the international system not as self-help or as a constant category but as one constructed by social practice, hence, considering the Anarchy as a process. Thus, if the structure of the system is dependent on the social practice, hence is shaped and being re-shaped by social practice. In the SC theory actors' action within the international system is not predicted by its [system's] anarchic structure but by the actors' interests and identities. Wendt's SC does not consider the factor of memory that is going to be the central object of this paper, as a direct variable determining the processes within the system of IR. Instead, it [memory] can be seen directly connected with identity which in turn does not only reflect the hard interests but also shapes and determines them.

Keywords: collective memory, foreign policy, anarchy, constructivism, self-help, identity . Armen Hovhannisyan is a PhD candidate with the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Bucharest. He prepares a dissertation on the relations between Romania and Russia after the Cold War, using the collective memory approach and the Constructivist theory in IR.

Armen Hovhannisyan from Armenia is a PhD candidate with the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Bucharest. He prepares a dissertation on the relations between Romania and Russia after the Cold War, using the collective memory approach and the Constructivist theory in IR.

OPINII

Breaking Laws of God and Men: When is this allowed for Intelligence Professionals?

Michael Andregg, PhD

Attorneys and philosophers have presented detailed answers to the question of when it is permissible to break laws, some of which begin and end with the word “never.” Others answer “always” if reasons of state are compelling. To compound confusion, governments often write special laws for their “spies”^{*} and other “intelligence professionals”^{*1}. Some of these laws are publicly known, but others are classified, like a significant fraction of US NSDD’s (National Security Decision Directives) and NSPD’s (National Security Presidential Directives). So what is forbidden for ordinary citizens may be legally “OK” for intelligence professionals, but citizens cannot tell because some of the laws are secret laws administered by secret courts like the FISA court in the USA². This situation can easily degenerate into simple codes: like “Do anything you need to accomplish your mission, but do not get caught” which has been noted by several CIA veterans³. That noted, the CIA may be among the more restrained intelligence agencies in the world, because it is besieged by lawyers who have some actual laws to work with, unlike the secret services of some other countries.

There are many cases that can be considered as dilemmas that challenge these simple, black-and-white views of the world and of moral codes of conduct. A modern classic is the ‘nuclear terrorist with a ticking time bomb’ scenario. Many people conclude that there are no limits at all on what one might properly do to stop him (or her!). A dilemma of longer duration is that of the small unit infantry

commander whose surrounded troops will all die if he does not do something to a prisoner that is forbidden by the Geneva Conventions and the American Laws of War. Such cases often involve torture or murder. There is also a long, Catholic tradition called “Just War Theory” that attempts to bring systematic thought to both *jus ad bellum* issues (is the war just?) and *jus in bello* (is the war being conducted justly?). Even in a theoretically unified church (regarding fundamental moral issues) one can find substantively different opinions on this among highly competent commentators⁴.

This paper will consider both of these hard cases in the context of many years of moral and legal thought with a final focus on two moral principles and one practical observation addressing the question of whether evil means can be morally pursued to achieve good end goals. They are: 1) the Do No Harm principle; 2) the Lesser of Evils principle; and 3) the lesson from human history that the Means Used Determine the Actual Ends Achieved.

INTRODUCTION

Near the beginning, it is alleged, God gave Moses 10 Commandments written in stone. Number 6 (or 5 depending on your source) was “Do Not Kill.” Soon the tribal equivalents of attorneys and rabbi’s rushed in to “clarify” this, asserting that God meant “do not murder” (a much less stringent command, allowing all

sorts of exceptions for reasons of state mainly). There has been some tension between moralists, lawyers and the practical people ever since.

A FIELD PERSPECTIVE

We will get to philosophy, theology and actual national and international laws soon. But I would prefer to be honest in this paper on when it is acceptable for intelligence professionals to break laws. And truth be told, when I have had to make real decisions of this kind I have not consulted attorneys or preachers because I have been “in the field.” There are very few preachers in the fields where danger lies, and I have never seen an attorney there although there must be some exceptions. I am told there are some anyway, but I have not seen one.

So to be blunt, I do not care much what people think in air conditioned offices far away, with the luxuries of 20-20 hindsight and lots of time to consult with learned others over cups of coffee. If I must make a really hard decision under great time pressure and stress, I pray that God will agree I made the best choice and I hope the attorneys will not prosecute me. But the reality is that I must make such decisions on my own. So, the society should hope I have a well developed conscience. That can be consulted; other people not.

The other big difference between field conditions and normal life is that when I am in the field I am there to protect my family and my community from mortal dangers. Therefore, I am prepared to die, or kill, and tense. There is nothing ordinary about being in the field. So, any mistake is possible where the notorious “fog of war” confuses us all. The main point is that in the absolutely worst case scenarios that agile minds can imagine, I would do really very bad things in defense of my family and community, regardless of what preachers and attorneys far away might say. And that is a law of nature, a force of nature, not of men *per se*.

CASE 1, CASE 2 AND THE ISSUE OF TORTURE:

Many classic test cases are now called “ticking time bomb” scenarios, and the stress question is would it be acceptable to torture someone if that could prevent the bomb from going off? A JSCOPE conference in 2003⁵ addressed this question in considerable detail, so I will join that discussion in traditional academic style soon. But I want to stay real for a moment. The blunt question is: If I had a “terrorist” in my hands who had placed a nuclear bomb in my city where my friends and family live, and if I thought that by means of torture I could get the location out of him to save my family and community, would I torture him?

The answer is “In a heartbeat.” But I would not claim that this was legal, because it certainly is not legal. And I would not claim it moral, even though thousands or millions of innocent lives might hang in the balance, because the moral thing to do would have been to create a world where no one feels they need be a “terrorist” and where crazy people are kept reliably away from weapons so terrible and indiscriminate. We do not live in that perfect, moral, sane world, so men in the field may have to face this worst case some day. Many professionals say the odds my torture would be effective in this case are near zero anyway.

I have never come remotely close to such severe scenarios and therein lies a danger of hypothetical scenarios. People can get carried away with them, and paranoid recklessness can follow. Someone must consider worst cases, and it is a traditional role of the military to do that. But sustaining a prudent balance between the worst cases minds can imagine and the real cases that must be dealt with, often is difficult. For reasons I will elaborate soon, I think that society should not make torture legal even in those most severe cases where it is virtually certain that the laws would be broken by men desperate to protect their families.

But let us turn first to the much more common case. Pretend I am a small unit commander with a squad and one prisoner, isolated by

the chaos of larger operations and surrounded by hordes of angry enemy. The prisoner may know things that would help us to escape; otherwise death is highly likely, preceded by hideous torture, according to the alleged habits of the enemy. Should I torture my prisoner to try to extract that information and maybe save my troops? Would I? Would you, and should you? We should make these judgments including ourselves in the bull's eye. It is too easy to think of better ways for others to act.

In this case I cannot know what I *would* do, because such abstract scenarios never lay out every detail, and details are very important at moments like that. But I can be confident that I *should not* torture the prisoner, for all the reasons that created the Geneva Conventions that my country has signed and ratified. There are big differences between national interests and personal interests. Society has excellent reasons to put some boundaries on our most barbaric behaviors even in the crucible of war. Society has other goals than saving my life or my squad. And my country, like most countries, decided long ago that we would prefer that our soldiers not to be tortured, so we agreed that our soldiers would not torture in turn.

Lawyers might debate whether my prisoner qualifies as a “prisoner of war” or they might invent new categories of person like “unlawful combatant” to rationalize the desires of some client. This is what lawyers do. But I would stress instead that my prisoner is for sure a human being, and that it is in the human interest to remember that. I would stress to other men in combat that no matter how grave the situation, there are uncertainties. And I, at least, would prefer if I am caught by the enemy, that my prisoner is alive to tell them I have treated him fairly as a human being, rather than to be a dead body with marks of abuse upon him.⁶

Whatever I might choose to do in that circumstance, it is fair for society to remind us that we volunteered to face death defending our people, and that a society based on freedom and human dignity has reasons to honor its commitments that go far beyond the life of one soldier, or 12, or even 12,000. These re-

asons were compelling enough to create the Rules of War and the Uniform Code of Military Justice, which clearly state that we should not torture our prisoners, even if the result is death for us and our military family. This is not a pleasant rule, but nothing about war is pleasant, and the reasons are sound. A nation's reputation over the long run is far more important than the lives of a squad, or ten or even a division, because that reputation determines our alliances and the cohesive strength of the society itself.

THE STRATEGIC ISSUE IS BETWEEN CIVILIZATION AND BARBARISM, NOT BETWEEN NATIONS, RELIGIONS OR POLITICAL PARTIES.⁷

Any of us can become a barbarian in the blink of an eye. Any of us - there is nothing special about that. This is why law is so important (comments on attorneys notwithstanding). Law is what distinguishes civilization from barbarism. At its best, law saves us from our own dark sides. So it is very important what attorneys write, legislatures pass, and judges adjudicate. But Alexandr Solzhenitsyn saw more clearly than most that the critical frontier of this battle is not between ideologies or countries or political parties - it actually lies in human hearts (or less poetically I would say in our personal consciences). Solzhenitsyn saw torture too, and lots of it, in the Stalinist Soviet Union.

The strategic issue is between civilization and barbarism, so it is especially important to win by “fair” means. Our ways of combat are the most important things that distinguish us. “They” (evil terrorists) kill innocents deliberately - so we must not. Must not. “They” (evil, unlawful enemies) torture people, execute them on TV and do other barbaric things - so we must not. We must wage war differently, or we will lose the strategic battle.

Because the strategic issue is between civilization and barbarism, the struggle for hearts

and minds is as important as battlefield victories. The “global war on terror” seems to recognize this sometimes, other times not. The strategic issue is between civilization and barbarism, so we must resist the natural urge to go primitive and stay on the high road to real victory instead. Otherwise we will win tactical battles on the way to losing the war.

JUST WAR THEORY, INTERNATIONAL TREATIES, AND OTHER MUSINGS OF SCRIBES

The 2003 JSCOPE conference had 3 excellent papers on this topic. Dr. Robert Kennedy⁸ brought highly systematic, professional moral analysis to the question of when “interrogatory torture” could be moral. He concluded that rare cases exist with some caveats. Maj. Dr. William Casebeer⁹ hedged his similar conclusion with explicit “Notes, Cautions and Warnings.” He created a case for “exceptions” to prevailing laws, but he also warned of long term effects on military and political systems should we legalize torture as an instrument of national policy. Dr. Jean Maria Arrigo then laid out how critical institutions may decay from a social psychological and clinical pathology point of view.¹⁰ Her case is quite compelling, and her analysis was informed by watching this actually occur in another country. That makes it an exceptionally vivid analysis, but vulnerable to the charge of bias. We are all vulnerable to that charge, and without real experience what is our opinion worth?

So without repeating these excellent reviews of key concepts, I will refer to them as I summarize much more briefly the principles of Just War Theory and the international treaties that one hopes would be considered by our hypothetical agent in the field who must decide whether to torture someone. The great virtue of this theory is that it lays out a systematic way one might ask such questions. The great flaw of Just War Theory is that it is almost never used in real world decisions by actual leaders of nation states, or by agents in the field.

Kennedy uses a framework of three main principles and four sub-principles derived from Just War Theory which are: 1) Standing to act, 2) Sound Reason to act, including

a) Discrimination, b) Necessity, c) Proportionality and d) Prospects for Success, and 3) Right Intention in acting. Standing to act refers to proper authority, so our field interrogator who ponders moral questions on torture must be an authorized agent of a legitimate government. Sound Reason to act is pretty self-evident, although it also includes a principle of “last resort” embedded within it (necessity). Right Intention is less obvious. In essence Professor Kennedy means that our potential torturer must take no joy in the act, rather he should feel remorse as he tortures his prisoners. Base motives, like revenge or care-erism, disqualify on this count. In theory, given lots of time to work through each of these six or seven standards, a logical person could conclude that torture is permissible under the most severe scenarios, like the ticking nuclear time bomb scenario. In practice, Kennedy admits that there might never be real conditions so severe and logically precise.

Dr. Kennedy starts by listing the main international laws on torture: the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment [1984,¹¹]; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights [1966,¹²]; and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [1948,¹³]. Many lists begin with the Geneva Conventions¹⁴ which are very explicit about the treatment of prisoners of war, civilians and anyone else gathered up in a battlefield. Kennedy writes that: “... we have entered into international agreements which, in some cases, seem to entail a commitment not to employ torture, and in one case at least this commitment seems to be exceptionless.” Seems to??? The language is crystal clear. It says no exceptions, period, ever. It is very rare in that respect.

Enter White House lawyers tasked to find exceptions anyway, and to make a very long story short they conjured up a concept found nowhere in international law, the “illegal enemy combatant” who (in their opinion) does

not qualify for protection under the Geneva Conventions or any of these other solemn obligations called treaties signed and submitted by US Presidents and ratified by US Senates according to the American Constitution.

Like many legal discussions it would take books to convey all the words involved. A directive from President Bush to his war cabinet dated February 7, 2002¹⁵ stated that:

“... relying on the opinion of the Department of Justice dated January 22, 2002, and on the legal opinion rendered by the Attorney General in his letter of February 1, 2002, I hereby determine as follows:

a. I accept the legal conclusion of the Department of Justice and determine that none of the provisions of Geneva apply to our conflict with al Qaeda in Afghanistan or elsewhere throughout the world because, among other reasons, al Qaeda is not a High Contracting Party to Geneva.

b. I accept the legal conclusion of the Attorney General and the Department of Justice that I have the authority under the Constitution to suspend Geneva as between the United States and Afghanistan, but I decline to exercise that authority at this time. Accordingly I determine that the provisions of Geneva will apply to our present conflict with the Taliban. ... “

Brutally simplified, an assistant in the Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) named John Yoo authored several memos, some with co-authors like Robert Delahunty, that turned 60 years of settled international and US law on its head. The most notorious was dated August 1, 2002 and was transmitted to the President's Counsel Alberto Gonzales by then Assistant Attorney General Jay Bybee.¹⁶ Lisa Hajar of the University of California describes that memo this way: “The background to this memo was a request by the CIA for an opinion on the legality of interrogation tactics already in use against prisoners held in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Hence the main issue to which Yoo and his colleagues devoted themselves was where to draw

the line between “torture” and “not torture” in accordance with Title 18 of the US Code Section 2340, which implements the UN Torture Convention.”¹⁷

This now infamous memo was repudiated when it became public in June of 2004 because of barbaric ideas like ‘it’s not really torture unless the pain is equal to organ failure or death’ and so forth. It was replaced by a new OLC memo in December, 2004. But torture camps run by the CIA were not replaced¹⁸ and the practice of “extraordinary rendition” of prisoners to countries known to torture was not stopped. The army in contrast was changing many things at their facilities because of photos from Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq first shown publicly on CBS news’ 60 minutes in the spring of 2004. The international legal community was appalled at how low the previous leader in human rights law had fallen. Milt Bearden, a 30 year veteran of the CIA’s Directorate of Operations, explains why this is not just a moral conclusion, but rather illumines the practical way in the New York Times of Nov. 4, 2005.¹⁹

Unlike the other authors Major Casebeer warns that field conditions are not the same as law offices (as I do) as he reviews the underlying philosophies of virtue, right and wrong. In distinguishing “consequentialist” from “deontic” theories of rights, he cites a Just War classic²⁰ that deals with another hard case, the killing of innocents. “In the case of war, Michael Walzer argues that while the innocent noncombatant has a right not to be killed, in certain exceptional circumstances we can justifiably violate that right. Walzer calls those exceptional circumstances cases of ‘supreme emergency.’” This is all great theory. But the practice of modern war, by organized armies or by irregular, guerrilla or terrorist forces, kills civilians more often than combatants, one of the most disturbing trends of the last century.

We still must deal with real terrorists who mock law and murder innocents for propaganda. What to do? Many authors cite Alan Dershowitz’s appeal for America to establish special “torture warrants” with a legal process for overseeing cases, thereby to ratify rare de-

cisions to deal with rare scenarios.²¹ He even specifies using “sterile needles” under the nails as a technique, but only after due process ending in a written warrant signed by a live judge (who, since this must be in classified circumstances under great time pressure, would probably be a secret, torture certified, and thoroughly pre-“cleared” judge). Can you see our agent in the field searching for suitably sterilized needles, in order to satisfy the logic of Harvard attorneys? Note to Professor Der-showitz: Torture can **not** be made sanitary.

In my opinion, the worst problems come from institutionalizing these things. Casebeer warns his readers of this process, but Jean Maria Arrigo lays out in vivid detail how the need to train professional torturers, and torture lawyers, and doctors skilled in assisting with the torture process, psychiatrists and psychologists to assist in breaking minds, and special prison guards for black torture centers, et cetera *ad nauseum*, inevitably corrupts the very institutions we depend on for safety from the barbarian in us all. It corrupts the military, it corrupts intelligence agencies, it corrupts medicine and law – it corrupts every institution that tries to twist the laws of God to serve the expedient interests of some government.

This is why I say that while in the field I certainly might violate laws to serve some imagined higher good; but society should **not** take that path. The most vivid reason why is what happens to doctors when they ally with the forces of evil and torture to serve “good goals.” They become, in a phrase, “Nazi Doctors” who can rationalize anything including flagrant violations of the Hippocratic Oath they all must take to become doctors. That begins with the words, “First, Do No Harm.” More bluntly, they become immoral and insane.

Our military calls such “professionals” biscuit teams today. The official term is “Behavioral Science Consultation Teams” (BSCT) and there is little doubt that properly motivated doctors and psychologists can help to fine tune torture by monitoring physiology to tell when detainees are near death or just faking it, by administering psychoactive drugs, and

identifying phobias that might be used against them. But there is also little doubt that to do so has manifold consequences, not just for the reputation and indeed for the psyche of the doctor involved, but for the profession entire, and for the nation that employs them. BSCT teams have much better missions than these to pursue. Onlooking colleagues share the blame. Large groups of decent people can thus be stained by the use of some for immoral purposes.

PSYCHIATRIC ISSUES AND THE PRIMARY LESSON OF MKULTRA

It bears remembering that the USA visited this evil territory at least once before. American soldiers captured during the Korean War (POWs) made blatantly false statements against us, so a fear resulted that someone on the Korean side had perfected techniques of “brainwashing” so powerful they might overcome the strongest and most loyal of men. Thus began a series of over 200 secret experimental programs conceived and sponsored by the CIA, but conducted under cover in at least 80 hospitals and university laboratories in the USA and Canada during the 1950’s and 1960’s. The largest program, code-named MKULTRA, involved abuses of unwitting subjects straight out of Kafka²² (also ²³).

I will spare the reader detail here, because it is the system consequences I stress now. You do need to know that every conceivable drug, electromagnetic radiation, sound or other technique that might bend minds was tried on people in prisons and hospitals and sometimes even on the streets. 7000 US Army subjects were, for one example, dosed with LSD at a base to see what would happen, and at least one unwitting subject elsewhere died (CIA scientist Frank Olson) in a separate case.²⁴ Psychiatric patients were “treated” under false pretense.²⁵ Some never recovered. Fear of the Cold War and nuclear annihilation by brain-washed zombies was so great that even men of conscience authorized experiments one could hardly believe today. If the damage to subjects was too severe, they were conducted overse-

as with “subjects” sometimes killed – a grim parallel to some extraordinary renditions of today.

Well, the practical point is this: You reap what you sow. Do evil, and evil things will come to you. The usual comment that “good goals” may be so urgent that they justify using evil means to achieve them, is often undercut by the observable fact that **the means you use ultimately determine the ends actually achieved.** The CIA was devastated by fallout from MKULTRA, along with other egregious abuses of secret power at home and abroad, which resulted in Church Committee Hearings in the US Senate (and a preceding Pike Commission in the House). In addition to scandal they resulted in the creation of oversight committees in each body of Congress. That was the last time Congress thought seriously about intelligence community reform (1975-77) before the recent convulsion due to different errors that harmed the nation and world (the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004).²⁶

You do not have to be a moralist of any kind to recognize these real consequences of using means that offend the common conscience of most people. Eventually your secret will come out, and the backlash (or blowback, in spy language) may cripple you. In the modern information age, secrets sometimes come out before week’s end. Others drip like acid over time, corroding everything of value to free nations. Big problems, like our CIA running black detention centers where torture is employed (like Guantanamo Bay, Cuba) have billion dollar consequences for international trade, and even larger military consequences when alliances are considered. In the long run and the big picture, time-tested principles of basic morality lead to more practical answers to many of these dilemmas than the rule breaking advice of tacticians eager for a temporary, and often tiny, victory.

Israel has had as intimate an experience with this problem as any nation during its short history and its long-running wars with Palestinian Arabs and other neighbors. Faced with implacable hatred, even such thoughtful

warriors as Yitzhak Rabin tried legalizing torture (during the bone-breaking for prisoners period). They called this torture “moderate physical pressure” since euphemisms seem to be required for ugly things like this. One result - Israel’s reputation lies in tatters, blown to shreds as thoroughly as by a suicide bomber.

