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Freedom for Nations! Freedom for Individuals!

IN THIS ISSUE:

Certification for Ukraine	1
NATO Expansion and the Problem of a NATO Strategy	5
Estonia's President Speaks Out	9
NATO Expansion	10
<i>Mikhail A. MOLCHANOV</i> Ukraine Between Russia and NATO: Politics and Security	11

Swedish Information Project on Victims of Communism Worldwide

During recent years a successful information project by the Swedish government has been carried out concerning the Holocaust. Jewish organisations and other governments have expressed interest in this project. A booklet on the national socialist Holocaust has been distributed to all Swedish households. Recently, non-socialist parties have demanded that a similar project be started on the victims of communism worldwide.

On 10th February, 1999, the government called all party leaders to talks on such a project in Stockholm. The Green Party and the Left Party (the former communist party) opposed such a project which probably means that it will not be undertaken, at least not funded by the government. The Liberal Party had earlier declared its interest in a privately funded project. In February of this year, a book was published (*Never Again!*) estimating the victims of communism worldwide since 1917 to be around 150 million.

The editor of DESTA, Bertil Haggman, has already published a book in 1982 on the victims of communism worldwide estimating the total number of victims at around 100 million. Much more informative material is of course available today.

The knowledge of the crimes of communism is very limited among the Swedish public and in school education and limited time in the school curriculum is devoted to the history of the crimes of communism. To avoid future totalitarian catastrophes it is important to inform people about the crimes perpetrated by national socialism and communism during the 20th century.

DESTA

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CERTIFICATION FOR UKRAINE

*by Secretary Madeleine Albright
to the Committees on Appropriations
February 18, 1999*

In 1998, Congress allocated a \$195 million earmark of assistance for Ukraine for the Financial Year 1999. Within the Foreign Aid Bill, it is stipulated that 50% of the amount of assistance to Ukraine shall be withheld from obligation "until the Secretary of State reports to the Committees on Appropriations that Ukraine has undertaken significant economic reforms additional to those achieved in the fiscal year 1998 and include:

1. reform and effective enforcement of commercial and tax code, and
2. continued progress on resolution of complaints by United States investors."

Certification shall be sent to the Appropriations Committees on February 18, 1999.

The following is a brief overview of the economic situation in Ukraine (since the beginning of fiscal year 1999) and the continued resolution of U.S. business disputes in Ukraine.

Economic Reforms:

- The state budget of Ukraine was adopted by the Ukrainian Parliament on December 31, 1998, while President Kuchma signed the budget act law on January 25, 1999:
- Based on IMF recommendations, the state budgets upholds realistic projections of revenue and expenses. For example,

Revenues - 35 billion UHR (28% of GDP)
Expenditures - 36 billion UHR (29% GDP)
Deficit - 1 billion UHR (1% GDP)

NOTE: The amount of budget deficit is the lowest since Ukrainian independence. It is expected that the budget deficit for 1998 will be near 2.5% of GDP.

World Financial Crisis:

- Ukraine averted a major financial collapse of its economy through the effective measures undertaken by the National Bank of Ukraine (NBU), which included efforts to avoid hyper-inflation, increase budget revenues, raise reserve requirements for commercial banks, and introduce a new currency exchange rate corridor.

- Inflation rates for 1998, are projected at 20% while the decline in GDP (as a direct result of the financial turmoil in Asia and neighboring Russia) is expected to be near 1.5%.

Investment Climate:

- A major impediment for foreign investment in Ukraine remains a lack of modern accounting standards. In October 1998, the Cabinet of Ministers approved a three-year program to reform the accounting reporting system. In the first half of 1999, eleven international accounting standards will be introduced in Ukraine.

- The 1999 privatisation program, which envisages tender procedures for the sale of property, was approved by presidential decree.

- By the end 1998, the total number of former state-owned enterprises that have been privatized reached 9,300. Privatisation of 442 grain elevators and storage facilities was also initiated in 1998. Monopolies, such as Khib Ukrainy (kî, Erhf-yb), were decentralized in their operations.

- Comprehensive administrative reform of the public sector was issued by presidential decree in July 1998. The program was initiated in consultation with World Bank provisions and is expected to begin implementation in the first quarter of 1999.

Activity of U.S. businesses in Ukraine:

- Of the nearly 6,500 joint ventures with foreign capital investment in Ukraine, about 900 U.S. companies are active in various forms of business operations, i.e., investors, exporters, importers, consultants, etc. For example, the largest U.S. companies in Ukraine include: Arthur Anderson, AT&T, Coca-Cola, DuPont, Ernst & Young, General Electric, IBM, McDonald's, PepsiCo, Price Waterhouse, Procter & Gamble, and SC Johnson.

- Many new American companies are ready to invest in Ukraine, while others such as General Electric, Coca-Cola, and McDonald's are prepared to expand their operations in Ukraine.

- According to McDonald's public affairs manager Petro Hnatiuk, the fast food chain intends to rely more on domestic products for its restaurants in Ukraine. The company will assemble a meat processing plant in Vinnytsia (in central Ukraine) to make exclusive use of Ukrainian meat for their restaurant products. An eventual plan of supplying meat products to their restaurants in neighboring countries is also being considered.

- There are currently nine outstanding American business disputes in Ukraine (roughly less than 1% of American business presence). All the cases are currently within the Ukrainian court system, while several of the cases have been referred to international arbitration and mediation. The business disputes are of a very complicated nature, as both sides have admitted errors in administrating business decisions.

- An inter-agency group of U.S. officials was in Ukraine at the beginning of January 1999 to assess Ukraine's progress in its economic reform efforts and review current U.S. business disputes. Edwin Truman, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Department acknowledged that "Ukraine has accomplished a great deal" during the last several months, especially as a result of the Asian and Russian financial crises.

- In an expression of support for Ukraine's economic reform effort, the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine (which represents several hundred American business interests in Ukraine)

expressed "a big interest regarding the impact of the Russian financial and economic problems on the economic environment in Ukraine."

Ukraine – A U.S. Strategy Ally:

- The assistance given to Ukraine from the U.S. government has, as its main prerogative, the intent of supporting reform efforts in a wide variety of issue areas. Reform in each area is vitally important in continuing Ukraine's transition to a stable parliamentary democracy with a free-market economy. What has been done has been remarkable, considering the obstacles that Ukraine has had to overcome since its independence.

- Hennadyi Udoenko, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and the 52nd President of the United Nations General Assembly stated in an interview on March 21, 1998: "We [Ukraine] are a young country, and in less than seven years we reformed our political system, adopted a new constitution, became a member of the Council of Europe... Ukraine inherited a collapsed Soviet economy... We started from scratch." Such progress, with the help of the United States, can only benefit both Ukraine and the United States.

- Were the United States to continue to invest in a strong and democratic Ukraine, the goal of stability in a turbulent region would be attained. As we enter the 21st century, the United States has no better ally in Central Europe than Ukraine.

- Immediately following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, western economic support to Ukraine, in the quantities necessary to sustain its independent economic destiny, was lax. Continued indifference to Ukraine's position and its subsequent courtship with Russia could be reviewed by future policy analysts as a serious strategic miscalculation of the United States.

NATO Expansion and the Problem of a NATO Strategy

Summary:

NATO's expansion has raised the serious question of what the military strategy of the NATO alliance is. The inclusion of Poland and Hungary creates certain serious strategic problems that must be dealt with if NATO is going to be a military alliance as well as a moral project. There is a rare opportunity and a clear danger defining the strategic moment.

Analysis:

In the first weeks of March 1999 Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic formally became part of NATO. This means that the mutual guarantees of assistance in time of war, that have been the essence of NATO for several generations, have now been extended to these three. If any of them are attacked, then it is the legal and moral obligation of all NATO members to come to their assistance. This dramatically increases both the responsibilities and vulnerabilities of NATO. The expansion may also increase the opportunities. These possibilities need to be carefully considered.

NATO has become defined in two ways. First, it has been defined, along with the European Union, as an alliance among democratic states. To be a bit more precise, it has been identified as an organisation that motivates formally non-democratic states to become democratic. The assumption is that membership in NATO and the EU is so attractive that the formally socialist states, now freed from Soviet control, would be motivated to reconstruct their political, social and economic systems in order to be permitted to join. This, in the first round of admissions, membership was given as a reward to three countries that had gone the furthest in evolving into democratic policies with market economies that do not discriminate against ethnic minorities.

NATO sees itself as being engaged in low-risk operations. The question of Polish or Hungarian admission to NATO did not depend on the perception of any strategic threat to Europe. Instead, their admission depended on moral questions, such as the nature of their political and economic life. Excluding a country did not carry with it any particular risk. Including a country did not carry with it any particular benefit, beyond expanding a community of nations having shared values.

NATO has evolved into a moral instrument. Its evolution into this moral instrument depends on the accuracy of the core perception, which is that NATO no longer faces a strategic challenge from any quarter. If this is correct, then the moral project of transforming all of Europe into democratic, tolerant, market driven economies is a low-cost, low-risk operation, certainly within the capability of NATO. But if this perception is false, if there are still serious, potential risks to European security, then treating NATO as a moral rather than a strategic project carries with it enormous risks. This issue revolves entirely on the Russian question: how can we expect Russia to behave in the first decade of the 21st century? Are there any circumstances under which Russia could once again pose a threat to Europe? Russia certainly attempted to transform itself into a democratic, tolerant, market driven society. Russia quite hard to fit into what we have termed the Western moral project. It is our perception that Russia has not only failed in this transformation but more, that it knows that it has failed.

Now, there is a tendency to dismiss the ability of Russia to assert itself internationally because of its economic problems. No one should take comfort from this. First, Russia's military has certainly suffered from economic neglect. However, this policy is changing very quickly and the Russian military has become the beneficiary of additional resources in recent months. This is particularly true of core units that have always represented the heart of Russian military power. Much of the Russian military machine remains intact. The very depression that tore Russia apart preserved the Russian military's cadre. Since the civilian economy could not absorb them, much of the officer corps is still intact. Russian research and development have continued with some intensity and the Russians have developed, if not fully deployed, some excellent and important new weapons.

It should never be forgotten that Hitler took a completely hollowed military force in 1933 and within five years turned it into the awesome Wehrmacht. As important, the very process of rebuilding German military strength revived the German economy. Defence spending is a very efficient way to implement Keynesian deficit financing to revive the civilian sector. What the Germans had was an intact officer corps, a strong research and development capability, an idle industrial plant, and a political consensus that rearmament was essential. All but the last of these is present in Russia, and we see that political consensus rapidly developing.

It is interesting to note that among the new members joining NATO as well as among those who are hoping to join, there is a very different perception of why they are joining. The Poles, for example, have seen the Russians come and the Russians go. The one thing that they know without any doubt is that nothing is permanent in this region. The retreat of the Russians is merely the preface for their return. The Polish reason for joining NATO was certainly a desire to be part of the Western moral project. Poland, the Czech republic, and Hungary all certainly see themselves as part of that project. But the driving force for membership had less to do with that than it had to do with the strategic fear of a return of the Russians to their borders and the inability of any of these countries, by themselves, to protect themselves. Since each of them was invaded and occupied by Soviet forces, the dread of a return is real and justified.

This is the real, underlying weakness in today's NATO. The older NATO members have adopted a view of NATO that it is primarily a low-risk moral project. The newer members of NATO see NATO has a strategic guarantee of their independence in the face of the inevitability of a resurgent Russian power. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic view NATO membership as a military guarantee of their territorial integrity. The rest of the NATO members do not see any threat to their territory and have focused on using NATO as a force for political reform.

One of the consequences of this is that Brussels has done almost no serious and meaningful strategic planning for the defense of the new region. Hungary, for example, is completely geographically isolated from the rest of NATO. It is separated from Poland by Slovakia, from the Czech Republic and Germany by Austria, and from Italy by Slovenia. At the same time it is being used by NATO forces as a staging area into the former Yugoslavian territories in support of military operations there. Obviously, no one expects to have to rush forces to Hungary either to defend its territory or to defend U.S. airbases there. Alternatively, the assumption is that in time of conflict Slovenia, Austria and Slovakia would all permit the passage of reinforcements and material. Now this may be true, but the test will come in the event of a crisis, the ability of Russia to assert itself may condition any secret guarantees that may be given.

The admission of Hungary is a strategic absurdity without the admission of Slovenia. But the deeper mystery resolves around the

defense of Poland. Poland has about a two hundred mile border with Belarus, which is now federated with Russia. The southern part of the border is marshland, not suited for military operations. About half of the border is flat, superb tank country. That border can be defended. The problem is that Poland also faces an extensive direct frontier with the Russian enclave around Kaliningrad (the old German city of Koenigsberg). That enclave is separated from Belarus by Lithuania. Now, if Russian forces take Lithuania, then the northeastern frontier of Poland becomes almost indefensible. NATO defenders will have to abandon the eastern part of the country and retreat to the Vistula River line. This not only means giving up a third of the country, it also makes Warsaw the frontline. This is compounded by the fact that just as Slovenia hasn't been admitted to NATO. Slovakia hasn't been admitted. Slovenia is secure, well behind the lines of any future confrontation with Russia, and without having to ante up for the common defense. If Slovakia were to ally itself with Russia, and this is not an unpopular view in parts of Slovakia, the entire southern frontier of Poland would be exposed as well as Hungary's northern frontier.

The point being made here is that using a military alliance for a moral project becomes very dangerous if a strategic threat reemerges. Since we see the reemergence of a threat from Russia, we are arguing that the current shape of NATO since its expansion is militarily insupportable. It might have been better not to expand NATO, but having expanded, NATO's eastern frontiers are no longer defensible. It has become absolutely indispensable that Slovakia and Slovenia be admitted to NATO if NATO is to be able to defend its frontiers. Now, this poses a challenge to NATO's vision of a moral project. NATO has been cautious about Slovakia because of certain anti-democratic tendencies of its former Prime Minister. Whatever the moral character of the regime, its location in the Carpathian Mountains makes its inclusion essential.

There are more serious long-term issues. The situation on the northern frontier of Poland is unsupportable. Since the Kaliningrad enclave cannot be liquidated, we assume, it must be isolated. Lithuania must be included in NATO. Indeed, if that flank is to be protected fully, the rest of the Baltic States must be included, shortening NATO lines substantially and anchoring the left flank on the Gulf of Finland. In the south, Romania must be included in order to anchor the southern frontiers of NATO in the Carpathians, defending the Hungarian plane.

Finally, and most importantly, a decision must be made on Ukraine. Ukraine in NATO hands creates a magnificent pincer on Belarus along with the Baltics.

