

Ukraine's Regional Security Environment

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The goal of this study is to examine and analyze the interrelated processes of global, regional, and national security of Ukraine, namely the general security environment in which our country found itself at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century; as well as to determine the specific aspects of the security environment around Ukraine and to outline trends that could potentially appear as the sources of threats to the national security of Ukraine.

This is an attempt to highlight some features of the current security agenda, which, in my opinion, require increased attention. However, we cannot leave aside the world's globalized context and the major events that have occurred in greater or lesser approximation to the borders of our country recently.

Another point of the current agenda, influencing Ukraine and its security environment, is the formation of a polycentric world with the increased contribution of individual regions to global governance.

Global processes and regional security

Undoubtedly among the most significant achievements during Ukraine's twenty-year period of independence, marked last year, are the preservation of civil peace and inter-ethnic harmony in the country, as well as a peaceful and good neighborly existence in the European environment.

The end of the "Cold war" led away from the global security issues to the challenges of the regional or local levels thus creating a new security reality in the immediate vicinity of Ukraine, which is located at the intersection of at least two regions: 1) Central and Eastern Europe and 2) the Black Sea – Caspian Sea.

International security as well as national security at the present stage is preconditioned by the trends of globalization. The world's leading nations, which for the most part dominate in global economic processes and influence the solutions of international security issues, have taken key positions in supranational and international institutions. At the same time, multina-

tional corporations and financial groups further intensify their influence on the economic and socio-political development of the national states.

In turn, globalization processes directly affect the security and defense policy of the world powers. New positioning of the leading political players at a global stage defines the balance of power and interests, changes the character, scale and substance of the former challenges, threats and risks.

We can observe the world splitting into two spaces, one of which enjoys the advantages of globalization while the other is sidelined. Essentially, this is what preconditions the polarization of the whole world system into the area of comparative peace, stability and prosperity and the area of chaos, instability and stagnation. In the second case, the situation is characterized by backwardness, low development level, authoritarianism and oppression. Naturally, the latter harbors the main threats to global stability and security. It is where the security agenda for the whole world is determined largely.

Dynamic changes, related to globalization, create new challenges and threats to security. In the present-day world the difference between domestic and external security aspects is levelled, while the importance of economic, social, ecological components of security grows¹. There is aggravating intolerance, extremism and fanaticism between civilizations, on socio-cultural, religious, inter-ethnic grounds, growing social tension, sharpening military and civil conflicts, as well as struggling for energy resources. The emergence of the wide range of new-type threats increases uncertainty of the international security space and provokes international actors to pre-emptive use of the policy of force, both “hard” and “soft”.

Negative implications of globalization have much more powerful impacts on the countries with poorly developed public administration structures. Present-day Ukraine and its surrounding region find themselves at the junction of countries that enjoy the advantages of globalization and those that suffer from its negative impacts. Due to the inability of rapid accomplishment of the European integration strategy, it has turned into the bridgehead of the “West vs. East” competition of values.

Ukraine, as well as the other new independent states, has been facing a very sharp contradiction: from one side the interests of formation and consolidation of the statehood demand intensification of the processes

¹ National Security Strategy of Ukraine, #105 Decree of the President of Ukraine of February 12, 2007, <http://zakon1.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=105%2F2007> (accessed November 28, 2011)

of cultural revival and the growth of national identity. From the other – the process of social and economic modernization requires the widest possible openness of the country, turning it into a target of intensive but usually far from welcomed political, economic, social and cultural influences.

Disintegration and fragmentation of the national identities, growing ethnic nationalism and separatism, leading to the collapse of multinational states, characterize the world's social and political development in the globalization framework. Fragmentation also takes place in the line of ideological confrontation between the extraneous political groups. Political extremism and religious fundamentalism have become the extreme forms of public division.

Unpredictable policies of authoritarian regimes and “failed states”, whose activity or inactivity directly or indirectly facilitates the formation of a conflict environment with a favorable breeding ground of extremism and terrorism, intensify these threats. Most of them are not involved in globalization processes or are incapable of or unwilling to accommodate themselves to their requirements. Consequently, they are pursued by the permanent economic downfalls leading to social revolts and the collapse of the state administration capacity.