My practical appeal is to observe that Israel already has enough enemies. What it needs is more allies. And being known as an expert on torture does not provide those. An advisor to the Italian government on intelligence [Alessandro Politi, ²⁷] says this to us all:

“Democracies are not perfect, of course, but when they pollute their own principles and laws they do not just weaken their image or moral standing, they corrode sometimes irreversibly their own credibility, their political influence and the internal systemic cohesion, laming or destroying in the process their overall power.”

SECRET LAWS, AND ‘SPECIAL LAWS’ FOR SECRET WARS

When confronted with legalistic arguments about proper conduct, some intelligence professionals will snort that this is nonsense for a profession whose business is breaking the laws of other countries, if not necessarily the bones of their enemies. “Our enemies don’t obey law” some will say, “So why should we?” Some will refer to the many special laws, regulations and rules that guide employees of American agencies, some public but many still secret and known only to select individuals, like still classified National Security Decision Directives from President Reagan’s era, NSD’s from Bush I, PDD’s from Clinton’s time, and NSPD’s or HSDD’s from President George W. Bush, and Presidential Policy Directives (PPDs) from President Barak Obama. Every President chooses his own terminology, and which edicts shall be classified and which not.²⁸

Well I contend that this reveals the ultimate distinction between “professionals” and not.

Professionals care about honor and follow their professional codes regardless of current fads and politicians. Police have been extracting information from uncooperative suspects for millennia. Often they have been the instructors of federal employees about interrogation methods. But there is a code of ethics among police professionals that distinguishes the best of them from thugs, criminals and opportunistic entrepreneurs. People who will break the law for some employer are very common. In the military field these are called mercenaries. But those are not the same as professional soldiers and those who really care about protecting our people must forever be aware of the difference. It is all about methods and means.

CONCLUSION: THE PRINCIPLES TO RELY ON

So, after a long time of watching spies (and many other “intelligence professionals”), learning from, teaching, turning and occasionally ambushing exceptionally naughty spies, what rules do I actually follow for such difficult decisions? They are three (an integrated, nested set) so they should be considered together.

First, do no harm, especially to innocents. Most missions can be accomplished under this constraint, certainly most analytic work (not all) but even many military and operational missions. This is the gold standard rule to which I always aspire.

Second, if that cannot protect the people, choose the lesser evil when the horns of difficult dilemmas cannot be dodged. In blunt terms this means if you really must lie, cheat and steal or worse to protect innocents; well OK. But this does not mean that you can do anything to accomplish any mission, especially since some missions are not good ones.

Third, remember always the insidious power of rationalization. We all rationalize our evil acts, and that process damages us as much as anyone. There are usually alternatives unconsidered in moments of crisis. Perfection

is not possible. So go back to items 1 and 2 if you can. But if all else fails and you really must do evil to protect the people, then do. Just remember that the means chosen to do a thing almost always determine the actual results achieved. Intentions mean little, actual consequences much, and the law of unintended consequences is very real. Millions of people have tried to accomplish good by doing a little evil first. That almost never works in the long run. Sometimes, perhaps, but very rarely.

These are the actual rules I use. What you do in extreme circumstances or in ordinary life is your decision. You may explain to lawyers that you were under orders to accomplish some mission. But when you talk to God that means nothing, because God knows that you alone control your acts, so you alone are responsible for everything you choose to do, even in extreme circumstances. Good luck!

(5 December, 2014.)

* Disclaimer: The views expressed herein are entirely the author's and bear no connection to policies at the University of St. Thomas, the University of Minnesota or any government entity.

References and Notes:

¹ A critical note on language follows. “Intelligence professionals” are often allergic to the word “spies” for reasons most know intimately but which I must discuss. First, most “intelligence professionals” are analysts, technical collectors, managers and such, and even CIA case officers and NCS operators are generally not “spies” in the internal language. “Spies” are guys who commit treason against their own countries by providing us secrets. “Spies” are also domestic traitors our Counterintelligence people try to catch. “Spy” thus has a very negative tone, while “intelligence professional” sounds more sanitary. Reading other people's mail like the NSA does every day may be ungentlemanly, but it is not so laden as being a “spy” is. I take a contrary view on this because “intelligence” seems to me an intrinsically dirty, albeit necessary, business. Getting all huffy about such terms is like a “sanitation engineer” objecting to the word “janitor.” But the main point is to highlight the roles of euphemism and offense at marking the terrain of evil. Evil always cloaks its work in lies, of which euphemisms are important and ‘offense’ common. For example, all military people recognize that some “collateral damage” is inevitable in war, but true professionals

recognize that this still means that someone innocent has died. Some forget that at their peril. Those who forget can rationalize anything. All police recognize that “moderate physical pressure” has an inevitable place in police work. But when the Israelis used this term to put a band aid on torture, even when some prisoners died in custody, the cost was dear indeed. When people are faced with life and death so starkly, there is always pressure to bend the rules and pressure to alter ordinary language to make crimes more palatable. Resist that pressure, because it is corrosive to your souls. God understands that exceptional circumstances may call for exceptional measures. The corollary to euphemism is “taking offense” and getting upset when vague language rules are violated. Thus people walk away from unpleasant truths, and blind themselves. At universities this is often called “PC” but it always has negative consequences. The same is true for “intelligence professionals” whatever kind you are. I am one, and I guarantee you will be better off by hanging on to that which is true instead of fogging your brain with euphemisms and party language. Some forget that at their peril. Those who forget can rationalize anything. All police recognize that “moderate physical pressure” has an inevitable place in police work. But when the Israelis used this term to put a band aid on torture, even when some prisoners died in custody, the cost was dear indeed. When people are faced with life and death so starkly, there is always pressure to bend the rules and pressure to alter ordinary language to make crimes more palatable. Resist that pressure, because it is corrosive to your souls. God understands that exceptional circumstances may call for exceptional measures. The corollary to euphemism is “taking offense” and getting upset when vague language rules are violated. Thus people walk away from unpleasant truths, and blind themselves. At universities this is often called “PC” but it always has negative consequences. The same is true for “intelligence professionals” whatever kind you are. I am one, and I guarantee you will be better off by hanging on to that which is true instead of fogging your brain with euphemisms and party language.

² The “FISA court” was created by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 (Pub. L. No. 95-511 Stat. 1783). It is a secret court of 11 unnamed federal district court judges from different circuits. Its proceedings and records are secret and “defendants” are not represented by counsel or advised of its conclusions. Before the Patriot Act of 2001 that made more sense, since “defendants” were usually spying against America, and the question was whether the FBI or others could bug them, surveil their homes or work, or read their mail without notification or normal search warrants. After the Patriot Act, however, the FISA court became a back-door way to surveil anyone without notification or oversight if the Department of Justice would claim there was any connection whatsoever to national security

³ Mahle, Melissa Boyle. *Denial and Deception: an Insider's View of the CIA from Iran-Contra to 9/11*. NY: Avalon Publishing Group, 2004. Of special relevance is her Chapter Three on the Directorate of Operations, pp. 33 – 49. Lindsay Moran is even blunter in *Blowing My Cover*, Putnam, 2004, albeit less experienced. But my best sources on the realities of agency training are people I cannot cite here. Accomplishing the mission is almost always

more important than ethical nuances at the CIA, in the KGB and its FSB offspring, in Israel's MOSSAD, in the manifold Arab mukhabarat and in many other intelligence agencies worldwide. This is what an emerging field of “intelligence ethics” must correct.

⁴ Kennedy, Robert G. “Is the Doctrine of Pre-emption a Legitimate Element of the Just War Tradition?” Presented to the Joint Services Conference on Professional Ethics, (JSCOPE) Springfield, VA, Jan. 27, 2005, and Fr. David Smith in *Don't Just Stand There – Do Something!* Text for his Introduction to Justice and Peace Studies course at the University of St. Thomas, Chapter 12, Just War Theory, 2005. The point is that Kennedy lists 7 principles to Just War Theory and Smith lists 10, which makes a very considerable difference when examining real cases. Both of these men are very highly credentialed, tenured professors at a University that takes its Catholic character very seriously. They often have opposite views on whether a particular war is “just” or not based on their reading of Just War Theory.

⁵ JSCOPE Conferences are held annually by the Joint Services Conference on Professional Ethics for military professionals from all the US military services. It has been my honor to attend two, although I am not and never have been a member of the uniformed services of America. I have, however, been shockingly close to them since the age of 5, was thoroughly trained by the Army in particular, have lectured at several military and intelligence colleges, and have been involved in real operations in unusual circumstances. I have also worked with (not for) the CIA, DIA, FBI and local law enforcement in a variety of ways including, for one example, preparing a brief on weapons of mass destruction for Minnesota police, fire and public health services. Rather than considering these credentials, I suggest that if you just let my words speak for themselves, you will know I write from experience. This paper was originally written for JSCOPE 2006, and has been updated for the current publication.

⁶ Readers from US intelligence entities often work in huge systems where oversight is omnipresent, and the biggest complaint is how long it takes for lawyers far away to say ‘go’ or ‘no go’ on some decision. That environment is quite different from mine. You have my deepest sympathy.

⁷ Solzhenitsyn, Alexandr. *The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1954: an experiment in literary investigation*. New York: Perennial Classics, 2002. First published in Paris in three volumes, 1973-1975, based on the author's eight years in Soviet prison camps. My section title paraphrases his prime insight.

⁸ Kennedy, Robert G. “Can Interrogatory Torture be Morally Legitimate?” Paper presented at the 2003 JSCOPE conference, accessible at: <http://atlas.usafa.af.mil/jscope/JSCOPE03/Kennedy03.html>

⁹ Casebeer, William D., Major, USAF. “Torture Interrogation of Terrorists: A Theory of Exceptions (With Notes, Cautions, and Warnings).” Paper presented at the 2003 JSCOPE conference, accessible at: <http://atlas.usafa.af.mil/jscope/JSCOPE03/Casebeer03.html>

¹⁰ Arrigo, Jean Maria. “A Consequentialist Argument against Torture Interrogation of Terrorists.” Paper pre-

sented at the 2003 JSOC conference in Springfield, Virginia, USA, accessible at: <http://atlas.usafa.af.mil/jscope/JSOC03/Arrigo03.html>

¹¹ Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984, UN).

¹² International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966, UN). Kennedy notes that "The United States ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on 8, June 1992. Article 4, Section 2, of this covenant prohibits derogation from Article 7 (prohibiting torture) in any and all circumstances." That means **any** and **all** circumstances.

¹³ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948, UN).

¹⁴ Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, 12 August 1949, Part III, Captivity. 75 U.N.T.S. 135, *entered into force* on Oct. 21, 1950. Part IV on treatment of civilians is also relevant.

¹⁵ Memo from President Bush to selected national security cabinet officers, dated February 7, 2002, and reproduced in Appendix B of The Abu Ghraib Investigations: The official reports of the Independent Panel and the Pentagon on the shocking prisoner abuse in Iraq. Edited by Steven Strasser, published by Public Affairs, LLC, an imprint of the Perseus Books Group, New York City, NY, 2004.

¹⁶ Memo to the President from the Office of Legal Council dated August 1, 2002. Preceding this and item 15 was a Yoo-Delahanty memo of Jan. 9, 2002: "Application of Treaties and Laws to Al Qaeda and Taliban Detainees" which alleged that the President was above **any** international law. Specifically it claims on page 2: "We conclude that customary international law, whatever its source and content, does not bind the President or restrict the actions of the US military, because it does not constitute federal law under the Supremacy Clause of the Constitution."

¹⁷ Hajar, Lisa, response to my request for details on a paper presented in Istanbul, Turkey, Aug. 27, 2005.

¹⁸ Priest, Dana. "CIA holds terror suspects in secret prisons," Washington Post, Nov. 2, 2005, page A1.

¹⁹ Bearden, Milt. "When the CIA played by the rules," in The New York Times, November 4, 2005, pg. A-25, an op-ed piece. Bearden is a 30 year veteran of the CIA's DO/NCS who understands blowback. For those unfamiliar with this term, it refers to a common problem in propaganda and covert actions, that lies or acts one commits for one purpose can boomerang back to harm our domestic populations.

²⁰ Walzer, Michael. Just and Unjust Wars: a Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations, 2nd Edition. NY: Basic Books, 1992.

²¹ Dershowitz, Alan. "Want to torture? Get a warrant." San Francisco Chronicle, January 22, 2002, page A-19.

²² U.S. Senate, Select Committee on Intelligence and Subcommittee on Health and Scientific Research of the Committee on Human Resources, (1977). Project MKULTRA: the CIA's program of research in behavioral modification. Washington, DC: US Government printing office. Pp. 7, 12-13, 123 & 148-9.

The Final Report of the Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments (Oct. 1995, published by the GPO also) has more details on MKULTRA experiments involving radiation exposure.

²³ Hodge, James, & Linda Cooper. "The U.S. and Torture," in the National Catholic Reporter, Nov. 5, 2004.

²⁴ Washington Post, June 11, 1975. The CIA's general counsel ruled that Dr. Olson's death was due to unwitting exposure to CIA sponsored LSD in an experiment gone bad, and thereby that the family was entitled to death benefits. The family maintains that he was murdered for reasons related to biological weapons research. That distinction would be important for many discussions, but not this one.

²⁵ Testimony of psychometrist Mary Ray to the US Congress on Sept. 10, 1975, on forced drugging of an unwitting and unwilling 17 year old female psychiatric patient with massive doses of LSD (ten times a 'normal street dose' repeated often). This experiment, funded by the CIA but covered by an Air Force contract, was ended only after "**the subject**" became catatonic for 4 days. It was done at a university hospital where I have personally worked, and so I could confirm details from people who were there.

²⁶ One of my best informed reviewers thinks this is too harsh, and reminds me of several long reviews of intelligence issues by Congress like the Inouye-Hamilton inquiry of 1987. I stand firm because at least 15 books had been written on critical issues of intelligence reform before 9/11, and many commissions had published detailed studies, all to be ignored in actual practice. Another excellent example was the President's Commission on Government Secrecy of 1996, headed by Senator Daniel Moynihan. Its detailed conclusions about the costs and consequences of excess secrecy were simply ignored.

²⁷ Response by Alessandro Politi on October 6, 2005, to my request for his comments on this topic.

²⁸ See "Presidential Directives: Background and Overview" published on January 7, 2005 by the Congressional Research Service. Although it is stupidly classified secret, it can be accessed at <http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/98-611.pdf>

ABSTRACT

Attorneys and philosophers have presented detailed answers to the question of when it is permissible to break laws, some of which begin and end with the word “never.” Others answer “always” if reasons of state are compelling. To compound confusion, governments often write special laws for their “spies”^o and other “intelligence professionals.” Some of these laws are publicly known, but others are classified, like a significant fraction of US NSDD’s (National Security Decision Directives) and NSPD’s (National Security Presidential Directives). So what is forbidden for ordinary citizens may be legally “OK” for intelligence professionals, but citizens cannot tell because some of the laws are secret laws administered by secret courts like the FISA court in the USA. This situation can easily degenerate into simple codes: like “Do anything you need to accomplish your mission, but do not get caught” which has been noted by several CIA veterans. That noted, the CIA may be among the more restrained intelligence agencies in the world, because it is besieged by lawyers who have some actual laws to work with, unlike the secret services of some other countries. A real professional in the field of intelligence will never behave as a barbarian and will avoid torturing prisoners, for the sake of the national security’s future.

Keywords: intelligence, professionals, laws, torture, just war, prisoners

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Adrian Cioroianu, *Epoca de aur a incertitudinii. America și China, ideile și Primăvara arabă, Clio, Clausewitz și Lady Gaga la începutul secolului XXI*, Curtea Veche, București, 2011, 380 pagini

dr. Silviu Petre

După cum semantica ne este mai la îndemână decât gramatica și a vorbi mai inerent decât a vorbi corect, tot astfel și realitatea se deapănă la întretăierea dintre cunoaștere și acțiune. Altfel spus, suntem obligați să facem față unor evenimente aparent izvorâte din neant fără a le înțelege neapărat și cauzele, dărâmate cursul. Prin urmare, fiecare epocă își caută propria logică, proces care nu este deloc subînțeles și nici lipsit de efort. Cuvântul logică nu a fost folosit întâmplător, întrucât el descrie cel mai bine demersul argumentativ al volumului lui Adrian Cioroianu. Istoric exersat și om politic, îmbinând constanța scrisului cu ocazionala practică, Cioroianu ne propune o grilă de lectură a evenimentelor în plin flux de la început de secol XXI. Exercițiul său de filozofie istorică este structurat din îmbinarea a trei chei de lectură: logica lui Clio; cea a lui Clausewitz și cea a lui Lady Gaga.

Prima descrie traseul evenimentelor așa cum este acesta văzut de ochii gânditorului (istoric, filozof, sociolog etc) detașat de realitate și în căutare de cauzalități și tipare;

Cea de-a doua logică, evocând numele precunoscutului general prusac de secol XIX, descrie lumea factualului, a evenimentialului, cu cele două ipostaze principale ale sale: strategia/conflictul și diplomația/negocierea/compromisul.

Trinitatea este împlinită de o a treia perspectivă. Sub numele unei vedete pop de anvergură globală, metafora Lady Gaga descrie lumea spectacolului/spectaculosului, a imprevizibilului și antinarativului. Ea ne amintește

cât de aproximativă este orice cauzalitate și cum orice prospect poate fi invalidat în orice clipă de câte un iritant factor X. [pp.8-9; 10-19]

Urmând maniera clasică, a tripticului dialectic, cartea este împărțită în câte un sertar, fiecare corespunzător fiecăreia dintre perspectivele mai sus invocate.

I. Galeria muzei Clio aduce împreună mai multe eseuri cu privire la condiția intelectualului și a rolului acestuia în înțelegerea lumii și a tentației de a o influența, erijându-se în actor pe scena publică. Ceea ce îl situează pe gânditor în lumina atenției este tocmai tentația profeției, adesea un defect profesional ce derivă inerent din fișa postului. Pe de-o parte, dacă acceptăm că *Historia magister vitae*, atunci cunoașterea trecutului nu are sens decât în măsura în care cercetătorul găsește tipare pe care le proiectează asupra viitorului pentru a preîntâmpina repetarea greșelilor. Pe de altă parte, profetismul, ca subspecie a istoricismului, poate genera încredere exagerată în datele unei situații sau șansele de reușită ale unei acțiuni. Nimeni nu este mai potrivit pentru a ilustra cele enunțate decât figura lui Karl Marx, pare să spună Cioroianu. [pp.29-33 și *passim*] De ce? Pentru că moștenirea sa denotă un profet eșuat (ca atâția alții, doar), dar un politician reușit, în măsură în care Internaționala căreia i-a pus bazele avea să schimbe fizionomia modernității, chiar și după căderea Uniunii Sovietice. În altă ordine de idei, continuă argumentația, ieșirea din utopia comunistă a

însemnat totodată și ieșirea din modernitate, dintr-un traseu al maturizării statului național cu care ne obișnuisem timp de atâtea generații. Altfel spus, reîntoarcerea fostului bloc semnat al pactului de la Varșovia la liberalism și capitalism, la o normalitate fixată în azimutul occidental nu însemna doar închiderea parantezei începute în 1945, ci o veritabilă intrare într-o lume nouă, cu date necunoscute. Pentru istoriografi, gardienii și interpreții muzei Clio, ieșirea din comunism a însemnat și exilul din Galaxia Gutenberg a culturii scrise. De aceea, gânditorul evului postmodern nu se mai poate bizui pe aceleași procedee ca și până atunci, fiind obligat a se reinventa ca personaj mediatic, analitic politic, profet al combinațiilor electorale pe termen scurt. [pp.29-33; 38-42]

În economia totală a cărții, capitolul dedicat logicii lui Clio dă impresia de eterogen, disparat, veritabilă mostră a prezentului lipsit de un numitor comun. Simultan face trecerea către celelate două logici ale treimii.

II. Silogismul principal al logicii clausewitziene (pentru a rămâne în vocabularul ce evocă moștenirea clasică) se referă la declinul (perceput sau real) al hegemonului american, ascensiunea Chinei-viitoarea pretendentă la titlu, afirmarea actorilor regionali (Uniunea Europeană, Federația Rusă, Turcia, Iranul) dar, mai mult decât atât, la izbucnirea unor procese transnaționale cărora instanțele mai sus menționate trebuie să le răspundă. Imperativul stabilității globale cere sincronizarea dintre geoeconomie și geopolitică, prima fiind adesea anexată celei de-a doua, așa după cum au arătat-o diferențele la Summitul G20 din 2009 (primul dedicat rezolvării crizei). [pp.146-150] Un tablou special înfățișează noile ambiții rusești, fostul stat al țărilor manifestând tulburări identitare (să redevină imperiul de odinioară sau să se adapteze noii ipostaze de stat-național) așezate peste binomul securitaro-economic - mai simplu spus, Rusia lui Putin, asemenea Uniunii Sovietice de odinioară pe care o dorește refăcută, reprezintă un arsenal militar impresionant, dar care nu poate ascunde ori compensa gravele neajunsuri domestice (declin demografic, rata înaltă a sinuciderilor, consum 'suprarealist' de alcool- 18% de alcool pur anual/capita- adică de două ori maximul

admis de Organizația Mondială a Sănătății). [pp.186-187]¹ Formulată ca o interogație deschisă, concluzia lui Cioroianu insistă asupra ofensivei de șarm orchestrată de Rusia după războiul cu Georgia din 2008 (inclusiv aici curtoazia față de lideri anti-americani notorii precum Chavez și Ahmadinejad; gala Eurovision de la Moscova din 2009 sau paradele grandioase dedicate zilei de 9 Mai din ultimii ani) ce ar reprezenta fie doar un consumabil pentru publicul intern, fie anticamera unei noi confruntări cu Vestul. [pp.189, 212-214]² Criza din Ucraina intensificată după finele Jocurilor de Iarnă de la Soci denotă că spectacolul grandorii rusești (adică logica Lady Gaga) avea să fie anexat unei politici militariste manifeste.