The Russians will not like this. If our assumption is correct and Western relations with Russia have already been ruptured beyond hope, then now is the time to act, before Russia fully revives and can preempt such moves. If the West does not act now, it will regret its dilatory behaviour for generations. However, if our assumption is incorrect, and Western-Russian relations can remain at this level indefinitely or improve, than the West will have created an unnecessary and dangerous crisis. Turn the matter around. If the Russian view of the West has become as negative as it appears from what they say, then Russia will assume the worst of the West and act preemptively. In that case, it is a race over who will act first in the Baltics, Ukraine, and Slovakia.

These are the deep and pressing strategic issues facing NATO.

Global Intelligence Update, March 15, 1999.

Estonia's President Speaks Out

In his speech "The Consequences of Communism in the Baltic States" President Meri remarked at the seminar: "On August 20, 1991, the 50th birthday of Slobodan Milosevic, Tallinn was occupied by the tanks of the Pskov airborne division. The coup in Moscow was not a success and during the next few days Estonia managed to restore her independence. At the time, few had heard of Milosevic. Today, Milosevic' tanks are in Kosovo.

Half of the Kosovo's inhabitants have been driven out or fled from their homes. Just like the Poles in 1939, the Karelians in 1940 and in 1944, the Germans of East Prussia and the Sudeten region in 1945 or some mountain tribes in Tadjikistan in 1973. For these people it did not matter whether their death was defined as an ethnic purge, a genocide or something else. And whether they were victims of national socialism or communism.

President Meri spoke movingly about his own deportation experiences at the age of 12.

DESTA, Volume VII, No.2 March - April 1999

NATO Expansion

The following text is a speech made by Dr. Javier Solana, the Secretary General of NATO, on 16th March 1999, on the occasion of the admission of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland as full members to the Atlantic Alliance.

Prime Minister Zeman,
Prime Minister Orban,
Prime Minister Buzek,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we welcome the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland as full members of our Atlantic Alliance. This is an emotional moment - for us who are gathered here today, for Europe and for the whole Euro-Atlantic community. It represents the triumph of justice over history. For too much of this century, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe have been cut off from the Euro-Atlantic community - a community of democracies to which they rightly belong. In this new Europe, geography is no longer destiny. Nations can determine their own fate, by their own free choice.

Today - here, now - we are crossing the threshold from vision to reality. History will see the accession of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland as a key step towards a Europe of co-operation and integration, towards a Europe without dividing lines. Europe is growing together - and this process is irreversible. The example set by these three countries will serve as a strong incentive and encouragement for those other nations that share the same ambitions and values.

Our 19 Allies are joined in a commitment to the defence of each others' security and territorial integrity. This is the strongest, most solemn commitment any nation can make to another. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland have shown consistently that they are ready for this commitment. They, in turn, can count on the solidarity of the other Allies.

In only a few months time, we enter a new century, a new millennium. The ill-winds of war and conflict that plagued Europe for so much of the past hundred years have given way to a transatlantic community of shared values and interests. Yet while today's accession closes one chapter, it also opens a new one.

This journey, our common journey, is far from over. We - the Alliance of 19 - must continue to work for peace and stability on this continent; to entrench firmly the democratic values we uphold and safeguard; to make partnership and cooperation the foundation of our European security, building on the success of the Partnership for Peace and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council.

The tasks are still plentiful. Europe's integration must continue to widen and deepen. Long-term peace must be established in the Balkans, not only by managing immediate crises, but by building a solid base for prosperity in the entire region.

We must continue to develop our partnership with Russia - to nurture the relationship of trust and cooperation that is essential to European security.

Our cooperation with Ukraine must intensify, to help that important nation find its proper place in the new Europe. We want to build confidence with countries of the Mediterranean.

Mikhail A. MOLCHANOV

Ukraine Between Russia and NATO: Politics and Security

In the post-cold war era, Russian-Ukrainian relations directly bear upon European and global security. Russia remains the second nuclear power in the world in terms of pure quality of weapons (inherited from the former Soviet Union). Its seat at the UN Security Council gives it additional leverage over matters of international security. It still has one of the largest land armies in the world, while its military-industrial complex, though a shadow of its Soviet predecessor, is by no means negligible.

The international role of Ukraine is best seen in terms of its vital importance for Russia. Whether or not post-communist Russia will ever represent a threat to the international community as a whole will be determined, first and foremost, by the character of its relationships with Ukraine as a linchpin of European stability, and rightly so.¹

¹ See John Edwin Mroz and Oleksandr Pavliuk, "Ukraine: Europe's Linchpin", *Foreign Affairs*, 1996, Vol. 75, no. 3, pp. 55-62; Sherman W. Garnett, *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the Emerging Security Environment of Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1997).

Without Ukraine, the regeneration of the Russian empire in any form is impossible; thus, Russia has no option but to concentrate on its still neglected domestic agenda rather than pursuing ambitious goals in foreign policy. On the other hand, if Ukraine² is forced to follow Belarus and join another Moscow-dominated Union, this may prompt Russian rulers to revive the ambitions of a global superpower. In that case, the Russian-led military alliance, facing NATO expansion on its western borders, will probably re-establish an "iron curtain" in Europe, thus driving the world into a new cold war period, determined this time by sheer geopolitics rather than ideology.

Moscow's perspective on Ukraine as an erstwhile legitimate part of a "bigger" Russia renders complex problems in Russian-Ukrainian relations all the more dramatic. The closeness of language and culture, the naturally intertwined history, and the important concessions Soviet rulers granted to Ukraine and Ukrainians as "junior partners" in running the collective communist empire all make Russia's current leaders feel betrayed by the "ungrateful" Ukrainians, who are trying to steer clear of the emerging Russian hegemony in the area.

On the other hand, academic monographs and media analyses published in Ukraine not infrequently present Ukrainian history in deceptively clear-cut terms of Russian exploitation and Ukrainian subservience. Several influential politicians in Ukraine (notably the Ukrainian Republican Party) argued against the signing of the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation between the two countries, while others devoted considerable efforts to predict that the Treaty would never be signed anyway owing to irredeemable Russian malevolence. This later message was still being directed at audiences on both sides of the Atlantic even when preparations for the relevant summit were on the way to completion.³

The two peoples' relationship has been complex and asymmetrical. Their linguistic and ethnodemographic proximity and densely intertwined histories throw these differences in mutual perceptions into even sharper relief. In view of the clear similarities

² (Ed.) The Ukrainian Parliament voted on 3rd March 1999, to join the CIS Parliamentary Assembly – 230 MPs backed the decision (226 votes were necessary).

³ Taras Kuzio, "Why Ukraine and Russia Will Not Sign an Inter-State Treaty", *Analysis of Current Events*, 1997, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 9-10.

in the Ukrainian and Russian post-communist transitions, an analyst might expect a certain congruity in the foreign policies of the two countries. However, the post-communist history of Ukrainian-Russian relations reveals for the most part distinctly different approaches to the various international, regional and bilateral issues that engage the politicians of both countries alike. Public opinion differs, too: when questioned on their attitudes towards possible reintegration with Russia, Ukrainians regularly exhibit far less enthusiasm than Russians or Belarussians.⁴

As the Ukrainian Ambassador to the United Nations, Anatoliy Zlenko, has noted, the fact Ukraine and Russia adopt different stances in practically any question on international importance may be traced back to fundamental differences in their foreign policies and international interests: geopolitical in the case of Russia, purely national in the case of Ukraine.⁵ Russia has never dropped its traditional pretensions to superpower status. Since 1991, these ambitions have been somewhat confined to the sphere of immediate interest – the former Soviet space, where Russia has assumed a self-proclaimed ‘peacekeeping’ role and has actively engaged its military forces in a number of local conflicts from Tajikistan to Abkhazia. Russia also managed to maintain some of its former spheres of influence in Bosnia and rump Yugoslavia, to re-establish links with Iraq, Cuba, Vietnam and other ex-Soviet satellites world-wide. It has exerted significant diplomatic and economic pressure on Ukraine, in an attempt to persuade the Ukrainian leadership to accept a ‘strategic partnership’, which, as interpreted by Russia, would imply major limitations on Ukraine’s sovereignty and non-aligned status. Ukraine, however, has refused to treat Russia any differently from other powerful partners of the Ukrainian state – the USA, Canada, Germany, or Great Britain, resulting in a protracted period of Russian bullying on almost all aspects of bilateral relations: oil and gas supplies, Crimean autonomy, dual citizenship rights for the ethnic Russians living in Ukraine, and procrastination over signing a comprehensive treaty on friendship and cooperation.

This Russian pressure on Ukraine and its implications for regional security has received a fair deal of analytical attention. In Zbigniew Brzezinski’s phrase, Ukraine is now perceived as a

⁴ See periodical bulletins of the Kyiv-based research center Democratic Initiatives, e.g. *A political Portrait of Ukraine*, no.4, 1994.

⁵ Personal interview, Edmonton, Alberta, 31 May, 1996.

'geostrategic pivot', which may be used by the West to bring some order into the Russian 'black hole'.⁶ Though the Ukrainian-Russian debate over the Crimea, Sevastopol and the Black Sea Fleet eventually cooled off, it was not until 1995 that relations between the two countries began to normalise on the basis of equal sovereignty. Russia dropped its demand for dual citizenship rights for the Russians resident in Ukraine, and a host of other compromises was achieved soon thereafter. Ukraine's active diplomacy helped to transform the seemingly benign, but also patronising attitude of the Russian establishment into one more respectful of Ukraine's independence.

Even with the conclusion of the long-awaited friendship Treaty (31 May 1997), Ukraine has retained a unique perspective (sometimes less flexible, from Moscow's point of view) on the most significant issues of international politics. The Ukrainian leadership remains firm in its resolve not to give to Moscow more than is necessary for Ukraine's own national interest. Understanding the objective disparity in the political 'weight' of the two countries, the Ukrainian government does its best to maintain good relations with Russia. But, at the same time, it seeks reliable international guarantees of security, should the potentially dangerous issues of Ukrainian-Russian relations flare up into confrontation.

Most Russian politicians, including the younger generation of reformers, have never really abandoned the traditional Russian perception of Ukraine as a province in a jointly run state. This inherited political culture of Soviet quasi-federalism meant that after December 1991 Ukrainian-Russian relations got off to a false start. Where direct negotiations took place, they were often marked by attempts at domination by the Russian side. When Moscow could not secure the dominant position, it tried to avoid contact altogether.⁷ The friendship Treaty proved insufficient to resolve fully a number of contentious issues, most notably the status of Sevastopol, the divergent attitudes towards NATO, and the precise meaning of the 'strategic partnership' which Russia has offered Ukraine.

⁶ Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

⁷ No less than six cancellations of the planned official visit of the Russian President to Ukraine illustrates the tactics.

The Crimea, Sevastopol and the Black Sea Fleet

The Crimea was an integral part of Russia from the late eighteenth century till 1954; both nationalists and neo-communists in the Russian parliament question its transfer to Ukraine. In the predominantly Russophone Crimean Autonomous Republic, the Ukrainian government allows a *de facto* monopoly of the Russian language as a medium of both official and day-to-day communication. Most of the Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF) naval bases are located on Crimean territory. The biggest one is in Sevastopol – a city emotionally loaded for the Russians, with a history of military endeavour and sacrifice. Disagreement over the political and military status of Sevastopol remains one of the most sensitive issues in Ukrainian-Russian relations today.

The 1997 agreement provides a twenty-year lease of the naval facilities in Sevastopol by the Russian Black Sea Fleet. The Ukrainian Constitution, however, stipulates that there should be no foreign military bases on Ukrainian territory. Ukrainian insistence on the temporary nature of the Russian naval presence in the Crimea provokes Russian fears that the lease agreement will not be renewed when expired. A thinly veiled desire to keep Sevastopol as a permanent Russian base can be observed in official and semi-official Russian pronouncements on the issue.

Before the agreement was concluded, the fight over the exact wording of agreement formula ('the Russian naval base *in* Sevastopol', as preferred by the Ukrainian side, versus 'the Russian naval base – Sevastopol', advocated by the Russians) revealed a latent mutual mistrust. First came the official Russian Security Council announcement that 'Kyiv has shown a tendency to go back on its commitments'.⁸ Yuriy Luzhkov, Mayor of Moscow and potential presidential contender, made a controversial statement which proved worrying to both the Ukrainian and Russian governments. In January 1997, Luzhkov alleged that 'after a drinking binge', Khrushchev presented the Crimea to Ukraine, 'Sevastopol was turned into a separate administrative entity and was not handed over to Ukraine'.⁹ Just over a year later, in February 1998, he promised to demand 'that Sevastopol be placed under Russia's jurisdiction again', denounced what he called the 'forced Ukrainianization' of ethnic

⁸ *OMRI* online, 10 September 1996.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 20 January 1997.

Russians and warned that 'relations between Ukraine and Russia will never be transparent or sincerely fraternal if injustice continues with regard to Sevastopol and Crimea'.¹⁰

Luzhkov's statements could be dismissed if it were not for the feeling that his thoughts are tacitly shared by other top Russian politicians. Viktor Chernomyrdin, for example, has claimed that Moscow is worried by what he called 'Ukraine's increasingly distinctive policy of squeezing out the Russian language and culture' from Ukraine.¹¹ The lower house of the Russian parliament – the State Duma – is currently dominated by neo-communists from Gennadiy Zyuganov's CPRF and a broad coalition of nationalists, where people like Sergey Baburin, Konstantin Zatulin, or Vladimir Zhirinovskiy are unanimous in their view of Ukraine's 'proper place' in a Moscow-dominated Union of some sort.

If one compares how the Ukrainian and the Russian legislatures address the key issue of ratification of the friendship treaty, one observes marked discrepancies. The Ukrainian parliament ratified it on 14 January 1998. Shortly thereafter, a statement by the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry declared 'that there has never existed and cannot exist' any territorial dispute between Moscow and Kyiv.¹² The Russian Duma, on the other hand, was in no hurry to ratify this important agreement, while the Russian media kept insisting that the treaty could give Ukraine a one-sided advantage and therefore rapid ratification might run contrary to Russian interests.¹³ On 3 March 1998, most Duma members spoke out against quick ratification of the treaty, while some of them delayed until the new Ukrainian parliament ratified agreements on dividing the Black Sea Fleet. Georgiy Tikhonov, the Chairman of the Duma CIS Affairs Committee, went as far as to hand the Ukrainian parliamentary delegation a proposal to hold a referendum to reunite the two countries. The Ukrainian delegation felt obliged to describe this proposition as a 'provocation'.¹⁴

¹⁰ *RFE/RL* online, 23 February 1998.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 28 May 1997.

¹² *ITAR-TASS*, 23 February 1998.

¹³ *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 25 March 1998, p.1.

¹⁴ *RFE/RL* online, 4-6 March 1998.