The “Arab Spring” wave of uprisings, though still raising some questions concerning the role of external interferences, digital media and social networks, and, most importantly, what the consequences will be, has fully confirmed what was previously mentioned.

State borders have been losing their “sacral” meaning mainly playing the role of limits dividing separate territories. The attention of the world community to territorial claims issues and the legal settlement of borders has been diminishing while the issue of the inviolability of borders seems to be the principal one for the consolidation of sovereignty of the new independent states. Territorial claims from the other states' radical political forces and incompleteness of the legal settlement of state borders are substantial challenges for Ukraine in particular.

Shifting of the center of gravity from the conventional threats (armed invasion in particular) to non-typical (asymmetric) threats, originating from non-state entities, specifies the current security situation. The world-wide web of terrorism poses the most serious danger to the international system and security of individual states, caused first of all by trying to get access to the newest nuclear, biological, bacteriological, information technologies, which is especially dangerous considering the openness of contemporary

society, the extreme vulnerability of the essential foundations of the social being and the anthropogenic density of the modern ecosphere².

The modern world after a relatively long period of bipolar confrontation and a short one-polar phase moves to multi-polarity, the formation of a poly-centric world with the increased contribution of individual regions in global governance. Competition between the leading world powers in the political, military, economic, humanitarian, and security spheres has increased.

According to research³, the world has entered a new era of nuclear arms race. The widening circle of leading powers today implements the modernization programs of existing arsenals and the creation of new types of nuclear weapons and means of their delivery. Hundreds of \$ billions will be spent in the next ten years for these purposes throughout the world. Besides the Russian Federation and the United States, China, India, France, Israel, Pakistan and North Korea participate in the nuclear arms race. All these states are developing and producing new nuclear weapons according to their needs and capabilities.

Global strategic stability is being disturbed due to the weakening efficiency of the international proliferation control mechanisms for weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. At the same time the nuclear arms factor is reinforced first of all due to some regimes' increasing ambition to acquire their own nuclear potentials, which stimulates their interest in the technologies and experts already available in Ukraine.

New complicated and multidimensional patterns of international interaction are being shaped actively instead of the US-dominated one-polar world order that formed after the end of "Cold War" and was functioning roughly until the middle of the 21st century's first decade.

The United States is trying to preserve its leading role by other, more flexible means, depending less on its own individual will while more on the joint accomplishment of this or that tactical and strategic task engaging other countries and international bodies. At the same time, other centers of influence, the European Union and Russia for example if speaking of the European continent, are increasing their weight.

² Horbulin, V., Security of Ukraine 2010, http://uf.org.ua/books/1758494_bezpeka%202010.pdf (accessed November 7, 2011)

³ Kearns, I., Beyond the United Kingdom: Trends in the Other Nuclear Armed States, Discussion Paper 1 of the BASIC Trident Commission, 2011, <http://www.basicint.org/sites/default/files/commission-briefing1.pdf> (accessed November 2, 2011)

The world geopolitical environment has been changing; rivalry of the leading global and regional powers for redistribution of the spheres of influence, particularly in the post-soviet area, has intensified. The interests of the most influential nations are objectively present in the region around Ukraine. Since their relations have not gained a lasting positive character, it is especially challenging in view of Ukraine's current non-aligned status. Under these conditions new independent states with complex socio-political transformations underway due to certain political and strategic ambiguity turn into the targets of asymmetric political, economic and media influence.

The role of "Big Stick" policy strengthens within the changing global context. Leading world powers add the pre-emptive defense concept to their armory, mapping out operations outside their national borders and the use of force to protect their economic interests, to reach post-conflict settlement objectives, to fight international terrorism.

Struggling for natural resources stirs up, first of all the desire for control of the energy sources and their transportation routes. It becomes especially visible in growing tension around the new energy transportation corridors from the Caspian region, competing with traditionally existing ones.

There is an especially sharp antagonism in the information and media sphere. As a consequence of intensive information technology development, its crucial importance for the governmental decision-making system, administration in different spheres of life, information and media have drawn increased attention of states and international organizations seeking world domination as well as of terrorists' groups and destructive forces which are trying to disrupt the execution of publicly important functions.