La nivelul scrierii textului-anul 2011, nimic nu ilustra mai bine contestarea status-quo-ului și a ordinii westphalice în zona Orientului Mijlociu și Africii de Nord ca Primăvara Arabă. În siajul inaugurat de carte, tulburările sociale care au cuprins tot brăul Africii de Nord până în Peninsula Arabă și Palestina indicau un cocktail imprevizibil de posibilități subîntinse cartezian de axele a două logici : Clausewitz și Lady Gaga- adică conflictualitate și spectaculozitate. Aici autorul pare a se contrazice:

– pe de-o parte refuză să conceadă cumului de tulburări din MENA drept un exemplu al logicii lui Clio prin comparație cu țările est-europene la 1989 unde cauza și direcția erau destul de clare: 1) eșecul sistemului comunist și 2) reîntoarcerea la valorile liberal-democratice specifice propriului trecut confiscat de tancurile sovietice după 1945 [p.296]. În schimb aici, continuă acesta, rolul catalizator al mass-media pentru mișcările globale, conectarea tinerilor nemulțumiți la satul global ca și imprevizibilul rezultat de pe urma detronării regimurilor autoritare nu ar fi o mostră cum nu se poate mai bună a bizariei postmoderne, anti-narative (după A nu vine neapărat B ci E...X...Y...Z etc).³

– pe de cealaltă parte, Cioroianu identifică resorturile crizei în factorii socio-demografico-instituționali (adică în logica tip Clio). Sub motto-ul „istoria urmează demografia”, trepidățiile brăului mediteranean-islamic se explică (și) printr-o creștere demografică galopantă- între 42%-54% din populație este formată din tineri sub 25 de ani în Tunisia, respectiv Egipt

[p.272]- acuplate unei piețe a muncii stagnante. [p.294] *Suplimentar urbanizarea accentuată atinge.. un indice de risc ideologic maxim: pe fondul unui învățământ tot mai precar, crește infracționalitatea și alienarea ideologică: vezi sistemul de școli islamice/islamiste madras, ce tind să dubleze moscheile în orice oraș cu o comunitate musulmană semnificativă.* [p.294]

Însumând cele de mai sus ar trebui poate să spunem că logicile de tip Clio și Clausewitz au constituit ingredientele de profunzime în timp ce mass media/logica tip Gaga a fost factorul declanșator. În orice caz, povestea Primăverii Arabe nu rămâne în parametrii națiunilor islamice ci apelează o întreagă diaspora globală pentru a complica și mai mult relațiile musulmanilor cu restul societăților de adopție. Cu potențial deosebit de tensionat s-ar putea dovedi Europa, unde imigrația și boom-ul demografic al noilor veniți, simultan cu declinul autohtonilor occidentale, ar putea duce la o ciocnire a civilizațiilor, după cum demonstrează fanatismul lui Anders Breivik:

„Episodul Breivik acolo a fermentat: într-un mediu în care noua cruciadă este parolă pentru o luptă- pe viață și pe moarte, după cum se vede- împotriva islamismului care, în această perspectivă, asediază Europa.” [p.304]

Consecințele pentru peisajul ideologic și electoral al bătrânului continent sunt cum nu se poate mai vizibile: *„Așadar: pe de-o parte, avem în Europa o expresie politică a curentului white power care a intrat într-o dinamică anume, ce nu dă semne de ofilire în viitorul apropiat; chiar și dreapta moderată europeană va fi obligată să-și adapteze discursul, prin adoptarea unor note mai ferme. Iar pe de altă parte avem o lume arabă în care sentimentele prooccidentale sunt în pierdere de viteză chiar și în rândurile islamiștilor moderați.”* [p.306]

III. Ultima parte a treimii este dedicată totalmente logicii de tip Gaga- adică a unei lumi în care formele își creează fondul cu viteză nemaipomenită. Este vorba despre un univers în care vedetele sunt mai importante decât oamenii de stat/ sau altfel spus în care nu contezi decât în măsura în care reușești să devii și să menții statutul de vedetă, fie că vorbim despre Madonna, Ioan Paul al II-lea sau Dominique Strauss-Khan. [p.308-320] Este de asemenea

lumea banilor virtuali, neacoperiți în produse reale dar care întrețin industria bursieră. Este, nu în ultimul rând, universul numerelor mici-așa cum sunt celulele teroriste care reușesc să producă pagube memorabile și să oblige statele să dedice sume imense restabilirii ordinii. [pp.205-208; 320-323]

Cel din ultim capitol, adaugă posturii analitic-descriptive pe cea prescriptivă și se condensează într-un set de sfaturi pentru un nou președinte al României, cel care a câștigat alegerile în 2014:

- reconstruirea relațiilor cu vecinii;
- atenția acordată Turciei, vector extrem de

important pentru joncțiunea dintre Europa, Rusia și Orientul Mijlociu. De aceea se sugerează abandonarea vechii narațiuni istorice a rivalității dintre spațiul românesc și cel otoman în vederea unei politici de substanță orientată spre viitor. La momentul scrierii cărții cel puțin, relațiile dintre București și Ankara erau considerate frumoase la nivel retoric, dar lipsite de orice proiect comun real.

- azimutul sud-pontic trebuie complet de cel nordic, unde Polonia pare să fie cea mai de succes poveste a Europei de Est, putere emergentă care articulează o diplomatie regională ambițioasă.

- lumea arabă a reprezentat în epoca Ceaușescu spațiul de manevră al unei prezențe românești foarte active (rămâne de discutat și cât de eficientă va fi fost aceasta). Lăsată în lătoare după 1990, această direcție poate fi reactivată pornind de la acele ancoră cu care mai există contacte privilegiate (deși nu se precizează foarte bine cine sunt acestea. Poate Egipt, Libia ?)

- palierul regional trebuie completat și de cel global, acolo unde puterile asiatice în frunte cu China redau tectonica geopolitică a secolului al XXI-lea. Dacă a vorbi despre Beijing ca despre sediul viitoarei superputeri globale a devenit un clișeu, acestea nu reprezintă și un program politic. Atractivitatea mediului de afaceri românesc față de investițiile Extremului Orient va deveni una din cheile de succes dacă România dorește să conteze. [pp.347-352]

Substanțială și incitantă, lucrarea istoricului Adrian Cioroianu impresionează poate nu atât prin noutatea informațiilor cât prin modul

lor de organizare. În plus, faptul că autorul a fost demnitar al statului, conferă detaliilor furnizate, fie și a celor cu titlu de opinie, o importanță de interior.

Evaluarea cărții ar trebui să țină poate cont de perspectiva din care o lectură: fie ca eseu, fie ca teorie de știință socială. Ca eseu, textul ne conduce printre rubricile disparate ale unui prezent care încă mai caută pe cineva să-i spună povestea. Ca teorie de știință socială, cartea reprezintă mai degrabă un început și o schemă de înțelegere mai mult decât un demers complet. Nu înseamnă că nu ar fi posibil sau nu ar merita o continuare care să transforme alăturarea celor trei logici într-o ecuație causală (dacă A atunci B). În forma care se arată, textul trebuie parcurs mai mult ca o colecție de analize și eseuri, decât ca un ansamblu încheiat, ceea ce nu îi tocește din calitate.

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Note:

¹ Un an mai târziu, într-un interviu acordat portalului Contributors, Cioroianu vorbește din nou despre ambițiile expansioniste rusești, atinge episodul protestelor de după alegerile parlamentare din Rusia dar insistă pe faptul că regimul Putin a îmbunătățit situația economică a cetățeanului de rând, fără a mai pomeni despre neajunsurile structurale listate în textul recenzat. Adrian Cioroianu: Manifestatiile din Rusia nu sunt doar împotriva lui Putin, ci împotriva sistemului, Contributors, 2 martie 2012, <http://www.contributors.ro/global-europa/manifestatiile-din-rusia-nu-sunt-doar-impotriva-lui-putin-ci-impotriva-sistemului/>

² O versiune a textului din carte se poate găsi pe site-ul Geopolitikon: Adrian Cioroianu, Rusia învață să zâmbească, Geopolitikon, 16 Septembrie 2010

³ Pentru puncte de vedere despre satul global și rolul media în cadrul Primăverii Arabe vezi și: Simon Cottle, Media and the Arab uprisings of 2011: Research notes, Journalism 12 (5), 2011, 647–659. Alexa Robertson, Narratives of Resistance: Comparing Global News Coverage of the Arab Spring, Volume 6, Issue 2, New Global Studies, 2012

Newsletter al crizei din Ucraina (octombrie 2013 – septembrie 2014)

realizat de *dr. Angela Grămadă, SNSPA*

Gazprom reinstates Ukrainian tycoon as gas broker

October 10, 2013

As concerns mount over Ukraine's ability to pay its import bill, Gazprom has agreed to supply discounted gas to a Ukrainian tycoon, who has previously acted as an intermediary between it and Ukraine's Naftogaz, a company source said today (9 October).

Dmytro Firtash's Ostchem holding will purchase 5 billion cubic metres (bcm) of gas to put into underground storage, at a 30-36% discount on the price that Ukraine pays for Russian gas, the source added, confirming Russian newspaper reports.

Gazprom's CEO Alexei Miller has said the transit of Russian gas exports to Europe is once again at risk again, due to the low levels of gas in Ukrainian underground bunkers ahead of winter, when cold weather pushes up demand.

"This deal with Ostchem will make it possible to increase the level of gas storage in Ukraine and provide for safe passage of Russian gas to Europe," the source said.

Neither Ostchem nor Gazprom made any comment.

With the extra volumes purchased by Firtash, Ukraine will hold 19 bcm of gas in storage, "the level required to ensure trouble-free gas deliveries to Europe in the 2013-14 winter season," Alfa Bank said in a note.

Gazprom meets a quarter of Europe's gas needs, and more than half of those energy exports to the EU flow across Ukraine. The remainder traverses Belarus or goes via the Nord

Stream pipeline under the Baltic Sea to Germany.

Read more at: Euractiv, <http://www.euractiv.com/europes-east/gazprom-reinstates-ukrainian-tyc-news-530970>

Ukraine must do more before striking deal with EU

October 21, 2013

Ukraine needs to step up reforms and find an acceptable solution to the fate of jailed former premier Yulia Tymoshenko before striking a ground-breaking deal with the EU, ministers warned Monday.

European Union foreign ministers meeting in Luxembourg just weeks before the scheduled signing of an historic accord late November which would set Ukraine on the path to membership of the bloc, said Kiev had not fulfilled all the conditions set for the deal.

Moves by Ukraine to allow Tymoshenko - who was jailed in 2011 for seven years on hugely controversial abuse of power charges -- to go abroad for medical treatment, most likely to Germany, might not be enough.

"This is not just about one person," said British Foreign Secretary William Hague.

"There are important reforms and important progress has been made," he said. "But we do want to see further progress on selective justice and electoral reform and judicial reform."

"What happens with Tymoshenko is one of the subjects within that," he added.

Her release is seen as a key condition for Ukraine to sign a free trade Association Agree-

ment -- a first step towards integration into the EU, which has infuriated Russia.

But Sweden's Foreign Minister Carl Bildt said on going into the Luxembourg talks that agreeing to send the former firebrand premier to Germany for treatment without some sort of pardon might not be enough.

See more at: EUBusiness, <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/ukraine-politics.qzk/>

European Parliament resolution of 23 October 2013 on the European Neighbourhood Policy: towards a strengthening of the partnership
October 23, 2013

Extract from the EP resolution on the ENP of 23 November 2013

Ukraine

"... 47. Encourages the Ukrainian authorities to advance further in fulfilling the requirements of the Association Agreement, as laid down in the Council conclusions of 10 December 2012 on Ukraine and in Parliament's resolution of 13 December 2012 on the situation in Ukraine¹, and in addressing the pending issues of selective justice, and electoral and judicial reform; welcomes, nevertheless, the recent commitments made by both President Yanukovich and the opposition leaders to proceed with the required legal acts through Verkhovna Rada, and awaits prompt delivery on those promises before the Vilnius Summit; recognises the progress made so far, but underlines the need for further reforms, notably the reform of the Prosecutor's Office; commends the work of the European Parliament's Monitoring Mission for Ukraine and welcomes the extension of its mandate until 12 November 2013; expresses hope and confidence that it will soon lead to a mutually acceptable solution to the case of Yulia Tymoshenko, on the basis of the appeal by Pat Cox and Aleksander Kwaśniewski to the President of Ukraine;

48. welcomes the ongoing dialogue between Ukraine and the EU and their common ambition to sign an Association Agreement at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius on 28 and 29 November 2013;

49. Acknowledges Ukraine's European aspirations and reiterates its view that a deepening of relations between the EU and Ukraine and the fact of offering Ukraine a European

perspective are of great significance, and are in the interests of both parties;

50. Recommends that the Council sign the Association Agreement between the EU and its Member States, on the one part, and Ukraine on the other part, if the required conditions, as formally defined by the Foreign Affairs Council of 10 December 2012 and supported by Parliament's resolution of 13 December 2012, are met; expresses its approval, conditional upon the above-mentioned requirements, of the Council decision on the provisional application of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement immediately upon signature; states its intention, in the event of meeting all requirements and subsequent signing, to proceed with the full ratification of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement within the present legislative term;

51. Condemns the recent trade sanctions imposed by Russia on Ukrainian exports, which are aimed at putting pressure on Ukraine not to sign the Association Agreement with the EU; calls on Russia not to impose these sanctions and to refrain from undue political interference and pressure. ... "

Source: Mission of Ukraine to the European Union, <http://ukraine-eu.mfa.gov.ua/en/press-center/news/15759-rezolyucija-jevropejsykogo-parlamentu-shhodo-jevropejsykoi-politiki-susidstva-u-napryami-posilennya-partnerstva-vid-23-zhovtnya-2013-roku>

How Russia lost Ukraine

October 23, 2013

Russia's leaders view the Association Agreement with the European Union that Ukraine and five other former Soviet republics recently signed in Vilnius as a major defeat in this long-standing geopolitical standoff. Moscow is so angry that it is threatening to unleash a trade war with Ukraine and punish Lithuania for pandering to the "treacherous" behavior of the former Soviet republics. Russia finds it particularly offensive that Kyiv's drift toward Europe is occurring under Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, whom Moscow initially hailed as pro-Russian. Moscow thought that after it managed to sign an agreement to rent the Sevastopol naval base for the Black Sea Fleet for the next 10 years, it would be just as easy to bring Ukraine into the Customs Union.

More details on: The Moscow Times, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/how-russia-lost-ukraine/488388.html#ixzz2iciR8ls>

"The EU is united in its wish to strengthen relations with Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia"

October 23, 2013

EU foreign ministers are calling on Russia to stop trade restrictions and threats against the Eastern Partnership countries that aspire to join the European Union, the Associated Press says.

"The 28 EU countries hope to agree on closer cooperation deals with Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia at a Nov. 28-29 summit. But Moscow is urging those nations to align themselves closer with Russia instead, and it is using pressure to back up its demand," Associated Press says.

The EU has extensive experience with remaining united in the face of pressure from the outside world, said Dutch Foreign Minister Frans Timmermans. "And no amount of pressure can make us crumble."

"The EU is united in its wish to strengthen relations with Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia," Timmermans said.

To help those nations make that decision, Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt and Polish Prime Minister Radoslaw Sikorski left Monday's ministerial meeting in Luxembourg for a whirlwind tour of the three countries to promote closer alignment.

"There might be things that we can do to help the nations that are under pressure from Russia," Bildt said, and he warned Moscow that any more pressure would be counterproductive.

See more at: Civil Georgia, <http://www.geotimes.ge/index.php?m=home&newsid=29430&lang=eng> *Russia and Ukraine edge closer to 'gas war'*

October 29, 2013

The possibility of a new "gas war" between Russia and Ukraine inched closer on Tuesday, as the Russian state energy giant Gazprom complained that Kiev had outstanding debts of over half a billion pounds and demanded swift payment.

Gazprom's concern comes a month before Ukraine is due to sign up for closer ties with

the European Union, a deal that has infuriated the Kremlin.

The complaint brought back memories of crises in 2006 and 2009 in which Russia turned off the gas to Ukraine, leaving many European nations that rely on pipelines passing through the country without energy in the middle of winter.

Russia wants Ukraine to join its own Customs Union of former Soviet states, and has repeatedly sent dire warnings that by signing the deal with Europe, Ukraine will lose billions of dollars and face myriad problems. One Kremlin economic adviser even predicted that if the deal is signed "political and social unrest" will ensue and Russia could cease to recognise Ukraine's status as a sovereign state.

See more at: The Guardian, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/29/russia-ukraine-gazprom-gas-war>

Halt in Ukraine-EU relations threatens Ukraine's credit profile – Fitch

November 23, 2011

Ukraine's announcement that it was halting preparations to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union threatens to leave in limbo a process that, if fully implemented, would strengthen Ukraine's credit profile, Fitch Ratings has said.

"But the retreat may also reduce the more immediate risk of Russian economic retaliation, which has already affected Ukraine's exports in 2013," Fitch said.

Fitch noted that it downgraded Ukraine to 'B-' from 'B' this month. This reflected the sovereign's fragile external financing position and constraints on its ability to borrow in foreign currency to refinance heavy external debt repayments in 2014-2015, in the absence of an IMF agreement.

"These remain the key rating drivers, and the risks they present are reflected in the continuing Negative Outlook on the rating," reads the statement.

Source: Interfax.ua, <http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/economic/176451.html>

Vilnius summit overshadowed by Ukrainian trade deal rejection

November 28, 2013

Ukraine has focused heavily in EU talks in Lithuania after Kyiv rejected a free-trade

deal with the EU in favor of closer ties with Moscow. But the EU remains keen on bringing the country into the fold.

The European Union on Thursday warned Ukraine that it was risking its economic future by its decision last week to suspend work on a landmark association and free-trade deal and focus instead on enhancing ties with Russia.

Speaking ahead of a two-day summit aimed at improving relations between the EU and six of its eastern neighbors, EU enlargement commissioner Stefan Füle rejected Ukraine's claim that upgrading its economic base to European standards would cost too much.

"The only costs that I can see are the costs of inaction allowing more stagnation of the economy and risking the economic future and health of the country," he told a business forum in the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius.

The deal between the EU and Ukraine was due to be signed at the meeting in Vilnius. The association agreement would enhance political ties between the two sides and pave the way for trade liberalization.

More details here: DW, <http://www.dw.de/vilnius-summit-overshadowed-by-ukrainian-trade-deal-rejection/a-17260699>

EU summit shows no sign of reviving Ukraine deal

November 29, 2013

European leaders appear to have made no progress on reviving a far-reaching association agreement with Ukraine at an EU summit in Vilnius.

Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich abruptly froze plans to sign the trade and reform deal last week, under pressure from Russia.

The Ukraine agreement, the summit's centerpiece, would have been a major step towards eventual integration.

But progress was made with two other ex-Soviet states, Georgia and Moldova.

Both initialled association agreements on Friday, the closing day of the summit, with diplomats hopeful that these can be signed next year.

More details at: BBC News Europe, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-25134682>

Yanukovich: We received answer at Eastern Partnership summit that EU door is open

November 29, 2013

President Viktor Yanukovich stresses the importance of the 'Eastern Partnership Summit for the understanding of future European prospects of Ukraine.

The head of state told this to Interfax-Ukraine on Friday in Vilnius.

"We received an answer that the doors of the EU are open for us, that we still have time to determine the conditions under which Ukraine is ready to make the next step," the president noted.

According to him, the Eastern Partnership Summit was extremely important for the country to understand the future of Ukraine.

Source: UkrInform, http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/yanukovich_we_received_answer_at_eastern_partnership_summit_that_eu_door_is_open_313875

Barroso rules out possibility of EU-Ukraine-Russia tripartite negotiations

November 29, 2013

The EU-Ukraine association agreement cannot be elaborated in the EU-Ukraine-Russia tripartite format, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said at a press conference after the Eastern Partnership Vilnius summit.

He rejected as unacceptable the tripartite negotiations and the interference of a third country in the bilateral agreement and said there could not be a tripartite format in the elaboration of the bilateral agreement between the EU and Ukraine. Barroso made the statement at a press conference after the Eastern Partnership Vilnius summit.