Russian nationalists continue to lament the loss of the Crimea, advancing irredentist claims to what now is an officially recognised territory of the sovereign Ukrainian state. Meanwhile, with the adoption of the new Ukrainian Constitution (28 June 1996), Crimean autonomy has been further curtailed, and a clause stating that the Crimea is an inalienable part of Ukraine has been enshrined in the fundamental Law of the State. The Russian separatist deputies in the Crimean parliament could not put up a sustained opposition to these developments, since they no longer commanded the overwhelming majority they had in 1993-4. However, unexpected assistance came from the Russian politician Konstantin Zatulin.¹⁵ In an article published in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* on 28 March 1997, he tried to persuade the Russian establishment to undermine independent Ukrainian activity within the CIS and to refuse to recognise its current borders with Ukraine unless and until Kyiv agrees to sign a federal treaty with the Crimea. This idea was taken further in an article in the same newspaper, published anonymously, but believed to be by Zatulin and another well-known policy analyst, Andranik Migranyan. This advocated bringing back the former Union republics, first and foremost Ukraine, into the Russian embrace by force, not excluding the deliberate destabilization of the domestic political situation in the targeted countries.¹⁶

Nevertheless, the current situation in the Crimea, however tense, is in no way comparable to 1994-5, when the separatist Yuriy Meshkov, acting as an elected president of the Crimean Autonomous Republic, tried to initiate the Crimea's secession from Ukraine and its reunification with Russia. This détente may be attributed to Ukraine's improved economic performance: although by the end of 1993 Ukraine's monthly inflation was approaching 91 percent per month, which was significantly worse than in Russia,¹⁷ the situation changed drastically in the next three years. By summer 1996, inflation levels in Ukraine had dropped below five percent and stayed at this low thereafter, successfully competing with the respective Russian indicators.

¹⁵ A former Chairman of the State Duma CIS Affairs Committee (1994-5), currently Luzhkov's advisor on CIS matters and Director of the Institute of CIS countries.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Fuller, "Russia: Influential Article Warns of CIS Laxity", *RFE/RL* online, 1 April 1997.

¹⁷ Anders Aslund, 'Eurasia Letter: Ukraine's Turnaround', *Foreign Policy*, Autumn 1995, no. 100, p. 136.

The 1994-5 crisis in the Crimea could have led to major repercussions for both regional and European security, if all the top politicians had shared these irredentist feelings. However, top figures in the Russian executive, first and foremost the president and his team and the Cabinet of Ministers, showed significantly more restraint on the Crimean issue than did the members of the State Duma. As the executive arm is traditionally more important in Russian politics than the often weak legislature, the prospect of the nationalist extremists winning the day is, at the moment, remote. According to certain analysts, the relative cooling of Ukrainian-Russian tensions over the Crimea may be attributed to this dominance of the more reasonable executive over the largely nationalist legislature. It is Russian prudence and restraint, they assert, rather than (largely debatable) economic improvements in Ukraine, which should take the credit for the absence of 'hot' conflict in the area.

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Freedom for Nations! Freedom for Individuals!

IN THIS ISSUE:

Mikhail A. MOLCHANOV
Ukraine Between Russia and NAT:
Politics and Security (Part II) 1

Persida ZLATOV
Totalitarianism Causes Struggle 13

The Kosovo Crisis 14

Georgia Considering Withdrawal From CIS 14

Ukraine's Political Pendulum Swings 15

Seminar On Communist Crimes in Stockholm

On April 13, 1999, the Jarl Hjalmarson Foundation in the Old Parliament Building, Stockholm, conducted a seminar on the crimes of communism. Chairman was Moderate Party leader Carl Bildt. Estonian author Andres Kueng had for the seminar prepared "Communism and Crimes against Humanity in the Baltic states", A Report to the Jarl Hjalmarson Foundation seminar on April 13, 1999". Hjalmarson was a Swedish conservative (now moderate) party chairman, who was more or less hounded by the now ruling social democratic party of Sweden for making pro-Western statements.

Author Kueng reports that The International Commission charged with the task of examining Communist and Nazi crimes against humanity in Estonia met for the first time in Tallinn, Estonia, on January 26, 1999. The Commission is chaired by former Finnish diplomat Max Jakobson. Lennart Meri, president of Estonia, commented on the occasion that it is not possible to build a free and democratic future without facing up to the past. Trying to sweep past events under the rug of collective forgetfulness will not help to achieve either reconciliation or progress toward a better future.

The seminar was organized on the occasion of the publication of the "Black Book on Communism" (Le livre noir du communisme) edited by Stiphane Courtois, France, in Swedish (Bokfoerlaget DN, Stockholm, 1999), himself a former communist. He spoke at the seminar and revealed that over 30 contracts worldwide had been signed for publication of this 900-page book that covers among other countries the crimes of communism in PR of China (around 100 million victims). The ongoing conflict in Kosova highlights the problem of bringing communist war criminals to justice. One can only hope that Operation Allied Force leads to bringing Yugoslav dictator Slobodan Milosevic to court.

DESTA

Destabilization, Terrorism & Disinformation

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Ukraine Between Russia and NATO: Politics and Security

(Part II – Part I was published in
ABN Correspondence, Vol. L. No. 1, 1999)

Indeed, it would be difficult to provide firm evidence of any sustained attempt by the Russian government to destabilise the internal situation in Ukraine, despite all the ups and downs in the post-Soviet relations of the two countries. One year after Ukraine became independent, Russia was still financing up to 22 percent of the Ukrainian GDP with subsidised credits.¹⁸ In 1993, Russia continued its subsidies to Ukraine, as well as to other former Soviet republics. The IMF experts calculated that the total of Russian donations to newly independent states for that year amounted to US \$17 billion 'in goods at concessionary and subsidized prices'.¹⁹ As late as 1995, the financial support of the Ukrainian economy by two of its former Soviet sister-republics (and currently major creditors) – Russia and Turkmenistan – outweighed the financial contribution of the IMF and the World Bank combined.²⁰ On these grounds, one may feel obliged to agree with Hannes Adomeit's view on Ukraine's current predicament: 'If the country were to fall apart, or fall into Russia's lap, it would not be because of destabilization attempts from the outside but because of Kyiv's inability to make the best of its independence'.²¹

And yet, it would be premature to regard the Crimean issue as closed. Just because, so far, there have been no sustained destabilisation attempts as far as centrally coordinated policy is

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁹ Karen Dawisha, "Russian Foreign Policy in the Near Abroad and Beyond", *Current History*, October 1996, Vol. 95, no. 603, p. 332.

²⁰ Calculated from Aslund, op. cit., p. 139.

²¹ Hannes Adomeit, 'Russia as a "Great Power" in World Affairs: Images and Reality', *International Affairs*, January 1995, vol. 71, no.1, p. 61.

concerned, one should not ignore a number of provocative statements by individual Russian politicians, or the vote in the Russian Duma rejecting the 1954 decision of the former Soviet parliament, which transferred the Crimea to the Ukrainian SSR. Though Russia has so far made no attempt to transform this vote into executive action, it sent a clear signal to the Ukrainian leadership. In 1993-4, when Ukrainian-Russian tensions were running high, the issue was even put before the UN Security Council. Some Ukrainian diplomats and experts suggested submitting it to the UN International Court of Justice in the Hague. However, the idea was rejected by the Ukrainian government for fear of an unfavourable decision.²²

Many Russians remain unhappy with the loss of the region. Although they no longer question (at least openly) the formal sovereignty which Ukraine exercises over the Crimea, Russians continue to consider the region to be traditionally 'theirs'. This attitude, plus the existence of sizeable Russian separatist groups on the peninsula, and the political clout which the separatists demonstrate in the Crimean parliament, make the problem potentially explosive for the new Ukrainian-Russian relations. The outcry on the further reduction of Crimean autonomy in the newly adopted Ukrainian Constitution was heard well beyond the Crimean borders. When not only people regarded as champions of the Russian nationalist cause (Rutskoy, Zhirinovskiy, Baburin et al.), but also those considered the political centre (Luzhkov, former presidential contender Aleksandr Lebed) issue statements implying that the Crimea is still regarded as a zone of specific Russian interests, there is some reason to be alarmed.

The situation is complicate by the fact that Ukraine, in essence, is literally defenceless against any future Russian intrusion. Despite all efforts to 'Ukrainianize' the national armed forces, they will remain, of necessity, largely ethnic in their composition. Ukraine is ill-prepared to fight the Russians – both psychologically and materially. Nationalist myth-making has seemingly failed to arouse the desired level of animosity – as might have been expected – given the current shape of the Ukrainian and Russian ethnonational psyches. Such factors as the rather weak history of Ukrainian-Russian conflicts, the high percentage of inter-ethnic marriages,

²² Personal interview with Dr. Oleksander Horin, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations, New York, 16 September 1996.

internal regionalism and the successful incorporation of the Ukrainian élites into imperial and Soviet Russian state-building should all be taken into consideration. Ukraine's disadvantage in conventional arms is well known. Its nuclear deterrence option was renounced voluntarily (albeit under some international pressure).

With all this in mind, the Ukrainian government would have little room for manoeuvre if faced with an imminent conflict with the Russians. At one time, it could be asserted that if Russian stepped up its pressure on Ukraine over the Crimea, the showdown 'could slow or halt Ukraine's transfer of nuclear weapons to Russia, thereby complicating the entire denuclearization program'.²³ However, on 1 June 1996, the Ukrainian President announced that the transfer of Ukrainian nuclear warheads to Russia had been completed. With that threshold crossed, Ukraine lost the security guarantees it might have had against Russian military pressure, International assistance became the only viable option.

The link to Ukraine's position on potential NATO membership is clear. However remote this possibility may seem at present, no analyst would stake his or her career on saying that Ukraine will have no chance of admission at some time in the future. If Ukraine moves closer to NATO, it would obviously not want a Russian naval base on the issue, and a clash over Sevastopol would follow.²⁴ The legend of Russian military glory, which holds the city in high esteem as a site of Russian sacrifice and military valour, will work against the peaceful resolution of the potential conflict with the West. For the Russian top brass, Sevastopol is worth dying for, while, for example, Chechnya is not. This attitude should never be forgotten in any analysis of the problem.

Culturally, Russians consider the Crimea as an inseparable part of their legitimate sphere of interest. They are concerned about the growing 'Tatarisation' of the peninsula by the influx of Tatars repatriated from Central Asia, and the attempts of the Ukrainian government to reduce Russian local autonomy there. Russian politicians understand perfectly well that, if the battle for Russian

²³ John W. R. Lepingwell, 'START II and the Politics of Arms Control in Russia', *International Security*, Autumn 1995, vol. 20, no. 2, p. 85.

²⁴ See Anatol Lieven, 'Russian Opposition to NATO Expansion', *The World Today*, October 1995, vol. 51, no. 10, pp. 196-9.

local autonomy is lost in the Crimea, they have little hope of winning it in, say, the Narva region of Estonia, where Russians are in the majority, or in the Latvian capital, Riga, where they form a sound plurality. This in Kuzio's words, the 'Ukrainian "threat" to Russia is not military – but political, cultural, and psychological'.²⁵ The Crimea serves as a visible manifestation of a half-real, half-imaginary threat to Russian national pride and political identity.

Ukrainians do not and cannot perceive the Crimea with the same degree of emotional attachment. All else being equal, the symbolic importance of the Crimea for the Ukrainians is marginal; indeed, it is sometimes asserted that the problems that the separatist enclave causes outweigh any potential benefits for the Ukrainian state. Besides, 'as a new and economically weak state Ukraine clearly cannot afford to support the BSF in anything like its present form'.²⁶ The problem, however, is that 'all else' is *not* equal as far as Ukraine and Russia are concerned. Russia laments the loss of its former imperial grandeur; while for Ukraine the issue is its hardly-won sovereignty in a very basic, elementary form. For Russia, territorial concentration may still be interpreted as shedding the remnants of former 'colonial' or pseudo-colonial possessions. Ukraine cannot take refuge in this shooting interpretation. Thus, Ukraine, in effect, is more sensitive to the Crimean issue than Russia itself. On both sides, national pride and historic memories are involved. The fact that in one case the memories are of erstwhile glory, and in the other of past subjugation, does not make the situation any more manageable. International monitoring of Crimean developments is necessary from the point of view of both regional and European security.

The CIS: A New Alliance?

Faced with growing Russian assertiveness, Ukrainian politicians are intent on keeping Ukraine's status of a formally neutral, non-aligned state. For this reason, Ukraine has withdrawn from the CIS military structures, except for limited participation in

²⁵ Taras Kuzio, *Russia – The Crimea – Ukraine: Triangle of Conflict* (London: Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, 1994), p. 1.

²⁶ John Jaworsky, *Ukraine: Stability and Instability* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1995), p. 48.

a joint air defence system with Russia,²⁷ and restricted its cooperation with NATO to the Partnership for Peace programme (which is also open to Russia) and to the IFOR peacekeeping mission in Bosnia, in which Russia participates as well. Meanwhile, the rest of the CIS is currently showing centripetal tendencies in Moscow's favour, as witnessed by the recent transformation of the Russian-Belarussian Community into the Union of Belarus and Russia (under the agreement signed on 2 April 1997).

Russia makes no secret of its ambition to play the leading role in formally multilateral CIS structures, be it financial, economic, political, or military. In practice, this means that all important decision-making is done in Moscow. 'Can we be indifferent', Boris Yeltsin asked the CIS heads-of-state at the January 1997 CIS summit, 'when powerful enterprises, connected to the Russian partners by thousands of threads, are put into the hands of foreign companies, changing the direction of their sales or stopping them altogether?'²⁸ The economic interests of the Russian state and Russian private capital determine the direction and long-term goals of Moscow's attempts at 'reintegration' with its CIS partners. Ukraine cannot except this kind of leadership for fear of renewed Russian dominance. The West, however, is quite content with the idea that Russia may, in fact, inherit the hegemonic role it played in the former Soviet Union.²⁹ For this reason, Ukraine is desperately trying to diversify its international links, as an at least partial counter-balance to the still predominant Russian influence.

The treaty on the Russian-Belarussian Union was instrumental for the Russian ongoing attempts to consolidate its military position within the CIS. The treaty and related documents have made Belarus a part of the Russian system of military planning – at least as far as defence of the 'western front' is concerned. The CIS joint air defence system had put the Belarussian and Kazakh air forces under the *de facto* control of the Russian high command – and Russia hopes of extending that control further, by bringing in Georgia and Armenia.

²⁷ *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 25 October 1997, p. 3.

²⁸ *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 5 April 1997.

²⁹ Wynne Russell, 'Russian Relations with the "Near Abroad"', in Peter Shearman, ed., *Russian Foreign Policy Since 1990* (Boulder: Westview, 1995), p. 55.