Due to the high vulnerability of the governmental information and communication systems, there is a serious threat of purposeful hacking attempts by individual hackers or alien special services able to disrupt critical information systems of the governmental institutions as well as of the private sector entities important for the national security. Special operations intended for unauthorized access to the strategic databases, misinformation and manipulation of mass consciousness are also threatening. Parties' concerned attempts to distort the national image by means of systemic slander campaigns also present a particular threat for young democracies.

There is still the threat of the emergence of new or the escalation of the smoldering inter-ethnic and international conflicts in our country's environs. In this context, "unfreezing" the conflicts in Transnistria and Caucasus is extremely dangerous for us due to Ukraine's location in the immediate proximity to the regions where most of these threats come from.

Mass migration from poor and undeveloped countries further remains a serious challenge to Ukraine. Evolution of illegal schemes of displacement and trafficking in human beings contributes to migration pressure.

An adequate response to the present-day challenges and threats under the conditions of Ukraine's gradual entering into the world economic and political system and its domestic transformation requires the shaping of a substantially new national security system. It will have to meet the scope of the existing threats, and be efficiently integrated into the global and regional security system as its integral part.

Ukraine's security environment: changes and trends

One can observe the trends in Ukraine's surrounding area that potentially appear as the sources of threats to the national security.

According to experts, the essence of the regional security environment around Ukraine has become more complicated, which has been caused by different factors, most important of which can be defined as follows:

- Accelerated shaping of "spheres of influence" or "geopolitical zones of responsibility" accompanied by a growing conflict potential, dissemination of conflict (including armed) provoking practice, increased diverse external influences in the region, including reconnaissance and subversive activities; threatening with preventive use of armed force by individual states beyond their borders;
- Further escalation of conflicts (including "frozen" ones) in the Black Sea-Caspian Sea region, the internal instability in many countries of the region, lack of perspectives and common vision of regional integration processes;
- Increased militarization of the region, growing foreign military presence and deployment of new weapons systems of non-regional players in the countries of the region;
- Unresolved issues related to the legal regulation of interstate borders, delimitation of the exclusive maritime economic zones and the continental

shelf, as well as the national and cultural rights of ethnic minorities that could revive territorial claims issues in the regional agenda⁴.

Sensible transformations of the U.S. geo-strategic guidelines and NATO policy in the post-soviet area, due to which the security “load” of their relations with Ukraine has been significantly reduced; as well as processes of globalization, other international transformations, growing new security challenges and threats directly or indirectly influence the Ukraine’s positioning in the European security system, and the nature and substance of the security cooperation in the region.

Firstly, NATO expansion to the East has actually frozen in the last few years. The fact that Russia rapidly coped with NATO and EU criticism after the brief war with Georgia, viewed by the Euro-Atlantic community as a manifestation of the Kremlin’s imperial ambitions and a return to the spheres of influence policy in Europe and in the post-soviet area, was an important indicator. In particular, the West appeared to be unprepared to grant practicable security guarantees to Georgia.

Russia, in turn, made effective use of Europe’s energy dependence in order to form certain “energy groupings” within the EU, favorable to its influence. In fact, it managed to persuade a number of influential NATO and EU members that Georgia’s as well as Ukraine’s eventual obtaining of NATO membership posed a direct threat to Russia’s national security and were a source of future problems for the Alliance itself. Moscow also demonstrated its readiness to resolutely counteract this process. It was not only the use of military force against Georgia that served as a warning but also symmetric recognition of South Ossetia’s and Abkhazia’s independence in response to the recognition of Kosovo’s independence by the West.

Secondly, changes in the U.S. Administration security priorities under Obama have affected the European and regional security in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Black Sea Region (BSR). The current U.S. President under the existing conditions of the global financial and economic crisis and the stockpiling of unsettled complicated issues, inherited from the previous administration, reconsidered his predecessor’s policy towards the optimization of costs and results in international policy, focusing its at-

⁴ “Modernization of Ukraine – our strategic choice”, annual address of the President of Ukraine to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Draft National Security Strategy of Ukraine: Ukraine in a changing world. 2011, http://www.president.gov.ua/docs/Poslannya_sborka.pdf (accessed November 2, 2011)

tention on the Middle East, as well as on the adjustment of the global and regional balances.