Barroso said they had respect for sovereignty; the agreement with a sovereign country, Ukraine, had been initialed and whenever a bilateral agreement was on the agenda both sides should agree that it was a bilateral affair.

He said they did not hold negotiations with a third country when they concluded an agreement with Canada, for example. There cannot be a tripartite format in the conclusion of EU agreements with another state, Barroso noted.

The strategic partnership with Russia did not mean that the EU would agree to any interference of a third country in its bilateral relations with another state; that is a matter of principle, the European Commission president said.

Read more at: Voice of Russia, http://voiceofrussia.com/news/2013_11_29/Barroso-rules-out-possibility-of-EU-Ukraine-Russia-tripartite-negotiations-3665/

Russia Offers Cash Infusion for Ukraine
December 17, 2013

In a sharp rebuff to the West in the diplomatic wrangle over Ukraine, President Vladimir V. Putin said Tuesday that Russia would come to the rescue of its financially troubled neighbor, providing \$15 billion in loans and a steep discount on natural gas prices.

It was a bold but risky move by Russia, given the political chaos in Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, where thousands of demonstrators remain encamped in Independence Square, protesting their government's failure to sign political and free-trade accords with Europe.

For the moment, however, Mr. Putin seemed to gain the upper hand over Europe and the United States in their contest for Ukraine, a former Soviet republic of 46 million that Russia sees as integral to its economic and security interests. It is by far the region's most populous and influential country that has remained outside the European orbit.

More: New York Times, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/18/world/europe/russia-offers-ukraine-financial-lifeline.html?emc=edit_na_20131217&_r=2&

EU not to fight with Moscow for Ukraine – Foreign Ministry of Lithuania
December 18, 2013

The European Union will not fight with Russia for Ukraine. Linas Linkevičius, Foreign Minister of Lithuania that chairs in the EU now said this in exclusive interview to UNIAN, commenting arrangements of Ukraine and Russia. "There will be no fight for Ukraine. It is not a boxing and not a fight, and even not a auction, when they compete, who will pay the bigger price. It is necessary to step aside from the scheme. It is the country that should choose, the authorities should choose, but we underlined that we want this choice should be free", - said Linkevičius.

Read more here: Unian.info, <http://www.unian.info/news/613017-eu-not-to-fight-with-moscow-for-ukraine-foreign-ministry-of-lithuania.html>

Ukraine's Russian Deal: Not Really a Big Victory for Putin by ADRIAN KARATNYC-KY

December 18, 2013

Passions are flaring today – in the streets of Kyiv, and in government buildings across the European Union and in Washington – over yesterday's announcement of Russian financial support for Ukraine. EU officials are issuing warnings that the deal is shortsighted and will retard Ukraine's modernization.

Ukrainian opposition politicians and leaders of its mass protest movement voice alarm over a sellout of Ukraine to Russia, a wholesale Russian takeover of Ukraine's economy and the loss of Ukrainian sovereignty.

While all the contours of Ukraine's deal with Russia are not known to us, amid today's storm and drang, it is worth separating the wheat from the chaff.

More at: Atlantic Council, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/ukraine-s-russian-deal-not-really-a-big-victory-for-putin>

Polish foreign minister sees no obstacles to signing EU-Ukraine partnership treaty

December 19, 2013

Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski has said he sees no obstacles to the signing of the association agreement between the European Union and Ukraine.

"I do not know any formal facts that should say that it is impossible to sign the association agreement between Ukraine and the European Union," he said at a press conference following his talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

Ukraine should take its own decision whether to sign the association agreement with the EU, Lavrov said for his part.

When asked to assess the prospects of Ukraine's signing this agreement at a press conference in Warsaw, the Russian foreign minister said that this question should be addressed to Ukraine.

Source: Interfax Ukraine, <http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/182972.html>

FM Kozhara assures PACE co-rapporteurs of invariability of European integration policy

December 20, 2013

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Leonid Kozhara on December 19 held a meeting with co-rapporteurs of the monitoring mission of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), Mailis Reps (Estonia) and Marietta de Pourbaix-Lundin (Sweden), the ministry's press office said in a statement.

"Special attention was paid to the issues related to the implementation of the European integration policy of our state," the report reads.

During the meeting the sides also discussed the prospects of cooperation between Ukraine and the Council of Europe, in particular in the framework of the relevant obligations of our state to the Council of Europe.

In this regard, the sides noted the adoption in the first reading of the draft law submitted by the President of Ukraine on prosecutor's office, which contributes to the implementation of the relevant recent formal commitment of Ukraine to the Council of Europe.

Source: UkrInform, http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/fm_kozhara_assures_pace_co_rapporteurs_of_invariability_of_european_integration_policy_315068

Russia and Ukraine: the European Factor in Post-Soviet Relations by Artyom Malgin

January 02, 2014

Judging by the latest developments in Ukraine, foreign policy towards Europe has become a major element of Russian-Ukrainian relations, at the same time affecting Kiev's international priorities and, according to some observers, its domestic politics. And the role of Europe is definitely growing, as Ukraine increases the emphasis it is placing on its statehood.

As far as Russian and Ukrainian foreign policy priorities are concerned, the only equal to Europe is the post-Soviet track. While Kiev reduces the post-Soviet area to Russia, Moscow concentrates on a single country only during a time of crisis. Independent Ukraine managed to do so twice, i.e. in fall-winter 2004-2005 during the Orange Revolution, and in final weeks of 2013 before and after the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius.

Source: RIAC, http://russiancouncil.ru/en/blogs/riacmembers/?id_4=901

Sikorski: EU overestimated association attractiveness for Ukraine

January 03, 2014

The European Union overestimated the attractiveness of its offer for Ukraine regarding the association and underestimated Russia's determination in this context, Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski told the TVN BIS television channel in an interview.

"I agree with the assessment that the EU seriously overestimated the attractiveness of its offer and underestimated something that for us [Poles - ed.] is obvious: to what extent Ukraine is a priority for Russia and how much money the Russian government is ready to invest to strengthen relations with it," the Polish minister said.

He also expressed his belief that there are no facts that could prevent the signature of an Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU. "I'm not aware of any proven facts that would make association between Ukraine and the EU impossible," Sikorski said, adding that in the matter "nothing has been yet finally decided".

Source: UkrInform, http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/sikorski_eu_overestimated_association_attractiveness_for_ukraine_315535

Pro-European protesters say riot police force being pulled into central Kyiv

January 15, 2014

The Maidan all-Ukrainian Association, which represents the pro-EU demonstrators, has said on Facebook that members of the Berkut riot police squad and interior troops are being moved into the center of Ukraine's capital for possibly storming Independence Square, which is under the control of the demonstrators.

"Berkut forces and Interior troops are being pulled into the center of Kyiv. The storming of Maidan (the Independence Square) may happen this night and the next ones. It is very important to be on Maidan this night. The more of us will be there, the less probable the violence," reads a statement posted on Facebook on Wednesday.

Source: Interfax.ua, <http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/185998.html>

Ukraine's Harsh New Antiprotest Law Draws International Condemnation

January 17, 2014

There has been international condemnation of sweeping legislation to curb protests in Ukraine, with the European Union and United States expressing “deep concern” over the measure. It comes with protests continuing in Kyiv and other cities against a government volte-face on closer ties to the EU, opting instead for deeper cooperation with Russia. Ukraine’s parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, on January 16 passed a law that cracks down on street protesters and adopted amendments making it easier for the ruling-party-dominated legislature to strip offending members of parliament of their immunity. According to the president’s website on January 17, Viktor Yanukovych has signed the bill into law. The parliament also amended the Criminal Code to introduce provisions recriminalizing defamation and provide additional protection for public officials from critical speech.

See more at: Radio Free Europe, <http://www.rferl.org/content/ukraine-strict-law-protest-reaction/25233199.html>

Germany warns Ukraine on anti-protest law January 17, 2014

The German government on Friday (17 January) said controversial Ukrainian laws banning pro-EU protests would have “consequences” for its EU relations.

Chancellor Angela Merkel’s spokesman, Steffen Seibert, said the legislation, which bans protests and introduces the “concept of foreign agent” into criminal law, will make life difficult for opposition activists and NGOs.

“The German government expresses its great concern about this law, which marks a turn-around from European values,” he noted.

He spoke of “disappointment for Ukrainian citizens and the EU” and warned that this “will have consequences on EU-Ukrainian relations.”

Pressed to be more concrete, Seibert said he did not want to pre-empt EU foreign ministers’ talks on the subject on Monday.

Another German official told this website that Berlin is not EU envisaging sanctions.

But he said it might favour a freeze on all ongoing EU-Ukraine talks, for instance, on visa-free travel.

Germany wants is keen to send a message to Yanukovych that his actions will have repercussions, especially if opposition activists are thrown in jail following adoption of this law.

For more details visit: EU Observer, <http://euobserver.com/foreign/122766>

President instructs NSDC Secretary to establish working group to solve political crisis

January 20, 2014

President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovych instructed NSDC Secretary AndriyKliuyev to establish the working group consisting of representatives of the Cabinet of Ministers and the Presidential Administration in order to consider the issues regarding the settlement of political crisis.

Also the Head of State instructed to hold a meeting between representatives of the working group and representatives of the opposition on Monday.

Source: Viktor Yanukovych, President of Ukraine, official website, <http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/29963.html>

Yanukovych calls on opposition to stop standoff, start negotiations

January 22, 2014

Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych has called on the opposition to sit at the negotiating table and stop the standoff.

“I am urging the people once again not to fall for calls by political radicals. It’s not yet too late to stop and settle the conflict in a peaceful way. I am calling on the opposition once again to sit at the negotiating table and stop the standoff,” Yanukovych said in a statement posted on the presidential website on Wednesday.

Yanukovych regretted the deaths of people in the conflict “provoked by political extremists.”

“My sincere condolences go to the families of the dead,” he said.

He said he strongly opposes bloodshed, the use of force, and the fomenting of hatred and violence.

“I am asking the people to come back home. We should restore peace, serenity, and stability in Ukraine,” he said.

The Ukrainian presidential press service reported that Yanukovych instructed the law enforcement agencies to conduct a thorough

investigation into the people's deaths during the ongoing unrest in Kyiv.

Source: Interfax.ua, <http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/186974.html>

*Readout of Vice President Biden's Call with Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich
January 23, 2014*

Vice President Biden called Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich today to urge an immediate de-escalation in the standoff between protesters and security forces in downtown Kyiv. The Vice President urged President Yanukovich to take steps to end violence and to meaningfully address the legitimate concerns of peaceful protesters, stressing the importance of the ongoing dialogue with the opposition and the need for genuine compromise as the only solution to the crisis. The Vice President underscored that freedoms of assembly and expression are fundamental pillars of a democratic society and must be protected. While emphasizing that violence by any side is not acceptable, the Vice President underscored that only the government of Ukraine can ensure a peaceful end to the crisis and further bloodshed would have consequences for Ukraine's relationship with the United States. Vice President Biden encouraged President Yanukovich to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

Source: White House, <http://m.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/01/23/readout-vice-president-bidens-call-ukrainian-president-viktor-yanukovich>

BARROSO WARNS KYIV
23 January 2014

The EU was shocked by the latest deadly violence in Ukraine, warning Kyiv that it may take action after two months of conflict, which has just resulted in the first deaths of protesters.

On 23 January in Brussels, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso told the press that "We [...] deplore in the strongest possible terms the use of force and violence". He stated that "we will continue following closely these developments, as well as assessing possible actions by the EU and consequences for our [the EU and Ukraine's] relations" and pointed out that the EU had "several instruments" at its disposal. Concerned by the "recent restrictions on fundamental freedoms, in-

cluding freedom of expression and freedom of the media," Barroso assured that if Ukraine did not comply with the principles of democracy, the EU would take very clear action.

High Representative Catherine Ashton also called for "an immediate end" to the escalating violence, which has been an "extreme concern" for her.

Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Füle is due to visit Kyiv on 24-25 January.

Ukraine is a priority partner country within the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership. At the end of 2013, its government decided to suspend the signing of an association agreement that had been negotiated with the EU.

Source: Europolitics, Europe Information Service SA

*Statement of Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Stefan Füle after his visit to Kiev
January 25, 2014*

"I visited Ukraine on behalf of President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso and High Representative/ Vice-President Catherine Ashton on Friday and Saturday.

To underline that the EU remains engaged in facilitating a peaceful, negotiated solution out of the crisis, I held talks with President Viktor Yanukovich, leaders of the opposition party BatkivshchynaArseniyYatsenyuk, of the party UdarVitaliKlitchko and party Svoboda OlehTyahnybok as well as with representatives of the civil society. I have also visited the Maidan square and talked to people there.

In my talks I conveyed deep concerns of the EU about the latest developments and underlined the need to end the cycle of violence, to fight against impunity of perpetrators of human rights violations and to continue an inclusive national dialogue to find a way out of the crisis that threatens to further destabilise the country.

My talks in Kiev showed the need for a series of concrete steps to first start to rebuild trust of people by stopping the spiral of violence and intimidation, to be complemented in a second stage by an inclusive political process leading the stability in Ukraine.

I have discussed a series of steps to this end that could lead to confidence building and to a

political process aimed at ending this crisis. I stressed to my Ukrainian partners that the EU would remain engaged in this process assisting them in de-escalating the situation and finding a way out of the crisis, as demonstrated by the scheduled visit of High Representative/Vice-President Cathy Ashton to Kiev next week.

Source: Delegation of the European Union in Ukraine

Ukrainian parliament repeals controversial anti-protest laws

January 28, 2014

Nine out of 12 anti-protest laws passed on January 16 have been canceled during the special session of the Ukrainian Parliament. It was one of the main demands of the opposition. The cancelation of the laws has been approved by 361 MPs, while 226 were needed to get it passed. The laws, banning unsanctioned gatherings and imposing multiple restrictions on mass demonstrations, have been harshly criticized by the opposition. Among things that were illegal according to the repealed bills were protesters' wearing of masks or helmets, and erecting tents or stages without permission from the authorities. When passed, the laws provoked a mass demonstration with at least 10,000 participants out in the streets of Kiev. The protest eventually ended in violent clashes with police.

See more at: Russia Today, <http://rt.com/news/ukraine-parliament-protest-law-289/>

Ukrainian Prime Minister Azarov resigns
January 28, 2014

Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov has tendered his resignation, the press service of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine has reported.

"I have made my personal decision to ask the Ukrainian president to accept my resignation from the post of Ukrainian prime minister in order to create additional opportunities for a socio-political compromise and settle the conflict peacefully," Azarov said in a statement.

He noted that the current conflict situation in the country endangering Ukraine's economic and social development poses a threat to the entire Ukrainian society and every citizen.

See more at: Interfax.ua, <http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/187663.htm/>

Russia restarts trade sanctions against Ukraine

January 29, 2014

Russian President Vladimir Putin gestures speaks during a press conference with EU Council president and European Commission President on January 28, 2014 following an EU-Russia summit at the EU Headquarters in Brussels. "The EU needs +to clear the air+ with Russia at this summit as sharp differences over the Ukraine crisis and Eastern Europe test relations", a senior EU official said.

At least two trade associations complained that Ukrainian exports are once again facing troubles at the Russian border, similar to the brief but damaging trade war in August.

Source: KyivPost, <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine-abroad/russia-restarts-trade-sanctions-against-ukraine-335835.html>

Ukraine unrest: EU and USA clash with Russia in Munich

February 1st, 2014

Ukraine's future has sparked angry exchanges at a summit in Munich. European Council President Herman Van Rompuy said the "future of Ukraine belongs with the EU" while US Secretary of State John Kerry said the US backed Ukraine's "fight for democracy". Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov accused Western countries of double standards over violent protests. Ukraine has been in turmoil since November, when it scrapped an EU accord in favour of a Russian bailout.

"Time on our side"

The security conference is an annual event held to discuss military and political affairs. Mr Van Rompuy's opening speech referred to the EU's offer of close association with Ukraine. "The offer is still there and we know time is on our side. The future of Ukraine belongs with the European Union," he said. Mr Kerry launched a broad attack on "a disturbing trend in too many parts of Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans". He said: "The aspirations of citizens are once again being trampled beneath corrupt, oligarchic interests - interests that use money to stifle political opposition and dissent, to buy politicians and media outlets, and to weaken judicial independence."

Mr Kerry added: "Nowhere is the fight for a democratic, European future more important today than in Ukraine. The United States and EU stand with the people of Ukraine in that fi-

ght.” He said the “vast majority of Ukrainians want to live freely in a safe and prosperous country - they are fighting for the right to associate with partners who will help them realise their aspirations”. In an apparent swipe at Moscow, he added that “their futures do not have to lie with one country alone, and certainly not coerced”. Mr Lavrov said that a “choice is being imposed [on Ukraine] and Russia is not going to be engaged in this”.

For more visit: BBC News, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-25996453>

EU-Ukraine: “Only a Ukrainian plan can work”

February 13, 2014

Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle continued EU’s political efforts in helping Ukraine to find solution to the political crisis. He held talks with partners in Kyiv on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. After that he made the following statement to the media (watch also video on the link below)

“It is my third visit here in as many weeks. This one is very much connected to the Foreign Affairs Council and has an overarching goal to stress the EU’s concerns and continued willingness to help. My main message is that only one plan can work here: a Ukrainian plan agreed by Ukrainians and implemented swiftly.

I had talks with the President, leaders of the opposition, civil society, and activists from Euromaidan. All of them are important actors in this process. I conveyed to them that deep engagement of all is needed to find negotiated solution based on consensus. In all my meetings I stressed how important is confidence and trust as the main precondition for political process. I made the point that confidence and trust of the population cannot be achieved on Maidan and main squares in big cities, while throughout the country the arrests, intimidations and harassment of protesters and activists continue from people in uniforms and in civilian or sporting clothes. An important part of my programme was to visit two hospitals to see injured protesters and policemen. My message there was that violence is not acceptable. Politicians must think about the impact of their actions or non-actions. I also used that

opportunity to appreciate the work of doctors in these difficult circumstances.

From all my conversations I gathered that there is the need:

to take urgent steps on constitutional reform, and formation of the new inclusive government, ensuring free and fair elections nominate the remaining member of the Investigation Advisory Panel, as initiated by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and make the Panel work as soon as possible. The work of this Panel is important - it would ensure that the investigations by the Ukrainian authorities proceed in a way which is compatible with Ukraine’s international commitments. more security, no impunity: respect and protection for rights and freedoms, end of intimidations, harassment, quick and transparent investigations of acts of violence.

It is strange and unacceptable that injured are brought to hospitals by police and not by ambulances.

I had the opportunity to appreciate the work of the independent media. Freedom of press is one of the main pillars of democracy. For democracy to thrive, journalists must have freedom to do their job and must not be deliberately targeted and threatened. By targeting the press you target one of the pillars of your own democracy.

This brings me to what the EU could bring to facilitate the process. Throughout our continued engagement and based on the FAC Conclusions from Monday, we continue to support the peaceful political process.

We are ready to step up our efforts, together with international partners, to help Ukraine in dealing with difficult economic situation with reform agenda and assistance.

For more details visit: European Union External Action, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-14-6_en.htm

FM: Russia will do its best to ensure peace in Ukraine

February 19, 2014

Russia will do its best to ensure peace and calm in Ukraine, the Foreign Ministry reported on Wednesday.

“Russia demands the opposition leaders stop bloodshed in the country and resume dialogue with the legitimate authorities without

threats and ultimatums,” the ministry said in a statement.

“Ukraine is Russia’s friendly state and strategic partner. We’ll do our best to ensure peace and calm in the country,” the statement says.

Civilians and law enforcers have died and received serious injuries in Kiev and other Ukrainian cities due to the criminal actions, which were taken by the opposition. Radical forces have seized the buildings of police, the prosecutor’s office and military units in the west of Ukraine. Rioters have jeered at policemen and servicemen. Dozens of them have received wounds.

Russia “is indignant with the lack of reactions from radical groups of the opposition that connive at ‘the brown revolution’ by using demagogic slogans to cover the commitment to democracy and European values”, the statement says.

“There is no clear reaction from European politicians and structures that refuse to recognize that the opposition bears full responsibility for the actions of radical forces in Ukraine,” the statement says.

Source: ITAR-TASS, <http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/719850>

EU unsure who to blacklist in Ukraine by Andrew Rettman

February 20, 2014

EU countries have agreed to impose sanctions on the Ukrainian regime, but disagree who should be on the blacklist and when it should enter into life.

“The EU has decided as a matter of urgency to introduce targeted sanctions including asset freeze and visa ban against those responsible for human rights violations, violence and use of excessive force,” foreign ministers said after a snap meeting in Brussels on Thursday (20 February).

“The scale of implementation will be taken forward in the light of developments in Ukraine,” they added.

EU foreign affairs chief Catherine Ashton told press that “members of the [EU] Council were truly alarmed, shocked by the scale of violence that has taken place and I think this will drive the agenda going forward.”

Read full story at EU Observer, <http://eu-observer.com/foreign/123225>

Statement by President Barroso on the situation in Ukraine

February 20, 2014

During his joint press point with the Czech Prime Minister Sobotka, President Barroso made the following statement on the situation in Ukraine:

“In our meeting today, Prime Minister Sobotka and I also exchanged views on the situation in Ukraine that we are following with great concern.