And if, as Russia hopes, Armenia and Georgia become active participants, Moscow's control will extend even further. CIS peacekeeping operations have helped to re-establish Russian presence in the Caucasus (South Ossetia, Abkhazia) and Central Asia (Tajikistan). The North Caucasian theatre entailed the compliance of the Georgian government, while the peacekeeping mission in Tajikistan draws auxiliaries from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, thus bringing some substance to the Russian claim that this is in fact a multinational force. In addition, neither the Armenian nor the Azeri sides to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict could afford to ignore the Russian presence in the area, and both concluded their bilateral treaties on military assistance and consultations with Moscow. The Russian, however, clearly favoured the Armenians and did not hesitate to breach the rules of international conduct with massive illegal supplies of arms to the Armenian side.³⁰ Finally, retired and semi-retired officers of higher rank have joined the independent armed forces of the self-proclaimed separatist republics of Trans-Dnister (east Moldova) and Nagorno-Karabakh (south-west Azerbaijan) ostensibly as mercenaries outside the control of Moscow.

These developments have had two major consequences of military-political significance. Firstly, they have moved the CIS states further towards the establishment of a bloc structure, which would possess formal authority over the military and defence planning. Secondly, they have made Russia the undisputed leader of this emerging structure. Russia had to face unavoidable accusations of 'neoimperialism' – which are usually countered by claiming that Russia is a 'protector of democratic transformations' in the post-Soviet space. Ukraine, however, has had – and continues to have – its doubts, based largely on Russia's methods of dealing with domestic opposition, as demonstrated by Yeltsin's treatment of the Russian parliament in October 1993, and especially by Moscow's handling of the Chechen crisis in its own southern periphery. The state of Ukrainian-Russian relations could not give ground for optimism either, since both before and after the conclusion of the Friendship Treaty, both chambers of the Russian parliament displayed and continued to display hostility towards Ukrainian independence.

³⁰ *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 28 March 1997, p. 3.

While CIS military coordination and, in particular, cost sharing have never approached the NATO level, the first steps in this direction have nevertheless been taken. However, the claim of Russian policymakers that the CIS must be taken seriously as a kind of counterpart to NATO lacked one vital factor – Ukraine. Ukraine, with its 52 million-strong population, its huge industrial potential, deliberately geared to the military-industrial complex, and its Soviet-era military installations of the first and second lines of defence against attack from the West, is vital to any Russian plans 'to negotiate with Europe as equals, not as inferiors'.³¹

Ukraine's reaction to the flexing of Russia's military muscles was predictable. It could not change its status within the CIS from that of observer to full member without denouncing part of its sovereignty in the most sensitive area of defence planning and political-military decision making. At the same time, it could not realistically expect to apply for and be granted NATO membership. The Western Alliance was having enough trouble with anticipating and dissuading fierce Russian resistance to the acceptance of the Central European states. Some analysts have pointed out that even a hint at Ukraine's possibly joining NATO could prompt the Russians to backtrack on the SALT-II and the CFE treaties, and even to move their nuclear weapons as far west as Kaliningrad (former Königsberg) *oblast*. Belarus, too, as its President has stated on a number of occasions, would make launch sites available in such an eventuality. Under these circumstances, the only viable option still open to Ukraine's leaders is the same delicate balancing act that has distinguished foreign policies of the country since its independence.

The most likely future for the CIS would appear to be as some kind of confederative structure with intensely coordinated industrial, financial and trade policies, but more or less independent national diplomacy, sovereign governments and autonomous electoral processes. It is already clear that Russia will fail in forging anything like a uniform, homogenous entity of several satellite states equally tied to their Moscow patron. Even now, the 'union of the two' (Russia and Belarus), which is the closest implementation of the Russian idea of integration, competes with the 'union of the four' (Russia,

³¹ Personal interview with the First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Mr. Victor L. Vassiliev, New York, 16 September 1996.

Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan and Belarus). Ukraine has launched an 'informal' drive to balance the pro-Russian developments in the CIS on the basis of subregional economic integration, and laid the foundations of the GUAM union (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldava). 'The principle common denominators of this latter alignment', writes Liz Fuller, 'are an unequivocally pro-Western orientation and the development of transportation links and a pipeline network for the export of Azerbaijan's Caspian oil, both of which would circumvent Russian territory. The alignment thus poses a threat to Russian hopes of preserving a leading role within the CIS'.³²

One may fairly safely predict that the CIS military cooperation will continue to develop at both regional and subregional levels, which means that only part of it will be controlled by politicians in Moscow. The actual posture of the Moscow-centered alliance (pro-European or to the contrary) will be defined primarily by the stance NATO takes towards Russia and its allies, and also by the Russian attitude to the CIS-based alliances in which Moscow is not present. If Ukraine's neutral status is preserved, the country may become a 'buffer zone' separating Russia from Europe. The alternative, which is the preferred vision of the Ukrainian government, is to serve as a 'bridge' linking the West and the East of the continent together. On the other hand, Ukraine may shed its neutrality and form a military alliance with other GUAM countries. The prospect of NATO membership remains, in the short term, unfeasible.

Cooperation with NATO

To make Ukraine more visible in the international arena and to improve the often sceptical international assessment of the country's defence capabilities, the Ukrainian leadership decided to step up its participation in NATO's Partnership for Peace programme (PfP), and to make Ukrainian troops readily available for UN peacekeeping operations. The latter decision made Ukraine the only other post-Soviet state apart from Russia to participate in UN peacekeeping missions on a permanent basis. Ukrainian troops have taken part in seven UN peacekeeping operations all around the globe,

³² Liz Fuller, '1997 in review: The CIS – Half Alive or Half Dead?', *RFE/RL* online, 22 December 1997.

plus one mission under NATO sponsorship in Bosnia. Their important role in the peacekeeping contingent in Angola was praised by both the local powers and the United Nations. The performance of Ukraine's peacekeepers, who make a noticeable part of the UNPROFOR force in Bosnia-Herzegovina, won the approval of the Croatian authorities. Ukraine has also been acting as a mediator in the on-going negotiations between Moldova and its breakaway region of Trans-Dnister, mostly populated by ethnic Slavs. Ukrainians are ready to participate in peacekeeping missions throughout the territory of the former Soviet Union, specifically in Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh, pending the approval of such a mission by either the UN or the OSCE.

For Ukrainian policymakers, participation in the expanded PfP remains high on the list of priorities. While for the Russians PfP has been valuable, first and foremost, as an instrument delaying the admittance of East European countries to NATO, the Ukrainians have regarded it as a vehicle for closer cooperation in the West in the military and political spheres. Ukraine applied to join the PfP before Russia or other CIS states. It has regularly hosted joint military exercises with NATO countries, readily exchanged relevant information, and actively cooperated in peacekeeping. Since the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between NATO and Ukraine was signed at the 1997 Madrid Summit, Ukraine and NATO have launched the Joint Working Group on Defence Reform, a joint group in the field of civil emergency planning, and opened a NATO Information and Documentation Centre in Kyiv. Other areas of prospective cooperation are being explored.³³

By participating in PfP, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC)³⁴ and the Council of Europe, Ukraine is re-establishing itself as a sovereign European power with a foreign policy fully independent of Russian influences. As a neutral power, Ukraine does not wish to become a member of any military bloc. At the same time, as President Leonid Kuchma mentioned on several occasions, the current non-aligned status of Ukraine should not be regarded as its eternal destiny. The Ukrainian leadership tries to

³³ *NATO Press Release* (98) 34, 26 March 1998.

³⁴ The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council was established on 30 May 1997, superseding the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (1991-7), of which both Russia and Ukraine were members.

keep its options open. Despite its economic hardships, Ukraine still

manages to maintain the world's third-largest air force and Europe's third-largest standing army. Participation in PfP programmes, including military exercises with NATO countries, the IFOR/SFOR missions in Bosnia and the joint Poland-Ukraine Battalion, should make the Ukrainian army prepared for cooperation in the field with the Western armies and demonstrated this readiness to Russia.³⁵

Ukraine regards itself as a normal European state, whose main international concerns are the preservation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the development of the best possible relations with its neighbours and other members of the world community. Russia's self-perception is different in the sense that the Russian political leadership and diplomatic corps continue to think in terms of a supranational Russian 'mission', conceived as global in scope and manifestations. Russian policymakers still treat their country as an aspiring, if not actual, superpower. Consequently, Russia's goals in the Permanent Joint Council established by the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act go beyond the regular bilateral partnership open to any other PfP country. Russia would like to use the enhanced military-to-military dialogue envisaged by the Act as a vehicle for advancing its interests in the West. To give but one example, the mechanism of consultations and information exchange with NATO countries presents convenient opportunities to influence decision-making in the Alliance. Russia wants a partnership tailored to its 'size, importance, and potential', especially 'in those areas where Russia can make a unique and important contribution commensurate with its weight and responsibility as a major European, world, and nuclear power'.³⁶ Though toned down in the wording of the 1997 document, Russia's self-image as a powerful and influential country with a significant say in pan-European affairs has not been abandoned.

³⁵ Personal interview with O. Horin, New York, 16 September 1996. Cf. US Department of State, Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs, 'U.S.-Ukraine Relations', *Fact Sheet*, 18 June 1997.

³⁶ Protocol on the Results of Discussions between Russian Foreign Ministry Andrey Kozyrev and the NATO Council, in Michael Mihalka, 'European-Russian Security and NATO's Partnership for Peace', *RFE/RL Research Report*, 25 March 1994, vol. 3, no. 12, pp. 34-345.

Ukraine does not and cannot make similar claims to special treatment. Its main reason for participating in PfP is to avoid being squeezed between the expanding NATO and the emerging CIS military alliance with Russia at its core. The Ukrainian leadership continues to view CIS military integration with suspicion. The original theory that member-states would have joint control over combined CIS forces has never been implemented. Indeed, to date such CIS forces do not even exist as a distinct entity; what goes by his name is in effect Russian troops, slightly diluted and supplemented with some troops of the allied countries, such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgystan and Tajikistan. And – viewed from Kyiv – a more active role for Belarus looks all too likely. However, at the moment ‘Russia appears content with the use of early-warning bases and is uninterested in financing the Belarussian armed forces’.³⁷

The only example of a moderately successful Ukrainian-Russian military collaboration in the post-Soviet space dates from 1993, when naval forces of the then undivided Black Sea Fleet took part in a peacekeeping mission in western Georgia.³⁸ The subsequent dispute over the division of the BSF ships and infrastructure poisoned an already precarious relationship. Fear of paving the way to Russian domination kept Ukraine from signing the CIS Statute or the 1992 Tashkent Treaty on Collective Security. Instead, Ukraine has sought to establish ‘special relations’ with NATO. Ukraine’s joining PfP has been considered as an important step towards that end. Ukrainian participation in the NATO operations in Bosnia, without any pretensions to the ‘independent’ field command demanded by the Russians, was another step in the same direction. The Charter on a Distinctive Partnership with NATO has, it would seem, established a hardly-reversible trend.

³⁷ Ustina Markus, ‘Imperial Understretch: Belarus’s Union with Russia’, *Current History*, October 1996, vol. 95, no. 603, p. 339.

³⁸ Alexander A. Pikayev, ‘The Russian Domestic Debate on Policy Towards the “Near Abroad”’, in Lena Johnson and Clive Archer, eds., *Peacekeeping and the role of Russia in Eurasia* (Boulder: Westview, 1996), p. 58.

Conclusion

The key powers in the post-Soviet space, Ukraine and Russia, represent a dilemma for both regional and international security. They obviously need each other for a number of reasons, including, but not limited to, economic cooperation and development. At the same time, their potential drawing together raises the ghost of resurgent Russian imperialism, which, historically and geostrategically speaking, specifically frightens Russia's immediate neighbours and, until recently, junior partners – the Ukrainians. Russia's emerging regional hegemony is institutionalised via the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Russian-Belarussian Union. Ukraine's distinct position in the CIS and its reluctance to join the Union, which, according to Leonid Kuchma, is 'absolute nonsense' and 'the way to the destruction of the CIS',³⁹ has so far evoked no major economic or major sanctions from Russia. However, as Russia's foreign policy stance becomes more assertive and increasingly utilitarian, no one can be certain that its current balanced attitude towards Ukraine will not deteriorate. If this happens, the Ukrainian distinctive partnership with NATO may prove its best guarantee of safety.

Political and military developments in the area need to be closely and continuously monitored by the international community. Ukraine's special significance for international stability in Europe is all the more evident in view of the forthcoming enlargement of NATO, which will put Ukraine directly between what may evolve into two potentially hostile camps. In the worst-case scenario, Ukraine will have to serve as a *cordon sanitaire* in the border zone between the expanded NATO and the Russia-dominated CIS, or the extended version of the Russian-Belarussian Union. The best-case scenario may see Ukraine paving the way to the new enlarged NATO for other CIS countries and, most importantly, the Russian Federation itself. In any case, Ukraine's distinct position vis-a-vis Russia should be supported and used as a strategic asset rather than a liability.

The Ukrainian Review, Vol. 45, No. 3.

³⁹ Paul Goble, 'Russia: Analysis From Washington – Toward A More Devisive Union', *RFE/RL* online, 2 April 1997.

Totalitarianism Causes Struggle

The issue in the Balkans is not past history or ethnic multiculturalism, or religious pluralism, which exists in every nation in the world, and is not exclusive to the Balkans, but rather a political struggle between totalitarianism and democracy at the turn of the 21st century.

The acts of military aggression and ethnic cleansing have been instigated by the one totalitarian regime in the Balkans. And the targets have been neighbouring democratic states with the express intent of destabilizing democratic programs in the Balkans. The tragedy of ethnic cleansing that the world has been witness to in Bosnia and now in Kosovo, has not occurred in a political vacuum. Its direct cause is an archaic 20th century totalitarian supremacist ideology that is contrary to democratic principles of law and morality.

The media has provided coverage of the humanitarian dimension of the crisis, but has failed to identify its vital political cause, substituting as "cause" the myth of "inevitability" of armed conflict and ethnic cleansing in the Balkans due to "ancient hatreds and grievances" and proud medieval histories. The presentation of the myth as "cause" obscures the political dimensions of the crisis, and actually absolves the dictator of political accountability for present transgressions against humanity by proving it with the very young propaganda it needs to justify itself. It furthermore undermines democracy by ignoring the fact that all other states in the Balkans are emerging democracies, all of whom also have proud medieval histories, but have chosen the way of democracy with a will equal to the will of the last remaining communist dictatorship in the Balkans to subvert it, and who seeks to subvert it still.