U.S.-Russian relations have also gained priority since both sides have faced the necessity of easing tensions in bilateral relations, searching for mutually acceptable balances and improving cooperation through the “reset” process. Washington has come to a clear understanding that the United States has limited resources to proceed with George W. Bush’s democracy expansion policy and maintain the U.S.’ overloaded geopolitical agenda (Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, North Korea etc.).

Thirdly, the 08/08/08 war between Russia and Georgia revealed that the U.S., NATO and the EU were unwilling to aggravate military and political relations with Russia in the post-soviet area. It appeared that there was no consensus within the Euro-Atlantic community concerning the strategy of relations with Russia or concerning the NATO and EU eastward expansion.

At the same time American and Western European decision-makers are increasingly realizing the danger to the Euro-Atlantic community’s strategic interests originating from the Middle East, as well as from the dynamic growth of China’s military and global power. The U.S. and Western Europe need to cooperate with Russia to address these issues was demonstrated by the resumption of the NATO-Russia Council as well as the EU’s unblocking and successful completion of the Nord Stream pipeline (against in fact stalled EU-initiated Nabucco project).

Fourthly, Russia has taken advantage of the U.S., NATO and EU interest towards partnership building and is seeking to strengthen its influence in Europe, attempting to develop its own global and regional system of balances. By the example of the Russia-Georgia war Moscow demonstrated to the West that the latter should consider the Russian interests whereas it is able to defend its strategic interests by force. At the same time, Russia is trying to press the Euro-Atlantic community concerning the necessity of the European security parameters revision towards a more liberal model, which has to enhance Russia’s role and status accordingly. In fact, the Kremlin demands the veto power at the Euro-Atlantic club of states’ decision-making table.

President Medvedev’s initiative concerning a new European Security Treaty establishing an indivisible security area from Vancouver to Vladivostok, which, according to Moscow, will draw the line to the “Cold War”, is a logical continuation of Russia’s policy towards occupying a fitting place in the region. However, it has not gone much further than discussions yet. The next step has turned out to be too difficult for the parties concerned.

Having approached the point of maximum convergence on the issues, whose resolution was what actually “reset” had been launched for, Russia and the West started to diverge from each other once again. Most characteristically: the U.S. did not abandon the Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) system in Europe, having only adjusted its approaches, while Russia declared the concept of “Eurasian Union” as a key element of Vladimir Putin’s foreign policy program. In turn, the “Arab Spring” exposed the compelling differences of values and ideologies demonstrated in reaction to these events from both sides.

Fifthly, one should mention that the strengthening role of such regional players as Poland, Romania, Turkey de facto have modified inter-regional relations and have begun to considerably influence the European security regional agenda. At the same time, growing rivalry for regional leadership within the existing global framework can be noticed.

For example, Romania’s NATO and EU membership has only stirred up some Romanian politicians’ feelings concerning the revanchist “Great Romania” ideology, an expansion in the direction of Moldova and in the Black Sea area. Predictably, these sentiments are fuelled in the light of BMD interceptor missiles and appropriate U.S. military and civilian personnel deployment⁵ on the Romanian soil in addition to the already existing U.S. military presence, threatening with growing conflict potential Ukraine-Romania relations. Under these conditions, Ukraine objectively will not be able to defend its national interests effectively enough relying solely upon the mechanisms of cooperation with NATO, the EU and the U.S. as long as Bucharest has institutional and strategic advantages in all three directions.

Poland, one of the most important strategic partners of Ukraine, is increasingly gaining credibility and weight not only in Europe but also worldwide. It is facilitated first of all by its achievements in economy (against the background of many countries’ falling economies due to the economic crisis its achievements are particularly impressive) and foreign policy. Poland assertively and with good reason claims status as a leading regional center of power projecting its capabilities especially in the eastern direction.

Ukrainian-Polish understanding of and reconciliation with the complexities of the past, reached during the last decades; Warsaw’s ambition to help

⁵ U.S. Department of State Fact Sheet: U.S.-Romania Missile Defense Agreement, U.S. Department of State Office of the Spokesperson, September 13, 2011, <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2011/09/20110913135719su0.7217022.html#axzz1dVzwOBwu> (accessed November 12, 2011)

bring Ukraine as close as possible to the EU; joint projects in the economic and energy spheres – all have determined Poland’s special role for our country and have created a reliable basis for further cooperation.

Turkey’s position is being strengthened in the region with the help of its own experience of modernization through modern versatile development techniques where emphasis is put on regional economic interests, and the power of private capital.