As you know, the situation is very difficult and remains extremely volatile. The immediate and urgent priority is to avoid further bloodshed and save human lives. This is also the message I conveyed yesterday to President Yanukovich. The authorities have a special responsibility in ensuring it and demonstrators also need to keep the peaceful nature of the protests. An immediate end to the violence and a meaningful dialogue, responding to democratic aspirations of the people of Ukraine is the only way to solve the political and institutional crisis. As you know, the European Union has been offering its sincere assistance to facilitate dialogue and de-escalate the situation. We have also reiterated our offer of political association and economic integration. But what we have to do now, the most immediate thing is to put an end to violence, violence to stop as soon as possible. We cannot forget the images of the last days and the tragic deaths and injuries of so many people. This is why the Foreign Affairs Council will meet today to discuss the adoption of targeted measures against those responsible for violence and use of excessive force. We will continue engaged and committed to a political, democratic and peaceful solution of the situation in Ukraine together with our international partners.

And I am happy to see that there is now a broad consensus among our Member States in the way to deal with this issue. Just yesterday, because you were meeting an important delegation of business leaders, I spoke about these matters with President Hollande of France and Chancellor Merkel of Germany and, in fact, I have understood how deep is also their commitment to find a peaceful solution and today in the meeting with Prime Minister Sobotka, I have seen the same concerns and determination.”

Source: European Commission, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-14-15_en.htm

S T A T E M E N T by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the latest developments in Ukraine

February 22, 2014

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission issued the following statement today:

“The European Union is following minute by minute the rapidly changing political situation in Ukraine. I call on all sides to continue engaging in a meaningful dialogue to fulfil the legitimate democratic aspirations of the Ukrainian people.

The European Union expects everyone in Ukraine to behave responsibly with a view to protect the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the country. I call on everyone to abide by the rule of the law and the Constitution.

We need a lasting solution to the political crisis. This must include constitutional reform, the formation of a new inclusive government and the creation of the conditions for democratic elections. Following the agreement reached by the sides on 21 February, we remain fully committed to support an inclusive political process, help de-escalate the situation and to assist Ukraine in the process of reform. These steps could deliver a stable, prosperous and democratic future for all Ukraine’s citizens.

Furthermore, I welcome today’s release of former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko after more than two and a half years in detention. This comes as an important step forward in view of addressing concerns regarding selective justice in the country. “

Source: European Union External Action, http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2014/140222_01_en.pdf

FM: Situation deteriorates in Ukraine due to opposition’s inability to respect agreements

February 22, 2014

After the Ukrainian government and the opposition signed an agreement on February 21 the situation in the country deteriorated sharply “due to the opposition’s inability or unwillingness to respect the agreements, whi-

ch had been concluded with the active participation of Germany, Poland and France”, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said.

In a telephone conversation with US Secretary of State John Kerry on Saturday, Lavrov said, “Illegal extremist groups refuse to surrender arms and take Kiev under their control with the connivance of the opposition leaders in the Verkhovna Rada.”

Lavrov told Kerry, “This issue was thoroughly discussed in the telephone conversation between Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Barack Obama. Putin called on Obama to use all chances to curb radicals’ illegal actions and settle the situation by peaceful means.”

Kerry confirmed that the US was committed to the agreements reached on February 21. He pledged to use all mechanisms to influence the opposition, the Russian Foreign Ministry said.

Source: ITAR-TASS, <http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/720518>

Russia’s Putin, Germany’s Merkel discuss Ukraine over phone – Kremlin

February 23, 2014

Russian President Vladimir Putin and German Chancellor Angela Merkel had a telephone discussion about the situation in Ukraine, the press service of the Kremlin stated Sunday. “The latest developments of the situation in Ukraine were discussed,” the press-service said. The conversation took place at the initiative of the German side.

Massive riots resumed in Kiev on Tuesday, February 18. Aggressive crowds tried to approach the Parliament of Ukraine, radicals broke into the buildings in the center of Kiev, burned tires, threw stones and Molotov cocktails at the police. According to the Ministry of Health, the confrontation in the capital killed 82 people, injured nearly 650.

Apart from that, Merkel congratulated Putin on the success of the Winter Olympics in Sochi and the results achieved by Russian athletes. Russian team set up a record at the Olympics in Sochi at both overall ranking and the number of gold medals. In addition, the record of the USSR team in the total number of medals was surpassed, while that of the number of gold medals was repeated. In total, the

Russians won 33 medals: 13 gold, 11 silver and 9 bronze.

Putin, Obama hold 'constructive' talks on Ukraine

US President Barack Obama had a "constructive" phone call with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Friday and agreed it was important that Ukraine's peace agreement be implemented quickly and that its economy is stabilized, a senior State Department official said on Friday.

For more details visit: Voice of Russia, Reuters, Interfax, RIA, http://voiceofrussia.com/news/2014_02_23/Russias-Putin-Germans-Merkel-discuss-Ukraine-over-phone-Kremlin-8098/

Ex-economics minister drafting Ukraine-EU accord in Brussels

February 24, 2014

Ukraine's ex-economics minister Bohdan Danylyshyn said he is in Brussels drafting an association accord between Ukraine and the European Union.

"I am in Brussels and we are preparing proposals connected with the Association Agreement and free trade zone. Jointly with world experts we have drafted a plan of economic reforms, titled Ukraine's European Prospect, to be presented soon," he told Interfax on Monday, Feb.24.

Danylyshyn added that he remains an advocate of quality political renewal and reforms, "not cosmetic repairs." "Again, I don't seek posts. I am an academician of the National Academy Sciences. I am a doctor of economics, a professor of the government of European universities and president of the Council of the European Institute of Economic and Political Research. I will return to Ukraine bringing along a free trade zone agreement. These talks started during my tenure as economics minister in 2008 and this is the most important thing for me," Danylyshyn said.

Source: KyivPost, <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/ex-economics-minister-drafting-ukraine-eu-accord-in-brussels-337503.htm/>

Ukraine hoping for \$35 bln in financial assistance

February 24, 2014

Ukraine's Finance Ministry and National Bank, along with parliamentary speaker Oleksandr Turchynov, have suggested to the country's international partners - particularly Poland and the United States - that a financial assistance credit of around \$35 billion be extended in the next week or two.

"During the last two days we have had consultations and meetings with ambassadors from the EU, USA, other countries, and financial organization over Ukraine getting urgent macro-financial aid," acting Finance Minister Yuriy Kolobov said in a statement issued on Monday.

Kyiv is also proposing that there be a large international donors conference involving the European Union, the United States, Poland, the IMF, other countries, and international financial organizations on the extension of aid for modernization and reforms in Ukraine, as well as achieving an association agreement between the country and the EU.

Source: Interfax-Ukraine, <http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/economic/192330.html>

G20 urged to give financial support to Ukraine

February 24, 2014

UK Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne has urged the G20 group of developed nations to provide vital financial aid to crisis-hit Ukraine.

He said this in an interview in Sydney, where he was attending a meeting of the G20 finance ministers and central bank governors.

The G20 countries, including countries such as Britain, the United States and other developed nations, should be ready to provide international aid to Ukraine's people, Osborne said, the international media reported.

"We're here, ready to help, just as soon as there is someone at the end of the telephone. We should be there with a checkbook to help the people of Ukraine rebuild their country," the UK chancellor said.

Britain is likely to contribute to stability funds being put together by the European Union and the International Monetary Fund, the UK minister said after he discussed the financial assistance with his U.S. counterpart in Sydney.

Source: Interfax-Ukraine, <http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/economic/192460.html>

Presidential election campaign begins in Ukraine

February 25, 2014

The presidential election campaign began in Ukraine on Tuesday, February 25.

The election campaign starts automatically on the basis of a Verkhovna Rada resolution on scheduling early presidential elections in Ukraine for May 25, 2014, the press service of the Central Election Commission (CEC) reported.

On February 24, the CEC published the schedule of organizational measures on preparing for and holding the elections. According to the schedule, the nomination of presidential candidates begins on February 25 and will last until March 30.

Candidates may be nominated by parties or self-nominated. It is necessary to make a deposit of UAH 2.5 million to register a candidate. For this purpose, the CEC has published the number of a special account opened for the placement of deposits by candidates for the Ukrainian president.

Deadline for the submission of documents to the CEC for the registration of presidential candidates is April 4.

The CEC has to create 225 district election commissions. The Verkhovna Rada allocated UAH 1.965 billion to the Central Election Commission for the holding of early presidential elections.

Source: UkrInform, http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/presidential_election_campaign_begins_in_ukraine_317712

Ashton: EU expects economic reform plan from new Ukrainian government to determine necessary international financial assistance
February 25, 2014

The EU expects an economic reform plan from a new Ukrainian government to determine the necessary international financial assistance, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton has said.

She said at a press conference in Kyiv on Tuesday that now it was necessary to take a decision on the formation of a new government.

She also said that after different parties are involved in this process a plan on resolving economic issues should be drafted and discussed with international organizations and the EU so that they can determine what assistance should be better provided to Ukraine.

Source: Interfax-Ukraine, <http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/economic/192653.html>

Putin discusses situation in Ukraine with members of Russia's Security Council

February 25, 2014

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday morning held a briefing session with the permanent members of the Security Council on the situation in Ukraine, Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov has reported, according to Ukrinform's Moscow correspondent.

"The discussion focused on the situation in Ukraine," he said.

The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office Sergei Ivanov, speakers of both houses of parliament Valentina Matvienko and Sergei Naryshkin, Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev and his deputy Rashid Nurgaliyev, Interior Minister Vladimir Kolokoltsov, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, and also heads of the FSB and SVR Alexander Bortnikov and Mikhail Fradkov.

Source: UkrInform, http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/putin_discusses_situation_in_ukraine_with_members_of_russias_security_council_317724

EU moves toward sanctions on Russians, Obama meets Ukraine PM

March 12, 2014

The EU agreed on a framework on Wednesday for its first sanctions on Russia since the Cold War, a stronger response to the Ukraine crisis than many expected and a mark of solidarity with Washington in the drive to make Moscow pay for seizing Crimea.

U.S. President Barack Obama warned Russia it faced costs from the West unless it changed course in Ukraine, and pledged to "stand with Ukraine" as he met with the country's new prime minister in Washington.

"We will never surrender," Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk vowed as he and Obama met in a White House show of support for the embattled leader.

"Mr. Putin - tear down this wall - the wall of more intimidation and military aggression," Yatsenyuk told reporters in remarks aimed at Russian President Vladimir Putin and a reference to then-President Ronald Reagan's challenge to the Soviet Union in a 1987 speech at the Berlin Wall.

The EU sanctions, outlined in a document seen by Reuters, would slap travel bans and asset freezes on an as-yet-undecided list of people and firms accused by Brussels of violating the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said the measures would be imposed on Monday unless diplomatic progress was made.

Read more at: Reuters, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/12/us-ukraine-crisis-idUSBREA1Q1E820140312>

Crimeans vote over whelmingly to leave Ukraine, join Russia; West vows to punish with sanctions

March 16, 2014

Just two weeks after Russian troops seized their peninsula, Crimeans voted Sunday to leave Ukraine and join Russia, overwhelmingly approving a referendum that sought to unite the strategically important Black Sea region with the country it was part of for some 250 years.

The vote was widely condemned by Western leaders, who planned to move swiftly to punish Russia with economic sanctions.

As the votes were counted, a jubilant crowd gathered around a statue of Vladimir Lenin in the center of Simferopol to celebrate with song and dance. Many held Russian flags, and some unfurled a handwritten banner reading "We're Russian and proud of it." Fireworks exploded in the skies above.

"We want to go back home, and today we are going back home," said Viktoriya Chernyshova, a 38-year-old businesswoman. "We needed to save ourselves from those unprincipled clowns who have taken power in Kiev."

Ukraine's new government in Kiev called the referendum a "circus" directed at gunpoint by Moscow, referring to the thousands of tro-

ops that now occupy the peninsula, which has traded hands repeatedly since ancient times.

The referendum offered voters the choice of seeking annexation by Russia or remaining in Ukraine with greater autonomy. After 50 percent of the ballots were counted, more than 95 percent of voters had approved splitting off and joining Russia, according to Mikhail Malishev, head of the referendum committee.

Final results were not expected until Monday.

Source: US News, <http://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2014/03/16/crimea-votes-on-whether-to-secede-from-ukraine>

Crimea declares independence from Ukraine following overwhelming referendum vote
March 17, 2014

Crimea's parliament on Monday declared the region an independent state, after its residents voted overwhelmingly to break off from Ukraine and seek to join Russia.

In the same resolution, it said that all Ukrainian state property on the territory of the Black Sea peninsula will be nationalized and become the property of the Crimean Republic.

Sunday's referendum is not recognized by the West, and the United States and the European Union are preparing sanctions against Russia, whose troops have been occupying Crimea for several weeks.

Crimean lawmakers have asked the United Nations and other nations to recognize it.

A delegation of Crimean lawmakers is set to travel to Moscow Monday for negotiations on how to proceed further. Russian lawmakers have suggested that formally annexing Crimea is just a matter of time.

Read more at: ABC News, <http://www.wjla.com/articles/2014/03/crimea-declares-independence-from-ukraine-following-overwhelming-referendum-vote-101215.html#ixzz2xY4UFLdD>

Executive Order on recognizing Republic of Crimea

March 17, 2014

Vladimir Putin signed Executive Order on Recognizing the Republic of Crimea.

The Executive Order reads, in part:

"Given the declaration of will by the Crimean people in a nationwide referendum held on March 16, 2014, the Russian Federation is

to recognise the Republic of Crimea as a sovereign and independent state, whose city of Sevastopol has a special status.”

The Executive Order comes into force on the day of its signing.

Source: Kremlin.ru, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/acts/6884>

Kyiv expects Belarus to condemn annexation of Crimea

March 20, 2014

When asked to comment on the Belarusian foreign ministry’s statement issued on March 19, Mr. Perebyinis said, “We have always had a mutual understanding with the Belarusians. I did not see signs of support for Russia’s actions in that statement. That was a positive signal from Belarus.”

“However, the statement certainly did not make it clear whether or not Belarus condemned the annexation of Crimea. This is what we would like to hear from our Belarusian friends and partners,” Mr. Perebyinis said. “The entire world is doing so. Such things should not be tolerated in the 21st century. The previous annexation happened in 1939 and now we have experienced a new annexation. That is why we still hope that our friends will support us in this matter.”

The Republic of Belarus cannot be indifferent to the developments in Ukraine, including the referendum conducted in Crimea on March 16 and the subsequent decision to accept Crimea into the Russian Federation, the Belarusian foreign ministry said in the statement in question.

“Belarus, Russia and Ukraine are brotherly states united by the ties of their centuries-long common history,” the ministry said. “External forces made repeated attempts to play on contradictions that emerged between us and use them for their selfish ends. We are now deeply concerned about the attempts by politicians, who are in fact remote from the developments that are happening in the region, to decide what is good and what is bad for our Slavic nations.”

Belarus is opposed to a “one-sided and biased interpretation of the principles of international law for the sake of geopolitical interests and attempts to claim that some international

situations and territories are special cases and to ignore others,” the ministry said.

Read more at: Belarus News, http://naviny.by/rubrics/english/2014/03/20/ic_articles_259_184963

Ukraine urges Armenia to review stance on Crimea recalls envoy

March 21, 2014

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine is urging Armenia to reconsider its position on Crimea and the referendum held there on March 16, Deputy Foreign Minister said. “We are disappointed with reports on Armenia’s position regarding the issue. We have already invited the Armenian ambassador to express our concerns and gave certain instructions to our envoy in Yerevan. We also sent a note requesting explanation on Armenia’s position,” DaniloLubkivski said, when asked whether Kyiv can sever diplomatic relations with Yerevan. “Now we are waiting for the answer,” he said, adding that Armenia’s “unfriendly position may have undesirable consequences for bilateral relations.

See more at: Pan Armenian, <http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/news/177128/>

PACE President and leaders visit Ukraine
March 21, 2014

A delegation of the leading members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), headed by its President Anne Brasseur, is to visit Kyiv, Donetsk and Lviv during a three-day visit to Ukraine from 22-24 March 2014.

The nine-member delegation(*) – made up of the President of the Assembly, the heads of its five political groups and its Secretary General, as well as the two-co-rapporteurs for the monitoring of Ukraine – will assess the situation in Ukraine ahead of an urgent debate likely to take place at PACE’s spring plenary session (7-11 April 2014).

In Kyiv on Saturday 22 March, the delegation is due to meet the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada and acting President, the Prime Minister, the Internal Affairs Minister and Foreign Minister, as well as the leaders of Ukraine’s main political parties and the chairman of the Meilis of the Crimean Tatar People.

In Donetsk on Sunday 23 and in Lviv on Monday 24, the delegation is due to meet the

Governors of each oblast, the mayors of each city, and members of the regional councils, as well as representatives of Russian and Ukrainian cultural organisations (to be confirmed).

Source: Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe, [http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/News/News-View-EN.asp?newsid=4941 &lang=2&cat=15](http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/News/News-View-EN.asp?newsid=4941&lang=2&cat=15)

Ashton says 'biggest fear' is over Ukraine's economy

March 24, 2014

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton has voiced a deep concern over the fragility of Ukraine's economy and urged the rest of the world to rally round to support it.

During the discussion at the Brussels forum on March 22, Ashton said that Ukraine's economic problems would be of top priority on the immediate agenda of the European Union.

"We have to make sure that Ukraine, economically, does not fall over ... My biggest fear right now is the state of economy and the need for us all to offer the support they need," Ashton said.

The European diplomat said she believes that Ukraine needs several billion euros to solve its budget deficit problems. The fiscal shortfall is currently one of the main problems of Ukraine's economy that had to be resolved "relatively quickly," she said.

Another problem the diplomat highlighted was the "economic viability of industry, many parts of which need to be modernized, [and this is] an issue ... that needs a slightly longer-term plan," Ashton said.

"And then there are the underlying structural problems in how to make sure that they are able to generate the resources they need to be able to pay their bills and to be able to develop that economy without running into the buffers of not having enough money day-to-day," Ashton said.

Source: Interfax.ua, <http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/economic/197550.html>

Ukraine, Britain discuss situation in Ukraine, Kyiv's cooperation with IMF

March 25, 2014

Acting Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Deschytzia met with British Foreign Secretary William Hague during the Nuclear Security

Summit in The Hague, the information policy department of the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry reported on Tuesday.

During the meeting the sides discussed the situation in Ukraine, in particular the annexation by Russia of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

"The British foreign secretary assured Deschytzia of the UK's continued support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and condemned Russia's actions that violate the fundamental principles of international law," reads the statement.

The ministers also discussed future prospects for European integration of Ukraine, as well as the country's cooperation with the International Monetary Fund.

Source: Interfax.ua, <http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/economic/197645.html>

Crimea Referendum: 34 Percent, Not 97 Percent, Says Former Russian Government Adviser

March 25, 2014

Crimea's near-unanimous referendum to join the Russian Federation was a "grossly rigged" falsification of a "cynically distorted" populace whose vote was closer to 34 percent, according to former economic policy adviser to the Russia Government Andrey Illarionov.

Illarionov, who is currently a senior fellow at the Cato Institute's Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity in Washington, DC, recently published on his blog a study of polling done in Crimea over the past three years, in which Illarionov shows support for joining Russia has varied between 23 and 41 percent since 2011, and concludes that "[a]t a minimum, two-thirds of the Crimea did not vote for the joining of Crimea to Putin's Russia."

This opinion is shared by Yulia Tymoshenko, former prime minister of Ukraine, who Illarionov quotes and who met last week with leaders of Crimea's ethnic Tatar people—at least one of whom has been declared persona non grata in Crimea by Russian authorities since their occupation. Tymoshenko stated on Ukrainian television program Shuster Live, "According to the leaders of the Crimean Tatar people, only 34 percent of Crimeans voted to join Russia. And this is very close to the truth."

Illarionov's study referenced several opinion polls conducted by the United Nations,

Democratic Initiatives' IlkaKucheriv, the Kiev International Institute of Sociology, Research & Branding Group, International Republic Institute, and Gallup.

Read more at: Liberty Voice, <http://guardianlv.com/2014/03/crimea-referendum-34-percent-not-97-percent-says-former-russian-government-adviser/>

EU-Ukraine: Unprecedented Visit to Follow-up on Association Agreement Signature
March 26, 2014

A sizeable delegation of senior EU officials, led by Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy ŠtefanFüle, is visiting Ukraine today and tomorrow to work with the Ukrainian authorities on crucial reforms in the area of democratic institutions and the economy, as well as on issues linked to the implementation of the Association Agreement. The delegation also includes Commissioner for Financial Programming and Budget Janusz Lewandowski and senior representatives of various Directorates General of the European Commission, a press release said.

The high-level visit by EU officials follows last week's signature of the political provisions of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement.

"We will be talking about a number of reforms that are necessary both in the area of democratic institutions and the economy. We will start work on a roadmap for these reforms in different fields," Commissioner Füle said ahead of the visit.