The only inevitability is the present will of Western democracies to support the democracy which has taken firm root on Balkan soil, for it is only this ideal which has the power to banish ethnic cleansing from the earth. Without this will, the tears of humanitarians are tears without compassion, and their criticisms of democracies in their struggle to preserve the humanitarian institution of democracy against new and more refined strategies of destabilization, morally repugnant.

The Kosovo Crisis

Parties and organisations of the Serbs in Macedonia supported by a marginal Communist Party held a rally in the center of Skopje against the NATO presence in Macedonia. On March 25 a real war was waged between the extremist Serbs and the Macedonian Police. More than one thousands Serbs living in Macedonia stoned the American Embassy, set fire to the doorman's booth, as well as vehicles in the parking lot and burned the American flag. Assisted by the League of Communists in Macedonia, Dragisa Miletic, leader of the Serbian element, sent a message to the world that "NATO must be driven out of the country and that his followers would not give up Kosovo or Macedonia".

Macedonian Tribune, Vol. 73, No. 3276.

Georgia Considering Withdrawal From CIS

Georgia is sceptical about the prolongation of the CIS collective security treaty and is considering a withdrawal from CIS, Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze said in an interview with Sankei Shimbun, a Japanese newspaper, on the eve of his first official trip to Japan as the head of state scheduled for March 4-8.

Shevardnadze said, that the same as other CIS member states, which announced their intention not to renew the collective security treaty, Georgia is sceptical about that document. "We shall decide what we are going to do about the treaty, and on this basis we shall consider a possibility of withdrawal from the CIS," he added.

The Georgian president told the Japanese journalists that he intended to visit Uzbekistan on his way home from Japan in order to hold serious talks with Uzbek President Islam Karimov on the withdrawal from the treaty and from the CIS in general.

In the opinion of Shevardnadze, the CIS collective security treaty cannot reach the targets set before it, and in the future Georgia will consider joining NATO. Shevardnadze said that Georgia would create its own frontier guard troops this year, and the Russian frontier guard troops, deployed in Georgia now, would be withdrawn. "In the future, Russian military bases on the territory of our country will be eliminated, and we shall withdraw from under Moscow's influence," the Georgian president stressed.

According to this information, Georgia, the same as Ukraine, is consolidating its relations with Europe and is trying to steer the process of state development onto a normal track on the basis of its cooperation with the West.

ITAR-TASS, Tokyo 02/25 0331

Ukraine's Political Pendulum Swings

On 3rd March 1999, Ukraine's Supreme Council voted in favour of a resolution on Ukraine's participation in the CIS' Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (MPA). The MPA was founded in 1992, one year after the establishment of the CIS, and its main mission is to coordinate legislation in the CIS framework. By joining the MPA, Ukraine does not automatically become a CIS member. The move, together with the recently approved friendship treaty between Ukraine and Russia, indicates that Ukraine is swinging the pendulum of Ukrainian politics toward rapprochement with Moscow, despite a 7 year period of strengthening its ties to the West. Pro-Russian forces in Ukraine are gaining control over the country that has been exhausted by the slow and ineffective process of economic transformation. Yet the reformists and Ukrainian nationalists will not surrender so easily and we expect the struggle between Ukrainian factions favouring Russian ties and those opposing them to intensify in the future.

Approval by the Ukrainian parliament of the resolution on joining the MPA was preceded by the approval of the Ukrainian-Russian friendship treaty and by ratification of the treaty on Ukraine borders by the Russian Federation Council in February 1999. There is no doubt that elements in Kyiv, denied financial support for Ukraine's economic reforms by the IMF since autumn 1998, are now hoping to survive economically by renewing cooperation with Russia and the rest of the CIS despite other factions in Ukraine who continue to signal Ukraine's desire to carry on integrating with the West.

The idea of Ukraine joining the MPA has been prompted in the Ukrainian parliament by parliamentary speaker Oleksandr Tkachenko since December 1998, when a Ukrainian parliamentary delegation, led by Tkachenko, visited Moscow. One month later, in January 1999, Tkachenko proposed a vote on joining the MPA during the regular session of the Ukrainian parliament. The proposal sparked a fierce struggle between communist and nationalist factions in the parliament. The proposal failed, with only 176 votes in favour, far short of the 226 votes necessary for the resolution to be approved. When the resolution on Ukraine joining the MPA was put on vote again on 3rd March 1999, however, it was passed by 230 votes to 42, with two abstentions. The discussion preceding the vote was extremely dynamic and emotional, as the issue of Ukraine's relationship with Moscow is a sensitive topic in a country that has been ravaged and tyrannized by Russia for many decades.

In their commentaries following the approval of the resolution, representatives of pro-reform forces in Ukraine expressed their belief that the move is indicative of a shift in the country's political orientation from the West towards Russia. Hennadiy Udovenko, former Ukrainian Foreign Minister, was quoted as saying that "MPA was the first step towards recreation of the Soviet Union in some form." The nationalist Rukh Party member, the late Vyacheslav Chornovil, addressed his colleagues in the parliament by saying: "We are in the process of changing the vector of Ukrainian politics from a European to a Russian orientation." Contrary to these voices Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma and Prime Minister Valeriy Pustovoitenko expressed their satisfaction with the vote.

Russian State Duma speaker Gennadij Selenyov praised the the outcome of the March 3 vote shortly after its announcement. He told journalists at a press conference in Geneva, where he was on a 3 day official visit, that he was "very happy because our ranks have got reinforcement." Ukraine and Russia recently made several important steps towards harmonizing their bilateral relations. On 17th February 1999, the Russian State Duma approved the 1997 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between Ukraine and Russia, and on 2nd March 1999, Russian President Boris Yeltsin ratified the treaty. The passing of the treaty by the Russian parliament has been delayed repeatedly due to unresolved issues complicating the mutual relations, such as the status of the city of Sevastopol and the division of the Black Sea Fleet. The approved treaty recognises the territorial sovereignty of Ukraine and the country's existing borders.

There is little doubt that approval of the friendship treaty between Ukraine and Russia and Ukraine's entry into the MPA, were both results of intensive negotiations between Ukrainian and Russian communists. And it is very likely, that Tkachenko's delegation that visited Moscow in December 1998 won the Russian side's backing for the friendship treaty by making certain concessions involving the separatist territory of the Crimea and Ukraine's participation in the MPA. Only a couple of days after the Moscow visit, the Ukrainian parliament implemented constitutional changes that guaranteed greater autonomy to the Crimea and strengthened the Crimea's political representation in the country's legislative body. This move was initiated by Tkachenko, and apparently, before being implemented, did not go through required legislative channels.

The recent developments indicate that pro-Russia forces in Ukraine are gaining control over the country which has been exhausted

by a slow and ineffective process of economic transformation. And yet, the reformist factions keep expressing their desire to join the Western structures such as NATO and the European Union. Most recently, the head of the Department for the European Union of the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry, Viktor Masshtaby, said at a briefing in Kyiv on 2nd March 1999, that his country's goal is to become a full member of the EU. Masshtaby said that the Ukrainian legislators are making intensive efforts to adapt the country's legislation to European standards. Western institutions, primarily the IMF, made it clear that no further financial help would be given to Ukraine, unless the country makes progress in transforming its legislative environment and economic structures. With a deteriorating economy, Ukraine is now standing at a crossroads. The question is whether the democratic forces in the country are strong enough to sustain the implementation of pro-reform policies in a drastically declining economic environment. More to the point, the question is whether the pro-Western factions can entice their Western allies to deliver benefits that outweigh what Russia has to offer.

Global Intelligence Update, March 1999.

Russian Military Base in Tajikistan

Russia formally set up its first military base in the former Soviet Republic of Tajikistan, which according to defence sources, will be home to some 6,500 troops.

The agreement, signed by President Boris Yeltsin and his Tajik counterpart Emomali Rahmonov in the Kremlin, will allow Russia's 201st motorized infantry division to be based in the central Asian country bordering Afghanistan for at least 10 years. The division currently comprises 6,500 soldiers, Interfax cited defence ministry sources as saying, and will not be reinforced by additional troops.

The base will be financed entirely by Russia. The two sides also agreed that Moscow would help Dushanbe improve its national defences and in the future become the primary supplier of military equipment and arms to Tajikistan.

The Tajik-Russian pact will establish "peace, well-being and prosperity" in Tajikistan, Yeltsin said. Russia has been overseeing a two-year old peace accord in Tajikistan which put an end to five years of civil war between the neocommunist government and guerillas.

The Muslim World, Vol. 36, No. 42.

Latvia Commemorates Anniversary of Deportations

On Monday, 14th June 1999, Latvia commemorated the anniversary of mass deportation of its citizens. On June 14, 1941 over 14,000 people were forcibly deported from Latvia. On Monday, a minute of silence was observed at railway stations from which trains departed taking the forcibly deported people away from their native country.

On the eve of the tragic anniversary a collection of historic documents from the Latvian State Archives was released. The documents contain a plan signed by former NKVD Chief Lavrenty Beriya about the deportation of the population from Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Moldova. The plan specified the number of families which were to be deported to Kazakhstan, the Krasnoyarsk region and the Onega timber processing labor camp.

An international conference of historians attended by scholars from 14 countries, including Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, began on 14th June. The conference was opened by Latvian President Guntis Ulmanis. Shortly before World War II the Latvian president's family was also deported to the Krasnoyarsk region.

Itar-Tass – RIGA, 14 June 1999.

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IN THIS ISSUE:

Jean-Pierre CAP

Le Livre Noire du Communisme	1
Dagestan Muslims Proclaim Independence	14
Fundamentalism is Not the Most Pressing Problem in the Caucasus	15
Chechen Republic: Humanity is Indivisible	17
The Illegal President	19
Belarus's President Lukashenko Called on the Carpet	20

Tajikistan President Wins Landslide

DUSHANBE, Tajikistan, 8 November 1999 (AP) - President Emomali Rakhmonov won a landslide victory in Tajikistan's presidential race, the Central Election Commission announced Sunday, but his challenger refused to accept the result. Preliminary results showed that Rakhmonov had taken 96% of the vote in balloting Saturday, winning a seven-year term, said commission chairman Mirzoali Boltuyev. The commission had reported a turnout of more than 96 percent of the nation's approximately 2.8 million registered voters.

But Rakhmonov's sole challenger, Davlat Usmon, said he would not recognize the results and called for the election to be invalidated. He told a news conference on Sunday that he believed the election was rigged, and estimated that only 20-30% of eligible voters cast ballots. Opposition members and some international human rights monitors claimed that the election campaign was neither free nor fair, and international organizations refused to send observers.

Opposition parties accused Rakhmonov's government of interfering in their drives to collect signatures to nominate candidates and preventing them from campaigning. Usmon, the Islamic Revival Party candidate, had planned to boycott the vote, but was persuaded by Rakhmonov and an opposition leader to change his mind on the eve of the election.

The election pitted Rakhmonov, a hard-line secularist, against the devoutly Islamic Usmon. The two were on opposite sides in the 5-year civil war that devastated Tajikistan and ended with a shaky cease-fire in 1997. "By voting for Rakhmonov, the Tajik people actually favored support and continuation of democratic changes, peace and stability in the republic," said Boltuyev, the electoral commission chairman. He said that the results announced Sunday were only preliminary, and the official results would be published within 10 days.

Alexander Metelsky, head of a team of election observers from the CIS, a grouping of former Soviet republics, said his team did not observe any fraud. "We believe that the elections passed as they should have, that is, in compliance with the constitutional law of Tajikistan," he said, according to the ITAR-Tass news agency. He said, "it was clear from talks with voters that people were tired of war," and they voted for Rakhmonov because he had managed the transition to peace.

Le Livre noire du communisme

(An Appraisal)

The Black Book of Communism. Crimes, Terror, Repression¹ is already regarded as one of the most eventful scholarly publications in France since World War II. It has caused a seismic shock throughout the French and European intellectual community – a shock that has sparked a great debate, controversy and has inspired many to feel sorrow and pity upon learning of the horrible fate of an enormous number of mankind. The interest in *The Black Book of Communism*² has been such that translations into some thirty languages are planned. Several are already in print.

The Black Book of Communism is a large volume. It includes a philosophical part consisting of an introductory essay, “The Crimes of Communism” (pp. 9-41) and a concluding one “Why?” (pp. 793-826), both written by Stéphane Courtois, the principle editor of the volume. Together these essays form a moral basis for the study of communist criminality throughout the world during its entire existence and provide an explanation of its significance.

The major contributors to the volume are well known specialists in studies on communism. Quite appropriately as the center and “homeland” of communism, Russia in particular and the former Soviet Union as a whole receive the most intensive attention in the First Part. It is the largest (pp. 49-295) and is entitled “A State Against Its People” by Nicolas Werth. The Second Part, (pp. 299-394), “World Revolution, Civil War and Terrorism” includes ‘The Comintern in Action’ and ‘The NKVD in Spain’ during the Spanish Civil war, by S. Courtois and Jean-Louis Panné, and a short essay on ‘Communist Terrorism’ by Remy Kauffer. The Third Part, entitled “The Other European Victim of Communism” by Andrzej Paczkowski and Karel Bartosek deals primarily with Poland, the former Czechoslovakia and Hungary, to a lesser extent with Bulgaria, and only in a cursory fashion with Romania, Yugoslavia and Albania. The Fourth Part, “Asian Communism: Between ‘Reeducation’ and Massacre” (pp. 503-704) is about evenly divided between China (by Jean-Louis Margolin), the second most important study

¹ Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Paczkowski, Karel Bartosek, Jean-Pouis Margolin: *Le livre noire du communisme. Crimes, terreur, répression*. (The Black Book of Communism. Crimes, Terror, Repression). Paris: Robert Laffont, 1997. 846 p, FF 189.

² An assessment of its impact: *Un pavé dans l'Histoire. Le débat français sur "Le livre noire du communisme"* A (An Historical Blockbuster. The French debate over “The Black Book of Communism”) by Pierre Rigoulot and Ilios Yannakakis (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1998. 223 p. FF 119) is already in print.

in this volume, and North Korea, by Pierre Rigoulot. Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia, with a special emphasis on the latter, are by Jean-Louis Margolin. The Fifth Part: "The Third World" includes a section on 'Communism in Latin America' by Pascal Fontaine (pp. 705-742), one on Africa by Yves Santamaria (pp. 743-767), and one on Afghanistan by Sylvain Boulouque (pp. 768-791).

It is "the most comprehensive assessment of all the misdeeds committed under the banner of communism" throughout the world and it goes beyond the goal of tallying up the number of victims. For this, numerous unrepentant communists have accused the authors of having engaged in "a macabre accounting," as if the 100 million victims of communism should not be mentioned lest it might embarrass those who remain faithful to this dangerous ideology.

