



Russian military has enforced a partition of Crimea and asserted unilateral control over most of the disputed Black Sea fleet. Making matters even worse has been the open assertion of Russian territorial claims to portions of Ukraine. At the same time, economic leverage has been applied through reductions and periodic cutoffs in the delivery of vital energy sources to Ukrainian industry, presumably in the hope of destabilizing the country to the point that a sizable portion of the population will begin to clamour for a closer connection with Moscow.

To isolate Ukraine internationally, Russian policymakers have also skilfully exploited the Clinton administration's preoccupation with Ukraine's nuclear status. Playing on American fears (and the administration's evident preference for Russian control over Ukraine's nuclear weapons), Moscow was quite successful in portraying the new leaders in Kyiv as a menace to international stability. Ukraine's ineptitude in conveying its concerns to the West also intensified its isolation and therefore its sense of vulnerability.

By late 1993, just two years after the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union (leaving aside the Baltic republics), only beleaguered Ukraine, energy-rich Turkmenistan and perhaps authoritarian Uzbekistan could still be viewed as truly sovereign....

GEOPOLITICAL PLURALISM

The central goal of a realistic and long-term grand strategy should be *the consolidation of geopolitical pluralism within the former Soviet Union*. That goal defines more appropriately the long-term American interest, irrespective of whether in the near future Russia does or does not become an accommodating democracy. Attaining that goal is the necessary precondition for the eventual emergence of a stable democratic Russia. Only when a felicitous environment for Russia to define itself purely as Russia has been firmly created will the basis have been laid for an enduring and genuine American-Russian partnership.

The basic premise of this alternative strategy is that geopolitical pluralism will

foster the context for the emergence of a Russia that, democratic or not, is encouraged to be a good neighbour to states with which it can cooperate in a common economic space but which it will not seek or be able, politically and militarily, to dominate. The consolidation of geopolitical pluralism would inhibit the temptation to reinvent the empire, with its pernicious effects on prospects for democracy in Russia. In not being an empire, Russia stands chance of becoming, like France or Britain or earlier post-Ottoman Turkey, a normal state.

Consolidation of geopolitical pluralism within the former Soviet Union would entail a number of practical policy consequences. Though continuing the pursuit of a deepening friendship with Russia, it would call for a more balanced distribution of financial aid to Russia and to the non-Russian states, the abandonment of the single-minded elevation of the question of nuclear arms to the status of litmus test for American-Ukrainian relations, and an even-handed treatment of Moscow and Kyiv. It would require the explicit recognition of the fact that Ukraine's independent existence is a matter of far greater long-range significance than whether Kyiv does or does not promptly dismantle its post-Soviet nuclear arsenal. It also would condition American aid to Russia on the end of Russian efforts to make the newly independent states into fully subordinate satellites, and it would entail a greater willingness to make an issue - including in the United Nations - of Moscow's transgressions against its neighbours. Georgia, for example, deserved better in 1993.

The crucial issue here, one that might well come to a dramatic head in the course of 1994, is the future stability and independence of Ukraine. It cannot be stressed strongly enough that without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be an empire, but with Ukraine suborned and then subordinated, Russia automatically becomes an empire. American policymakers must face the fact that Ukraine is on the brink of disaster: the economy is in a free-fall, while Crimea is on the verge of a Russia-abetted ethnic explosion. Either crisis might be exploited to promote the breakup or reintegration of Ukraine in a larger Moscow-dominated framework. It is urgent and essential that

the United States convince the Ukrainian government - through the promise of substantial economic assistance - to adopt long-delayed and badly needed economic reforms. At the same time, American political assurances for Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity should be forthcoming.

MEDIA'S CRITICISM OF UKRAINE BASED ON BAD RESEARCH

by David R. Marples, author of *Ukraine Under Perestroika*, *Edmonton Journal*, May 31, 1994

Over the past three years, Western media focus on Ukraine has become highly critical. A nation that seemed destined for a glorious democratic future has been attacked, in the words of writer Abraham Brumberg "for its nationalistic and ugly side." Others declared Ukraine irresponsible for its failure to sign promptly the START-1 Treaty. Rarely has a nation that seemed so popular at its birth lost friends so quickly. It can be argued, however, the problem lies with the analysts as much as the country.

An illustrative example of this phenomenon is Richard Gwyn's Toronto Star Column (published in the *Journal* on May 26, 1994) entitled "Ukraine is just a bigger Bosnia" (Editor's Note: The article by Richard Gwyn is quoted extensively in this article, and is not included in the *Monitor*). As collection of half-truths, distortions and outright mistakes, it reaches hitherto uncharted depths. Let us focus on some of the statements therein.

Excepting Africa and possibly Haiti, Ukraine, he declares is the "worst-run country in the world." By what criteria, one wonders? It is not a dictatorship, nor has it seen some 500,000 deaths in the past year like Rwanda (with which it is compared later). Has Mr. Gwyn ever visited Ukraine or studied its system of government? It is not markedly different from that in Russia, though notably less violent.