The increased activity of Turkey in the international arena was “sanctioned” by the Western allies to fulfill two functions: to be a stronghold of the West in its penetration into geo-strategically important regions and to be a buffer, “which prevents expansion of radical Islamic fundamentalism and extremism⁶.”

Motives for Ukraine’s rapprochement with Turkey appear quite reasonable. Turkey is a key country for Ukraine and the natural partner to the south. The country is not only a powerful regional player in the political and security field, but also is a huge market and economy that is developing dynamically. However, the duality of the situation is that in some important areas Ukraine and Turkey can be both partners and competitors as their interests and capabilities intersect.

Ukraine in fact has found itself all alone in front of the challenges of enormous international transformations (*first of all dynamic processes of establishing informal geopolitical and geo-economic groupings, increasing competition around the geopolitics of energy transportation corridors, emergence of new regional leaders with their own agenda*). It seems that the world’s leading players (the U.S., NATO and the EU) have lost or have been reviewing their strategic interest in it at least in the medium term.

The Black Sea Region: a security dimension for Ukraine

In general, the world’s transformation into a more conflict generating area and the increased confrontation in regions previously considered as relatively stable, have led to the formation of closer regional alliances.

In the post-bipolar world, the geopolitical and geo-economic situation in the Black Sea Region has undergone dramatic change. This has not only attracted the attention of international players, but also raised a challenge to

⁶ Vorotnyuk, M., Turkish Euro-Atlantic Policy: Lessons for Ukraine, Strategic Priorities, #3. – 2007

the new independent states to develop an effective regional policy on a background of a complex state building process.

Different transition dynamics within these countries, the complicated ethno-political components of the region, its geopolitical location and many other factors cause considerable conflict potential for the region. Thus, the countries of the region face a difficult task to adapt to new realities, to achieve and maintain cooperative interaction, despite the existing destabilizing factors⁷.

For Ukraine, the urgency of these issues is obvious, since in order to ensure the Ukrainian national interests in the Black Sea Region all these processes must be taken into account. This includes primarily the development of friendly dialogue with key countries in the region and external players present here.

Since Romania's and Bulgaria's accession in 2007, the European Union is no longer an external but a key internal player in the Black Sea Region. Similarly, their joining NATO in 2004 resulted in the strengthening of the North Atlantic Alliance's presence in the region.

The changing role of Russia and its relations with other regional players have caused a major geopolitical transformation herein. An objective decrease of Russia's role in the Black Sea Region after the Cold War has limited the leverage of its influence. Despite this, Moscow continues to regard the region as a sphere of its strategic interests. This is shown in its efforts to preserve its influence on the political processes in the neighboring countries as well as in its energy policy which is used as an instrument of pressure.

Key disputes of modern international relations have unfolded around energy resources – their fields, routes and means of transportation. Consequently ensuring energy security has become a cornerstone of foreign policy. Therefore, the Black Sea Region, rich in energy reserves and with an extensive transport network, is at the forefront of world politics and has become a major sphere of the strategic interests of the great powers.

The worldwide trend of extremist and separatist aggravation has not bypassed this region either.

The geopolitical transformations mentioned above have changed the strategic environment in the region and complicated the configuration of forces

⁷ Vorotnyuk, M., Ukraine and Turkey in the Context of Geopolitical Transformations in the Black Sea Region, Strategic Priorities, #1 – 2009

and alliances. Countries of the region face a difficult task adapting to new realities and developing an effective foreign policy.

The indefinitely delayed NATO membership for Georgia, the non-alignment declared by Ukraine and the neutrality of Moldova show the diversity of the security paradigms and the heterogeneity of the political-security environment of the Black Sea Region, which lies on the watershed between the prosperous West and the problematic East. While the CEE region is largely homogeneous in this context and in fact represents the core of countries that have implemented a successful European project, and is sought by those who currently remain outside the EU expansion plans, the BSR is characterized by the dominance of corruption, organized crime, intensive traffic in persons, illicit drugs and arms trafficking, fully deserving its definition as a “criminal hub”.

Along the perimeter of the Black Sea there are a number of so-called “**frozen**” conflicts and hot spots that might at any moment destabilize the situation in the region and beyond. Moreover, except the Transnistria conflict the rest of them pertain to important existing energy supply routes or are associated with future ambitious energy transportation projects.