He stressed the need to continue the dialogue with the Verkhovna Rada and civil society, adding both of them play a significant role in advancing reforms. The possibility to speed up the process of visa liberalisation and issues related to decentralisation and support of the regions are also on the agenda for discussions between the Ukrainian authorities and the high-level EU delegation.

Source: Visa-free Europe Coalition, <http://visa-free-europe.eu/2014/03/eu-ukraine-unprecedented-visit-to-follow-up-on-association-agreement-signature/>

Vote by U.N. General Assembly Isolates Russia

March 27, 2014

In the first barometer of global condemnation of Russia's annexation of Crimea, Ukrai-

ne and its Western backers persuaded a large majority of countries in the United Nations General Assembly on Thursday to dismiss the annexation as illegal, even as Russia sought to rally world support for the idea of self-determination.

The resolution, proposed by Ukraine and backed by the United States and the European Union, represented the latest effort to isolate President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia over the annexation, which followed a March 16 referendum in the peninsula that has been internationally regarded as Ukrainian territory.

The resolution garnered 100 votes in favor, 11 votes against, with 58 abstentions. The two-page text does not identify Russia by name, but describes the referendum as "having no validity" and calls on countries not to recognize the redrawing of Ukraine's borders.

Ukraine's acting foreign minister, Andriy Deshchytsia, called Russia's actions "a direct violation of the United Nations Charter."

Russia said Crimea should not have been part of Ukraine anyway, since it had been part of Russia for centuries until 1954, when the Soviet leader Nikita S. Khrushchev gave the peninsula to Ukraine, at the time a Soviet republic.

Read more at: The New York Times, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/28/world/europe/General-Assembly-Vote-on-Crimea.html?_r=1&referrer

The Crimean Crisis and the Energy Ramifications for Azerbaijan

March 27, 2014

The Kremlin's partition of Crimea from Ukraine has put other states along Russia's "near abroad" on edge. But while most of Russia's neighbors seem to be worried about becoming Vladimir Putin's next target, one state, Azerbaijan, stands to benefit, at least over the longer term, from the sudden turn of events.

The Crimean crisis has revived fears among European Union states over their dependency on Russian natural gas imports, as well as the reliability of Ukraine as a transit state. This, in turn, is giving greater impetus to energy diversification projects across Europe, creating an opportunity for Azerbaijan to capitalize on

its role as an alternative energy supplier at the head of the Southern Corridor energy route.

Azerbaijan already plays an important role as a regional supplier. In 2012, Azerbaijan exported 24 million tons of oil and 7 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas, primarily via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum pipelines, respectively. Azerbaijan also has plans to significantly increase its natural gas exports once the Shah Deniz II gas field comes online in 2017-2018. That will mean an additional 10 (bcm) of Azerbaijani gas heading to Europe.

For more details visit: Caspian Barrel, <http://caspianbarrel.org/?p=8170>

Russia Calls UN Resolution on Crimea Referendum 'Counterproductive'

March 28, 2014

The Russian Foreign Ministry on Friday dismissed a UN resolution declaring Crimea's referendum invalid as "counterproductive" and called on the international community to help stabilize the situation in crisis-hit Ukraine.

On Thursday, the 193-nation UN General Assembly passed the non-binding resolution with 100 votes in favor, 58 abstentions, and 11 against, including Armenia, Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, North Korea, Nicaragua, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela and Zimbabwe in addition to Russia.

"The counterproductive initiative of the General Assembly's resolution only complicates efforts to stabilize the domestic political crisis in Ukraine," the ministry said, calling on officials to respect the results of the Crimean vote.

The ministry added Ukraine's attempts to misrepresent the crisis are aimed at distracting international attention away from the escalation of domestic tensions, seeking instead to shift blame onto Russia for the country's internal problems.

In the wake of rising ultranationalist rhetoric in Kiev, the country's largely Russian-speaking republic of Crimea sought reunification with Russia, a move backed by over 96 percent of voters in a referendum held in the region earlier this month.

See more at: RIA Novosti, <http://en.ria.ru/russia/20140328/188836412/Russia-Calls-UN-Resolution-on-Crimea-Referendum.html>

Ukraine crisis: US-Russia deadlock despite 'frank' talks

March 31, 2014

US Secretary of State John Kerry has announced no breakthrough on Ukraine, following four hours of "frank" talks with Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov.

Mr Kerry said he told Mr Lavrov that the US still considered Russia's takeover of Ukraine's Crimea region to be "illegal and illegitimate".

He said he had stressed that no decision on Ukraine's future could be made without Kiev's involvement.

Earlier Mr Lavrov set out demands for a neutral and federal Ukraine.

Mr Kerry told a news conference in Paris: "We will not accept a path forward where the legitimate government of Ukraine is not at the table.

"This principle is clear: no decisions about Ukraine without Ukraine."

He said he had also raised "strong concerns" about the presence of Russian troops on the Ukraine border, which he said, created a climate of fear and intimidation.

Read more at: BBC, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26814651>

Qurultay votes for self-determination of Crimean Tatar people in Crimea

March 31, 2014

The delegates of the Qurultay of the Crimean Tatar people on March 29 supported a resolution on the realization by the Crimean Tatar people of their right to self-determination on their historic territory - in Crimea, aUkrinform correspondent has reported.

"To announce the beginning of political and legal procedures on the creation of the national-territorial autonomy of the Crimean Tatar people on its historic territory - in Crimea," reads the decision, for which 212 of the 217 Qurultay delegates voted.

According to the adopted document, "the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people is ordered to enter into relations with international organizations - the UN, the Council of Europe, the EU, OSCE, OIC and the parliaments and governments of states on all issues of ensuring the right of the Crimean Tatar people to self-determination in the form of the national-territorial autonomy on their historic territory - in Crimea."

As Ukrinform reported, the second session of the sixth Qurultay of the Crimean Tatar people opened in Bakhchisarai on March 29. The delegates discussed the socio-political situation in Crimea and the objectives of national government agencies of the Crimean Tatar people.

Source: UkrInform, http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/qurultay_votes_for_self_determination_of_crimean_tatar_people_in_crimea_319389

Ukraine: National Platform takes up leadership in creating EU-Ukraine Civil Society Platform sanctioned by the Association Agreement

March 31, 2014

Last week the Steering Committee of the Ukrainian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (UNP EaP CSF) held a meeting, where goals were set for the nearest future and new opportunities that emerged after the signing of the Association Agreement on 21 March were discussed. According to the UNP National Coordinator Oleksandr Sushko, the main task for the Ukrainian civil society for the nearest several months is to introduce an effective mechanism of cooperation between the Ukrainian civil society and the EU. In particular, article 469 of the Association Agreement establishes a Civil Society Platform to manage bilateral consultations between the Ukrainian civil society and the European side, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). However, the Agreement does not suggest any precise formula to determine structure and composition of the Platform; moreover, it passes to the Platform the responsibilities to define its own agenda and rules of procedure.

For more details visit: EAP-CSE, <http://www.eap-csf.eu/en/news-events/news/ukraine-national-platform-takes-up-leadership-in-creating-the-eu-ukraine-civil-society-platform-sanctioned-by-the-association-agreement/>

Ukraine to finally sign association deal with EU in July or September - Fesenko

April 02, 2014

Ukraine will finally sign an Association Agreement with the European Union in the first half of July or in September.

Head of the Penta Center for Applied Political Studies Volodymyr Fesenko said this at a press conference on Monday, Ukrinform reported.

"The [association] agreement [with the European Union] will be fully signed most likely at the beginning of July or early in autumn," the political analyst said.

He said that in determining a possible date for the signing of the agreement it should be borne in mind that elections for the European Parliament and an update of the leadership of the European Union, as well as presidential elections in Ukraine, would be held in May.

"Given Russia's tough stance and the current not entirely stable situation in Ukraine, the EU wants to sign this agreement with a new president of Ukraine, who will be legitimately elected in a direct election," Fesenko said.

In general, in his opinion, the fact of such a fast and even partial signature of the Association Agreement with Ukraine is evidence of EU support - both political and economic.

Source: UkrInform,

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/ukraine_to_finally_sign_association_deal_with_eu_in_july_or_september___fesenko_319439

Restoring energy security after Crimea - The National Interest

April 05, 2014

News.Az reprints an article from The National Interest.

The crisis in Ukraine has rightly sparked concerns over a possible cut in Russian natural gas to Europe. Europe receives roughly 30 percent of its gas supplies from Russia, and more than half of the Russian natural gas delivered to Europe travels through Ukraine. This dependence needs to be remedied, and the sooner the better. As European leaders weigh the continent's energy strategies to mitigate the potential long-term loss of Russian supplies, two countries—Turkey and Azerbaijan—stand out as important partners in Europe's quest for energy security.

For more information: News.az, <http://news.az/articles/economy/87505>

Appeal: Belarusian National Platform supports UN Resolution on territorial integrity of Ukraine

April 09, 2014

We, citizens of the Republic of Belarus, a broad spectrum of civil society organizations, political parties, trade unions, non-governmental organizations and initiatives condemn the official position of the Republic of Belarus to the UN General Assembly March 27, 2014 and support the resolution of the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

We believe that voting against the resolution of the territorial integrity Ukraine official Belarus:

- entered into conflict with its earlier articulated position in support of the territorial integrity of Ukraine,
- demonstrated its disrespect to international treaties,
- showed their contempt for the Ukrainian government and the people,
- recognized as legitimate the fact of capturing territory of one state by another one.

It is our deep conviction that in a situation where it is critically important to prevent escalation of war by all (and primarily diplomatic) means, Belarus should condemn the act of annexation of the Crimea by Russia, and from the perspective of international treaties, rejection of aggression of one country against another to act as a deterrent side. Unfortunately, this does not happen, the Belarusian authorities have officially supported the position of Russia, making the Belarusian people a hostage of imperial ambitions of its leadership.

Source: EAP-CSF, <http://www.eap-csf.eu/en/news-events/news/appeal-belarusian-national-platform-on-the-support/>

Expert says stabilization in Ukraine relates to its European integration

April 24, 2014

Stabilization of the situation in Ukraine relates to the process of integration into the European Union.

Director of Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation Iryna Bekeshkina said this at a roundtable entitled "Problems of Information Security and European Integration of Ukraine", which was held on Wednesday in Kherson.

"Now the issue of European integration - this is a problem of Ukraine. It is a matter of stabilization in Ukraine. They [the EU - ed.] have doubts, fears [about Ukraine - ed.]. And I would say, the more, the fears of Europeans

grow faster. This mess, the lack of order. This is a difficult issue," the expert noted.

According to her, there is another complicated issue. "What to do with that part of Ukraine, which mainly does not want to go to the European Union? We are told: how you can speak for all when they do not want?" Bekeshkina added.

Source: UkrInform, http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/expert_says_stabilization_in_ukraine_relates_to_its_european_integration_320628

G7 leaders' statement on Ukraine: April 2014

April 26, 2014

We, the leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission, join in expressing our deep concern at the continued efforts by separatists backed by Russia to destabilize eastern Ukraine and our commitment to taking further steps to ensure a peaceful and stable environment for the May 25 presidential election.

We welcomed the positive steps taken by Ukraine to meet its commitments under the Geneva accord of April 17 by Ukraine, Russia, the European Union, and the United States. These actions include working towards constitutional reform and decentralization, proposing an amnesty law for those who will peacefully leave the buildings they have seized in eastern Ukraine, and supporting the work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We also note that the government of Ukraine has acted with restraint in dealing with the armed bands illegally occupying government buildings and forming illegal checkpoints.

In contrast, Russia has taken no concrete actions in support of the Geneva accord. It has not publicly supported the accord, nor condemned the acts of pro-separatists seeking to destabilize Ukraine, nor called on armed militants to leave peacefully the government buildings they've occupied and put down their arms. Instead, it has continued to escalate tensions by increasingly concerning rhetoric and ongoing threatening military manoeuvres on Ukraine's border.

We reiterate our strong condemnation of Russia's illegal attempt to annex Crimea and Sevastopol, which we do not recognize. We will now follow through on the full legal and practical consequences of this illegal annexation, including but not limited to the economic, trade and financial areas.

We have now agreed that we will move swiftly to impose additional sanctions on Russia. Given the urgency of securing the opportunity for a successful and peaceful democratic vote next month in Ukraine's presidential elections, we have committed to act urgently to intensify targeted sanctions and measures to increase the costs of Russia's actions.

Russia's actions in Ukraine and the response from the international community already have imposed significant costs on its economy. While we continue to prepare to move to broader, coordinated sanctions, including sectoral measures should circumstances warrant, as we committed to in The Hague on March 24, we underscore that the door remains open to a diplomatic resolution of this crisis, on the basis of the Geneva accord. We urge Russia to join us in committing to that path

Source: Gov.uk, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/g7-leaders-statement-on-ukraine-april-2014>

EC Delegation Visit to Naftogaz: Meeting Remarks

May 07, 2014

The European Commission delegation represented by Mr. Borchardt, Director for energy markets at the European Commission, and Ms. Pinho, Member of Cabinet of Commissioner Oettinger, held a meeting in Kyiv with Naftogaz management on April 26 to discuss the company's reform plan, efforts to fully integrate with the European energy market and the pressing need to start accumulation of gas reserves in Ukrainian underground storage facilities to safeguard stable gas supplies in both Ukraine and the EU next winter. The key meeting remarks are outlined below.

Ukraine's energy market can attract significant investment if reforms are made – Borchardt

Mr. Borchardt stated that if Ukraine implements key reforms to bring its energy market up to EU standards, the industry will become

highly attractive for investment as Ukraine has abundant undeveloped resources of conventional gas, in addition to its considerable shale gas potential.

Read more at: Naftogaz of Ukraine, <http://www.naftogaz.com/www/3/nakweben.nsf/0/870455F20B1D7EFDC2257CD1004D5CF8?OpenDocument&year=2014&month=05&nt=News&>

Situation on border with Russia remains difficult – Tymchuk

May 10, 2014

According to the Information Support group, the situation remains difficult on the border of Ukraine with Russia.

Head of the Center of Military and Political Studies and coordinator of the Information Support group Dmytro Tymchuk has said.

"For effective countering of infiltration of Russian diversionists' groups and weapons to the territory of Ukraine, additional forces and means are badly needed, as well as effective support on the part of other power ministries and departments of Ukraine," he wrote on Facebook.

According to Tymchuk, the situation is especially weakened on the state border in Luhansk and Donetsk regions.

Source: UkrInform,

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/situation_on_border_with_russia_remains_difficult_tymchuk_321216

Council broadens EU sanctions regarding the situation in Ukraine

May 12, 2014

In the light of the recent developments in Ukraine and in the absence of any steps towards de-escalation, the Council has today widened the scope of EU restrictive measures regarding the situation in Ukraine.

The Council broadened the legal basis for EU restrictive measures in respect of actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. It added the possibility to target persons associated with actions and policies undermining stability or security in Ukraine as well as with obstructing the work of international organisations in the country, and entities linked to such persons.

The Council also provided a legal basis for asset freezes on entities in Crimea and Sevasto-

pol which have been confiscated, or entities which have benefited from such confiscation.

The Council also decided to add 13 persons to the list of those subject to a travel ban and a freeze of their assets within the EU. This brings the total number of persons subject to sanctions in connection with the crisis in Ukraine to 61.

See more at: Council of the European Union, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/142559.pdf

Ukraine ready to resume water supply to Crimea on its own terms

May 14, 2014

Ukraine is ready to resume water supply to Crimea through the North-Crimean canal on certain terms, the Chairman of Crimea's Committee for Water Resources Development and Irrigated Farming, Igor Vail, told ITAR-TASS.

He said the Ukrainian side had sent a letter with a proposal to resume the supplies of freshwater from the River Dnieper to Crimea through the canal upon repayment of a debt of around \$146,500, coordination of the price and return of the vehicles used in the Crimean system of water development.

"We have an official letter and no other conditions have been specified so far," Vail said

April 26, 2014, Ukraine shut the North-Crimean canal, by which Crimea receives 85% of the freshwater it needs.

May 6, Crimea's First Deputy Prime Minister Rustam Temirgaliyev said the region is fully independent from the supplies of Ukrainian freshwater today.

He said efforts were being made along several directions to ensure this independence, including the diverting of rivers and the Tagansky freshwater reservoir to the North-Crimean canal.

Source: ITAR-TASS, <http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/731557>

Crimean port waters 'unsafe for navigation', Ukraine warns marine agency

May 21, 2014

Ukrainian port authorities have warned the International Maritime Organization (IMO) that they cannot guarantee navigation safety in waters around Crimean ports.

A «high level of risk» exists on approaches to and within seaport reaches around Crimea, officials have told the United Nations agency responsible for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution.

This could not ensure «a proper level of safe navigation and compliance with international commitments stemming from the necessity to preserve human life on the sea [and] search and rescue in the ports of Yevpatoria, Kerch, Sevastopol, Feodosia and Yalta,» Ukraine's port chiefs told the IMO.

Source: ITAR-TASS, <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/732467>

Ukraine elections: President Barroso called today Petro Poroshenko and Prime Minister Arseniy Yatseniuk

May 26, 2014

President Barroso spoke earlier today with Petro Poroshenko (whom he had previously met in Strasbourg on 12 March) on the phone to congratulate him on the results of the Presidential elections in Ukraine. He praised the high turnout and the fact that the elections took place largely in line with international standards. President Barroso reiterated the EU's commitment to support Ukraine and recalled the concrete action taken so far. Furthermore, he underlined the importance of constitutional reform and welcomed Petro Poroshenko's willingness to engage in dialogue with Russia. The President expressed his wish that the dynamics created by the election can reunite all Ukrainians and constitute a new start for Ukraine.

The President also called Prime Minister Yatseniuk to congratulate him on the orderly and successful conduct of the elections in challenging circumstances. He reiterated the Commission's readiness to assist the Ukrainian authorities in implementing the European agenda for reforms. He also recalled the Commission's commitment to work with both Ukraine and Russia to achieve a solution on the issue of supply and transit of gas.

Source: European Commission, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-380_en.htm

Heads of countries and Govts of EU look forward to working closely with new President of Ukraine—statement

May 28, 2014

Heads of the countries and governments of the European Union call on all parties to accept the outcome of the elections, and look forward to working closely with new President of Ukraine.

It is said in the joint statement of the European leaders, released by the Council of the EU today.

"We welcome the holding of the elections as an expression of the will of the Ukrainian people. The presidential election was characterised by high turnout and a clear resolve by the authorities to hold what was a genuine election largely in line with international commitments and respecting fundamental freedoms, despite the hostile security environment in two eastern regions of the country. We call on all parties to accept the outcome of the elections and we look forward to working closely with the new President", - it is said in the statement.

The European leaders also note: "We stand firm in upholding Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and we strongly condemn the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation and will not recognise it. We reaffirm the European Union's commitment to the Geneva Joint Statement of 17 April and commend the role of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in assisting in its implementation, as well as the efforts undertaken so far by the Ukrainian authorities to implement it".

"In the light of the latest developments, we reiterate our call on the Russian Federation to take actions to fully implement the Geneva joint statement. We also fully support the complementary efforts of the OSCE and its Chairman in Office, while ensuring Ukrainian ownership", - it is said in the statement.

Source: Unian, <http://www.unian.info/politics/922808-heads-of-countries-and-govts-of-eu-look-forward-to-working-closely-with-new-president-of-ukrainestatement.html>

Naftogaz of Ukraine paid off Gazprom for total volume of natural gas, supplied at the price, which is not disputed

May 30, 2014

National Joint Stock Company «Naftogaz of Ukraine» transferred Gazprom 786.3 mln USD, a payment for natural gas, imported in

February and March 2014 at the price 268.5 USD/1000 cm, which is not disputed.

Source: Naftogaz of Ukraine,

<http://www.naftogaz.com/www/3/nakweben.nsf/0/D866F8F9D1C4F4E5C2257CE800572359?OpenDocument&year=2014&month=05&nt=News&>

&"Naftogaz of Ukraine" sent "Gazprom" draft supplementary agreement, designed to settle all disputes regarding Russian gas import

June 01, 2014

Naftogaz of Ukraine has sent draft supplementary agreement to the Contract dated January 19, 2009 on purchase-sale of natural gas for the period of 2009-2019, signed by Naftogaz of Ukraine and Gazprom.

The supplementary agreement amends the Contract in terms of price, volumes and conditions of natural gas supplies.

The fourth round of trilateral negotiations, Ukraine–Russia–EU, on natural gas supplies from Russia to Ukraine, will take place on June 2, 2014. Naftogaz of Ukraine intends to continue negotiations with Gazprom in a constructive way.

Reference: on May 30, 2014 Naftogaz transferred Gazprom 786.3 mln USD, for the natural gas imported in February and March 2014. So, the Company conducted the full payments for the natural gas imported from Russia in 1Q 2014 at the price 268.5 USD/1000 cm, which is not disputed.

Source: Naftogaz,

<http://www.naftogaz.com/www/3/nakweben.nsf/0/4669838548D0FDA1C2257CEC004B733C?OpenDocument&year=2014&month=06&nt=News&>

Berlin hosts talks with Naftogaz of Ukraine
June 04, 2014

Berlin hosted today a working meeting between Alexey Miller, Chairman of the Gazprom Management Committee and Andrey Kobolev, CEO of Naftogaz of Ukraine.