In his introductory essay, which is the most original and perhaps the most important part of the volume, Courtois examines the characteristics of communist crimes, terror and repression. The author first explains that the communists' use of violence in seizing power and their continued use of repression and terror was not only in order to retain power – the dictatorship of the proletariat – but a regular means of implementing policies. In these three ways communist regimes were criminal and perpetrated crimes which stagger the imagination not only by the number of victims, but by the dehumanizing violence used.

Defenders of communism have often alleged that communist ideology is a noble ideal and that only in the initial stages of its implementation has it required the use of force. First, Courtois points out that "archives and abundance witness accounts show that terror was from the beginning one of the fundamental dimensions of modern communism" and that all communist regimes used mass crimes not only to establish their power, but as an actual way of governing. "True," he adds, "after a variable lapse of time, extending from several years in Eastern Europe to several decades in the USSR and in China, communism lost its vigour, regimes became stabilized and managed repression on a daily basis" (12).³ He explains that "communist crimes have not been submitted to a legitimate and normal assessment, neither from a historical nor a moral point of view" (13) because not only current leaders themselves, but their sympathizers in the West and even democratic leaders took the view that "what occurred within the boundaries of an established and internationally recognised state correspond to the legality of the state in question." Courtois and his colleagues focus their attention on "crimes [committed] against persons which constitute the essence of the phenomenon of terror" (13).

Courtois then lists the various means used to destroy human beings: cold, exhaustion, illness and especially hunger, as during the famine of 1921-22 due to civil war and mismanagement or "deliberately caused and/or unrelieved" as in

³ All references unless otherwise indicated are made to pages in *Le Livre noir du communisme*.

Ukraine in 1932-33 (14). The total number of victims approaches the staggering number of 100 million. Yet, this horrific number appears to be a low estimate. "As for the Russian SSR of Lenin and Stalin, one's blood chills at the thought of its experimental yet perfectly thought out, logical, political character" (14). Assassinations by communists in countries not under communists rule caused at least 10,000 victims. Of these, only some of the most famous are known: Yevhen Konovaletz in Rotterdam in 1938, Trotsky in Mexico in 1940, Stepan Bandera in Munich in 1959, and of course the attempt against Pope John Paul II in Rome in 1981.

Courtois' placing of Lenin and Stalin on the same level of inhumanity is the second way in which he has caused shock, for there are still many diehard admirers of the "grand" old man of bolshevism. Following other scholars, he makes the case against Lenin as the original inventor of communist terror. It is also clear that Trotsky should be included among the original willing practitioners of criminal violence to maintain the dictatorship of the proletariat. Courtois then undertakes a systematic indictment of communist regimes not on some vague or personal criteria, but on the basis of judicial standards established in 1945 by the Nuremberg Tribunal created to try the Nazis, and expanded since. Article 6 of the Statutes of the Nuremberg Tribunal defined three major categories: crimes against peace, war crimes, crimes against humanity. Courtois concludes that "an overall examination of the crimes committed under the Lenin/Stalinist regime and in the communist world in general leads us to recognise each of these three categories" (15).

Stalin's pact with Hitler of August 1939 definitely contributed to the unleashing of World War II. His attack against Finland on November 30, 1939 is another example of a crime against peace. Courtois does not mention the wars waged by Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin against the peoples of the former Russian Empire, which had proclaimed their independence, notably the Ukrainians. Thus, as pointed out by Robert Conquest, "in 1921 Ukraine was the first independent Eastern European State to be successfully taken over by the Kremlin."⁴ later, the invasion of South Korea by North Korea with the help of the USSR, as well as the invasion of Afghanistan were crimes against peace, as were subversion and assistance in civil wars in Africa and Latin America.

The mass murder at Katyn of Polish officers taken prisoner in 1939 fits perfectly the definition of a 'war crime.' Communists and their sympathisers attributed this barbaric deed to the Nazis, until Yeltsin made public the document proving Soviet responsibility. Other war crimes of the USSR are the murder through inhumane treatment of hundreds of thousands of German prisoners of

⁴ Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Despair* (New York & Oxford, Oxford Univ. Press, 1996) p. 41.

war,⁵ the rape of innumerable German women by the Red Army in 1945, and the systematic execution of Polish, Balt and Ukrainian resistance fighters for years after the war was over.

Earlier definitions of crimes against humanity were extended at Nuremberg, Article 6c to include "assassination, extermination, enslavement, deportation [as well as other forms] of persecutions for political, racial or religious motives [...] whether committed in violation or not of the internal law of the country where they were perpetrated." The French penal code adopted on July 23, 1992 further expands the Nuremberg definition to specifically include crimes committed for political or philosophical reasons with a plan aimed at a group of the civilian population "determined by any arbitrary criteria" (17018). According to this definition, war against a social group can be characterised as genocide. In the context of "class warfare" the communists waged war against the bourgeoisie, the nobility, the peasantry, the intelligentsia, the religious, the Cossaks (wars which Lenin himself compared to the French Revolutionary War against the royalists and the Christians in Vendée).

"The great Ukrainian famine of 1932-33, was designed to eliminate the resistance of the rural population to forced collectivization. In a matter of months, it caused the death of six million people." (19) (Most experts' estimates fluctuate between 7 and 10 million deaths, caused by hunger in Ukraine in 1932-33.) Curtois adds that "here, the 'class' genocide approaches the 'race' genocide: the death by hunger of the child of the Ukrainian kulak, deliberately reduced to starvation by Stalin's regime, is the equivalent of the death of a Jewish child in the Warsaw ghetto, caused to starve by the Nazi regime." The parallel is not new. Two decades ago, Vasilij Grossman, a Soviet Jew whose mother was killed by the Nazis in Berdychiv, is quoted as having been perhaps the first to equate the Famine in Ukraine with the Holocaust. Stalin regarded Ukrainian independent peasants or kulaks "exactly the way Germans did when they said the Jews are not human being. That is what Lenin and Stalin said: kulaks are not human beings" (26). Stalin ordered that they be annihilated "as a class." Whereas the Nazis aimed at destroying certain races, the Soviet designated certain socio-economic classes for annihilation. While equating the two genocides and the two barbaric regimes, Courtois maintains a distinction between the "singularity of Auschwitz" where an industrial process of extermination was at work, and "the systematic use of hunger as a weapon." Later, hunger was used by numerous communist regimes (in China, Ethiopia, Cambodia). As he points out, since 1918 hunger causing deaths in excess of hundreds of thousands of victims occurred only in communist countries.

⁵ The fact that Germans caused the death of vastly greater numbers of Soviet prisoners of war through inhuman treatment does not provide justification for Soviet crimes against their German prisoners.

Courtois also addresses the less tangible issue of complicity in crimes against humanity, as defined in the Canadian criminal code (1987) Article 7 (3.77), where "attempts, complicity, advice, help, encouragement or complicity in deed, as well as complicity after the fact" are defined as criminal. Under this article he indicts communists and others around the world who "applauded enthusiastically the policy of Lenin and Stalin, the 'great Leader' of the Chinese Revolution, and later, Pol Pot of Cambodia. "Many claim not to have known [...] but often, this ignorance was merely the result of blindness due to militant faith" (21). Courtois agrees with Robert Conquest's reasoning that those who did not denounce the Great Famine and the Great Purge of the thirties made subsequent communist crime easier to commit. And one might add, the non-condemnation of communist crimes made it easier for the Nazis to engage in their crimes. What of those who kept on praising Stalin from the thirties until the seventies and later, and some who still praise him today? They were complicit in the cover-up. The poet Louis Aragon, who fervently wished for the creation by France of its very own KGB, although he knew how murderous it was, never recanted. Nor did Pablo Neruda, who celebrated Stalin as "the little father of peoples." Such egregious admiration of Stalin desecrates his victims, but it has in no way hurt their standing as writers. Their works still appear in college anthologies even in North America.

How long will humanity wait to condemn those who praised murderous communist leaders as we condemn those who praised Hitler?

To show how much more brutal the communist repression was than that of the tsarist regime it had toppled, Courtois points out that between 1825 and 1917, 3,932 persons were executed in tsarist Russia for their political opinions or actions. The Bolsheviks exceeded that number by March 1918, after being in power for merely four months! (23-24)

Courtois also compares communist and Nazi terror: 100 million victims of communism, 25 million victims of Nazism. There again the facts are stubborn. Between 1933 and 1939 the Nazis assassinated about 20,000 leftist militants and put to death some 70,000 persons in their program of euthanasia. Killings on a grand scale took place during the war, not that the conduct of the war required it or in any way justified the barbaric program which cost the life of 25 million people. The Jews, Poles and Ukrainians sustained the greatest losses. In occupied countries, 15 million civilians perished, mainly Slavs, including 3.3 million Soviet prisoners of war, and 5.1 [sic] million Jews. Furthermore, 8 million persons, the majority from Slavic countries, were subjugated to forced labour, and 1.6 million of these died of mistreatment. The Nazis have been condemned. Yet the communist system kept its full international legitimacy and still has numerous supporters around the world.

Courtois, concerned with the aftermath of communism, contrasts the worldwide attempt at purging the world of Nazis with virtually no effort to punish

surviving communists. In fact, during the political debacle of communism in Europe, Western leaders on the highest policy levels insisted that they would not tolerate persecution of communist officials. Soon communists regained much of their power and have paralyzed the evolution of Eastern European countries toward democracy.

Courtois also explains that Lenin's methods, institutionalised by Stalin, not only remind one of those of the Nazis, but often preceded them. For example, Bolsheviks created concentration camps in the early twenties. Later, Rudolph Hoess, the first commandant of Auschwitz, reported that at the time he received his assignment he was given detailed documentation on Soviet concentration camps, especially about the fact that Russians were annihilating entire populations through forced labour. Thus the Soviet did not merely precede the Nazis in genocide, but may have inspired them (25).

"It is evident," remarks Courtois, "that the study of stalinism and communist terror in general lags far behind that of the Nazi crimes (27). Indeed," he adds, "nothing comparable to Raul Hilberg's works on the Holocaust exists for Soviet crimes. Why," he wonders, "are Dzerzhinsky, persecution of the Jews by the Nazis, communists saw the advantage [...] of focusing attention on one exceptional atrocity so as to hide other similar realities in the communist world." (33)

In 1956, First Secretary of the Party Nikita Khrushchev began to officially, although still in a secret report, to recognise some of the atrocities committed under Stalin. However, as Nicolas Werth later points out, Khrushchev was "very selective in his condemnation of stalinism without ever questioning the major policies of the Party since 1917." He accused Stalin of deviations after 1934 "which excluded the crimes committed during collectivisation and the Famine of 1932-33. The victims he mentioned are all communists, [...] but never ordinary citizens." (282) Then came the *Gulag Archipelago*. "But even Solzhenitsin had difficulty to break through the crust of lies." (37)

Today communist archives document and prove true the numerous witness accounts by escapees, refugees and travelers which had been considered suspect in the West since after the establishment of bolshevism in Russia to its demise in 1991. It is time to study the communist experience at last scientifically, writes Courtois. The first duty is to study the two sides of totalitarianism – Hitler's version as well as Lenin's and Stalin's. The second duty is one of **remembrance** – the morale obligation of honoring the memory of the dead, of tens of millions of innocent and anonymous victims.

The first and longest part of this volume, "Un Etat contre son peuple. Silences, répressions, terreur en Union Soviétique" (pp. 49-295) [A State Against its People. Violence, Repression, Terror in the Soviet Union] by Nicolas Werth is fundamental, for it deals with Russia and the former Soviet Union, which served as a laboratory for the communist experiment.

The first incredible yet indisputable fact stressed here is that a very small number of determined revolutionaries imposed their will on the largest empire in the world through the use of force and barbaric brutality. Werth explains that in 1917, Russian society, including the army, was in disarray. Most of the peasant-soldiers lacked patriotism because their civic horizon did not extend beyond their rural communities. Some felt indifferent to Russian goals because they did not consider themselves Russians and were much more concerned about the future of their own nations. Just as Lenin, and his Bolsheviks felt a war would give their party a chance to win power, nationalists in Poland, the Baltic States, Ukraine and elsewhere hoped the war – especially if it weakened Russia – would give their peoples a chance to gain independence. Events unfolded following this imaginary scenario. Subjugated nations claimed their independence and peasants everywhere seized land and destroyed symbols of the old order. What of the workers? Werth wonders, “did the undeniable radicalization of urban and rural masses mean that they had become Bolshevik? Nothing is less certain.” The workers demanded a true participation in the management and profits of their concerns, while the peasants wanted land. Lenin himself wished for the defeat of Russia to be followed by a civil war that would help destroy the old order. He certainly rejected any thought any thought of gaining power through the democratic process. Trotsky not only agreed with Lenin, but helped with the military *coup d'état*.

Fully aware of how precarious was the Bolsheviks' hold on power, Lenin created and consistently supported the Cheka, “the armed hand of the dictatorship of the proletariat.” Its leader, Felix E. Dzerzhinsky, had the mission to suppress and liquidate all counter-revolutionary attempts and acts. No legal basis was necessary, for according to Lenin, “terror is class revolutionary justice.” From the beginning, Lenin and Trotsky agreed to wage war on the peasants. In July-August 1918 alone there were 110 peasant riots. There were thousands more during the following three years. All were suppressed ruthlessly. This occurred on orders from Lenin himself with the full approval of his comrades, including Trotsky. Later total war on the peasantry continued until the mid-thirties.

During the summer of 1919, Lenin ordered that “extreme measures” were to be taken against the enemy, including “prophylactic” measures, i.e. the taking of hostages, and as early as August 1918, the creation of concentration camps (fifteen years before Hitler's coming to power!). Only days earlier, Dzerzhinsky and Trotsky had issued a similar order (85). The expression “concentration camp” as well as “suppression” and extermination of “classes” of people appeared as early as 1917 – not only in orders, but in the press. An editorial of August 31, 1918 stated that “the time had come to annihilate the ‘bourgeoisie’.” That referred to at least several million people. The same year that Gregori Zinoviev calmly envisaged the destruction of 10% of the population of Russia in order to impose socialism (88). And some thought Stalin was cruel for having him executed in

1936. Everyone of the original major Bolsheviks with the exception of Nikolay Bukharin and possibly a few others was capable of great ruthlessness. All shared Lenin's contempt for justice, freedom, democracy, lacked respect for human life and for the basic norms of civilisation. When Kamenev proposed the abolition of the Cheka, he was opposed by Dzerzhinsky, Yakov Sverdlov, Stalin, Trotsky and Lenin who asserted that "a good communist is also a good chekist" (92). Given such leaders and such brutality, the Red Terror of the autumn of 1918 caused between 10,000 and 15,000 victims. "In two or three weeks the Cheka had executed two or three more times people than the tsars had in ninety-two years" from 1827 to 1917 (91).