Solution of the **Nagorno-Karabakh conflict** depends on the joint good will and understanding between Moscow, Ankara, Baku and Yerevan. Against the background of a long muscle flexing on both sides of the border, there is still a threat of escalation or “unfreezing” the conflict. Concerned with prospects of increased Turkish influence in the Caucasus and the need for dialogue with Baku as opposed to steps forward between Ankara and Yerevan, Moscow has undertaken active efforts in recent years in order to reach an understanding at the highest level and to define an eventual framework for the settlement. Nevertheless, the lack of practical achievements and Moscow’s inability to bring both parties of the conflict to tangible agreement have resulted in another round of rapprochement between Baku and Ankara marked with the signing of a new natural gas delivery deal⁸. However, the gas supply issues in Moscow-Baku and Moscow-Ankara relations require separate consideration.

As objective analysis shows, **Abkhazia** and **South Ossetia** have become cut off from Georgia for an indefinite period. It is difficult to imagine a more or less likely scenario of their de facto return under Georgia’s sovereignty

⁸ Cutler, R.M., Dr., Azerbaijan, Turkey signs gas delivery deal, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Central_Asia/MJ28Ag01.html (accessed October 26, 2011)

in the foreseeable future. Russian intervention and its recognition of their independence and its military presence have fixed a “post-2008” situation unrecognized by the international community, reducing at the same time the possibility of a new major armed confrontation.

The Transnistrian conflict is so to speak the most “frozen” among the rest of the region’s ones but also, according to many, the most promising in terms of a possible peaceful solution. However, a lot will depend on the development of internal processes, both in the Transnistria and in Moldova in general, as well as in Russia, which has the most powerful leverage on the situation in the unrecognized Transnistrian Moldovan Republic. Optimistic expectations have been associated with increased attention from the EU, which is interested in the resolution of disputes on its borders for the continuation of “success stories”, as well as with the newly-elected Transnistrian leader whose promising declarations and ambitions have revived the hope for building lasting and goal-oriented dialogue between the both banks of Dniester.

Russia’s military presence in Georgia and Moldova, which in itself changes the balance of power and creates obstacles for reaching compromises, deserves special attention. In the case of Moldova’s Transnistrian region, Russian military presence contradicts commitments Russia made at the 1999 Istanbul OSCE summit, to withdraw by 2002. The presence of the Russian troops in Georgia’s breakaway regions – Abkhazia and South Ossetia after the 2008 war is not regulated by any internationally recognized agreements at all.

In addition to the above-mentioned conflicts, one should not forget about the ongoing terrorist threat and tensions in the Russian North Caucasus and the Kurdish issue in Turkey, which escalated again during the summer-autumn of 2011.

Implementation of the United States’ plans to deploy elements of missile defense in Poland, Romania and Turkey is extremely urgent and potentially stressful not only to regional but also to global security. Lack of progress in negotiations between the U.S. and Russia concerning missile defense in Europe as well as the inability to resolve the existing contradictions may lead to radical political and military decisions by the Russian leadership⁹. This may occur as the Kremlin’s response to Washington’s anti-missile plans, which,

⁹ Lavrov, S., Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, “Evening News” (Serbia), November 1, 2011, http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/brp_4.nsf/2fee282eb6df40e643256999005e6e8c/c54fd02dab0948654425793b0038181d!OpenDocument (accessed November 5, 2011)

according to Moscow, testify to the U.S. intentions to jeopardize the strategic stability in the world to their advantage. In particular, it was already announced that there is a possibility of Russia's withdrawal from the New START treaty¹⁰ if the deployment process of missile defense in Europe becomes "irreversible", providing for Russia's reservations to the Treaty made at the signing of new START¹¹. However, such steps looked more like pre-election rhetoric which needs to be clarified after the new President of Russia comes to power.

The newly-approved Russian 2011-2020 weapons program, the development of new and the modernization of existing intercontinental ballistic missiles (land-based and submarine-launched), the development of air and space defenses including missile attack early warning systems, the announced development and introduction of advanced missile defense penetration means, the drawing up of measures for disabling the missile defense system data and its command and control systems¹², etc. have all displayed Russia's reaction to the ongoing implementation of U.S.-NATO missile shield plans¹³.