The meeting addressed a wide range of issues regarding the bilateral cooperation in the gas sector.

On request of the Ukrainian party, the debt settlement deadline was postponed until June 10, due to June 9 being a holiday in Ukraine.

See more at: Gazprom, <http://www.gazprom.com/press/news/2014/june/article192797/>

The Head of State: Ukraine is ready to sign the Association Agreement including Free Trade Area with the EU

June 07, 2014

President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko states that Ukraine is ready to sign the Association Agreement including Free Trade Area with the EU and hope to do so as soon as possible.

"You know my declaration that Ukraine is ready to sign from the first moment in my office of the President of Ukraine", - he said during the meeting with President of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaite.

The Head of State added that after the first, political part, Ukraine is ready to sign the second –economic one. "Today it depends only from the EU" – he said expressing hopes that it would take place as soon as possible.

The President is sure that following complex reforms, realization of all necessary steps and support of the Ukraine by European partners Ukraine will become a member of the EU. "I am sure that the support demonstrated by Lithuania, the Baltic countries, the Scandinavian countries, Poland, will allow us to hope for the prospective of the membership in the EU and the further future", - said Petro Poroshenko expressing gratefulness to Lithuania for the support of Ukraine.

Read more at: Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine, official website, <http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/30497.html>

Merkel advises Ukraine to be friends with Putin - for good relations with Europe

June 12, 2014

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has said that Ukraine should not expect a good relationship with the European Union without maintaining friendship with Russia.

She said this at a traditional reception for diplomats, Deutsche Welle reported.

Merkel said that Europe stands for dialogue with Russia. She said the Eastern Partnership program with such countries as Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia was clearly not directed against Russia. She said that building good relations with the EU implies good relations with Russia.

She also said that ceasefire was needed for reforms in Ukraine. Only after that the new Ukrainian president will be able to focus on the necessary reforms, Merkel said.

Source: UkrInform, http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/merkel_advises_ukraine_to_be_friends_with_putin_for_good_relations_with_europe_322646

SBU creates life corridor for leaving for civilians from areas of ATO

June 12, 2014

Antiterrorist Center of the SBU creates a life corridor for leaving for civilians in the area of antiterrorist operation in Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts.

The press center of the SBU disclosed to UNIAN that in order to ensure the necessary conditions for citizens, who leave the area of anti-terrorist operation, the head of the ATO was given a number of instructions.

In particular, to determine roadblocks, through which will be the maximum safe movement of civilians from the area of the ATO will be carried out.

Source: Unian, <http://www.unian.info/politics/928057-sbu-creates-life-corridor-for-leaving-for-civilians-from-areas-of-ato.htm>
<http://www.unian.info/politics/928057-sbu-creates-life-corridor-for-leaving-for-civilians-from-areas-of-ato.html>

NATO Secretary General concerned about reports of escalation of the crisis in Eastern Ukraine

June 13, 2014

I am concerned about reports that pro-Russian armed gangs are acquiring heavy weapons from Russia, including Russian tanks. We have seen reports that Russian tanks and other armoured vehicles may have crossed the border into eastern Ukraine. If these reports are confirmed, this would mark a serious escalation of the crisis in eastern Ukraine.

I continue to urge Russia to complete the withdrawal of its military forces on the border with Ukraine, to stop the flow of weapons and fighters across the border, and to exercise its influence among armed separatists to lay down their weapons and renounce violence. We call on the Russian Federation to meet its Geneva commitments and cooperate with the govern-

ment of Ukraine as it implements its plans for promoting peace, unity and reform.

Source: Nato.int, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_111052.htm

EU releases €250 million of grants to support Ukraine

June 13, 2014

The European Commission has made the first disbursement of €250 million to Ukraine to support institutions and reforms in the country. This payment is part of the "State Building Contract" programme signed on 13 May after the joint meeting between the European Commission and the Ukrainian government in Brussels.

"Today's disbursement is one of many steps we are currently making to help the government of Ukraine in addressing the short-term needs as well as preparing for the implementation of the Association Agreement. We stand by Ukraine and we are proving it with concrete actions. There is still more to come in terms of financial and other assistance," Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle said.

The State Building Contract is designed to help Ukraine in the process of transformation and with related reforms. It includes concrete steps to promote more transparency, better governance, support the fight against corruption and help the government to respond to citizens' needs.

It is a major deliverable of the €11 billion support package to Ukraine, which the European Commission announced on 5 March.

See more at: UkrInform,

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/gaz-prom_imposes_advance_payment_requirement_for_gas_supplies_to_ukraine_322766

Over 60% of Ukrainians want accession to EU

June 18, 2014

If a referendum on Ukraine's accession to the EU were held in Ukraine in June 2014, most Ukrainians would vote for this - 61.5%.

These are the results of a survey conducted by the Gorshenin Institute and presented on Tuesday at the 4th National Expert Forum "From Revolution to a New Country," a Ukrainian correspondent reported.

"If the referendum were held in May 2013, the percentage of supporters of European choice would be 45% of respondents. Now, in June 2014, this is already 61.5%," the moderator of the forum, Sonia Koshkina, said, while presenting the results of the survey.

According to the survey, in May this year, the number of supporters of Ukraine's accession to NATO was also higher than in previous years - 47.3% of respondents.

In addition, most Ukrainians (64.2%) believe that Russia arms separatists in eastern Ukraine and directly controls their actions. Some 55.1% of respondents think that Russia will try to continue aggression against Ukraine, and 76.7% see Russia's actions as a threat to Ukraine's future.

Most respondents (78.4%) also support the Ukrainian authorities in the fighting in eastern Ukraine. However, views on ways to resolve the crisis were divided: 42.1% stress the need to use force, while 47.2% call for the settlement of the crisis through talks.

According to the Gorshenin Institute, the survey was conducted throughout Ukraine from June 1 to June 14. A total of 2,000 people were interviewed.

Source: UkrInform, http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/over_60_of_ukrainians_want_accession_to_eu_322846

Poroshenko intends to personally sign economic part of association agreement with EU

June 18, 2014

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said he intends to personally sign the economic part of the association agreement with the European Union in Brussels on June 27.

"Pavlo Anatoliyovych [Klimkin] is now foreign minister. I will sign the economic part of the agreement on June 27 and the procedure for signing the association agreement will be completed," Poroshenko said while introducing Ukraine's new Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin in Kyiv on Thursday.

Poroshenko recalled that Klimkin was actively involved in the work on this important document.

After the document is signed, serious work will need to be done on its implementation, Poroshenko said.

"The level of tasks and the level of intensive work will be very high, and I have high hopes for you," Poroshenko told Klimkin.

Poroshenko also said he expects the new foreign minister to reform the Foreign Ministry and increase its effectiveness.

"I am confident that the team that now exists in the ministry is capable of finding appropriate answers to these challenges," the president said.

Source: Interfax.ua, <http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/economic/210145.html>

Kiev's Unilateral Border Demarcation Not Legally Binding – Russian Foreign Ministry
June 19, 2014

Kiev's unilateral demarcation of the Russian-Ukrainian border can never be legally binding, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Alexander Lukashevich said Thursday.

"We still expect the Ukrainian authorities to reject the idea of taking practical measures to unilaterally demarcate the border in breach of existing international obligations," the spokesman said.

See more at: RIA Novosti, <http://en.ria.ru/world/20140619/190618158/Kievs-Unilateral-Border-Demarcation-Not-Legally-Binding--Russian.html>

Merkel welcomes direct contacts between Russia, Ukraine leaders
June 20, 2014

German Chancellor Angela Merkel welcomes direct contacts between the Russian and Ukrainian presidents, Vladimir Putin and Petro Poroshenko, on the situation in eastern Ukraine's embattled Luhansk and Donetsk regions, German government spokesman Steffen Seibert said Thursday.

Seibert's statement came after phone talks that Merkel held with Poroshenko and French President Francois Hollande.

"Francois Hollande and Angela Merkel urged the Russian president to make all required efforts to render influence on armed groups and terminate the standoff as soon as possible," the French presidential administration said in a communique.

"Otherwise, the international community may adopt new measures that will affect relations with Russia," it said, adding that Paris and

Berlin called on Moscow "to resume talks on Russian gas supplies to Ukraine".

The chancellor said she is convinced that "the so much needed deescalation (in Ukraine's south-east) may only be achieved through joint efforts," according to Seibert. Merkel said Russia should "use its influence" on federalization supporters to push for termination of violence in the neighboring country's troubled east.

Merkel and Poroshenko agreed that the Russian Federation needs to "effectively control the border with Ukraine," Seibert said.

Source: ITAR-TASS, <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/736931>

JOINT DECLARATION BY THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF UKRAINE, RUSSIA, FRANCE AND GERMANY

July 02, 2014

The Foreign Ministers of Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine strongly reconfirm their commitment to sustainable peace and stability in Ukraine. In this context they stress the necessity of a sustainable ceasefire, to be agreed upon swiftly and to be observed by all concerned, thus putting an end to violence in Eastern Ukraine.

Ministers urge that the Contact Group should resume no later than July 5th with the goal of reaching an unconditional and mutually agreed sustainable cease-fire. This ceasefire should be monitored by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine in conformity with its mandate. In that respect, Ministers agree to take all necessary measures and use their influence on the concerned parties with a view to achieving this goal. Ministers stress the importance of a swift release of all hostages.

Ministers welcome Russia's readiness to grant Ukrainian border guards access to Russian territory in order to participate in the control of border crossings at the checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk while the mutually agreed cease-fire is in place. This shall be done in close collaboration between Russian and Ukrainian border authorities and pending the return of the Ukrainian checkpoints Izvarino and Krasnopartizansk to Ukrainian government control.

Ministers invite the OSCE to take all necessary steps to deploy OSCE-observers in response to the Russian invitation at the Russi-

an checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk while the mutually agreed cease-fire is in place. All sides must contribute to a secure environment.

Ministers stress that this would contribute to an effective control of the Russian-Ukrainian border and called for regular and expeditious exchange of relevant information between Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE.

Ministers emphasize the need to ensure safety and security of journalists working in the area of violence.

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation,

http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/2FD69F0269F1E51B44257D0900659A61

Romanian Senate ratifies EU Association Agreements for Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine

July 07, 2014

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs hails the Romanian Senate's unanimous vote as a decision-making Chamber on July 3rd, 2014, to approve in extra-ordinary session the Laws to ratify the Association Agreements between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine.

This vote, which concludes the ratification procedure in the Romanian Parliament of the three Agreements, proves Romania's sound, constant trans-party commitment to support those three partner countries in their effort to ultimately join the EU and to their legitimate aspirations to become fully integrated.

The Romanian Parliament thus becomes the first EU Parliament to complete the procedure to ratify the three Association Agreements.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expresses hope that the Association Agreements between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine will be ratified quickly by the other EU Member States as well.

Source: Romania Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mae.ro/en/node/27705>

Lithuania ratifies EU association agreement with Ukraine

July 08, 2014

The Lithuanian parliament at its meeting on Tuesday, July 8 ratified the association agreements between Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and the European Union.

"Strong support and encouragement for European path - Lithuania's government ratified EU association agreement with Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova" The Lithuanian Foreign Ministry wrote this on its Twitter page.

On June 27, the EU and Ukraine completed the signing of the Association Agreement, including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. On the same day Moldova and Georgia signed a similar agreement with the European Union, Ukrinform reports.

To ratify the agreement, the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry is preparing a package of documents for submission to the President. According to recent reports, it is being agreed in ministries and agencies.

The first EU country to ratify the Association Agreement between the EU and these three countries became Romania. The ratification took place on July 2. The same day, Moldova ratified its agreement with the EU.

Source: The Baltic Times, <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/35113/#.U8O-iQPmSxic>

U.S. Officials Urge Ukraine to Reform Gas Markets to Cut Reliance on Russia

July 09, 2014

Ukraine must reform its historically inefficient and corrupt natural gas markets to guard against Russian aggression and supply controls, U.S. State Department officials have told lawmakers.

After invading and annexing Crimea this year, Russia cut off natural gas supplies to Ukraine last month in a dispute over unpaid bills. Escalation of the nearly decade-long argument between Moscow and Ukraine over gas imports has raised concerns about a disruption of supplies to the rest of Europe.

Ukraine has enough gas for now, but the winter heating season looms. The U.S. is trying to make sure Ukraine, Bulgaria and other Eastern European countries are better able to integrate into the EU's energy market of 400 million customers to get reliable supplies from Russia and other countries.

"This is an opportunity, it is a moment in time for Ukraine to walk away from its past," Amos Hochstein, deputy assistant secretary for energy diplomacy with the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Energy Resources,

told lawmakers on a Senate foreign relations subcommittee.

Read more at: The Moscow Times, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/us-officials-urge-ukraine-to-reform-gas-markets-to-cut-reliance-on-russia/503180.html>

EU agrees to add 11 names to Ukraine sanctions list

July 10, 2014

The European Union agreed to add 11 new names on Wednesday to the list of persons targeted with asset freezes and travel bans over the Ukraine crisis and the sanctions are likely to take effect on Saturday, an EU diplomat said on Wednesday (9 July).

“The list consists mainly of Ukrainian separatists; there may be one or two Russians there as well,” the diplomat said after a meeting of EU ambassadors that addressed the issue.

The names will be published in the official journal of the European Union in the coming days.

So far, the EU has imposed limited measures, targeting 61 people in Russia and Ukraine with asset freezes and travel bans, as well as two energy companies in the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea, seized and annexed by Moscow earlier this year.

Read more at: EurActiv.com, <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/europes-east/eu-agrees-add-11-names-ukraine-sanctions-list-303392>

Merkel and Hollande Demand Putin to Put Pressure on Separatists in Ukraine

July 10, 2014

French President Francois Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel called on Russian President Vladimir Putin to influence the separatists to hold efficient negotiations.

The telephone conversation of the world leaders was held on Thursday morning, the Elysee Palace official website states, Ukrainska Pravda reports.

Hollande and Merkel once again stressed on the need to quickly achieve a political solution, the parameters of which are known: a bilateral cease-fire; development of a mechanism to monitor the border in cooperation with the OSCE, the release of all hostages.

They asked the President of the Russian Federation to apply all the necessary pressure

on the separatists to make them hold efficient negotiations and make the necessary specific steps to ensure control of the Russian-Ukrainian border.

Source: Censor.net, <http://en.censor.net.ua/n293306>

Russia warns Ukraine after shell crosses border by Anton Zverev and Katya Golubkova

July 13, 2014

Russia threatened Ukraine on Sunday with «irreversible consequences» after a Russian man was killed by a shell fired across the border, while Kiev said Ukrainian warplanes struck again at separatist positions in the east of the country, inflicting big losses.

Although both sides have reported cross-border shootings in the past, it appears to be the first time Moscow has reported fatalities on its side of the border in the three-month conflict which has killed hundreds of people in Ukraine.

Kiev called the accusation its forces had fired across the border «total nonsense» and suggested the attack could have been the work of rebels trying to provoke Moscow to intervene on their behalf. The rebels denied they were responsible.

For more details: Reuters, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/13/us-ukraine-crisis-idUSKBN0FI09I20140713>

Latvia ratifies EU-Ukraine Association Agreement

July 14, 2014

The Latvian parliament has ratified the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkevics has reported on Twitter.

“The Latvian parliament has unanimously ratified the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement as a sign of solidarity with the Ukrainian people,” he wrote.

Rinkevics added that the Saeima of Latvia had also unanimously ratified the EU-Georgia Association Agreement.

Read more at: UkrInform, http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/latvia_ratifies_eu_ukraine_association_agreement_323715

Hroisman: EU technical mission to assess Ukraine's demands for overcoming effects of military aggression

July 14, 2014

A technical mission of the European Union will assess the priority demands of Ukraine to overcome the effects of foreign military aggression, Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Regional Development, Construction and Housing and Communal Services Volodymyr Hroisman said on Channel 1+1.

"We have agreed that there will be a technical mission which will assess what today Ukraine needs first and foremost. Most important tasks that need to be addressed is the improvement of our eastern border - because once this boundary will be the boundary of the European Union, as well as issues of internally displaced persons, their accommodation and infrastructure development - perhaps the new one, and perhaps the development of what is today," Hroisman said.

Commenting on the results of a recent visit to Brussels, he noted that Ukraine itself should do a lot to become a European democratic country, including overcoming corruption, reinvigorating the economy, infrastructure issues. "And the fact that there is understanding from the civilized world, Europe, international finance institutions, I felt it during a trip to Brussels," the official emphasized.

Source:UkrInform,http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/hroisman_eu_technical_mission_to_assess_ukraines_demands_for_overcoming_effects_of_military_aggression_323711

Separatists claim to have shot down two Ukrainian planes near Russian border
July 17, 2014

Two Ukrainian Air Force aircraft were shot down in the east of the Donetsk region on Thursday evening, said Ihor Druz, an advisor to the defense minister of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DPR).

"The Antonov An-26 transport aircraft was shot down above the city. It fell near the Progress coal mine, near a waste pile. Residential buildings were not damaged. A group of militia scouts are working at the crash site," Druz told Interfax.

A Sukhoi Su-25 attack aircraft was shot down near the Russian border later, the defense minister's advisor said.

"It was hit from a portable anti-aircraft missile system. Efforts are under way to locate the crash site," Druz said.

Source: Interfax

Merkel: Russia partly responsible for Ukraine crash

July 18, 2014

German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Friday (18 July) said Russia must acknowledge its share of responsibility in the Ukraine plane disaster.

"It is important to have an international investigation as soon as possible. There are many indications that the plane was shot down, so we have to take things very seriously," Merkel said in Berlin during her traditional summer press conference.

A Malaysian Airlines passenger plane flying at high altitude from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur crashed on Ukrainian territory on Thursday, killing all 298 people onboard. According to leaked tapes and the US intelligence service, the plane was shot down by a Russian-made missile.

Merkel called on Russia to "acknowledge its responsibility" for what is happening in Ukraine, especially since it allowed weapons and tanks to cross the border into Ukrainian territories controlled by the pro-Russian separatists.

Read more at: EUObserver, <http://euobserver.com/foreign/125039>

EU Divisions on Russia Sanctions Fester After MH17 Downed

July 19, 2014

European Union divisions over tougher sanctions on Russia were laid bare by the shooting down of a passenger plane over rebel-held territory in eastern Ukraine.

As Germany sought an impartial probe of the downing of the Malaysian jet, Poland demanded a harder line on the Kremlin while Italy signaled no shift from its opposition to more biting sanctions. EU officials gave priority to enacting penalties that were sketched out at a summit this week before the crash.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel straddled the European divide, telling reporters in Berlin yesterday that the region's response so far is "adequate" and "it is especially Russia's responsibility for what is going on in Ukraine right now."

Read more at: Bloomberg, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-07-18/eu-divisions>

ons-over-russia-sanctions-fester-after-downing-of-plane.html

Ukraine votes to call up more military reserves to protect border

July 22, 2014

Ukraine's parliament approved a presidential decree on Tuesday to call up more military reserves and men under 50 to fight rebels in eastern Ukraine and defend the border against a concentration of troops in Russia.

Some 45 days after the latest call-up of additional reserves, which has now expired, Kiev repeated the decree to "declare and conduct partial mobilisation" to ensure the ranks of what Ukraine calls its "anti-terrorist operation" are filled.

After the vote, brief scuffles broke out between nationalist politicians and members of the party that was led by the former president, Viktor Yanukovich, who was overthrown in February.

Read more at: Reuters, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/22/ukraine-crisis-mobilisation-idUSL6N0PX1Y420140722?irpc=932>

ICAO accident team begins Ukraine mission

July 22, 2014

The ICAO experts are in the State to provide guidance on relevant aspects of the Convention on International Civil Aviation and Annex 13 to the Convention (Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation) which apply under these circumstances, to assist with fact finding, and to ensure that all evidence is thoroughly considered as the investigation seeks to determine how the aircraft and its 298 passengers and crew were tragically lost late last week.

"ICAO's accident investigation experts are in the Ukraine to respond to a call for assistance from the State's National Bureau of Incidents and Accidents Investigation of Civil Aircraft," said ICAO Council President, Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu. "Their work relates to Annex 13 investigations, the objective of which is to determine the causes of an accident and to make recommendations that will help prevent future accidents. This is a painstaking process and the collaboration of all concerned with the international team of investigators, notably where access to all evidence and data is concerned, will be greatly appreciated."

IATA's director general Tony Tyler called the downing of MH17 an outrage and an attack against the air transport system.

"No effort should be spared in ensuring that this outrage is not repeated," the airline industry chief said, adding that governments across the world now need to review how airspace risk assessments are made.

Source: AirTrafficManagement.net, <http://www.airtrafficmanagement.net/2014/07/icao-accident-team-begins-ukraine-mission/>

Ukrainian prime minister announces resignation

July 24, 2014

Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk announced his resignation Thursday in an address before parliament after the tenuous coalition that kept him in power finally splintered.