Throughout the civil war there was war on all sides. Werth does state, however, that "the Bolshevik policy of terror was more systematic, more organised, thought-out, theorised and planned well before the civil war, against entire groups of society. White terror [...] was almost always carried out by out-of-control detachments." From those early times, next to massive executions, hunger was the most effective weapon the Bolsheviks used against urban masses. The brutality of civil war was such that early on, the Reds developed a vocabulary as rich as it was dehumanizing to refer to their enemies. They called them bandits, lice, yellow mosquitoes, harmful insects, stinking dogs⁶ or simply dirt, and used verbs such as to "clean-out" and "exterminate" instead of to "kill" or to "execute".

Discussing the conquest of Ukraine, Werth explains that in "1919 there were real peasant armies numbering in tens of thousands, commanded by military and political leaders, such as Symon Petlura, Nestor Makhno, [Nykyfor] Hryhoryiv, or still [Danylo] Zeleny" (109). He might have added O. Volokh. These leaders cannot be placed in the same category. Hryhoryiv, Zeleny and Volokh were leaders of partisan formations, some of which exceeded ten thousand men. They did not, however, oppose the Bolsheviks consistently or in a coordinated fashion. For example, in the hope of establishing an anarchist polity in independent Ukraine, Makhno supported the Bolsheviks not realising they wanted to bring Ukraine under Russian rule. In narrating the Bolsheviks' aggression on Ukraine, Werth does not mention the Ukrainian National Republic which had a government with its own currency, raised taxes, fielded an army and carried out international negotiations. Nor does he state any significant fact about Symon Petlura, who was President of the Directory of the Ukrainian National Republic and Minister of War. Werth does mention, however, that during the summer and autumn of 1919 Petlura's units participated in the White Terror with detachments of Denkin's army in pogroms. This allegation which remains in dispute. While the author judiciously explains that "these actions were carried out almost always by uncontrolled detachments, which escaped the authority of a military commander

⁶ Later Jean-Paul Satre was to exclaim that an "anti-communist is a dog!"

who tried without much success to function as a government," he does not say to whom he is referring (95). But, whereas he states that Denkin condemned pogroms, he does not say the same about Petlura. Yet, Petlura⁷ was not anti-semitic, he guarded his troops against anti-Semitism and even had some of his soldiers executed for their participation in pogroms.

The author also fails to mention that the war in Ukraine was more than a civil war between the Reds and the Whites. Both Reds and Whites shared the goal of forcing Ukraine back under Russian rule.

Arbitrariness and brutality resulted in the total disorganisation of agriculture, which in 1922-23 caused a famine of catastrophic proportion. Nearly thirty million people were affected. Even though numerous international organisations came to the rescue, at times feeding over ten million, at least five million people perished. However, the highest Bolshevik authorities were not alarmed by the tragedy.⁸ Simultaneously, there was a major onslaught on the church and on intellectuals. Many were sent into exile. Lenin explained to Stalin the necessity of proceeding with "a definitive cleanup in Russia of all socialists, intellectuals, liberals and other 'gentlemen'. [...] Several hundred of these gentlemen should be pitilessly expelled" (147). Intellectuals and liberals should ponder over this statement. It was Lenin's scornful way of referring to those who advocated the non-violent democratic process.

From 1924 to the end of 1927 there was a kind of truce between the government and the people, due in large to the implementation of the New Economic Policy (NEP) and to the power struggle among the top Bolsheviks. By 1928, Stalin was firmly in control. Following on one of Lenin's major objectives, he undertook the liquidation of the peasantry "as a class" and to replace independent farms by collective ones. Anticipating great resistance, Alexy Rykov

⁷ Clearly, the Soviets saw the propaganda value of such an accusation. They used it smear Ukrainian nationalists to the bitter end. They also pursued them wherever they could find them. Werth might have reminded French readers that after the demise of the Ukrainian National Republic, Petlura sought political asylum in France where he was assassinated in Paris on 25 May 1926 by Shalom Schwartzbard. In a glaring miscarriage of justice, the assassin, having claimed that he was avenging victims of pogroms allegedly carried out by Petlura's troops, was acquitted on grounds of "justifiable homicide." The suspicion lingers that Schwartzbard had actually carried out an order of the KGB, which had a number of other prominent nationalist leaders assassinated. Why was Nestor Makhno not troubled by Schwartzbard or the Soviets? Not because he and his peasant army had no anti-Semitic sentiments and had not engaged in pogroms, but rather because he was not a national leader while in Ukraine, or with any potential future leadership while in exile in Paris where he remained active mostly in anarchist circles.

⁸ Commenting on the famine of 1891, Lenin is reported to have expounded on the positive consequences of famine it could bring about the replacement of the peasantry by an industrial proletariat, which he saw as the gravediggers of the bourgeoisie. He also thought famine destroyed faith not only in the tsar, but in God too. (140)

and Nikolay Bukharin tried to dissuade Stalin, but to no avail. The resistance of the peasantry was indeed most astonishing: in 1928-29, more than ten years after the Bolshevik coup, brutal repression and a famine, there were no fewer than 1,300 riots and protests.

"In 1930, nearly two and a half million peasants participated in some 14,000 riots, revolts and mass protests against the regime. The most affected regions were in Ukraine, especially in Western Ukraine where entire districts [...] ceased to be under the control of the regime." In those areas peasants formulated lists of demands including restitution of their properties, livestock, reopening of churches, abolition of Bolshevik power and [...] "the reestablishment of 'an independent Ukraine'" (168). Although Werth does not adequately take into account, there was clearly strong national awareness at least in certain parts of Ukraine. Just as Lenin dreaded the loss of Ukraine, so did Stalin, the expert on the nationalities question. It is in the face of danger to Soviet Russian imperialism, that Stalin resorted to the use of famine in Ukraine and territories heavily settled by Ukrainians.

Geographically, the 'famine zone' covered Ukraine as a whole, the part of the black earth zone, the rich plants of the Don, of the Kuban and the North Caucasus, a large part of Kazakhstan. [...] For the year 1933 and the country as a whole, the observed surplus of deaths exceeds six million. Ukrainian peasantry paid the largest tribute with at least four million deaths (185).

Werth does not explain the methodology used in calculating the estimate of victims, which for him is much lower than the figures heretofore accepted. Furthermore,

Should one view this famine, asks Werth, as do today certain Ukrainian publicists and historians, as a 'genocide of Ukrainian people'? It is undeniable that the Ukrainian peasantry was the principle victim of the 1932-33 famine and that this 'assault' was preceded, as early as 1929, by several offensives against Ukrainian intelligentsia first accused of 'nationalist deviation,' then beginning in 1932, against part of Ukrainian communists. One can without argument use Andrei Sakharov's expression and speak of 'Stalin's ukrainophobia.' However, it is important also to notice that proportionally, the repression by famine affected Cossack lands of the Kuban and the Don and Kazakhstan.

First, it is not true that it is merely today and only certain Ukrainian publicists and historians who see the famine of 1932-33 as a genocide⁹ of the Ukrainian people. Ukrainians who were able to do so – i.e. mostly outside of

⁹ The word appeared into most European languages after World War II in conjunction with the Jewish Holocaust.

Ukraine because under Stalin it was forbidden even to mention the famine – did write about the horrible onslaught against their people. In fact, although the press did not bring forth an adequate international public response, the tragedy was known in Europe and America where massive demonstrations were organised and aid organisations attempted to send food to Ukraine. But the Soviet government denied the existence of the famine refused all aid.

In the selected bibliography of his authoritative *The Harvest of Despair* (Oxford 1986), to which curiously Werth does not refer in his chapter on the Famine, Robert Conquest cites no fewer than sixteen works on the subject by English and American scholars and several dozens more by Poles, Russians and Ukrainians. All but seven were published over twenty years ago. It is most unfair to the victims not to recognise Stalin's true agenda. It was much more than what Andrei Sakharov called "Stalin's ukrainophobia." The Famine was much more than a punishment of Ukrainian peasants because they had been unruly and had resisted abandoning their way of life. As Robert Conquest wrote'

[...] the assault by famine on the Ukrainian peasant population was accompanied by a wide-ranging destruction of Ukrainian cultural and religious life and slaughter of the Ukrainian intelligentsia. Stalin, as we noted, saw the peasantry as the bulwark of nationalism; and common sense requires us to see this double blow at Ukrainian nationhood as no coincidence.¹⁰

Russification was a tsarist program the communists made their own and carried out throughout the non-Russian USSR until its collapse.

Then Stalin turned on "bourgeois specialists," members of the liberal professions, again on remaining members of the clergy and small business people. This led to the Great Terror of 1936-38 which, next to the Great Famine, were the most murderous years of the regime. Like the Great Famine, the Great Terror was never mentioned officially by the Soviets until Khrushchev's Report to the XXth Party Congress in 1956 (206).

In addition to the in-depth eradication of the kulaks, the Terror was aimed principally against the educated elite – 70% of the victims – and the Party, including five faithful Stalinist members of the Politbureau. Even members of foreign communist parties residing in the USSR were purged. The Polish Communist Party was decimated. The Soviet army officer corps was particularly devastated: over 30,000 officers were executed, with a high proportion of high rank, including three marshals and about two hundred and fifty officers of general rank.

¹⁰ Conquest, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

As well as the sensational trials in Moscow, there were “populist” ones on the local level which Annie Kriegel flippantly called “a formidable mechanism of social prophylaxy”¹¹ (215).

With Khrushchev at its head, the Ukrainian Communist Party suffered more than those of other regions. “106,000 persons were arrested and the great majority executed” (215). The purge was also particularly severe on intellectuals in Ukraine and Belarus (222).

The Great Terror was more publicized abroad because it took place primarily in the cities, its victims were not merely peasants, and there were sensational trials. Documentary evidence shows Stalin’s personal responsibility in the Terror. Werth states explicitly that “documents available to date prove that Stalin controlled and directed Yezkov’s activity minutely,” even though he had handpicked him to replace Yagoda at the head of the NKVD (21). Lists of individuals to be executed had to be signed by Stalin or a member of the Politbureau.

By the end of the Great Terror, population in the camps had more than doubled and conditions were so atrocious that in 1939 Lavrenti Beria decided to improve conditions “so as to exploit rationally and maximally all the physical capacities of the inmates” (229).

There were again massive deportations in 1939-40, subsequent to the annexation by the Soviet Union of the Baltic States, Western Belarus and Western Ukraine. Conditions in the Gulag were at their worst in 1942-43 when mortality rates rose to 18% and 17% respectively. There were 600,000 deaths during those two years. These repressions did not inspire allegiance to the regime. Only after having experienced barbaric brutality inspired by Nazi racism did ordinary people fight for survival (239).

After victory in 1945, there were more deportations than ever. Seven nationalists, including the Volga Germans and the Crimean Tartars were punished for alleged collaboration with the Nazis; and in addition, Balt, Ukrainians and Moldovans were deported in great numbers for resistance to incorporation into the Soviet Union. In the fifties there were five and one half million people in the Gulag.

At the time of Stalin’s death in March 1953, the regime which had been imposed on the people and maintained in place by terror needed profound reforms. Curiously, Beria emerged as a would-be reformer. He admitted that most detainees did not represent a threat to the government(280). Less than two weeks after Stalin’s death, an amnesty was announced and a reform of the Gulag was undertaken. However, those who had been deported for political reasons, especially Balt and Ukrainian nationalists, did not benefit from the amnesty. They began to organise, to resist and to occasionally win concessions. But “[they] were the last deportees to be freed of their paria status in 1989” (283).

¹¹ An unfortunate expression inspired by Lenin.

The rigor of the criminal code was attenuated, but the KGB continued to watch religious and national minorities as well as political dissidents. After 1973, the impact of A. Solzhenitsin's *Gulag Archipelago* and the formation of Helsinki groups contributed to partially contain police repression. But the sheer existence of the Party in full control, and of the KGB, without any punishment being meted out to those who had readily carried out Stalin's orders, remained profoundly intimidating forces to the end of the regime and beyond.

In conclusion to the volume, Stéphane Courtois finds that "the most thorough knowledge [about communist criminality] can satisfy neither our intellectual curiosity nor our conscience. A fundamental question remains. Why? Why did communism, established in 1917, almost immediately become a bloody dictatorship and then a criminal regime? Was extreme violence used in the most matter-of-fact way necessary for the system to attain its goal?" No goal, one might add, is justified by the immolation of so many victims. Courtois explains that Robespierre's justification of terror as a means not to punish but to destroy those who are seen as obstacles to the establishment of a just republic certainly inspired Lenin.

Searching further for an explanation, Courtois speculates that Bolshevik violence and cruelty were perhaps inherited from the tsarist tradition whose history is marked by such violent leaders as Ivan IV the Terrible and Peter I, who both resorted to violence in the hope of accelerating progress. Perhaps the World War (in which none of the communist leaders participated) also added to the violence of the Russian Revolution. Nonetheless, Lenin met some opposition within his party when he advocated the violent overthrow of the existing order. But he went on and organised terror as early as November 1917, when, with Trotsky's support, he dissolved the Constituent Assembly, the first in Russian history to have been democratically elected - Lenin showed scorn for the progress that was rapidly realised. His conception of a better and more just society was in fact far cruder and backward than that emerging from the practice of democratic societies and in Russia itself at the time.

The communist experience was an anachronism which imposed and maintained itself in power only in less developed countries and only through the use of extraordinary violence - never with the consent of the government. In the end, whatever progress was realised under communist regimes can in no way be justified by the suffering of entire populations and the immolation of 100 million victims. It succeeded only in deceiving especially those who did not have to live under its yoke. Very sadly, all this was unnecessary - a tragic illusion.

Dagestan Muslims Proclaim Independence

Guerilla's declared Russia's Dagestan province on independent state on 10 August 1999 and called for a war of liberation amid Russia's worst security crisis since the Chechen war. Russian security officials gathered in Moscow and made optimistic noises. Armed forces Chief of General Staff Anatoly Kvashin told new acting Prime Minister Vladimir Putin the situation had changed and was nearly under control.

Putin, who met President Boris Yeltsin at the Kremlin, predicted it would be sorted out within two weeks. "A package of measures for imposing order and discipline in Dagestan has been prepared and it was approved by the president of Russia and will be implemented step by step," Putin said.

But the appearance of the independence declaration, shown to reporters in Chechnya's capital Grozny, was a sign that powerful Chechen warlords who fought Russia to a humiliating defeat in 1994-96 planned to press on backing the Dagestan revolt. Putin's predecessor Sergei Stepashin said that Russia risked losing control of Dagestan altogether.