The role of the Black Sea Region as the current and potential energy bridge between the EU and the East conditions its importance and reinforces geo-economic and geopolitical competition. In practice, this translates into competition of existing and planned pipelines routes and their filling sources. Given the reduction of U.S. influence in the region, the differences between the EU member states, the dossier of unresolved interstate and ethnic conflicts in the Caucasus and the Middle East, Russia has maintained a dominant position skillfully speculating on the tensions between the key

¹⁰ Ozerov, V., Head of the State Duma of the Russian Federation Defence and Security Committee, November 1, 2011, http://ria.ru/defense_safety/20111101/477538882.html

¹¹ 1. Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START), signed April 4, 2010, entered into force February 5, 2011

2. Statement of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation "Concerning the Position of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on the Issues of Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms", January 25, 2011, <http://duma.consultant.ru/page.aspx?1543983> (accessed November 5, 2011)

3. Statement of the Russian Federation on Missile Defence, April 4, 2010, http://news.kremlin.ru/ref_notes/511 (accessed November 5, 2011)

¹² Statement by the President of Russia Dmitry Medvedev in connection with the situation concerning the NATO countries' missile defence system in Europe, November 23, 2011, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/3115> (accessed November 24, 2011)

¹³ Kazimirov, V., The Kremlin warns that Moscow's patience has its limits, November 25, 2011, http://en.rian.ru/international_affairs/20111125/169028065.html (accessed December 2, 2011)

regional players, using the resource dependence of European consumers and its own control over the supply infrastructure.

Naturally, Turkey has significant potential to become the “energy hub” for Europe. Cooperation with Azerbaijan and the recent agreement on gas deliveries from the “Shah Deniz” field (project “Shah Deniz-2”) underpin these ambitions. However, Ankara’s opportunities are also limited due to complicated regional context.

Experts note that the major regional challenges are the need for further profound political and economic reforms, worrisome demographic and migration trends, existing conflict zones, severe competition in the energy sphere, widespread organized crime, human and drugs trafficking and illicit arms trade¹⁴. However, the Baltic Sea-Black Sea axis represents a space where ideas of democracy and good governance have better prospects, and therefore a distribution potential to the South and East.

A successful scenario for the region should provide a final implementation of the European idea, i.e. the reunification of the region as a part of United Europe with a corresponding increase of Europe’s own chances for continued success and the strengthening of its position as a global player.

The security environment of the Black Sea Region is directly subjected to the strategic balance between Russia and the West (EU-NATO-U.S.) in their efforts to promote their competitive interests within the region. Unfortunately, in the absence of effective European agendas, able to meet the requirements of very different regional players, there is little chance of a change in Russia’s vision and strategic approaches for the Black Sea Region.

The second largest player in the region – Turkey, will remain in a position of controversial symbiosis between its Euro-Atlantic identity and its growing affinity towards classical imperial-style nationalism aimed at expansion of its influence in the Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asia.

Prior to the Russian-Georgian war, there was a strong tendency towards integration of the region into the Euro-Atlantic security architecture. However, the sharp differences between the European capitals, the active policy of Moscow, as well as Ukraine’s declaration of “non-alignment” hampered the process.

¹⁴ Khara, O., *Emerging Security Architecture of the Black Sea Region*, Seaford House Paper, Royal College of Defence Studies, UK, 2010, <http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/ABF5EDBE-BE57-4C8E-AAD7-824413534371/0/SHP2010KHARA.pdf> (accessed November 12, 2011)

Thereby, under the circumstances of the uncertain future of the Euro-Atlantic and European vectors, with the accumulation of common problems there is a growing need for new regional security architecture, which in cooperation with the EU, NATO and the U.S. could face the challenges and use available opportunities for the benefit of all.

Key elements of Ukraine's security policy

Implementing its European integration ambitions Ukraine should take into account the international reality that has formed. Its own security policy should be developed based on the current tendencies in this sphere.

In particular, Ukraine remains under the growing pressure of differently directed centers of influence. However, in the post-bipolar framework the situation is much more complicated than in the 90's – a time when there was a choice between the East and West. First of all, it is determined by the logic of contradictions between Russia and the EU, and Russia and the U.S. that is fundamentally different now.