"I am announcing my resignation in connection with the collapse of the coalition and the blocking of government initiatives," Yatsenyuk said.

Parliament has struggled to approve budget laws, part of a legislative logjam that Yatsenyuk said jeopardized military funding in the war-torn nation of 45 million people.

Yatsenyuk, 40, came to power in February after a revolution that forced from power pro-Russian president Viktor Yanukovych, who drew ire for efforts to slow assimilation with the Europe Union. But in recent days the nationalist Svoboda party and the UDAR movement led by famed former boxer Vladimir Klitschko split from the coalition that helped make Yatsenyuk prime minister.

Read more at: USA Today,

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2014/07/24/ukraine-prime-minister-resign/13091533/>

EU and US warn Russia against 'humanitarian' invasion of Ukraine

August 11, 2014

EU and US leaders have warned Russia that more sanctions will follow if it "invades" Ukraine in the name of "humanitarian" aid.

US president Barack Obama issued the threat on Saturday (9 August) following phone calls with German chancellor Angela Merkel and UK Prime Minister David Cameron.

His office said in a statement on the call with Merkel: "The two leaders agreed that any Russian intervention in Ukraine, even under purported 'humanitarian' auspices, without the formal, express consent and authorisation of the government of Ukraine is unacceptable, violates international law, and will provoke additional consequences".

Merkel in her own communique noted that any Russian intervention must have Ukraine's consent.

See more at: EUObserver, <http://euobserver.com/foreign/125223>

EU increases humanitarian assistance for Ukrainian conflict-affected population
August 12, 2014

The European Commission is giving additional funding of €2.5 million to assist the most vulnerable people affected by the continuing fighting in Eastern Ukraine. This humanitarian aid is geared towards helping to register and relocate internally displaced people (IDPs), provide shelter, food, water, healthcare, psycho-social assistance and protection in preparation for the coming winter.

"We are moving to help some of the most vulnerable victims of this conflict. These civilians, many of them women and children, have been forced to flee their homes at a short notice, leaving behind even the most necessary belongings. They need our help to live through the months ahead - especially with winter looming. Some of them are also now caught in crossfires without possibility to escape," said EU Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva, responsible for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection.

"I call on all sides of this conflict to facilitate the work of humanitarian organisations and allow for the provision of assistance to the civilian population in need, irrespective of who and where they are," the Commissioner added.

See more at: Europa.eu, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-924_en.htm

Ukraine: head of EU mission for civilian security reform arrives in Kyiv
August 12, 2014

"I strongly believe that EUAM-Ukraine's support and advice to the security sector reform framework in Ukraine, focusing on im-

provements in governance and effective management of efficient and fair law enforcement under democratic and legitimate control, will help secure peace and stability as well as economic prosperity for the country. In this very ambitious undertaking the fight against corruption is of particular relevance," said Mizsei upon his arrival in Kyiv. EUAM Ukraine is an unarmed, non-executive civilian mission under the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy, a press release issued on Friday said. EU advisers will initially focus on supporting the elaboration of revised security strategies and the rapid implementation of reforms, in coordination and coherence with other EU efforts, as well as with the OSCE and other international partners.

Source: ENPI-Info, http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id=38171&id_type=1&lang_id=450

Over UAH 2 billion needed to repair roads and bridges in Donbas
August 21, 2014

More than UAH 2.15 billion is needed to restore the infrastructure, damaged or destroyed during fighting in eastern Ukraine.

The preliminary cost of repairs in Donetsk region will be UAH 735.1 million and in Luhansk region - UAH 1.423 billion, the Ukravtodor (State Agency of Motor Roads) press service informs.

"This is the reference sum, as full survey is so far conducted only in areas, liberated from the terrorists. Meanwhile, damage was not yet established in places, where military operations are still conducted, because of the threat to lives of road builders," Ukravtodor head Serhiy Pidhainy said.

According to him, currently, almost 962 kilometers of public roads experienced the devastation of varying difficulty, of which about 250.5 km - in Donetsk region and over 711.5 km - in Luhansk region and 20 bridges and overpasses of total length of 2,101 running meters.

Source: Ukrinform, http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/over_uah_2_billion_needed_to_repair_roads_and_bridges_in_donbas_325544

Merkel: Ukraine can go to Eurasian Union
August 25, 2014

Germany's Angela Merkel has said Ukrai-

ne is free to “go to” Russia’s “Eurasian Union”, amid signs of a new willingness to make peace with Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

Speaking to German public broadcaster ARD on Sunday (24 August), the German chancellor said her visit to Kiev on Saturday was designed to prepare for peace talks between Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko and Putin in Minsk on Tuesday, but warned the public not to expect a “breakthrough”.

She mentioned Ukrainian “decentralisation”, a deal on gas prices, and Ukraine’s “trade relations” with Russia as elements that could bring about an accord.

“And if Ukraine says we are going to the Eurasian Union now, the European Union would never make a big conflict out of it, but would insist on a voluntary decision,” Merkel added.

See more at: EUObserver, <http://euobserver.com/foreign/125331>

Poroshenko dissolves Verkhovna Rada, early elections to be held on October 26
August 26, 2014

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has terminated the powers of the Verkhovna Rada of the seventh convocation, reads a statement posted on the Twitter page of the head of state.

“Dear compatriots, I have decided to terminate the powers of the Verkhovna Rada of the seventh convocation. The election of the new parliament will be held on October 26, 2014. I have made this decision in strict accordance with Article 90 of the Constitution of Ukraine. I urge everyone to come to the polls and complete the process of the formation of the new government, which was launched in June. Glory to Ukraine!” reads the statement.

Source: UkrInform,

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/poroshenko_dissolves_verkhovna_rada_early_elections_to_be_held_on_october_26_325629

Poroshenko to seek ceasefire plan after ‘very tough’ talks with Putin

August 26, 2014

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko promised after late-night talks with Russia’s Vladimir Putin to work on an urgent ceasefire plan to defuse the separatist conflict in the east of his former Soviet republic.

The first negotiations between the two leaders since June were described by Putin as positive, but he said it was not for Russia to get into the details of truce terms between the Kiev government and two rebel eastern regions.

“We didn’t substantively discuss that, and we, Russia, can’t substantively discuss conditions of a ceasefire, of agreements between Kiev, Donetsk and Luhansk. That’s not our business, it’s up to Ukraine itself,” he told reporters early on Wednesday.

“We can only contribute to create a situation of trust for a possible, and in my view, extremely necessary, negotiation process.”

See more at: Reuters, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/26/us-ukraine-crisis-idUSKBN0GQ0RF20140826>

Captured Russian troops ‘in Ukraine by accident’
August 26, 2014

Ten Russian soldiers captured in eastern Ukraine crossed the border “by accident”, Russian military sources are quoted as saying.

Ukraine has released video interviews of some of the seized paratroopers.

The incident comes as the Ukrainian and Russian leaders have held their first-ever bilateral talks in Belarus.

More than 2,000 people have died in months of fighting between Ukrainian forces and separatists in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

See more at: BBC News, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28934213>

Russian NGO branded as ‘foreign agent’ after reporting on Russian military action in Ukraine

August 29, 2014

Russia’s official branding of a civil society organization as a “foreign agent”, an expression akin to “spying”, for speaking out on Ukraine is a sign of the country’s determination to suppress any information about its military activities there, Amnesty International said.

On 28 August, the Russian Ministry of Justice added the NGO “Soldiers’ Mothers of St. Petersburg” to its official list of “foreign agents” under the 2012 law.

The decision came after its leader, Ella Pol-yakova, spoke publicly about the alleged death of Russian soldiers fighting in Ukraine against the Ukrainian forces.

Her organization received a list of some 100 Russian soldiers allegedly killed in Ukraine and a further 300 wounded, and demanded investigation into these allegations. The Kremlin denies sending troops to Ukraine and any direct Russian involvement in what it insists is Ukraine's internal conflict.

"The timing of this decision indicates that the Kremlin is determined to muzzle its critics and keep a strong lid on any information which suggests that Russia plays a direct part in the conflict in Ukraine, although evidence to the contrary is mounting every day. The message is clear: if you dare to speak out, there will be serious reprisals," said Sergei Nikitin, Amnesty International's Moscow Office Director.

For more details visit: Amnesty International, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/russian-ngo-branded-foreign-agent-after-reporting-russian-military-action-ukraine-2014-08-29>

Ukraine president warns Europe nearing 'point of no return'

August 31, 2014

Poroshenko calls for strong response to 'military aggression' in his country, while Barroso laments 'serious' situation

The European Union has warned that the apparent incursion of Russian troops on Ukrainian soil pushes the conflict closer to a point of no return, with new economic sanctions being drawn up to make Moscow reconsider its position.

The Ukrainian president, Petro Poroshenko, who briefed a summit of the 28-nation EU's leaders in Brussels, said a strong response was needed to the "military aggression and terror" facing his country.

Read more at: The Guardian, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/30/ukraine-russia-crisis-barroso-warns-putin-point-no-return>

Ukraine crisis: New EU sanctions on Russia go into effect

September 12, 2014

New EU sanctions against Russia have gone into force, blocking loans for five big sta-

te banks and curbing EU business with oil and defence firms.

The aim is to keep pressure on Russia over its role in the Ukraine crisis. But the measures could be eased or lifted if a ceasefire in Ukraine holds.

Russia says it is preparing a response. One top Russian official said cars imported from the EU could be targeted.

Nato says Russia still has about 1,000 heavily armed troops in east Ukraine.

For more information visit: BBC News Europe, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29154488>

New EU support for the Civil Society in Ukraine

September 13, 2014

Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle and Prime Minister of Ukraine Arseniy Yatsenyuk signed a new programme to support civil society in Ukraine. The new programme, worth €10 million, is designed to enhance the role of civil society in promoting and monitoring democratic reforms and inclusive socio-economic development in Ukraine. "The Civil Society plays a key role in the reform process. This financing agreement will support it in monitoring the reforms and providing the feedback on them to the Government. The engagement of the Civil Society is essential if national reforms are to succeed," Commissioner Š.Füle said after the signature.

The new program provides direct funding to the Civil Society organizations to build up their capacity to analyze the reforms and is directly linked to the State Building Contract worth 355m euro signed in May. The Civil Society organizations will monitor the reforms agreed under that Contract, including fight against corruption, constitutional reform and reform of the judiciary. The action will be implemented through calls for proposals for civil society organisations. Training and advice will also be provided to support the establishment of a structured dialogue between the authorities and the civil society.

Source: Europa.eu, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-999_en.htm?locale=en

Russian Humanitarian Convoy Goes to Ukraine, Returns

September 14, 2014

A convoy of more than 200 white trucks crossed the Russian border to deliver humanitarian aid to a battered Ukrainian city on Saturday, a move made without Kiev's consent yet met with silence by Ukraine's top leaders.

«Early in the morning, we entered Ukraine to bring aid to Luhansk,» said Yuri Stepanov, a Russian who was overseeing the convoy. «We came in around 215 vehicles,» he added, as workers unloaded boxes into a local warehouse.

The much-needed aid arrived as fighting flared again between pro-Russian rebels and government forces, further imperiling an already fragile cease-fire in the region.

By Saturday evening all Russian trucks had returned back to Russia, Interfax reported.

In August, when Russia sent a first convoy of trucks over the border without waiting for Kiev's approval or oversight from the International Red Cross, Ukrainian officials quickly condemned what they called an invasion of Ukraine. On Saturday, no top Ukrainian leader mentioned Russia's latest delivery at all, reports The Moscow Times.

Source: The Moscow Times, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/article/507024.html>

United Russia wins 70 out of 75 seats in Crimean parliament — preliminary count
September 15, 2014

Candidates from the United Russia party have won more than 71% of votes in their support in Crimean constituencies and rose to top positions in all the 25 single-member constituencies in Crimea, Deputy chairman of the Russian Central Election Commission Leonid Ivlev said Monday, citing preliminary results of the election after 67% of ballot papers had been counted.

The United Russia party, which is in the lead with 71.06% of votes in its support, will have 70 out of 75 seats in the Crimean parliament. The LDPR party has gained 8.17% support in Crimea, while ten more parties which have been contesting seats in the Crimean parliament cannot pass the five-percent election hurdle.

The election to the Crimean parliament was first held under the Russian legislation on

September 14. A total of 803 candidates are contesting 75 seats in the Crimean legislature: 108 candidates were nominated from majority constituencies and the rest are running on tickets of 12 political parties.

Crimeans to be able to vote on three passports in elections on September 14.

According to preliminary results of the election to the Simferopol City Council, the United Russia is in the lead with 59.1% of votes in its support; LDPR follows behind (17.49%); Communist candidates have reported 6.46% support after 50% of ballot papers were counted. The rest of the contestants are trailing behind, showing support under three percent.

After 50% of ballot papers were counted in Simferopol, the United Russia might hope for 32 seats in the Simferopol City Council, said member of the Central Election Commission (CEC) Valery Kryukov, citing data released by the CEC information center. He did not rule out that the final result might seriously differ from the figures available at the moment.

Source: ITAR-TASS, <http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/749559>

NATO troops start exercise in west Ukraine, weapons deliveries, by Andrew Rettman
September 15, 2014

NATO countries have started an annual military exercise in west Ukraine, with Kiev saying some Nato states have also begun to ship weapons.

The exercise - "Rapid Trident" - began on Monday (15 September) in Yavoriv, near the Polish-Ukrainian border.

According to a Nato statement, the 11-day drill will practice "peacekeeping and stability operations", including "countering improvised explosive devices, convoy operations, and patrolling".

It includes 200 US soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade, based in Italy.

It also includes 1,100 troops from Bulgaria, Canada, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, and the UK and from former Soviet republics Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine itself.

Read more at: EUObserver, <http://euobserver.com/foreign/125614>

Joint Ministerial Statement on the Implementation of the EU-Ukraine AA/DCFTA

September 15, 2014

Friday's meeting has been a follow-up to the trilateral ministerial meeting on 11 July 2014 in Brussels and the meeting at the highest political level that took place in Minsk on 26 August 2014.

EU Trade Commissioner De Gucht, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Klimkin and Minister of Economic Development of the Russian Federation Ulyukayev agreed on the importance of promoting trade liberalisation in support of growth and greater prosperity, in line with their WTO obligations. They concurred on the necessity to ensure that the EU-Ukraine AA/DCFTA and the CIS FTA both contribute to a more integrated economic space in the region.

To be able to fully support the stabilisation of Ukraine, the Commission said is ready, in the event that Ukraine ratifies the Association Agreement with the EU, to propose additional flexibility. Such flexibility will consist in delaying until 31 December 2015 the provisional application of the DCFTA while continuing autonomous trade measures of the EU to the benefit of Ukraine during this period.

Parties will continue to consult on how to address concerns raised by Russia. The progress of these consultations will be reviewed at Ministerial level trilateral meetings.

The Ministers said that this ongoing process needs to be part and parcel of a comprehensive peace process in Ukraine, respecting the right of Ukraine to decide on its destiny as well as the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

On the basis of this understanding Russia and Ukraine confirm that they will continue to apply the CIS-FTA preferential regime.

On Friday, President of the European Commission, Manuel Barroso, met with the President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko. President Barroso visited Kiev, saying that this visit is "a clear symbol of Europe's support to Ukraine's sovereignty and unity."

Source: New Europe Online, <http://www.neurope.eu/article/joint-ministerial-statement-implementation-eu-ukraine-aadcfta>

European Parliament ratifies EU-Ukraine Association Agreement

September 16, 2014

The European Parliament gave its consent to the EU-Ukraine Association agreement, which includes a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA), on Tuesday in Strasbourg. At the same time, the Agreement was also ratified by the Ukrainian Parliament in Kiev. The deal will establish a deep political association and economic integration between the EU and Ukraine and provide for mutual free market access.

MEPs backed the agreement with 535 votes in favour, 127 against and 35 abstentions.

"Through this ratification, Ukraine's European choice will be institutionalized and will bind the futures of the EU and Ukraine together. Ukrainian society has paid the highest price for its European aspirations, grieving the deaths of numerous people, suffering territorial occupation by Russia and experiencing deteriorating economic conditions. With this ratification, the EU gives Ukraine the strongest sign of support, despite the regrettable proposal to delay implementation of the agreement" said rapporteur Jacek Saryusz-Wolski (EPP, PL) before the vote.

He added that the agreement was "not a definitive goal of EU-Ukraine relations" and stressed that the common future of the EU and Ukraine must now be protected from Russian aggression by introducing "increasingly heavy sanctions until the cost for Russia will be too high to sustain its policy".

"This is an historic moment", said EP President Martin Schulz in his address to MPs in the Strasbourg and Kiev chambers via a video link. "The two parliaments freely determined to vote today at the same time on this agreement. This is free democracy, the opposite of directed democracy. The European Parliament has always defended the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and will continue to do so", he added.

Just before the Ukraine Parliament ratified the deal, President Poroshenko said "The Ukrainians have reversed the express-train going East, and I hope that also today's vote will confirm that. Our synchronised ratifications will be a feast, not just for Ukraine but also for Europe because without Ukraine there is no united Europe. I would like to thank Europe for the support it has given us in these

difficult times. At the same time I would like to address our government - the EU only asks for one thing in return from us - the reforms. I urge you not to delay them in any way”.

What does the deal involve?

The deal provides both for a political association and for free trade. The political provisions take Ukraine one step closer to the EU, by opening new channels for political dialogue and establishing ground rules for cooperation in areas such as energy, transport, and education. It requires Ukraine to implement reforms and respect democratic principles, human rights and the rule of law.

Among other rules, the deal provides for greater movement of workers, sets targets for establishing a visa-free travel regime and aligning the two sides' regulatory systems by laying down detailed timetables for Ukraine to transpose parts of the EU *acquis* legislation into its national laws and put them into effect.

Read more at: European Parliament News, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20140915IPR62504/html/European-Parliament-ratifies-EU-Ukraine-Association-Agreement>

Ukraine, EU ratify Association Agreement
September 16, 2014

The Verkhovna Rada and the European Parliament have ratified the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU.

The simultaneous ratification process took place through a videoconference between Kyiv and Strasbourg, Ukrinform reports.

In the European Parliament a respective legislative resolution was supported by 535 deputies.

In the Verkhovna Rada a draft law on ratification of the Association Agreement was backed by 355 MPs.

Following ratification by the legislative bodies of Ukraine and the EU, the provisional application of certain provisions of the political, institutional and sectoral parts of the document will begin from November 1, 2014.

The agreement will come into force in full after its ratification by all 28 member states of the EU.

The tentative deadline for the implementation of the Association Agreement is ten years.

Ukraine and the EU signed the Association Agreement in two stages: the political part on March 21, 2014 and the economic chapter on June 27, 2014.

Source: UkrInform, http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/ukraine_eu_ratify_association_agreement_326120

Tbilisi Rejects Crimea Elections
September 16, 2016

Georgia “condemns annexation of Autonomous Republic of Crimea” and “does not recognize so called ‘local elections’ organized in Crimea and Sevastopol” on September 14, the Georgian Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Tuesday.

It said that these elections were held in “gross violation of international norms and Ukrainian legislation.”

“Georgia reiterates its clear support to the Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity in its internationally recognized borders,” the Georgian Foreign Ministry said.

Source: Civil Georgia, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27669>

Signing of Association Agreement between Ukraine and EU will significantly influence Ukrainian insurance market – LIOU

September 17, 2014

The Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union is without exaggeration the most ambitious package of agreements in the history of independent Ukraine, president of the League of Insurance Organizations of Ukraine (LIOU) Oleksandr Zaletov has said. “According to the document, Ukraine undertakes to start the gradual convergence of the national legislation on insurance with the standards of the corresponding EU regulations,” he said [...]

For further details see: <http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/economic/224204.html>

Government approves plan for implementation of Association Agreement with EU
September 17, 2014

Members of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine at a meeting on Wednesday unanimously voted to approve the plan for the implementation of the Association Agreement with the EU, Ukrinform's correspondent has reported.

“The Ukrainian government today adopts the decision to approve the plan for the implementation of the Association Agreement with the EU. We have set very ambitious terms: the agreement must be fully implemented by 2017,” Prime Minister Arseniy Yatseniuk said.

He said that such a short time was due to the desire to quickly adapt national legislation to European standards.

“The sooner we make changes, the sooner the European Union will see that we actually implemented the agreement and the sooner we will have a chance to apply for EU membership and say that we meet the criteria, we signed the agreement, we implemented it, and in accordance with Article 49 of the [EU] Treaty, Ukraine may apply for membership of the European Union,” Yatseniuk said.

As reported, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko on Tuesday signed a law ratifying

the Association Agreement with the EU. The simultaneous ratification process took place through a videoconference between Kyiv and Strasbourg.

Following ratification by the legislative bodies of Ukraine and the EU, the provisional application of certain provisions of the political, institutional and sectoral parts of the document will begin from November 1, 2014. The agreement will come into force in full after its ratification by all 28 member states of the EU. The tentative deadline for the implementation of the Association Agreement is ten years.

Source: UkrInform,

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/government_approves_plan_for_implementation_of_association_agreement_with_eu_326143

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