Dagestani Parliament Speaker Mukhu Aliyev told a news conference in Moscow that the insurgents planned to free all of Dagestan. Representatives of a body called Islam Shura (council) of Dagestan told reporters in Grozny they had adopted the independence declaration at a meeting in Dagestani villages under the guerillas' control. The declaration called on Chechens to support the "Moslems of Dagestan in their struggle against unbelievers for the liberation of the Islamic state of Dagestan from occupation."

Russia says the villages in Dagestan were seized by followers of the Chechen guerilla leaders Shamil Basayev and Khattab, known to command hundreds of armed men. Chechnya's President Aslam Maskhadov told a news conference in Grozny that Chechens were not behind the fighting in Dagestan, although "certain misguided" Chechens might be participating. Chechen guerilla leaders, led by Basayev, have said that they intend to drive the Russian forces out of the region, as they did from Chechnya itself after their 1994-96 war for independence.

Fundamentalism is Not the Most Pressing Problem in Caucasia

In their coverage of recent events in Dagestan the Western media have to a large extent again been duped by the old disinformation machinery of Moscow. The bias, well known from earlier reports concerning the so-called border regions of Russia, continues unabated. The news items are largely based on Russian sources, any comments from their adversaries are either ignored or played down. The Chechen guerillas have received much larger publicity than the official Chechnian denials of any complicity of the Republic of Chechnya in the events on the other side of the border. Actually President Maskhadov has accused foreign (Western) intelligence agencies of fermenting the disturbances in Caucasia, and Russian authorities of machinations against the Republic of Chechnya. Often the vocabulary used in the reports of the journalists is tendentiously misleading also: if the population of a Republic consist almost entirely of Muslims, it is preposterous to speak about "Islamic groups" in the country.

More significant than the words used in the news items are, however, the utterances of so-called authorities on Caucasian questions in various interviews in the media. A returning feature is the talk of the "real threat presented by the Islamic fundamentalism" in Caucasia. The assertion is grossly exaggerated. The present problems of Dagestan, Chechnya and other Muslim nations which in the past have been forcibly incorporated in the Russian Empire have not arisen because of religious issues but because of a release of pent-up emotions created by colonial exploitation experienced by many generations already. The collapse of the USSR did not bring relief, on the contrary, it rather aggravated the situation. The support of the West has also remained an illusion for these nations, although the UN resolution against colonialism from 1960 guarantees the right to self-determination to all colonized and occupied nations, not only to peoples in Africa and in the Pacific.

The knowledge of the Muslim peoples of the former USSR, of their long history and their ancient cultures is still surprisingly vague in the West - our country, Finland, included. In the disinformation spread by the former Soviet authorities especially the Muslims have been depicted as bandits, as almost sub-human creatures, entirely dependent on the help provided to them by Russia. Even today all expressions of opinion by Muslim or other minority nations, if directed against the central authorities in Moscow, are depicted by Russian media as operations of "extremists", regardless of the degree of the support they receive from the local community.

It's amazing to see that Itar-Tass and other Russian news agencies are again being used as important sources by world media reporting on Dagestan, even though the intentional untruthfulness of Russian news releases was amply shown in the Chechnyan War of Independence. The relevant issue in Dagestan is

also not “terrorism” or “banditry” of isolated extremists, but the fact that the “rebellious groupings” - not “fundamentalism” - enjoy the support of the majority of the population. In the West we might say that the relevant question is the right of democratic choice.

We Finns have successfully fought for our independence in 1918 and repelled Russian attempts of reconquest in 1939-40 and in 1941-44. We do not consider our war veterans as “Lutheran fundamentalists”, although in their most distressed moments they saw no other power but God Almighty lending them a helping hand. Nor do we consider Poles to be “Catholic fundamentalists” because of the heroism they have repeatedly shown against Russian imperialism during the centuries - just like the Caucasian peoples have done. Even with our own historical experience, though, we Finns also - largely because of the biased media coverage - seem to have difficulties in realising that in the various conflicts in the former USSR the real issue has always been defence against the over oppression or hidden machinations of the occupant, the Russian Empire, whether “Soviet” or not.

The situation on the Caucasus is now very threatening. The armed coup in Georgia in 1991 and the civil war - Russian occupation - in 1993 and the unbelievably cruel war in Chechnya already destroyed burgeoning democracies in two nations, and both countries were plunged into a constant state of imbalance. Gangs of mafiosi and of other criminals have been hastened to the Caucasus, and a widespread banditry is the regrettable outcome today especially in Chechnya which has not received reparations payments and reconstruction assistance from Moscow and very little of it from abroad. In the present circumstances Russia can easily take advantage of the chaos which it has brought about by its own deeds and negligence. Russia can even worsen the situation by its “preventive” aggressions from time to time.

The media as well as the self-appointed experts on Caucasian affairs should do well in acquainting themselves with the past and the present of the region from the point of view of the local ethnic and cultural entities. A complacent reiteration from the point of view of mainstream “truths”, manipulated by the imperialist powers and its stooges, is not enough.

If the real background of the Caucasian “conflicts” does not receive the attention due to it, the new millennium may begin with an exceptionally violent century.

Helsinki, 18 August 1999.

Aila Ninimaa-Keppo - President of the Finland-Georgia Society;

*Heikki Riihiärvi - President of the Finnish-Caucasian Association,
President of the Georgia Friendship Group of the Finnish Parliament in 1991-94;*

Heimo Rantala - President of the Finland Freedom Council.

THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION: CHECHEN REPUBLIC

Humanity is indivisible

*Open Letter to the United Nations from the Secretary General of
Amnesty International. AI Index: EUR 46/038/99)*

NOV 3, 1999, M2 Communications - The unfolding catastrophe in the Northern Caucasus and the international community's muted response to the situation is further evidence of the selectivity of response to human rights violations when it comes to action, Amnesty International said today in an Open Letter to the United Nations:

“Political and economic considerations for action or inaction on the part of the international community cannot come first when the lives of ordinary civilians are at stake,” Amnesty International said. “Russia’s seat on the UN Security Council must not mean it escapes censure for human rights violations,” the human rights organization stressed. “There is no place for political compromise when international law is being blatantly ignored and the Russian government, as any other, is not above the law.”

In August and September of this year, the Security Council passed two resolutions - 1261 and 1265 - on the protection of children and civilians in armed conflict. The resolutions, consistent with international humanitarian law prohibiting direct attacks on civilians and indiscriminate attacks, strongly condemned the targeting of civilians and called for full and unhindered access to civilian victims.

However, Amnesty International continues to receive reports that artillery attacks on Chechnya have resulted in civilian deaths and serious injuries, despite Russia’s claims that all its attacks are aimed at military targets. On 21 October an attack on Grozny’s central market, mosque and maternity hospital resulted in the deaths of at least 137 civilians, including 13 mothers and 15 newborn babies, and left over 400 wounded. On 29 October a Russian air attack at Shami-Yurt on a humanitarian convoy of five vehicles, reportedly ‘clearly marked with the Red Cross emblem’, killed at least 25 people, including two staff members of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and wounded more than 70 others.

“All parties to the conflict must abide by international humanitarian law, and in particular ‘ensure respect for and protection of the civilian population’,” the organization stressed. The intensity of the Russian air raids and artillery attacks have led to nearly 190,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) fleeing Chechnya for the neighbouring republics of Ingushetia, Dagestan and North Ossetia and Stavropol Territory. Smaller numbers have also fled to Georgia and Azerbaijan, thereby becoming refugees.

The recent closure of the only remaining highway to Ingushetia from Chechnya by Russian troops on 23 October has worsened the plight of the hundreds of IDPs who now find themselves trapped with no way out to reach safety. Recently there have been conflicting reports suggesting that Russian troops have reopened a border crossing with Ingushetia, but it is not clear whether people are allowed to cross in both directions, or only from Ingushetia to Chechnya.

Amnesty International calls on all UN member states, as well as the Representative of the Secretary-General for Internally Displaced Persons, to urge the Russian government to ensure full protection and assistance for all IDPs in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. In addition, the UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies must be allowed to take all necessary actions to assist and protect all IDPs and refugees, especially with the onset of winter.

The organization urges all members of the international community to fully respect their commitments under international refugee law, in particular not to return anyone seeking asylum in another state without assessing the merits of their claim. Amnesty International continues to receive reports of unlawful detention and expulsion of ethnic Chechens from large cities, in particular Moscow, and also allegations of ill-treatment while in custody. “The Russian government claims to be fighting ‘international terrorism’, but in fact it seems to be targeting people based on their ethnic origin,” the organization added. “‘Fighting crime and terrorism’ is no justification for violating human rights.”

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The Illegal President

The leaders of post-Soviet republics found it easy at first to proclaim a new era of democracy. Now that their terms of office should be coming to an end, many of them are finding it more painful actually to let democracy take its course. This is particularly so in the republics of Central Asia, where even those most wedded to the rhetoric of democracy seem even more wedded to their positions, and in the European nation of Belarus. There the legal five-year term of President Alexander Lukashenko came to an end this week, but Mr. Lukashenko shows no signs of vacating the presidential mansion any time soon.

Mr. Lukashenko, a former collective-farm chairman, was chosen in a legitimate 1994 election. But in 1996 he staged what a U.S. spokesman called "a flawed and unconstitutional referendum" to extend his term by two years and give himself the right to run, in 2001, for re-election. He also disbanded the legally elected parliament and installed a legislature friendlier to his ambitions and amenable to his control.

Since that time, he has hounded the opposition, muzzled the press and in many other ways re-created Soviet conditions with remarkable success. All of this makes Belarus the ugly exception in its neighborhood. Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine all have managed successful democratic transitions of their top leaders and their parliaments.

The European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe both said this week that Mr. Lukashenko can no longer be regarded as Belarus' legitimate leader. State Department spokesman James Rubin said Mr. Lukashenko's legitimacy "can only be restored by free and fair democratic elections." The only European leaders expressing approval of Belarus' autocracy are Slobodan Milosevic, who sees in Mr. Lukashenko a kindred spirit, and Russian President Boris Yeltsin and his government, who welcome Mr. Lukashenko's pro-Russia, anti-NATO stance.

In the long run, though, an alliance with this small-time tyrant does Russia no good. It only serves to further isolate Russia from the West while undermining prospects for democracy in Russia itself. Vice President Al Gore, who holds his first official meetings with Russian Prime Minister Sergei Stepashin next week, should make sure Belarus is on the agenda.

This editorial appeared in The Washington Post (June 1999).

Belarus' President Lukashenko Called on the Carpet

WASHINGTON, Oct 20, 1999 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -

Today the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe released the text of a letter to His Excellency Alyaksandr Lukashenko, President of the Republic of Belarus, expressing growing concern about violations of human rights, democracy and rule of law, specifically:

- the arrest yesterday of democratic opposition leader Anatoly Lebedko, for allegedly participating in an "unsanctioned" march;
- the continued imprisonment of former Prime Minister Mikhail Chygir; the disappearances of former Central Election Commission Chairman Viktor Gonchar and others;
- increased attempts to stifle freedom of expression, including the annulling of registration certificates of nine periodicals;
- the denial of registration of non-governmental organizations;
- the police raid, without a search warrant, on the human rights organization Viasna-96;
- criminal charges against opposition activists;
- and, the initial attack by riot police against peaceful protestors in last Sunday's Freedom March.

The Commission has been concerned about this deterioration in Belarus for quite some time and has raised such issues with the Government of Belarus to little avail. The letter was signed by Commissioners Chairman Rep. Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ), Co-Chairman Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-CO), and Ranking Members Senator Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Rep. Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD).

The full text of the letter follows:

We are writing to express our serious and growing concerns about recent developments in Belarus. Until recently, we were becoming more hopeful that meaningful dialogue between the Belarussian Government and opposition would take place. Within the last month, however, violations of the principles of human rights, democracy and rule of law have come to our attention that, frankly, lead us to question your government's seriousness in finding a solution to the problems of democracy in Belarus. We were disturbed to learn of the arrest earlier today of democratic opposition leader Anatoly Lebedko, for allegedly participating in "an unsanctioned march."

Our concerns include the following:

- the continued imprisonment of former Prime Minister Mikhail Chygir, who was supposed to be released from investigative detention where he has been held for six months.
- the disappearances of former Central Election Commission Chairman Viktor Gonchar, his colleague Yuri Krasovsky, former Interior Minister Yuri Zakharenka, and former National Bank Chair Tamara Vinnikova.
- increased attempts to stifle freedom of expression, including the annulling of registration certificates of nine periodicals, and especially the harassment of Naviny through the use of high libel fees clearly designed to silence this independent newspaper.
- the denial of registration of non-governmental organizations, including the Belarussian Independent Industrial Trade Union Association.
- the police raid, without a search warrant, on the human rights organization Viasna-96, and confiscation of computers which stored data on human rights violations.
- criminal charges against opposition activist Mykola Statkevich and lawyer Oleg Volchek and continued interrogation of lawyer Vera Stremkovskaya.
- the initial attack by riot police against peaceful protestors in last Sunday's Freedom March.

Your efforts to address these concerns would reduce the climate of suspicion and fear that currently exists and enhance confidence in the negotiation process which we believe is so vital to Belarus' development as a democratic country in which human rights and the rule of law are respected.

SOURCE

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

<http://www.prnewswire.com>

*Chadwick R. Gore of the Commission on Security and
Cooperation in Europe, 202-225-1901*

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Soviet Agent Convicted in Estonia

Tallinn, Estonia, 28th October 1999 (AP) - A former Soviet official was found guilty of murdering three people in an Estonian forest 50 years ago, one of a dozen convictions in a campaign to seek justice for Stalinist-era abuses in the three Baltic Sea states. Karl-Leonhard Paulov, 75, was sentenced to eight years in jail, but judges suspended the term because so much time had passed since the crime. The conviction Tuesday was for murdering three Estonians hiding from Soviet authorities in the 1940s, when the Soviet Union took over the tiny northern country. Thousands took refuge in Baltic forests in the years during the Soviet occupation. Many sought to avoid deportation to Siberia, while others took up arms in resistance. As a young agent, Paulov was ordered to capture or kill such forest dwellers. Prosecutors said he shot two of his victims in the back.

Looking frail and clutching a cane, Paulov told the court he had acted in self-defense. He said he was glad he didn't have to go to prison, but feared prosecutors would appeal to have him jailed. "This has all hit me very deeply," said Paulov, who has cancer, according to Eesti Paevaleht newspaper. "I can't sleep at night."

There have been a dozen convictions on charges related to Stalinist-era crimes in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania since they gained independence in 1991 and pledged to bring former Soviet agents to trial. Moscow has criticized the trials, saying the former Soviet republics were exacting revenge on ailing, elderly men, many of whom still held Russian passports.

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