It is practically impossible for Ukraine to ensure its security in the modern world entirely alone. The current state of its economy, finances, Armed Forces and other components of the security sector does not allow for the fulfilling of this task effectively.

Taking into account its declared non-aligned status, Ukraine's perspectives of entering a not imaginary but effective European security system should be linked first of all to the Common Security and Defence Policy with its military component as well as with further expansion of its conflict settlement activity area beyond Europe. Whereas this policy is considered complementary to NATO, though not duplicating it, the EU is developing not only as a "soft" but also as a "hard power".

Implementing its EU integration policy, and maintaining and developing cooperation with NATO, Ukraine has to exert efforts in order to take part in shaping new regional and pan-European balances of power able to include deterrent capabilities concerning old as well as new threats and challenges.

Under present conditions, Ukraine urgently needs at least unequivocal security assurances if not clear legal guarantees from the U.S. and other key partners in the West including NATO and the EU as international bodies as well as from Russia, in the context of an elaboration of the 1994 Budapest Memorandum and other international security instruments concerning

Ukraine. The best possible outcome can be seen as concluding a network of bilateral legally binding agreements guaranteeing certain actions by the UN Security Council member-states and other contracting parties in case of armed aggression against Ukraine or any other kind of hostile action from any state against Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security. Ukraine fully deserves to obtain such assurances, first of all because of it being the one and only country in history which voluntarily abandoned its nuclear potential.

Responding to contemporary challenges and threats in terms of Ukraine's integration into the global economic and political system requires the formation of a new system of national security. It should match the scale of the threats, and be effectively integrated into the systems of international and regional security. At the same time, fundamental principles of human rights and rule of law remain especially important for a democratic state.

As was stated by the President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, the situation concerning the international security regimes, which have provided strategic stability for decades, has deteriorated recently. According to the head of state, the influence of international security institutions, notably the UN and OSCE, needs to be strengthened, while the days when security issues were solved based on regional blocs and alliances are now over. Under these conditions, the importance of global mechanisms of coordinating different countries' positions and developing common approaches to tackle the problems of modernity is objectively growing. Therefore, a new, more effective mechanism of international cooperation that guarantees each country's security – from East to West – is needed¹⁵.

Conclusions

1. In the short- and medium-term, in order to create better security conditions in its neighborhood, Ukraine's foreign and security policy should focus on the following areas:

- Persistent advancement of the European integration agenda bringing our country closer to the European standards in all spheres as well as

¹⁵ President of Ukraine Speech at the 8th Yalta European Strategy Annual Meeting, September 06, 2011, <http://www.president.gov.ua/news/21215.html> (accessed November 11, 2011)

reinforced cooperation with NATO as technically beneficial and based on commonly shared values;

- Maintaining a high level of Ukrainian-Polish cooperation, particularly in the context of European integration, as well as with other European partners;
- Resolution of the Ukrainian-Romanian relations issues based on good neighborliness and finding mutually acceptable compromises;
- Active participation in the Transnistrian settlement in order to protect national interests in any possible scenarios of its evolution;
- Building constructive and equitable relations with Russia;
- Developing a strategic partnership with Turkey;
- Completion of the legal regulation of a state borders regime;
- Promoting national interests, both political and economic, in the Caucasus and the Middle East;
- Ensuring dialogue with the world's leading nations whose interests are present in this region.

2. Dynamic changes associated with globalization have created new challenges and threats. Regional security policy should take account of these global changes, while the system of regional security should respond appropriately and flexibly to new challenges and threats.

3. One of the most important features of the present that requires special attention is the shift of the center of gravity from the classic threats (including armed invasion) to atypical (asymmetric) threats originating from non-state entities.

4. Intensification of the struggle for natural resources has become a real and growing security challenge at global and regional levels.

5. The interests of the most powerful states, relations between which have not yet acquired a lasting positive character, are objectively present in the Black Sea-Caspian Sea region, complicating the formation of a security architecture at the regional level.

6. One of the important strategic goals of the security policy of Ukraine is to obtain legally binding guarantees from nuclear powers for certain actions in case of armed aggression against Ukraine or any other kind of hostile action from any state against Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security.

7. Indisputable respect for the fundamental principles of human rights and rule of law has become especially important with the development of Ukraine's national security system.

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